Collect a Fee From the Buyer or Seller

Last Modified on 09/04/2026 11:18 am EDT

A buyer or seller owes your office something that isn't commission — a broker fee, a retainer, a reimbursement, a tax. Client Fees is the one mechanism that collects it at closing, and it works even when the commission is zero.

Introduction

Money coming from a client on top of the commission behaves differently from money moving between the brokerage and its agents. It isn't a split, it isn't a deduction from anyone's share, and it isn't an agent's cost of doing business. It's an amount the buyer or the seller pays at closing, routed to whoever your office says should keep it.

That's what Client Fees are for, and the list of things they cover is longer than most offices realise: buyer-broker compensation under the new commission structure, sales tax collected from a seller, an appraisal or listing-prep reimbursement, a retainer, a transaction fee on an agent's own purchase. One mechanism, one place to set it up, and it is the only one that still works when nobody is earning commission on the deal.

When to Use This

- You need to collect a buyer-broker fee directly from the buyer.
- Your office charges a transaction or admin fee to the client rather than the agent.
- You're recovering listing-prep costs — photos, cleaning, staging — from the seller at closing.
- You have to collect sales tax from the seller on top of the commission.
- An agent bought a property themselves, the commission is $0, and you still owe the office a fee.

Why This Isn't an Agent Fee or a Deduction

The instinct is to reach for whichever fee mechanism you've used before. Agent Fees and Deductions are both right there in the same step, and both will happily take a dollar amount.

Neither one can do this job, and the reason is structural rather than a matter of taste. An Agent Fee is subtracted from an agent's commission, and a Deduction comes out of somebody's share — both of them assume there's a share to take it from. Money arriving from a buyer or a seller isn't coming out of anyone's share; it's arriving from outside the split entirely. Put it in the wrong mechanism and either the arithmetic won't work or the fee lands against the wrong party. Put it in Client Fees and Pipeline routes it correctly, tells escrow who owes it, and doesn't care whether there's any commission on the deal at all.

1. Create the Client Fee Type

Fee types are set up once and then reused. A master admin creates them on the **Manage Client Fees** page — name each one for what it actually is, because the name is what prints and what you'll be picking from a list later. *Buyer Broker Fee*, *Listing Prep*, *GST*, *Personal Purchase Transaction Fee*.

When a buyer or seller pays something on top of the commission, that's a client fee — collected at closing and routed to your brokerage or to the agent.

See Client Fees

2. Apply It With the Right Payor

On the transaction, work through to the fees and deductions step and click [+ Collect Client Fee]. Set the **Payor** to Buyer or Seller — that's who the money comes from — pick the fee type, and enter the amount.

Then be deliberate about which section you enter it under, because that's what decides where the money goes. Enter it under the **Broker's** section and the brokerage keeps it; enter it under the **Agent's** section and the agent does.

> Both halves matter and they're independent. A fee paid by the seller and kept by the agent is entered with Seller as the payor, under the agent's section. Getting the payor right and the section wrong is the most common way this comes out backwards.

3. Use It When There's No Commission to Take a Fee From

This is the case Client Fees quietly solve. An agent buys a property themselves and takes no commission, or the deal has none — and you still need to collect the office's transaction fee.

Agent Fees cannot help here: they are subtracted from an agent's commission, and there's no commission to subtract from. A Client Fee can, because it's collected from the client rather than out of a share. Generate the CDA with the commission at zero, then enter the fee as a Client Fee under the broker or the agent as usual.

An agent bought it themselves, or the deal pays nothing — and you still want it counted, and you still need the office's fee. Generate the CDA anyway; that's what makes the deal exist to your reports.

See Run a Deal Where Nobody Earns Commission

4. Know Where the Fee Lands

A Client Fee sits alongside the commission rather than inside it — it's money collected at closing, not part of the gross your splits are calculated from. That's exactly what you want for a reimbursement or a broker fee, and it's worth knowing before you go looking for it inside a commission total.

Payables is the part of the CDA that says who gets paid what — one line per party, written in the names your closing agent should make the checks out to.

See Payables