

# NAR's 2024 Survey of Buyers & Sellers Provides Some Insights on the Market

Every year the National Association of Realtors (NAR) publishes a "Profile of Buyers and Sellers" which contains some useful data and insights on the real estate market.

The 2024 survey was just released and contains some interesting trends which I'll summarize here.

In the posting of this week's ad at [RealEstateToday.substack.com](https://www.realtor.com/news/real-estate-today), you will find the full highlights of the report on the following topics:

- ◆ Characteristics of home buyers
- ◆ Breakdown of homes purchased
- ◆ Use of real estate professionals
- ◆ The home search process
- ◆ How homes are being financed
- ◆ The experience of home sellers
- ◆ Use of listing agents by sellers
- ◆ For Sale by Owner statistics

Here are some of the key take-aways from the report:

**Characteristics of Home Buyers:** The median age of home buyers surged in 2024 over the prior year — 56 vs. 49. The median age for first-time buyers jumped from 35 to 38, and for repeat buyers jumped from 58 to 61.

73% of buyers had no children under 18 in the home, and 17% bought a multi-generational home. First-time home buyers constituted 24% of home sales, down from 32% in 2023. This was the lowest percentage since NAR started doing these surveys in 1981.

**Characteristics of Homes Purchased:** 15% of buyers purchased new homes from a builder. Among those who purchased existing homes, the typical home was built in 1994, compared to homes built in the 1980s in two prior surveys. The typical home was 1,900 square feet, with 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. The median distance of the new home from the previous home was 20 miles, compared to 50 miles in 2022. (That was the height of Covid, spurred by remote work.) Pre-Covid, the median distance was typically 15 miles. 16% of 2024 buyers purchased in an urban area or central city, the highest such percentage since 2014, spurred perhaps by the end of some work-at-home arrangements. Proximity to the home buyer's job was important to 34% of buyers, down from 52% in 2014. The top consideration this year was the quality of the neighborhood (59%), followed by proximity to friends and family (45%).

## Home Buyers & Real Estate

**Professionals:** 88% of home buyers used the services of a real estate agent. Looking at buyers of existing homes, that percentage rose to 92%.



Only 63% of new home buyers were represented by an agent. 80% of first-time buyers said that their agent's assistance in understanding the home buying process was "invaluable."

40% of all buyers and 51% of first-time buyers found their agent through a referral from their friends, family or personal network. Most buyers only interviewed one agent — it was 71% for repeat buyers.

Although 88% of buyers said they would use their agent again or recommend him/her to others, only 21% of buyers actually used the same agent they had used before. Of those who purchased in 2024, 61% have already recommended their agent to others.

**The Home Search Process:** 43 percent of buyers said they started the process by looking at homes on the internet, with 21% first contacting an agent. 69% of buyers did their searching for homes on mobile or tablet devices.

Open houses were deemed "very useful" by 23% of buyers. About 40% said they valued photos and detailed listing information, while 31% appreciated floor plans. The typical buyer spent 10 weeks house hunting and saw a median of 7 homes, 2 of them online only. 51% found the home they bought through their own online searching. 55% said finding the right home was the most difficult part of the process.

59% of buyers said they were "very satisfied" with their home buying experience, and another 33% were "somewhat satisfied."

**Financing the Home Purchase:** 91% of first-time buyers and 69% of repeat buyers financed their home purchase with a loan. These percentages were down from 92% and 81% respectively from last year. The overall percentage was 74%, meaning that 26% of all home buyers paid cash — an all-time high.

The median down payment was 9% for first-time buyers and 23% for repeat buyers. That's the highest down payment percentage for first-time buyers since 1997 and the high-

est for repeat buyers since 2003. 25% of the first-time buyers used a gift or loan from a relative to finance their down payment, but savings was the biggest source at 69%.

In 2009, 55% of first-time buyers used an FHA loan, but that has dropped to 29% now that there are many conventional loan offerings requiring minimal down payments and no mortgage insurance premium. In 2024, 52% of first-time buyers took out a conventional loan.

**Home Sellers and Their Selling Experience:** The median age of home sellers in 2024 was 63 — the highest ever recorded. 69% of the sellers were married couples, the first increase in this statistic in four years. Of all the homes sold in 2024, 77% did not have any children under 18 living in the house -- empty nesters!

66% moved within the same state, 16% within the same region. (Note: These are national statistics.) Roughly one-third bought a bigger house, one-third bought the same size house and one-third bought a smaller house. 52% bought a newer home, with the rest split equally between the same age or older home.

The single most common reason for moving (23%) was to be closer to friends and family. The median number of years that a seller owned

their home was 10 years, a big increase from 6 years in 2000 to 2008.

Median time on market in 2024 was three weeks, up from two weeks in 2023.

**Home Selling and Real Estate Professionals:** 90% of sellers hired a listing agent, up from 89% in 2023. Only 6% were FSBO (for sale by owner), a record low percentage. Of those sellers who did not know the buyer, 95% used a real estate agent. Two-thirds of sellers used an agent who was referred to them or that they had used before. 81% interviewed only the one agent they hired. 71% of sellers who bought within 10 miles of their home used the same agent for both transactions. The most important criteria in selecting the listing agent were the agent's reputation (35%) and the agent's honesty (21%). 58% of sellers offered open houses.

**For Sale by Owner Experience:** 5% of detached single-family homes were sold without the assistance of a real estate professional. 38% were sold this way to a friend, relative or neighbor. 63% did no marketing. 70% of those who knew the buyer were "very satisfied" with the selling process.

Again, the full reports of each of the above sections can be found at [RealEstateToday.substack.com](https://www.realtor.com/news/real-estate-today).

## Is a Reverse Mortgage Right for You?

If the idea of not paying principal and interest for the rest of your life and possibly drawing a lump sum from your home's equity to help you with taxes and insurance, sounds like something you'd like to explore, let me tell you about "reverse mortgages." They are officially known as **Home Equity Conversion Mortgages (HECM)**. They can be used to purchase a home or to refinance your current home.

Many seniors are in a situation where they have substantial equity in their home but don't have quite the amount of income they need to live on day-to-day or month-to-month. If you are still paying on your mortgage, a HECM allows you to reduce that

monthly expense by the amount of your principal and interest payment. That alone may be enough to improve your monthly cash flow, but you can also draw on your surplus equity to have additional money for living expenses or discretionary expenditures such as travel.

If downsizing is in your plans, the HECM can also be used to purchase a home that better fits your senior lifestyle.

You have to be 62 or older to qualify for a HECM. The amount of down payment or equity you need to have is based on your age and life expectancy.

*Due to space limitations in this ad, the rest of this article can be read at <http://realestatetoday.substack.com>.*

### Jim Smith

Broker/Owner, 303-525-1851

[Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com](mailto:Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com)

1214 Washington Ave., Golden

#### Broker Associates:

- JIM SWANSON, 303-929-2727
- CHUCK BROWN, 303-885-7855
- DAVID DLUGASCH, 303-908-4835
- GREG KRAFT, 720-353-1922
- KATHY JONKE, 303-990-7428
- CHRIS SHOLTS, 320-491-6494

**Loan Officer:** WENDY RENEE, 303-868-1903



Hometown Service Delivered with Integrity  
Promoting and Modeling Environmental Responsibility



Golden Real Estate lists and sells residential properties across the entire metro area.