

STANTON REALTY · EL PASO, TEXAS

Home Seller's Guide

From Listing to Closing, with Confidence

Presented by Penny Lares, Realtor | pennylaresrealtor.com

Welcome to Your Selling Journey

Dear Homeowner,

I'm thrilled you've taken this first step toward exploring what it takes to successfully sell your home. Selling isn't just about putting up a sign and waiting for offers — it's a strategic process that requires careful planning, market knowledge, and informed decision-making at every turn. I'm here to guide you through each part of it.

Throughout this guide, I'll share honest advice drawn from real-world experience, helping you understand what to expect at every stage of the selling process. My goal is to give you the transparency and knowledge you need to make confident decisions, avoid common pitfalls, and achieve the best possible outcome for your unique situation — whether you're selling due to relocation, a lifestyle change, or an investment opportunity.

You'll find this guide organized into five major parts: Preparation, Pricing & Marketing, Offers & Negotiation, Under Contract, and Closing & Moving. Each section breaks a complex topic into manageable steps, giving you a clear roadmap from your initial decision to sell through your final closing day.

What You'll Find Inside

Preparation and staging, pricing strategy, marketing exposure, offer evaluation, negotiation, inspections, appraisals, and a step-by-step path through closing — all explained in plain English.

Your home represents more than a structure — it's where memories were made. As we move forward together, I'll help you balance those emotions with the practical realities of today's market.

With dedication to your success,

Penny Lares

Realtor, Stanton Realty



What You Need to Know Before Listing

Before you place that first call or start dreaming about your net proceeds, it's essential to understand that selling a home involves far more than a simple transaction. I want to be completely honest with you about what lies ahead, because transparency builds trust and helps you prepare mentally and financially for the journey.

The Emotional Reality

This isn't just a structure of wood and drywall — it's where you've celebrated birthdays, weathered storms, and built memories. Buyers will walk through your space evaluating it clinically, and that can feel surprisingly personal. Remember: buyers are evaluating a house, not your life or your taste. Separating yourself emotionally from the property is one of the first and most important steps toward a successful sale, and I'll support you through it.

The Financial Picture

Selling involves more complexity than many sellers anticipate. Beyond the sale price, you'll encounter closing costs, potential repair expenses, staging costs, and moving expenses. Many sellers overestimate their profit because they focus solely on the sale price without accounting for these costs. Together, we'll build a clear financial picture so you can plan your next move with confidence.

Today's Market Conditions

Market conditions shift constantly based on inventory levels, interest rates, and seasonal patterns. A seller's market with low inventory and high demand creates a very different experience than a buyer's market with abundant choices. I'll help you understand exactly where we stand today and what that means for your pricing and timeline, setting realistic expectations so you can make strategic decisions throughout our time working together.

Your Selling Timeline: What to Expect

Understanding the complete timeline helps you plan realistically and reduces the stress that comes from unrealistic expectations. Let me walk you through what each phase typically involves, so you know exactly what's coming and when.

Preparation

2–4 weeks of decluttering, staging, and paperwork before we go live.

Marketing

Listing, showings, and market outreach — timing varies with market conditions.

Negotiation

1–2 weeks to review and respond to incoming offers.

Under Contract

30–45 days for inspections, appraisal, and escrow before closing.

Preparation Phase

This is where we lay the foundation for success. You'll spend 2–4 weeks working with me to declutter, make strategic repairs, stage your home, and prepare it for professional photography. This phase requires the most work from you, but it's worth every bit of effort — properly prepared homes consistently sell faster and for higher prices than those rushed to market.

Marketing Phase

Once we're listed, your home receives maximum attention in the first two weeks as a new listing. This phase can last anywhere from a few days in a hot market to several months in slower conditions. I'll keep you informed with regular updates on showing activity, online engagement, and buyer feedback.

Negotiation, Under Contract & Closing

When offers arrive, we'll enter a period of negotiation that typically spans 1–2 weeks. After accepting an offer, you'll spend 30–45 days navigating inspections, appraisals, and contingencies before we reach the closing table — where you'll sign the final documents and receive your proceeds.

Defining Your Selling Goals

Every successful sale begins with clarity about why you're making this move and what you hope to achieve. Your motivation directly impacts our strategy, timeline flexibility, and willingness to negotiate. Here are the questions I'll ask as we begin working together.

1

Understanding Your Motivation

Are you relocating for work with a firm start date? Upsizing for a growing family, or downsizing now that the kids have moved out? Each scenario creates different pressures and opportunities that shape our approach.

2

Calculating Your Finances

We'll work together to understand your true net proceeds — starting with your expected sale price, then subtracting your mortgage balance, commission, title insurance, escrow fees, transfer taxes, and any repair costs or credits.

3

Setting Timeline Expectations

How quickly do you need to sell? Do you need to coordinate this sale with purchasing your next home? Understanding your timeline helps me create a pricing and marketing strategy that aligns with your needs.

4

Identifying Your Priorities

Is maximizing your sale price your top priority, or is a quick, stress-free sale more important? There's no wrong answer — I just need to understand what matters most to you.

Understanding Our Local Market



Real estate is intensely local. National trends and headlines provide context, but your specific neighborhood, school district, and community determine your actual selling experience. This is where my hyperlocal market knowledge becomes invaluable — I track inventory levels, days on market, and sale-to-list price ratios in your area continuously.

Buyer's Market vs. Seller's Market

A seller's market occurs when demand exceeds supply. Homes sell quickly, often with multiple offers, and you maintain strong negotiating leverage. A buyer's market features more inventory than demand, giving buyers room to negotiate. I measure this using "months of inventory": under three months signals a seller's market, over six months suggests a buyer's market, and three to six months represents balance.

Comparable Sales Analysis

I'll prepare a comprehensive analysis of recently sold homes similar to yours in location, size, condition, and features. Unlike automated online estimates that can miss the mark by 10–20%, my professional analysis accounts for your home's unique condition, upgrades, and location nuances.

Why You Should Work With Me

Selecting the right real estate professional is one of the most important decisions in the selling process, and I want to be completely transparent about what I bring to this partnership. I'm not here to make vague promises — I'm here to provide expert guidance, tireless advocacy, and the kind of service that makes this journey as smooth and profitable as possible for you.

My approach is built on three core principles: transparency, communication, and results. I believe you deserve complete honesty about market conditions and what to expect at each stage — I'll tell you what you need to hear, not just what you want to hear. My communication style is responsive and proactive, so you'll never wonder what's happening with your sale.

Your Advocate

I represent your interests in every negotiation and decision.

Market Expert

Hyperlocal knowledge that informs pricing and strategy.

Trusted Partner

Honest communication and guidance you can rely on.

Results-Focused

Committed to achieving the best outcome for your situation.

Beyond the tactics and tools, what truly sets me apart is my commitment to your success and my understanding that this isn't just a transaction — it's a major life transition that deserves respect, attention, and expertise.

Preparing Your Home: The Foundation of Success



The preparation phase is where successful sales are truly made, and I want to be honest with you — this is where you'll invest the most time and energy. Homes that are properly prepared consistently achieve better outcomes: higher sale prices, shorter market times, and smoother transactions.

01 Declutter & Depersonalize

Remove roughly one-third to one-half of your belongings, including excess furniture and personal photos. Buyers need to envision their own lives in the space.

02 Deep Clean

Scrub grout, wash windows, clean light fixtures, and eliminate odors. If cleaning isn't your strength, I can recommend trusted professionals.

03 Strategic Repairs

Fix leaky faucets, broken handles, and holes in walls — small signals of care that buyers notice, without overspending on renovations that won't return their cost.

04 Stage for Appeal

Whether we bring in professional staging or work with your existing furniture, every room should feel welcoming, spacious, and purposeful.

I'll provide detailed checklists, recommend trusted service providers, and walk through your home room by room. Properly prepared homes typically return 3–5 times the investment in preparation costs through higher sale prices and reduced time on market.

Room-by-Room Preparation Guide

Let me break down exactly what buyers look for in each area of your home, so you understand where to focus your efforts. I'll walk through your property with you, but this gives you a head start.

Living Areas

Remove excess furniture to create clear traffic flow. Add strategic pops of color while keeping a neutral palette, and depersonalize bookshelves.

Kitchen

Clear countertops, store small appliances, and organize cabinets — buyers will look inside. Fresh flowers or herbs add life without clutter.

Bedrooms

Make beds with hotel-quality neutral bedding, clear nightstands, and minimize visible clothing so closets look more spacious.

Bathrooms

Store personal care products out of sight, display only a few luxury touches, and replace busy shower curtains with neutral options.

Outdoor Spaces

Power wash siding and walkways, mow lawns with crisp edges, and refresh the front door and house numbers for great curb appeal.

Storage Areas

Don't neglect garages, basements, and closets — buyers will look. Organize and clear excess items to show their full potential.

Professional Photography: Your Most Important Marketing Tool



Professional photography is non-negotiable in today's market. Over 90% of buyers begin their home search online, and your photos are often the only reason they decide to schedule a showing — or skip your property entirely. The difference between amateur and professional photos can mean tens of thousands of dollars in your final sale price.

Timing Matters

We'll schedule the shoot during late morning or early afternoon, when natural light fills your home and creates warm, inviting images.

Virtual Tours

I recommend virtual tour technology so buyers can explore your home room by room online, especially valuable for out-of-town buyers.

Highlighting Features

We'll discuss your home's strongest selling points so the photographer prioritizes updated kitchens or unique architectural details.

Before the photographer arrives, we'll ensure every detail is perfect: staging complete, surfaces cleaned, lights on, and curtains opened to maximize natural light. We'll also remove vehicles from view and make sure pets are out of the home.

Pricing Your Home Strategically

Pricing is both art and science. This is one area where emotion and wishful thinking can cost you tens of thousands of dollars, so I ask you to trust my market expertise and the data we'll analyze together. Many sellers believe starting high leaves room for negotiation, but in today's information-rich market, that strategy typically backfires.

I'll prepare a comprehensive comparative market analysis examining recently sold homes that closely match yours, along with active listings and any expired listings that offer cautionary lessons about overpricing.

Pricing Psychology

Buyers search online within specific price ranges. Pricing at \$401K instead of \$399K can exclude your home from every search with a \$400K maximum — potentially eliminating half your buyer pool for a \$2,000 difference.

My Commitment to You

I'll provide honest pricing guidance based on current market data, not what I think you want to hear. Homes priced correctly from the start typically sell within 30–60 days and receive maximum attention in their critical first two weeks on the market.

My Comprehensive Marketing Strategy



Once we've prepared your home and established strategic pricing, it's time to get the word out to every qualified buyer in the market. My approach leverages both traditional and cutting-edge digital strategies to ensure maximum visibility and engagement.

Multi-Platform Exposure

Your listing syndicates to the MLS, Zillow, Realtor.com, Trulia, and dozens of other sites within hours.

Social Media Campaigns

Strategic Facebook and Instagram campaigns targeting potential buyers by demographic, location, and behavior.

Network Marketing

A beautifully designed email blast to my database of agents and past clients on the day we list.

Strategic Open Houses

Broker and public open houses that build visibility, buzz, and a sense of desirability around your property.

Managing Showings and Buyer Feedback

Once we're listed, your home needs to remain in showing-ready condition continuously. Buyers typically schedule showings with only a few hours' notice, and if we decline or delay, they'll simply move on to the next property. Flexibility and readiness directly correlate with successful sales.

Your Daily Routine

Each morning, make all beds, clear dishes from sinks, wipe down counters, and do a quick pickup. Keep a go-bag ready with pet supplies or anything you'll need to grab quickly when a showing is requested.

Leave during every showing. Buyers won't open closets or discuss concerns with their agent if you're present, and they'll rush through rather than imagining themselves living in the space.

What Feedback Tells Us

Consistently positive feedback with no offers usually points to a pricing issue. Negative feedback about specific features might indicate needed repairs. I'll personally contact each buyer's agent after every showing to gather this intelligence and refine our strategy.

When Offers Start Arriving



The moment we receive an offer, your journey enters its most exciting and critical phase. Many sellers focus exclusively on purchase price while overlooking terms and contingencies that can dramatically affect the probability of closing and your net proceeds.

I'll prepare a detailed net sheet for each offer showing your estimated proceeds after all costs, so we can compare offers with different prices, terms, and closing dates directly and objectively.

Purchase Price

The offered amount — remember, this isn't necessarily what you'll receive after costs.

Earnest Money

The good-faith deposit, typically 1–3% of price, demonstrating serious buyer intent.

Contingencies

Conditions that must be met for the sale to proceed, affecting the offer's true strength.

Closing Timeline

When the sale will complete, affecting your moving plans and next steps.

Negotiation Strategy: Protecting Your Interests

Negotiation begins the moment we receive an offer and continues through inspection and appraisal. How we respond to the initial offer sets the tone for the entire transaction. I will never take offers personally, and I'll help you maintain that same professional perspective — a low offer is a business negotiation, not a judgment about your home.

My Negotiation Principles

- Focus on the complete package, not just price
- Know your walk-away point before negotiations begin
- Counter on both price and terms when appropriate
- Stay flexible on items that don't cost you money
- Maintain professional relationships throughout

When Multiple Offers Arrive

This creates the most favorable position. I'll present all offers together for strategic comparison, and we might run a "highest and best" process — often driving prices above asking while shortening contingency periods.

Under Contract: Navigating to Closing

Accepting an offer marks a major milestone, but we're far from finished. The period between contract acceptance and closing, typically 30–45 days, involves inspections, an appraisal, a title search, and several deadlines. My job is to facilitate the process and help you navigate any challenges that arise.

Opening

Open escrow and run the title search.

Inspection

Conduct inspections and review findings together.

Appraisal

Complete the appraisal and process the buyer's loan.

Closing

Finalize preparations and close escrow.

Escrow is a neutral third party that coordinates every step required to transfer ownership. You'll receive an estimated closing statement to review, and I'll go over it with you carefully — if numbers seem incorrect, we'll question them immediately rather than waiting until closing day.

Your Role in This Phase

You'll receive requests for documents such as prior inspections, repair receipts, and HOA disclosures. I'll help you gather these proactively, because your responsiveness directly affects the timeline.

The Home Inspection: What to Expect



The home inspection is the most common point where transactions require renegotiation. Professional inspectors examine your home's structure, systems, and components, and even beautifully maintained homes generate multi-page reports — some findings are inevitable and don't necessarily require action.

1 Major Issues

Roof failure, foundation problems, or electrical hazards. These require attention — we'll decide whether to repair or offer fair credits.

2 Moderate Issues

Aging HVAC or plumbing leaks. Often negotiable, and we'll evaluate each strategically.

3 Minor Issues

Loose handles or caulking needs. Typically excluded from negotiation, as buyers agreed to the home's current condition.

You're not obligated to address every item in the report. I'll review it with you before formal requests arrive, helping you understand what's significant and preparing a response that's fair but protects your position.

The Appraisal Process

After inspections are complete, the buyer's lender orders an appraisal to verify your home's value supports the loan amount. Lenders only loan based on the lower of the purchase price or appraised value, so this step matters a great deal.

I'll provide the appraiser with a list of major updates, dates, and costs — kitchen remodels, HVAC replacements, roof work — since appraisers can't consider improvements they don't know about.

Most appraisals come in at or above the purchase price, confirming the market value we established through our pricing strategy. If a low appraisal occurs, we'll review the report for errors, request reconsideration with documentation if warranted, or discuss adjusting price, meeting buyers halfway, or holding firm based on current market realities.



Preparing for Closing Day



As closing day approaches, you'll finally see the finish line coming into view. I'll be with you every step of the way, making sure you understand what's happening and what you'll receive at the end of this process.

1 Final Walkthrough

Buyers verify condition 24–48 hours before closing. Ensure the home is pristine and empty.

2 Review Statement

Carefully examine all charges and credits at least three days prior to closing.

3 Signing Day

Bring photo ID and sign the deed and affidavits — typically 30–60 minutes.

4 Funding

Funds transfer and the deed records with the county; proceeds arrive within a day.

You should receive your closing statement at least three days before closing. I'll review it with you line by line, verifying the sale price, mortgage payoff, commissions, and credits — we'll handle any discrepancies well in advance, not at the closing table.

Moving Out and Final Transition



Moving out properly protects you from post-closing complaints and leaves a positive final impression with buyers. How you leave your home affects your reputation and can prevent unnecessary disputes after closing.

Cleaning Standards

Sweep, vacuum, wipe down surfaces, and leave the home at least "broom clean." Remove all personal belongings, trash, and debris. Professional cleaning is worth the investment to ensure everything meets expectations.

What to Leave Behind

- All keys and garage door openers
- Alarm codes and instructions
- Appliance manuals and warranty information
- Any items specifically listed in the contract as conveying

Managing Your Timeline

Begin packing non-essential items weeks before closing. Build in buffer time, because moving always takes longer than expected.

Final Utility Considerations

Transfer service as of closing day, but don't shut off utilities early — buyers may need them for the final walkthrough.

Understanding Your Closing Costs

I want to be completely transparent with you about the costs associated with selling your home, because understanding your true net proceeds is essential for planning your next move. Let me break down the typical costs you'll encounter at closing, so there are no surprises.



6–7%

REAL ESTATE
COMMISSION

Commission — the largest expense, typically split between your listing agent and the buyer's agent.

1–2%

CLOSING COSTS

Closing Costs — title insurance, escrow fees, recording fees, and transfer taxes.

Varies

REPAIR CREDITS

Repair Credits — any credits agreed to during inspection negotiations.

Varies

PRORATED COSTS

Prorated Costs — property taxes and HOA fees prorated through your closing date.

Don't forget to budget for costs beyond closing — moving expenses, temporary housing if needed, and any pre-listing repairs or staging costs. I'll prepare detailed net proceeds estimates early in our relationship, so you can plan confidently for your next chapter.

THANK YOU

Thank You for Trusting Me With Your Home Sale

Selling your home is one of the most significant financial transactions you'll ever make, and I'm honored that you're considering working with me to navigate this journey. My goal in creating this guide was to give you complete transparency about what to expect and how I'll support you every step of the way.

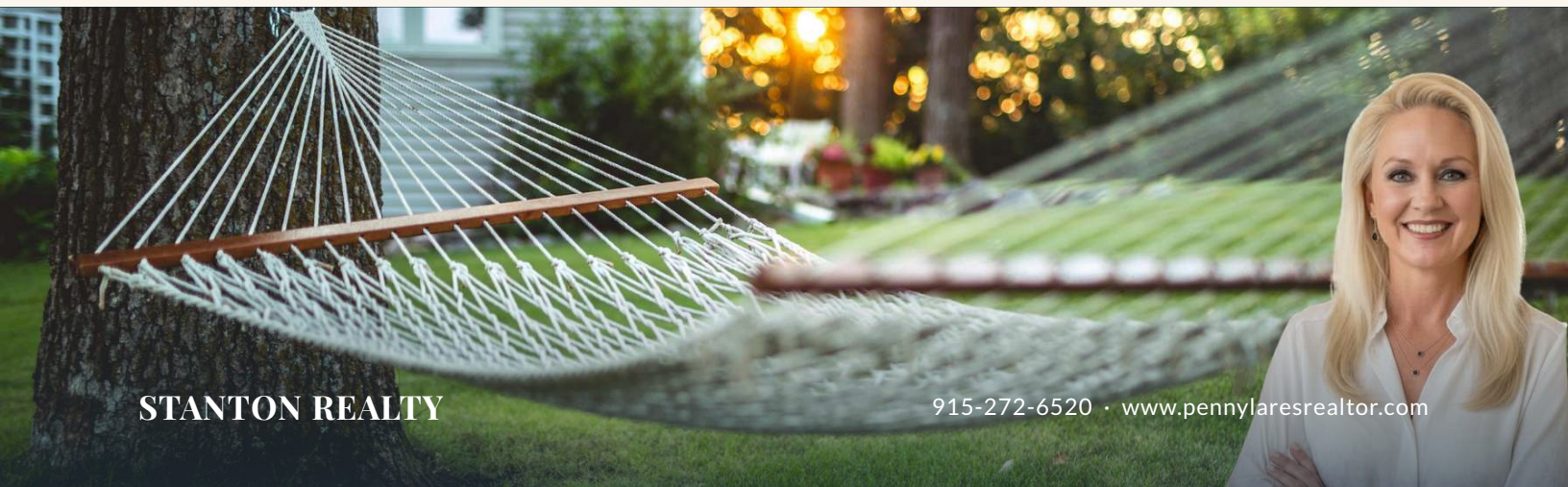
I understand that you're not just selling a house — you're transitioning to a new chapter of your life. That deserves respect, expertise, and the kind of personalized attention that makes all the difference.

My Commitment to You

I will provide honest pricing guidance, comprehensive marketing, expert negotiation, and steady communication from our first conversation through your final closing day.

"Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. Let's schedule a time to talk about your goals, tour your home together, and discuss how I can help you achieve the best possible outcome."

Penny Lares, Realtor



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