



A Guide to Selling a Home In Massachusetts



BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HomeServices
Commonwealth Real Estate



Every home sale is unique. Your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate will help you make informed decisions from your pre-consultation meeting until the day you close. Your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate can help you transition from the emotional decision to the objective planning phase by providing you with key information about the home selling process. Your sales associate will listen to your needs and advise you through the process, to ensure your home sells for the most money in the shortest time, with the least amount of anxiety or stress.

PLANNING THE SALE

- You will need to do some homework and planning to help you maximize the sales price of your home. Here’s a checklist to get you started:
- Select a Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate that is right for you. With the help of your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate, review the latest real estate market trends to determine the listing price, sales range, recent comparable sales, and comparable homes currently for sale.
- Sign the Listing Agreement.
- Estimate the amount of profit you will make from the sale.
- Review financing options available to potential Buyers.
- Arrange for inspections.
- Make any necessary home repairs.
- Get the house in showing condition.
- Review the offers presented to you with your Berkshire Hatha-way HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate.
- Close the deal.

TIMELINE FOR SELLING YOUR HOME

This timeline represents approximately 60 days. The time periods shown on this chart are fairly typical but may differ in your situation, depending on various needs and negotiations between Buyer and Seller.

SELLING WITH A BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES COMMONWEALTH REAL ESTATE SALES ASSOCIATE AT YOUR SIDE

Given the complex personal and financial decisions involved, enlisting the help of an experienced and objective real estate professional can save you time, frustration and potentially thousands of dollars. Your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate will provide the following services:

- Assist with determining the fair market value of the house based on a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA).
- Provide a detailed marketing plan.
- Access the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), which exposes your home to all cooperating member brokers.
- Screen potential Buyers for financial qualifications.
- Provide suggestions for making your property more attractive to potential Buyers.
- Show your home, with your permission.
- Answer Buyers’ questions.
- Present all offers.
- Negotiate for top dollar on your behalf.
- Facilitate the closing process.

UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET

Although you and your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate set the price, Buyers determine the value. They’ll compare your home and your asking price to similar homes in the marketplace. If your price doesn’t meet the market, buyers will quickly reject it and move on to the next listing. That’s why your first step in determining the right price is to review the Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) with your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate. The report provides details on recent home sales similar to yours, as well as the asking prices of homes currently on the market. You will also want to consider the factors listed below that may add to or detract from the value of your home:

Location: What are the trade-offs and advantages of your property? Look at both the area in which the house is located as well as the neighborhood.

Features: Does your house have features that set it apart from other houses in the area such as a view, a three-season porch, vaulted ceilings, gourmet kitchen, etc.?

Condition: Has the house been adequately maintained? Are there minor or major repairs that could make a difference in the immediate sale of your house?

Age: Potential Buyers will want to know the age of the plumbing, furnace, roof, appliances, etc. If anything has been updated, this could add value to your property and the sale price.

Current Market: Is today’s market a Buyer’s market or a Seller’s market? Consult with your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate to learn more.

Time Frame: How long do you have to sell the house? What was the average time on the market for a comparable home? Can you wait while a Buyer arranges financing? Does your purchase of another home depend on the sale of your current home?

PRICING YOUR HOME TO SELL

Properly pricing your home is perhaps the most crucial factor in making a sale. If you set your price too low, you could lose thousands of dollars. If it’s priced too high, you may discourage potentially qualified Buyers and risk having your home sit on the market. Studies show that the longer a home is on the market the lower the price at which it is finally sold. The “right” price is a bal-ance between the maximum amount the current housing market will allow, your “competition” and your own time limits in selling.

THE LISTING AGREEMENT

A Listing Agreement is a personal service contract between you and a licensed real estate broker describing the property to be sold and the terms under which it is to be sold. You are appointing a broker to market the property for a specified length of time and agree to pay them a commission for bringing an acceptable offer from a Buyer. The commission is due when the property has closed, and the deed has been recorded.

THE SALE OF YOUR HOME . . .

THE PROCESS

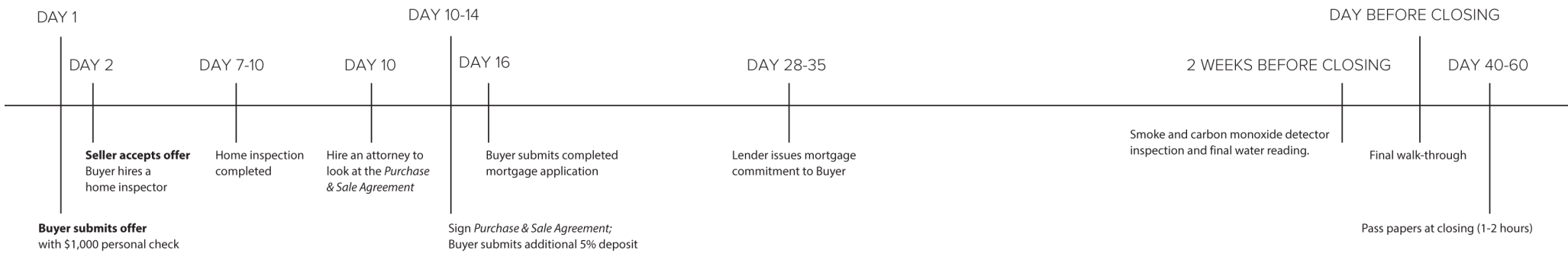
When someone prepares an offer, they notify your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate, who then makes an appointment to present it to you (all offers for your property must be presented to you). Review every offer, comparing the financial qualifications and time frame of each Buyer. You may accept an offer as is, reject it, or make a counter offer and send it back to the Buyer to see if they are willing to accept your terms. Your sales associate will counsel and advise you, but the final decision will be yours. In turn, the Buyer then may accept your changes, reject your counter offer, or come back with another counter offer. This process continues until a deal is agreed upon or negotiations are terminated.

Your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate will be armed with information to negotiate the best deal for you. For your protection, an earnest money deposit will be collected from the Buyer with the Offer to Purchase prior to acceptance of any offer.

The Purchase and Sale Agreement formalizes in more detail the original Offer to Purchase. It expands upon what has already been agreed to, without changing the original terms unless both parties agree. It is usually “drafted” by the listing office and should be reviewed by attorneys for the Buyer and Seller. The date for signing a Purchase and Sale Agreement is customarily about 10-14 days after the acceptance of the Offer to Purchase.

Final closing day is when you and the Buyer sign all the paper-work and the documents are recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Once your attorney presents an executed deed to the Buyers and you receive a check for the amount agreed upon, your house is successfully sold.

Congratulations!



GETTING YOUR HOME READY TO SHOW

To get the best-selling price in the shortest period of time, you must prepare your home and property so that it's in top-notch, move-in condition.

OUTSIDE: First impressions are hard to change, and the way your home looks from the street ("curb appeal") can make or break the sale. Make your house a showpiece from the curb to the front door.

- Does your house look a little dingy or dull? Give it a face-lift with a paint job or powerwash.
- Keep the grass mowed and the weeds pulled; trim trees and bushes; plant flowers to add a touch of color.
- Replace a weather-beaten mailbox or add visual interest by positioning rocks and potted plants around it.
- Remove grease or oil spots in your driveway.
- Make sure your doorbell works.
- Repair torn screens.
- Clean outdoor light fixtures; replace burned-out bulbs.
- Repair loose roof shingles and fill cracks in the walk and driveway.
- Create a welcoming front door; restore its luster with a few coats of varnish or spiff it up with a rich, new accent color.

INSIDE: Your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate sales associate can recommend and arrange for a professional stager to help show your home in the best light. Statistics show that properties that are staged sell for 10-15% more than those that are not staged. Staged homes also sell faster and closer to the price you want. Here are some other helpful tips:

- Clear out closets and cupboards; remove knickknacks from tables, countertops and bookshelves.
- Remove all unnecessary furniture to make your rooms seem more spacious.
- Brighten rooms with a fresh coat of paint. Choose neutral shades of white, off-white, beige or light pastels that will coordinate with most decors.
- Give your home an open, airy feel by opening the curtains and pulling up the blinds; turn on as many lights as possible.
- Kitchens should be absolutely spotless; pack up all excess kitchen items; clean the appliances inside and out.
- Run a lemon through the garbage disposal for a fresh smell.
- Remove items from the refrigerator door.
- Bathrooms should be immaculate. Remove stains from bathroom fixtures, repair dripping faucets, and polish mirrors.
- Wash and fluff bathroom rugs, hang fresh towels. Scented candles and soaps add a nice fragrance to the air.
- As a final touch, play soft background music while people tour your home. Potential Buyers usually feel more comfortable when the owners are not present. Let the buyer's or seller's sales associate show the house. He or she knows the business and will present your property to its best advantage.

Where you deserve to be



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