

## How to Prepare for an Appraisal

For homeowners, a real estate appraisal is the linchpin to buying or selling their home. It allows the property transactions to occur among the buyer, seller, real estate agent and mortgage lender.

Before an Appraiser arrives, there are a few things you should know. By law, an appraiser must be state licensed to perform appraisals prepared for federally related transactions. Also by law, you are entitled to receive a copy of the completed appraisal report from your lender.

To facilitate the appraisal process, it's beneficial to have these documents ready for the appraiser:

- A plot plan or survey of the house and land (if readily available)
- Information on the latest purchase of the property in the last three years
- Written property agreements, such as a maintenance agreement for a shared driveway
- List of personal property to be sold with the home
- Title policy that describes encroachments or easements
- Most recent real estate tax bill and or legal description of the property
- Home inspection reports, or other recent reports for termites, EIFS (synthetic stucco) wall systems, septic systems and wells
- Brag sheet that lists major home improvements and upgrades, the date of their installation and their cost (for example, the addition of central air conditioning or roof repairs) and permit confirmation (if available)
- A copy of the current listing agreement and broker's data sheet and Purchase Agreement if a sale is "pending".
- Information on "Homeowners Associations" or condominium covenants and fees.
- A list of "Proposed" improvements if the property is to be appraised "As Complete".

Once your appraiser has arrived, you do not need to accompany him or her along on the entire site inspection, but you should be available to answer questions about your property and be willing to point out any home improvements.

Here are some other suggestions:

- Accessibility: Make sure that all areas of the home are accessible, especially to the attic and crawl space
- Housekeeping: Appraisers see hundreds of homes a year and will look past most clutter, but they're human beings too! A good impression can translate into a higher home value
- Maintenance: Repair minor things like leaky faucets, missing door handles and trim
- FHA/VA Inspection Items: If your borrower is applying for an FHA/VA loan, be sure to ask your appraiser if there are specific things that should be done before they come. Some items they may recommend might be: Install smoke detectors on all levels (especially near bedrooms); install handrails on all stairways; remove peeling paint and repaint the effected area; provide inspection access to the attic and crawl

