



Why Use a REALTOR®?

Six Important Reasons

Real estate is a big deal. For most Americans, a home is the most expensive purchase they'll make in their lifetime. It's a serious transaction with significant financial and emotional ramifications for the parties involved, and having proper representation is critical.

Today's buyers and sellers agree. In 2012, a full 89 percent of buyers used a real estate agent, and so did 88 percent of sellers.¹

Realtor® representation during a real estate transaction is important for both buyers and sellers. Here are six of the chief reasons:

Fiduciary responsibility. When you work with a Realtor®, their fiduciary responsibility is to *you*. That means you have an expert who is looking out for your best financial interests, an expert who's contractually bound to do everything in their power to protect you. That's *big* — the value of that commitment cannot be overstated. "For more than 100 years, Realtors® have subscribed to the NAR's strict [Code of Ethics](#) as a condition of membership," says National Association of Realtors® President Gary Thomas. "Realtors® have the expertise and experience to help sellers protect their investment and help buyers build theirs."

Complex, ever-changing real estate regulations. Buying or selling a home is not like purchasing a plane ticket. Every home is different, and laws change every year and vary from state to state. Generally speaking, people purchase a new home every 7-10 years, and a lot can — and usually does — change between transactions. Realtors® are immersed in real estate, and they *must* stay current with all the updates in regulations, laws, contracts and practices. Once you retain your Realtor®, they put that knowledge to work for you.

Help finding the right home, beyond square footage and baths. Browsing online is a terrific way to start a home search — in fact, almost 90 percent of people start their home search online.¹ But when it's time to buy, knowing all the pros and cons of a property can help you make the *right* decision. Realtors® live and breathe real estate, and they can share information about a home that you wouldn't otherwise know. For example, they can tell you about the perils of polybutylene piping (a plumbing material that's prone to bursting), or the concerns with FRT plywood (a roofing material that can spontaneously combust in higher temperatures, like those in attics). Your Realtor® can go beyond the aesthetics and tell you important details about homes you're considering.

Pricing and selling a home. There are lots of sites where you can view price estimates for your home before you list it for sale, but you take a risk using them. In some markets, online estimates can be off by

as much as 35 percent, and they often rely on tax records and data that can be as old as 6-12 months. Realtors® know the local market, have access to the freshest sale data, and can price your house in line with the market to maximize your earnings. In 2012, sellers using an agent got \$40,100 more: The median sale price for the 88 percent of sellers who worked with an agent was \$215,000, versus a median sale price of \$174,900 for the 9 percent of sellers who didn't use an agent.¹

Contracts and negotiations. Finding the right home is the fun part. Then the real work begins.: Today's contracts can be 50 pages long — not counting addendums and riders. Realtors® can help you navigate these complex documents and craft an attractive offer that makes sense for you. Plus, when it comes to negotiation, your Realtor® is *your* advocate and can bring an objective voice to a very subjective situation.

Following a code of ethics. When you work with a Realtor®, you're partnering with a professional who operates according to a strict code of ethics. In place for over 100 years, the Realtor® [Code of Ethics](#) ensures that consumers who work with a Realtor® are treated professionally and ethically in all transaction-related matters.

¹*National Association of REALTORS® 2012 Survey of Home Buyers and Sellers.*