

SELLER LEAD MAGNET | WASHINGTON STATE

Before You List

10 Decisions Every Washington Seller Should Make

A practical guide to help you make the important decisions before the transaction starts.

- ✓ Protect your timeline and net proceeds
- ✓ Prepare disclosures and property records
- ✓ Compare offers by strength - not price alone

Make these decisions before your listing goes live.

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A better sale starts before the sign goes up

Selling a home is a sequence of decisions. The strongest sellers decide their priorities, prepare the property and paperwork, understand likely costs, and establish a negotiation plan before buyers begin reacting to the listing.

WASHINGTON NOTE Washington real estate brokerage and seller-disclosure rules create specific obligations and timelines. This guide highlights the planning decisions that help you enter the market prepared.

1

Clarify your outcome and timeline

Start with the end in mind. Your pricing, preparation, possession date, and negotiation strategy should support what you actually need from the sale.

- Target move date and preferred closing window
- Whether you must sell before buying your next home
- Minimum acceptable net proceeds, not just an asking price

Decision prompt: *What matters most: highest net, fastest close, fewer contingencies, or flexibility?*

2

Choose representation and understand the agreement

Interview your real estate professional before you list. Discuss scope of service, communication, marketing, compensation, term, and what happens if your plans change.

- Ask for a written explanation of services and compensation
- Confirm how offers and conflicts will be handled
- Agree on communication cadence and decision-making authority

WA: Washington requires a written services agreement between a real estate firm and a seller to establish the agency relationship; compensation terms must be addressed in the agreement.

Decision prompt: *Do I understand exactly what I am authorizing and paying for?*

3

Set a pricing strategy - not just a price

A strong list price is a market strategy. It should reflect recent comparable sales, competing inventory, condition, location, buyer demand, and your timing.

- Review sold, pending, and active comparables
- Discuss likely appraisal support if financing is involved
- Pre-plan how long you will hold the initial price before reassessing

Decision prompt: *Would this price attract the right buyers if I were shopping today?*

4

Decide what to repair, refresh, or leave alone

Not every project pays back. Prioritize items that improve safety, function, first impression, and buyer confidence rather than remodeling for personal taste.

- Address obvious defects and deferred maintenance
- Consider paint, lighting, landscaping, cleaning, and small repairs
- Decide whether a pre-listing inspection would help or create unnecessary complexity

Decision prompt: *Which improvements are most likely to improve marketability or reduce negotiation friction?*

5

Prepare your disclosure and property records

Gather facts before the listing goes live. Do not guess. Organize documents that help answer buyer questions accurately and efficiently.

- Permits, warranties, invoices, surveys, easements, HOA documents
- Septic/well records if applicable
- Insurance claims, known repairs, and material property information

WA: For many Washington residential sales, the seller disclosure statement (commonly called Form 17) is governed by chapter 64.06 RCW. Unless waived or exempt, it is generally delivered within five business days after mutual acceptance, and the buyer generally has three business days after receipt to rescind unless otherwise agreed.

Decision prompt: *What do I know about the property that a reasonable buyer would want to understand?*

6

Choose your staging, showing, and privacy plan

Decide how the home will look and how buyers will access it. Make the property easy to show while protecting privacy and valuables.

- Declutter and depersonalize without making the home feel empty
- Remove medications, financial papers, jewelry, firearms, and sensitive documents
- Plan for pets, children, work-from-home schedules, and notice requirements

Decision prompt: *What showing rules protect my household without making the home hard to buy?*

7

Approve the launch and marketing strategy

Your first week on market matters. Align photography, property story, showing availability, launch timing, and digital distribution before going live.

- Professional photography and accurate property details
- Clear showing instructions and offer-review strategy
- Marketing that reaches the broad buyer market, not just a private network

WA: Washington law now generally requires brokers marketing residential property for a seller to market it concurrently to the general public and all other brokers, except as reasonably necessary for the health or safety of the owner or occupant.

Decision prompt: *What should a qualified buyer understand within 30 seconds of seeing my listing?*

8

Know your estimated net proceeds

The number that matters is what you keep after the transaction. Ask for a seller net estimate before setting your walk-away number.

- Loan/HELOC payoff and liens
- Brokerage compensation, title/escrow charges, repairs or credits
- Real estate excise tax (REET), prorations, and other transaction costs as applicable

WA: Washington imposes a graduated state REET plus applicable local REET. Rates and thresholds can change, so confirm current figures with your broker, escrow/title team, tax adviser, or Washington Department of Revenue.

Decision prompt: *What sale price and terms produce an acceptable net after all known costs?*

9

Decide how you will compare offers

The highest price is not always the strongest offer. Compare net proceeds, financing strength, contingencies, appraisal exposure, closing date, concessions, and probability of closing.

- Create your priorities before offers arrive
- Evaluate both economics and execution risk
- Ask questions before accepting terms you do not understand

Decision prompt: *Which offer best balances net proceeds, certainty, timing, and risk?*

10

Plan closing, possession, and fraud protection

Closing can move quickly. Know where you will be, what must be signed, when you must vacate, and how funds will be delivered.

- Confirm mortgage payoff and title issues early
- Coordinate movers, utilities, keys, remotes, and final cleaning
- Independently verify wire instructions using a known phone number before sending funds

Decision prompt: *What could delay closing, and what can I solve now rather than in the final week?*

Seller readiness checklist

Gather these items before listing so questions, disclosures, title work, and closing preparation do not become last-minute surprises.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Mortgage/HELOC payoff information | ☐ Property tax and utility information |
| ☐ HOA/condo contacts and documents | ☐ Permits, plans, surveys, easements |
| ☐ Repair invoices and warranties | ☐ Septic/well records if applicable |
| ☐ Insurance claim history and known repairs | ☐ Appliance/system manuals |
| ☐ Leases or occupancy agreements | ☐ Keys, remotes, access codes |
| ☐ List of recent improvements and dates | ☐ Moving/possession plan |

Your three pre-listing numbers

Ideal closing date: The date that best supports your move and next housing plan.

Target net proceeds: The amount you hope to retain after estimated transaction costs and payoffs.

Walk-away threshold: The minimum economics/terms you would accept after considering your alternatives.

Washington resources & important notice

Washington Legislature - Chapter 18.86 RCW — brokerage relationships, services agreements, duties, compensation, and 2026 public-marketing rule. [Official link](#)

Washington Legislature - Chapter 64.06 RCW — residential seller disclosure requirements and buyer rights. [Official link](#)

Washington Department of Revenue - REET — current Washington real estate excise tax information and rates. [Official link](#)

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Ready to plan your next move?

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