

Virtual Office Web Sites (VOW)

History and Intent:

A virtual office web site is designed for the use of your customers. The concept emerged in late 1999, and was developed by a few firms that preferred to deal with their clients through electronic means. The concept is spreading as more people in our industry embrace the various tools available for electronic communication.

A Virtual Office Web site (VOW) has two general areas in the Internet site. First, there is a password protected client side that contains all active listing data. The client side of the site must be password protected and restricted to clients only. The general public may not enter this portion of the site until agency is established and they have been provided a password by registering with the Broker or agent. Second, there is a company side of the site. The company side of the site must also be password protected, and controls must be in place to assure only BAREIS members have access to BAREIS data. The company side of the site may include active and off-market data. The company side of the site many times includes automatic email notification of customers, transaction programs, etc.

Some vendors are developing VOW sites for Agents as well as Brokers.

General Comments:

A virtual office web site may be expensive to develop, and very complex to keep up to date. A number of vendors are offering products with a number of additional features, while providing data synchronization (updating) and maintenance service.

General Rules:

1. The Broker and/or vendor must sign an agreement to access the data for the purpose of establishing a VOW site.
2. The client side of the site must be password protected.
3. Clients may only access active data.
4. CMA reports may be transmitted to the client through the site, but the client may not have open access to, or the ability to search off market data.
5. Clients must be "registered", and agency must be established before the client is provided a password to enter the site.
6. The company side of the site must be password protected.
7. Controls must be in place to permit only BAREIS members to have access to BAREIS data.
8. BAREIS shall be given the opportunity to review the site for compliance prior to "going live."
9. Ownership of the data and copyrights remains with BAREIS MLS.
10. All data must be removed from the VOW Internet site upon termination of membership.\

General Prohibitions:

1. Failure to password protect the site for access by clients, and providing "general public access" without the use of password protection, may constitute advertising listings of other Brokers without specific written permission and subject to fines under Rule 13.3.
2. Permitting non-members of BAREIS to access the data through the office side is permitting unauthorized access to BAREIS data under Rule 12.1 and may be subject to a fine, and/or termination of access.
3. Providing access to sold data (Rule 14.3), or providing clients confidential portions of the database (Rule 12.4) may result in fines and/or termination of access.

4. If using a vendor, the vendor may not charge a finder's fee to brokers.
5. If using a vendor, the vendor may not sell captured names to brokers.
6. If using a vendor, the vendor may not sell or retransmit data.
7. If using a vendor, the vendor must protect BAREIS MLS copyrights.
8. BAREIS Rapattoni MLS site may not be framed or linked to under any circumstances.

Access to Data and Photos:

1. If using a vendor, the vendor will be granted access to the special SQL site containing the data and the Photo Server after signing a contract with BAREIS to access the data. The fact that data is provided to a Vendor does not relinquish the Broker or Vendor from the responsibility to adhere to the Rules and Regulations of the MLS service.
2. The Broker may access the SQL server if the site will be developed in house. An agreement for access is required, and a small annual fee is charged.
3. BAREIS may offer a VOW Web page for a small fee through an approved vendor if the demand justifies the expense.

Member Use of an VOW Site:

First, the Broker of the company must sign the Data Access participation agreement. Email idx@norcalmls.com to request a copy.

If using a vendor to develop your site, first read the Rules dealing with access to the data, and retransmission of data. Failure to follow the rules does not exempt you from a fine for misuse.