THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY SELLER'S GUIDE

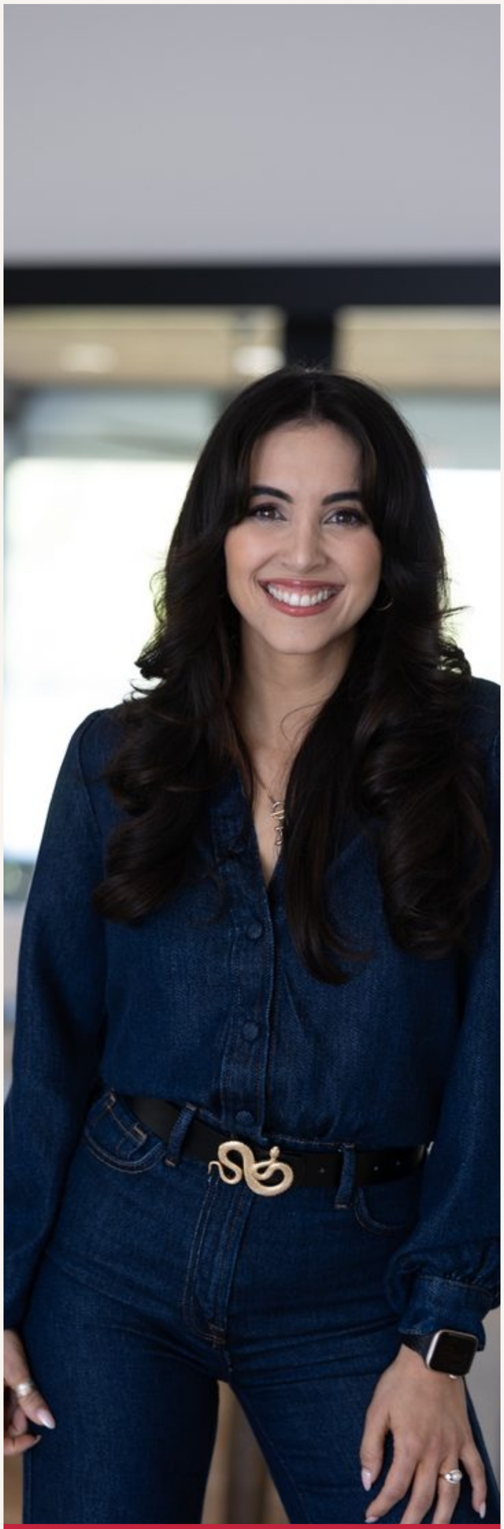
What Sellers Get Wrong: A Hill Country Seller's Guide

An honest guide for sellers in Austin & the Texas Hill Country

Presented by Jennifer Ferrara | Nook Realty | Austin, Texas

WELCOME

A Note from Jennifer


Jennifer Ferrara
Hill Country Real Estate Advisor

Selling a home is one of the biggest financial decisions you'll ever make. And in a market as dynamic as Austin and the Texas Hill Country, the difference between a great outcome and a frustrating one often comes down to a few critical decisions made before the sign ever goes in the yard.

I've guided hundreds of sellers through this market — from first-time sellers in Dripping Springs to move-up buyers in Westlake and retirees cashing out equity in Wimberley. And I see the same myths come up again and again. Pricing too high. Skipping staging. Trusting an online estimate. Thinking all agents are the same.

My name is Jennifer Ferrara — I'm the founder of Nook Realty, a Certified Home Marketing Specialist, and your Hill Country Real Estate Advisor. This guide is the same honest conversation I have with every seller before we list — so you can walk into this process with clear eyes and a real strategy.

One more thing: at the very end of this guide you'll find a complete Seller Closing Checklist — every item you need to cross off before, during, and on closing day. Print it. Use it. Thank yourself later.

Let's get your home sold — the right way.

Jennifer Ferrara

Founder, Nook Realty
Hill Country Real Estate Advisor

THE MARKET

What the Data Says About Selling Here

The Austin & Hill Country market rewards preparation and punishes mistakes

90%
of buyers start their search online

53%
fewer days on market with professional staging

6–13%
less earned by FSBO vs. agent-listed homes

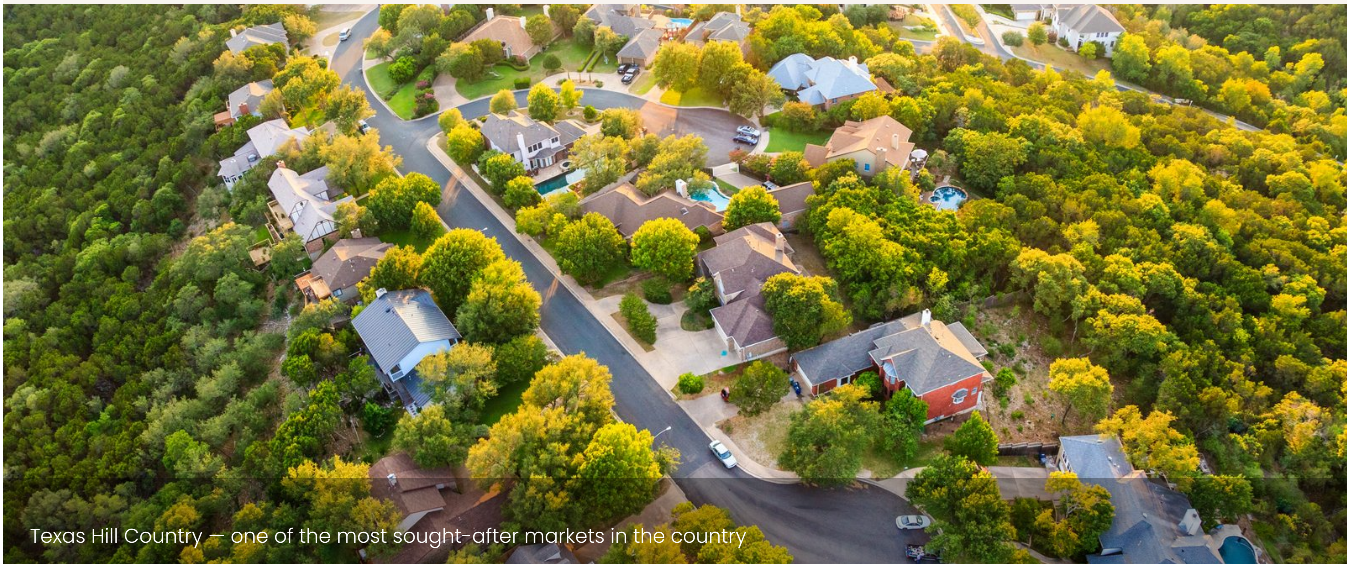
The Texas Hill Country — spanning Austin, Dripping Springs, Driftwood, Wimberley, Lakeway, Bee Cave, Westlake, Buda, and beyond — attracts buyers from across the country. That demand is real. But a hot market doesn't mean every listing sells well. Homes that are overpriced, under-marketed, or poorly presented can sit — and sitting costs sellers negotiating power with every passing day.

The Pricing Window

The first two weeks on market are your most powerful. Buyers are watching for new listings. An overpriced home misses this window and enters the dreaded "why has it been sitting?" conversation. Price right from day one.

The Presentation Premium

In Hill Country, where buyers are often relocating and deciding from photos before visiting in person, professional photography and staging are not optional — they are the listing. 90% of buyers search online first.



Texas Hill Country — one of the most sought-after markets in the country

5 Myths That Cost **Sellers** Real Money

01 Listing high gives us room to negotiate.

02 Staging is optional — buyers can use their imagination.

03 My Zestimate tells me what my house is worth.

04 I can sell it myself and skip the commission.

05 Any real estate agent will do.

"Listing high gives us room to negotiate."

This is the most expensive mistake a seller can make. The instinct makes sense: if I list at $750K, I have room to come down to $700K and still get what I want. But buyers don't work that way — and neither does the algorithm.

Buyers set search filters by price range. An overpriced listing gets filtered out before anyone even sees it. And the buyers who do see it assume something is wrong. The first two weeks on market are your golden window. Buyers, agents, and investors are all watching for new listings. Miss that window, and you're chasing the market downhill.

THE REALITY

The price reduction signal is worse than the original miss.

A price reduction publicly signals that you were overpriced — which tells every buyer to wait for the next drop. Homes that sit and reduce almost always net less than if they'd been priced correctly from day one. Pricing strategy is everything. Jennifer analyzes active competition, closed comps, and market demand signals to find the number that attracts the most buyers and produces the strongest offers.

JEN'S INSIGHT

I'd rather have three competing offers at the right price than sixty days on market followed by a price reduction. The data always shows that properly priced homes net more. Let's look at the comps together before we decide.

"Staging is optional — buyers can use their imagination."

Sellers often resist staging because it feels expensive and unnecessary. "Buyers can see past the clutter," or "we've lived here comfortably for years — it looks fine." But here's the reality: 90% of buyers start their search online. Your photos are your first showing. And most buyers cannot visualize an empty room or look past personal items and clutter to imagine how a space could feel.

Staging is not decorating. It's strategic presentation — designed to photograph well, feel spacious, and create the emotional reaction that triggers an offer.

THE REALITY

Staged homes sell faster and for measurably more money.

53% of seller's agents report staging decreases time on market. 83% of buyer's agents say staging makes it easier for buyers to visualize the property as their home. Staged homes consistently sell for closer to — or above — asking price, while vacant or cluttered homes invite lower offers. The cost of staging is almost always recovered in the first offer.

JEN'S INSIGHT

For occupied homes, staging doesn't mean moving out — it means curating. We'll identify what to store, what to rearrange, and what to add. For vacant homes, Nook coordinates full furniture staging. Either way, we handle it so you don't have to.

"My Zestimate tells me what my house is worth."

03

Automated valuation models like Zillow's Zestimate are convenient. They're also regularly wrong — sometimes by 10, 20, even 30% in the Texas Hill Country, where lot sizes, views, custom finishes, and rural characteristics make algorithmic comparisons unreliable.

Zillow has no idea you replaced your roof in 2023, installed a pool, renovated your kitchen, or back up to a greenbelt. It doesn't know your HOA, your ISD, or your water situation. And it certainly doesn't know what buyers are actually offering right now in your specific neighborhood — which is ultimately the only thing that matters.

THE REALITY

Market value is what a real buyer will pay today — not an algorithm's estimate.

A true market analysis looks at active competition (what buyers see right now), recent closed sales (what buyers have actually paid), and days on market trends (how the market is moving). This is the analysis Jennifer prepares for every seller — tailored to your specific home, your specific street, and today's buyer behavior. No algorithm can replicate this.

JEN'S INSIGHT

I've seen Zestimates come in $80,000 above and $60,000 below true market value on the same street. Never list — or decide not to list — based on an automated estimate alone. Let's look at what the market is actually saying.

"I can sell it myself and save on commission."

FSBO — For Sale By Owner — is one of the oldest myths in real estate. The appeal is obvious: skip the commission, keep more money. But the data consistently tells a different story.

FSBO homes sell for an average of 6-13% less than agent-listed properties. They sit longer, attract fewer qualified buyers, and expose sellers to significantly more legal and contractual risk. Meanwhile, sellers are managing showings, fielding calls from unqualified buyers, negotiating directly, and navigating a complex transaction without professional guidance.

THE REALITY

The commission almost always comes back in higher net proceeds.

A skilled listing agent brings: maximum buyer exposure across MLS and syndication networks, professional photography and staging that drives higher offers, expert negotiation on price and terms, and transaction management through contract, inspection, appraisal, and close. The agent who knows how to position, market, and negotiate your home typically earns their fee many times over in the final sale price.

JEN'S INSIGHT

The most common thing I hear after a FSBO attempt: "I wish I'd called you first." The savings feel real until you've sat on the market for 90 days or accepted an offer $40,000 below what your neighbors got with proper marketing. Let's run the numbers.

"Any real estate agent will do."

Real estate is one of the few industries where you can have two licensed professionals in the same city, serving the same market, with outcomes that differ by tens of thousands of dollars and months of unnecessary market time.

The gap between a high-performing listing agent and an average one is not just about personality or connections. It's about marketing reach, staging expertise, pricing strategy, negotiation skill, and the relationships that move transactions forward when complications arise. All of this directly impacts your bottom line.

THE REALITY

Who you hire to list your home is a financial decision — treat it like one.

Nook Realty's listing approach includes: professional staging coordination, cutting-edge photography and video, MLS + global syndication, targeted social media, luxury market exposure via Mansion Global, off-market blast to top-producing agents in major feeder cities, and Jennifer's direct negotiation expertise. Ask your agent what's specifically included in their marketing plan. The answer tells you everything.

JEN'S INSIGHT

Interview at least two agents before signing a listing agreement. Ask to see their marketing plan, their list-to-sale price ratio, and their average days on market. The right agent will be able to show you results — not just tell you about them.

THE NOOK PROCESS

Jennifer's 7-Step Listing Approach

From strategy to sold — backed by a full team with a dedicated Director of Operations

01 Strategy & Pricing Session

We analyze your home against active competition, recent closed sales, and current buyer demand signals to set a price designed to attract the most offers. No Zestimate guessing — real data.

02 Pre-Listing Prep & Vendor Management

Our Director of Operations coordinates all pre-listing work: repairs, staging, cleaning, and inspections. Nook's vendor network means preferred pricing and zero scheduling headaches.

03 Professional Staging & Photography

We partner with top-tier staging and production teams. Photography, cinematic video, drone footage, and social reels ensure your home looks stunning on every screen.

04 Launch & Multi-Channel Marketing

Zillow Showcase listing, MLS, Realtor.com, Meta Ads (Facebook & Instagram), local Facebook market campaigns, luxury syndication via Mansion Global, and off-market outreach to 100+ top agents in major feeder cities — all coordinated from day one.

05 Off-Market & Pre-Launch Strategy

Before hitting MLS, we build pre-launch buzz through our agent network and off-market outreach. This generates early buyer interest and can produce strong offers before the home even officially goes live.

06 Showings, Offers & Negotiation

We manage all showing logistics, collect real-time buyer feedback, and negotiate every offer with your net proceeds as the goal — not just the headline price.

07 Contract to Close & Beyond

Our team manages the transaction through title, appraisal, inspections, and closing. After you sign, you're still part of the Nook family.

MARKETING SUITE

How Nook Gets Your Home in Front of Every Buyer

Most agents list on MLS and hope. We run a full multi-channel campaign from day one.

53%
fewer days on market with professional staging

83%
of buyers' agents say staging helps close the deal

90%
of buyers start their home search online

FEATURED

Zillow Showcase

Premium Zillow placement with enhanced photo display, interactive floor plans, and boosted search visibility — seen by millions of buyers before any other listing.

VISUAL

Professional Photography & Video

HDR photography, cinematic video walkthrough, aerial drone footage, and 3D Matterport virtual tour. Your first showing is online — make it count.

PAID SOCIAL

Meta Ads & Local Facebook Market Campaigns

Targeted Facebook & Instagram paid campaigns reach buyers by zip code, income, and home-search behavior. Local market campaigns build neighborhood-level buzz.

PRE-LAUNCH

Off-Market & Pre-Launch Outreach

Before MLS goes live, we blast your home to our agent network and buyer database. Pre-launch demand builds urgency and can produce strong offers on day one.

NATIONAL

MLS + National Syndication

Full MLS listing syndicated to Zillow, Realtor.com, Homes.com, and 100+ portals so every active buyer finds your home wherever they're searching.

GLOBAL

Luxury & Global Syndication

Mansion Global, international luxury portals, and an off-market email blast to the top 100 agents in major feeder cities. Global buyers are real buyers.

PRINT

Print & Property Brochures

Professionally designed, high-quality printed materials that make your home unforgettable in-hand — quality that immediately signals premium positioning.

NETWORK

Broker's Open Events

Exclusive agent-only showings that generate buzz among top buyer's agents before the public launch. Agent referrals move homes faster.

Backed by a Full Team

Nook Realty operates with a dedicated Director of Operations, marketing specialist, expert copywriter, and listings coordinator — so every detail of your sale is managed by professionals, not left to chance.

PRICING STRATEGY

How We Price Your Home to Win

Comps matter — but they don't tell the whole story

Your home's list price is the single most consequential decision in the entire selling process. Too high, and you miss the critical first-impression window. Too low, and you leave money on the table. At Nook Realty, we use a layered approach that goes far beyond pulling comparable sales.

How We Price Your Home

Active competition

What buyers are seeing right now — your true competition.

Recent closed sales

What buyers have actually paid, not just listed for.

Days on market trends

How long homes like yours are taking to sell.

Price-per-sq-ft

By neighborhood, finish level, and lot size.

Unique property features

Views, pools, acreage — things comps can't capture.

Buyer demand signals

Showing activity, offer patterns, rate context.

The Two Pricing Danger Zones

OVERPRICED

Misses the critical first-two-week window. Buyers think something is wrong. Price reductions signal desperation — and every reduction invites lower offers. Homes that sit lose negotiating power with every passing day.

UNDERPRICED

Leaves equity on the table that belongs to you. While multiple offers can push price up, it's not guaranteed. Starting too low anchors buyer expectations and can permanently cap the final number.

THE SWEET SPOT

A home priced at fair market value — supported by data and positioned against current competition — attracts the most buyers, generates the most showing activity, and produces the strongest offers. This is exactly where we aim to be on day one.

APPRAISAL

What Sellers Get Wrong About Appraisals

Understanding appraisals protects your deal and your net proceeds

Most sellers understand that a buyer's lender will order an appraisal. What many don't understand is how much they can influence the outcome — and how a low appraisal can threaten a transaction they thought was closed.

What an Appraisal Actually Is

An appraiser — hired by the buyer's lender — visits your home and produces an independent value estimate. If the value comes in below the purchase price, the lender will only finance the lower number. The buyer must then make up the gap in cash, negotiate a reduction, or walk away. Sellers should never be blindsided by this.

How to Support a Strong Appraisal

- Provide a written list of all upgrades with approximate costs
- Note renovations: kitchen, baths, flooring, roof, HVAC, windows
- Highlight features that don't show in photos: views, lot, water
- Keep the home clean and fully accessible for the appraiser visit
- Ask Jennifer to share supporting comp data with the appraiser
- Flag unique characteristics: custom finishes, specialty materials

What Sellers Get Wrong

Assuming price = value

A buyer agreeing to pay $750K doesn't mean an appraiser will confirm it.

Not providing upgrade lists

Appraisers can miss $30-50K in improvements if not documented.

Ignoring low-appraisal options

You can dispute the value, renegotiate price, or require the buyer to cover the gap.

Confusing tax value with market value

Tax assessed values can be significantly out of sync with true market value.

JEN'S INSIGHT

If your appraisal comes in low, you have options: request a reconsideration of value with supporting comps, renegotiate the purchase price, or hold firm if you have a backup offer. Jennifer has navigated appraisal gaps on both sides of the table.

What You'll Actually Walk Away With

Know concessions, closing costs, and net proceeds before you list

The most common surprise for sellers is the gap between their list price and the check at closing. Knowing what to expect — and what's negotiable — gives you real power when evaluating offers.

TYPICAL SELLER COSTS

- Real estate commission (both sides)
- Title insurance — seller's policy
- Texas escrow / closing fees
- Property taxes (prorated to close date)
- HOA transfer fees (if applicable)
- Payoff of existing mortgage(s)
- Agreed-upon repair credits

WHAT BUYERS MAY ASK FOR

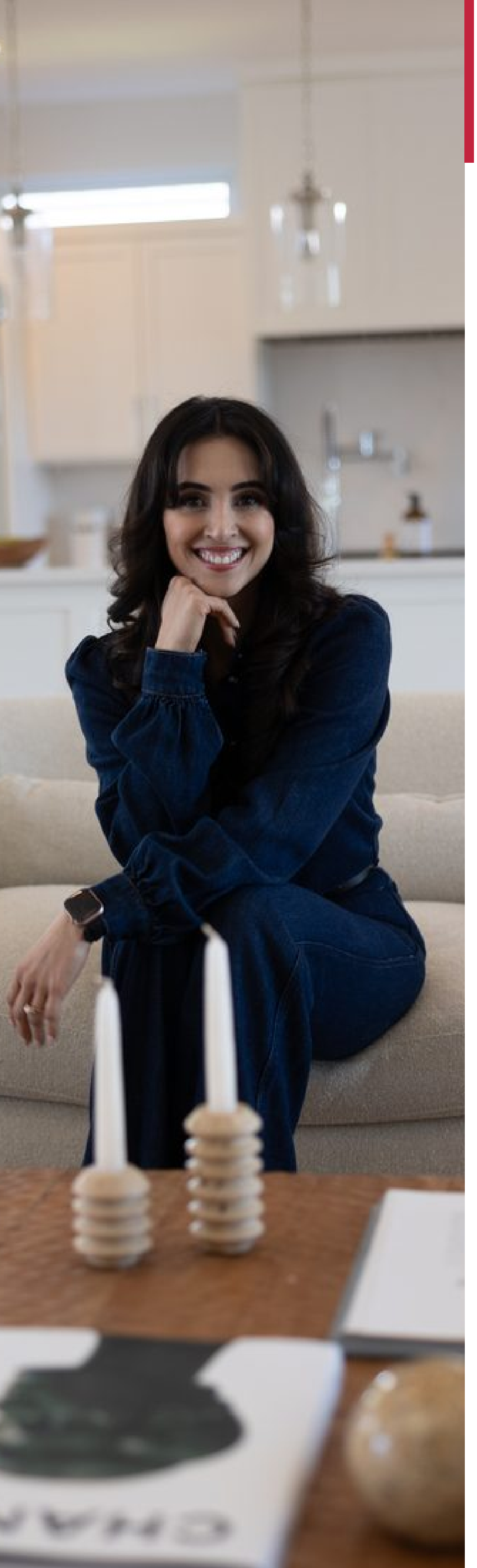
- Closing cost assistance (1-3% of price)
- Rate buydown contribution
- Home warranty ($500-700 typical)
- Inspection repair credits
- Survey cost (if new survey required)
- Temporary interest rate buydown

HOW TO EVALUATE OFFERS

- Net proceeds = the only number that matters
- Higher offer + big concessions may net less
- Cash: fewer contingencies, faster close
- Financing type affects transaction risk
- Closing timeline: your schedule matters
- Escalation clauses: understand the ceiling

CALCULATING YOUR NET PROCEEDS

Before you list, Jennifer will prepare a Seller's Net Sheet — a detailed breakdown of estimated proceeds based on your target price, mortgage payoff, typical closing costs, and any concessions. This is the number that drives every decision. Not the list price. Not the Zestimate. Your net.



Jennifer Ferrara

Founder · Hill Country Advisor

YOUR HILL COUNTRY ADVISOR

Get to Know Jennifer.

Jennifer Ferrara is recognized as one of Austin's most respected real estate professionals, known for pairing deep market expertise with an authentic, relationship-driven approach. As the founder of Nook Realty and your Hill Country Real Estate Advisor, she has built a brand rooted in trust, strategy, and results.

With over $60 million in career production, Jennifer specializes in Austin and the Texas Hill Country — including Dripping Springs, Driftwood, Lakeway, Bee Cave, Westlake, Wimberley, and Buda. A Certified Home Marketing Specialist and Accredited Luxury Homes Specialist, Jennifer brings expert staging strategy, sharp negotiation, and a seamless listing experience from first call to closing table.

CERTIFICATIONS & SPECIALIZATIONS

- Certified Home Marketing Specialist (CHMS)
- Accredited Luxury Homes Specialist (ALHS)
- Austin & Texas Hill Country Expert
- Luxury Syndication & Global Marketing
- Digital Marketing, Photography & Social Media Strategy

> "*Every person becomes a friend, an extension of family. It's never just a transaction.*

A Local at Heart

Living and working in the heart of the Hill Country, Jennifer is a self-proclaimed foodie and avid pickleball enthusiast — deeply connected to the neighborhoods and communities she serves.

List With Jennifer

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nookrealtygroup.com

Austin, Texas · Nook Realty

CLOSING CHECKLIST

Seller Closing Checklist

Print this and check off each item — Part 1 of 2

1. Property Condition (Before Final Walkthrough)

- [ ] Remove all personal belongings (full trash out)
- [ ] Vacuum and/or sweep all floors
- [ ] Wipe down all surfaces (kitchen, bathrooms, counters)
- [ ] Ensure all appliances included in the sale remain
- [ ] Remove all trash from home, garage, and yard
- [ ] Lawn is maintained — mowed, not overgrown

2. Systems Check (Day Before Closing)

- [ ] All lights and fixtures functioning
- [ ] Toilets flushed and working properly
- [ ] Sinks and showers running correctly (no major leaks)
- [ ] HVAC system operational
- [ ] Garage doors and openers working
- [ ] Leave all remotes (garage, fans, etc.)

3. Utilities & Services

- [ ] Keep electricity, water, and gas active through closing date
- [ ] Cancel internet/cable effective the day after closing
- [ ] Cancel trash service effective the day after closing
- [ ] Notify HOA of sale (if required)
- [ ] Cancel any HOA auto-pay after closing

4. Insurance & Accounts

- [ ] Cancel homeowner's insurance only after closing is complete
- [ ] Settle any outstanding utility balances before closing
- [ ] Ensure no active service contracts remain tied to the home (unless transferring to buyer)

Seller Closing Checklist

Part 2 of 2 · jennifer@nookrealtygroup.com · 1-512-960-2058

5. Keys, Access & Items Left Behind

- [ ] Leave all house keys
- [ ] Leave mailbox keys
- [ ] Leave garage remotes
- [ ] Leave gate / pool / amenity access keys
- [ ] Leave appliance manuals or warranties (if available)

6. Final Walkthrough Expectations

- [ ] Buyers typically complete walkthrough 24–48 hours before closing
- [ ] Home must be fully vacated (unless otherwise agreed)
- [ ] Home must be clean and broom-swept at minimum
- [ ] Condition must match the state at time of contract
- [ ] No new damage should be present

7. Day of Closing

- [ ] Ensure all remaining items have been removed
- [ ] Double-check closets, garage, attic, and cabinets
- [ ] Confirm all utilities are still on
- [ ] Lock all doors when leaving for the last time

8. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- [ ] Turning off utilities before closing is complete
- [ ] Leaving trash or unwanted items behind
- [ ] Forgetting to leave keys and remotes
- [ ] Last-minute damage left unaddressed
- [ ] Canceling homeowner's insurance before closing is final

Ready to List Your Home the Right Way?

In a free strategy call, Jennifer will walk you through your home's current market value, a customized pricing recommendation, and exactly what Nook Realty will do to maximize your sale price and protect your net proceeds.

Book a Free Listing Strategy Call

30 minutes · No pressure · Pricing, staging, and marketing strategy included

nookrealtygroup.com · jennifer@nookrealtygroup.com

$60M+ in career closings

Certified Home Marketing Specialist

Hill Country specialist