

Article 18.00: Standards of Conduct for Stellar MLS

Last Updated: September 15, 2026

Standard 18.1

MLS participants shall not engage in any practice or take any action inconsistent with exclusive representation or exclusive brokerage relationship agreements that other MLS participants have with clients.

Standard 18.2

Signs giving notice of property for sale, rent, lease, or exchange shall not be placed on property without consent of the owner(s) of record/landlord.

Standard 18.3

MLS participants shall not solicit a listing currently listed exclusively with another broker. However, if the listing broker, when asked by the MLS participant, refuses to disclose the expiration date and nature of such listing (i.e., an exclusive right-to-sell, an exclusive agency, open listing, or other form of contractual agreement between the listing broker and the client) the MLS participant may contact the owner(s) to secure such information and may discuss the terms upon which the MLS participant might take a future listing or, alternatively, may take a listing to become effective upon expiration of any existing exclusive listing.

Standard 18.4

MLS participants shall not solicit buyer/tenant agreements from buyers/tenants who are subject to exclusive buyer/tenant agreements. However, if asked by an MLS participant, the broker refuses to disclose the expiration date of the exclusive buyer/tenant agreement, the MLS participant may contact the buyer/tenant to secure such information and may discuss the terms upon which the MLS participant might enter into a future buyer/tenant agreement or, alternatively, may enter into a buyer/tenant agreement to become effective upon the expiration of any existing exclusive buyer/tenant agreement.

Standard 18.5

MLS participants shall not use information obtained from listing brokers through offers to cooperate made through multiple listing services or through other offers of cooperation to refer listing brokers' clients to other brokers or to create buyer/tenant relationships with listing brokers' clients, unless such use is authorized by listing brokers.

Standard 18.6

The fact that an agreement has been entered into with an MLS participant shall not preclude or inhibit any other MLS participant from entering into a similar agreement after the expiration of the prior agreement.

Standard 18.7

The fact that a prospect has retained an MLS participant as an exclusive representative or exclusive broker in one or more past transactions does not preclude other MLS participants from seeking such prospect's future business.

Standard 18.8

MLS participants are free to enter into contractual relationships or to negotiate with owner(s) of

record/landlords, buyers/tenants or others who are not subject to an exclusive agreement but shall not knowingly obligate them to pay more than one commission except with their informed consent.

Standard 18.9

When MLS participants are contacted by the client of another MLS participant regarding the creation of an exclusive relationship to provide the same type of service, and MLS participants have not directly or indirectly initiated such discussions, they may discuss the terms upon which they might enter into a future agreement or, alternatively, may enter into an agreement which becomes effective upon expiration of any existing exclusive agreement.

Standard 18.10

In cooperative transactions, MLS participants shall compensate cooperating MLS participants (principal brokers) and shall not compensate nor offer to compensate, directly or indirectly, any of the sales licensees employed by or affiliated with other MLS participants without the prior express knowledge and consent of the cooperating broker.

Standard 18.11

MLS participants are not precluded from making general announcements to prospects describing their services and the terms of their availability even though some recipients may have entered into agency agreements or other exclusive relationships with another MLS participant. A general telephone canvass, general mailing, or distribution addressed to all prospects in a given geographical area or in a given profession, business, club, or organization, or other classification or group is deemed general for purposes of this rule.

The following types of solicitations are prohibited:

Telephone or personal solicitations of property owners who have been identified by a real estate sign, multiple listing compilation, or other information service as having exclusively listed their property with another MLS participant; and mail or other forms of written solicitations of prospects whose properties are exclusively listed with another MLS participant when such solicitations are not part of a general mailing but are directed specifically to property owners identified through compilations of current listings, for sale or for rent signs, or other sources of information intended to foster cooperation with MLS participants.

Standard 18.12

MLS participants, prior to entering into a representation agreement, have an affirmative obligation to make reasonable efforts to determine whether the prospect is subject to a current, valid exclusive agreement to provide the same type of real estate service.

Standard 18.13

MLS participants, acting as buyer or tenant representatives or brokers, shall disclose that relationship to the owner(s) of record/landlord's representative or broker at first contact and shall provide written confirmation of that disclosure to the owner(s) of record/landlord's representative or broker not later than execution of a purchase agreement or lease.

Standard 18.14

On unlisted property, MLS participants acting as buyer/tenant representatives or brokers shall disclose that relationship to the owner(s) of record/landlord at first contact for that buyer/tenant and shall provide written confirmation of such disclosure to the owner(s) of record/landlord not later than execution of any purchase or lease agreement.

Standard 18.15

MLS participants, acting as representatives or brokers of owner(s) of record/landlords or as sub-agents of listing brokers, shall disclose that relationship to buyers/tenants as soon as practicable, and shall provide written confirmation of such disclosure to buyers/tenants not later than execution of any purchase or lease agreement.

Standard 18.16

MLS participants are not precluded from contacting the client of another broker for the purpose of offering to provide, or entering into a contract to provide, a different type of real estate service unrelated to the type of service currently being provided (e.g., property management as opposed to brokerage) or from offering the same type of service for property not subject to other brokers' exclusive agreements. However, information received through a multiple listing service or any other offer of cooperation may not be used to target clients of other MLS participants to whom such offers to provide services may be made.

Standard 18.17

All dealings concerning property exclusively listed or with buyer/tenants who are subject to an exclusive agreement shall be carried on with the client's representative or broker, and not with the client, except with the consent of the client's representative or broker or except where such dealings are initiated by the client.

Before providing substantive services (such as writing a purchase offer or presenting a CMA) to prospects, MLS participants shall ask prospects whether they are a party to any exclusive representation agreement. MLS participants shall not knowingly provide substantive services concerning a prospective transaction to prospects who are parties to exclusive representation agreements, except with the consent of the prospects' exclusive representatives or at the direction of prospects.

Standard 18.18

Participants and subscribers, prior to or after their relationship with their current firm is terminated, shall not induce clients of their current firm to cancel exclusive contractual agreements between the client and that firm. This does not preclude participants from establishing agreements with their associated licensees governing assignability of exclusive agreements. (Updated 6/2011)

Standard 18.19

These rules are not intended to prohibit ethical, albeit aggressive or innovative business practices, and do not prohibit disagreements with other MLS participants involving fees, or other forms of payment or expenses.

Standard 18.20

MLS participants shall not knowingly or recklessly make false or misleading statements about other real estate professionals, their businesses, or their business practices.

Standard 18.21

MLS participants' firm websites shall disclose the firm's name and state(s) of licensure in a reasonable and readily apparent manner.

Websites of licensees affiliated with a participant's firm shall disclose the firm's name and the licensee's state(s) of licensure in a reasonable and readily apparent manner. (Adopted 11/2007)

Standard 18.22

MLS participants shall present a true picture in their advertising and representations to the public, including internet content, images and the URLs and domain names they use, and participants may not:

- i. engage in deceptive or unauthorized framing of real estate brokerage websites;
- ii. manipulate (e.g., presenting content developed by others) listing and other content in any way that produces a deceptive or misleading result;
- iii. deceptively use meta-tags, keywords or other devices/methods to direct, drive, or divert Internet traffic;
- iv. present content developed by others without either attribution or without permission; or
- v. otherwise misleading consumers, including use of misleading images.

(Updated 8/2018)

Standard 18.23

The services which MLS participants provide to their clients and customers shall conform to the standards of practice and competence which are reasonably expected in the specific real estate disciplines in which they engage; specifically, residential real estate brokerage, real property management, commercial and industrial real estate brokerage, land brokerage, real estate appraisal, real estate counseling, real estate syndication, real estate auction, and international real estate.

MLS participants shall not undertake to provide specialized professional services concerning a type of property or service that is outside their field of competence unless they engage the assistance of one who is competent on such types of property or service, or unless the facts are fully disclosed to the client. Any persons engaged to provide such assistance shall be so identified to the client and their contribution to the assignment should be set forth. (Adopted 6/2011)