**State Leadership Idea Exchange at 2017 REALTORS® Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo**

**Virginia REALTORS®**

**Centralized grant facilitation = WIN/WIN/WIN**

The Virginia REALTORS® has centralized grant facilitation between local associations, NAR resources, and state association grant funds for targeted activities that proliferate capacity building statewide and elevate brand awareness.

Identifying common causes and opportunities across the state through the Director of Association Relations and direct communication with local AEs, the Virginia REALTORS® association has been able to coordinate a network of activities. Facilitating like activities in multiple geographies not only deepens the impact on any particular issue, it unifies the messaging about REALTOR® leadership and engagement.

In 2016, the Virginia REALTORS® coordinated NAR Housing Opportunity Program support for five local associations to address **rural housing** conditions across Virginia. The effort resulted in a universal benefit to the REALTOR® organization, as five local associations were awarded grant support and achieved core standards credit, the at large REALTOR® brand was connected to thought leadership in multiple locales, and the collective efforts were leveraged into statewide attention in media and at the annual Governor’s Housing Conference. The centralized facilitation of the effort enabled greater leverage in messaging publicly and in developing dialogue with elected officials.

In 2017, the Virginia REALTORS® are employing the same centralized coordination to help local associations host education with the statewide housing finance agency (the Virginia Housing Development Authority). In coordination with nine local associations, VHDA is hosting statewide trainings to both certify trainers in their homebuyer education course and update real estate professionals on the updated range of programs available to prospective buyers. Centralizing the effort has enabled more associations to access resources than would have occurred without state coordination. The result (in progress throughout the year) is increased professional opportunity for REALTOR® members through exposure to valuable education and an also expanded opportunity for homebuyers to get the information that they need, as REALTOR® teaching capacity increases.

**Best practices for centralizing grants to magnify impact**

1. Identify common cause/opportunity through local associations and community partners in multiple regions
2. Invite participation of local associations in a coordinated effort
3. Establish event/engagement template for consistency in execution and outcome across multiple locales
4. Coordinate support through NAR, state resources, or community/institutional partners
5. Execute series of events/engagements
6. Leverage collective activities in high-impact messaging to:
   1. Demonstrate REALTOR® leadership on important issues
   2. Strengthen connotation of REALTOR® brand with expertise and commitment
   3. Increase investment of individual members in important advocacy issues and encourage their united advocacy on real estate issues of universal importance