



BUYER GUIDEBOOK

YOUR CONNECTION TO HOME

WELCOME

YOUR CONNECTION TO HOME



We're so glad you've chosen to work with us. At St.Clair Collective, our promise is to make sure all of your real estate needs are exceeded throughout each step of the homebuying process.

We understand that moving in any sort of capacity can make anyone feel somewhat anxious. You are leaving the familiar for the unfamiliar. It's financially stressful, and you may also worry about your family's adjusting to a new place.

You may have a lot of questions, and we know it can seem overwhelming. Don't worry—that's why we're here. This guidebook is created just for you. It will be a valuable resource as we go through the process together, but please know that we'll be staying in constant contact with you throughout the process.

Our focus is on your complete satisfaction every step of the way, no matter what it takes. And from here we start our journey...

Whitney St. Clair



TABLE

of contents

3 MEET THE TEAM

4 SUCCESSFUL HOMEBUYING
PROCESS

5 FINANCING

7 THE SEARCH

8 PRESENTING AN
OFFER

9 NEGOTIATIONS &
ACCEPTANCE

10 PREPARING TO CLOSE
CONTINGENCIES
INSPECTIONS
LOAN SATISFACTION
FINAL STEPS

15 CLOSING DAY
CLOSING CHECKLIST

17 WHAT OUR CLIENTS
SAY

meet the TEAM



When you work with us, you're not just hiring a single individual to help sell your home. You're enlisting the efforts of an entire team of skilled professionals who are trained and ready to roll up their sleeves and work on your behalf. From marketing & listing preparation, to negotiations - our team has you covered.

We have built strong relationships and developed in-depth knowledge of the local market over our years in the industry, and we have the resources necessary to align our expertise towards achieving your goals.

In addition to our team agents, we enlist the services of a multi-member Transaction Management team to handle administration & all broker compliance documentation.



WHITNEY ST. CLAIR
PRINCIPAL | REALTOR®

Whitney is a seasoned agent, currently dual licensed in California and Arizona, with the #1 Brokerage nationwide COMPASS. Her power is in her extended nationwide network of 28,000+ agents across 70+ regions with COMPASS. She is currently ranked TOP 1% in Maricopa County. When not working, you can find her chasing her two boys around the Valley to keep up with their football & lacrosse games, or hosting big dinners with extended family.



NOELLE COOK
REALTOR®

Originally from Seattle, Washington, Noelle moved to Arizona in 2015 in search of sunshine. She met Whitney while looking to buy her first property, and the client/agent relationship quickly blossomed into a friendship. With a background in Mass Media, Noelle serves as the heart of marketing for St. Clair Collective. When she's not studying to learn more about the real estate industry, she can be found teaching yoga around the valley.

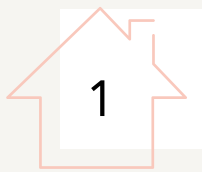
SUCCESSFUL

homebuying process

We know that buying a home can be stressful, and that's why we're here.

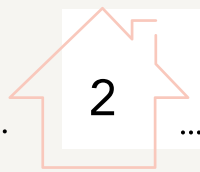
We want to help you purchase a property that fulfills your wishlist, within your desired timeline and for a fair price. Using a combination of search methods and negotiating power, we will make it a priority that your offer is accepted. As your trusted advisors, we'll be there to guide you throughout the homebuying process to ensure that your experience is as seamless and stress-free as possible. From the initial search, to negotiations, to closing day and beyond, we will work hard for you every step of the way.

WHAT TO EXPECT



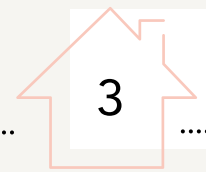
Establish a Budget

- Obtain pre-qualification through a certified lender
- Establish a budget, analyzing all expenses, debts & reserves



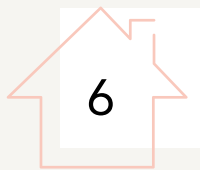
Create a Wishlist

- Prioritize a wishlist of home features including neighborhood, home size, amenities and design style



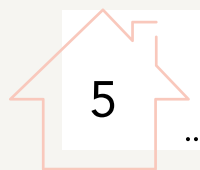
Begin the Search

- A custom MLS search will be created for you
- Schedule blocks of time for showings & open houses



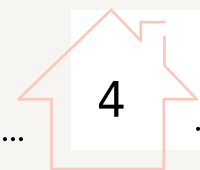
Final Details

- Final walk-through inspection of the home, confirm all requested repairs were made
- Finalize the financing with lender
- Receive clear to close from lender



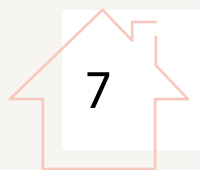
Under Contract

- Arrange Earnest Money Deposit
- Perform necessary home inspections. We will negotiate any repair requests
- Lender-required appraisal



Offer & Negotiation

- We will assist you in compiling a compelling offer & negotiate seller counteroffers, if applicable
- Review & understand all the terms of the contract



Closing

- Review closing documents
- Sign closing documents
- Receive keys and celebrate your new home!

smart FINANCING

The very first step in the home buying process is to obtain a financial pre-approval or pre-qualification. This documentation is required to accompany any offer we make on a property, in order to demonstrate you are a serious & qualified buyer. Having this in hand before we start searching will save us time & make sure we don't miss out on the perfect home opportunity.

If purchasing in cash, we will still need to obtain a proof of funds statement from your financial adviser or banker prior to submitting any offers.

LENDING PROCESS

- 1 Pre-Approval**
Obtain full pre-approval by gathering all financial data requested. Discuss loan products & rates.
- 2 Home Shopping**
Based on pre-approval, decide on a budget and begin shopping for your next home!
- 3 Credit Approval**
We recommend sending your file to underwriting for credit approval to make your offers stand out to sellers
- 4 Negotiation**
We'll submit & negotiate offers to lead us to a successful acceptance. Now, we're officially in Escrow.
- 5 Application**
Finalize loan application within 48 hours, lock in rate & payment. Gather any additional financial documentation
- 6 Verification**
Underwriter reviews your file, the appraisal & the property itself. A few last minute documents may be requested.
- 7 Conditions**
Once the underwriter approves your application, we are "clear to close." Sign Closing Disclosure 3 Days prior to close.
- 8 Closing**
The down payment is sent to title company, and final closing documents signed. Congratulations!

LOAN APPROVAL DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

A mortgage lender will gather all your financial information including income, debts, reserves and credit score, to determine the amount you will be able to borrow. The following documents may be requested through this process:

- Two Years of Tax Returns
- W2s, 1099s and Pay Stubs (last pay stub of the previous year + most recent two pay stubs)
- Bank Statements, minimum 2 months
- Retirement Account Statements
- Savings & Investment Accounts
- Student Loan Statements
- Misc. Loan or Debt Statements
- Letter of Gifting, if receiving down payment assistance from family
- Photo ID
- Renting History
- Credit History (or approval to run credit)

PRE-QUALIFICATION VS. PRE-APPROVAL

Pre-Qualification - The first step in the lending process.

It determines if you qualify for a loan and if so, how much you qualify for. Loan pre-qualification does not include an analysis of your credit report or an in-depth look at finances. Nothing official, but it gives a good rough estimate of the expected APPROVED loan amount.

Pre-Approval - It takes the mortgage process one step further.

With Pre-Approval, you will receive a conditional commitment in writing with the exact loan amount. It sets a comfortable home shopping budget and shows sellers you are serious about buying, and that you are close to an actual mortgage approval. We always recommend pre-approval prior to submitting an offer.

HOMEBUYING AFFORDABILITY

Many wonder if they should continue to rent to avoid the maintenance of homeownership. The benefits of investing in a home include appreciation, home equity, tax deductions, and deductible expenses. While there can be high upfront costs, a home can be a good long-term investment which builds equity with time. Real estate appreciates not just because of the home itself, but the property it sits on. Here is a idea of what you can purchase, versus paying \$2,000 a month in rent.

Loan Product	CONV. 30YR FIXED	VA 30YR FIXED	FHA 30YR FIXED
Purchase Price	\$400,000	\$342,000	\$315,000
Down Payment	20%	0%	3.5%
Total Payment Includes Principal, Interest, Insurance, & Property Taxes	\$2,130.25 based on 4.625% Int. Rate	\$2,158.27 based on 4.375% Int. Rate	\$2,137.96 based on 4.375% Int. Rate

RECOMMENDED LENDERS

BRENT NARDECCHIA
HIGH PLACE MORTGAGE, LLC
602 • 463 • 3780
BRENT@HIGHPLACEMORTGAGE.COM

COURTNEY CROWDER
HOMEOWNERS FINANCIAL GROUP
480 • 305 • 8525
CCROWDER@HOMEOWNERSFG.COM

TOM MAISON
FAIRWAY INDEPENDENCE
602 • 206 • 3144
TOM.MAISON@FAIRWAYMC.COM

the SEARCH

Once you have your finances in order, the fun of looking for the perfect home begins! I will set you up on an automatic search through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), which is the REALTOR-exclusive database for listing properties. The moment a home fitting your search criteria is listed for sale, it will be sent to your inbox. If we ever need to adjust the search criteria, just let me know and I can make any change you need. Make sure to let me know which homes pique your interest and we will set up some showings.



**WE TAKE YOUR REAL ESTATE GOAL AND
BREAK IT DOWN, STEP BY STEP.**



TELL US ABOUT YOU

We invite you to fill out this short questionnaire to help us understand what kind of home you're looking for. Consider what's a 'must-have' and what's a 'negotiable.' Do you have a lot of tools requiring garage storage? Does your family enjoy swimming or enjoy the outdoors? Where do your kids go to school? All of these will help us find the best match for you. Please, take a few moments and fill out the survey using the QR Code below.



←
scan me

presenting an OFFER

Once we've found 'the one' - it's time to present a compelling & competitive offer. I will do my research to make sure we understand fair market value for the property. Collectively, we will decide on the best price to offer, being cautious not to offend the seller. We'll also put together the strongest terms we're able to offer, which will ensure the seller we can deliver a stress-free escrow.



TERMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Sales price is not the only important factor in a compelling offer.

Sellers will also look at the following terms to determine their confidence in a buyer, and ultimately whether to accept:

- **Pre-Qualification & Proof of Funds**
- **Earnest Money Deposit (Escrow Deposit or EMD)**
Recommended 1-3% of the purchase price, this is a sign of good faith to show the seller you are a serious buyer.
- **Financing**
What percentage of the purchase price is financed vs. a cash down payment
- **Closing Date (Close of Escrow or COE)**
Typically 30 calendar days after the offer is accepted. Seller's may find a shorter escrow period more appealing
- **Inspection Contingencies**
Typically the buyer has 10 days to perform inspections on the home, and terminate or renegotiate the contract if any of the inspections come back unacceptable

handling NEGOTIATIONS

SELLER COUNTEROFFER

This is where our team thrives - negotiations.

It's not uncommon for a seller to receive multiple offers on a property - many of which will be very similar. When a seller chooses to "counteroffer" they may send one, two or many counteroffers. In this situation, it's important to be very timely with our response and put the absolute best terms forward. We will advise you on what can be adjusted from the original terms, but keep you in a comfortable position should the seller accept your new offer. A few ways we may negotiate our offer to be in favor include:

- Increasing the purchase price
- Increasing the down payment & Earnest Money Deposit
- Adjusting the escrow period based on seller desires
- Relinquishing inspection contingency
- Paying for all title & escrow fees
- Offering a lease back to sellers after close of escrow



WE WILL ALWAYS PUT OUR CLIENTS AT THE FOREFRONT AND FIGHT FOR WHAT THEY DESERVE. IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM & GET THEM TO THEIR DESTINATION. WE WANT EACH OF MY CLIENTS TO WAKE UP IN A HOME THEY LOVE, AN ACCOMPLISHMENT THEY ARE PROUD OF.

ACCEPTANCE

Congratulations! Your offer has been accepted and we are officially 'In Escrow.'

There are many moving parts during the Escrow period, and alongside our Title/Escrow team, we are here to guide you each step of the way. First thing's first, we'll want to check off these boxes right away:

➤ **Make Earnest Money Deposit:**

The EMD is due by check, cashier's check or wire transfer within 48 hours of an accepted offer. You will receive instructions from the Escrow Company on how to arrange payment. The funds are placed in a neutral escrow account and will be credited towards the total down payment of the home.

➤ **Schedule Inspections:**

We will advise you which inspections to order based on the property. The last date to renegotiate or cancel a contract due to anything that comes up in inspections is typically within 10 days.

➤ **Obtain Homeowners Insurance:**

Start contacting Insurance companies for quotes immediately. Your lender will require the home is insurable before the end of the inspection period



preparing TO CLOSE

CONTINGENCIES

In real estate, a "contingency" refers to a condition of the Agreement of Sale that needs to occur in order for the transaction to keep moving forward. Consider these a checklist of processes that are required before closing. As the buyer, there are required contingencies and others that you can choose whether or not to include.

Our team will help you understand what contingencies are all about, when they're most likely to be necessary, and what you can do to make sure you're in the best position possible for releasing contingencies when they are due. The most common contingencies are:

- Inspection Contingencies
- Financing Contingency
- Appraisal Contingency
- Title Contingency
- Home Sale Contingency

We'll discuss each of these in greater detail. Passing the contingency period, there are just two more stages before closing: a title search and transfer of ownership.



INSPECTIONS

During the inspection period, you have the right to hire a professional to inspect the condition of the home. The inspection will uncover any issues in the home that would have otherwise been unknown.

The standard home inspector's report will cover the condition of the home's heating system; central air conditioning system; interior plumbing and electrical systems; the roof, attic and visible insulations; walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors; the foundation, basement and structural components. We will schedule specialists to take a closer look at your roof, HVAC, plumbing or swimming pool, if required.

You will receive a written report of the inspection that outlines any areas of concern. You may be present for the inspection if you would like to ask the inspector any questions.

After the inspection, we will sit down together to review the findings and make a request for repairs or seller credit towards anything of concern. This is another opportunity for negotiations and we will work hard to ensure a favorable outcome.



ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS YOU MAY NEED:

- Four-Point Inspection may be required by your homeowner's insurance if the home is more than 30 years old
- WDO Inspection - Ask your lender if your loan requires any certain inspections such as a Wood Destroying Organism (WDO) inspection.
- Lead-Based Paint Inspection - If the home was built prior to 1978, a lead-based paint inspection is recommended

RECOMMENDED INSPECTORS

SQUARE ONE
HOME INSPECTIONS
503 • 718 • 4719
SQUARE1AZ.COM

CHECKLIST HOME
INSPECTIONS
480 • 660 • 5992
CHECKLISTAZ.COM

AJF
ENGINEERING
480 • 661 • 8888
AJFENGINEERING.COM

LOAN SATISFACTION

APPRAISAL

An appraisal is an estimate of the value of the property by a licensed professional appraiser. Once any problems during the inspection are solved, the appraisal will be ordered by the lender and paid for by you. The goal of the appraisal is to verify the value of the property for the lender and to protect you from overpaying. The contract is contingent upon whether the appraisal comes in at or above the purchase price. If the appraisal comes back short, we will be back to the negotiating table.

LOAN STATUS UPDATE (LSU)

Your lender will continue to work on loan satisfaction. Each Friday, we will request an LSU from the lender so we can see what has been done and what items are outstanding. They may request additional documentation from you including employment verification, income clarification or outstanding loan balances.

HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE

Your lender will require you to obtain a homeowner's insurance policy. You will need to get the lender this information before closing.

ESTIMATED NET SHEET

A buyer estimate or buyer net sheet gives you an estimated amount of all expenses. The document lists a number of costs including down payment, property fees, taxes, mortgage fees, and title fees order to transfer the deed. At any time during the transaction, you can request an updated net sheet from your Escrow Officer.

CLEAR TO CLOSE:

The magic words! It means the mortgage underwriter has officially approved all documentation required to fund the loan. All that remains is the signing of closing documents.



IMPORTANT:

It is very important not to make any major job changes, major purchases, or open new credit cards or lines of credit, as any of these activities could alter your qualifications for a loan.



FINAL STEPS

TITLE SEARCH

The title company will conduct a title search to find out if there are any outstanding mortgage liens, judgements, restrictions, easements, leases, unpaid taxes, or any other restrictions that would impact your ownership associated with the property. Once the title is found to be valid, the title company will issue a title insurance policy which protects lenders or owners against claims or legal fees that may arise over ownership of the property. This will also be a part of your closing costs.

HOME WARRANTY PLAN

A Home Warranty Plan is a good idea for the first year of homeownership. A home warranty plan covers service, repair, or replacement of your major home systems and appliances. It provides a financial buffer in case a big-ticket item malfunctions, and it can extend the protection of manufacturers' warranties after they expire. Depending on the sale, either the seller or buyer will cover this cost for one year. You then have the option to renew each year of home ownership.



FINAL WALK THROUGH

We aim to conduct a final walkthrough of your new property within the last 24 hours prior to closing. We want to push this timeline to the last 24 hours, to ensure the home is delivered in the condition agreed upon, all requested repairs have been completed, and nothing has been damaged or removed.

CLOSING *day*

Whew, this is it! Closing Day is finally here.

You'll be signing a lot of paperwork today, all of it important! But don't worry, our team and trusted partners will get you through it all.

After signing, the deed will be transferred to you and the county will be notified of the change in ownership. Once the county alerts us of 'recordation' our team will notify you, and will arrange key delivery. You're officially a homeowner!

We hope that this process was smooth and relatively pain-free! We truly appreciate working alongside you in this significant transaction, and thank you for your trust in our team.

Congratulations!





CLOSING CHECKLIST

PRE-CLOSE OF ESCROW

- Make sure you've obtained homeowner's insurance and send to your lender
- Review the closing settlement statement & ensure you have the funds for closing costs
- Final walk-through
- Wire funds to closing company
- Bring your driver's license or passport to closing table

POST-CLOSE OF ESCROW

- Make copies of all of the closing documents and store them in a safe place.
- Change the locks and update any keypad passcodes
- Start a home maintenance list
- Update your address on all of the following:
 - Friends and family
 - Work
 - Banks/Financial Institutions
 - Subscriptions
 - Utility Services
 - Insurance companies
 - Drivers License/ID Cards (DMV)
 - Schools
 - Medical Offices
- Meet the neighbors!

MOVING CHECKLIST

- Create a Move Plan & Choose a Moving Service
- Sort, Purge, Donate & Organize
- Start Packing
- Prepare Yourself and Your Family
- Take Care of Your Home and Car
- Make a Plan for Moving Day
- Go Over the Trip Details
- Get the New House Ready
- Schedule Utility Turn Off & On Services



WHAT OUR CLIENTS *are saying*

"Whitney was such a pleasure to work with. She made what was a stressful situation [needing to find a home out of state], actually a fun and exciting experience. Whitney eased my mind and anxiety about moving to a new state. She was always available to answer my numerous questions, and would go above and beyond to deliver information about the communities we were interested in. I highly recommend Whitney to anyone who is moving into Arizona. She was patient, kind hearted, with a work ethic off the charts. Most important, she made us feel like we were family. We found our forever home with her and are so grateful."

- Jim & Amy, Buyers

"Jordyn helped us find our first home as we welcomed our first child. She made the process so easy. At our initial meeting she really listened to us and what we were looking for. When it came time to view potential houses, she was so organized and made the day go so smoothly, maximizing the number of houses we were able to view. For first time homebuyers, her communication made us feel so comfortable and knowledgeable about the entire process. Besides being truly great at her job, she is the sweetest person. I would recommend Jordyn to anyone looking to buy a home. It was such a great experience working with her."

- Holly M., Buyer

"Ciara was such a huge help in finding us our home! We were a bit concerned about the current market and our ability to beat out so many qualified families but Ciara stayed on top of the process, had us update our offer to stay competitive and helped us beat out 20 other offers to move into our house! She is professional, friendly and eager to do whatever it takes for her clients. Thank you Ciara!"

- Alivia & George K., Buyers

"I had an amazing experience working with St.Clair Collective. I couldn't believe how responsive Whitney and her team were to all of my requests and questions, and they knew far more than I ever hoped about the process of buying and selling a home. I couldn't recommend them enough to anyone looking for peace of mind when selling a home!"

- Lynn B., Buyer & Seller

"Never before have I worked with an agent who was so engaged in the process of finding me a property. Kristine was beyond prompt in responding to me & always thoroughly answered my many questions... this also helped put aside stressors. I could relax in the process and let her handle the specific details. Kristine is a true gem and I feel beyond blessed to have had her every step of the way in finding me my new home."

- Shirley R., Buyer

"I can't even begin to describe how amazing Whitney is. From the beginning, she was very attentive, going out of her way to help us find our dream home. She did whatever it took for us. She was so genuine, and we are already looking forward to working with her again for our next purchase."

- Jesse & Jennifer, Buyers



WE KNEW SHE WAS FIGHTING FOR US TO GET THE BEST DEAL POSSIBLE.

"Whitney was an immense asset in the search for a new home. We had a long wish list, and had been searching for almost two years before meeting Whitney at an open house, and we knew right away we wanted to her to help us. She is extremely knowledgeable in all the communities and was willing to meet us anywhere at any time."

Whitney and her team shine when it comes to communication. They understand that the process can be stressful and was empathetic - always available to chat and above all else, we knew she was fighting for us to get the best deal possible. We are fortunate to have met Whitney. She literally made our dream house come true."

- Matt & Mindy, Buyers

THANK YOU
for your trust

 ST. CLAIR
COLLECTIVE
YOUR CONNECTION TO HOME

LAUNCH
POWERED BY
COMPASS



GET IN TOUCH

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