

WHAT TO  
EXPECT  
BEFORE YOU  
START HOUSE  
HUNTING

# FIRST TIME BUYER GUIDE

FOR MESA AND THE EAST VALLEY

NEED A HOUSE.  
I'm your girl

# THE HOME BUYING BREAKDOWN

01

## MEET YOUR MODERN AGENT & ESTABLISH YOUR PLAN

Set up a Zoom or Facetime call so we can meet and establish your specific game plan. This includes getting your pre-approval, talking about your goals, timelines, home search criteria, deal breakers, must haves, all the things.

02

## GET PRE-APPROVED

You will meet with a lender to discuss budget, loan types and provide necessary documentation. The lender will review how much you can spend along with how much you are comfortable spending. You will discuss payments and what not to do while in the home buying process. You will finish up with a pre-approval.

03

## DIGITAL HOME SEARCH AND HOME TOURS

I'll set you up on a digital home search based on the criteria discussed at your initial consult. From there, we'll coordinate in person or virtual showings based on listings you're interested in that match your criteria. 24 hour notice required for most showings.

04

## YOU FOUND THE ONE - LET'S WRITE AN OFFER

First, we need to talk strategy. Are there other offers on the table, how long has the home been on the market, how does the list price compare to other homes in the area, what can we do to accommodate the sellers, what is the assessed value, etc. How do these compare to the goals we discussed in our initial consultation and what contingencies do we need to include? We'll use digital signatures to sign offer docs.

05

## POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS

Be prepared to negotiate with the sellers. They may counter our offer on price, closing date, inclusions, etc. From here we'll determine our next steps and proceed accordingly. It's important not to let your emotions get involved here. We need to look at this logically so you can make smart real estate decisions.

06

## YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED - YAY! HERE'S WHAT'S NEXT

All offer documentation will be forwarded to your lender. You will submit your earnest money to the title office, start your loan application and schedule your home inspection. I'll be sending you a timeline of dates and deadlines along with weekly updates to keep you on track and in the loop.

# THE BREAKDOWN CONTINUED...

07

## SCHEDULE YOUR HOME INSPECTION

I will share my list of Home Inspector recommendations but feel free to choose anyone who is licensed in the state of Wisconsin. They will coordinate a date and time to do your in person home inspection and share a digital report following the inspection. I encourage you to attend the inspection and learn as much as you can about the house.

08

## COMPLETE LOAN APPLICATION AND APPRAISAL

You will start the loan application process with your lender and submit all required documentation. They will then order an Appraisal to be done by an independent 3rd party Appraiser to verify the market value of the home.

08

## SATISFY ANY REMAINING CONTINGENCIES

Between now and closing is when we'll need to make sure all contingencies in the offer have been satisfied. If there were repairs required from the home inspection, a home sale contingency on your end, other inspections being done, etc. Once these are completed we're almost there!

09

## LOAN COMMITMENT AND FINAL WALK THROUGH

Once your contingencies have been satisfied and your financing has been approved, you'll receive your final loan commitment and clear to close from the lender. Our final step prior to closing is to schedule a final walk through of the property. We'll want to go through and make sure everything is as agreed upon with the sellers.

10

## CLOSING DAY, KEYS AND CELEBRATION

It's finally closing day! Time to sign all the official paperwork and get the keys to your new home! Plan to arrive to our scheduled place of closing on time and with a check in the amount determined with your lender. Bring Photo IDs and plan to be here for about 45 minutes. Once everything has cleared, you'll receive your keys and are off to celebrate!

# THINGS TO *think about*

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## **01. Do you have an emergency Fund?**

When you own a home it's important to have money set aside for unknown expenses such as home maintenance / repairs, increase in property taxes, an emergency plan for paying your mortgage in the event you wouldn't have income, and other misc. items.

## **02. Can you cover the cost of repairs?**

While owning your home has a long list of wonderful benefits, it also comes with added responsibility. There isn't a landlord to call if your refrigerator stops working or you have a problem with your plumbing. You'll want to be prepared for unknown expenses.

## **03. Do you know your credit score?**

If you're a few months out from starting this process, you'll want to know what your current credit score is as this can impact the type of loan you qualify for. Meet with a lender to see if there are actions you should take to try and increase it before starting the actual house hunting process.

## **04. How long will you live in the house?**

When deciding which home is the right fit, consider what your needs are now and in the near future. Knowing an average timeframe of how long you expect to stay in your first home will help you to focus on the features that are the most important.

## **05. What are you comfortable spending monthly?**

The amount of your mortgage payment isn't the only expense that comes with owning a home. You'll also need to budget for taxes, homeowners insurance and possibly private mortgage insurance. Decide what you're comfortable spending monthly when figuring out your budget.

## **06. What are the most important features you want in a home?**

Remember to prioritize the features that can't be changed. You can always get new carpet or add a fresh coat of paint but things like location, lot size and number of bedrooms can't be changed.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK *a real estate agent*

1. WHEN DO I START THE PROCESS?

2. WHO DO I TALK TO FIRST?

3. WHAT DOES MY CREDIT SCORE NEED TO BE?

4. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM DOWN PAYMENT?

5. HOW MUCH CASH DO I NEED TO HAVE SAVED?

6. HOW MANY HOUSES WILL I LOOK AT BEFORE FINDING THE RIGHT ONE?

7. HOW WILL YOU SEARCH FOR MY HOUSE?

8. HOW MUCH DO I OFFER ONCE I FIND THE HOUSE I WANT TO BUY?

9. HOW DO I COMPETE WITH OTHER OFFERS?

10. HOW LONG UNTIL I GET THE KEYS TO MY NEW HOUSE?

# STARTER KIT:

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*Dear future home buyer: It's important to remember that you shouldn't start this process alone! Did you know most of my clients meet with me 6+ months before they're even ready to start the home buying process? My goal is to equip you with all of the tools necessary to start this journey as prepared as possible. The first step in that is to schedule a phone appointment or coffee chat with me so I can learn about your goals and set you up on a plan to achieve them.*



No. 1: Find a Real Estate Agent that you like and feel comfortable with. You'll be spending a lot of time together during this process so who you work with is important.



No. 3: Work with your Real Estate Agent to set up a custom home search that meets your wants / needs.

Then start saving homes that you want to set up private tours for.



No. 2: Get pre-approved so you know how much you can afford, (remember to consider what you are comfortable spending monthly, not just what the approval amount is for).



No 4. Leave the rest up to your awesome Real Estate Agent. They will walk you through all of the questions you have and guide you through each step of the home buying process.

*\*I have a list of trusted lender recommendations who I've worked with directly if you need a referral!*

# BEFORE YOU GO...



I'm **GALE CULVER**, your go-to real estate girl in Mesa and Prescott.



I love selling houses, but I also love tacos and an unlimited number of coffees!.

**FOLLOW ME  
@GaleAZRealtor  
AND SAY HI!**

My ideal weekend includes brewery date with my husband, puppy snuggles and Friends reruns.



A hill I'll die on: social media is meant to be SOCIAL, not salesy, so I share a lot of behind the scenes on IG @GaleAZRealtor.



I'm obsessed with Mesa and all things home and local.

If you see me around town, please say hey!

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