



Become a REALTOR®



Become a REALTOR®

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Victoria Real Estate
Board

Work in real estate

Work in the real estate business can be a rewarding career, but there are no guarantees in this service-based business. As a real estate agent, you'll rely on your skills to develop a client base and to complete sales. And as an agent whose income will be based on commission, your income will be unpredictable - there will be no regular paycheques. Before you dive in, it's important to evaluate your aptitude for the work required to run your own business, as well as the education and licensing required by the industry.



Before you make a decision to start your career in real estate, consider the time, money and effort you'll need to get started. This booklet will help you understand what work is required to enter the business and to make sure your expectations about a career in real estate are realistic.

The rewards

1. You can make a good living

Start with a smart business plan, an enthusiastic work ethic and a solid budget, and you can make a good living.

2. You build relationships that last

The rewards of a career in real estate are not limited to financial – the sense of satisfaction you get when you help someone through the experience of buying a house or selling a home can be a reward in itself. Some relationships may grow with your career and open new opportunities.

3. Every day is different

The pace of the real estate market, along with the unique demands of your customers, marketing yourself and running your own business means that every day can be different. This could mean that one day you tour properties with a client and the next day stay in the office to do paperwork.

Are your expectations realistic?

1. Real estate agents make a lot of money in commission and don't have a lot of expenses

Not true! In the real estate business you may work under a brokerage, but you are an independent business owner. Like all business owners, you'll pay expenses from your revenue. Your expenses may include special technology, marketing yourself and your listings, signage, websites, professional fees and more.

2. Real estate services are all the same

As a real estate agent you will provide a service to your clients. This means there are many viable business models. Under the *Competition Act of Canada*, a real estate professional is free to negotiate the amount and structure of their commission with their client. You can craft your service offerings to match the market you wish to serve.

3. A career in real estate allows you to set your own schedule

In theory, this is true. In real life, it can be a different story. In most cases you will work around your client's schedule. This could mean you'll need to write up an offer late at night or show homes on Saturdays and Sundays. Setting your own schedule may mean you have to pass on certain clients or business.

Realty reality check

- You may work hard and your client may decide not to buy or sell. This often means you will make no income for the work you have done including any marketing you have arranged.
- A sale isn't done until all conditions have been removed and the transaction is complete. There are many moving parts to a real estate transaction, and many deals do not complete successfully, regardless of how solid your own work was.
- Not all commissions are equal. Some sales require a lot of time and hard work to earn a small amount and some sales will take less of your time and effort and earn you more.

Real life real estate



Arlene's story

A mother of two young children, Arlene decided to look for a career to match her lifestyle and leave more opportunity during the day to spend with her kids. She chose real estate for the flexibility of hours – now she can work from her home office and be home for her children. Arlene's husband's work provides the family's medical benefits and a pension plan.

Arlene studied weeknights and weekends and took one year to enter the industry and work with her first clients.

Trevor's story

Trevor completed his college education and committed to full-time studies in the real estate industry. He saved start-up costs and put enough money in the bank for six months of living expenses. Trevor worked with a friend who wanted to purchase a home, and with the help of his new brokerage completed his first sale four months after he was licenced. Trevor also chose to kickstart his networking and joined the local real estate board as a volunteer committee member. The committee provides Trevor the opportunity to learn more about the business from long term professionals.

John's story

John was ready for a new career and decided to opt for an early retirement from his job with the government. A divorced Dad with two teenaged children, John studied in his spare time and continued to work at his government job. He made sure he had one year of living expenses set aside to cover his financial needs and his business start-up costs.

John left his government job in December and had his first clients by June.



Are you ready?

A career in real estate is not just a job, it's a lifestyle. You'll be a professional who operates your own business. Like any business, yours will require a commitment of time, energy and money. Before you make the commitment, consider what you'll need to get started.

Financial Commitment:

- \$4,000 or more to pay for your initial education, licensing, insurance and any membership fees
- A recommended minimum of six months living expenses to support you during your business start-up phase
- Money for taxes, business cards, website and other promotional materials
- Brokerage fees

Personal Commitment:

- Are you leaving a job with benefits and a pension?
- If you have a spouse, do they have benefits (medical, extended health, dental etc.) that will cover your family's needs?
- How will you adapt to a small business that requires you to work evenings and weekends?
- Does a career change now support your long term goals, which may include a plan for retirement?
- What steps will you take to leave your current job and start your career in real estate?

Required reading

In order to represent a client in a real estate transaction (buying or selling), you must be licenced with the BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA).

The BCFSA is a regulatory agency established by government. Its mandate is to protect public interest by enforcing the licensing and licensee conduct requirements of the *Real Estate Services Act*. The BCFSA licenses individuals and brokerages engaged in real estate sales, rental and strata property management. It also enforces entry qualification, investigates complaints against licensees and imposes disciplinary sanctions under the *Act*.

Research the industry

Talk to your local real estate board

Your local real estate board will be your best resource if you choose to work in Organized Real Estate, as most real estate agents do. As a member of Organized Real Estate, national, provincial and regional associations provide you support, access to [REALTOR.ca](https://www.realtor.ca) and the locally operated Multiple Listing Service®. They ensure standard business practices are followed, maintain professional standards within the community and promote the local real estate industry.

Questions to ask your local real estate board:

- What are the membership fees at the board?
- How will I be billed?
- What services will the board provide to me?

Talk to property owners

Survey people you know to learn about their experience when buying and selling real estate. Ask them:

- Why they chose the real estate agent they used
- Why they decided to purchase or sell their home
- What the hardest part of their real estate transaction was
- What they would change next time they buy or sell

What else?

- Go on open house tours
- Get to know your product – single family homes, condos, etc
- Talk to locals involved in real estate, property development and management
- Do research online at [REALTOR.ca](https://www.realtor.ca)
- Write a business plan
- Read the FAQ page at BC Financial Services Authority [bcfsa.ca](https://www.bcfra.ca)





Budget guide

This guide intends to provide you with an overview of costs associated with being a real estate agent in British Columbia.

Please **note that all fees are subject to change at any time**, and you may not be required to pay all fees. There may be additional taxes. Check the British Columbia Real Estate Association's website for their *Want to Be a Realtor* guide to start-up costs at bcrea.bc.ca

Start Up Costs

Licensing & Pre-Licensing Fees

Fees are payable directly to the organizations noted.

Real Estate Trading Services Licensing Course UBC Sauder School of Business, Pre-licensing Course		\$1150	
Residential Trading Services Applied Practice Course BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA)		\$875 (+ \$43.75 GST)	
Licensing, Insurance Fees & Assessments			
One of...	New or Rejoin	BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) Licensing Application - or -	\$2000*
	Renewal, every second year	BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) Ongoing Licensing	\$1650*

* Includes all BCFSA fees, Errors & Omissions Insurance, Real Estate Special Compensation Fund

Initiation Fees

The following initiation fees are payable to the Victoria Real Estate Board.

Victoria Real Estate Board (VREB) New Member Initiation Fee This fee is payable if you are joining the VREB for the first time, or if you are returning to VREB following an absence of two years or more, this fee is reduced to \$300+tax.	\$800 (+ \$40.00 GST)
British Columbia Real Estate Association (BCREA) New Member Initiation This fee is payable if you are joining BCREA for the first time, or if you have not paid BCREA dues for a period of 12 calendar months or more the reinstatement fee is \$495 + tax.	\$895 (+ \$44.75 GST)
Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) New Member Initiation Fee This fee is payable if you are joining CREA for the first time, or if you have not paid CREA dues for a period of 24 calendar months or more.	\$200 (+ \$10.00 GST)

Annual Membership Dues

Annual Membership dues are billed monthly with the Monthly Membership Service Fee

British Columbia Real Estate Association (BCREA) Annual Dues	\$204 (+ \$10.20 GST)
Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) Annual Dues	\$310 (+ \$15.50 GST)

VREB Fees

These fees are billed through the Licensee's Firm. The individual Licensee is responsible for paying the dues to the Board.

Monthly Membership Service Fee	\$130 (+ \$6.50 GST)
MLS® Listing Fee	\$50 (+ \$2.50 GST)
MLS® Sales Fee	\$50 (+ \$2.50 GST)

Next Steps

Here are the steps you'll take to obtain your Trading Services (Sales) Licence and Realtor designation and start your career in real estate! Note that you must be over 19 years of age to receive your licence, and be of good reputation per the BCFSa definition (find out more on their website).

1. Satisfy the [Language Proficiency Requirement](#). As of September 1, 2017, the BCFSa requires students enrolled in real estate licensing courses to demonstrate their proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening in English by passing the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program General test (CELPIP). Find out more on the BCFSa website.
2. Register for the [Real Estate Trading Services Licensing Course](#). The course requires a minimum of ten weeks commitment, and maximum of one year.
3. Once you complete the Real Estate Trading Services course and before you apply for your licence, obtain a [criminal record check](#).
4. Before you apply for your licence, register in the [Residential Trading Services Applied Practice Course](#) or the [Commercial Trading Services Applied Practice Course](#) delivered by the BC Financial Services Authority. This course is a requirement for licensing.
5. Once you have registered in the Applied Practice Course and have your criminal record check, apply to the BC Financial Services Authority for licensing. The managing broker of your chosen brokerage will help you complete the form.
6. If your brokerage is a member of Organized Real Estate, and therefore a member of the local real estate board, apply to the Canadian Real Estate Association to become a Realtor. Not all real estate trading services licencees are Realtors, but to be classified as a Realtor, you must be a member of a real estate board and are therefore a member of the provincial association (British Columbia Real Estate Association in BC) and the Canadian Real Estate Association. Realtors must adhere to a Code of Ethics (see page 10).





Why Realtor not just agent?

The word Realtor is trademarked by the Canadian Real Estate Association. The Canadian Real Estate Association is an integral part of Organized Real Estate in Canada. When you join the Canadian Real Estate Association, you also join your provincial and local associations. But first, in order to become a member of Organized Real Estate, you must be licenced by the BC Financial Services Authority (per page 8 of this booklet).

Every Realtor is a licenced real estate agent, but not every licenced real estate agent is a Realtor.

The benefits of being a Realtor in Organized Real Estate:

- Access to the Multiple Listing Service® (MLS®) and REALTOR.ca
- Professional standards and business practices
- Access to standard legal contracts and other documents
- Standardized education and opportunities for continuing education
- Access to industry statistics, newsletters and other industry communications
- Marketing and technology tools
- Arbitration services
- Networking opportunities
- Industry-specific software and technology
- CREA® intranet access
- Electronic LockBox systems

...and more.

Organized Real Estate

Canadian Organized Real Estate operates on three levels - the national level, provincial (or territorial) level and the local level. As a Realtor you will have membership with and receive services from all three levels.



The Realtor Code

The Canadian Real Estate Association's Realtor Code of Ethics is recognized by Realtors and consumers as the measure of professionalism in real estate. The Realtor Code defines the standard of performance the public can expect from those in the real estate business registered to display the Realtor trademark.

Realtors accept a personal obligation to the public and to their profession. The Code of Ethics of The Canadian Real Estate Association embodies these obligations. Realtors commit to:

- Professional competent service
- Absolute honesty and integrity in business dealings
- Co-operation with and fairness to all
- Personal accountability through compliance with the Canadian Real Estate Association's Standards of Business Practice

To meet their obligations, Realtors pledge to observe the spirit of the Code in all of their activities and conduct their business in accordance with the Standards of Business Practice and the Golden Rule - do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

How to choose a real estate brokerage

In order to complete your education and obtain your real estate licence in BC, you must be licenced by the BC Financial Services Authority and be engaged by a real estate brokerage.

A managing broker isn't your boss, but you'll need to adhere to the brokerage's policies. When you start to assess brokerages, you'll likely want to consider brokerages in the area you intend to build your business. Talk to managing brokers at several brokerages to find one with a fee structure and work environment that best suits you. Each brokerage has its own way of operating, so it's a good idea to ask each of them what makes them different from the others. A phone call or email to brokerages is a good first approach.

Questions to ask:

- What are your brokerage start up fees? Are there ongoing fees?
- What should I budget for desk fees?
- Does your brokerage offer mentorships or training opportunities?
- Will I have access to administrative support or will I need to hire my own help when the time comes?
- Does the brokerage have policies concerning commission or compensation?
- What support do you offer new Realtors?

When you apply to the BCFSA for your licence, you'll need to provide the name of the brokerage with which you intend to work and that brokerage will retain your licence. You may change brokerages at any time after you are licenced, but the BCFSA will need to be informed so they can amend your licence.

You cannot conduct any real estate business unless you are engaged by a brokerage and any business that you do conduct must be done in the name of and on behalf of your brokerage with which you are engaged.



Successful Realtors are:



Ethical
Patient
Flexible
Organized
Ambitious
Community builder
Self-motivated

Persistent
Generous
Practical
Service-oriented
Passionate
Dedicated



Online resources

- British Columbia Real Estate Association > bcrea.bc.ca
- Canadian Real Estate Association > crea.ca
- BC Financial Services Authority > bcfsa.ca
- Real Estate Services Act > leg.bc.ca
- University of British Columbia, Sauder School of Business, Real Estate Division > realestate.ubc.ca
- Victoria Real Estate Board > vreb.org

Victoria Real Estate Board

The Victoria Real Estate Board is an association of Realtors in the Greater Victoria area of British Columbia. The Board was founded in 1921 and since that time has been a key player in the development of standards and innovative programs to enhance the professionalism and community standing of realtors. Formation of the Board grew out of a need to establish basic standards for those working in the real estate industry.

The Victoria Real Estate Board is one of eight boards throughout British Columbia. The area served by the Board includes Greater Victoria from Sooke to Sidney, up Vancouver Island as far as Cherry Point Road in Cobble Hill and the Gulf Islands. Membership is voluntary. In addition to operating the Multiple Listing Service® within the area, the Board provides membership services such as information, software, education and Realtor resources and materials.

Mission Statement

The Victoria Real Estate Board makes good Realtors better.

Our Values

Progressive

The Board is an innovative organization, able to flex to meet the emerging requirements of the membership and organized real estate

Responsible

The Board is a steward of the industry, and manages all affairs in an ethically and fiscally responsible manner

Approachable

The Board welcomes diverse perspectives to ensure a positive experience for all Members

Engaged

Members have a sense of ownership of the Board

Collaborative

Directors and staff work together in service of Members





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VICTORIA
REAL ESTATE
BOARD

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Build your
career in
real estate