INTELLIGENT TITLE · WHITE PAPER · 2026

The Case for Pre-Policy Intelligence

Why the timing of the title search — not its price — is the variable that protects wealth, defeats fraud, and holds evidence together in an artificial intelligence world.

Intelligent Title
A BRAND OF AMERICAN COMMERCIAL TITLE LLC

Underwritten by Stewart Title Guaranty Company and WFG National Title Insurance Company
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What this paper argues

Every workstream in a real estate transaction now begins on day one. Title has traditionally been the exception. This paper makes the case that the exception is no longer defensible.

Title insurance is usually discussed as a line item — a fee compared against other fees. That framing misses what the product actually is. A title policy is the written conclusion of an investigation, and the investigation is where nearly all of the value sits. The industry's own economics confirm it: over the ten years from 2013 to 2022, title insurers spent roughly **95 percent** of collected premium on loss elimination and other operating costs, while claims averaged just over **4 percent**.[1] The money is in prevention. The only question left is **when** the prevention happens.

Pre-Policy Intelligence℠ is Intelligent Title's answer: the full title search and examination, ordered at day one — at the letter of intent, the loan application, or the signed contract — rather than at conditional approval. The work is the same work. Moving it forward changes what the parties can do with what it finds.

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SECTION 01

Executive summary

Three forces — concentrated household wealth, industrialized impersonation fraud, and the collapsing cost of fabricating a document — all reward the same operational change: know the title on day one.

The economics already favor early work

Title insurance is not priced like casualty insurance because it does not behave like casualty insurance. Industry-wide, claims cost just over four cents of the premium dollar; the remainder funds the search, the examination, the curative work, and the operating cost of doing them.[1] In 2025 the industry paid **$32 per policy** in direct losses against **$1,367 per policy** in net premiums earned.[2] That is the signature of a product whose entire value is realized before closing. A buyer, a lender, or a borrower who receives that work at day one rather than at day forty-five receives the same product with materially more optionality.

Wealth is concentrated in exactly the asset title protects

American households held **$49.8 trillion** of real estate and **$35.8 trillion** of owners' equity in it as of the second quarter of 2026 — 71.9 percent of the value of the real estate they own.[3] For households between the 25th and 50th percentile of net worth, real estate represents roughly 155 percent of net worth.[4] A title defect is not a paperwork problem for these households; it is the whole balance sheet.

Impersonation has become a volume business

The share of title firms reporting at least one seller-impersonation attempt rose from **28 percent** in a 2024 survey to **59 percent** in a 2026 study; the share reporting three or more attempts rose from 4 percent to 23 percent.[5] FBI IC3 losses in its "Real Estate" crime category climbed from $145.2 million in 2023 to **$275.1 million** in 2025.[6] Fraud that depends on an owner not being verified is defeated by verifying the owner early, while there is still time to act.

Generative tools have devalued the document

FinCEN has reported that criminals use generative AI to produce falsified identification documents, photographs, and video to defeat customer identification controls.[7] Fifty-eight percent of title professionals now rate deepfake image or voice technology as at least somewhat common in impersonation attempts.[5] When a document can be manufactured in minutes, the durable asset is the chain of examined, sourced, dated evidence behind it.

> The title search is the only diligence workstream in a real estate transaction that is customarily ordered after the decision it is supposed to inform.
>
> THE THESIS OF THIS PAPER

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SECTION 02

The timing problem

Appraisal, environmental, survey, insurance, and credit all begin early because a late answer is an expensive answer. Title alone is routinely ordered last — and then blamed for the delay it was never given time to prevent.

A sequence inherited, not designed

The customary order of operations in a financed real estate transaction was not engineered. It accreted. Title is ordered once a file looks likely to close, on the reasoning that a search performed on a transaction that dies is a search wasted. That made sense when a search was a manual abstract and the closing calendar had slack. It makes far less sense now, when the search is the one workstream capable of revealing the facts that kill transactions, and the calendar has none.

The average purchase loan closed in **36.8 days** in March 2026 — the fastest since ICE began tracking the metric in 2019. The typical loan moved from application to rate lock in 11 days and from rate lock to closing in 26 more.[1] Ordering title at conditional approval places the search inside that final 26-day window, alongside underwriting conditions, appraisal reconciliation, insurance binders, and payoff demands. Anything it finds must be cured inside a period already fully allocated.

What the search actually finds

The premise that most files are clean does not survive the industry's own measurement. In a 2024 study of 2023 files, title professionals reported that **36 percent** of files on average required substantial, non-routine curative work, and that **62 percent** of firms performing curative work addressed four or more issues per transaction.[2] A standard file consumed 22.0 hours on average; a difficult file consumed **45.4 hours** — 2.1 times longer.[2]

36%
of files required substantial non-routine curative work (2023 files, ALTA)[2]

45.4 hrs
average work on a difficult file, versus 22.0 on a standard file[2]

36.8 days
average purchase loan application to close, March 2026[1]

The price of finding out late

No public authority publishes a per-day cost of a delayed closing, and this paper will not invent one. The closest published anchor is Freddie Mac's 2024 Cost to Originate study, which valued automated collateral evaluation at **$179 per loan for 7.3 days** of cycle time saved.[3] Lenders price the same variable directly: one wholesale rate lock policy charges **2.5 basis points per day** to extend a lock.[4] Against total loan production expenses of **$10,936 per loan** in the second quarter of 2026,[5] days are not a soft cost.

And delay is not rare. In the August 2026 REALTORS® Confidence Index, **14 percent** of contracts had delayed settlements in the prior three months and 7 percent terminated outright.[6] The most recent NAR cause breakdown attributes 11 percent of delayed contracts to titling and deed issues — a 2018 figure, cited with its vintage.[7]

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SECTION 03

What Pre-Policy Intelligence is

Not a new product. The same title search and examination every transaction already requires, ordered at the moment the parties first commit.

The engagement in one paragraph

A Pre-Policy Intelligence order is placed at day one for **$149**, on its own — no policy commitment, no executed contract required. An initial response is delivered within **24 hours**, covering ownership, liens, encumbrances, judgments and taxes, and the legal description. Close with an Intelligent Title policy and the $149 is credited in full against the premium. Decide differently and the findings are still yours.

What the initial response contains

Ownership	Vested owner of record, chain of conveyance, and the identity questions that follow — entity status, deceased owners, absentee owners, recent transfers.
Liens	Mortgages and deeds of trust of record, mechanics' liens, and the payoff and release posture that sets lien position.
Encumbrances	Easements, restrictions, covenants, and rights of record that constrain use, access, or collateral value.
Judgments and taxes	Docketed judgments, state and federal tax liens, and delinquent property taxes, including assessments not yet on the roll.
Legal description	The description that will appear on the instrument, reconciled against the record.

When the order is placed

The trigger differs by transaction type; the principle does not.

Day 1	**Letter of intent, term sheet, loan application, or signed contract.** Pre-Policy Intelligence is ordered. The property, not the file's probability of closing, justifies the search.
Within 24 hrs	**Initial response delivered.** The parties learn what is on the record before the appraisal is ordered, before the rate is locked, and before a closing date is promised.
Days 2–30	**Curative work runs in parallel** with underwriting rather than behind it. Payoffs, releases, estate matters, and description corrections are worked on the calendar's slack, not its deadline.
Closing	**Policy issues**, underwritten by Stewart Title Guaranty Company or WFG National Title Insurance Company, with the $149 credited against the premium.

IRIS℠ — the interface to the work

The Intelligent Real-time Information System is the conversational front end to our rate and status engine. It answers pricing questions in plain English across promulgated, filed, and negotiable rate jurisdictions, reflecting the current filed tables for each state — including the Texas Basic Premium Rates effective 1 March 2026.[1] IRIS is an interface to a rate engine and a file, not a substitute for examination.

SOURCES

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SECTION 04 · PILLAR ONE

Preserving wealth

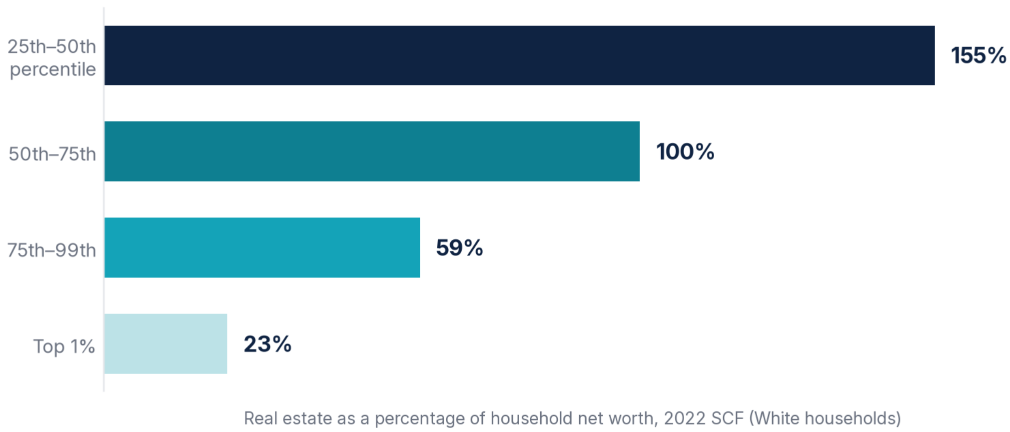
Thirty-five point eight trillion dollars of American household equity rests on the accuracy of county records. The households with the most at stake are not the wealthiest ones.

The size of the exposure

As of the second quarter of 2026, U.S. households held **$49.79 trillion** in real estate at market value and **$35.81 trillion** in owners' equity in that real estate — **71.9 percent** of the value of what they own, against $13.98 trillion of one-to-four-family home mortgages.[1] Owners' equity equals roughly 18 percent of total household net worth of $195.87 trillion.[1]

Concentration is the real story

Aggregates understate the risk. Using 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances data, the Richmond Fed found that for households between roughly the 25th and 99th percentiles of wealth, housing is by far the largest component of assets; only at the very top do equities and business interests outweigh real estate.[3]



Real estate as a share of net worth, by net-worth percentile, 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances. Shares exceed 100 percent at lower percentiles because mortgage debt is carried as a negative share. Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.[3]

A household at the 25th to 50th percentile carries real estate equal to **155 percent** of net worth; a household in the top 1 percent carries **23 percent**.[3] Median net wealth was $396,200 for homeowners against $10,400 for renters, and the median homeowner's net housing value was $201,000 in 2022.[2,4] For the great middle of the American balance sheet, a cloud on title is not a diminution of wealth. It is wealth.

$35.81T
owners' equity in household real estate, 2026:Q2[1]

71.9%
of household real estate value held as equity[1]

$14.92T
housing wealth held by owners aged 62 and over, Q1 2026[5]

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Where the premium dollar actually goes

If title insurance were a claims-paying product, late discovery would be tolerable — the policy would absorb the loss and the parties would move on. It is not that product. Over 2013–2022, title insurers spent approximately **95 percent** of collected premium on loss elimination and other operating costs, with claims costs averaging just over **4 percent**. For homeowners insurance over the same period, expenses averaged 27 percent and claims 70 percent.[1]

Title insurance premium allocation, ten-year average 2013–2022. Source: ALTA / Milliman.[1] Note: the 95 percent figure covers loss elimination together with other operating costs, including amounts retained by title agents; it is not a published measure of search-and-examination spend alone.

The 2025 statutory results tell the same story in different units. The title industry wrote **$18.6 billion** of direct premium, issued 13.58 million policies, and recorded a net loss ratio of **4.4 percent** against an expense ratio of 98.5 percent and a combined ratio of 102.8 percent. Direct losses paid came to **$32 per policy**.[2] An industry that pays out thirty-two dollars a policy and spends nearly all of its premium preventing claims is telling you plainly where its value is created.

The part the policy cannot reach

A policy indemnifies. It does not restore a closing date, a rate lock, a 1031 deadline, or a seller's patience. And a meaningful share of loss arises from matters the public record never showed: ALTA's 2025 complexity study reports that nearly **30 percent** of losses on purchase transactions and **40 percent** on refinances arise from issues not discoverable in the public records, with an average residential claim cost of $143,000 for fraud and forgery in that category.[3]

> Indemnity is what remains after prevention fails. Pre-Policy Intelligence buys the interval in which prevention is still possible.

What early discovery is worth to a household

Average title and settlement charges on a large sample of purchase loans were **$2,408**, roughly 1 percent of purchase price and about a third of average total mortgage cost of $7,207.[4] The CFPB describes title insurance as typically 0.5 to 1 percent of purchase price, paid once.[5] Set against $35.8 trillion of equity and a median household whose home is more than its entire net worth, the argument for buying the diligence earlier — not more of it, earlier — is not a close call.

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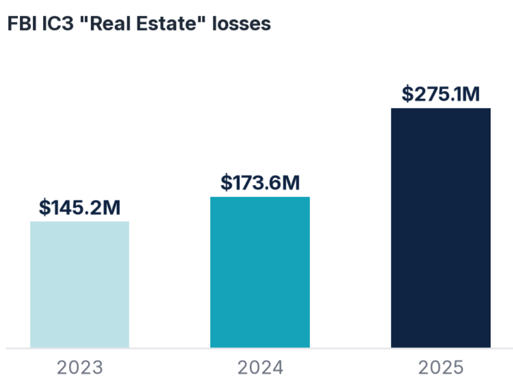
SECTION 05 · PILLAR TWO

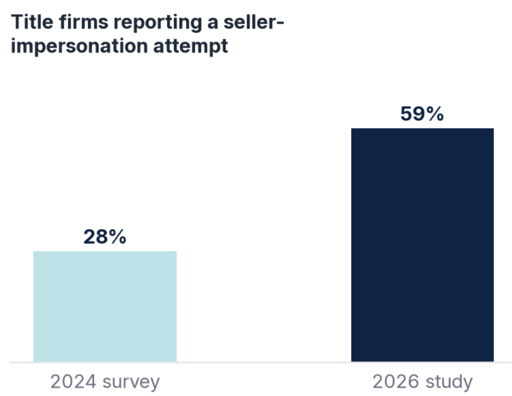
Eliminating fraud

Impersonation fraud is a timing attack. It depends on the seller never being verified against the record until the calendar is too compressed to stop the closing.

The attempt rate has roughly doubled

ALTA's 2026 seller impersonation study found that **59 percent** of title firms experienced at least one attempt in the prior calendar year, against 28 percent in its 2024 survey. Firms reporting an attempt in the single month before the survey rose from 19 to **45 percent**, and those reporting three or more attempts rose from 4 to **23 percent**. Among firms with attempts, one in four paid a claim, and half of those disclosing average costs reported costs above $100,000.[1]





Left: FBI IC3 losses in its "Real Estate" crime category, 2023–2025.[2] Right: share of title firms reporting at least one seller-impersonation attempt in the prior calendar year, 2024 survey (783 respondents) versus 2026 study (245 respondents).[1] The two ALTA samples differ in size and composition.

The federal series moves the same direction. IC3 recorded **12,368** complaints and **$275.1 million** in losses in its Real Estate category in 2025, up from $173.6 million in 2024 and $145.2 million in 2023. Business email compromise, reported separately, accounted for 24,768 complaints and **$3.05 billion**.[2] These are distinct categories and should never be added together; a closing wire loss may land in either.

The red flags are all day-one facts

What makes impersonation defeatable is that its preconditions are visible in the record before anyone signs. ALTA's respondents identify absentee owners, properties owned free and clear, properties associated with recently deceased owners, sellers who avoid meetings or calls, mail-away signing requests, and seller-chosen notaries as the recurring red flags. Vacant land remains the top target, with vacation homes, rental properties, agricultural land, and primary residences all rising as targets since 2024.[1]

Every one of those signals except the behavioral ones is a search result. Ownership vesting, absentee mailing address, lien-free status, and a deceased owner of record all surface in the initial Pre-Policy Intelligence response — inside 24 hours of day one, weeks before wire instructions exist to be spoofed.

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Deed theft: a measurement gap, not an absence

No federal agency publishes a national count of fraudulent deed filings. That absence is frequently mistaken for evidence that the problem is small. The jurisdiction-level record suggests otherwise. In a 2025 NAR survey, **63 percent** of state and local association respondents were aware of title fraud or deed theft in their area in the prior twelve months — 92 percent in the Northeast — and **62 percent** of the most recent known instances involved vacant land.[1] New York City, which operates a statutory recorded-deed notification program, logged 56 deed-fraud complaints and referrals between November 2022 and October 2023.[2]

In June 2026 the FBI issued a public service announcement on parcel owner impersonation, describing criminals who "impersonate the owners of vacant property parcels and attempt to illegally sell the property parcels without the owner's knowledge or consent," using fabricated driver's licenses and passports, disposable email addresses, and VoIP numbers.[3]

Older owners are disproportionately exposed

IC3 recorded **2,473** Real Estate complaints and **$123.7 million** in losses from complainants aged 60 and over in 2025, plus 4,566 BEC complaints and $568.0 million in losses in that age band.[4] This is the same cohort that holds $14.92 trillion of housing wealth.[5] IC3's own 2025 case file includes a Missouri senior who received spoofed wire instructions purportedly from the title company and wired over $1.3 million.[4]

The regulatory backstop is currently unavailable

Firms that assumed federal reporting would supply a fraud-deterrence layer should note where that stands. FinCEN's Residential Real Estate Rule, published at 89 FR 70258 on 29 August 2024, was scheduled to take effect 1 December 2025, postponed by exemptive order to **1 March 2026**, took effect on that date, and was then **vacated in its entirety on 19 March 2026** by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, which found FinCEN exceeded its authority under the Bank Secrecy Act. FinCEN states that while the order remains in force, reporting persons need not file Real Estate Reports; FinCEN and the Department of Justice have appealed.[6]

What this means operationally

As of the date of this paper, there is no enforceable federal beneficial-ownership reporting requirement for non-financed residential transfers. Private diligence is not supplementing a federal regime right now; in this area it is the regime. Statements about compliance obligations in this space must carry a date, and any party relying on them should re-verify status before acting.

Why early verification beats late verification

Detection timing is measurable. In ALTA's 2024 study, 46 percent of companies said identifying and preventing fraudulent transactions **before** closing was at least somewhat common, against 26 percent after closing.[7] Ninety-four percent of firms in the 2026 study use multiple fraud-detection tools, averaging 5.3 per firm.[8] Tools help. But the cheapest control available is asking who owns the property, on the first day, from the record — and having enough calendar left to act when the answer does not match the person signing.

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SECTION 06 · PILLAR THREE

Information integrity in an AI world

When a convincing document costs nothing to produce, the document stops being evidence. What survives is provenance: who examined what record, sourced from where, on what date.

The cost of fabrication has collapsed

FinCEN's November 2024 alert is the clearest official statement of the change. Its analysis of Bank Secrecy Act data found that "criminals have used GenAI to create falsified documents, photographs, and videos to circumvent financial institutions' customer identification and verification and customer due diligence controls," including altered or generated images used for driver's licenses and passports, and GenAI images combined with stolen or wholly fabricated personal information to create synthetic identities. FinCEN observed plainly that "GenAI tools have greatly reduced the resources required to produce high-quality synthetic content."[1]

The alert publishes no counts — it is qualitative, and this paper will not attach a number to it that FinCEN did not publish. The quantified federal signal comes from IC3, which began breaking out an AI nexus in 2025: adjusted losses exceeding **$893 million** across complaints with an AI nexus, of which **$30.3 million** in BEC and **$2.70 million** in the Real Estate category.[2] IC3 itself cautions that these figures understate the problem, noting that overall investment scam losses exceeded $8 billion and that "many victims do not realize the extent AI may be involved."[2] Treat the AI-nexus dollars as a floor, not a measure.

What practitioners are seeing

Fifty-eight percent of respondents to ALTA's 2026 study rate deepfake image or voice technology as at least somewhat common in seller impersonation attempts, and 87 percent say the same of spoofed contact information.[3] In the 2024 study, 43 percent reported fake notary credentials as at least somewhat common, 31 percent reported legitimate notary credentials used without the notary's consent, and 26 percent reported in-person paper notarization in which the fraudster defeated the notary with a fake identification document.[4]

58%
rate deepfake image or voice technology at least somewhat common in impersonation attempts[3]

$893M
adjusted losses in 2025 complaints with an AI nexus, described by IC3 as understated[2]

52%
of title firms spend 11 or more hours per month on anti-fraud measures[5]

The notary findings are worth sitting with. The notarial act is the identity control that the entire recording system leans on. When it can be defeated by a generated identification document, the recorded instrument inherits the defect — and the record, which everyone downstream treats as ground truth, now contains a lie with a stamp on it.

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Automation is a retrieval gain, not a judgment gain

We build with AI and we are candid about its limits. A 2026 study reviewing 200 residential title files reported that a public-record-only AI search missed at least one meaningful matter in **40.8 percent** of searchable files, with a fail rate above 36 percent in high-risk categories including involuntary liens, and could not search 16 files at all for lack of title plant data or comparable normalized datasets.[1] The study is vendor-sponsored and its extrapolated liability figures are explicitly illustrative; we cite the file-level fail rate, not the extrapolation.

The reason is structural rather than technological. Title examination is not a document-retrieval task. It is a judgment about whether a set of instruments, read together and in order, conveys what it appears to convey. ALTA's 2026 complexity study found that **82 percent** of purchase transactions require careful review of eleven or more documents, 21 percent require more than fifty, half of respondents rely on nine or more document sources, and 27 percent must obtain documents in person.[2] Retrieval breadth is where machines are strong. Reconciling contradictory instruments across sources of varying reliability is where they are not.

> In a world where any document can be generated, the question is no longer what a document says. It is who looked, where they looked, and when.

The standard we hold ourselves to

- **Every material statement is sourced and dated.** A finding without a record citation and a search date is not intelligence; it is an assertion.
- **Automation accelerates retrieval; a human underwrites the conclusion.** IRIS answers pricing and status questions. It does not clear title.
- **Vendor data is labeled as vendor data.** Detection-network statistics describe a vendor's customers, not a population, and we say so when we use them.
- **Statistics we cannot trace, we do not use.** The widely repeated claim that one in three or one in four transactions has a title defect could not be traced to any current primary publication during the research for this paper. ALTA's own 2006 news item gives 25 percent as the figure for the year 2000 and 36 percent for 2005.[3] We cite the 2024 curative study's 36 percent instead, with its year and methodology attached.
- **Regulatory statements carry a date.** See the FinCEN chronology in Section 05.

Why this belongs in a value proposition

Because the discipline is the product. A lender relying on a title conclusion is relying on a chain of evidence it cannot independently reconstruct. When fabrication is cheap and retrieval is automated, the differentiator among title providers stops being turn time and becomes the integrity of that chain — whether the search was real, whether the sources were named, whether the date is recent, and whether a person with liability attached to their judgment signed off. Delivering that chain at day one, rather than at day forty-five, is the whole of what Pre-Policy Intelligence offers.

SOURCES

1. DataTrace, "AI Title Search Tested in the Real World," reported 29 July 2026 (vendor-sponsored study of 200 residential title files). businesswire.com/news/home/20260729983580/en/AI-Alone-is-Not-Enough-for-Reliable-Title-Search-Automation-and-Insurable-Title-Decisioning-at-Scale-New-Study-from-DataTrace
2. ALTA Critical Issues Study, "Measuring the Complexity of Title Production," March 2026. alta.org/file/Measuring-the-Complexity-of-Title-Production.pdf
3. ALTA news item, 14 April 2006, reporting title problems in 36 percent of 2005 residential transactions, up from 25 percent in 2000. alta.org/news-and-publications/news/20060414-Title-problems-found-in-35-of-residential-real-estate-deals

SECTION 07

Who we serve

Nine constituencies. One operational change. Each of them is protecting something different with it — a guarantee, a rate lock, a calendar, a fee, a lien position, a file, a home, a structure, or a portfolio.

The order trigger differs because the first moment of commitment differs. An SBA lender commits at the letter of intent; a mortgage banker commits when the borrower signals intent to proceed after the Loan Estimate; a hard money lender commits at the term sheet. In each case the principle holds: order the search at the first moment the outcome starts to matter, not at the last moment before it is required.

ORDER AT LETTER OF INTENT

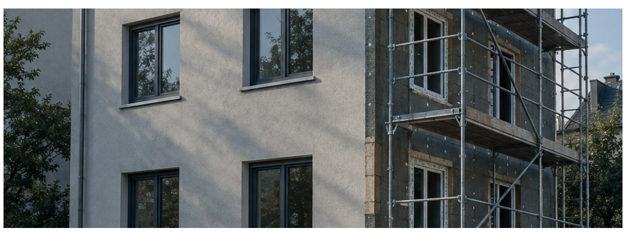
SBA Lenders

7(a), 504, and Express files run against a guarantee timeline with no slack. Title is an eligible project cost, and lien position on real estate is generally evidenced by a title insurance policy under SBA's own standard operating procedure.[1] Knowing the vesting, the liens, and the description at LOI protects the authorization calendar rather than testing it.

ORDER AFTER INTENT TO PROCEED

Institutional Lenders

Conforming lenders, portfolio banks, and credit unions are managing two calendars at once: the rate lock and the post-closing delivery file. With production expenses at $10,936 per loan[2] and extensions priced by the day,[3] a title surprise inside the lock window is a measurable loss, not an inconvenience.



ORDER AT TERM SHEET

DSCR and Hard Money Lenders

Speed to close is the product. A lender competing on a seven-to-fourteen-day close cannot absorb a curative item discovered on day ten. Ordering at the term sheet converts title from the gating item into the first item finished, and protects the pricing premium that speed commands.

ORDER AFTER INTENT TO PROCEED

Mortgage Bankers and Brokers

The referral relationship is the asset, and it is spent down every time a borrower is told the closing has moved. Fourteen percent of contracts had delayed settlements in the three months to August 2026.[4] Early title gives the originator something to say on day two rather than an apology on day thirty.

SOURCES

1. SBA SOP 50 10 8.1, effective 1 October 2026: "Lien position on real estate is generally evidenced by a title insurance policy"; eligible 504 project costs include title insurance, title searches and abstract costs, surveys and zoning matters. legacy.sba.gov/document/sop-50-10-lender-development-company-loan-programs
2. MBA Quarterly Mortgage Bankers Performance Report, Q2 2026. mba.org/news-and-research/newsroom/news/2026/08/18/imbs-production-profits-increase-in-second-quarter-of-2026
3. Land Home Financial Services, Wholesale Rate Lock Policy (2.5 basis points per day). cdn.lhfs.com/lhfscdn/wholesale/download/LHFSRateLockPolicy.pdf
4. NAR, REALTORS® Confidence Index, August 2026. nar.realtor/sites/default/files/2026-09/2026-08-realtors-confidence-index-09-10-2026.pdf

SECTION 07 · CONTINUED

Counsel, owners, and portfolio buyers

ORDER AT PROJECT INTAKE

Certified Development Companies

A 504 project is a two-lien structure by regulation: at least 10 percent borrower contribution, a CDC debenture of up to 40 percent on a second lien, and a third-party loan on a first lien.[1] Two lenders must agree on lien position over one record. Establishing that record at intake keeps the debenture cycle from slipping a month.

ORDER AT ENGAGEMENT

Attorneys and Closing Counsel

Counsel carries the file's legal risk and, in many states, the closing itself. A search delivered at engagement gives counsel the record before advising on structure, contingencies, and seller representations — rather than after the contract has committed the client to terms the record will not support.

ORDER AT CONTRACT OR EARLIER

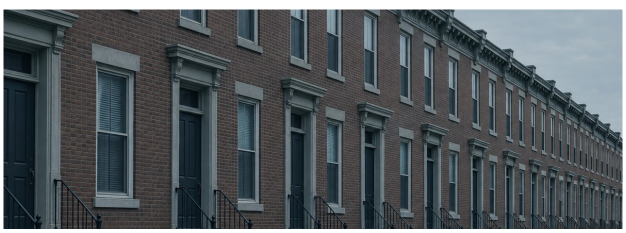
Real Estate Buyers and Owners

One property at a time, to live in, rent, lease, or hold. This is the buyer whose home is more than their entire net worth.[2] For them, the value of early title is not cycle time. It is finding out that the seller is not who the deed says, or that a lien exists, while walking away is still cost-free.

ORDER BEFORE STRUCTURING

Creative Finance

Subject-to, seller-financed, wraparound, and lease-option structures are built on assumptions about the underlying loan, the vesting, and the due-on-sale posture. Those assumptions are record questions. A structure designed before the record is read is a structure designed on hope.



ORDER AT OFFER

Real Estate Investors

Rental, reposition, wholesale, portfolio, and fund buyers underwrite on thin margins and repeat volume. A defect found late costs the deal, the holding cost, and the credibility of the next offer. At $149 per property, early title is cheaper than a week of carry.

The common thread

Nine different parties, nine different things being protected, one shared dependency: a factual answer about the record, early enough to act on. None of these constituencies needs a different search. They need the same search, sooner.

SOURCES

1. 13 CFR § 120.801, § 120.920 and § 120.930; CDC defined at 13 CFR § 120.10. ecfr.gov/current/title-13/part-120/section-120.801 · ecfr.gov/current/title-13/part-120/section-120.920 · ecfr.gov/current/title-13/part-120/section-120.10
2. Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Economic Brief 23-39: real estate equals roughly 155 percent of net worth for households at the 25th to 50th percentile. richmondfed.org/publications/research/economic_brief/2023/eb_23-39

SECTION 07 · CONTINUED

Order triggers and what the timing changes

The order trigger, by constituency

CONSTITUENCY	ORDER TRIGGER	WHAT DAY-ONE TITLE PROTECTS
SBA Lenders	Letter of intent	The guarantee timeline and documented lien position
Institutional Lenders	Loan Estimate and intent to proceed	The rate lock and post-closing policy delivery
DSCR and Hard Money	Term sheet	Speed to close, which is the product itself
Mortgage Bankers and Brokers	Intent to proceed	The referral relationship and the promised date
Certified Development Companies	Project intake	Two-lien agreement and the debenture funding cycle
Attorneys and Closing Counsel	Engagement	The advice given before the client is committed
Buyers and Owners	Contract or earlier	The household balance sheet
Creative Finance	Before structuring	The assumptions the structure rests on
Real Estate Investors	Offer	Margin, holding cost, and the next offer's credibility

What changes when the answer arrives on day one

DECISION	ORDERED AT CONDITIONAL APPROVAL	ORDERED AT DAY ONE
Pricing the deal	Priced before the encumbrances are known; re-traded or abandoned later	Priced against the actual record, including easements and liens
Setting the closing date	Promised on assumption, then moved	Promised against a known curative list
Locking the rate	Locked into a window that curative work may exceed	Locked with the curative work already scoped or complete
Verifying the seller	Verified once wire instructions and signing logistics are already in motion	Verified against the vesting before anyone is committed
Walking away	Costly: appraisal, legal, and inspection spend already sunk	Nearly free: the decision precedes the spend

The right-hand column is not a faster process. It is the same process with the information moved to the front of it.

> Nine constituencies, nine different exposures, one shared dependency: a factual answer about the record, early enough to act on it.
>
> SECTION 07 · WHO WE SERVE

SECTION 08

Why Intelligent Title

A brand of American Commercial Title LLC, built around a single operational conviction and underwritten by two of the oldest names in the business.

$149
Pre-Policy Intelligence, credited in full against the premium at closing with an Intelligent Title policy

24 hrs
initial response covering ownership, liens, encumbrances, judgments and taxes, and legal description

50 states
underwriter licensure across promulgated, filed, and negotiable rate jurisdictions

Underwriting

Policies are underwritten by **Stewart Title Guaranty Company**, established in 1893 and licensed in all fifty states, and by **WFG National Title Insurance Company**, established in 1975 and part of Williston Financial Group. The intelligence is ours; the indemnity sits with underwriters whose balance sheets and regulatory standing are a matter of public record.

Pricing transparency across three regulatory regimes

Title is priced differently depending on the state's rate framework, and the difference is not cosmetic. In promulgated states, the regulator sets the rate and every provider charges it — Texas premiums derive from the Basic Premium Rate table effective 1 March 2026 under Commissioner's Order 2025-9697, with simultaneous issue and reissue treatment governed by Rate Rules R-5, R-6 and R-8.[1] In filed-rate states such as Florida, New Mexico, New York and Pennsylvania, rates are filed with or promulgated by the regulator or a rating bureau.[2] In negotiable states such as California, rates are filed but competitively set.[3] IRIS surfaces the applicable regime and the resulting figure rather than quoting a national average that applies nowhere.

Our terms, stated plainly

- The search is available on its own. No policy commitment and no executed contract are required to order it.
- The $149 buys work. Close with an Intelligent Title policy and it is credited in full against the premium; decide differently and the findings are still yours.
- There is no separate intelligence product and policy product. There is one body of work, delivered at the beginning rather than the end.
- Every finding carries its record citation and its search date.

Order the search on the first day. Everything else in this paper follows from that one change.

INTELLIGENTTITLE.COM

SOURCES

1. Texas Department of Insurance, Basic Premium Rates effective 1 March 2026; Commissioner's Order 2025-9697; Title Insurance Basic Manual, Section III, Rate Rules. tdi.texas.gov/title/titlerates2026.html · tdi.texas.gov/orders/documents/20259697.pdf · tdi.texas.gov/title/titlem3b.html
2. Florida Administrative Code r. 69O-186.003; New Mexico Office of Superintendent of Insurance revised title rate table, 30 September 2025; TIRSA Rate Manual (New York); TIRBOP Schedule of Rates (Pennsylvania). law.cornell.edu/regulations/florida/Fla-Admin-Code-Ann-R-69O-186-003 · osi.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Revised-Title-Ins-Rate-Table-Updated-9.30.2025.pdf · patitleratingbureau.org/schedule-of-rates/
3. NAIC Title Insurance Task Force, survey of state insurance laws on title rate regulation. content.naic.org/sites/default/files/committee_related_documents/cmte_c_title_tf_survey_state_insurance_laws_march_2018.pdf

SECTION 09

Methodology and sources

A white paper that argues for evidentiary discipline has to practice it. Here is what we did, and what we deliberately left out.

What we cited

Every figure in this paper was taken from a primary publication fetched during its preparation and is quoted as published, with its period stated. Federal sources include the Federal Reserve's Financial Accounts of the United States, the Survey of Consumer Finances, FBI IC3 annual reports, FinCEN alerts and rulemaking records, the eCFR, SBA standard operating procedures, and CFPB research. Industry sources are attributed to their publishers — ALTA, NAIC, MBA, NAR, ICE, Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae — with sample sizes and survey dates given where they materially affect interpretation.

What we refused to cite

Several statistics circulate widely in title marketing that we could not trace to a primary source, and we excluded them rather than repeat them:

- **"One in three title searches uncovers a defect."** No current ALTA publication states this. ALTA's own 2006 item gives 25 percent for 2000 and 36 percent for 2005. We use the 2024 curative study's 36 percent, dated.
- **"Title insurers spend 95 percent of premium on search and examination."** The ALTA/Milliman wording is 95 percent for loss elimination and other operating costs, which includes agent retention. We quote it as written.
- **A single aggregate for "real estate wire fraud at closing."** IC3 publishes Real Estate and BEC as separate crime types. They must not be blended.
- **Vendor growth rates without a traceable methodology**, including a widely quoted figure for BEC growth attributed only to unnamed industry data.
- **A per-day dollar cost of a delayed closing.** None is published. We cite Freddie Mac's cost-of-funds benefit and a lender's published extension pricing instead, and label the arithmetic as ours where we perform any.

Known gaps

No national count of fraudulent deed filings exists. No current NAR breakdown of delay causes exists; the most recent is from 2018. CFPB publishes total loan costs without a title breakout. SBA publishes its own review turnaround times, not application-to-funding averages. Where a number was unavailable we said so rather than substituting an estimate.

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