

Help raise your home's worth with these simple appraisal tips

A fair opinion of value gives buyers and lenders a clear picture of a home's worth.

A professional home appraisal is required when selling a home — and it's also important for refinancing. The unbiased opinion of your home's value gives potential buyers and lenders a clear picture of a home's worth.

While some influencing factors are outside of your control — such as proximity to good schools and the value of nearby homes — a few simple steps may help increase the value of your home.

How to prepare for a home appraisal

- **Review previous appraisals** - Look for issues that lowered your home's value in the past and address those problems.
- **Collect important documents for the appraiser** - These could include a land survey that verifies property size, proof of your home's most recent sale price and a list of recent improvements complete with receipts.
- **Prepare for the visit** - Clear clutter and contain pets to make the inspection easier for the appraiser.
- **Tidy up** - There are some simple things you can do to raise your home's worth. Also, your [landscaping choices](#) should enhance the house, not hide it.
- **Invest in curb appeal** - Simple home maintenance to [improve curb appeal](#) help improve first impressions. Clean the landscape, clear debris from your yard, [trim the hedges](#) and [clean the gutters](#) to make your home more attractive.
- **Make minor repairs** - Small fixes, such as touching up chipped paint or replacing a broken doorknob, can also help add to a home's value.
- **Know the comps** - Be sure to check other websites to search for comparable sales in your neighborhood. It's a good idea to know what similar homes are selling for.
- **Be polite** - Share the information you collect with your appraiser. Be friendly and polite, step away, then let them do their job.

What does an appraiser do?

- **Real estate inspection** - The [appraiser closely examines](#) the interior and exterior of your home, taking photos and noting its overall condition.

- **Comparables** - After the initial visit, the appraiser researches recently sold homes in your neighborhood. This helps the appraiser calculate the home's worth based on current housing market values.
- **Final report** - The appraiser prepares a complete property and market analysis, which typically includes:
 - Your home's size and condition
 - A record of any serious structural issues
 - Notes about recent home renovations and the surrounding area
 - Photographs, sketches and maps of your property