How to find commercial and small industrial property for sale in Cincinnati

Most people start on a listing site, see a handful of buildings that don't fit, and decide there's nothing out there. There usually is. It just isn't all in one place. This guide covers where small commercial and industrial buildings for sale in Cincinnati show up, what each source is good for, which ones are free, and how to find the buildings that never get listed.

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The short answer. Use the listing sites to see what's openly for sale, but don't stop there. Small industrial buildings, contractor garages and warehouses also change hands through brokers' private lists, owner-posted ads, public sales, and owners who will sell when someone asks. A buyer who covers all of those, and who knows exactly what they're looking for, sees far more buildings than one who only checks LoopNet.

Before you start, write down what you need. Size, number of bays, overhead door height, yard, power, the area you'll work from, and your price range. The flex space checklist covers what to look at. It's also what a broker or an owner will ask you first.

Where are buildings openly listed for sale?

Source	What it's good for	Free or paid
LoopNet	The largest commercial listing site. Most brokered listings in the area end up here	Free to browse. A free account saves searches and alerts. Some listings and features need a paid subscription
Crexi	Brokered listings, plus auctions. Often has listings LoopNet doesn't	Free account to view listings. Owner contact information is a paid feature
CoStar	The database most commercial brokers use. Listed and unlisted buildings, owners, sales history and loans	Paid, priced for brokers. LoopNet is CoStar's public listing site
Zillow and local real estate company websites	Smaller and older commercial buildings that agents post to the local MLS	Free

Source	What it's good for	Free or paid
Other listing sites (Cityfeet, Showcase, CommercialSearch, PropertyShark)	Mostly the same listings again, sometimes one the others missed	Free to browse
Brokerage websites	Each firm's own listings, sometimes posted before they reach the big sites	Free
Craigslist (real estate for sale, and office and commercial)	Owner-posted buildings, small garages and shops, older properties	Free, no account needed to browse
Facebook Marketplace	Owner-posted buildings and land, mostly small and informal	Free, needs a Facebook account
BizBuySell and other business-for-sale sites	Businesses for sale that include their building, or whose owner will sell the building too	Free to browse
Auction sites (GovDeals, Crexi auctions, local auctioneers)	Surplus government property, court-ordered sales and owner auctions	Free to browse. Bidding takes registration, often a deposit
County auditor websites	Who owns a building, what it last sold for, and recent sales nearby	Free, public, no account
Sheriff sales and public land sales	Foreclosures and tax-forfeited property sold at auction	Free to search. Bidding takes registration and a deposit

LoopNet and Crexi are where most brokered commercial listings go. Both let you filter by property type, size and price, and both are free to browse. Set up saved searches for industrial, flex and warehouse buildings in your price range and let the alerts come to you. Keep two things in mind. Neither site shows everything, since some brokers post to only one of them and some buildings are never posted anywhere. The paid tiers, meanwhile, are built for brokers and investors who want owner contacts and sales history, which a buyer hunting for one building rarely needs.

CoStar is the database behind most commercial brokers' work. It tracks listed and unlisted buildings, who owns them, what they sold for and often what's owed on them. It's priced for brokers and appraisers, not for someone buying one building, so most buyers get at it through a broker. LoopNet is CoStar's public listing site.

Zillow and local real estate company websites show the commercial listings that agents post to the local MLS, the same system used for houses. These tend to be smaller and older buildings, often listed by agents who mostly sell homes, and some never make it to LoopNet or Crexi. Search the commercial or mixed-use categories.

Brokerage websites list each firm's own inventory. When you call about a listing, ask the broker what else they have coming that fits. Listing brokers often know of buildings that will be for sale before they're posted.

Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace are where owners post buildings themselves, and where some of the smaller contractor garages and older shops show up. Expect thin details and some ads that aren't real. Before you send anyone money or sign anything, look the property up on the county

auditor's website and make sure the person you're talking to is the owner. The Hamilton County Auditor's site makes the same point about rental ads.

Business-for-sale sites such as BizBuySell list companies for sale, and some include the building the business runs from. A contractor or small manufacturer selling the company may also be willing to sell the building separately.

How do I find buildings that aren't listed?

This is where most of the good small buildings are. An owner-user who has been in the same building for twenty years and is getting ready to retire may never call a broker. A landlord with one vacant bay and a roof that needs work may be glad to hear from a buyer. Neither will show up on a listing site.

Start with the area, not the building. Pick the corridors that work for your business. The submarkets guide describes where small-bay buildings are across Hamilton, Butler and Warren counties. Then drive them. You'll see buildings that fit, owner-made "for sale" signs that never make it online, and buildings that look underused.

Find out who owns it. Every county auditor in the area has a free property search by address, owner or parcel number. Hamilton, Butler, Warren and Clermont all do. The record shows the owner of record, the tax mailing address, the last sale date and price, and often the building size and photos. The owner is often an LLC. Ohio's Secretary of State has a free business search that shows the LLC's statutory agent and address, but not its owners, so you may still need to make a few calls to reach the person who decides.

Ask, and be honest about who you are. A short letter or call works better than a cold offer. Say you're looking for a building like theirs to use for your business, give your timing, and ask whether they would ever consider selling. Most owners will say no. Some will say not now, and some of those will call back a year later. Keep a list and follow up.

Be ready to move. An owner who sells off-market wants a buyer who is serious. Talk to a lender first, so you know what you can buy. The financing guide explains SBA 504 financing and the other loan options for buying a building your business will use.

What about foreclosures and public sales?

Foreclosed commercial property is sold through the county sheriff. Since January 2024, Hamilton County sheriff's sales are held online through the state's sheriff sale website, and bidding on commercial property requires registering and a deposit set by the court. The county auditor also holds forfeited land sales for tax-foreclosed property that didn't sell at the sheriff's sale. In Hamilton County, the Landbank lists the property it holds for redevelopment on its own website.

Other auctions turn up too. Government agencies sell surplus buildings on GovDeals, Crexi runs online auctions, and local auctioneers handle court-ordered and owner sales.

These can be bargains, and they can be traps. Most are sold as is, often without an inside look, and the buyer takes on the work of clearing up whatever comes with the building. If you're new to them, watch a few sales before you bid, and have an attorney look at the title on anything you plan to buy.

Should I work with a broker?

You don't have to. You can find and buy a building on your own. A broker who works for you can help in three ways. They can search CoStar and the other broker databases, which carry listings and owner details the public sites don't. They hear about buildings before they're posted. And they can make the owner calls for you, which many buyers would rather not make.

If you hire a broker, ask how they're paid before you start, and put it in writing. If you're already working with one, keep working with them.

How do I get on a buyer list?

When an owner tells me they're thinking about selling, the first people I call are the buyers who have told me what they're looking for. If you'd like to be on that list, tell me what you're looking for, including size, area, price range and whether you'll use the building yourself or lease it out. Sending the form doesn't create an agency relationship.

If you're still deciding whether to buy at all, start with buy or lease. Or browse the other guides.

Common questions

Where can I find small commercial properties for sale in Cincinnati?

Check LoopNet and Crexi first, then Zillow and local real estate company websites, which carry smaller commercial listings that residential agents post to the local MLS. Owner-posted ads on Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace, government and auction sites, and businesses for sale with their building on BizBuySell fill in the rest. Many small buildings never get listed, so drive the areas you want and ask owners directly.

What is the best website to find commercial property for sale?

No single site has everything. LoopNet and Crexi carry the most public listings and are free to browse, with paid tiers for extra features. CoStar is the most complete, covering listed and unlisted buildings with owner details, but it's a paid service priced for brokers. Most buyers do well with free alerts on LoopNet and Crexi plus a broker who has CoStar.

How do I find out who owns a commercial building in Cincinnati?

Look up the address on the county auditor's website. Hamilton, Butler, Warren and Clermont counties each have a free property search that shows the owner of record, the tax mailing address and the last sale. If the owner is an LLC, Ohio's Secretary of State business search shows its statutory agent and address. It doesn't list owners, so you may need to call the agent or search the name to reach the person who decides.

What is an off-market property, and is it a better deal?

Off-market means the building isn't publicly advertised for sale. It may be for sale quietly through a broker's own buyers, or the owner may simply be willing to sell when asked. You face less competition, but that doesn't make the price low. Owners who aren't in a hurry often expect full value. Check the price the same way you would for a listed building, using the methods in how small-bay buildings are priced.

Can I buy a building from a sheriff's sale or the Landbank?

Yes. Foreclosed property is sold at online sheriff's sales, and the Hamilton County Landbank sells property it holds for redevelopment. Most of it is sold as is, often without an inside look, so have your attorney review the title and plan for repairs before you bid.

Sources

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CINCINNATI SMALL BAY

Buying or selling a small-bay or contractor garage building?

Tell me what you're looking for, or what you own, and the best way to reach you.

Start a conversation

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