

FOR PHOENIX + TUCSON AGENTS

The Relocation Buyer Playbook

Out-of-state buyers hire from a screen, not a referral network. This is the remote system that wins them: one sharp intake call, video tours they can trust, steering-safe neighborhood education, and a 90-day plan that ends with keys.

The intake script

Remote tour protocol

A steering-safe matrix

Every stat sourced



WHY THIS MATTERS

Relocation buyers cannot hire the neighbor's agent

43% of buyers found their agent through a referral (NAR 2025 Profile). A buyer leaving Seattle or Sacramento has zero Arizona referrals, so they hire whoever looks most competent online and runs the cleanest remote process. Almost nobody builds a real system for them; this guide is the system.

NAR 2025 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers

19.1%

of U.S. house hunters were searching to move to another part of the country in Q1 2026, the highest share since tracking began in 2021

Redfin Migration Report, April 2026

No. 7

Phoenix's rank among U.S. relocation destinations, with a net inflow of 4,522 searchers; Seattle is the top origin city

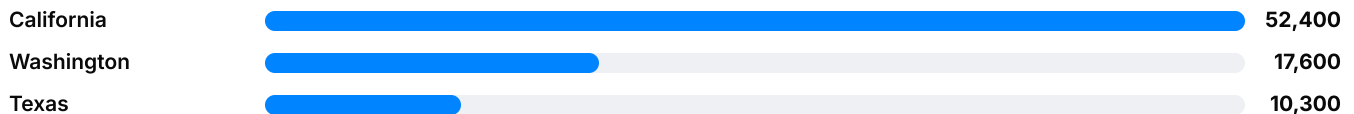
Redfin Migration Report, April 2026

235,000

people moved to Arizona from another state in the latest Census count

U.S. Census Bureau ACS, 2024

WHERE ARIZONA'S NEW NEIGHBORS COME FROM



U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2024

THE OPEN LANE

Nobody has home-field advantage here: The median buyer moved just 20 miles from their old home (NAR 2025 Profile), so most agents build a referral business and treat the long-distance buyer as a one-off favor. Meanwhile Arizona has ranked in U-Haul's top 10 growth states six straight years (U-Haul Growth Index, January 2026). Build the system once and you own a lane your competitors keep treating as an interruption.

THE FIRST CALL

Qualify the move, not just the buyer

A local buyer call asks about beds, baths, and budget. A relocation call asks about the move itself: dates, the origin-market exit, financing that works in Arizona, and how they will actually decide. Run these word for word and you will sound like the tenth relocation you closed this year, not their first.

THE TIMELINE

What date does [job / school / orders] start, and what date does your current housing end? If one of those dates slipped by 30 days, which one breaks?

THE ORIGIN SIDE

Do you need to sell a home or exit a lease in [current city] first? If it is a sale, is it listed yet, and who is handling it?

THE MONEY

Have you spoken with a lender who lends in Arizona yet? Some out-of-state pre-approvals do not travel well; I can send you [two or three] local lenders to compare against your current one.

THE TRIP

When could you fly in for a two-to-three-day decision trip? I will build the entire search backward from that date.

THE THRESHOLD

Straight question: if the right home appeared next week, would you buy it without walking it, or is that off the table? And who else needs to see it before you would write an offer?

- 1 **Reply first, reply with substance.** A relocater emailed five agents from the same portal page. The first reply with one real insight about their target area and one question usually wins the client.
- 2 **Stay in your Arizona lane.** If they need to sell in [origin city], refer a licensed agent there and coordinate the two timelines. A clean referral on the origin side marks you as the organized one.
- 3 **Book the next call before this one ends.** Time zones kill momentum. Arizona skips daylight saving time, so in summer you match Seattle and LA clocks and in winter you match Denver. Set the standing call while you are still talking.

WHAT MOST AGENTS MISS

Sign before you stream: Since August 17, 2024, a written buyer agreement must be signed before touring a home with a buyer, and NAR's settlement guidance treats a live virtual tour you conduct as a tour (NAR, Written Buyer Agreements 101, 2024). Send the agreement right after the intake call, walk them through exactly what you do and how you get paid, and remember: compensation is fully negotiable. Confirm current forms and policy with your broker before your next FaceTime showing.

THE REMOTE TOUR

A video tour they can trust from 1,500 miles away

Only 7% of buyers purchased based on a virtual tour, showing, or open house alone, without physically seeing the home (NAR REALTORS Confidence Index, July 2026). So the remote tour's real job is filtering: cut a 30-home wish list to the 6 or 8 worth a flight. Treat it like evidence gathering, not a sales video.

NAR REALTORS Confidence Index, July 2026

- 1 Agreement first.** No live virtual tour until the written buyer agreement is signed (page 2). Then book the showing like any other; you are representing them inside that house.
- 2 Stabilize and slow down.** Phone landscape, two hands or a gimbal, walk at half speed. Start at the street: the approach, both neighbors, and what sits across from the driveway.
- 3 Narrate what the camera cannot carry.** Smells, road noise, the neighbor's dogs, how the west-facing backyard feels at [4 PM]. Say the flaws out loud and point the lens at them. Trust is the product.
- 4 End on the block, not the front door.** Finish with a slow drive of the street and the route to [grocery store / freeway on-ramp]. Remote buyers fear the block more than the house.
- 5 Send the package within the hour.** The recording, the 3D tour link, the floor plan, and your honest two-line verdict. If a serious contender lacks a 3D tour or floor plan, get them made; ListerPros captures photos, video, 3D, and floor plans in a single visit.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Street approach and both neighbors first | ☐ All four exterior sides, roof line, yard walls |
| ☐ Open every door and closet; pan ceilings and floors | ☐ Backyard compass check: west-facing means summer heat |
| ☐ Run water, flush a toilet, cycle the AC on camera | ☐ Narrate smells and noise; the camera misses both |
| ☐ Show each flaw before the disclosure does | ☐ Slow drive of the block and the commute out |
| ☐ Recording, 3D tour, floor plan sent within the hour | ☐ Log every question they asked; that is your filter |

7%

of buyers purchased without physically seeing the home; the share has ranged roughly 5% to 9% over the past year

NAR REALTORS Confidence Index, July 2026

57%

of buyers rate floor plans very useful on a listing, ahead of virtual tours at 38% and video at 29%

NAR 2026 Generational Trends

52%

of buyers used video sites in their home search, up from 37% a year earlier

NAR 2025 Profile

NEIGHBORHOOD EDUCATION

Teach the Valley without steering

Relocators now land with a ChatGPT-built neighborhood shortlist that is confidently out of date, and the fastest way to lose them is answering 'which areas are good?' with adjectives. Your edge is ground truth delivered as facts: minutes, dollars, build era, distance. Build the matrix below live on a screen share, one row per area they are curious about, and let them rank the rows.

AREA	COMMUTE AT 5 PM	PRICE BAND FROM LISTINGS	HOA DUES · NEAREST ANCHOR
[Area or ZIP 1]	[minutes] to [workplace]	\$(low) to \$(high)	\$(amount)/mo · [grocery]
[Area or ZIP 2]	[minutes] to [workplace]	\$(low) to \$(high)	[none] · [trailhead or park]
[Area or ZIP 3]	[minutes] to [workplace]	\$(low) to \$(high)	\$(amount)/mo · [minutes to airport]
[Area or ZIP 4]	[minutes] to [workplace]	\$(low) to \$(high)	[none] · [employer or campus]

THE FAIR HOUSING LINE

Facts, not adjectives: Never rank neighborhoods, and never reach for 'safe,' 'good schools,' or 'family-friendly.' Describe what is measurable: commute minutes, HOA dues, build era, distances. For schools and crime, send clients to the public data sources and let them apply their own criteria; your job is the accurate map, their job is the verdict. That is the law, and it also happens to be more useful to the buyer.

ARIZONA GROUND TRUTHS THAT BEAT ANY CHATBOT

- "Arizona skips daylight saving time: in summer we run on Seattle's clock, in winter on Denver's."

"A west-facing backyard takes the full afternoon sun in July. Check the compass before you fall for the pool."

"Master-planned communities usually mean an HOA: read dues, rules, and rental caps before you get attached."

"Leased solar usually transfers to the buyer: get the payment and remaining term in writing before you offer."
- "Monsoon season runs roughly mid-June through September: real dust storms, then hosing off the patio furniture."

"Most homes here are block construction with block-walled yards, and almost none have basements."

"Pools come with barrier and fence requirements: budget the fix before closing, not after."

"Arizona has statewide open enrollment: families can apply to public schools outside their attendance zone."

THE DECISION TRIP

Two days, eight homes, one offer

No published research settles the perfect decision-trip length, so here is the craft answer from agents who run them every month: two full days on the ground, a shortlist capped at eight, and everything pre-staged so the trip ends in ink instead of 'we will think about it from Seattle.'

WK -2

Lock the shortlist

Use the remote tours, 3D links, and floor plans to cut the list to eight or fewer. Book every showing before the flight and ask each listing side about offer activity now, not from the car.

WK -1

Paper ready

Updated Arizona pre-approval in hand, buyer agreement signed, wire-fraud briefing delivered in writing (page 6). If a favorite is drawing offers, agree on the virtual-offer plan before they board.

DAY 1

Corridors, not zigzags

Cluster showings by freeway corridor: Loop 101 in the morning, US 60 after lunch. Sprawl eats decision trips, so budget 20 minutes between doors, more in snowbird season.

NIGHT

Drive-bys after dark

Return to the top two or three at night: streetlights, parking, noise, the commute route at rush hour. This is the half of the tour no video can carry.

DAY 2

Second looks, then write

Re-walk the top two, walk the block, then write the offer while they are still in town. Signing from the airport works; deciding from the airport does not.

DAY 3

Fly home covered

They leave, you carry it: inspection scheduling, repair negotiation, and closing all run remote from here (page 6).

**Cap the list at eight**

Eight homes across two days leaves room for second looks. Past that, the houses blur together and the trip ends in a spreadsheet instead of an offer.

**Arizona lender, letter dated**

Have a local lender re-issue the pre-approval dated inside the trip window before wheels touch down. An offer written on day two should not be waiting on paperwork from another state.

**Hold two backup slots**

Homes go pending mid-trip. Keep two alternates from the matrix warm so a dead showing becomes a swap, not a hole in the day.

**The PCS lane**

41% of active-duty military buyers moved more than 500 miles, the longest-distance group NAR tracks (NAR, May 2026). Around Luke AFB, Davis-Monthan, and Fort Huachuca, this whole playbook runs on compressed orders timelines.

Wins: West Valley + Tucson

SAFEGUARDS + REMOTE CLOSE

Sight-unseen without the horror story

Sometimes the trip is impossible: orders, a newborn, a job that started yesterday. Buying without walking the home is workable, but only inside guardrails, and the first guardrail is not negotiable: keep the inspection contingency. No house is worth waiving it from 1,500 miles away.

- ☐ Keep the inspection contingency; never waive it to win
- ☐ Order a current-condition documentation shoot, separate from the staged listing photos (ListerPros runs these)
- ☐ Review the seller's disclosure line by line on video
- ☐ Video the final walk-through the day before closing
- ☐ Verify every wire by phone at a known number first
- ☐ Video-call the inspection live; have the inspector narrate
- ☐ Get the floor plan and settle the furniture questions now
- ☐ Drive the commute both directions on camera at rush hour
- ☐ Close by remote online notarization; Arizona has allowed it since April 2020, permanent since 2022 (Arizona Secretary of State)
- ☐ Confirm recording before the truck leaves [origin city]

From: You · To: Your relocation buyer · Sent the day you open escrow

Before you wire a single dollar, read this

1. Escrow will send wire instructions once, through the title company's secure portal.

2. Before you send anything, call me or the title officer at the numbers we gave you on day one. Voice, not email.

3. Wire instructions never change by email. A last-minute 'updated account' message is the scam.

4. If anything feels off, stop and call. A wire can be gone in hours; a closing can wait a day.

Send this the day you go under contract. Real estate cyber fraud took more than \$275,000,000 from 12,368 victims in 2025 (FBI IC3, 2025). This notice is the safeguard; never send or confirm actual wir

12,368

victims lost more than \$275,000,000 to real estate cyber fraud in 2025, up from \$173,000,000 the year before

FBI IC3, 2025

44 days

average purchase mortgage close, the runway to build into every relocation timeline

ICE Mortgage Technology, Q4 2025

2020

the year Arizona authorized remote online notarization, permanent since 2022, so a fully remote close is routine here

Arizona Secretary of State

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THE 90-DAY TIMELINE

Work backward from moving day

The average purchase mortgage takes about 44 days to close (ICE Mortgage Technology, Q4 2025), so a buyer who must be at a Phoenix desk on [date] needs a signed contract roughly six and a half weeks earlier. Anchor everything to moving day and schedule backward. The plan below assumes 90 days; compress it as needed.

ICE Mortgage Technology origination data, Q4 2025

DAY 90**Intake + agreement**

Run the intake script (page 2), sign the written buyer agreement, connect them with [two or three] Arizona lenders, and set the standing weekly call.

DAY 80**Education phase**

Build the neighborhood matrix together on screen shares, send the Arizona ground truths, and start the remote tour reel as candidates hit the market.

DAY 65**Decision trip booked**

Flights and showings on the calendar. From here, every remote tour feeds one list: the eight homes worth that trip.

DAY 55**The trip + the offer**

Two days on the ground, offer written before they fly home (page 5).

DAY 50**Under contract**

Inspection scheduled with a live video call, wire-fraud warning sent in writing, repair negotiation run in one video call instead of forty texts.

DAY 10**Remote close prep**

Final numbers verified by phone, remote online notarization scheduled, movers confirmed out of [origin city].

DAY 0**Keys**

Recording confirmed, keys handed over or waiting in a lockbox with a video walkthrough, and their first monsoon still ahead of them.

TWO ARIZONA CLOSERS

Save these for the cold-feet call: Arizona charges no transfer tax on a home sale, and Proposition 100 wrote a ban on new real estate transfer taxes into the state constitution in 2008 with 76.75% of the vote (Arizona Proposition 100, 2008), a real number for buyers leaving California's county and city transfer taxes. And Arizona never changes its clocks. For the actual tax math of a cross-state move, send them to their CPA; your job is the house.

PRINT IT, PIN IT, RUN IT

The relocation buyer checklist

- ☐ Intake call run word for word; dates, deciders, and threshold logged
- ☐ Arizona lender pre-approval in hand, not just the out-of-state letter
- ☐ Remote tours filtered the list to eight homes or fewer
- ☐ Wire-fraud warning email sent in writing at contract
- ☐ Remote close scheduled: notarization, funds verified by phone, recording confirmed
- ☐ Written buyer agreement signed before any tour, live virtual included
- ☐ Neighborhood matrix built together: facts only, zero adjectives
- ☐ Decision trip booked: two days, showings clustered by corridor
- ☐ Inspection contingency kept; inspection attended by video
- ☐ Contract signed at least seven weeks before moving day



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. © 2026 ListerPros · Mesa, AZ

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