

Roadmap to Leadership: Guide to Association Involvement

Course One: Understanding the Organization





Roadmap to Leadership

Guide to Association Involvement

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Participant Manual

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Welcome!

The Roadmap to Leadership *Guide to Association Involvement* is a three-course series intended to give Texas REALTORS® members an in-depth view of the organization, how decisions are made, and how to get involved. We hope you learn from the resources that will be discussed, and that you take advantage of the opportunity you have been afforded to increase your participation at the state and national level.

Understanding the Organization

This course will cover the structures, governance, committee policies, and strategic planning within the state and national association.

The state and national associations are somewhat different from the local associations. Their focus is largely strategic with more attention on policies than day to day operations. If you've been involved at the local association level, you'll likely notice some of these differences.

Understanding Yourself as a Leader

There are many types of leaders, but leadership style itself doesn't make a leader great. What distinguishes a leader is often a combination of characteristics—some of which are hard to define. Here are some of the qualities that can be identified in most successful leaders.

Great leaders have a map.

A leader sets goals and has a plan to achieve them. Don't let your association wander aimlessly. Create a strategic plan and guide your staff and membership in the direction of that plan.

Great leaders foster an environment for great followers.

A great leader inspires others. Team-minded, an outstanding leader discovers the strength of each person on the team and combines those strengths to the fullest benefit of the association. Delegate work to others and trust them to get the job done. Cheer them on constantly and help them discover the greatness within themselves.

Great leaders are the tie that binds.

Are you ready to pull very different people together? Include everyone rather than excluding anyone. An effective leader recognizes that diversity is a valuable key to strengthening any effort. Create an environment of inclusiveness and cooperation among peers. Try to avoid anyone being overlooked.

Great leaders expect the best and deliver the best.

When you provide an example to others that you follow the highest standards of honesty, ethics, and accountability, you foster integrity and responsibility by others. If you make a mistake, own it, correct it, and move forward. Great leaders don't dwell on their own failings or the failings of others.

Great leaders look for the better way.

Greatness requires being open to new ideas, diverse thoughts, and bringing in new people. Avoid the phrase, "That's not how we do it." Instead, keep an open mind so you and your association can continue to grow and improve.

Great leaders listen more than they speak.

A true mark of greatness is the ability to view an issue from multiple sides. Often the only way great work can be done is to patiently absorb the multiple possibilities in a scenario before focusing on a resolution. Aesop said, "A [person] is known by the company he keeps." In striving to be a truly great leader, consider the people around you. Surround yourself with others whose strengths complement

yours and who bring different perspectives. Cultivate leadership qualities not only in yourself but also in your peers. Finally, remember that one of the most important attributes of a great leader is the ability to identify and nurture the next generation of leadership.

Understanding the Three-Way Agreement

The term 'Three-Way Agreement' refers to the relationship between the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the state association, and the local associations of that state. The agreement requires that a REALTOR® member of any constituent local association must also be a member of the National and appropriate state association. This agreement further grants to state and local associations the right to use the term REALTOR® in their names and grants them the right to use the term REALTOR® within their territorial jurisdictions and to grant the right to use the term REALTOR® to such individuals as deemed qualified for membership.

In turn, member associations agree to accept the charge of properly granting and regulating the use of the terms REALTOR®; to subscribe to the Code of Ethics of the National Association, and to uphold and enforce the Code within the association's jurisdiction. The local associations also agree to maintain membership in good standing in the state association of the state in which they are located.

The following list of activities provides a partial picture of a local association's function:

- Provides the organization, administration, and execution of REALTOR® policy.
- Provides a headquarters or "place" for REALTORS® to discuss plans and to implement policy in which they are in agreement.
- Elects its leadership and selects its staff to execute final decisions.
- Grants use of the terms REALTOR® to eligible members and ensures proper use of both terms.
- Provides educational meetings and seminars on real estate topics.
- Enforces the NAR Code of Ethics and provides an arbitration process for contractual disputes between REALTORS® and between REALTORS® and their clients.
- Is the collective voice of all its members, by virtue of electing—through democratic processes - - its officers and directors, by appointing REALTORS® to its committees, by having membership meetings, and by entertaining suggestions and complaints.
- Provides training in public service and organized real estate through service on committees and in elective positions.
- Provides, through tested and proven service on the local association level, an opportunity for service on the state and national level.
- Organizes & maintains the important function of cooperative business practices, such as a Multiple Listing Service (MLS).
- Often provides a real estate library, training films and cassettes, standard business forms, advertising, publicity, public relations, and the opportunity for civic participation on behalf of the association and its members.
- A local REALTOR® association can be a great force for the public welfare of any community, and it can be a tremendous service to and on behalf of its REALTOR® members

The state association is often the conduit between the national and local association. They share many of the responsibilities with local associations but here's a few that are unique to the state association.

1. Communicate with legislators and advocate on behalf of private property rights in the state of Texas. Annually, Texas REALTORS® hosts a Day at the Capitol to coordinate efforts to meet and share concerns with legislators in the state.
2. Communicate and resolve issues between TREC and Texas REALTORS®.
3. Provide a legal hotline for our members. While they can't provide legal advice regarding any particular issue, the six attorneys answered more than 18,000 calls in 2020.
4. Provide a library of real estate forms, and electronic access through ZipLogix.
5. Oversight and coordination of TREPAC, our political action committee.
6. Offer benefits to members to help them in their business, such as their affinity partnership with Office Depot/Office Max.
7. Publish a print and electronic magazine 10 times per year, highlighting events and in-depth analysis of specialties and areas of interest.
8. Host a website that serves both consumers and members.
9. Texas REALTORS® provides professional standards services statewide, processing ethics complaints and providing arbitration and ombudsman services. The association processes over 500 member and consumer complaints and inquiries annually. Around 50% of complaints are resolved through the Ombudsman Program.
10. Host two annual business meetings. The fall conference also includes speakers, education, events, and trade shows.
11. Provide education resources through various departments, and continuing education for its members, usually in partnership with our local associations. The GRI is owned and maintained at the state level and is one of the most successful programs in the country.

The National Association is responsible for governing the Association (see Articles IV and VII of the [NAR Constitution](#)). The NAR Board of Directors authority includes:

1. Establish governing policies of the Association
2. Approve Association expenditures
3. Set membership dues
4. Set public policy positions as they pertain to the real estate industry
5. Approve member programs, products, and services
6. Approve amendments to the NAR Bylaws and recommend amendments to the NAR Constitution and Code of Ethics to the NAR Delegate Body.

Understanding Texas REALTORS® Governance

Political/Legislative/Public Policy; Operational/Governance; Legal/Risk Management/Professional Standards/Professional Development

Written policies can provide association staff and volunteers with information needed to properly run the association and protect the association from potential legal liability.

The documents listed below are essential to create and run an association.

- Articles of incorporation - a set of documents filed with a government body to legally document the creation of a corporation
- Bylaws - a set of rules and guidelines adopted by the governing board that must be followed by the association's leaders, members, and staff
- Strategic plan - a document that sets out the association's goals
- Budget - a financial document that outlines the financial parameters and sets the association's priorities
- Policies - the guidelines adopted by the association's governing board to carry out its mission
- Procedures - the specific methods employed to carry out the association's policies
- Policies and procedures manual - a collection of documents of the association's policies and the procedures for following those policies.

Texas REALTORS® Bylaws:

<https://www.texasrealestate.com/wp-content/uploads/TAR-bylaws-clean-9.10.18.pdf>

National Association of REALTORS® Governing Documents

<https://www.nar.realtor/about-nar/governing-documents>

Here are some areas for which your local association should consider adopting a policy to help reduce risk for the association.

FINANCIAL

A financial policy provides guidelines for how the association's money is safeguarded and spent. A financial policy should answer these questions:

- Who approves the budget?
- Who has check-signing authority and how many signatures are required?
- Who controls the bank accounts and investment accounts?
- Which staff hold credit cards, if any?
- What type of expense reporting is required?
- Where is petty cash kept and how is it secured?
- Who determines the accounting system?
- What are the audit procedures?

CONFIDENTIALITY

A confidentiality policy educates the association leaders and informs members regarding what information the board members and staff will keep confidential and the repercussions for anyone who violates the confidentiality policy.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Many times, association leaders don't realize that their online communications are perceived to represent the views of the association.

A social media policy:

- Establishes rules for association leaders who are engaged in social media
- Provides control of the association's online presence
- Safeguards the association's reputation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict-of-interest policy protects the association by addressing the following questions:

- Could your association members or employees use their positions for private gain, to advance personal interests, to obtain favors or benefits for themselves, members of their families, other individuals, corporations, or business entities?
- How do you define a conflict of interest?
- Who determines a conflict of interest exists?
- What steps must a leader with a conflict take to protect the association?

WHISTLEBLOWER

A whistleblower policy can be used to encourage staff and volunteers to come forward with credible information on illegal practices or serious violations of adopted policies of the association. The policy should confirm that the association will protect the person from retaliation and identify where such information can be reported.

FRAUD

Associations have faced instances of misuse of funds and theft of association property. A fraud policy can deter these types of unacceptable behaviors and lay the framework for how the association will investigate suspected fraudulent activity.

A fraud policy should include elements such as:

- What activities are prohibited?
- Who is responsible for reporting suspected fraudulent activity?
- Who is responsible for conducting a fraud investigation?
- How a fraud investigation will proceed?

PRIVACY

A privacy policy should state the ways the association gathers, uses, discloses, and manages members' data. Having a written policy fulfills a legal requirement to protect a person's privacy and can be used as an education tool for association staff and volunteers regarding how to handle private data.

RECORD RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION

A record retention policy helps the association minimize risk by ensuring that necessary records and documents are adequately protected and maintained. It also ensures that records that are no longer needed are discarded properly and at the proper time. The policy should limit distribution of documents so that only those who need to see them do. Clearly delineating what documents should be kept or destroyed prevents documents—especially those that could be misinterpreted or that are confidential—from being subpoenaed or used against the association.

Understanding Texas REALTORS® Committees

COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

[Texas REALTORS® Bylaws](#) outline committee structures in **Article IX, Section 1: Committees.**

(a) Committees.

1) The following committees are established:

- a) Public Policy Oversight Committee for the purpose of discussing and making recommendations on matters related to state legislative policy issues;
- b) Political Involvement Committee for the purpose of discussing and making recommendations on matters related to election issues and grass roots;
- c) Professional Standards Committee for the purpose of discussing and making recommendations on matters related to professional standards of members;
- d) Budget and Finance Committee for the purpose of discussing and making recommendations related to the Associations budget and fiscal issues; and
- e) Texas Association of REALTORS® Commercial Committee for the purpose of discussing and making recommendations on matters related to commercial and industrial real estate.

2) The committees under this subsection will conduct business and make recommendations to the Executive Board on matters related to the purposes stated in Subdivision (1).

(b) Nominating Committee.

1) The Nominating Committee is comprised of the following:

- A) the elected Nominated Committee members, who each serve a two-year term;
- B) the Past Chairman of the Board Once Removed, who serves a one-year term; and
- C) the Immediate Past Chairman of the Board, who serves a one-year term.

2) The number of elected Nominating Committee members is equal to the number of Regions. The elected directors in each Region elect one REALTOR® Member who holds Primary REALTOR® Membership in a Member Board in that respective Region to serve as an elected Nominating Committee member.

3) The Executive Board may shorten the term of a particular Nominating Committee Member position, before the Nominating Committee Member is elected, in order to provide for a substantially equal number of staggered two-year terms among all Nominating Committee Members.

4) The Past Chairman of the Board Once Removed serves as the chairman of the Nominating Committee, and the Immediate Past Chairman of the Board serves as Vice Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

5) The Regional Vice Presidents serving each respective Region are responsible for conducting the election of the elected Nominating Committee member from that Region. The directors in each Region who elect the elected Nominating Committee member from the Region also elect an alternate with an identical term as the elected Nominating Committee member from that Region. The alternate must satisfy the same qualifications required for one to be elected Nominating Committee member. The alternate serves on the Nominating Committee at any meeting the elected Nominating Committee member does not attend. The election of the elected Nominating Committee members and alternates shall take place prior to the Fall Meeting preceding their respective terms. Such elections shall be conducted at the discretion of the Regional Vice Presidents serving each respective Region. The election results shall be announced before the close of the Fall Meeting of the Board of Directors.

6) If a vacancy exists because an elected Nominating Committee member and the alternate are unable to serve the remainder of the term, the chair of the Nominating Committee shall appoint a REALTOR® Member from the respective Region to fill the remainder of the term. A person appointed to fill a vacancy in an elected Nominating Committee member position must satisfy the same qualifications required for one to be elected as a Nominating Committee member. The Chairman of the Board may appoint a previous Past Chairman of the Board to fill a vacancy in the Vice Chairman position.

(c) Other Committees or Groups. The Executive Board may establish such other committees, task forces, or groups as it determines necessary.

(d) Appointment of Committee Members, Task Force Members, or Groups.

1) The Chairman of the Board will appoint the Chairman of each committee, task force, or group.

2) The Chairman-Elect will appoint the Vice Chairman of each committee, task force, or group.

3) The Chairman of the Board will appoint the other members of the committees, task forces, or groups.

4) The Chairman of the Board or the Chairman-Elect may delegate the power of appointment of task forces under this subsection to committees, committee chairmen, or Association staff.

(e) Terms of Committee Members.

(1) The term of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, or a member of a committee is determined by policy of the Executive Board.

(2) A Chairman, Vice Chairman, or member of a task force or group serves at the will of the Chairman of the Board.

(f) Vacancies. The Chairman of the Board may appoint a person to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term of a Chairman of a committee. The Chairman-Elect may appoint a person to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term of a Vice Chairman of a committee. The Chairman of the Board may appoint a person to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term of any other member of a committee.

(g) Approval; Eligibility. All actions of committees, task forces, or groups are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors and Executive Board, unless otherwise delegated under these bylaws. Members of the committees, task forces, or groups need not be directors.

Article IX, Section 2: Management Groups

The Board of Directors may designate one or more groups or committees to have and exercise the authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the Association. Such groups or committees must consist of two or more persons, a majority of whom are directors, with the remainder being directors or non-directors. The Executive Board is empowered to act in accordance with Section 7 of Article VI.

Understanding Committee Appointment Policies

Upon appointment, Texas REALTORS® committee chairs, vice chairs, and members must acknowledge and abide by the policies and guidelines governing the obligations and conduct of committee members as outlined below. Nothing in these policies set terms or conditions of employment or create an employment contract.

- Attendance Policy*
- Conflict of Interest Policy*
- Anti-Harassment Policy*
- Ownership Disclosure Policy*
- Code of Conduct Policy*
- Social Media Guidelines

**This applies to committee members who have a term of more than one year.*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Committee chairs, vice chairs, and members accept the responsibility for carrying out the goals of their committee when appointed, and meeting attendance is part of that responsibility. It is expected that committee members will make every effort to attend committee meetings. If a committee chair, vice chair or member will be absent from a meeting, a written notice should be submitted to the staff executive before the meeting date (email suffices as a written notice). If a committee chair, vice chair or member is absent from two consecutive regularly scheduled committee meetings, he or she automatically forfeits the committee appointment subject to review by the Leadership Team.*

Most committees meet at the regular bi-annual meetings of the Texas REALTORS®. All members of committees, including chairs and vice chairs, are responsible for paying their own meeting expenses to the regular meetings.

**This applies to committee members who have a term of more than one year.*

When accepting a committee appointment, appointees agree to the statements that are in bold, like this one below:

"I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated in the Texas REALTORS® Attendance Policy. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Policy and have read its terms very carefully. I understand that my failure to abide by the terms of the Policy may result in my immediate dismissal from my volunteer governance position with Texas REALTORS®."

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

A member of any Texas REALTORS® decision-making body has a conflict of interest whenever that member:

- is a principal, partner, or corporate officer of a business providing, or being considered as a provider of, products or services to Texas REALTORS® ("Business");
- or serves on the board of directors of the Business unless the individual's only relationship to the Business is service as Texas REALTORS® representative on such board;
- or holds an ownership interest* of more than one percent of the Business.

Members with a conflict of interest must immediately disclose such conflict of interest prior to participating in any discussions or vote of a Texas REALTORS® decision-making body that pertains to the Business. Such members may not participate in any discussions related to that Business other than to respond to questions asked of them by other members of the body. A member may not vote on any matter in which the member has a conflict of interest.

If the Leadership Team has reasonable cause to believe a committee member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances the Leadership Team determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate corrective action, which may include removal from the committee.

*Ownership interest is defined as the cumulative holdings of the individual; the individual's related spouse, children, and siblings; and of any trust, corporation, or partnership in which any of the foregoing individuals is an officer, director, or owns in the aggregate at least 50% of the (a) beneficial interest (if a trust), (b) stock (if a corporation), or (c) partnership interests (if a partnership).

"I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated in the Texas REALTORS® Conflict of Interest Policy. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Policy and have read its terms very carefully. I understand that my failure to abide by the terms of the Policy may result in my immediate dismissal from my volunteer governance position with Texas REALTORS®."

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment

Prohibited Texas REALTORS® prohibits and will not tolerate harassment of any kind by Texas REALTORS® volunteer leaders or members on the basis of race, color, physical, or mental disability, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, age (40 or over), citizenship, genetic information, past, current, or prospective service in the uniformed services, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local law. Harassment is prohibited on Texas REALTORS® property and at all Texas REALTORS®-related or sponsored events. This policy further extends to harassment on social media platforms.

All Texas REALTORS® volunteer leaders and members are expected to behave accordingly and take appropriate measures to ensure that the conduct described herein does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any Association volunteer leader who violates this policy. Texas REALTORS® is committed to enforcing this policy against all forms of harassment.

Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment means any harassment based on someone's sex or gender. It is not limited to interactions between members of the opposite sex. It includes harassment that is not sexual in nature (for example, offensive remarks about an individual's sex or gender), as well as any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any other conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment includes:

- Verbal (for example, epithets, derogatory statements, threatening or obscene language, slurs, sexually-related comments or jokes, sexual innuendoes, unwelcome sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors)
- Non-Verbal (for example, suggestive or insulting sounds, or whistling)
- Physical (for example, assault or inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, such as touching, pinching, brushing the body)
- Visual (for example, displaying sexually suggestive posters, cartoons, or drawings, sending inappropriate adult-themed gifts, leering, or making obscene or sexual gestures)
- Online (for example, derogatory statements, threatening or obscene language, or sexually suggestive postings in any social media platform including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)

Other types of harassment often take a similar form to sexual harassment and include harassment that is:

- Verbal (for example, epithets, derogatory statements, threatening or obscene language, slurs, derogatory comments, or jokes)
- Physical (for example, assault or inappropriate physical contact)
- Visual (for example, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings, or making derogatory gestures)
- Online (for example, derogatory statements, threatening or obscene language, or sexually suggestive postings in any social media platform including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)

This list is illustrative only, and not exhaustive. It is impossible to list every type of behavior that can be considered harassment. Any conduct that could create an offensive environment will be considered harassment in violation of this policy.

Reporting Harassment

Texas REALTORS® will take each complaint seriously and conduct a thorough and impartial investigation. Texas REALTORS® will maintain a complete written record of each complaint and will maintain communication with the alleged harasser and the victim throughout the proceedings. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances. Texas REALTORS® will take prompt and proportionate action when a violation of this policy has occurred.

If you are a Texas REALTORS® volunteer leader or member and are subjected to any conduct that you believe violates this policy or witness any such conduct, you may speak to, write, or otherwise contact the Chairman of the Committee ("Chairman"). Although not mandatory, a Complaint Form is available on the Texas REALTORS® website to make your complaint if you wish to use it.

Once a report has been received, a prompt and thorough investigation will be conducted by the Chairman upon consultation with Texas REALTORS® Legal Counsel. If the report names the Chairman, that individual is precluded from participating in the investigation and disciplinary action and shall be replaced by the Committee's Chairman-elect or Chief Executive Officer.

No Retaliation

No one will be subject to, and Texas REALTORS® prohibits, any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for good faith reporting of incidents of harassment of any kind, pursuing any harassment claim or cooperating in related investigations.

Violations

Any Texas REALTORS® volunteer leader or member, regardless of position or title, who has subjected an individual to harassment or retaliation in violation of this policy, will be subject to discipline, up to and including removal from any committee position the Texas REALTORS® volunteer leader or member holds. A violation of this policy may be a factor in determining a Texas REALTORS® member's fitness for future Texas REALTORS® volunteer leader positions.

Appeal Process

Any Texas REALTORS® volunteer leader or member found in violation will have a right to appeal the decision to the Texas REALTORS® Board of Directors. A written request for appeal must be submitted no more than thirty (30) days after the individual receives notice of a violation of this policy. The Texas REALTORS® Legal Counsel is responsible for the administration of this policy.

If you have any questions regarding this policy or questions about harassment that are not addressed in this policy, please contact the Texas REALTORS® General Counsel.

"I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated in the Texas REALTORS® Anti-Harassment Policy. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Policy and have read its terms very carefully. I understand that my failure to abide by the terms of the Policy may result in my immediate dismissal from my volunteer governance position with Texas REALTORS®."

OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE POLICY

Members of any Texas REALTORS® decision-making body must disclose the existence of any of the following:

an ownership interest* in, (2) a financial interest** in, or (3) service in a decision-making capacity for any entity prior to speaking to a Texas REALTORS® decision-making body on any matter involving that entity.

After making the required disclosure, such member may participate in the discussion and vote on the matter unless that member has a conflict of interest as defined below. If the Leadership Team has reasonable cause to believe a committee member has failed to disclose actual or possible ownership interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances the Leadership Team determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible ownership interest, it shall take appropriate corrective action, which may include removal from the committee.

*Ownership interest is defined as the cumulative holdings of the individual; the individual's related spouse, children, and siblings; and of any trust, corporation, or partnership in which any of the foregoing individuals is an officer, director, or owns in the aggregate at least 50% of the (a) beneficial interest (if a trust), (b) stock (if a corporation), or (c) partnership interests (if a partnership).

"I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated in the Texas REALTORS® Ownership Disclosure Policy. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Policy and have read its terms very carefully. I understand that my failure to abide by the terms of the Policy may result in my immediate dismissal from my volunteer governance position with Texas REALTORS®."

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

All committee members have a general duty to act in the best interest of Texas REALTORS® and must avoid any appearance of impropriety. Committee chairs, vice chairs, and members accept the responsibility of conducting themselves at all times in accordance with this policy.

Uncivil discourse and discourteous and inappropriate behavior have a negative impact on the reputation of Texas REALTORS® and productivity of the committee decision-making process. If a committee member acts in a way that reflects poorly on Texas REALTORS® or distracts from the goals of the committee on which the member sits on, the Leadership Team shall take appropriate corrective action, which may include removal from the committee.

"I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated in the Texas REALTORS® Code of Conduct Policy. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Policy and have read its terms very carefully. I understand that my failure to abide by the terms of the Policy may result in my immediate dismissal from my volunteer governance position with Texas REALTORS®."

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CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Purpose

This Confidentiality Policy (Policy) is adopted in order to ensure matters which are to remain known only to certain persons affiliated with the Texas REALTORS® are kept that way. Texas REALTORS® members and staff are frequently involved in proceedings or actions that involve information that should be kept private. The purpose of this Policy is to define and set forth what information that is and to inform members and staff of procedures to be followed to ensure confidentiality.

Scope This Policy is applicable to members of Texas REALTORS® who serve in voluntary governance positions. Voluntary governance positions include all members of the Texas REALTORS® Leadership Team, Executive Board, Board of Directors, Committees and Task Forces.

Confidential Information Confidential Information includes but is not limited to any information pertaining to Texas REALTORS® current or anticipated operations, procedures, third party relationships and agreements, work product, and personal identification information.

Some examples of Confidential Information are:

- Identifying personal or financial information related to any Texas REALTORS® employee or member (e.g. driver's license number, address, phone number, credit card number, etc.)
- Information related to any previous, current, or anticipated Professional Standards proceedings (including the Ombudsman, Mediation, Ethics, and Arbitration programs)
- Information related to Professional Development programs and the creation of such programs that is specifically identified as confidential
- Information related to the development and creation of any artwork, marketing material, graphic design, and other printed material to be used by Texas REALTORS®, its staff and members
- Information concerning the process used to create and publish the Texas REALTORS® magazine, newsletters, podcasts and any other communications tool utilized by Texas REALTORS®
- Information related to vendor contracts and any proprietary information learned by Texas REALTORS® in obtaining and fulfilling its obligations pursuant to vendor contracts
- Any information related to government affairs and political involvement programming of Texas REALTORS® not otherwise required to be made public (e.g. process used to determine campaign contributions, discussions surrounding decisions for campaign contributions and endorsements, etc.)
- Information pertaining to the process used to create and publish the Texas REALTORS® Forms Library that is specifically identified as confidential
- Information related to personnel decisions (e.g. hiring, firing, promotion, reprimand, salary increases, etc.)
- Information obtained pursuant to closed meetings of Texas REALTORS® committees, Board of Directors, Executive Board or Leadership Team
- Any other information not generally known that if disseminated could be reasonably expected to adversely affect the Texas REALTORS®

General Non-Disclosure of Confidential Information

At no time shall a member disclose Confidential Information unless expressly permitted to do so at the discretion or direction of the CEO of Texas REALTORS®. Furthermore, unless expressly permitted to do so, at no time shall a member make copies of Confidential Information except as may be required in the performance of the person's job duties or voluntary governance position duties.

Association Governance From time to time, it may be necessary or required for meetings of Texas

REALTORS® leadership (i.e. certain committees, Texas REALTORS® Leadership Team, etc.) to be held in executive session. The proceedings of these meetings are confidential in nature and shall not be disclosed to individuals who were not present at the meeting. Any information discussed at a meeting held in executive session or documents that are disseminated are to remain confidential and may not be shared with anyone not in attendance. This provision applies to all members.

Member Information Members of the Texas REALTORS® frequently provide information to TEXAS REALTORS® related to their membership requirements, contributions to the Texas Real Estate Political Action Committee, or other reasons. Any information provided to Texas REALTORS® for these limited purposes shall be deemed confidential and may not be shared with any other member of Texas REALTORS® or with Texas REALTORS® staff holding positions to which the information would not be relevant.

Acknowledgment

By agreeing to serve in a Texas REALTORS® voluntary governance position, each member agrees to abide by the terms in this Policy. Members also acknowledge that Confidential Information learned or discovered during the course of the person's affiliation with Texas REALTORS® is the sole property of Texas REALTORS® and further agrees to leave any hard copies containing Confidential Information in the possession of Texas REALTORS® upon either the end of the member's service in a voluntary governance position.

"I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated in the Texas REALTORS® Confidentiality Policy. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Policy and have read its terms very carefully. I understand that my failure to abide by the terms of the Policy may result in my immediate dismissal from my volunteer governance position with Texas REALTORS®."

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR TEXAS REALTORS®

Leaders and Members social media includes, but is not limited to websites, blogs, social networking sites, discussion groups, and listservs. Social media is a powerful and effective communication and engagement tool and the association encourages leaders to utilize social media to help raise awareness of the Association's work and issues of interest to Texas REALTORS® and consumers.

These Social Media Guidelines for Texas REALTORS® Leaders (Guidelines) are intended to enable Texas REALTORS® leaders and members to maintain their ability to express themselves personally on social media, while also ensuring that the reputation and work of the association is protected. In furtherance of these objectives, leaders should follow these Guidelines:

1. All Texas REALTORS® leaders and members are encouraged to use social media to promote the association's mission, policy positions, advocacy efforts, and other association news.
2. It is always acceptable to repost or share any Texas REALTORS® published communications and established policy positions.
3. Always be professional, respectful, and ethical when engaging in social media and avoid making statements or posting photographs that could reasonably harm the Association.
4. In the capacity of a Texas REALTORS® leader or member, avoid making statements contrary to NAR's public positions on federal issues, Texas REALTORS® public positions on state issues, including but not limited to contrary statements about appointees, elected officials or candidates, and legislative or regulatory matters.
5. When reasonably necessary or useful, include a disclaimer that views expressed by the Texas REALTORS® leader or member are personal to the individual and do not represent the official views of the association.
6. Do not disclose any confidential information.

7. Do not call for a boycott of a product, service, or company.
8. Avoid any connection to Texas REALTORS® when making personal statements of endorsement or opposition to particular products, services, or companies.
9. Avoid and/or remove statements or content that create undue opposition or controversy.
10. Avoid making statements or posting photographs that are inappropriate including, but not limited to discriminatory remarks, demeaning or defamatory comments, offensive material, and comments that might constitute harassment.
11. Respect third-party intellectual property, and always use NAR's trademarks in accordance with NAR's Membership Marks Manual. REALTOR® means member of the National Association of REALTORS® and must not be used generically as a synonym for the occupation of "real estate agent" or "broker".

Texas REALTORS® leaders or members who do not adhere to these Guidelines or who otherwise act inappropriately when engaging in social media, may be contacted by the President/CEO to resolve the situation, which may include withdrawing, correcting, or revising the communication at issue. Please be aware that social media presence is a significant factor for the Texas REALTORS® Nominating Committee in determining one's fitness for a leadership position or membership on a committee. Social media presence may also be a factor when applying for local and state government positions.

As used in these Guidelines, "Texas REALTORS® leaders" includes elected and appointed officers, directors, committee chairs and vice chairs, and other members appointed to positions of leadership by the Texas REALTORS® Leadership Team.

"I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated in the Social Media Guidelines for Texas REALTORS® Leaders and Members. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Guidelines and have read its terms very carefully. I understand that my failure to abide by the guidelines may result in my immediate dismissal from my volunteer governance position with Texas REALTORS®."

Understanding Texas REALTORS® Strategic Planning

MORE THAN A CHECKLIST

As a volunteer leader, it can be difficult to manage the many responsibilities you have with your association, your family, and other civic involvement—and, oh yeah, find time to practice real estate. Who has a spare day or two to talk philosophically about the association? Besides, don't the strategic plan's lofty goals and action items just sit on a shelf until it's time to do the same exercise again? The truth is that effective strategic planning is one of the most important things you can do as a leader. Done correctly, it actually saves time and makes your job easier!

A strategic plan is a roadmap to long-term success

Associations are designed to evolve over time to ensure value and relevance to their members. Markets change, technologies change, and member expectations change ... and the association has to change with it. As a leader, your job is to contribute to the long-term success of the association and leave it better prepared for the future than when you began your service. An effective strategic plan identifies priorities and charts the course for long-term success. Where does the association need to be in three, five, or 10 years to maximize its value to members? Not only does planning allow the association to determine the steps towards achieving long-term success, but it also protects the association from being reactionary and losing focus. Without an effective strategic plan, an association can too easily lose focus on the activities that contribute to achieving important goals.

A strategic plan enhances organizational alignment

An effective association is aligned from top to bottom to ensure everyone is working together to reach the goals of the organization. Leaders and key staff work together to identify priorities, opportunities, and threats and develop the association's strategic goals for long-term success. Those goals, in the form of the strategic plan, guide the association's budget and allocation of resources. Together, the strategic plan and the budget direct the association's board of directors, committees, and staff to ensure that every level of the organization is focusing its efforts on a common end goal.

A strategic plan simplifies the decision-making process

Association leaders have to make a lot of decisions. When organizational alignment is not achieved, those decisions are often based on individual interests or sales pitches for the newest shiny object that may have no impact on the association's mission. Conversely, an organization aligned through a strategic plan will face far fewer distractions, as leaders, committees, and staff ask themselves whether each proposal fits the strategic plan. If the answer to that question is yes, the proposal goes forward to the board of directors or other decision-making body. The same question can guide board members as they deliberate on proposals brought before them. The association's limited resources can be allocated according to whether the proposal fits into the strategic plan and the priorities within the plan.

A strategic plan communicates value to members

Perhaps most important, a strategic plan answers the question: "Why should I be a member?" The association exists to offer its members valuable, relevant services and resources that contribute to members' success. A strategic plan clearly articulates the association's values and how it intends to allocate its resources to that cause. Don't miss the opportunity to develop a great plan and answer that question for the members you serve.

FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Put together a forward-thinking team. Include members who represent a broad array of perspectives. While experienced members and past leaders are valuable, strategic plans focus on the future, so include visionaries, newer members, and members who embrace new ideas and technology.
2. Consider what members have to say. Solicit member input through a survey. Dedicate time during your planning session to really consider with an open mind what your members are saying. Remember that perception is often as important as reality. Don't forget to report back to your members. Texas REALTORS® staff can help facilitate member surveys at no charge.
3. Choose an experienced strategic planning facilitator. Find an outside facilitator who is experienced and knows the REALTOR® organization. It's critical for AEs and board leadership to participate in the planning process, so bring in someone who is skilled at bringing out ideas and discussion without the potential for bias. Texas REALTORS® staff is happy to help and has facilitated dozens of strategic planning sessions.
4. NAR's Core Standards requires associations to annually adopt a strategic plan. It's important for any organization to plan for the future and create actionable steps to ensure value and relevance to its members or customers. That's why the National Association of REALTORS® included strategic planning in its Core Standards requirements for state and local associations. NAR offers toolkits and resources for strategic and business planning at nar.realtor/ae/manage-your-association.
5. Keep it at the 50,000-foot level. Strategic plans are about setting goals and establishing actionable benchmarks, but they are not the place for tactical checklist items. That's what your committees should establish based on the goals in your strategic plan and your budget. In fact, an effective strategic plan can even fit on one or two pages.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AT EACH LEVEL

Texas REALTORS®

<https://www.texasrealestate.com/wp-content/uploads/StrategicPlan.pdf>

National Association of REALTORS®

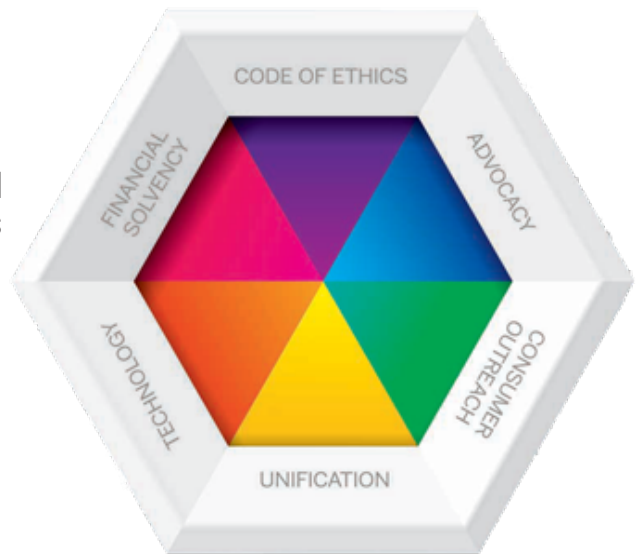
<https://www.nar.realtor/2021-nar-strategic-priorities>

CHECKPOINT

Compare the unique responsibilities of the state REALTOR® association listed in The Three-way Agreement (p. 3-4) to the Texas REALTORS® Strategic Plan (linked above). Make a list of the way these responsibilities and priorities align. Make notes on any questions you have.

Understanding Core Standards

One of the responsibilities NAR also has is making sure all local and state associations adhere to the Core Standards of the organization. The Core Standards are intended to raise the bar for REALTOR® associations and ensure high-quality service for members. The standards ensure strategic alignment with all entities of the REALTOR® association. All REALTOR® associations, as a condition of membership, are required to annually comply with a set of standards that are specific to local and state associations and commercial overlay boards.



1. CODE OF ETHICS

A. Every association will provide new and continuing member Code of Ethics training as required by Article IV of the NAR Bylaws.

B. Every association will maintain a viable professional standards process to enforce the Code of Ethics and provide arbitration and mediation as member services. Associations must have a fully functioning professional standards committee with administrative capability to conduct the program including a certified Professional Standards Administrator, or must administer professional standards enforcement through a multi-board (or regional) professional standards agreement with other associations or with the state association.

C. Every association will provide mediation services to members as required by Article IV of the NAR Bylaws. Associations must also offer ombudsman services to members and their clients and customers and may implement a "citation" enforcement policy.

2. ADVOCACY

A. Unless prohibited by state law and in recognition of state law differences, each association shall include in their dues billing a voluntary contribution for the PAC or the Political Advocacy Fund (PAF) in an amount adequate to meet any NAR established RPAC fundraising goals. Dues billing for PAC or PAF contributions has been proven to be the most effective method for raising PAC or PAF dollars and in engaging our members in political advocacy*. A local association will have met this Mandatory Core Standard, regardless of whether they collect the full amount of their NAR established goal, if they include the voluntary contribution on their dues bill.

B. Each association shall provide or distribute information and communications from NAR and the applicable state association, regarding the value of investing in and the benefits received from the individual's participation in the PAC.

C. Each association shall demonstrate participation in NAR Calls for Action (e.g., promotion through websites, newsletters, office visits, etc.). It is the state and local association's obligation to provide adequate proof of participation. NAR shall monitor state association participation primarily through the REALTOR® Party Response Reports.

D. Each local association shall demonstrate participation (if applicable) in State Calls for Action (e.g., promotion through websites, newsletters, office visits, etc.). It is the local association's obligation to provide adequate proof of participation.

E. In addition to the requirements established in subsections A-D, each association must support

the REALTOR® Party's "Vote-Act-Invest" goals, and must annually conduct at least two initiatives or activities furthering or supporting each of those three goals respectively. Commercial Overlay Boards must conduct at least one Vote and Act initiative and two Invest initiatives annually.

Associations must conduct or promote a diversity, equity and inclusion activity and a fair housing activity. Possible options for completing this standard include the following:

- Measure and assess diversity in the association membership and develop an actionable roadmap for local association DEI; NAR has a new Insights Hub tool to help with this process.
- Conduct or promote fair housing training.
- Conduct or promote an At Home with Diversity (AHWD®) course.
- Conduct or promote implicit bias training (e.g., NAR's implicit bias video).
- Form a Diversity Committee or a Fair Housing Committee.

Associations can meet the existing Advocacy requirement for 'Act' under the REALTOR® Party goals and the existing Consumer Outreach 'Being the Voice for Real Estate' and 'Community involvement and investment' requirements through activities that demonstrate a commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Fair Housing. Note, this is not an added requirement, but just another way to meet the existing Advocacy and Consumer Outreach requirements.

The remaining core standard requirements can be found in the below links. The requirements most affecting members are expanded above.

3. Consumer Outreach
4. Unification Efforts and Support of the REALTOR® Organization
5. Technology
6. Financial Solvency

The annual core standards compliance cycle runs from January 1 to December 31, by which time all local associations and commercial overlay boards are required to submit their certification forms to their respective state associations. If a local or commercial association is not in compliance with the standards, state associations must notify NAR by January 30. Core Standards enforcement is the joint responsibility of the state and national associations. If a state association confirms that a local or commercial association is not in compliance with the Core Standards, that association's charter may be revoked. However, all associations will first have the opportunity to appeal this determination and appear before a hearing panel of the NAR Association Executives Committee to show cause why the association's charter should not be revoked. Local and commercial overlay boards should consult with their state associations if they have questions about compliance.

NEW FOR THE CORE STANDARDS IN 2021

- Association strategic plans must include a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and a fair housing component.
- Associations must conduct or promote a diversity, equity and inclusion activity and a fair housing activity. Possible options for completing this standard include the following:
 - Measure and assess diversity in the association membership and develop an actionable roadmap for local association DEI; NAR has a new Insights Hub tool to help with this process.
 - Conduct or promote fair housing training.
 - Conduct or promote an At Home with Diversity (AHWD®) course.
 - Conduct or promote implicit bias training (e.g., NAR's implicit bias video).
 - Form a Diversity Committee or a Fair Housing Committee.
 - Other DEI or Fair Housing activities.
- Associations can meet the existing Advocacy requirement for 'Act' under the REALTOR® Party

goals and the existing Consumer Outreach 'Being the Voice for Real Estate' and 'Community involvement and investment' requirements through activities that demonstrate a commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Fair Housing. **Note, this is not an added requirement, but just another way to meet the existing Advocacy and Consumer Outreach requirements.**

- The leadership development education requirement within the Unification Efforts standard now specifies that the association's education and training for volunteer leaders must address the following:
 - Increased awareness and understanding of the Core Standards.
 - Understanding of staff and volunteer leadership roles and responsibilities.
- Associations must commit to greater diversity, equity and inclusion among the association's volunteer leadership.
- Associations must have the ability to interact with members in a remote work environment via a virtual meeting platform such as Zoom, Skype, WebEx, etc.
- Associations that administer professional standards must have the services of a certified Professional Standards Administrator. **Note, this is not a new policy; it is consistent with existing NAR policy and has been added to the Core Standards Certification Form.**

CHECKPOINT

Answer the following questions:

1. How does the REALTOR® organization differ from a corporate environment or other organizations?

2. Something I learned from this course that I did not know before is:

3. Other things I need to know to start my leadership journey in the REALTOR® organization are:
