



THE COMPLETE
GUIDE TO STARTING
**A SUCCESSFUL
CAREER IN
REAL ESTATE**



Starting any new career is an exciting and challenging opportunity. Transitioning to a career in real estate is an especially exciting choice. With endless earning potential, a self-built schedule, multiple career paths, and abundant opportunities, you may wonder why you did not decide to start your real estate career sooner.



As you begin considering your future real estate career, many questions will arise.

"Will I make enough money with a real estate career?"

"How do I get my real estate license?"

"What career opportunities are available to me after I finish my real estate education?"

This guide answers these questions and helps you on the path to real estate success. We compiled the average salary of real estate agents in every state, the steps to get your real estate license, and the many career opportunities available in the real estate industry.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

SALARIES IN ALL 50 STATES



The real estate industry is abundant with job opportunities that are a perfect match for almost anyone interested in following a new career path. A real estate agent is the most popular and sought-after career within the industry. And for good reason! This career path has great growth potential and has a competitive average salary.

HOW MUCH DO REAL ESTATE AGENTS EARN?

STATE	AGENT SALARY
Alabama	\$56,520
Alaska	\$71,710
Arizona	\$61,410
Arkansas	\$52,700
California	\$72,870
Colorado	\$92,057
Connecticut	\$84,810
Delaware	\$55,010
Florida	\$68,100
Georgia	\$64,410
Hawaii	\$64,290

STATE	AGENT SALARY
Idaho	\$44,920
Illinois	\$57,220
Indiana	\$75,720
Iowa	\$60,680
Kansas	\$70,230
Kentucky	\$52,870
Louisiana	\$42,710
Maine	\$73,110
Maryland	\$67,660
Massachusetts	\$105,784
Michigan	\$68,430

STATE	AGENT SALARY
Minnesota	\$62,050
Mississippi	\$67,770
Missouri	\$52,460
Montana	\$60,040
Nebraska	\$48,430
Nevada	\$67,120
New Hampshire	\$73,830
New Jersey	\$82,490
New Mexico	\$62,300
New York	\$112,080
North Carolina	\$53,880
North Dakota	\$65,950
Ohio	\$59,860
Oklahoma	\$89,435

STATE	AGENT SALARY
Oregon	\$63,420
Pennsylvania	\$60,590
Rhode Island	\$58,830
South Carolina	\$79,140
South Dakota	\$73,350
Tennessee	\$87,913
Texas	\$78,380
Utah	\$54,330
Vermont	\$100,750
Virginia	\$69,630
Washington	\$80,680
West Virginia	\$69,950
Wisconsin	\$53,840
Wyoming	\$71,460

* This data was taken from 2023 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data. These numbers are the mean salary of real estate agents in each state. Colorado, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, and Tennessee did not have available BLS data for the mean salary of real estate brokers in their state. For these states, we used salary data from ZipRecruiter.com in July 2024.

WHERE DO REAL ESTATE AGENTS MAKE THE MOST MONEY?

REAL ESTATE AGENT
\$69,610

REAL ESTATE BROKER
\$86,130

RANK	STATE	AVERAGE SALARY
1	New York	\$112,080
2	Massachusetts	\$105,784
3	Vermont	\$100,750
4	Colorado	\$92,057
5	Oklahoma	\$89,435
6	Tennessee	\$87,913
7	Connecticut	\$84,810
8	New Jersey	\$82,490
9	Alaska	\$81,720
10	Washington	\$80,680

HOW TO MAKE MORE MONEY

AS A REAL ESTATE AGENT



Even though real estate agents make a nationwide average of \$69,610, every agent makes a different salary. Salary can range from \$25,000 to over \$1,000,000 a year! To make more money as a real estate agent, you will need to focus on gaining more experience, increasing your effort, and dedicating more time to your profession. Additionally, your location and your niche expertise will influence your salary potential as an agent or broker.



STEP 1

GAIN INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

The first few years an individual works within the real estate industry, their salary may fall below the national average. Because a career in real estate is dependent on connections and relationships, it may take a few years for a new real estate professional to build a solid foundation and establish trust with their contacts.

Continue working on developing connections, and over time, you will gain more clients, and your salary will start to increase.



STEP 2

FOCUS ON YOUR EFFORT & DEDICATE MORE TIME TO YOUR PROFESSION

Though being a professional in the real estate industry allows a person to break away from the typical 9 to 5 workday, agents and brokers still need to put in a great amount of time and effort before they see lucrative results.

Time management is difficult when someone first breaks away from their jobs to pursue a career in real estate. People working in the real estate industry part-time will most likely make a part-time salary.

Simply put, the more time and effort you put into your craft, the more money you will make.



STEP 3

FIND A LUCRATIVE & PROFITABLE LOCATION

As you can see from the salary chart above, real estate agents and brokers make different salaries in different locations. This is because the real estate market is different in every state.

An agent working in New York City or Miami may have more work and make more in commission from higher-priced homes than a real estate agent working in a small town in Kansas.

Salaries may differ within different locations in each state. Higher demand and fast-paced purchases in a city are sure to garner more of a profit than the slower pace and lower demand in more rural areas.

If you are interested in making more money in real estate, find a location that has a high demand for real estate agents and is within a booming market.

STEPS TO GET YOUR LICENSE

& BECOME A REAL
ESTATE AGENT



To become a successful real estate agent, you must complete state-required pre-licensing education, pass the state and national portions of the real estate licensing exam, and find a broker to help you launch your successful real estate career.

Each step to getting your license could vary from state to state, so it's important to check your state's license requirements.

Follow these easy steps to learn how to get a real estate license online.

STEP 1

COMPLETE THE PRE-LICENSE COURSES

Each state's real estate commission requires pre-license education for prospective agents to get a real estate license.

Once you understand your state's education requirements, you need to complete your pre-license coursework.

Some helpful tips to remember:

- You may choose to take your courses online or in a classroom, however, you must enroll with an approved real estate school.
- If you have a degree in real estate, have your real estate license in another state or are a licensed attorney, your education requirements may vary. Please be sure to contact your state's real estate commission to understand what your education requirements are.
- Once you have completed your course(s), you will need to obtain your real estate transcripts or completion certificates from the approved school you enrolled with. Your certificate or transcripts can be printed from home in most states, but make sure to verify with your state's real estate commission.

STEP 2

FILE YOUR APPLICATION & PAY ANY FEES

To get a real estate license, you must fill out your state's required application and pay any applicable fees. Most states have forms and fee information on their website. VanEd will provide you with information or resources to help you understand what your state requires. When you reach the application phase of the process, make sure to consider the following concerning your application:

- Understand your state's filing date deadline
- If your state requires you to have it, obtain Errors and Omissions (E&O) insurance before applying
- If your state requires fingerprinting and a background check before applying
- If your state requires you to have a sponsoring or managing broker in place before applying.

STEP 3

PASS THE REAL ESTATE EXAM

Once you have completed your education requirements, you will need to take and pass the real estate license exam.

Most states use a testing provider for their real estate license exam so that the provider can administer and grade each test. It's important to understand who your state uses as a provider and contact them for any additional information or resources to help you prepare for the exam. VanEd provides you with all the information required to schedule your test with your state's provider.



STEP 4

BECOME A REAL ESTATE AGENT & FIND A BROKERAGE

After completing the courses and passing the exam, you will need to find a broker to work under to start your successful career.

Don't be afraid to ask our instructors about the industry or what to expect in your career. After you are licensed, come back, and we can help fulfill your continuing education requirements to renew your license.






CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN REAL ESTATE

AFTER GETTING YOUR LICENSE

There are many real estate career paths that match the different skills and interests of those with a license.

Before you get your first job in real estate, it is important to consider your options. Even though being a real estate agent may seem the obvious first step, there are many opportunities available to those who earn their real estate license.





REAL ESTATE AGENT

This is one of the most popular first jobs in real estate. A real estate agent aids in the sale of a property. The primary purpose of this job is to represent the seller or buyer of a property.

This position involves a fair amount of networking, interacting with others, and paperwork. Real estate agents usually earn a commission, or percentage, of the amount their property was sold/purchased for. In most states, a real estate agent must work under a brokerage.



REALTOR®

If you want to take one step further into the industry, consider joining the National Association of REALTORS® and becoming a REALTOR®. Taking the extra steps to become a REALTOR® indicates to buyers, sellers, and other real estate industry professionals that you have committed to provide a high level of professional service to your clients by securing a strong educational foundation.

The GRI designation is the mark of a real estate professional that has committed to provide a high level of professional services by securing a strong educational foundation. If you are still in the mindset to learn more about the industry, consider obtaining this valuable certification!



REAL ESTATE BROKER

Like agents, brokers assist with the sale, leasing, and purchase of real estate or real property. However, brokers have the unique opportunity to work independently or manage other agents.

A broker may specialize in retail property, investment property, farmland, businesses, industrial or medical facilities and dozens of other types of property.

Some brokers specialize in resort management or assist government agencies with redevelopment of industrial sites or reclamation of land. But, in many states, you are required to work in the real estate industry for a few years before you can become a broker. Still, this is a great goal to work towards. Additionally, brokers make more money than agents on average so this may be a great opportunity if you are interested in increasing your salary.



PROPERTY MANAGER

Once an investment property is purchased or developed, it needs to be managed. The property manager handles the day-to-day operations of a property. This includes staffing, contracting for services, repairs, maintenance, and leasing. Often property management is a salaried position. This gives a little more stability to those who are hesitant to work for commission.



REAL ESTATE APPRAISER



An appraiser's job involves developing an opinion of the market value or other value of real estate property. Almost all houses under contract or people looking to refinance need to undergo an appraisal. It is a great way to be active in the real estate field and get a consistent paycheck. Appraisers need to be experts in their market. If you feel like you are an expert in your area, an appraisal may be a great career for you to consider.



MORTGAGE BROKER & MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATOR

Mortgage loan originators work with loan processors and underwriters to create a home loan.

A mortgage loan originator typically works for a bank or mortgage lender and guides mortgage borrowers through the application process.

A mortgage originator helps people find the right type of loan and the best mortgage terms for their individual needs.



REAL ESTATE INVESTOR

Real estate investors invest in or purchase real estate that is used for income-generating purposes. Real estate investors will typically purchase a property and rent it out for a few years so the property can gain equity.

Investors will then sell the property when they can make a profit. The renters typically pay the amount of the monthly mortgage on the property. By the time it is time to sell the property, the seller makes a profit based on the equity gained from the past few years and the market's rising value.



REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY

A real estate attorney is licensed to practice real estate law. These attorneys have the knowledge and experience to advise the parties involved in a real estate transaction, such as a home sale.

In a home purchase transaction, both a buyer and seller can hire an attorney to represent their interests. Real estate attorneys typically make a six-figure salary.



REAL ESTATE JOBS

CHOOSING YOUR NICHE



When it comes to choosing what type of job you'd like in real estate, there are many niches to specialize in. Choosing a specialty will define your career and help you stand out in the industry.

When choosing which real estate specialty to pursue, remember that your interests and skillset are the top priority. While it may seem like choosing the easiest or most lucrative market is the best path, make sure your interests and skills align so that you not only make a high salary but also feel satisfied and fulfilled.

Here are a few real estate niches to consider if you choose to become an agent or broker:



RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE

These agents usually work with families or individuals looking for a home. The most common property types are single-family homes, condominiums, co-ops, townhouses, duplexes, triple-deckers, quadplexes, high-value homes, multi-generational and vacation homes.

CONSIDER THIS NICHE IF YOU:

Love working with people

Know how to find properties that suit different families or individuals

Are great at multi-tasking and working with multiple clients at once

Enjoy working in fast-paced environments



LUXURY REAL ESTATE

These agents usually work with ultra-wealthy individuals who have assets of \$30 million or more. They're among the world's wealthiest individuals, and it is difficult to break into this field of real estate without connections or a network already established.

CONSIDER THIS NICHE IF YOU:

Have connections who are looking for luxury properties

Understand what makes a home luxury

Love diving into the latest trends and following the top brands

Are comfortable working with ultra-wealthy clients



COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

These agents usually work with clients interested in purchasing business properties. These properties include shopping centers, strip malls, medical centers, educational buildings, hotels, offices, and apartment buildings.

CONSIDER THIS NICHE IF YOU:

- Enjoy working with businesses
- Have a thorough understanding of commercial property values and assets
- Have an eye for commercial real estate value
- Have a background in understanding the needs of businesses



INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE

These agents usually work with clients interested in purchasing property for manufacturing and warehouses. These properties are commonly used for research, production, storage, and distribution of goods. The main difference between Industrial and commercial properties is in the zoning of the property and the construction of the buildings.

CONSIDER THIS NICHE IF YOU:

- Understand the needs of industrial clients
- Can work to develop relationships within the industry
- Know how to assess an industrial client's needs
- Have an industrial background and connections
- Understand regulations and laws



LAND AND VACANT PROPERTY REAL ESTATE

These agents usually work with clients interested in purchasing land. These properties include vacant land, working farms, and ranches. Vacant land includes undeveloped, early development, reuse, subdivision, and site assembly parcels.

CONSIDER THIS NICHE IF YOU:

- Can see the potential in a blank plot of land
- Understand the farming industry
- Can help your clients see multiple possibilities
- Have thorough knowledge of property values within your area

WHAT TO EXPECT YOUR FIRST YEAR

IN REAL ESTATE



Every real estate professional's first year at their first real estate job is different. But there are certainly similar experiences that can be expected.

It is important that you find a brokerage that invests in your growth and continued education. Even though you completed some difficult real estate courses, you still have a lot to learn about being in the industry. Make sure you find an experienced mentor who can take the time to show you how the day-to-day business of how the industry is handled.

GROWING YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

A real estate career is made of the relationship you build. Your first years in the real estate industry will be defined by the success of your networking efforts. Your happy clients quickly become an expanding network of possibilities when they start referring you to their friends and families. It is important to establish positive working relationships with each client you meet.





DO NOT FORGET YOUR OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND GROW AS A REAL ESTATE LICENSEE



As a real estate professional, you are a life-long learner. There are many great educational opportunities available in the classroom or out in the market. It is important to remember that real estate professionals have certain requirements that need to be met to renew their licenses. Continuing Education (CE) courses are required education that must be taken to renew a license. The CE requirements vary in every state.

READY TO START YOUR NEW ADVENTURE?



Click the link below or scan the QR code to get started today!

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