DOUG PALMER

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Buyer Consultation Guide



myhomegroup®

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How to use this guide

This guide walks you from our first conversation to the day you get keys. Pick your path:

First time buying, or first time in Arizona:

read it top to bottom. Every step, every form, every deadline is here.

→ PAGES 03 TO 18

Bought before:

jump to **Returning buyer fast track** near the end. It is a one-page checklist of what is different in Arizona and in 2026, plus the pieces you cannot skip.

→ PAGE 19

Either way, we fill in the **Consultation worksheet** at the end together.

PAGES 20 TO 22

My take: how I work with buyers



I have been in real estate since 2009 and have 125+ transactions behind me, including about 20 of my own flips and rentals across several states.

"I look at every house the way an investor does first, then the way a homeowner does. That changes what I tell you."

Three things happen before we tour.

- **A signed buyer agreement**
- **A real number from a lender**
- **A defined buy box**

Touring without them feels productive. It is not. You fall for a house you cannot write on, or you write at a number the seller was never going to take.

We agree on what a winning offer looks like before we need one. Price, earnest money, close date, concessions, and how hard we negotiate repairs. When the right house shows up, we move in hours, not days.

If you own a home now, we plan the sale and the purchase together. Often the cleanest path is to sell first and rent back from your buyer, so you move once and never carry two payments.

You work with me directly. No hand-offs to a showing assistant or a call center. I tour with you, write the offer, negotiate it, and run the file to closing. During an active search you hear from me at least once a week, the way you prefer: call, text, email or in person.

What I ask of you: answer your phone during an active search, tell me when something changes (job, budget, timing), and tell me straight if we are not a fit. I would rather hear it than have you go quiet.

What buyers say

Excerpts from published client reviews on Zillow and Google, quoted as written.

★★★★★

"Dug into the actual inspection findings, BINSR contract language so we knew what we were buying … Held the line on our behalf when the seller's repairs fell short, protecting our interests instead of just pushing us to sign … Brought an investor's depth and judgment that gave us real confidence throughout a transaction with a lot of moving parts."

Mark L., Goodyear, 2026 ZILLOW

★★★★★

"Before our search began, Doug made a list of wants and needs documenting every detail. He found several homes for us to tour … Lo and behold amongst the list, we found our perfect home!"

Susan R., 2025 ZILLOW

★★★★★

"I totally trusted him and he came thru for me. He made the process very easy for me and he is a great negotiator."

Amy A., Sun City, 2025 ZILLOW

★★★★★

"We are from out of state and he worked with us by video of homes that we liked before we went to Arizona. He answered our questions and it didn't matter how many houses we wanted to see."

Keith K., Goodyear, 2024 GOOGLE

★★★★★

"When we were in the 10-day inspection period, Doug assisted us with insight on submission timing and what he thought an appropriate response would be."

Shawn K., Avondale, 2018 ZILLOW

The process, step by step

Most Arizona purchases run 30 to 45 days from accepted offer to keys. The search before that takes as long as it takes. Here is the full path.



1 Consultation and representation

We meet, walk through this guide, and fill in your worksheet. You sign the buyer agreement and the disclosures that go with it. From that point I represent you on any home we pursue. If you want a home my brokerage has listed, I explain limited representation first, and it happens only with your written consent and the seller's.

2 Pre-approval

You talk to a lender and get a pre-approval, or show proof of funds if paying cash. This gives us your real ceiling and a monthly payment you are comfortable with. Sellers will not take an offer seriously without it. I can introduce you to lenders I trust. You are free to use anyone.

3 Search and tours

I set up a search on the MLS that sends you new listings the moment they hit. We tour in tight clusters so your time goes to houses that fit. Before you fall for one, I pull the history: prior sales, days on market, price changes, and nearby sales.

The process, step by step

4 Offer and negotiation

I call the listing agent, run the comparable sales, and we set price and terms together. The offer is the Arizona Association of REALTORS Residential Resale Real Estate Purchase Contract plus any addenda. Expect counteroffers. When both sides sign, the contract is accepted and the clock starts.

5 Under contract

Earnest money goes to escrow. The inspection period opens. Your lender orders the appraisal and works your file. Title searches the property for liens and problems. You shop for homeowners insurance. I track every deadline.

Escrow is a neutral third party, usually the title company. It holds the money and documents and releases them only when both sides have done what the contract requires.

6 Final walkthrough

At least 3 days before closing, we walk the house to confirm its condition and that agreed repairs are done. The timing is deliberate. If something is wrong, I can issue a cure notice, the seller has 3 days to fix it, and we still close on time.

7 Closing

You sign loan and title documents no later than 3 days before closing, as the contract requires. Funds go to escrow. The deed records with Maricopa County, and you get keys.

Steps 1 and 2 happen before we tour. Steps 5 to 7 run on contract deadlines, listed on page 07.

Contract deadlines, Arizona defaults

Days count from contract acceptance unless noted. These are the standard contract defaults. Your signed contract can change any of them, and it governs.

Arizona contract defaults. Your signed contract governs.



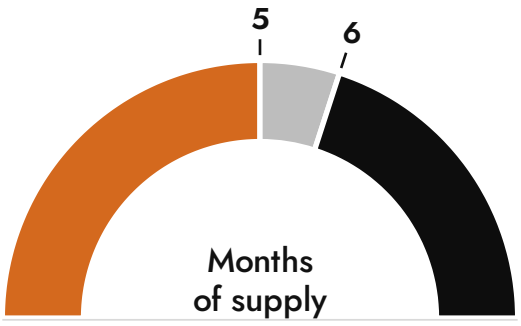
WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	WHO
At acceptance	Earnest money delivered to escrow	You
Within 3 days	Seller delivers the Seller's Property Disclosure Statement (SPDS)	Seller
Within 3 days	Apply for your loan: give your lender your information and permission to pull credit	You
Within 5 days	Seller delivers the five-year insurance claims history	Seller
End of inspection period, or 5 days after receipt if later	Your deadline to object to anything in the SPDS or claims history. A late delivery moves it later	You
Within 10 days of escrow's notice	Escrow notifies the HOA of the sale. The HOA delivers its documents, if any	Escrow, HOA
Within 10 days	Inspection period ends. Your repair request (BINSR) is due by this day	You

Contract deadlines, Arizona defaults

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	WHO
Within 10 days	Loan Status Update from your lender	You
Within 10 days of your Loan Estimate	Send your lender the documents it asks for	You
5 days after your BINSR	Seller responds to repair requests	Seller
5 days after seller response	You accept, or cancel with earnest money returned	You
5 days after receipt	Review window for title commitment and HOA documents	You
5 days after appraisal notice	Decide if the appraisal comes in low	You
3 days before closing	Last day to cancel for inability to get the loan	You
At least 3 days before closing	Final walkthrough. My practice, so there is time for a cure notice. The contract sets no window	You and me
Close of escrow	Deed records, keys	Everyone

Missing a deadline costs you rights. Miss the inspection deadline and you lose the right to cancel for condition. I send you reminders, and I need quick answers during the first 10 days.

Reading the market



The market sets the posture. I track months of supply: how long the current inventory would take to sell at today's pace.

- **Under 5 months** favors sellers.
- **5 to 6** is balanced.
- **Over 6** favors buyers.

In a buyer's market we ask for more. In a seller's market we lead with clean terms. If we lose a house we still want, a backup offer keeps us in line if the first deal falls apart.

I read how the seller priced it. Each calls for a different offer, and I tell you which one we are looking at.

↑

Some sellers price high and leave room to negotiate.

=

Some price right at the comps.

↓

Some price a little low to draw several offers.

I price houses, not averages. A price per square foot tells you almost nothing. I adjust each comparable sale for pool, lot, garage, condition and age, then weigh how long the house has sat. A listing that has been on the market 90 days is a different negotiation than one listed Friday.

I call the listing agent before we write. Offers so far, seller motivation, timing, flexibility on price and concessions. That call often decides the offer.

Writing under asking is a legitimate strategy. Writing under on every house is a signal. If our offers keep missing, either the target is off or the budget does not match the house. I will tell you which one, plainly.

Money: what you pay, and when

Plan on your down payment plus roughly 2% to 3% of the price in closing costs if you finance. Your lender's Loan Estimate itemizes the costs within 3 business days of applying. The Closing Disclosure gives the final figures.

Cash to close

ILLUSTRATION



Earnest money **Down payment** **Closing costs**

ITEM	WHEN	TYPICAL AMOUNT
Earnest money	At acceptance, to escrow	Typically 1% to 3% of price. Credited back to you at closing
Inspections	Inspection period	$400 to $800 for a general inspection. Add-ons extra
Appraisal	Ordered by lender	You pay it when your lender asks, usually upfront. It is non-refundable
Down payment	At closing	Set by your loan program
Closing costs	At closing	Loan fees, prepaid taxes and insurance, your share of escrow, lender's title policy, recording
HOA setup or capital fee	At closing	Varies by community

Who customarily pays what in Maricopa County

Custom, not law, except where noted. Everything is negotiable in the contract.

Owner's title policy	Seller (contract default)
Lender's title policy	Buyer (contract default)
Escrow fee	Split 50/50 (contract default)
Deed recording	Buyer
HOA disclosure fee	Seller, by Arizona law
HOA transfer fee	Either side, negotiated
HOA capital improvement fee	Either side, negotiated
Prepaid HOA dues	Buyer
Home warranty	Negotiated, often seller
Transfer tax	None in Arizona

VA loans limit which fees a buyer may pay. On a VA purchase, the seller commonly covers items like the escrow fee.

How I get paid

Since August 2024, every buyer signs a written agreement with their agent before touring, and that agreement states the agent's compensation. Mine is **3% of the purchase price***, with no retainer and no upfront fee.

Who pays it depends on the house.

Seller offers 3% or more:

the seller covers my fee. You pay nothing.

You pay nothing

Seller offers less than 3%, or nothing:

you cover the balance. Usually we ask the seller for a concession in the offer to cover the gap.

You cover the balance

Think of it this way: House A's seller offers to pay the buyer's agent. House B's seller does not.

I check what each seller offers before we tour, so you never learn it at the offer table.

Seller concessions

In a slower market, sellers often pay part of a buyer's closing costs or a rate buydown. We ask when the house and the market support it. Your loan program caps how much a seller can contribute.

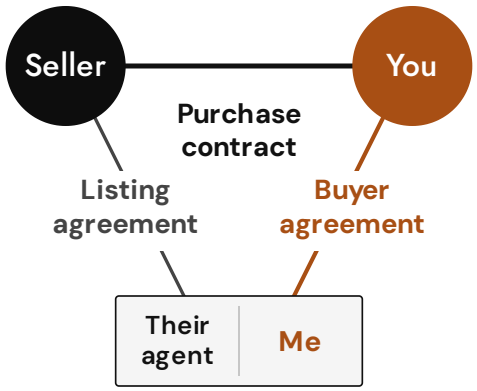
★★★★★

"He helped us to lower our closing cost by negotiating for more money from the seller as well as buying down the interest rate with some of the money."

Tunde A., Glendale, 2019 ZILLOW

**Broker compensation is not set by law and is fully negotiable.*

The paperwork



You sign six documents at the consultation and the rest when we write an offer. All are signed electronically. I walk you through each one before you sign.

Three agreements govern every purchase: the seller's listing agreement with their agent, your buyer agreement with me, and the purchase contract between you and the seller.

AT THE CONSULTATION

- ☐ **Buyer-Broker Exclusive Employment Agreement**
  Makes me your agent. Sets the term, the area, and my compensation
- ☐ **Real Estate Agency Disclosure and Election**
  States in writing that I represent you as the buyer, and whether you consent to limited representation if you want a home my brokerage lists
- ☐ **Buyer Advisory**
  Arizona's checklist of what to investigate on any home. Read it. It is the best free resource you will get
- ☐ **Wire Fraud Advisory**
  How wire fraud works in real estate and how to avoid it
- ☐ **Market Conditions Advisory**
  Markets move. No one can promise price, timing or value
- ☐ **Affiliated Business Disclosure**
  Lists companies connected to my brokerage. You are never required to use them

IF THE PROPERTY CALLS FOR IT

HOA addendum, lead-based paint disclosure (built before 1978), septic or well addenda, solar lease or loan information, and a consent form if I ever represent both sides.

The paperwork

WHEN WE WRITE AN OFFER

- [ ] **Residential Resale Real Estate Purchase Contract**
  The offer, and once signed, the binding contract
- [ ] **Lender pre-qualification form**
  Shows the seller you can close
- [ ] **Seller Compensation Addendum**
  Records any compensation the seller agrees to pay my brokerage
- [ ] **Buyer Contingency Addendum**
  Used if your purchase depends on selling your current home
- [ ] **Counteroffers**
  Changes either side proposes before agreement

DURING ESCROW

- [ ] **Seller's Property Disclosure Statement (SPDS)**
  What the seller knows about the home. You sign to acknowledge receipt
- [ ] **Insurance claims history**
  Five years of insurance claims on the property
- [ ] **Loan Status Update**
  Your lender confirms your loan is on track
- [ ] **Title commitment**
  What title found: liens, easements, restrictions
- [ ] **BINSR**
  Your repair requests, and the seller's response
- [ ] **Cure Period Notice**
  Formal notice if the other side misses an obligation. Starts a 3-day clock
- [ ] **Buyer Pre-Closing Walkthrough**
  Confirms the home's condition before closing

Inspections, repairs and appraisal

The 10-day inspection period is your strongest protection. You have three main ways out of an Arizona purchase contract with your earnest money: the inspection period, a loan denial, and a low appraisal we cannot resolve. The inspection period is the broadest. If you disapprove of the property, you can cancel, but the notice must list the items you disapprove, all in one notice, or your earnest money is at risk. I write it with you. Use every day of it.

INSPECTIONS I RECOMMEND

- **General home inspection.** Always. Roof, structure, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, appliances.
- **Pool and spa inspection** if there is one. Equipment is expensive to replace.
- **HVAC service check** if the units are 10 years or older. Summer here punishes a weak system.
- **Septic and well inspections** where they apply.
- **Termite (wood-destroying insect) inspection.** Always in Arizona.
- **Sewer line camera scope** on older homes or homes with mature trees.
- **Roof inspection** when the general inspector flags concerns.

WHAT ELSE TO CHECK IN THE INSPECTION PERIOD

- The SPDS and the insurance claims history. Past water or roof claims matter.
- HOA documents: rules, fees, the budget and reserve study, recent board minutes, and any pending special assessments.
- Flood zone, airport and military flight paths (Luke Air Force Base affects much of the West Valley), and school boundaries. Verify these yourself with the source.
- Insurance quotes. Get one before the deadline, not after.
- Solar panels. If they are leased or financed, the terms transfer or get paid off. We find out which.

The repair request (BINSR)

1. **You** list what you want repaired, credited or reduced, or you cancel.
2. **The seller** has 5 days to respond. No answer in time counts as a no.
3. **You** have 5 days to accept their answer or cancel. If you do not cancel in those 5 days, you close without the repairs the seller refused.

Accept | **Cancel**

My approach: ask for what matters, safety, systems, water, structure. Skip the cosmetic list. A short, serious request gets a better response than a long one.

Appraisal

If you finance, the lender orders an appraisal. If it comes in below the price, we have 5 days to act: renegotiate, cover the gap, or cancel. Your contract's appraisal terms decide which options you keep, so we set them in the offer.

Protect your money during escrow

Never wire money based on emailed instructions.

Criminals hack email accounts and send fake wiring instructions that look real. Before you wire a dollar, call the escrow officer at a phone number you found yourself, not one in the email, and confirm the instructions out loud. Escrow will not change wiring instructions by email. If anyone does, stop and call me.

Until you have keys, do not:

- Open new credit cards or loans, or co-sign for anyone
- Finance furniture, appliances or a car
- Change jobs, go self-employed, or change your pay structure
- Make large deposits or withdrawals you cannot document, or change bank accounts
- Spend the money set aside for closing
- Leave any debt off your loan application
- Miss a payment on anything
- Let your lender's document requests sit. Answer the same day

Your lender re-checks your credit and employment right before closing. Any of these can delay or kill the loan.

Closing day

CLOSING QUESTIONS BUYERS ASK:

How much do I bring?

If you finance, your lender sends a Closing Disclosure at least 3 business days before you sign your loan documents. Title confirms the exact wire amount 1 to 2 days before.

Can I bring a personal check?

No. Funds must be wired or a cashier's check.

What do I bring to signing?

A valid government photo ID. Plan on 1 to 2 hours.

When do I get keys?

After the deed records with Maricopa County, usually the afternoon of closing day. I call you the moment it records.

Before closing day:

schedule utilities, internet and trash in your name, and forward your mail.

Returning buyer fast track

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You know the basics. Skim this page, then fill in the worksheet with me. Pages 03 to 18 stay here for reference.

What changed since you last bought

A signed buyer agreement comes before any tour. Required of every REALTOR and MLS agent since August 2024. It is an industry rule, not a law. Compensation is written into it and negotiated up front. See **How I get paid** (p12).

Seller-paid agent compensation is no longer a given. I check each listing before we tour.

Arizona forms were revised in 2025 and 2026, including the purchase contract, Buyer Advisory and Wire Fraud Advisory. The process is the same. The wording moved.

Buying in Arizona for the first time? Read **Contract deadlines** (p07) and **Inspections** (p15). The 10-day inspection period and the BINSR process are Arizona-specific.

SKIP IF YOU ALREADY KNOW IT — The step-by-step overview, the paperwork descriptions, and the inspection list.

✓ Do not skip

- [ ] Sign the buyer agreement and disclosures
- [ ] Get a current pre-approval, even if you had one last year. Rates and rules move
- [ ] Confirm your buy box on the worksheet
- [ ] Agree what a winning offer looks like: price ceiling, earnest money, close date, concessions
- [ ] Review the contract deadlines table (p07)
- [ ] Read the wire fraud section (p17). It is the one mistake you cannot undo

Your consultation worksheet

We fill this in together. It becomes the brief for your search.

YOU

Who is buying, and whose names go on title?

Why now? What changes when you move?

Move-in date you are aiming for

Do you own a home now? Sell first, buy first, or keep it?

Lease end date, if renting

Best way and time to reach you

MONEY

Paying cash or financing?

Lender, and pre-approval amount

Monthly payment you are comfortable with, all in

Down payment and closing funds available

Any funds coming from a gift, a sale or a retirement account?

Your consultation worksheet

THE HOUSE

Areas or ZIP codes

Bedrooms and bathrooms, minimum

Square footage range

Deal-breakers

Top 3 must-haves, then up to 7 nice-to-haves

1
2
3

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

Pool	☐ want	☐ fine either way	☐ no
HOA	☐ fine	☐ prefer none	☐ no
Condition	☐ move-in ready	☐ light updates	☐ full project

Garage, RV parking, casita, single level, lot size

Your consultation worksheet

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

How do you want updates (call, text, email, in person), and how fast do you want new listings?

Who else weighs in on the decision?

Your offer style: strongest terms up front, or negotiate hard?

Notes

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