

A BUYER'S GUIDE TO REPRESENTATION IN ILLINOIS

Who's Really in Your Corner?

What every Chicago buyer should know before they tour a home, click Contact Agent, or sign anything.

Maureen Moran

@PROPERTIES CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

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Serving Lincoln Park, Gold Coast, Old Town, Lakeview, Bucktown, Wicker Park & beyond.

Before You Search. Before You Tour. Before You Offer.

The agent at an open house may represent the seller — not you.

Knowing who you're sharing with can make all the difference.

As of January 1, 2025, Illinois law requires a written Buyer Brokerage Agreement before any showing.

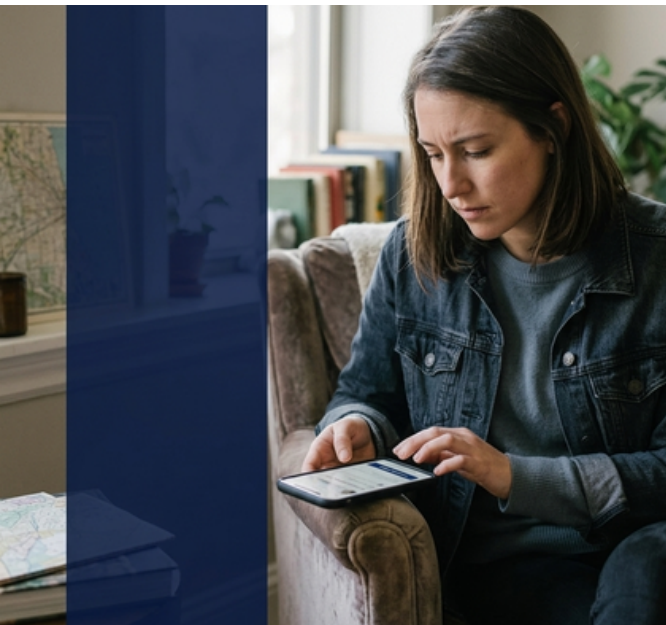
Understanding what you're signing — and why — puts you in a far stronger position from day one.

Representation means more than finding listings.

It means someone whose legal obligation is to protect you.

"The buyers who move through a transaction with the least friction are usually the ones who understood the rules of representation before they needed them."

Is This Guide For You?



- You've been asked to sign a Buyer Brokerage Agreement and want to understand what it means before you do.
- You're unsure what your agent can and can't do on your behalf — legally and practically.
- You've heard the term "dual agency" and want to know exactly what it means for your interests.
- You clicked "Contact Agent" on Zillow and assumed you were reaching the listing agent. (You probably weren't.)

According to a Wharton study, 99.7% of buyers who clicked Contact Agent believed they were reaching the listing agent. *They weren't. That agent works for the seller.*

Four Relationships. One That Protects You Most.

Illinois law recognizes four types of agency relationships.
Here's what each one means for you as a buyer.

MOST PROTECTIVE

DESIGNATED AGENCY

A specific agent within a brokerage is designated solely to represent you. Your agent's full legal duty — loyalty, confidentiality, advocacy — belongs to you alone.

This is the relationship that gives you the clearest, most protected path through a transaction.

SELLER'S AGENT

This agent represents the seller. Their fiduciary duty runs to the seller — not to you. They are legally obligated to act in the seller's best interest.

They may be courteous and helpful, but their loyalty is not yours.

What it cannot provide: Advocacy for your price, terms, or negotiating position.

DUAL AGENCY

One agent — or one brokerage — represents both buyer and seller in the same transaction. Both parties must consent in writing.

In dual agency, your agent cannot fully advocate for either side. Advice on price strategy and negotiation is significantly limited.

⚠ Note: Dual agency limits the candid advice you can receive on offer strategy and pricing.

What it cannot provide: Full advocacy, confidential strategy, or undivided loyalty.

NO AGENCY

You are working with a licensee who has no formal agency relationship with you. They may provide information, but owe you no fiduciary duties.

This is the least protected position a buyer can be in during a transaction.

What it cannot provide: Any legal duty of loyalty, confidentiality, or advocacy.

FEATURE	DESIGNATED AGENCY	DUAL AGENCY	NO AGENCY
Advocates for you	✓	—	—
Keeps your info confidential	✓	Limited	—
Can advise on offer strategy	✓	Limited	—
Can negotiate on your behalf	✓	—	—
Required written agreement	✓	✓	—

*Most buyers who've had the best experiences
chose designated agency before they ever needed to know why.*



What You're Signing — and Why It Works in Your Favor.

I.

WHO REPRESENTS YOU

The agreement formally establishes that I — as your designated agent — owe you full fiduciary duties.

It puts your protection in writing before we ever walk through a door.

II.

WHAT SERVICES YOU'LL RECEIVE

The agreement outlines exactly what I will do on your behalf: property search, market analysis, offer strategy, negotiation, and guidance through closing.

No ambiguity, no surprises.

III.

COMPENSATION

The agreement specifies how buyer agent compensation is structured. This is negotiable — and in many transactions, the seller chooses to participate in covering it.

IV.

DURATION

The agreement has a defined term. We discuss what makes sense for your timeline — whether that's a single showing or a full search period — before anything is signed.

On compensation: Compensation for buyer representation is negotiable and not set by law. Many sellers choose to participate — a supported, prepared buyer creates a smoother transaction for everyone.

You may take any agreement to your own attorney before signing. I encourage it. That's what working with a dedicated advocate looks like.

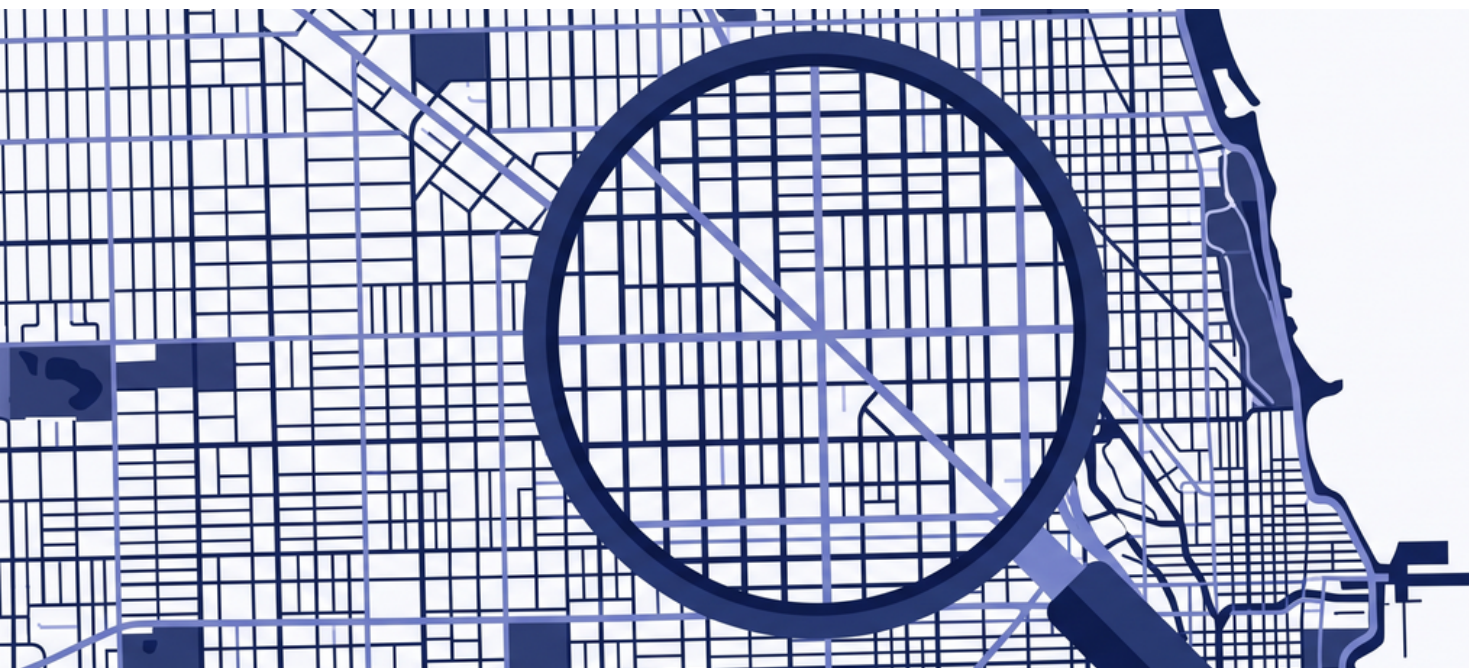
What Most Buyers Never See — And Why It Matters.

WHAT APPEARS ON ZILLOW & REALTOR.COM

- Active MLS listings — after they've been public for days
- Public price history (often incomplete or delayed)
- Agent contact buttons — often not the listing agent

WHAT A TOP-10% AGENT ACCESSES

- ✦ Private Listing Network — available since 2016 in Chicago's MLS
- ✦ Top Agent Network — invitation-only, top 10% of agents only
- ✦ Pre-market intelligence: days on market, building context, full pricing history
- ✦ Negotiation strategy invisible to the public — and to most agents



"It hadn't hit the market yet — Maureen found the listing on the Top Agent Network. Since I was one of the first buyers to see the property, I had more time to think it through. This was a real advantage and made the process less stressful."

Avondale, First-Time Buyer

Before You Write an Offer, Check These Six Things.

Buyers who have these in place move faster, negotiate stronger, and close with less stress.

✓ I know the agent at an open house represents the seller, not me.

✓ I understand what a Buyer Brokerage Agreement is and why Illinois now requires it before showings.

✓ I know the difference between designated agency and dual agency.

✓ I want an agent who gives candid advice — not just access to listings.

✓ I know buyer agent compensation is negotiable and can often be covered by the seller.

✓ I want representation that protects my interests from the first tour through closing.

*If most of these feel true, you're already thinking
like a buyer who will win in this market.*

What Clients Say

Definitely recommend working with Maureen. This was my first home purchase and she was incredibly patient... I never doubted her integrity, knowledge and her relationships in the industry.

C. L. — Avondale

"Look no further, Maureen is the real deal. She embodies everything you'd want in a realtor: honesty, professionalism, and knows the business better than most."

M. C. - Bucktown

"Maureen is someone of amazing integrity and insight and worthy of your trust. She handled the sale of my property flawlessly at every step, and was proactive about every aspect of the process. She has cultivated relationships with trusted contractors that she recommended to get our property ready for sale, and handled so many things herself, just to make sure things were done with high quality but at a reasonable cost. At every moment I knew she put my best interests first and foremost. Bottom line, if Maureen is on it, you can rest easy. The job will get done with minimum friction and maximum benefit to you. Couldn't be happier."

A. S. - Wicker Park



31 verified reviews across Google, Zillow and Realtor.com

ABOUT YOUR GUIDE AUTHOR

Maureen Moran.

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I've been licensed in Illinois since 1995 and have helped more than 500 families navigate some of the most significant decisions of their lives. Before real estate, I was a teacher — and that background shapes everything about how I work with buyers. I believe that knowledge and a deeper understanding empower confident decision-making.

I serve buyers across Chicago's Near North Side — Lincoln Park, Old Town, Lakeview, Gold Coast, Bucktown, Wicker Park, River North, and beyond — and I'm licensed in Wisconsin for second-home buyers in the Lake Geneva area.

I rank in the top 10% of agents locally, hold four NAR designations, and built this guide because buyers deserve to understand the rules of representation before they need them.



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INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

Top 10% Locally Licensed 1995

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Let's Talk About Your Move.

01

Your goals and timeline — where you want to be, and when it needs to happen.

02

Current market conditions in your target neighborhood — what's real, what's noise.

03

Whether you're ready to move — and if not, exactly what it would take to get there.

The ABR® designation means I've received specialized training in representing buyers. For you, that means having someone in your corner who knows how to ask the right questions, explain your options clearly, negotiate on your behalf, and help you make confident decisions from your first showing to closing.



Book a Buyer Consultation → Scan or Call [312.953.7811](tel:312.953.7811)

No pressure. No pitch. No obligation.

Maureen Moran · ABR® · SRES® · LHC · SRS · RSPS

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For Buyers — The Complete Series

WHO'S IN YOUR CORNER (this guide) ✓

Illinois agency law, buyer representation, and how to choose the right advocate for your purchase.

THE CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDE

An honest, block-by-block look at what each neighborhood actually delivers for buyers at every price point.

THE OFFER PLAYBOOK

How to structure a competitive offer in Chicago's market — without overpaying or leaving yourself exposed.

FROM CONTRACT TO KEYS

Every step from accepted offer to closing day, explained in plain language so nothing catches you off guard.

For Sellers — The Complete Series

WHAT YOUR HOME IS REALLY WORTH

How pricing strategy — not Zestimate — determines whether you leave money on the table or maximize your return.

PREPARING YOUR HOME TO SELL

The specific improvements that move the needle in Chicago's market, and the ones that don't.

THE LISTING ADVANTAGE

How top-10% agents market properties differently — and why it results in more qualified buyers and stronger offers.

NEGOTIATING THE SALE

What happens after an offer arrives, and how an experienced advocate protects your net proceeds through closing.

Ask Maureen for the full series at your first meeting.



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