



BROKER COMPENSATION ADVISORY

(C.A.R. Form BCA, 7/24)

1. WHEN SELLERS LIST THEIR PROPERTY FOR SALE THROUGH A REAL ESTATE BROKER THEY AGREE TO PAY THE SELLER'S BROKER WHEN ESCROW CLOSES.

- A. LISTING AGREEMENT COMPENSATION IS FULLY NEGOTIABLE:** When a seller enters into a listing agreement with a broker, the seller authorizes the broker to find a buyer for the seller's property and agrees to pay the seller's broker if a buyer is found who purchases the property. Compensation amounts are not fixed by law and are fully negotiable between the seller and the seller's broker. When negotiating compensation, the parties may discuss factors such as the broker's expertise and experience, the type of broker services to be performed, and the broker's time and expenses, among other considerations.
- B. OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION IF BUYER IS UNREPRESENTED:** A listing agreement may include optional additional compensation amounts owed to the seller's broker for situations where the broker takes on additional responsibilities or workload. Sometimes a buyer may not be working with nor want to be represented by a real estate broker. When that happens, the seller's broker is not required to represent the buyer, and the seller and seller's broker may decide that they do not want to create such a relationship. In those situations, the seller's broker is advised to use a Buyer Non-Agency (C.A.R. Form BNA) to inform the buyer that the seller's broker will be acting on behalf of the seller only, and not act as the buyer's agent, throughout the transaction. However, because the buyer is unrepresented, the seller's agent will inevitably have to do more work to facilitate the transaction. A seller may agree to compensate their broker for the additional work in such cases.
- C. BROKER MAY REPRESENT BOTH BUYER AND SELLER; DUAL AGENCY:** California law allows a brokerage company to represent both seller and buyer in a real estate transaction. At the time the agent, on behalf of a brokerage, obtains the signature of a seller on a listing agreement, the agent will not, in most cases, know who the eventual buyer will be for a seller's property. Similarly, at the time an agent, on behalf of a brokerage, obtains the signature of a buyer on a buyer representation agreement, the agent will not, in most cases, know who the eventual seller will be for a property the buyer wants to buy. Because many individual licensees may work through one brokerage company, and some individual licensees work with many buyers and sellers, there is a possibility that the same brokerage company will represent both buyer and seller in a transaction. If licensees working through broker represent both seller and buyer, broker is allowed to receive compensation from each, provided the seller and buyer are advised of the relationship and the total amount of compensation the broker will receive.

2. BROKER AGREEMENTS WITH BUYERS:

- A. BUYER REPRESENTATION COMPENSATION IS FULLY NEGOTIABLE:** When a buyer enters into a representation agreement with a broker, the buyer authorizes the broker to locate properties for the buyer to buy and agrees to pay the buyer's broker if a transaction is completed. Compensation amounts are not fixed by law and are fully negotiable. When negotiating compensation, the parties may discuss factors such as the broker's expertise and experience, the type of broker services to be performed, and the broker's time and expenses, among other considerations.
- B. REQUIREMENT FOR WRITTEN AGREEMENTS:** Pursuant to a nationwide class action settlement reached by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), participants in Multiple Listing Services are required to have a written agreement with a buyer prior to showing a buyer a residential property or giving a buyer a tour of such a property. The agreement must identify the amount of compensation to be paid to the broker for services provided and require that the broker cannot receive any compensation in excess of the amount specified in the agreement. Pursuant to legislation expected to become law in California on January 1, 2025, all licensees showing a buyer any type of property will be required to have a written agreement with that buyer prior to the showing.



C. ADVANTAGES OF WRITTEN AGREEMENTS: Buyers and their brokers benefit when the terms of their relationship and respective duties are in writing. A written agreement establishes clear, mutual expectations and helps avoid misunderstandings over the buyer and broker's duties and the amount of compensation the buyer's agent is to be paid.

3. WHEN ENLISTING A REAL ESTATE BROKER TO REPRESENT THEM, BUYERS AGREE TO PAY THE BUYER'S BROKER WHEN ESCROW CLOSES, BUT THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENT MAY BE NEGOTIATED IN THE TRANSACTION:

A. BUYER PAYS THE COMPENSATION PURSUANT TO A BUYER REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT:

A buyer's broker may negotiate the amount of compensation directly with the Buyer and then document that agreement in a buyer representation agreement (C.A.R. Form BRBC or PSRA). The buyer then becomes contractually obligated to pay the broker by providing funds to escrow prior to the closing of a transaction.

B. SELLER PAYS THE COMPENSATION:

(1) **Buyer negotiates for Seller to Compensate Buyer's Broker:** A buyer may make a conditional offer to the seller by including a term in the purchase offer asking the seller to pay the buyer's broker if the buyer has already agreed to pay their own broker pursuant to a buyer representation agreement. If such a term is included in the purchase offer, the request will become one term among many that a seller may accept, reject, or negotiate by way of a counter offer. The possibility of asking the seller to pay the buyer's contractual compensation obligation option should be discussed when creating a buyer representation agreement and prior to an offer being made.

(2) **Buyer's Agent negotiates an agreement directly with Seller:** If a seller is unrepresented or does not have an exclusive agency relationship with another broker, a buyer's broker may approach that seller asking the seller to sign an agreement (C.A.R. Form SP, Single Party Compensation Agreement) to pay the buyer's broker. In this situation, the seller agrees to pay the buyer's broker compensation without necessarily creating an agency relationship with the broker. When that happens, the buyer's broker is advised to use a Seller Non-Agency (C.A.R. Form SNA) to inform the seller that the buyer's broker will be acting on behalf of the buyer only, and not act as the seller's agent, throughout the transaction. However, because the seller is unrepresented, the buyer's agent will inevitably have to do more work to facilitate the transaction, which may be factored into the negotiation of the single party compensation agreement.

C. CHANGING PRACTICE RELATED TO A SELLER'S BROKER'S OFFER OF COMPENSATION:

Historically, in California, many seller's brokers used a Multiple Listing Service (MLS) to make a unilateral offer to compensate a buyer's broker who procured a buyer for the seller's property. However, the nationwide NAR settlement prohibits the seller's broker from using an MLS to make such an offer of compensation. The California Association REALTORS®' (C.A.R.) listing agreement forms no longer provide for such offers of cooperating broker compensation nor does C.A.R. include other forms in its library of forms that might facilitate such offers. Buyers and sellers must separately negotiate compensation with their respective brokers, as specified above.

By signing below, Seller or Buyer acknowledges that they have read, understand, and have received a Copy of this Broker Compensation Advisory. Seller or Buyer acknowledges they have been advised of their various options regarding compensation to be paid to real estate brokers and that any written agreement they have signed with a seller's or buyer's broker reflects a mutual understanding.

Seller/Buyer _____ Date _____

Seller/Buyer _____ Date _____

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