

## Summary of 2020 MLS Changes

This Summary highlights changes in NAR MLS policy adopted in 2019, including changes to the Model MLS Rules and Regulations (all types), and changes to the MLS Policy Statements, both found in the 2020 *Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy*. Shaded portions of the Handbook highlight all areas that have changed. All changes become effective January 1, 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

For comprehensive background information and additional detail, the Multiple Listing Issues and Policy Committee agenda and minutes can be found at <http://nar.realtor/natmeet.nsf>.

Throughout the Summary, underscoring indicates additions and strikeouts indicates deletions. At the end of each policy change, the compliance classification category is noted by the letters:

- M** Mandatory\*
- R** Recommended
- O** Optional
- I** Informational

*\*Adoption is necessary to ensure compliance with mandatory policies and ensure coverage under the NAR's insurance policy for associations and MLSs.*

### Changes to Model MLS Rules and Regulations (all types)

- **(New) Section 1.01, Clear Cooperation\*\***

Within one (1) business day of marketing a property to the public, the listing broker must submit the listing to the MLS for cooperation with other MLS participants. Public marketing includes, but is not limited to, flyers displayed in windows, yard signs, digital marketing on public facing websites, brokerage website displays (including IDX and VOW), digital communications marketing (email blasts), multi-brokerage listing sharing networks, and applications available to the general public. (Adopted 11/19) **M**

Note: Exclusive listing information for required property types must be filed and distributed to other MLS Participants for cooperation under the Clear Cooperation Policy. This applies to listings filed under Section 1 and listings exempt from distribution under Section 1.3 of the NAR model MLS rules, and any other situation where the listing broker is publicly marketing an exclusive listing that is required to be filed with the service and is not currently available to other MLS Participants.

- **Section 1.3, Exempt Listings**

If the seller refuses to permit the listing to be disseminated by the service, the participant may then take the listing (office exclusive) and such listing shall be filed with the service but not disseminated to the participants. Filing of the listing should be accompanied by certification signed by the seller that he does not desire the listing to be disseminated by the service.

Note 1: Section 1.3 is not required if the service does not require all (indicate type[s] of listing[s]) *accepted by the service* listings to be submitted by a participant to the service.

Note 2: MLS Participants must distribute exempt listings within (1) one business day once the listing is publicly marketed. See Section 1.01, Clear Cooperation M

- **Section 2.3, Right of Cooperating Broker in Presentation of Offer**

The cooperating broker (subagent or buyer agent) or his representative has the right to participate in the presentation to the seller or lessor of any offer he secures to purchase or lease. He does not have the right to be present at any discussion or evaluation of that offer by the seller or lessor and the listing broker. However, if the seller or lessor gives written instructions to the listing broker that the cooperating broker not be present when an offer the cooperating broker secured is presented, the cooperating broker has the right to a copy of the seller's or lessor's written instructions. None of the foregoing diminishes the listing broker's right to control the establishment of appointments for such presentations. (Amended 4/92)

Where the cooperating broker is not present during the presentation of the offer, the cooperating broker can request in writing, and the listing broker must provide, as soon as practical, written affirmation stating that the offer has been submitted to the seller, or written notification that the seller has waived the obligation to have the offer presented. (Adopted 11/19) M

*\*\* Local MLSs must adopt this change by no later than May 1, 2020. All other changes must be adopted within 60 days of the January 1, 2020 effective date. See MLS Policy Statement 7.51 for more information.*

## **Changes to Multiple Listing Policy Statements**

- **MLS Policy Statement 7.9, Definition of Participant**

Where the term Realtor® is used in this explanation of policy in connection with the word member or the word participant, it shall be construed to mean the Realtor® principal or principals, of this or any other association, or a firm comprised of Realtor® principals participating in a multiple listing service owned and operated by the board. Participatory rights shall be held by an individual principal broker unless determined by the association or MLS to be held by a firm. It shall not be construed to include individuals other than a principal or principals who are Realtor® members of this or any other association, or who are legally entitled to participate without association membership. However, under no circumstances is any individual or firm, regardless of membership status, entitled to MLS membership or participation unless they hold a current, valid real estate broker's license and offer or accept cooperation and compensation to and from other participants or are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property. Use of information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service is strictly limited to the activities authorized under a participant's licensure(s) or certification and unauthorized uses are prohibited. (Amended 11/08)

Mere possession of a broker's license is not sufficient to qualify for MLS participation. Rather, the requirement that an individual or firm offers or accepts cooperation and compensation means that the participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate business to list real property of the type listed on the MLS and/or to accept offers of cooperation and compensation made by listing brokers or agents in the MLS. "Actively" means on a continual and ongoing basis during the operation of the participant's real estate business. The "actively" requirement is not intended to preclude MLS participation by a participant or potential participant that operates a real estate business on a part-time,

seasonal, or similarly time-limited basis or that has its business interrupted by periods of relative inactivity occasioned by market conditions. Similarly, the requirement is not intended to deny MLS participation to a participant or potential participant who has not achieved a minimum number of transactions despite good faith efforts. Nor is it intended to permit an MLS to deny participation based on the level of service provided by the participant or potential participant as long as the level of service satisfies state law. *(Adopted 11/08)*

The key is that the participant or potential participant actively endeavors to make or accept offers of cooperation and compensation with respect to properties of the type that are listed on the MLS in which participation is sought. This requirement does not permit an MLS to deny participation to a participant or potential participant that operates a "Virtual Office Website" (VOW) (including a VOW that the participant uses to refer customers to other participants) if the participant or potential participant actively endeavors to make or accept offers of cooperation and compensation. An MLS may evaluate whether a participant or potential participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate business to offer or accept cooperation and compensation only if the MLS has a reasonable basis to believe that the participant or potential participant is in fact not doing so. The membership requirement shall be applied in a nondiscriminatory manner to all participants and potential participants. *(Adopted 11/08)*

Further, none of the foregoing is intended to convey participation or membership or any right of access to information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service where access to such information is prohibited by law. Additionally, the foregoing does not prohibit association multiple listing services, at their discretion, from categorizing non-principal brokers, sales licensees, licensed and certified appraisers and others affiliated with the MLS members or participants as users or subscribers and, holding such individuals personally subject to the rules and regulations and any other governing provisions of the MLS and to discipline for violations thereof. MLSs may, as a matter of local determination, limit participatory rights to individual principal brokers, or to their firms, and to licensed or certified appraisers, who maintain an office or Internet presence from which they are available to represent real estate sellers, buyers, lessors or lessees or from which they provide appraisal services. *(Amended 5/02)*

Where the terms subscriber or user are used in connection with a multiple listing service owned or operated by an association of Realtors®, they refer to non-principal brokers, sales licensees, and licensed and certified real estate appraisers affiliated with an MLS participant and may, as a matter of local option, also include a participant's affiliated unlicensed administrative and clerical staff, personal assistants, and individuals seeking licensure or certification as real estate appraisers provided that any such individual is under the direct supervision of an MLS participant or the participant's licensed designee. If such access is available to unlicensed or uncertified individuals, their access is subject to the rules and regulations, the payment of applicable fees and charges (if any), and the limitations and restrictions of state law. None of the foregoing shall diminish the participant's ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the rules and regulations of the MLS by all individuals affiliated with the participant. *(Adopted 4/92)*

Under the Board of Choice policy, MLS participatory rights shall be available to any Realtor® (principal) or any firm comprised of Realtors® (principals) irrespective of where they hold primary membership subject only to their agreement to abide by any MLS rules or regulations; agreement to arbitrate disputes with other participants; and payment of any MLS dues, fees, and charges. Participatory rights granted under Board of Choice do not confer voting privileges or eligibility for office as an MLS committee member, officer, or director, except as granted at the discretion of the local board and/or MLS. *(Amended 5/97)*

The universal access to services component of Board of Choice is to be interpreted as requiring that MLS participatory rights be available to Realtor® principals, or to firms comprised of Realtor® principals, irrespective of where primary or secondary membership is held.

~~The MLS may charge participants and subscribers not holding primary or secondary membership in a Realtor® association that owns the MLS a different amount than charged to members of the association, provided that such charge is reasonably related to the actual costs of serving those members. This does not preclude an MLS from assessing REALTORS® not holding primary or secondary membership locally, fees, dues, or charges that exceed those or, alternatively, that are less than those charged participants holding such memberships locally or additional fees to offset actual expenses incurred in providing MLS services such as courier charges, long distance phone charges, etc., or for charging any participant specific fees for optional additional services. (Amended 11/965/19)~~

None of the foregoing shall be construed as requiring an association to grant MLS participatory rights, under Board of Choice, where such rights have been previously terminated by action of that association's board of directors. (Adopted 11/95) **M**

- **MLS Policy Statement 7.73, Rights of Cooperating Brokers in Presentation of Offers**

Cooperating participants or their representatives have the right to participate in the presentation of any offer they secure to purchase or lease to the seller or lessor. They do not have the right to be present at any discussion or evaluation of the offer by the seller or lessor and the listing broker. However, if a seller or lessor gives written instructions to a listing broker that cooperating brokers may not be present when offers they procure are presented, cooperating brokers have the right to a copy of those instructions. This policy is not intended to affect listing brokers' right to control the establishment of appointments for presentation of offers.

Where the cooperating broker is not present during the presentation of the offer, the cooperating broker can request in writing, and the listing broker must provide, as soon as practical, written affirmation stating that the offer has been submitted to the seller, or written notification that the seller has waived the obligation to have the offer presented. **M**

- **(New) MLS Policy Statement 8.0, Clear Cooperation**

Within one (1) business day of marketing a property to the public, the listing broker must submit the listing to the MLS for cooperation with other MLS participants. Public marketing includes, but is not limited to, flyers displayed in windows, yard signs, digital marketing on public facing websites, brokerage website displays (including IDX and VOW), digital communications marketing (email blasts), multi-brokerage listing sharing networks, and applications available to the general public. (Adopted 11/19) **M**

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