ListerPros

FREE AGENT GUIDE

FOR ARIZONA LISTING AGENTS

# The Concessions Playbook

In May 2026, 65.6% of Phoenix sellers helped with buyer costs (Redfin, June 2026). Here is how to make that money work harder than a price cut: the caps, the payment math, the seller scripts, and the rules.

Loan-by-loan cap table · Same $9,000, three ways · Listing-table scripts · Every stat sourced

WHY THIS MATTERS

# The market handed buyers the pen

Phoenix agents are working one of the heaviest concession markets in the country while listings nationally take a median 25 days to go pending, five days slower than a year earlier (Zillow, August 2026). The agents winning listings right now are not the ones cutting price fastest. They are the ones who structure help on purpose.

Redfin, June 2026 · Zillow July 2026 Market Report, August 2026

**65.6%**

of Phoenix sellers gave buyers a concession in May 2026, up from 50.7% a year earlier, among the highest of the 28 metros tracked

Redfin, June 2026

**46.2%**

of U.S. sellers gave a concession in May 2026, the highest May share in records going back to 2019

Redfin, June 2026

**27.1%**

of U.S. listings took a price cut in July 2026, so your competition is already moving on price

Zillow, August 2026

### WHAT COUNTS AS A CONCESSION

**Use Redfin's definition with your sellers:** money that reduces the buyer's cost of purchase. Repairs, closing-cost credits, and mortgage-rate buydowns count. A price cut does not (Redfin, April 2025). Plenty of 2026 deals end up using both tools. The skill is knowing which one this week calls for, and this guide is that decision made in advance.

### THE REFRAME

**This is leverage, not bad news.** Two out of three Phoenix sellers are already helping with buyer costs, which means the listing appointment now has a new question: does this agent know how to structure help, or only how to cut price? Walk in with buydown math, credit scripts, and compliant wording and you are the specialist in the room. Tucson runs its own rhythm and has no verified metro number in these releases, so pull the same read from your MLS before you quote one.

THE RULES

# Know the caps before you negotiate

Two rulebooks govern seller help: loan program caps on what a seller may contribute, and the post-settlement rules on what you may say about money. Know both cold and you can answer any offer the same day.

Fannie Mae Selling Guide B3-4.1-02, May 2025 · HUD Handbook 4000.1 · VA.gov · NAR Settlement FAQs, 2024

| BUYER'S LOAN | SELLER CAP | THE FINE PRINT |
|---|---|---|
| **Conventional, under 10% down** | 3% of price | Seller-funded rate buydowns count toward the cap (Fannie Mae Selling Guide B3-4.1-02, May 2025) |
| **Conventional, 10 to 25% down** | 6% of price | Same rulebook; common-and-customary seller-paid fees do not count toward it |
| **Conventional, over 25% down** | 9% of price | Rare in practice; most deals never get near this ceiling |
| **Conventional, investment property** | 2% of price | Applies at any down payment (Fannie Mae Selling Guide B3-4.1-02, May 2025) |
| **FHA** | 6% program cap | Program rule per HUD Handbook 4000.1 (FHA); confirm specifics with the buyer's lender |
| **VA** | 4% of reasonable value | Closing-cost credits are not limited; the 4% cap covers funding-fee credit, debt payoff, prepaids and other things of value (VA.gov, current) |

BEFORE YOU QUOTE A CAP

**Program rules change and lender overlays are real:** confirm the cap with the buyer's lender on every single deal. These percentages are loan program limits on credits to the buyer. They are not commissions, and they say nothing about what any agent charges, which is always negotiable. For contract questions, talk to your broker or an attorney.

WHAT CHANGED IN AUGUST 2024

**The settlement-era split:** since the NAR practice changes took effect August 17, 2024, offers of compensation are banned from the MLS, and buyers sign written agreements before touring (NAR Settlement FAQs, 2024). Concession fields stayed legal: you may advertise a credit to the buyer as long as it is not conditioned on the use of, or payment to, a buyer's agent. Keep the two money conversations in separate sentences, separate fields, and separate documents. Two things never belong in your public remarks: anything naming what a buyer's agent gets paid, and any credit that depends on who represents the buyer.

WORDING THAT STAYS INSIDE THE LINES

"Seller offering $10,000 toward buyer's closing costs, prepaids, or rate buydown with acceptable offer."

"Seller will consider concessions; bring your buyer's numbers."

"Ask about a seller-paid 2-1 rate buydown on this home."

"$8,000 flooring and paint credit available at closing."

"Seller open to credits toward rate buydown or closing costs with strong offer."

"Concessions considered with acceptable price and timeline."

THE MATH

# A dollar of rate beats a dollar of price

Payment-constrained buyers feel $500 a month, not $9,000 of price. Every figure below assumes a $400,000 loan, 30-year fixed at 6.66%, the Freddie Mac average for the week of August 27, 2026, principal and interest only. Illustrative: lender pricing varies daily.

Freddie Mac Primary Mortgage Market Survey, August 2026 · Confirm live pricing with the buyer's lender

**6.66%**

30-year fixed average for the week of August 27, 2026, vs 6.56% a year earlier

Freddie Mac PMMS, August 2026

**$2,571**

monthly principal and interest on a $400,000 loan at that rate

Illustrative, computed at the PMMS rate

| THE MOVE | WHAT THE BUYER FEELS | WHEN | BEST FOR |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2-1 buydown, about $9,175** | Payment drops $506 a month in year one and $259 a month in year two | Months 1 to 24 | Payment-squeezed conventional and FHA buyers |
| **Price cut of $9,175** | Payment drops $59 a month | Spread over 30 years | Cash buyers, appraisal-tight deals, dropping into the next search band |
| **Closing-cost credit of $9,175** | Cash to close falls $9,175; payment unchanged | At the closing table | Solid income, thin savings: VA buyers and first-timers |

THE PART MOST AGENTS GET WRONG

**A concession cannot fix a wrong price.** Redfin's own agents name the two forces behind record concessions: buyer leverage and sellers pricing too high (Redfin, June 2026). So diagnose before you prescribe. Low views and low saves is almost always price: cut. Healthy views and saves with no offers is a payment or condition problem: sweeten. The week-three decision page turns that into a calendar.

THE SELLER TALK

# Set the budget at the listing table

The worst time to invent a concession strategy is 9 PM with an offer expiring at noon. Decide the number at the listing appointment, while it is still theory. A seller who has already spent the money emotionally answers offers in hours, not days.

### THE SETUP

In this market, [65% plus] of Phoenix sellers are helping with buyer costs. I would rather we pick your number tonight than under deadline with an offer in hand. If a strong offer needs help, what is our ceiling: $[5,000], $[10,000], or $[15,000]?

### THE REFRAME

A $[9,175] credit toward the buyer's rate can move their payment about $[506] a month in year one. The same amount as a price cut moves it about $[59]. Same money, very different sale.

### THE COUNTER

We are at your number on price. Instead of coming down $[15,000], seller will contribute $[9,175] toward your buyer's rate. They get a lower payment than the cut would buy them, and we keep the [June 12] close date.

1. **Pull comps with the credits showing.** Ask what nearby solds actually paid toward buyer costs. Heavy-concession comps quietly overstate neighborhood prices, so know the real nets before promising a seller their neighbor's number.
2. **Build the net sheet three ways.** Full price with no credit, list price with a $[9,000] credit, and a $[9,000] price cut. Sellers decide fast when the three bottom lines sit side by side.
3. **Ask the ceiling question tonight.** Run THE SETUP script above at the kitchen table. A range agreed in advance beats a panicked call with 24 hours left on an offer.
4. **Write the posture down.** Record the ceiling and the preferred structure, credit, buydown, or repairs, in your listing file so any offer gets a same-day answer.
5. **Revisit at day 7 and day 21.** The saves thresholds on the decision page tell you whether the budget stays holstered, sweetens the deal, or steps aside for a price correction.

### THE NUMBER YOU WILL NOT FIND HERE

**You will hear a going average for concession size.** No reachable primary source backs one, so no average appears in this guide, and no published research settles the right size anyway. Set the budget from your seller's net sheet and your comps' actual credits, not from folklore. The right number is the one that closes this buyer's gap.

THE DECISION

# Week three: cut or sweeten?

Views measure demand for your listing card. Saves measure demand for the home. Read them on a calendar, not on vibes, and the cut-or-concede call makes itself.

Thresholds: Zillow Research, March 2025 · Redfin, 2019 (1.2 million listings)

DAY 0

**Launch at full strength**

A new listing gets 3.4x the views of a price-dropped one (Redfin, 2019), and this window never reopens. Go live only when the full media package is ready; ListerPros returns photos within 5 hours of the end of the shoot.

DAY 2

**Views halve. That is normal.**

Redfin (2019) found views drop by half by day two and to a quarter by day seven. Do not panic over views; start counting daily saves.

DAY 7

**First verdict: count saves**

Zillow Research (March 2025): under 1 save a day averaged 41 days to pending at 95% of list. At 2 to 3 a day, 15 days at 98%. At 5 to 10, 6 days at 100%. Five is the magic number.

DAY 10

**Showings, but no offers**

Demand is real and the payment is the blocker. Add your credit wording to the remarks and keep a lender's buydown quote ready to hand any buyer's agent who calls.

DAY 14

**Low views and low saves**

That is price, not marketing. Plan one decisive cut into the next search band. Redfin (2019) measured a cut lifting one home from 17 views a day to 29 for a single day: you get one bump, so make it count.

DAY 21

**The fork: cut or sweeten**

Healthy saves with no offers: advertise the credit or buydown. Weak saves: take the decisive cut. Some deals need both; 15.7% of May 2026 U.S. sales closed with a concession and a price drop, up from 12.8% a year earlier (Redfin, June 2026).

THE PRICE CALL

[Seller name], two weeks in we have [214] views and [4] saves and no offers. Buyers are finding the home and passing at this number. I want one decisive move to $[489,000], not a drip of small ones. A fresh price earns about one day of extra attention, so we will make it count.

THE SWEETEN CALL

Good news first: showings are steady and saves are healthy, so the price is working and the payment is the sticking point. Instead of cutting $[10,000], let's advertise $[9,000] toward the buyer's rate or costs. Their year-one payment drops about $[500] a month, and we keep your price.

ARIZONA CRAFT

# Survive the inspection: the BINSR

In Arizona the deal rarely dies at the offer. It dies at the BINSR, the Buyer's Inspection Notice and Seller's Response, when a tired AC meets a nervous buyer on a 110 degree afternoon. Walk in with a posture, not a prayer.

- [ ] HVAC: age, last service, invoices in the file
- [ ] Pool: equipment age, run test, any leak history
- [ ] A written repair, credit, or price posture per big item
- [ ] Roof: type, age, last repair, post-monsoon check
- [ ] Warranties and receipts scanned into one folder
- [ ] Your broker's current AAR forms and BINSR training

### THE PRE-LIST POSTURE, TO YOUR SELLER

The [AC] is [17] years old and every inspector will lead with it. Three options: replace it now, hold a $[7,000] credit for when it comes up, or price for it. Let's pick one on purpose today, because deciding under a BINSR deadline is how escrows die.

### THE CREDIT IN LIEU, TO THE BUYER'S SIDE

We agree the [AC] is original. Rather than rushing a contractor before close, seller offers a $[7,000] credit at closing so your buyer picks the unit and the installer. We keep the [October 3] close date. Please confirm with the lender that the credit fits inside the program cap.

### DISCLOSURE DISCIPLINE

**Every credit lives in the contract,** disclosed to the lender and the appraiser, every time. No side agreements and no off-contract cash, ever: undisclosed credits sit in loan fraud territory. The same discipline protects your pricing, because heavy-credit comps quietly overstate what a neighborhood really nets. This page describes the forms; your broker and the current AAR training interpret them.

THE COMPETITION

# Beat the builder up the road

Resale listings in Queen Creek, Buckeye, Maricopa, and the far West Valley compete head-on with builder incentive machines, and the fight is sharpest at entry level: 32.1% of Phoenix starter listings took a price cut in June 2026 while starter sales still rose 3.6% year over year (Zillow, July 2026). Buyers are out there. They are negotiating like the builders taught them.

NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index, August 2026 · Zillow, July 2026

**63%**

of homebuilders were running sales incentives in August 2026

NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI, August 2026

**35%**

of builders cut prices that month

NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI, August 2026

**6%**

average builder price reduction, the machine your resale competes with

NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI, August 2026

### Match the structure, not the dollar

Builders sell a payment, not a price. When the community up the road advertises a below-market rate, answer with a seller-paid buydown plus what new builds cannot fake: mature landscaping, a finished backyard, no construction traffic.

**Wins: West Valley, Southeast Valley, Pinal corridors**

### Put the payment in the marketing

Use the compliant wording from the rules page: a dollar figure toward costs, prepaids, or a buydown with an acceptable offer. Buyer's agents filter for it, and payment shoppers finally see your listing as reachable.

**Wins: entry-level and FHA-heavy price bands**

### Win the first-week window

Builders staff staged models seven days a week; your listing gets one debut. Buyers rate photos the most useful listing feature at 81% (NAR 2026 Generational Trends). One ListerPros visit covers photo, video, aerial, 3D, and floor plans, with photos back within 5 hours of the end of the shoot.

**Wins: every price band, every season**

### Read the season

October through April brings snowbird and second-home money that negotiates price and repairs, not payment. Summer entry-level buyers feel every dollar of the monthly. Aim the same budget at what this buyer actually feels.

**Wins: Scottsdale, Oro Valley, winter-visitor pockets**

PRINT IT, PIN IT, RUN IT

# The concessions checklist

- [ ] Pull concession data on your comps before quoting any seller their neighbor's number
- [ ] Know the buyer's caps: 3, 6, or 9% conventional, FHA per HUD 4000.1, VA 4%; confirm with the lender
- [ ] Launch at full strength: the first-week window never reopens
- [ ] Week three: healthy saves means sweeten; low views and saves means one decisive cut
- [ ] Offer a credit in lieu of repairs to protect the close date
- [ ] Set the concession ceiling at the listing appointment and write it into the net sheet
- [ ] Advertise credits to the buyer only; never tie a credit to who represents the buyer
- [ ] Read day-7 saves: five a day is the magic number (Zillow Research, 2025)
- [ ] Pre-list the big three: HVAC, roof, pool equipment, with invoices in one folder
- [ ] Put every credit in the contract and disclose it to lender and appraiser

ListerPros

ListerPros has photographed Arizona real estate since 2013, for thousands of agents across Phoenix and Tucson. One visit captures photos, vertical video, aerials, 3D tour and floor plan, and everything is back within 5 hours of the end of the shoot. Guaranteed.

Every stat in this guide is sourced: the research named where it appears, 2019 to 2026. Sources on request. 

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