CLEARWAY
CREDIT UNION

YOUR GUIDE TO

SMARTER CAR BUYING

Practical steps. Smart financing.
Confident decisions.

Buying a car is a big decision — but with the right plan and the right partner, it can be a smooth and rewarding experience.

Clearway Credit Union is here to help you every step of the way.



PLAN AHEAD
Budget, check your credit, and set your goals.

SHOP SMART
Research, compare, and understand your options.

FINANCE WITH CONFIDENCE
Get pre-qualified and drive away with peace of mind.

PAGE 2

RESEARCH, TEST DRIVES, AND VEHICLE OPTIONS

RESEARCH

Smart buyers start with smart research. Read consumer reviews, check rankings, and compare multiple models. Look beyond the purchase price—consider long-term costs like maintenance, insurance, taxes, and fuel.

RESEARCH RESOURCES

- autotrade.com
- cargurus.com
- cars.com
- edmunds.com
- jdpower.com
- kbb.com

TEST DRIVES

A test drive helps you evaluate how a vehicle performs in real-world conditions. It's your opportunity to assess:

- Comfort and visibility
- Handling and acceleration
- Braking and ride quality
- Noise levels and interior features
- Overall fit for your needs and lifestyle

Take your time, test on different roads, and ask questions.

NEW VEHICLES

New vehicle inventories remain limited, and many popular models are in high demand. In some cases, you may need to place an order.

- Ordering allows you to secure the model, trim, and features you want.
- You may be able to customize color, packages, and options.
- Be prepared for potential wait times and pricing flexibility.

USED VEHICLES

The used vehicle market can be unpredictable. Inventory changes quickly, and the right vehicle may not be available when you're ready.

- Be flexible with makes, models, and features.
- Act quickly when you find the right vehicle.
- Use a checklist mindset—know your must-haves vs. nice-to-haves.
- Always review the vehicle history report and have it inspected if possible.

VEHICLE PROTECTION

Protect your investment and your financial well-being with optional protection products:

- Mechanical Breakdown Protection: Helps cover costly repairs.
- GAP Insurance: Covers the difference if your vehicle is totalled.
- Credit Life and Disability Coverage: Protects your payments if life happens.
- Rate Discounts: May be available with protection products.
- Term Extensions: May be available with protection products.

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PRE-APPROVAL: YOUR STRONG START

Getting pre-approved in advance gives you confidence, clarity, and more negotiating power.

GET PRE-APPROVED IN ADVANCE
Know your budget and shop with confidence.

USE CARFAX® REPORTS
Review vehicle history for greater peace of mind.

CHECK JD POWER® VALUES
Understand fair market value before you buy.

BRING TRADE-IN DATA
Know your car's value to maximize your trade-in.

VIP CHECKS: OUR 4-STEP PROCESS

SAFETY
We inspect key safety systems so you drive with confidence.

APPEARANCE
We check the interior and exterior for quality you can see.

PERFORMANCE
We evaluate major systems for reliable performance.

HISTORY
We review the vehicle history to uncover what matters.

CLEARWAY CREDIT UNION — VIP AUTO CHECK

Hot Springs AR 72307

DATE 05/08/2026

Approved Limit: $40,000.00

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Saucey Cranberry

$ _____

_____ dollars

VOID

MEMO

Void After: 07/07/2024

SIGNATURE

1234567890: 10065

OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS

- **CREDIT UNION CHECK**
  A secure, convenient way to pay.
- **WIRE OR ACH**
  Fast, secure electronic funds transfer.
- **DIRECT DEALER FINANCING**
  Flexible options through our partners.

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NEGOTIATION TIPS

Start strong. A smart negotiation can save you thousands over the life of your loan.

Use this email or text to get started:

> I'm ready to order my vehicle and have included my build details below. Please send your best out-the-door price with a complete breakdown. I'm comparing offers and plan to purchase within the next few days. If everything looks good, I'll gladly give top marks on my CSI survey. Email or text only, please.

- Begin negotiations by text or email. This creates a record, builds leverage, and keeps emotions out of the conversation.
- Contact multiple dealers. More quotes mean more power.
- Use CSI survey scores. It's a great way to compare dealer service and negotiation experiences.

BUYING CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED?

Always compare certified and non-certified prices. The best value might not come with a certification.

NEGOTIATION STEPS

Follow these steps in order for the best results.



1

RESEARCH & PREPARE

Know the market value, incentives, and your budget.



2

REQUEST QUOTES

Use text or email to request a detailed breakdown and best drive-out price.



3

CONTACT MULTIPLE DEALERS

Get quotes from several dealers to compare offers.



4

EVALUATE OFFERS

Compare pricing, fees, incentives, and CSI survey scores.



5

NEGOTIATE CONFIDENTLY

Counter with facts and stay firm on your target price.



6

REVIEW THE DETAILS

Check all documents, fees, and terms before agreeing.



7

CLOSE THE DEAL

Confirm the final numbers and enjoy your new car!

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DEALER PURCHASES

Your Buyer's Order & What to Expect

At the dealership, you'll sign a purchase agreement (Buyer's Order) that outlines the terms of your vehicle purchase and financing.

Once your Buyer's Order is received, your Clearway loan specialist will handle the contract and funding on your behalf.

Decline unnecessary add-ons. Only choose what you want.

REVIEW YOUR BUYER'S ORDER CHECKLIST

- Buyer Information: Ensure your personal information is accurate and complete.
- Vehicle Details: Confirm the year, make, model, and VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) are correct.
- Dealer Document Fees: Review all dealer fees to ensure they are reasonable and properly disclosed.
- Trade Allowance & Payoff: Verify any trade-in allowance and payoff amounts are accurate.
- Down Payment: Make sure your down payment or money shown aligns with what you agreed upon.
- No Unauthorized Fees or Add-Ons: You should not be charged for any products or services you didn't agree to purchase.

PRIVATE PURCHASES

Ask these questions before you buy:

1. Why is the vehicle being sold?
2. Have there been any repairs, recalls, or accidents?
3. Are maintenance records available? Can I see a Carfax report?
4. Who is the titled owner of the vehicle?
5. Are there any remarks on the title?
6. Is the title free and clear of liens?

CLEARWAY CREDIT UNION

PRIVATE PURCHASES
(CONTINUED)

VERIFY OWNERSHIP
If the seller isn't the registered owner, stop and continue the search.

CHECK FOR LIENS
If a lienholder is listed, ensure it's paid off and obtain a lien release.

TEST DRIVE SAFELY
Meet in a public place for the test drive.

GATHER INFORMATION
Collect seller information and take clear photos of the vehicle.

PAY SECURELY
Use a credit union check, ACH, or wire transfer for payment security.

ONLINE RETAILERS

Shopping with online retailers can be convenient. Follow these smart steps:

- Ask about title delivery. Confirm how and when the title will be delivered to you.
- Don't send money without a signed agreement. Do not remit any funds before you have a signed, written agreement.
- See it before you buy it. Request a full 360-degree walk-around video chat or video tour if available.
- Clarify delivery timelines. Ask about delivery timelines and make sure all expectations are clearly understood.

INSURANCE & TITLE REGISTRATION

Obtain and maintain comprehensive and collision coverage.

List Clearway Credit Union as the loss payee.

Email proof of coverage to loans@clearwaycu.org.

Be aware of CPI (Collateral Protection Insurance) if coverage lapses.

Register your vehicle in Arkansas within 60 days of purchase.

Transfer the title to Clearway Credit Union within 90 days of purchase.

Lienholder Information:
Clearway Federal Credit Union
P.O. Box 1080
Malvern, AR 72104

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DOWN PAYMENTS AND TRADE-INS

A smart down payment and trade-in strategy can lower your monthly payment and help you build equity from day one.

DOWN PAYMENTS
Aim for at least 10% down in cash or trade equity.

POSITIVE EQUITY (YOU'RE AHEAD)
Your vehicle is worth more than what you owe. You can apply that equity toward your next vehicle to reduce your loan amount.

NEGATIVE EQUITY (YOU OWE MORE)
You owe more than your vehicle is worth. This may increase your loan amount and monthly payment.

TRADE-IN VS. SELLING PRIVATELY

Each option has pros and cons. Here's how they compare:

TRADE-IN	SELLING PRIVATELY
CONVENIENCE Quick and easy—handled at the dealership.	**POTENTIALLY HIGHER PAYOUT** You may get more by selling on your own.
IMMEDIATE CREDIT Trade value goes directly toward your purchase.	**TIME & EFFORT** Requires time, advertising, and meeting with buyers.
LESS HASSLE No ads, meetings, or negotiating with buyers.	**UNCERTAIN TIMELINE** Sale may take days or even weeks.

ARKANSAS SALES TAX CREDIT

If you sell or trade your vehicle within 60 days of purchasing another vehicle, you may be eligible for a credit on sales tax for the new purchase. Be sure to ask your dealer for details.

Disclosure Guidance: Wait until you've agreed on a purchase price and trade-in allowance before sharing details about your down payment or payoff amount. This helps you stay in control of the deal.

READY TO START?

Clearway Credit Union makes it easy to apply for your auto loan.

APPLY ONLINE
www.clearwaycu.org

APPLY BY PHONE
Available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

APPLY BY TEXT
Text" APPLY" to 501-627-9204

APPLY IN BRANCH
Malvern, Grand and Central locations.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING CLEARWAY FOR YOUR JOURNEY.

We hope this Car Buying Guide has provided you with the tools and insights you need to make smart, confident decisions every step of the way.

Buying a car is a big decision, and we're here to help make it a positive one. Trusted for What Matters Most, Clearway Credit Union is committed to supporting you before, during, and long after you drive off the lot.

Drive with confidence. You've got this.

CLEARWAY CREDIT UNION

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Clearway Credit Union	www.clearwaycu.org
Arkansas DMV	www.mydmv.arkansas.gov
Autotrader	www.autotrader.com
CarGurus	www.cargurus.com
Cars	www.cars.com
Carvana	www.carvana.com
Vroom	www.vroom.com
Edmunds	www.edmunds.com
EchoPark	www.echopark.com
JD Power	www.jdpower.com
Kelley Blue Book	www.kbb.com
TruStage Insurance	www.trustage.com
NerdWallet	www.nerdwallet.com/auto-loans/learn/total-cost-owning-car
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/auto-loans/