

# How to Hire a Transaction & Listing Coordinator (TLC)

*What great coordination looks like — and how to spot it before you sign.*

*Updated for 2026 — covering both pre-contract listing launch and contract-to-close TLC.*

## Why the right coordinator matters more than you think.

The transaction coordinator — and now, increasingly, the listing coordinator — is the most overlooked hire in real estate. Dollar for dollar, also one of the most consequential.

A great coordinator doesn't just save you time. They reduce your liability, protect your reputation, and in tight markets they're often the reason listings go live on schedule and deals close on time while your competitor's falls apart at the finish line.

A bad coordinator does the opposite. They create quiet chaos — listings sitting unlaunched because admin work piles up, missed deadlines you don't notice until a buyer walks, disclosures that never got signed, MLS publications that went out without broker approval, wire fraud warnings that went out once (or not at all). You absorb the damage because you don't have a choice. The file has your name on it.

### What's at stake

- Your time. A coordinator who doesn't actually coordinate forces you to coordinate. That's unpaid overtime disguised as "just checking in."
- Your E&O exposure. Missed disclosures, late amendments, and incomplete compliance files are the three most common findings in broker audits. Listing-side errors (MLS published without broker approval, advertising claims edited by an unlicensed coordinator) are NCREC liability events.
- Your reputation. Clients remember the agent whose listings launched fast and whose closings went smoothly. They also remember the one where they had to chase the title company themselves.
- Your referrals. A great coordinator turns every listing and close into a reviewable, referable experience. A mediocre one ends the relationship at the closing table.

### The point of this guide:

Help you hire a coordinator who makes your business better — and give you the tools to walk away from anyone who doesn't clear the bar. Use it once when you're hiring. Reference it whenever you're reviewing.

## Listing Coordination vs. Transaction Coordination — what's the difference?

Until recently, "transaction coordinator" usually meant contract-to-close only. The 2025–2026 NC market increasingly splits the work into two service lines:

### Listing Coordination (pre-contract)

Runs from signed listing agreement through MLS launch through accepted offer. Includes seller intake, supporting-document retrieval (HOA / deed / tax / plat / septic), photographer and vendor scheduling, sign and lockbox coordination, showing-platform setup, MLS data entry from broker-supplied information, broker-approval evidence capture, listing-live confirmation, showing-feedback tracking, weekly seller updates, and accepted-offer handoff.

Pricing: typically \$150–\$329 per listing depending on tier (MLS-only, full launch, or rush).

### Transaction Coordination (contract-to-close)

Runs from executed contract through closing and post-close archive. Includes file setup, 7/3/1 deadline tracking, vendor coordination, pre-close audit, closing-day support, and post-close archive.

Pricing: typically \$395–\$595 per file.

### The bundle

Some coordinators offer a combined Listing + TLC Bundle — typically priced around \$550–\$700 total — that runs the same file from listing prep through closing without retriggering intake. If you do listings, the bundle is usually the better deal.

## The 4 types of coordinators — and which one is right for you.

Not every coordinator is the same. Before you start interviewing, understand what kind of relationship you're shopping for.

- In-house TLC (W-2 salaried). High control, high overhead. Best for high-producing teams who already need a full-time admin.
- Brokerage-provided TLC. Convenient, sometimes free or low-cost, but you usually share their attention with every other agent in the office. Quality varies.
- Independent coordinator (1099). A professional with skin in the game, documented systems, real liability coverage, and (the good ones) explicit listing-and-TLC service tiers. Best balance of quality, cost, and accountability for most active agents.
- Virtual assistant / overseas admin. Cheap, fast for data entry, but no NC-specific expertise, no licensure context, and no E&O. Useful for narrow tasks; dangerous as a full coordinator.

### Our recommendation:

For most active agents, an independent coordinator who handles both Listing Coordination and Transaction Coordination gives you the best balance — one relationship, one billing arrangement, one accountable owner from listing prep through closing.

## Pricing models, decoded.

What a coordinator charges and how they structure their fees tells you almost as much as their resume.

Model	Typical Range	What it signals
<b>MLS Launch (Listing Lite)</b>	<b>\$150–\$200</b>	Tech-only listing go-live: MLS input, photo upload, disclosures attached, showing setup. No seller communication. Best for experienced agents who only want the technical lift.
<b>Listing Launch Standard</b>	<b>\$249–\$300</b>	Full pre-listing handoff: signatures, doc collection, HOA/deed/tax retrieval, photo and vendor scheduling, MLS entry, listing-live confirmation. Most common listing tier.
<b>Listing Launch Rush</b>	<b>\$300–\$400</b>	Priority handling: target live within 1 business day, after-hours review, same-day vendor follow-up. For listing agents who occasionally need speed.
<b>File Review Only</b>	<b>\$100–\$250</b>	Not full coordination. Useful as a one-off sanity check or for agents with in-house staff who want an outside audit. Shouldn't replace a full TLC.
<b>Per-File TLC (Flat Fee)</b>	<b>\$350–\$650 per side</b>	Most common contract-to-close model. Aligns incentives — they only earn when you close. Pay-at-closing reduces upfront risk. Best for 1–15 files/year.
<b>Listing + TLC Bundle</b>	<b>\$550–\$700 total</b>	Listing launch + seller-side close as one continuous file. Best for listing agents who want one partner from listing prep through closing. Look for transparent pricing on both halves.
<b>Monthly Retainer</b>	<b>\$1,500–\$3,000/mo</b>	High-volume agents (10+ files/month). Lower per-file cost, priority response, often includes weekly summaries and listing tiers within scope. Look for a minimum file commitment.
<b>Hourly</b>	<b>\$40–\$75/hr</b>	Uncommon for full coordination. Usually a warning sign — suggests the coordinator hasn't systemized their workflow enough to quote a flat fee.
<b>% of Commission</b>	<b>5%–15%</b>	Rare and problematic. Ties pay to deal size instead of work volume. Creates conflicts on complex deals. Avoid.

### What should you expect to pay?

For listing-side work: \$150–\$300 per listing for a published Standard tier from a quality independent coordinator. Rush-tier listings (1-day go-live target) typically run \$300–\$400. MLS-only "Lite" listings run \$150–\$200.

For contract-to-close work: \$400–\$600 per file per side for a quality independent TLC. Dual-side coordination (both buyer and seller in the same transaction) typically runs \$550–\$700.

For a Listing + TLC Bundle: \$550–\$700 total. The bundle is almost always cheaper than buying the two services separately and ensures the same person owns the file from listing prep through closing.

*If someone quotes you under \$150 for listing launch or under \$300 for full TLC, ask pointed questions about what's actually included.*

**Pay-at-closing is your friend.**

A coordinator who offers pay-at-closing is telling you two things: (1) they have the cash flow to wait, and (2) they believe in their ability to get your file to the closing table. Both are good signs.

## The 14 non-negotiables.

Every coordinator worth hiring should meet all fourteen. If they're missing even one, keep looking.

### Both listing and TLC work

#### 01. E&O Insurance that Covers Third-Party Coordination

General liability isn't enough. Their policy must specifically name third-party transaction coordination AND listing coordination if they offer it. Ask for the declarations page before you sign anything.

#### 02. State-Specific Expertise (NC)

Every state has unique contract forms, disclosure requirements, business-day rules, listing-launch rules, and closing processes. NC-specific knowledge of NCREC unlicensed-assistant boundaries is essential for listing-side work.

#### 03. Documented SOPs and Checklists

"I just know how to do it" is the wrong answer. Great coordinators follow the same documented process on every file — listing AND contract. Ask to see both SOPs. If they don't have one for listing-side work, they're improvising on it.

#### 04. A Multi-Touch Deadline System

Single reminders miss. The professional standard for contract files is 7/3/1 (7 days out, 3 days out, 1 day out, same day). For listing files, the standard is launch-day-minus reminders (L-7, L-3, L-1).

#### 05. Clear Admin-Only Boundaries

A great coordinator refuses to give clients legal advice, pricing opinions, listing-strategy guidance, advertising-claim approval, or negotiation guidance. These protect your license and reduce liability.

#### 06. Proactive Communication

You should never have to chase your coordinator for an update. Weekly status updates, milestone notifications, and immediate flag of anything at risk should be the baseline.

### Contract-to-close specific

#### 07. Wire Fraud Warnings at Multiple Touchpoints

Wire fraud is the #1 financial threat in residential real estate. The standard now is three touchpoints: at contract, one week before close, and 24 hours before wire.

#### 08. Pre-Close File Audit

72 hours before closing, a good TLC runs a formal audit: every document verified, every signature confirmed, every contingency released. No surprises at the table.

#### 09. Broker Compliance Ready

Your broker's audit should be a non-event. A clean compliance file should be delivered without you having to prep it.

#### 10. Post-Close Follow-Through

Every closed file should produce a review and a referral opportunity.

### Listing-side specific (NEW)

### **11. MLS-from-Broker-Supplied-Data Discipline**

Per NCREC guidance, MLS submissions are made only from broker-supplied data. A listing coordinator who edits copy, sets price, or modifies advertising claims is putting your license at risk. The right answer is: "I publish exactly what the broker approves, in writing, every time."

### **12. Written Broker-Approval Evidence on Every MLS Action**

Every MLS submission and every listing change (price, copy, status, photos) should produce three artifacts on the file: broker-supplied input, written broker approval, final published MLS sheet. Ask how they capture and store this evidence. "I just go off email" is acceptable; "I don't really document it" is a disqualifier.

### **13. Documented Seller Communication Policy**

Sellers will ask seller-strategy questions. The coordinator must escalate anything about pricing, listing terms, advertising claims, repair / disclosure judgment, or negotiation back to the agent before replying. Ask to see their seller-communication templates and escalation triggers.

### **14. Transparent Listing Tier Pricing + Bundle Path**

Look for published listing tiers (typically \$165–\$329) plus an explicit bundle into TLC. "It depends" or "I can do listings too for an extra fee" is how scope creep starts and how disputes happen.

#### **How to use this list:**

Turn it into an interview scorecard (see end of guide for a printable version). Ask each coordinator about all fourteen. Any "no" or vague answer on a non-negotiable is a disqualifier.

## 20 questions to ask in the interview.

Don't just listen for "yes" answers. Listen for specifics. A coordinator who has systemized their practice will answer with detail. Someone who winged it in the past will speak in generalities.

### Process and systems

#### QUESTION #1

##### **Walk me through your process from executed contract to closing.**

**Good:** A structured, phase-by-phase walkthrough with specific touchpoints, timelines, and deliverables. They should sound like they've done this 500 times.

**Bad:** Vague "I handle the paperwork" or "I track deadlines." No specific phases. No deliverables.

#### QUESTION #2

##### **Walk me through your listing-launch process from signed listing agreement to listing-live.**

**Good:** A clear 5-step flow: Submit → Build the file → Coordinate launch tasks → Listing goes live → Keep it organized. Mentions broker-approval evidence and MLS-from-broker-supplied-data discipline.

**Bad:** Generic "I get the listing into MLS." No mention of broker approval. No mention of vendor coordination or seller communication.

#### QUESTION #3

##### **What systems do you use to track deadlines for both listing and transaction work?**

**Good:** Named platform (Dotloop, Skyslope, etc.) plus a multi-touch reminder cadence. Distinguishes listing deadlines (launch-day-minus) from transaction deadlines (7/3/1).

**Bad:** "My calendar" or "my memory."

#### QUESTION #4

##### **Can I see a copy of your SOP and a sample listing file and a sample contract file?**

**Good:** Immediate yes, with redacted sample files ready to share for both workflows.

**Bad:** Hesitation, or "I don't really have one written down."

### Compliance and liability

#### QUESTION #5

##### **What's your E&O policy and can I see the declarations page? Does it cover both transaction coordination AND listing coordination?**

**Good:** Yes to both, with the declarations page available. Specifically names third-party coordination work.

**Bad:** Vague answer, or coverage that only names "transaction coordination" without listing work.

#### QUESTION #6

##### **How do you handle MLS submissions and listing changes? Walk me through your broker-approval evidence process.**

**Good:** Specific: "I prepare the MLS sheet from broker-supplied copy and price, route it to the broker for written approval before publication, save the approval evidence to the file, then publish." Same process for every change.

**Bad:** "I just publish what they send me" or "I edit it for clarity if needed." Both are NCREC red flags.

#### QUESTION #7

##### **How do you handle wire fraud warnings?**

**Good:** Documented, multi-touchpoint protocol with timing.

**Bad:** "I mention it somewhere in the closing email."

#### QUESTION #8

### What are you NOT willing to do?

**Good:** A clear list — no legal advice, no pricing opinions, no listing strategy, no listing presentations, no negotiation, no advertising-claim approval, no signing contracts. Shows maturity and understanding of scope.

**Bad:** "I'll do whatever you need." Creates liability.

## Communication

#### QUESTION #9

### How often will I hear from you, and about what?

**Good:** Defined cadence: weekly status update minimum, milestone notifications, immediate flag on at-risk items. For listing files, mentions vendor confirmations and showing-feedback summaries. For contract files, mentions deadline status and document completeness.

**Bad:** "As needed" or "when stuff happens."

#### QUESTION #10

### What's your response time during business hours? After hours?

**Good:** Same-business-day acknowledgment, same-day for urgent items, defined after-hours behavior.

**Bad:** Vague "I'm pretty responsive" without numbers.

#### QUESTION #11

### How do you handle direct communication with sellers on listing files?

**Good:** Has a documented seller-communication policy and templates. Sends standardized messages (welcome, photo scheduling, listing-live, weekly updates) but escalates anything about pricing, strategy, or negotiation back to the agent before replying.

**Bad:** "I just talk to them about whatever they ask." Doesn't distinguish logistical from strategic conversations.

#### QUESTION #12

### How do you handle a deal that's going sideways — lender silence, inspection dispute, listing not getting traction?

**Good:** Specific: flags early, proposes a path within scope, escalates anything outside admin scope back to the agent, executes, closes the loop.

**Bad:** Vague or generic answer.

## Capacity and continuity

#### QUESTION #13

### How many files are you actively managing right now? How many are listings vs. contracts?

**Good:** Specific number with a rough split. Acknowledges the cognitive load is different for active listings vs. active contracts. Has a stated capacity ceiling.

**Bad:** "I take what I can handle." Vague.

#### QUESTION #14

### What happens if you're sick, on vacation, or unreachable?

**Good:** Backup plan: clearly identified backup coordinator, transition protocol, no files going dark.

**Bad:** "I just push through" or "I rarely take time off."

#### QUESTION #15

### Can I speak with two or three agents you currently work with?

**Good:** Yes, with names and contact info ready to share.

**Bad:** Stalling or refusal.

#### Track record

#### QUESTION #16

### Tell me about a deal that almost didn't close. What did you do?

**Good:** Specific story with their exact role, decisions, and outcome.

**Bad:** "All my deals close smoothly." Either a lie or low volume.

#### QUESTION #17

### Tell me about a listing that didn't go live on schedule. What caused it and what did you do?

**Good:** Specific story showing they understand the most common listing-launch failure modes (broker not responding to MLS-approval request, photographer cancellation, missing supporting documents).

**Bad:** "That doesn't really happen to me." Either no listing volume or no learning.

#### Onboarding and pricing

#### QUESTION #18

### How do you onboard a new agent client?

**Good:** Structured intake — Master Service Agreement, communication preferences, sample templates, first-file walkthrough, service-tier selection (TLC, Listing, or Bundle).

**Bad:** "Just send me the contract when you have one."

#### QUESTION #19

### What's your fee structure for listing work, contract work, and bundles? When do I pay?

**Good:** Specific tiers with prices for each. Clear billing trigger (at launch, at acceptance, at closing). Pay-at-closing option for eligible tiers.

**Bad:** Vague pricing or "it depends" without published tiers.

#### QUESTION #20

### How do you handle the handoff from listing → executed contract → closing?

**Good:** Same record, no re-intake. Listing-launch checklist closes, contract-to-close checklist opens. Contact data, MLS file, supporting documents all carry forward.

**Bad:** "We'd open a new file" or "I'd re-collect the basics." Wasted work.

## 10 red flags — walk away.

Some answers should end the interview. These are the non-starters.

<b>01</b>	They can't produce proof of E&O coverage. "I'm covered under my brokerage" isn't coverage. "I'll get that to you later" isn't coverage. If they can't show it, assume they don't have it.
<b>02</b>	They work without a signed service agreement. No Master Service Agreement means no defined scope, no defined fee, and no accountability. You're inviting a dispute.
<b>03</b>	They offer to give your clients legal, pricing, or negotiation advice. This is a bright-line violation of coordinator scope. They're either untrained or don't care about liability. Either way, they're dangerous.
<b>04</b>	They volunteer to write listing copy, set MLS price, or approve advertising claims. NCREC is explicit: MLS submissions are made only from broker-supplied data. A coordinator who edits copy or modifies price is putting your license at risk.
<b>05</b>	They don't capture written broker approval before MLS submissions. "I just publish what I get" is the wrong answer. Written broker-approval evidence on every listing and every change is non-negotiable.
<b>06</b>	They can't describe their process in specifics. Vague answers mean there's no system. No system means inconsistent results on your files.
<b>07</b>	They won't provide references. Any professional should have 3+ agents who'll vouch for them. Refusal or stalling is a tell.
<b>08</b>	Their pricing is aggressively low. A \$150 "full service" coordinator is doing corner-cutting math on your files. Quality coordination has a cost floor — listing launch under \$150 or full TLC under \$300 means inexperienced, overloaded, or both.
<b>09</b>	They blur listing and TLC pricing into one vague number. Look for published listing tiers AND published TLC tiers (with an explicit bundle path). "It depends" is how scope creep starts.
<b>10</b>	They seem eager to start without asking you any questions. A good coordinator interviews you just as carefully as you interview them. They want to know your volume, your niche, your preferences, your brokerage's compliance standards. A coordinator who doesn't qualify you back is desperate, distracted, or doesn't understand the work.

## Your first 30 days with a new coordinator.

A great onboarding looks predictable. Here's what the first 30 days should feel like.

<b>DAY 1</b> Onboarding	Signed Master Service Agreement. Communication preferences confirmed. Service tiers selected (TLC, Listing, or Bundle). They ask about your typical file volume, preferred brokerage, listing-launch frequency, and any nuances of your practice. You get a one-page "how we work together" doc covering both listing and contract workflows.
<b>DAY 2–3</b> First file	Your first file is opened. If it's a listing file, they confirm broker-supplied copy and price are in writing, request brokerage MLS credentials, and schedule the photographer/sign/lockbox. If it's a contract file, they email all parties, deliver a Key Dates summary, and walk you through the platform. The first wire fraud warning is sent on day 1 of any contract file.
<b>WEEK 1</b> Cadence	First weekly status update arrives without being asked. It's tight, scannable, and tells you exactly what's done, what's next, and what (if anything) needs your attention. For listing files, this includes showing-feedback summary, vendor confirmations, and listing-live status. For contract files, it includes deadline status and document completeness.
<b>WEEK 2</b> First test	The first unexpected thing happens — a lender goes silent, an inspection request gets complicated, a photographer reschedules, a seller wants a price change. You want to see how they handle it. A good coordinator flags early, proposes a path, escalates anything outside admin scope back to you, executes, and closes the loop.
<b>WEEK 3–4</b> Rhythm	You start forgetting about the file. That's the highest compliment a coordinator can earn. You're focused on new business; they're quietly moving every existing file (listings and contracts) toward their next milestone. Status updates keep coming. Nothing is sliding.
<b>DAY 30</b> Check-in	Schedule a short review call. What's working? What's not? Any preferences that need adjustment? A coordinator confident in their work will welcome the feedback. One who gets defensive is telling you something.

### Red flag in the first 30 days:

If you find yourself chasing them for updates, rewriting their emails before they go out, discovering issues they should have caught, or finding listings published without broker approval evidence on file — document it and address it immediately. Don't wait 90 days to course-correct.

## Interview Scorecard.

Print this page. Use it during the interview. Rate each criterion 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent).

*A candidate scoring below 50 should not be hired. 50–75: proceed with caution. 76–100: strong candidate.*

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Criterion	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	Notes
01. E&O insurance with proof of third-party coordination coverage						
02. State-specific expertise (NC contracts, disclosures, listing rules, NCREC compliance)						
03. Documented SOPs shown during interview (both Listing and TLC workflows)						
04. Multi-touch deadline tracking system (7/3/1)						
05. Clear admin-only boundaries — no legal, pricing, negotiation, or listing-strategy advice						
06. Wire fraud protocol with multiple touchpoints						
07. Proactive communication / weekly updates						
08. Pre-close audit protocol						
09. Broker compliance-ready file organization						
10. Post-close follow-through (reviews, anniversaries)						
11. MLS-from-broker-supplied-data discipline (listing work)						
12. Written broker-approval evidence on every MLS submission and change						
13. Documented seller-communication policy with escalation triggers						
14. Transparent listing tier pricing + bundle path into TLC						
15. Response time / availability						
16. References provided and positive						
17. Pricing clarity and pay-at-closing option						
18. Professional communication style						

Criterion	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	Notes
19. Asked YOU qualifying questions about your listing/TLC mix						
20. Clear handoff process from listing → contract → close						

**TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_ / 100**

*Below 50: Do not hire    50–75: Proceed with caution    76+: Strong candidate*

## A note from Eddie.

*This guide was written by a working transaction & listing coordinator who cares deeply about the standard of the profession.*

Hi — I'm Eddie Burroughs. I run a residential listing and transaction coordination practice serving real estate agents across North Carolina. I wrote this guide because too many agents hire the first coordinator they hear about, then quietly suffer through months of mediocre work because they don't know what "great" actually looks like — especially now that listing coordination is a separate service line that brings its own NCREC compliance considerations.

You deserve better. So do your clients.

The standards in this guide are the standards I hold myself to on every file. E&O insured. Documented SOPs for both Listing Coordination and Transaction Coordination. Multi-touch 7/3/1 deadline system. Three-touchpoint wire fraud protocol. MLS-from-broker-supplied-data discipline with written broker-approval evidence on every submission. Documented seller-communication policy with clear escalation triggers. Admin-only boundaries. Pre-close audits. Broker-compliance-ready files. Pay-at-closing available. Weekly status updates. Post-close follow-through.

**Listing Launch from \$165. Standard TLC: \$395/file. Listing + TLC Bundle: \$595 total.**

If you're hiring for the first time, use this guide to find the right person — whether that's me or someone else. If it's me, I'd be honored to earn your business.

### Ready for a 15-minute intro call?

No pressure, no pitch — just a chance to see if we're the right fit. I'll answer every question in this guide on the call, and then some.

**252-214-2689**

eddie@eddieburroughs.com | eddieburroughs.com

*Already have a coordinator? Pressure-test them with our companion checklist: "The 31-Point Listing & TLC Audit: Is Your Coordinator Actually Doing the Work?" — available at [eddieburroughs.com](http://eddieburroughs.com)*

© 2026 Eddie Burroughs | RegularUpkeep LLC | [eddieburroughs.com](http://eddieburroughs.com)