

CONSUMER INFORMATION STATEMENT ON NEW JERSEY REAL ESTATE RELATIONSHIPS

In New Jersey, real estate licensees are required to disclose how they intend to work with buyers and sellers in a real estate transaction. (In rental transactions, the terms “buyers” and “sellers” should be read as “tenants” and “landlords”, respectively.)

1. AS A SELLER’S AGENT OR SUBAGENT, I, AS A LICENSEE, REPRESENT THE SELLER AND ALL MATERIAL INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO ME BY THE BUYER WILL BE TOLD TO THE SELLER.

2. AS A BUYER’S AGENT, I, AS LICENSEE, REPRESENT THE BUYER AND ALL MATERIAL INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO ME BY THE SELLER WILL BE TOLD TO THE BUYER.

3. AS A DISCLOSED DUAL AGENT, I, AS A LICENSEE, REPRESENT BOTH PARTIES, HOWEVER, I MAY NOT, WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION, DISCLOSE THAT THE SELLER WILL ACCEPT A PRICE LESS THAN THE LISTING PRICE OR THAT THE BUYER WILL PAY A PRICE GREATER THAN THE OFFERED PRICE.

4. AS A TRANSACTION BROKER, I, AS A LICENSEE, DO NOT REPRESENT EITHER THE BUYER OR THE SELLER. ALL INFORMATION I ACQUIRE FROM ONE PARTY MAY BE TOLD TO THE OTHER PARTY.

Before you disclose confidential information to a real estate licensee regarding a real estate transaction, you should understand what type of business relationship you have with that licensee. There are four business relationships: (1) seller’s agent; (2) buyer’s agent; (3) disclosed dual agent; and (4) transaction broker. Each of these relationships imposes certain legal duties and responsibilities on the licensee as well as on the seller or buyer represented. These four relationships are defined in greater detail below. Please read carefully before making your choice.

SELLERS’ AGENT

A seller’s agent **WORKS ONLY FOR THE SELLER** and has legal obligations, called fiduciary duties, to the seller. These include reasonable care, undivided loyalty, confidentiality and full disclosure. Seller’s agents often work with buyers, but do not represent the buyers. However, in working with buyers a seller’s agent must act honestly. In dealing with both parties, a seller’s agent may not make any misrepresentations to either party on matters material to the transaction, such as the buyer’s financial ability to pay, and must disclose

defects of a material nature affecting the physical condition of the property, which a reasonable inspection by the licensee would disclose.

Seller’s agents include all persons licensed with the brokerage firm, which has been authorized through a listing agreement to work as the seller’s agent. In addition, other brokerage firms may accept an offer to work with the listing broker’s firm as the seller’s agents. In such cases, those firms and all persons licensed with such firms are called “sub-agents.” Sellers who do not desire to have their property marketed through sub-agents should so inform the seller’s agent.

BUYER’S AGENT

A buyer’s agent **WORKS ONLY FOR THE BUYER**. A buyer’s agent has fiduciary duties to the buyer, which include reasonable care, undivided loyalty, confidentiality and full disclosure. However, in dealing with sellers, a buyer’s agent must act honestly. In dealing with both parties, a buyer’s agent may not make any misrepresentations on matters material to the transaction, such as the buyer’s financial ability to pay, and must disclose defects of a material nature affecting the physical condition of the property which a reasonable inspection by the licensee would disclose.

A buyer wishing to be represented by a buyer’s agent is advised to enter into a separate written buyer agency contract with the brokerage firm, which is to work as their agent.

DISCLOSED DUAL AGENT

A disclosed dual agent **WORKS FOR BOTH THE BUYER AND SELLER**. To work as a dual agent, a firm must first obtain the informed written consent of the buyer and the seller. Therefore, before acting as a disclosed dual agent, brokerage firms must make written disclosure to both parties. Disclosed dual agency is most likely to occur when a licensee with a real estate firm working as a buyer’s agent shows the buyer properties owned by sellers for whom that firm is also working as a seller’s agent or sub-agent.

A real estate licensee working as a disclosed dual agent must carefully explain to each party, that, in addition to working as their agent, their firm will also work as the agent for the other party. They must also explain what effect their working as a disclosed dual agent will have on the fiduciary duties their firm owes to the buyer and to the seller. When working as a disclosed dual agent, a brokerage firm must have the express permission of a party prior to disclosing confidential information to the other party. Such information includes the highest price a buyer can afford to pay and the lowest price a seller will accept and the parties’ motivation to buy or sell.

