



BUYING YOUR HOME WITH THE MARKET LEADER

BUYER'S GUIDE



JULIE BROWN

Finding Your Dream Home...

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Windermere
REAL ESTATE



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Bellingham, WA 98226

Cell: 360-255-3727

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Your Personal Realtor

My goal is to provide you with the very best real estate experience. Whether you are buying or selling, I am confident that my team of professionals will help get you there. I have hand selected service professionals to ensure that your real estate needs are taken care of in a professional and efficient way.

Commitment to You

I am truly dedicated to providing exceptional, professional and comprehensive real estate services to my valued clients. As a specialist in the Greater Whatcom County real estate market, you may trust in my expertise and accurate assessment. I am infectiously passionate about real estate and a highly diligent professional. I will provide extra effort and attention that produces outstanding results. I am always extremely attentive and responsive to each client's specific requirements and am fully dedicated to achieving their goals.

My Purpose in Real Estate

My goals are based on integrity, professionalism and cooperation. I am an active member in my community. My extensive networking brings buyers and sellers together to achieve their goals.

Positive Approach Towards Buying

I know having up to date knowledge of the market place is invaluable in helping advise you on maximizing your real estate objectives. As a Buyer's Representative, I am trained to help you find and negotiate the best value and property for your needs.




Windermere
REAL ESTATE



My Recent Testimonials



Julie is exceptionally knowledgeable....

Julie is exceptionally knowledgeable about Whatcom County. She is very quick to respond to a phone call, email or a text. Her customer service is THE BEST. We rolled into Bellingham unexpectedly one Sunday and wanted to see a home. Julie was out of town and still able to work her magic and get us in to see the home, which we eventually bought. During the offer process I was on the East Coast and there were multiple offers on the table. Julie was a true advocate for my husband and I. She made the process even from afar, seamless. Julie is professional, down to earth and FUN to work with. We look forward (already!!!) to buying our next home with Julie!



Julie rolled up her sleeves and did some work herself...

Julie did a great job in helping us get our home "show ready"! She not only provided ideas, but rolled up her sleeves and did some of the work herself!! The home sold quickly with no hiccups!



Absolutely 5 stars...

Absolutely 5 stars! If there was a higher rating, we would give it to her. We had a long road from first arriving to Washington to eventually finding our perfect home in Everson and Julie was there every step of the way. Many times she went way out of her way to respond to all of our concerns while we were checking out neighborhoods and trying to decide where to buy a home. When this home came on the market, Julie was already on it when we called her about it. Her fast action is why we got this home and we couldn't be happier. If you are looking for a home in the Whatcom area of Washington, we highly recommend Julie Brown

To see more of my reviews, please visit <https://www.zillow.com/profile/juliebrown71/#reviews>





Helping you buy your home

Helping you find and purchase a home is only one facet of my job.
In addition, I will:



- ⇒ Explain real estate principles, contracts and documents.
- ⇒ Refer you to a reputable lender that can help you assess your financial situation and re-approve you for a loan.
- ⇒ Help you determine the types of neighborhoods that most fit your needs.
- ⇒ Arrange tours of homes that meet your criteria.
- ⇒ Provide you with detailed information about homes you're interested in.
- ⇒ Assist you in writing and negotiating a mutually-accepted purchase and sale agreement.
- ⇒ Coordinate necessary steps after inspection.
- ⇒ Work with the escrow company to ensure all needed documents are in order and completed in a timely manner.



Buyer Consultation



This will take 30-60 minutes and can be a conference call, a cup of coffee, or an office visit; whatever works for you! This meeting gives us a chance to talk about the process, the current market conditions, and what you are looking for in your perfect home. We will set up an automatic email so that when a new listing hits the market we both see it right away.

I Want to make sure you don't miss anything.

In my experience, it can take anywhere from a day to a year to find the right home. Your time frame is my time frame.





Financing

Determining how much you can afford before you begin your home search will save you valuable time. I can help you locate a lender who will assist you in finding a financing package that will best meet your needs. But there are a few steps you should consider beforehand to make the process as smooth as possible.

CREDIT REPORT

It's important to check your credit report before you see your lender because:

- ⇒ Lenders check this to determine the amount of loan you qualify for
- ⇒ It allows you to correct any mistakes in the report before lenders see it
- ⇒ If there are any blemishes in your report that are not errors, you should be prepared to explain them to your lender

You are entitled to one free request each year from each of the three credit bureaus. The best way to do this is to go online to AnnualCreditReport.com.

CREDIT SCORE

You may want to check your credit score at the same time you check your credit report (usually for a fee). This score influences how much lenders are willing to loan to you and at what interest rate.



DOWN PAYMENT

Most lenders will give better financing terms to borrowers that can put a 20 percent down payment on the purchase. If you are unable to do so, you will likely be required to purchase Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) and perhaps pay a higher interest rate.

PREAPPROVAL

A letter of preapproval from a lender shows that they have checked all your documentation and are prepared to make you a loan. Getting preapproved prior to starting your home search saves you time by:

- ⇒ Keeping you focused on viewing only the homes that are within your budget
- ⇒ Helping you obtain your financing more quickly once you find a house you want to buy



My Lending Team

GATHER YOUR DOCS

- ⇒ W-2's for the past two years
- ⇒ Most current paystubs (30 days)
- ⇒ Employment history for the past two years*

**address employment gaps, if any*

- ⇒ Current account statements (two months)
- ⇒ Rental/residential history for the past 2 years*

**include landlord's contact information*

- ⇒ Signed tax returns for past two years
- ⇒ 401 (k), stocks and other investments statements for the past two months
- ⇒ Photo ID (license or passport) for all applicants

ADDITIONAL DOCS FOR VA LOANS

- ⇒ Veteran DD214 or Veteran Reservists DD256
- ⇒ Original Certificate of Eligibility (COE) applicants

APPLY WITH MORE THAN ONE LENDER

One might say yes, one might say no, one might be able to offer you a lot more! Always apply with more than one lender to improve your chances at a better rate and to save yourself from missing out on an opportunity if one lender can't finance your purchase. Start the process ASAP, before you find a home.

There are a few local lenders who always do well by my clients. Here are my top three go-to lenders:



Ashley Walker, Industrial Credit Union

e: Ashley.walker@industrialcu.org

o: 360-734-2043

ONLINE APPLICATION



Amy Baker, Movement Mortgage

e: Amy.Baker@movement.com

o: 360-305-6196

ONLINE APPLICATION



Diana Foster, WaFd Bank

e: diana.foster@wafd.com

o: 360-755-9241

ONLINE APPLICATION





New Construction Homes



Building a new home can be exciting, and often times quite overwhelming with the amount of decisions you will need to make throughout the process. If you are looking at new construction, I will need to accompany you on the initial visit. My experience will help navigate this complicated process with ease.



For Sale By Owner (FSBO)

Homeowners trying to sell their home themselves are doing so in hopes of saving the commission.



As a buyer, it is important that you not only receive all the services a full time professional provides, but it is key that you are represented well in the sale of your new home.

Most homeowners will work with a broker, even though their home is not listed, however I must accompany you on the showing.

If you see a FSBO, please let me contact the owner to set the appointment.



The Inspection

Home inspections are a critical part of the home buying and selling process.

Inspections take the mystery out of selling your home and may make it easier for prospective buyers to imagine themselves living there. By making repairs and disclosing the home's condition to a prospective buyer before negotiations begin, you can create an atmosphere of good faith and instill confidence about your home's condition. This, in turn, may help sell your home faster and at a higher price.

A home inspection benefits all parties involved by providing insight into the condition of the home, thereby helping to reduce the overall listing time of your property.

I CAN HELP YOU:

- ⇒ Find a reputable inspector and home repair contractors
- ⇒ Prepare for when unknown problems are discovered
- ⇒ Review inspection options
- ⇒ Negotiate fair and appropriate solutions if necessary





Septic & Well Issues

Because well and septic systems can be expensive to replace, every knowledgeable buyer will want to know the condition of the well and septic systems of a home they are considering buying. A septic and well inspection can yield useful information on the condition of these systems.

WELL INSPECTION:

- ⇒ A check of the well system including water level before and during pumping, pump motor performance, pressure tank, and pressure switch contact
- ⇒ Water quantity: A flow test to determine output.
- ⇒ Water quality: Test for specific concerns in your area that could pose problems with plumbing, staining, water appearance, and odor.

SEPTIC INSPECTION:

- ⇒ Structural condition of tank, influent and effluent baffle tees, pumps, floats, etc.
- ⇒ Absorption test on the drain field.
- ⇒ Systems conditions, including root invasion and soil compaction.





Buyer Closing Costs

Typical fees paid by a buyer in a real estate transaction

- ⇒ Lender's title insurance policy (around \$1,200 on \$500,000 home)
- ⇒ 1/2 escrow fee (around \$900 on a \$500,000 home)
- ⇒ Property inspection (around \$400-\$700)
 - Lender Fees including
 - Appraisal (around \$500-\$800)
 - Credit report (around \$50)
 - Loan origination fee (ask lender)
 - Loan interest
 - Private mortgage insurance (put 20% down and avoid this)

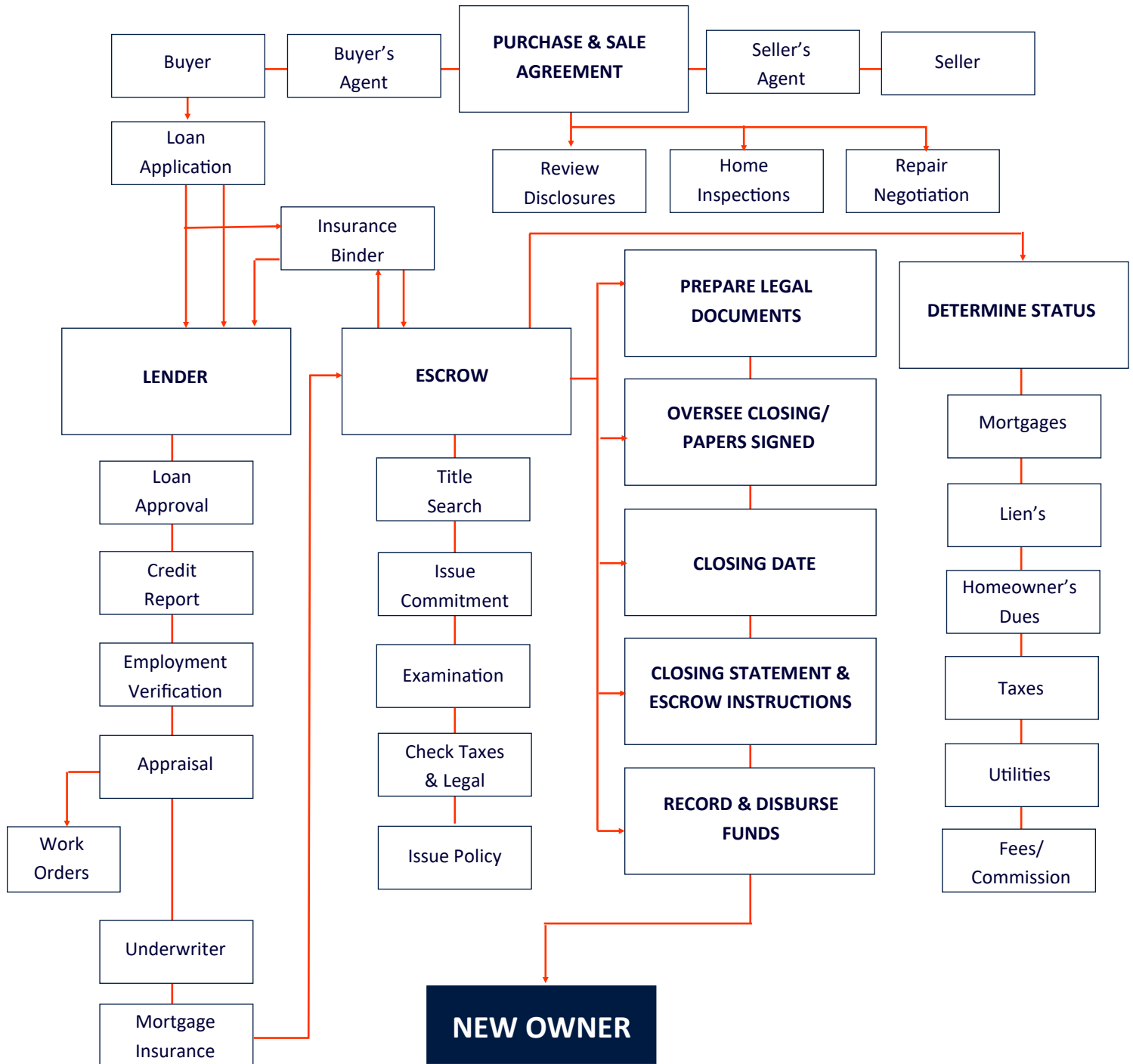


The only out of pocket costs (not financed in your loan) are typically home inspections, appraisal, and of course your down payment. A good rule of thumb is to budget around 2.5% of your loan amount as a total.

*Fees determined by sale price and/or loan amount. Payment of fees above can be negotiated within contract.



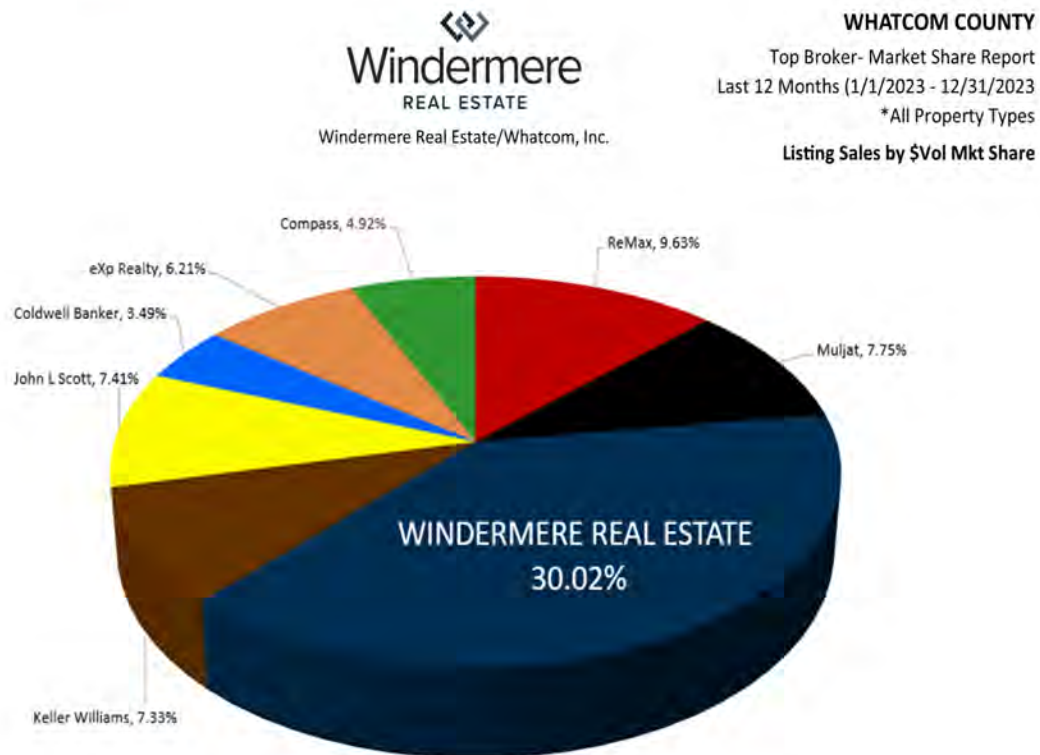
Steps to Closing





Why Windermere

Windermere is a recognized leader of listing and selling homes
Throughout the Puget Sound region.



*All reports were published January 2024 based on data available at the end of December 2023. All reports presented are based on data supplied by the NWMLS and deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

515 BAKERVIEW RD - BELLINGHAM, WA 98226 | 1200 OLD FAIRHAVEN PKWY - BELLINGHAM, WA 98225 | 1894 MAIN ST #102 - FERNDALE, WA 98248
8071 GUIDE MERIDIAN #105 - LYNDEN, WA 98264 | 8105 BIRCH BAY SQUARE ST - BLAINE, WA 98230





Agent Networking



Networking with other real estate agents within the first few days on the market will be key to selling your home. As your listing agent, my ability to network at weekly sales meetings will get your property shown to the top agents who will help sell your property.

While our workflow has changed some over the past year due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have continued our sales meetings online with excellent participation. Everyone is adapting to leaning more heavily on online communication and networking, and in 2020 even with tight inventory we had some of our best months ever.



Community Service Day



Making our communities better places to live.

It's a commitment we take seriously at Windermere Real Estate. That's why one day each year, Windermere offices close their doors so agents can spend time improving the neighborhoods in which we live and work. Since the first Community Service Day in 1984, Windermere associates and staff have volunteered nearly 500,000 hours of service to help improve our communities by working on projects to spruce up parks and playgrounds, paint community centers and tidy the homes of area seniors, just to name a few.

In the past years, the Whatcom County Windermere associates have volunteered at Agape Women's & Children's Home, Lydia Place, Dorothy House, Boys & Girls Club, YMCA & YWCA, and Horizon Camp.





Common Questions

How does my offer get presented to seller?

In today's electronic world, offers are sent via email to the seller's agent. I will call the agent to let them know it's coming and tell them a little bit about you and the details of your offer. Then I will follow up with the agent again to confirm receipt of your offer.

Does it cost me money to make an offer?

When you write the offer on the home you've chosen, you will be expected to include an earnest money deposit. The deposit is a sign of your good faith that you are seriously interested in buying the home.

Where does my earnest money go?

Once the buyer and seller have a mutually accepted offer, the earnest money is deposited into a trust account. That deposit becomes a credit to the buyer and becomes part of the purchase expense.

Is that all the money that's involved?

Some lenders require the cost of the appraisal and credit report at the time of the loan application.

Can I lose my earnest money?

Real estate contracts are complicated legal transactions. This is another area where having a knowledgeable and professional agent is a necessity. Rarely does the buyer lose the earnest money. Most often, if the transaction falls apart, there are circumstances beyond the buyer's control that cause it to happen. If the buyer willfully decides, however, that they no longer want to buy the house and has no legal reason for rescinding their offer, then the seller has the right to retain the earnest money.

What happens if I offer less than the asking price?

If you offer less money, the seller has three options. They can accept the lower offer, counter your offer or reject it completely. Remember that there could be another buyer who is also interested in the home you've chosen. If they happen to write an offer at the same time you do, the seller will have two offers to compare. There are usually many aspects of each offer to consider, but ultimately the seller will want to accept the best and most complete offer. In active real estate markets, homes often sell for their listed price. In hot markets, there may be many buyers vying for the same house, which sometimes drives the final sale price above the original listing price.

As a real estate professional, I can help you plan your strategy, based on the current real estate market in our area.

What if I need to sell my home before I buy a new one?

To put yourself in the best negotiating position before you find the new home you want, hire a qualified real estate agent to help you put your home on the market. Once you write an offer on a new home, your offer will be "contingent" upon the sale of your home. A buyer in this position may not have the same negotiating power as one whose home has already sold (or at least has an accepted offer). The seller may be hesitant to accept your offer because there are too many things that must happen before the sale can close.



Identifying Your Priorities

PERSONAL PROFILE

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (home) _____

(cell) _____

(work) _____

EMAIL _____

☐ Own ☐ Rent Years in this Home _____ Children (names/ages) _____

MOTIVATION

Reason to move: _____

When do you want to move in? _____

Is that date flexible? If not, why not? _____

How long have you been looking for a home? _____

Have you seen any homes you like? ☐ Yes ☐ No Describe: _____

If yes, why didn't you buy? _____

Are you looking at homes with any other sales associate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where do you work? _____

When is the best time to look at homes? _____

When we find the right home for your, will there be anything that could keep you from buying it? Will anyone else be involve in the buying decision? _____

HOUSE INFORMATION

What's most important to to you in a home? _____

Do you have (or anticipate) any hobbies, interests or lifestyle factors that would affect your housing needs? _____

Are schools important? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what aspects? _____

Where do you want to live? _____

What style of home do you prefer? ☐ Rambler ☐ Two-Story ☐ Traditional ☐ Contemporary

How many bedrooms? _____ Baths _____ Living areas _____ Yard size _____ Garage size _____



