

Multiple Listing Research Guide

NAR Archives Research Guide

The National Association of REALTORS® Archives produces Research Guides with the goal of helping members, scholars, and staff locate information held in the Archives. Each Guide covers one series of records, providing historical background and context on how the materials relate to NAR as a whole. In addition, the Guides contain content lists, brief notes about the materials, and box locations within the Archives. Researchers can use these Guides to gain a better understanding of the materials and quickly decide which records may be most relevant to their research.

Multiple Listing Series B12

<https://realtor.soutrnglobal.net/Portal/Members/en-US/RecordView/Index/5813>

The beginnings of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) can be traced back to the San Diego Real Estate Exchange in 1887, then followed by the Cincinnati and Cleveland Exchanges in 1892. William A. Keadin said that he organized the first system in 1907 and coined the term “multiple listing service.” He wanted to “establish more friendly and honorable methods in the business between brokers by interchanging their listings through a central bureau, or clearinghouse, thereby creating more confidence between owners, agents, as well as courts and assuring owners under exclusive contracts the concerted action of the members of the bureau.” The early establishment of exclusive contracts was the backbone of the formal MLS system. By the early 1920s, NAREB established a Multiple Listing Committee under the Secretaries Council and was beginning to produce manuals and handbooks to encourage local boards to operate MLSs.

In 1956, the Association appointed an official Committee on Multiple Listing Policy. The Committee conducted surveys, created uniform policies for local board MLSs, and in 1965 authored the first Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy. The Handbook served as the official guide to “ensure that MLSs owned by or affiliated with REALTOR® boards functioned in a manner consistent with the best interests of REALTORS®, their clients, and the public.” The MLS allowed for an orderly sharing of listings between REALTORS® and created a marketplace with consistent rules and regulations. As the age of the Internet dawned, the MLS moved online and policies about data exchange and virtual listings were developed to keep the marketplace fair and consistent for all MLS users.

The MLS continues to be a foundational part of REALTORS®’ businesses and this series captures the history, the evolution, and the modern operation of the Multiple Listing Service’s

cooperative efforts. The material in this series includes the beginnings of the MLS; the MLS Committee in its early and modern forms; the legal cases associated with commissions, anti-competition, and internet data exchange; the efforts of local associations to establish, promote, and operate MLSs; and the formation of an ever evolving Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy.

Collection:

B12:01 Multiple Listing Handbooks

B12:01 Box 1

- Multiple Listing handbooks before 1965
 - Regulations for Multiple Listing, 1920
 - The Organization and Administration of a Multiple Listing System, 1924
 - Multiple Listing Practice and Procedures, 1950
 - Published by the Long Beach Board
- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 1965-1975
 - The purpose of the MLS handbook is to “guide member boards in the proper operation” of MLS activity, to “enable REALTORS® to cooperate and thus be of maximum service to the buying and selling public.”
 - First published by NAR in 1965
- Handbook on Cooperative Sharing Service, 1972-1974
 - A handbook “to serve the needs of Boards of REALTORS® with limited membership wherein a formal Multiple Listing Service is not required...who wish to exchange listings on a systematic and uniform basis.”

B12:01 Box 2

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 1980-1989

B12:01 Box 3

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 1991-1994

B12:01 Box 4

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 1995-1998

B12:01 Box 5

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 1999-2002

B12:01 Box 6

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 2003-2007

B12:01 Box 7

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 2008-2012

B12:01 Box 8

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 2013-2017

B12:01 Box 9

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 2018-2022

B12:01 Box 10

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy: Commercial/Industrial Supplement, 1991-1998

- “This Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy: Commercial/Industrial Supplement is intended to provide Member Boards of REALTORS® with the governing documents necessary to establish commercial/industrial multiple listing services and commercial information exchanges as either Board committees or as wholly-owned subsidiaries of Boards of REALTORS®.”

B12:01 Box 11

- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy: Commercial/Industrial Supplement, 1999-2002
- Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy Japanese Translation, 1975

B12:01 Box 12

- RCS/MLS User Manual, 1987
 - The user manual for the RCS/MLS System that allows REALTORS® to “search listings and prospect data.”

B12:02 Multiple Listing Policies & Governing Documents

B12:02 Box 1

- The Multiple Listing System, 1941
 - A handbook for the creating and understanding the rules and regulations of an MLS
- Ideas for Discussion Relating to Suggested Multiple Listing Bylaws, 1956
 - Suggestions for Local Board MLS Bylaws
- MLS Terminology, 1959
 - Definitions of common terms used in the MLS
- Operation of Multiple Listing Services, 1970
 - A bulletin from NAREB EVP Herbert U. Nelson about how an MLS should operate
- Approval of the 14 points, 1971
- Multiple Listing Policy Questions and Answers, 1972
 - A booklet of commonly asked questions and answers about MLS Policy
- Initial Participation Fee of an MLS Owned and Operated by a Board of REALTORS®, 1974
 - A discussion of fees and service charges to participate in the MLS
- MLS Computer Systems Prototype, 1981
 - “The prototype is a broad, general-purpose tool for each local Board to use in developing its own individualized MLS computer system.”
- MLS Study Group on Agency report, 1988
 - Report of an MLS Study Group on agency, subagency, and agency relationships.
- MLS Study Group on Commercial/Industrial MLS Rules and Regulations, 1988
- Abolition of Mandatory Subagency in Board/Association MLS, 1992
- Consolidated Report and Recommendations of the MLS Policy Review Work Group, 2002
 - Discussion of policy review and proposed policy changes to the Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy.

B12:02 Box 2

- Virtual Office Website (VOW) Policy, 2005
 - Includes information about NAR’s Internet Listing Display policy, articles on VOWs and VOW policy, slides from presentations made about VOWs, and a mailing sent to REALTORS® about the new VOW policies.

B12:04 Multiple Listing Committee

Throughout the early years of NAREB, there were several attempts to assist member boards in multiple listing activities. In 1956 these activities were formalized and the Committee on Multiple Listing was established. The Committee worked to create a Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, to fight legal battles against MLS tax exemption, and to develop and make recommendations uphold the rules and regulations for all participants. Today, the Committee serves much the same purpose, to develop and recommend rules and regulations, and to make those available to all MLSs, whether operated by member boards or independently operated.

B12:04 Box 1

- Brief History on the Committee on Multiple Listing Policy, undated
- MLS Committee as a Committee of the Secretaries Council
 - Report of the Multiple Listing Committee, 1921
 - Report of the Multiple Listing Committee, 1922
 - Report of the Multiple Listing Committee, 1927
 - Preliminary Report of the Legal Forms and Multiple Listing Systems Committee, 1943
 - Report of the Multiple Listing Committee 1946
- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 1952-1974

B12:04 Box 2

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 1975-1991

B12:04 Box 3

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 1992-2002

B12:04 Box 4

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 2003-2005

B12:04 Box 5

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 2006-2009

B12:04 Box 6

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 2009-2012

B12:04 Box 7

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 2012-2014

B12:04 Box 8

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 2015-2016

B12:04 Box 9

- Multiple Listing Policy Committee minutes, 2016-2018

B12:04 Box 10

- Published updates of the Multiple Listing Policy Committee, 1976-1993



B12:05 Multiple Listing Legal Cases

The MLS has faced legal challenges throughout its history. One of the most challenged aspects of the MLS was the question of whether agents had to be a member of the local board of REALTORS® to join and have access to the MLS. Ultimately the decision was made to allow local board MLSs the option to give non-members access to the MLS in order to dispel anti-competition and anti-trust legal questions. There have also been legal questions related to the tax exemption of MLSs, commission rates, and the exchange of internet data as listings became readily available online. The cases here discuss taxation and anti-trust/anti-competition, as well as NAR's case with the Department of Justice on Virtual Office Websites (VOWs). The full VOW policy can be found in B12:02.

B12:05 Box 1

- Legal Cases on Anti-Trust, 1926-2005
 - Legal briefs, discussion, and newspaper clippings about anti-trust MLS cases.
 - Includes the Department of Justice case on Virtual Office Websites (VOWs) in 2005.

B12:05 Box 2-3

- Legal Cases on Taxation, 1927-1993
 - Beginning in 1958, the IRS began questioning the tax exemption status of member boards that conducted multiple listing. The Multiple Listing Policy Committee and NAREB's legal council fought to keep the tax exemption status of MLSs operated by member boards.
 - Legal briefs, discussion, and newspaper clippings about MLS tax exemption.
 - Includes the 1959 Evanston-North Shore Board and Providence Board cases.

B12:06 Multiple Listing Services of Local Boards

The Multiple Listing Service is primarily a local board operation. This series includes early local board efforts to establish MLSs; local board MLS handbooks, guidelines, rules and regulations, and by-laws; and forms used by REALTORS® to list properties, establish contractual relationships, and advertise both residential and non-residential properties.

B12:06 Box 1

- MLS Advertising
 - “I am a Typical REALTOR®” MLS advertising booklet, 1958
 - MLS Advertising Pamphlets from Local Boards, undated
 - Guidelines for Advertising the Multiple Listing Service of a Member Board in the National Association of REALTORS®, 1974 and 1979
 - Includes “dos and don’ts” of MLS advertising and ad slicks
 - Advertising Kit for Multiple Listing Services, 1990 and 1992
 - Emblems and Decals of Local Association MLSs, undated
 - Includes trademark registration
- MLS Forms from Local Boards, bulk from 1950s-1970s
 - MLS Listing Cards from various Local Boards
 - Greater Buffalo Board of REALTORS® Multiple Listing Service book, 1973
 - MLS Forms
 - Contracts, Listing Forms, Forms for Properties other than Single Family Residences, and other MLS forms from Boards

B12:06 Box 2

- Certification of Security Measures for Lock Boxes form, 1979
- Annual Reports of Local Board MLSs, 1925-1972
- Farm Land MLS, 1924
 - Rules and Regulations, newspaper clippings, and reports from states with Multiple Listing Services for Farm Land
- Local Board Bylaws, Rules, and Regulations, 1920-1969
- Local Board MLS Constitutions and Bylaws, 1941-1958

B12:06 Box 3

- Local Board MLS Handbooks, 1925-1968
- Guidelines and Suggestions for creating an MLS, 1950s
- Handbooks for Cooperative Listing, 1970 and 1981
 - Guides for local boards to establish cooperative listing services for boards that share a common geographic real estate market
- Lists and Indices of Local Boards with established MLSs, 1950-1962
- Articles, news bulletins, and speeches about Local MLS operations, 1927-1964
- MLS Membership Lists, 1960-1964
- Foreign MLS materials, 1970s
 - Rules and Regulations, Bylaws, Annual Reports, MLS Listing Bulletins, and meeting materials from foreign MLSs (England, Australia, Canada)

B12:07 MLS Studies, Surveys, and Publications

MLS Studies/Statistics

B12:07 Box 1

- Results of Surveys, 1920s
- Multiple Listing Statistics and Survey, 1924-1925
- Commission Splits Data, 1924-1963
- Excerpts from Board Responses on Multiple Listing, 1952
- Report on the Operation of Multiple Listing, undated
- Report of Boards Operating Multiple Listing Plan, 1946
- Tabulation of 1952 Multiple Listing Survey, 1952
- Study of 111 Multiple Listing Administrative Operations, 1954
- Surveys on Multiple Listing Operations, 1959
- Classification of MLS survey, 1960
- Committee on Multiple Listing Policy Report on Survey, 1966
- A Study of Fresno Multiple Listing Service Estimates of Residential Prices, 1967
- The Feasibility of Instituting a Multiple Listing Service, 1967
- Multiple Listing Survey by the Multiple Listing Policy Committee, 1970
- Proposal to the National Association of REALTORS® to Develop and Information Systems and Telecommunications Strategic Plan, 1981
- Proposal to Analyze the Alternatives of Providing Assistance to Local Boards in Developing and Implementing Multiple Listing Service Systems, 1981
- Multiple Listing and REALTOR® Cooperation in the 1990s—Scenario for Change, 1990s
- Presidential Advisory Group on MLS Technology Applications Report, 1993
- Update on Board/Association MLS Systems: Regional MLS Information Survey, 1993
- Independent Multiple Listing Services Report to the National Association of REALTORS®, 1993
- Local Association MLS Survey Data, 1958-1987
- Availability and Applicability of Information and Data Relating to Housing and Local Housing Markets, 1990
 - A hearing before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Policy Research and Insurance of the Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs

MLS Publications and Correspondence

B12:07 Box 2

- Multiple Listing Digestaire, 1951-1963
 - 3 bound volumes
 - A bulletin for members of the Secretaries Council that “supplements the material in the book “Multiple Listing—Practice and Procedures”

B12:07 Box 3

- Speeches and Articles about MLS, 1912-1955
- Articles on MLS, 1922-1926
- Correspondence on MLS for Rentals and Early Multiple Listing Systems, 1925-1932