

Frequently Asked Questions

\$500 Buyer Engagement Retainer FAQ Sheet

✦ What is the Buyer Engagement Retainer?

The Buyer Engagement Retainer is a \$500 upfront retainer required to secure active buyer representation.

✦ Is the retainer an additional fee?

No. If you purchase a home, the retainer is credited toward your buyer representation compensation at closing.

For example, if your total buyer representation compensation is 3% and you have already paid a \$500 retainer, that \$500 is applied as a credit toward the amount due.

✦ Why is the retainer required upfront?

Buyer representation begins before you go under contract. The work starts with understanding your goals, reviewing your buying position, helping you evaluate homes, home tours, discussing pricing, reviewing neighborhoods or builders, preparing offer strategy, and helping you make informed decisions.

The retainer helps ensure we are working with clients who are in an active decision-making phase and ready to move forward intentionally.

✦ What does the retainer cover?

Time & resources invested prior to making an offer.

✦ Can the retainer be waived?

No. The retainer is part of our buyer process and is applied consistently.

It allows us to provide focused, high-level representation and protects the time, resources, and strategy required to serve our clients well.

✦ When is the retainer due?

The retainer is payable once the Buyer Agency Agreement has been executed and must be received before any services are provided.

✦ Do I still need a pre-approval?

Yes. A mortgage pre-approval or proof of funds is required before active home touring begins. This helps us make sure your search is realistic, your budget is clear and you are prepared to move quickly if the right home becomes available.

✦ Do I need to sign a buyer agency agreement?

Yes. A signed buyer agency agreement is required before active representation begins. This agreement outlines our working relationship, responsibilities, compensation, and the services provided.

✦ Can the seller or builder pay the buyer agent compensation?

We will always review what the seller or builder is offering and discuss how compensation may be handled before moving forward.

However, buyer representation is an agreement between you and the firm, so any remaining compensation not covered by the seller or builder may be the buyer's responsibility.

✦ What if I don't buy?

If you do not complete a purchase, the retainer is retained by the firm for services already rendered.

Buyer representation involves time, strategy, research, preparation, guidance, and resources before a closing ever happens. A buyer's decision not to proceed with a purchase does not negate the time, expertise, resources, and professional services already provided.

The retainer helps ensure the agent is compensated for work already completed, even if a purchase is not made.

 I don't want to pay just to have an agent.

The retainer is not for simply having access to an agent. It is for the upfront professional work involved in representation.

Real estate agents provide a professional service. The time, expertise, market research, guidance, strategy, coordination, and resources invested on behalf of a buyer carry value, regardless of whether the buyer ultimately completes a purchase.

This retainer helps establish a fair business structure by ensuring the agent is compensated for services already rendered and is not expected to absorb the full cost of professional work performed without compensation.

 What if I'm not ready to commit yet.

That is completely okay. The retainer is only required when you are ready to begin active representation. If you are still researching, I would recommend using the consultation to get clarity on your next steps first.

Once you are ready to actively tour and make decisions, that is when the agreement and retainer come into play.