Driving for Dollars: From Distressed Property to Profitable Deal

South Florida edition • October 2026

Find 10 properties. Establish the facts. Build a respectful path to a possible deal.

What you will learn

Driving for dollars is a field research process: select a defined area, notice properties that may need attention, document what is visible from public space, and investigate before contacting an owner. A neglected exterior is a reason to ask better questions. It does not establish financial hardship, vacancy, willingness to sell, or investment value.

This guide takes you from a manageable farm area to a researched batch of exactly 10 addresses, then through ownership verification, outreach, follow-up, and underwriting. Your first success is a complete, accurate batch with a decision for every property. An offer or closing may follow; neither is promised.

Framework	Deliverable
Level 1 — Spot It	Exactly 10 unique addresses, public-view photos, dated observations and parcel matches.
Level 2 — Research It Thoroughly	A property file separating observed conditions, verified records, suspected explanations and unknowns.
Level 3 — Work the Lead	A lawful contact path, score, next action, follow-up date and disciplined deal analysis.

How to use this guide

Read the field and research sections first. Use the accompanying Driving for Dollars Excel Workbook and Workbook Quick Start Guide to document each batch. Complete the research and assign a next action or closed-out reason to all 10 before starting another batch. Optional printable worksheets are available as a separate download. Keep the research directory handy, and record the date and source behind every material finding. Consistency matters more than volume.

Inside

Pages 2–3: farm selection and fieldwork • Pages 4–6: property research and South Florida records • Pages 7–10: owner research, outreach, scoring and follow-up • Pages 11–12: underwriting and worked example • Page 13: Excel workbook and companion downloads • Pages 14–15: sources and tool directory.

Educational material for investors. Before a transaction or outreach campaign, obtain advice suited to the property, channel and circumstances from qualified Florida professionals. “Profitable deal” describes the objective, not a guaranteed result. Sources and product features were checked October 11, 2026; recheck before use.

1 Choose a farm you can understand

A farm is a bounded area you can revisit and research consistently. Start with a few adjacent subdivisions or a compact set of streets rather than an entire county. Boundaries should reflect travel time, housing type, comparable sales and your actual buying capacity.

Define your buy box before you drive

Define your buy box, or purchase criteria: county and municipality, property type, budget, likely exit, maximum repair scope and financing limits. A beginner who can fund a modest single-family renovation should not build a batch around unsafe structures, major redevelopment, or complex condominium projects simply because they look distressed.

Selection test	Practical check
Comparable sales	Can you locate recent closed sales with similar use, size, condition and location? Separate renovated sales from dated homes.
Exit demand	Who would buy or rent the finished property? Check competing supply, realistic rents and time to sell with a local professional.
Cost and complexity	Can your budget support repairs, permits, insurance and carrying costs here? Identify coastal, flood, association and historic restrictions.
Repeatable access	Can you drive public roads in daylight and park legally? Avoid restricted communities unless you have permission.
Research coverage	Identify the municipality or unincorporated area and its building, zoning and code offices before collecting leads.

Map a route that produces useful coverage

Mark boundaries, number streets in a simple loop, and note completed blocks so you avoid repetitive driving. Plan safe stopping points. Keep the driving session short enough to leave time for research afterward. A passenger can document observations while the driver focuses on the road. When alone, stop and park legally before using a device.

If you do not find 10 sound candidates, finish the batch on another safe outing. Do not pad it with duplicate parcels or unsuitable properties. Once you reach 10, stop adding addresses and begin research. If a candidate later proves unsuitable, retain its record and mark it “closed out”; do not erase the result to make the batch look better.

Set a weekly rhythm

Example cadence: one field session, two research blocks, one outreach block, and one review block. This is a scheduling example, not a quota. Reserve time for previously promised follow-ups before starting new work. Complete all 10 research files and assign each a next action or reason for closing it out before opening the next batch.

Track effort as well as results: hours driving, miles, research hours, mailing and data costs, verified owner matches, replies, appointments, offers and closings. Calculate your own cost per qualified conversation over time. A single batch is too small to establish a reliable conversion rate.

2 Level 1 Spot It

Field safety comes first

Use daylight, check weather, carry water and a charged phone, and share your route with someone you trust. Do not make abrupt stops, block driveways, stand in traffic, or enter storm-damaged areas. Leave if anyone is uncomfortable or conditions feel unsafe. Do not enter lots, yards, porches, fenced areas or buildings without permission. Do not peer into windows, touch meters, open mailboxes, retrieve mail, or test doors. A house that looks empty may be occupied.

Notice conditions without inventing a story

Public-view observation	Possible explanation to investigate
Tall grass or heavy overgrowth	Deferred maintenance, seasonal absence, landscaping dispute or intentional planting.
Roof tarp, missing shingles or exterior damage	Storm repair, insurance delay or ongoing construction; interior damage remains unknown.
Boarded or broken windows	Security measure, permitted work, damage or vacancy; no conclusion about ownership or hardship.
Debris, deteriorated paint or stopped work	Maintenance or permit issue; estimate scope only after authorized inspection.
Visible posted notice	Record only what is readable from public space; verify the case and present status with the issuing agency.
Apparent lack of activity	A reason for research, not proof of vacancy. Avoid photographing people or monitoring their routines.

Do not infer age, health, income, family circumstances or willingness to sell from appearance. Avoid selecting or excluding areas based on residents' protected characteristics. Use property and market criteria.

Capture exactly 10 complete records

Give each candidate a batch ID and a number from 01 to 10. Record the full street address, unit if applicable, city, ZIP, date, time, and the specific visible condition. Confirm the address against a map and later the parcel record. A map pin alone can land on the wrong lot. For a condominium, the building photo does not identify which unit has a problem.

Take at least one useful exterior photo per address from a lawful public viewpoint, only after parking safely. Frame the property rather than residents, license plates, mail or interiors. Note your viewpoint and date; retain the original privately. Suggested filename: B01-03_2026-10-11_front.jpg. Avoid public posts that label an owner distressed. Restrict access to your working files.

Before leaving: count 10 unique addresses, confirm a matching photo for each, and add a short reason it belongs in your buy box. If a photo cannot be obtained safely or lawfully, choose another candidate or return later. Safety overrides completing the batch that day.

3 Level 2 Research It Thoroughly

Research each address in the same order. A repeatable sequence reduces missed facts and makes leads comparable. Save the parcel ID, URLs, document numbers, dates and a brief conclusion, rather than screenshots without context.

Pass	What to establish and record
1 Match the parcel	Full address and unit, folio/APN/PCN, legal description, municipality, use, living area, lot size, year built and apparent additions. Resolve map or address conflicts first.
2 Trace ownership	Owner listed by the property appraiser and tax mailing address; latest recorded deed and later transfers; acquisition date, consideration and holding period. Match legal description, not only a name.
3 Review encumbrances	Recorded mortgages, assignments, satisfactions, liens and judgments. Search relevant names and property identifiers. Flag gaps for title counsel; recorded original loan amounts are not current balances.
4 Check taxes and cases	Tax payment status by year; certificates or tax-deed activity if any; court docket for foreclosure/lis pendens and publicly available probate indicators. Read dispositions and recent entries.
5 Check physical and legal use	Code case history and current status; open/expired permits and final inspections; zoning, lawful unit count, certificates and restrictions. Confirm jurisdiction with the responsible office.
6 Check project feasibility	Association information, flood exposure, insurability, access, utilities, repair scope, occupancy and comparable sales. Separate desktop estimates from verified inspection findings.

Know what each record cannot tell you

Property appraiser data is a starting point for tax-roll information, not a title opinion or a guarantee of legal square footage. Assessed or taxable value is not your resale value. A recorded deed may have nonmarket consideration. A tax mailing address different from the property address does not prove vacancy. A missing online result may reflect an incomplete index, name variation or the wrong jurisdiction. [1–12]

For foreclosure or probate, confirm the party, property, case number and current docket. A lis pendens is notice of litigation, not proof that the lender owns the home. A death or probate filing does not identify every heir or who can sign a contract. A court record may be restricted or unavailable online; use lawful clerk procedures rather than trying to bypass access controls.

Create a defensible property file

Use folders for field photos, parcel records, deed and mortgage records, taxes, code and permits, contact research, outreach, and analysis. Maintain a dated one-page summary with the biggest unresolved questions. Store only data needed for the transaction; protect contact details and limit who can download or share them. Refresh material findings before an offer and again through closing.

4 Separate facts from explanations

Your research should answer “What might explain this condition?” without turning a possibility into a diagnosis. Keep four labels visible in every file.

Label	How to write it
Observed	“Roof tarp visible from the public sidewalk on October 11.” This establishes only the visible condition on that date.
Verified	“County portal lists permit 123 as expired, checked October 12.” This verifies the recorded status, not the full repair scope.
Suspected	“Work may have stopped because of a permit issue.” Identify the evidence and what would confirm or disprove it.
Unknown	“Occupancy, loan payoff and owner’s intentions unknown.” Assign the next verification step instead of filling the gap with a guess.

Investigate the explanation

Research signal	Next check	Common mistake
Overgrowth + different mailing address	Review deed and tax address; ask the verified owner about property plans.	Calling it abandoned.
Tax balance shown due	Confirm tax year, payment date, installment status and tax-deed activity.	Treating an unpaid current bill as foreclosure.
Mortgage recorded years ago	Obtain authorized current payoff through the closing process.	Subtracting original principal as today’s debt.
Open code or permit record	Ask the agency about status, fines, cure and closing requirements.	Assuming paying a fine legalizes the work.
Probate or estate indicator	Have counsel verify representative, orders and authority to sell.	Assuming a relative can sign for everyone.
Large apparent equity	Validate value, liens, repairs and selling costs.	Equating paper equity with available profit.

A useful conclusion can be “we do not know yet”

A good summary might read: “Observed exterior deterioration. Verified out-of-county tax mailing address and one open roof permit. Cause of maintenance delay and occupancy unknown. Next steps: confirm permit requirements, send a private letter to the matched mailing address, and ask about plans if the owner responds.” That is enough to proceed with measured research; it is not enough to promise a price or profit.

Do not use sensitive records as an opening pitch. Never imply that you represent the county, lender, court or association. Do not tell neighbors that the owner is in foreclosure, behind on taxes, deceased or in financial trouble. If a listing or representative is identified, use an appropriate professional contact path and avoid inducing anyone to breach an existing agreement.

5 South Florida public record workflow

Start with the county property appraiser, then follow the parcel into recorded documents, tax records, court cases and the correct building/code jurisdiction. The numbered references at the back provide current starting pages. Save the exact record you used; website navigation can change.

County	Start here	Then cross-check
Miami-Dade	Property Appraiser Property Search: address, owner, subdivision or folio. [1]	Clerk Official Records for deeds, mortgages, liens and releases [2]; Tax Collector for payment status [3]; county Building Online Services for permits and code links [4]. Use the municipality's offices where applicable.
Broward	Property Appraiser for parcel, owner, mailing address and sales history. [5]	County Official Records for recorded instruments [6]; Clerk Case Search for litigation/probate research [7]; Tax Collector for taxes [8]; BCS permit/code searches for county coverage [9]. Cities maintain their own relevant records.
Palm Beach	Property Appraiser PAPA for parcel/PCN, owner and characteristics. [10]	Clerk Official Records and court services [11]; Tax Collector for account/payment status [12]; Planning Zoning and Building for permits, code and fine/lien search services [13]. Confirm whether the parcel is municipal or unincorporated.

Search technique that avoids false matches

Copy the parcel identifier exactly, including leading zeros. Search names with and without middle initials and compare the legal description. Read the document image, not only the result summary. Follow later satisfactions, releases, amended orders and case dispositions. If a source conflicts with another, document the conflict and ask the custodian or title professional to resolve it. [1–13]

Jurisdiction is a required field

Countywide tax and deed records do not mean county building or code portals cover every city. Confirm which office controls zoning, building permits, unsafe structures and neighborhood code matters. A "no results" screen from the wrong office is not clearance. Request a municipal lien/open-permit search when warranted; some utility, code, assessment and other obligations may require separate inquiries beyond recorded liens. [4,9,13]

Before money is committed

Use a Florida title company or real estate attorney to verify ownership, lien priority, authority to sell and title requirements. Obtain a current association estoppel certificate and governing documents where relevant. Commission the necessary inspections and written repair quotes. Check flood information, elevation and insurance with qualified providers; a map alone does not establish future losses or insurability. [21] Public research narrows questions; it does not replace transaction due diligence.

6 Find the owner and a lawful contact path

Verify the owner before trying to reach someone. Match the property appraiser entry to the latest recorded conveyance and investigate later documents or conflicting names. Retain both the property address and the tax mailing address. A tax mailing address may be a post-office box, accountant or former address; identify its source and check recency.

Ownership and authority are different questions

For an LLC or corporation, search Florida Sunbiz by the exact entity name and document number. Review status and filings, principal and mailing addresses, and listed managers/officers. A registered agent is a service-of-process contact, not necessarily the owner, decision-maker or person authorized to sell. For trusts and estates, have counsel establish who can sign and what approvals are needed. Do not assume a name match proves identity. [14]

Research contact information carefully

Start with the matched public mailing address, an owner's voluntarily published business contact information, or an identified professional representative. For phone and email candidates from lawful commercial sources, retain the provider, retrieval date, associated name/address, and corroboration. Do not obtain restricted utility, credit, account or identity data through pretext or someone else's credentials.

Confidence	Evidence standard	Action
Unverified	A single vendor result or name-only match.	Research further; do not disclose property or personal details to a possible wrong person.
Corroborated	Independent sources align on name and an associated address/entity.	Check channel compliance; politely confirm identity before discussing the property.
Confirmed by owner	The verified person supplies or confirms the contact and preferred method.	Record confirmation date, scope of permission and any limits. This is not blanket consent to automated marketing.

If you reach the wrong person, apologize briefly, mark the contact wrong and stop using it. Do not ask that person to reveal private information about relatives. A phone number or email being public or available for purchase does not itself authorize marketing contact. Keep opt-out records separate from your active prospect list so later imports cannot reactivate a suppressed contact.

Skip tracing Quick introduction

Skip tracing uses public and commercial data to locate possible owner contact information. Results can be stale, mismatched or linked to relatives. Treat them as leads to verify. A future guide, Skip Tracing for Real Estate Investors — How to Find and Verify Owners, will explore this topic in detail.

Use REIFax and Deal Generator

Use REIFax or the Dealmakers Network Driving for Dollars Excel Workbook to organize your batch of 10, property research, and follow-up. If you subscribe to REIFax, use Deal Generator, included in your subscription, for your driving-for-dollars workflow. REIFax training resources can help you get started. If you use the workbook, begin with Start Here and the accompanying Workbook Quick Start Guide. Confirm important findings in official records; vendor data is not proof of title, equity, or consent. [18, 18a, 20]

7 Respectful outreach and channel compliance

Begin with a private, factual inquiry. Confirm identity discreetly, identify yourself truthfully and give the owner an easy way to decline. Do not lead with taxes, foreclosure, code cases, probate or other personal circumstances. Do not promise a closing date, cash funding or price you cannot support.

Private letter example

Hello, my name is [your full name], and I am a real estate investor with [your business]. I am writing to ask whether you would consider selling the property at [address]. If you are interested, you can reach me at [business phone or email]. There is no obligation. If you prefer no further contact, please let me know and I will update my records. Thank you, [name and business mailing address].

Use a plain envelope and accurate return address. Keep personal financial or court information off the envelope and out of the message. Do not leave advertising in mailboxes or place signs on someone's property without permission. Check local solicitation and sign rules before any door-to-door activity; respect no-soliciting signs, access restrictions and requests to leave.

Live conversation example after channel clearance

"Hello, I'm [true first and last name] with [business]. Am I speaking with [owner name]? Is now an okay time for a brief question about a property?" After confirmation: "Would you consider selling [address]? If not, I understand." Listen. If interested, ask about their plans, timing, property condition and preferred next step. Ask permission before scheduling an inspection or follow-up.

Before calls or texts

Have qualified counsel assess how federal TCPA/FCC rules, the FTC Telemarketing Sales Rule, Florida solicitation laws and any registration requirements apply to your particular acquisition campaign. Coverage and exemptions depend on the facts; calling to buy a home is not a universal exemption. Keep a record of the review and the approved process. [15–17,17a]

For covered outreach, check applicable federal/state Do Not Call requirements and your own suppression list; document the basis for contact, list-check date, recipient local time and required consent. The FTC's Do Not Call safe-harbor procedures include using National Registry data no more than 31 days old. Identify the business honestly, use valid caller identification, and honor stop requests. [15]

Adopt a conservative internal live-call window of 9 a.m.–7 p.m. recipient local time, subject to stricter applicable requirements and owner preferences. This policy is not a legal safe harbor. Florida section 501.616 restricts covered commercial solicitation to 8 a.m.–8 p.m. and limits repeated same-subject calls. Do not use bulk texts, autodialing, prerecorded/AI voice or ringless voicemail without a separately reviewed legal and consent process. [16–17,17a]

Email and recording

For covered commercial email, use accurate sender/subject information, required advertising identification, a valid physical postal address and a clear opt-out; honor opt-outs within 10 business days. Apply these standards to investor email as an internal baseline. Do not record calls without legal review and the required consent. [22]

8 Level 3 Score and work the lead

Score the quality of the opportunity and evidence, not the severity of someone's personal hardship. Score each factor 0, 1 or 2 using the same anchors. Unknown facts receive zero until researched. This score is an internal prioritization tool, not a prediction of profit or sale probability.

Factor	0 points	1 point	2 points
Buy-box fit	Outside scope	Conditional fit	Clear fit
Evidence quality	Unmatched or stale	Some corroboration	Parcel and current records matched
Owner/contact path	Unresolved owner	Owner matched; path uncertain	Owner matched; usable lawful path
Economic room	Fails or unknown	Thin or preliminary	Conservative analysis supports margin
Execution feasibility	Major unresolved barrier	Questions with a resolution plan	Scope, funding and exit appear feasible

Total 0–10. Suggested priorities: 8–10 investigate promptly; 5–7 resolve gaps; 0–4 archive, monitor or reject with a reason. Recalculate after owner contact and inspection. Never award points just because an owner appears vulnerable.

Apply hard stops before the score

A do-not-contact request overrides every score. Wrong identity stops use of that contact. Do not make an offer until unsafe access, uncertain authority to sell, unquantified title or repair risks, and funding gaps are resolved. A high score cannot cure an unlawful contact method or a failing financial model.

Finish each file with a decision

Status	Required next action
Research	Name the unanswered question, responsible person and due date.
Ready for contact	Owner match and permitted channel documented; schedule one measured inquiry.
Owner interested	Confirm preferred follow-up, property access and information needed for analysis.
Nurture	Owner permits later follow-up; record the agreed date and method.
Offer / contract	Validate assumptions, authority, funding and written terms with professionals.
Closed out / suppressed	Record why; retain opt-out or wrong-contact flags to prevent future mistakes.

Select up to three priorities

Rank all 10, then identify up to three leads worth your next research or conversation block. Do not force three if none qualify. For each priority, state the opportunity, the biggest unresolved risk, the exact next step and the date. Every other property still needs a documented decision. A batch of 10 rejected properties can be a useful outcome if it protects capital and improves your farm selection.

9 Follow up with permission and purpose

Follow-up should reflect the owner's response and the lawful channel, not an automated pressure sequence. Record every interaction on the day it happens. Distinguish an unanswered attempt from a conversation and an interested response from a commitment.

Situation	Suggested internal practice
No response to a private letter	If lawful and no objection exists, consider one restrained follow-up letter after 3–4 weeks, then pause and review. This is a workflow suggestion, not a legal entitlement.
Not ready, open to later discussion	Ask when and how to follow up; use that date rather than a generic campaign.
Interested now	Send requested information and agree on the next step within the stated timeline.
Not interested	Thank them, close the active inquiry and avoid repeated persuasion.
Stop request or wrong person	Suppress immediately in your tracker and every connected tool; do not switch channels to evade the request.

Useful seller questions

"What would you like to accomplish?" "What timing would work for you?" "What repairs or issues should we understand?" "Is anyone else involved in deciding or signing?" "Is the property occupied, and how should access be arranged?" Ask for only what is necessary. Let the owner choose what to share; do not demand private documents to satisfy curiosity.

Make every next action specific

Replace "follow up soon" with "send the requested outline Friday" or "call on the owner's agreed date after checking suppression and channel requirements." Log date, channel, person, identity confidence, result, consent/preferences, stop requests and next due date. Keep an audit trail when a status changes. If using assistants or vendors, require the same standards and confirm suppression updates propagate to their tools.

Review the batch each week

First address overdue promises and stop requests. Next resolve the highest-impact research gaps. Then review the top priorities and analysis. Finally decide whether the batch is fully processed and you have capacity for a new batch of 10. Avoid collecting more addresses to postpone difficult research.

Measure complete files out of 10, lawful contact paths, actual owner conversations, invitations to inspect, supported offers, contracts and completed transactions. Also record why leads failed: wrong buy box, no seller interest, insufficient margin, title complexity or funding limits. Never present attempts, vendor phone matches or signed contracts as closed deals.

Consistency over volume

A sustainable routine is one you can maintain without neglecting existing leads, safety or financial analysis. Tighten your research and follow-through before paying for more data or adding drivers. The aim is dependable decisions, not a particular number of closings from 10 properties.

10 Underwrite before you make an offer

A property can look distressed and still be overpriced for your strategy. Work backward from a supported exit value, using current comparable sales and a written scope. Never use assessed value, an automated estimate or a fixed “70 percent rule” as your entire analysis.

Resale analysis

Maximum purchase price = conservative after-repair resale value − selling costs − acquisition costs − repair budget − repair contingency − financing and holding costs − required project margin. Model costs at the proposed price and holding period; recalculate percentage-based fees and loan costs when price or timing changes. Do not count the same cost twice.

Use at least three relevant closed comparable sales where available. Compare the immediate location, legal use, size, lot, age, condition, parking, flood exposure and sale date. Review competing listings as competition rather than completed value evidence. Adjustments need support; if the range is too uncertain, obtain professional help or pass.

South Florida costs to investigate

Get property-specific insurance quotes early, including wind coverage, deductibles and flood coverage when relevant. Check roof age, opening protection, water intrusion, termites, HVAC/electrical condition and storm damage with qualified inspectors. Confirm permit and code cure costs, legal additions, septic/sewer status and utility obligations. Test taxes after purchase using local appraiser tools rather than assuming the seller’s exemptions or capped assessment continue. [1,5,10,21]

For condos or HOAs, review governing documents, assessments, reserves, insurance, leasing and resale restrictions, approval requirements and any applicable inspection/structural obligations with professionals. Obtain current estoppel information and pending assessment details. Do not transfer single-family assumptions into an association property.

Rental analysis

Annual collected rent = scheduled rent − vacancy/credit loss. Net operating income (NOI) = collected rent + recurring other income − operating expenses, including taxes, insurance, maintenance, management and association charges. Cash flow before income taxes = NOI − debt service − capital reserves. Include management even if you self-manage. Stress-test vacancy, insurance increases, a major repair and slower leasing; financing availability and cash needs matter as much as an attractive yield.

Offer and closing gate

Require a current analysis, credible funding, a cash-to-close plan, verified signing authority, title review, inspection access, permit/code strategy and an acceptable downside case. Have counsel or a qualified professional prepare or review written terms, deposit handling, inspection periods, contingencies and deadlines. Disclose your role and any intended assignment accurately; obtain advice on applicable licensing and transaction requirements. Do not imply you own or can convey property you have not acquired.

11 Worked example A lead is not yet a deal

This fictional Broward single-family project illustrates the analysis. The figures are teaching assumptions, not market quotes or expected results from a real property. All amounts are dollars. The investor's buy box permits a moderate renovation and resale.

Level 1: candidate B01-04 has a roof tarp and overgrown landscaping visible from the public sidewalk. Level 2: assume research matches the deed and parcel, shows an expired roof permit and an out-of-county tax mailing address. Occupancy and the reason work stopped remain unknown. The owner later responds to a private letter, states that they have authority to sell and permits an inspection. Inspection and title review are still needed to validate the budget.

Base case assumption	Amount / basis
After-repair resale value	450,000; hypothetical adjusted closed-sale range 440,000–460,000
Selling costs	31,500; 7% of resale, assumed combined fees and costs
Acquisition/closing costs	7,500; assumed fixed allowance for this price range
Repairs	60,000; assumed written scope including roof and permit cure
Repair contingency	9,000; 15% of repair budget
Financing and six-month holding	22,000; financing 13,000 + tax/insurance/utilities/other 9,000
Required project margin	40,000; investor's target before income taxes and general overhead
Maximum purchase price	280,000 = 450,000 − 31,500 − 7,500 − 60,000 − 9,000 − 22,000 − 40,000

At a 280,000 purchase, modeled total project cost is 410,000 and the base-case project margin is 40,000. The 22,000 carrying/financing allowance must be replaced with actual lender and operating quotes. Loan proceeds affect cash required, not resale revenue; avoid counting principal repayment twice when purchase price is already included in project cost.

Sensitivity at 280,000 purchase	Project margin
Base case	40,000
Resale falls 5% to 427,500; selling costs become 29,925	19,075
Repair-related costs rise 15,000 above the combined 69,000 repair and contingency allowance	25,000
Lower resale, 15,000 above the 69,000 repair allowance and a 3-month delay costing 9,000	−4,925

Decision: the downside can erase the margin. With the other assumptions unchanged, a purchase price of 305,000 leaves only 15,000 in the base case. Do not force the deal. Reduce price if supportable, resolve cost uncertainty, change strategy only with fresh analysis, or pass. The target margin is compensation for risk, not a promised profit; income taxes and business overhead would reduce the amount retained.

12 Use the Driving for Dollars Excel Workbook

Use the accompanying Dealmakers Network Driving for Dollars Excel Workbook as your working property file. It brings the field tracker, research findings, owner and contact records, outreach history, lead scoring, follow-up, and deal analysis into one place. Save your own copy before entering information.

Your three companion downloads

Driving for Dollars Excel Workbook — the main tool for recording and working your leads. Open the Start Here tab first, then use Properties for your first batch of 10.

Workbook Quick Start Guide — a short walkthrough of each worksheet, how the records connect, and how to move from one batch of 10 to the next.

Optional Printable Worksheets — a separate four-page packet for members who prefer handwritten field notes or paper research forms. Transfer the findings into the workbook using the matching batch and Property ID.

Start with 10 and continue with the next 10

Start with batch B001 and Property IDs B001-01 through B001-10. Record exactly 10 unique addresses and dated public-view photos. Use the same Property ID in Research, Contacts, Activity, Resale Analysis, and Rental Analysis so the records remain connected.

Research all 10 and give each property a next action or a reason for closing it out. Then begin B002 using B002-01 through B002-10. Keep earlier records and continue their follow-up; you do not need to wait for a closing before starting the next batch. Repeat through B010. The workbook includes 100 property slots arranged in 10 batches.

Use the workbook through all three levels

Level 1 — Spot It: enter the address, observed condition, date, public-view photo link, parcel ID, and jurisdiction in Properties. Keep photos in a private folder with matching IDs.

Level 2 — Research It Thoroughly: add findings in Research, label them Observed, Verified, Suspected, or Unknown, and record the source and date. Use Contacts for identity confidence, authority evidence, and lawful contact research.

Level 3 — Work the Lead: complete the five scores and the current next action and due date in Properties. Log interactions in Activity, review the selected batch in Dashboard, and test the numbers in the appropriate analysis sheet. Activity retains history; update the current follow-up fields in Properties yourself.

Keep the records useful

Retain closed-out leads and their reasons. Respect contact holds and opt-outs across your outreach systems. Do not overwrite formula cells or reuse Property IDs. Enter explicit zero costs when appropriate; incomplete analysis inputs leave results blank. The Quick Start Guide explains the workbook's capacity and when to start a new copy.

Consistency over volume: finish the research and establish follow-up for your current 10 before collecting the next 10. The workbook organizes your work; verified facts and conservative analysis determine whether a deal deserves further attention.

13 Sources and public record directory

Checked October 11, 2026. References support the cited research workflow and resource descriptions. Use the issuing agency to resolve discrepancies. Directory links are starting points, not property clearance reports. Source descriptions below are paraphrased; the guide's instructions, worksheets and fictional example are original.

[1] Miami-Dade Property Appraiser — Property Search. Parcel, ownership and tax-roll search; check record currency.
https://www.miamidadepa.gov/pa/real-estate/property-search.page

[2] Miami-Dade Clerk — Official Records. Recorded deeds, mortgages, liens, satisfactions and releases.
https://www.miamidadeclerk.gov/clerk/official-records.page

[3] Miami-Dade Tax Collector. Real-estate tax information and links to account lookup and payments.
https://www.mdctaxcollector.gov/services/real-estate-tax-payments

[4] Miami-Dade Building — Online Services. Permit, building support, neighborhood code and lien-service links; jurisdiction matters.
https://www.miamidade.gov/global/economy/building/online-services.page

[5] Broward County Property Appraiser. Property Search and parcel information.
https://web.bcpa.net/bcpaclient/

[6] Broward County Official Records. Recorded-document search, separate from court case search.
https://officialrecords.broward.org/AcclaimWeb

[7] Broward Clerk — Public Case Search. Court records; match parties, property and current case status.
https://www.browardclerk.org/Web2/CaseSearchECA

[8] Broward County Tax Collector — Public Records. Links to property-tax lookup by name, address or account.
https://browardtax.org/public-records/

[9] Broward BCS — Permit and Code Searches. County permit search; code search at the same BCS portal uses folio/parcel ID. Verify municipal coverage.
https://dpepp.broward.org/BCS/Default.aspx?PossePresentation=ParcelSearchByAddress

[10] Palm Beach County Property Appraiser — PAPA. Property search, parcel/PCN and ownership information.
https://pbcpao.gov/

[11] Palm Beach Clerk — Official Records. Recorded documents; use the Clerk's court services separately for case research.
https://www.mypalmbeachclerk.com/records/official-records

[12] Palm Beach Tax Collector — FAQ. Real-estate payment-status instructions and account links.
https://www.pbctax.gov/resources/faq/

[13] Palm Beach Planning Zoning and Building — I Want To. Permit/inspection, fine/lien and open-code search services; confirm jurisdiction.
https://discover.pbc.gov/pzb/pages/i-want-to.aspx

14 Sources compliance and optional tools

[14] Florida Division of Corporations — Search Records. Entity names, officers/registered agents and filings; verify authority separately.
https://dos.fl.gov/sunbiz/search

[15] FTC — Complying with the Telemarketing Sales Rule. Covered-call requirements, Do Not Call procedures and calling restrictions.
https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/complying-telemarketing-sales-rule

[16] Florida Statutes — Section 501.059. Telephone solicitation definitions, identification, suppression and automated-call provisions. Apply with legal advice.
https://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0500-0599/0501/Sections/0501.059.html

[17] Florida Statutes — Section 501.616. Covered commercial solicitation practices, hours and repeat-call limits.
https://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0500-0599/0501/Sections/0501.616.html

[17a] FCC — Unwanted Calls and Texts. Federal call/text and consent guidance. Do not assume purchased data permits automated outreach.
https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/stop-unwanted-robocalls-and-texts

[18] REIFax — Deal Generator. Use Deal Generator within your REIFax subscription for the driving-for-dollars workflow.
https://www.reifax.com/

[18a] REIFax — Training and Help. Training on property searches, contacts, saved properties and follow-up.
https://www.reifax.com/resource/training/videos

[20] REIFax — Property Research. Property and public-record search information; corroborate findings with official sources.
https://www.reifax.com/products/platinum

[21] FEMA — Flood Map Service Center. Official flood-map starting point; supplement with site, elevation and insurance review.
https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home

[22] FTC — CAN-SPAM Act Compliance Guide. Commercial-email identity, postal address, advertising and opt-out requirements.
https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business

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Build a repeatable practice: document 10, investigate all 10, respect each owner, and let verified facts and conservative numbers determine the next step.