

REALTOR® AE

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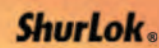
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ON THE COVER: Florida REALTORS® legal team member Brittany Nesmith rehearsing for her member education video in the association's in-house studio. Photo by Chris DesMarais, Florida REALTORS®.

The REALTOR® AE editorial board reviews each issue and provides critical feedback, proposes story ideas, and stays in touch with fellow AEs nationwide to scout out new programs and products to share with the AE community. To join the editorial board, write an article, or contribute information, email Carolyn Schwaar, editor, REALTOR® AE magazine, cschwaar@nar.realtor.



AE-ing From Home

I had planned to write this column about how great the AE Institute program was received and how wonderful our quality time together in San Diego was, while looking forward to seeing each other again in Washington, D.C. Those plans changed as our work lives and our personal lives were turned upside-down by COVID-19.

Like most of you, I have never closed my office for so long a stretch of time before. I have never worked from home for so long before, either, but with each new challenge I have found myself turning to a technological solution—some worked great; others, not so much.

This issue of REALTOR® AE, like every spring issue, is dedicated to technology. It's something we often take for granted and sometimes don't take full enough advantage of, but when the virus hit, it kept us going.

In fact, technology has been transforming the way we conduct business for some time. Now more than ever, it is technology that will make us successful as we add remote work and virtual committee and board meetings to our repertoire. We've all been experiencing a real time crash-course in how to stay connected to our members and colleagues while ensuring productivity and maximizing engagement.

As I transitioned to my home office, I realized just how essential good technology was: a fast computer, a good internet connection,

and reliable chat and conferencing applications have been my lifeline. There have been other productivity essentials, though, that aren't related to technology at all, such as having a dedicated workspace, finding the self-motivation and discipline to not be distracted, and adopting a strict routine. I still get up early every day, make my bed, and get ready for work just as I would if I were driving to the office instead of moving to another part of the house.

Other AEs I know have had to balance work with kids at home and share bandwidth with a spouse also trying to work remotely. Our diverse community may have different approaches, but I know the dedication to persevere was, and still is, there.

Since I had planned to see you in May, let's make an effort to still do that. That interaction could happen through a quick FaceTime call or through a virtual meeting platform where many of us join together to share our experiences, stay connected, and learn from each other. And, I'd expect nothing less from this amazing AE community.



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Learn about software exclusively for Real Estate Associations.

See how easily the REALTOR® Association of the Fox Valley updates records in NRDS, lockbox systems, and MLS platforms with GrowthZone.

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The Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association moved into its headquarters building (pictured) but keep its previous building as investment property.

The Property Investment Leap

When the housing market was booming, (and many say it will come back when the COVID-19 crisis is past) many associations found themselves in the enviable position of searching for new ways to invest reserve funds. There's no more natural investment vehicle—and non-dues revenue generator—for a REALTOR® association than real estate. Yet owning commercial real estate has unique challenges.

"If you're going to have tenants other than the association, then you need to understand what it means to be a landlord, because it's a lot of work," says Chuck Kasky, RCE, CEO of Maryland REALTORS® in Annapolis.

Kasky's board of directors voted to keep the association's old income-producing office property when it moved to a larger location in 2008. "The thinking behind it long-term is to control what will someday be one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in Annapolis," says Kasky. "Now we own both properties that sit on the larger corner lot, and the plan is to redevelop the entire parcel to the highest and best use sometime in the future."

The strategy for the property investment was developed by a committee of experienced commercial REALTORS®, which also represented the association in

the purchase. "Commercial deals are very different from residential deals, so make sure you're leveraging your commercial members to provide that kind of guidance," Kasky says.

When leaders at the Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association in south-east Virginia realized the association's 33,000-square-foot building in Virginia Beach, which was 65 percent leased to tenants, no longer provided enough parking, they voted to purchase 6 acres in Chesapeake, Va., and created a custom building to house the association. It also bought the neighboring land for future expansion.

Instead of selling the first building, association leadership decided to keep it as an investment property. The association keeps one classroom in the original building and leases the remaining space to tenants, which brings in quite a bit of revenue, says Executive Vice President Mike Reitelbach, RCE, CAE.

Keeping the property fully leased to quality tenants is a concern of all commercial real estate owners, but expert property management firms make a big difference.

"The first thing we did after closing was hire a leasing broker to represent us in the search for tenants for the building that we purchased," Kasky said. "If you're buying

a building with additional space and you're going to be a landlord, have people you trust as your broker to help attract and screen tenants and negotiate leases, then get a professional property management company to deal with the inevitable complaints and maintenance requests."

Kasky says maintaining the original building has been a challenge at times because of its age and the costs to upgrade and repair portions of it. But having tenants vetted by the leasing broker has made the process easy to manage and has brought in more money than is paid out, he says.

"With any commercial building, the risk is if we can't keep the space leased. Then it becomes a sinkhole for cash," Reitelbach says. "But we're very scrupulous about reserves and put aside a certain amount each month, not only for the general reserve but for maintenance and per capita expenditures."

Real estate investing is not for the faint of heart and can be a complicated process, even with a dedicated and knowledgeable commercial committee and supportive board. But if you do the math carefully and get expert guidance, says Kasky, it can be a smart way to invest your reserves.

— By Brenda Fisher, Frederick County Association of REALTORS®, Md.

Associations Turn to Virtual Solutions for Events, Education

Hundreds of REALTOR® association events and classes were canceled this spring as the coronavirus stay-at-home measures restricted in-person gatherings, but that didn't stop associations from delivering valuable education to members.

- The Central Panhandle Association of REALTORS®, Fla., launched webinar versions of many of its popular classes and retooled other offerings to focus on working remotely, including one called "How to Work Virtually in Today's Business Environment."

SPECIAL
Live Zoom Event

What's Next in Real Estate and the Economy?

Dr Ted Jones

Thur., March 26
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MIAMI REALTORS

- The Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS® dedicated its home page to news and advice for members on working through the quarantine, including articles written by its staff and attorneys on topics, such as the proper use of COVID-19 addendums to sale contracts and "Tips For Engaging With Clients Virtually."

- The Coastal Carolinas Association of REALTORS® posted a curated list of free on-line training opportunities for members that included links to webinars from well-known real estate industry speakers.

- The Miami Association of REALTORS® invited its members to watch most educational courses when and where they wanted via livestreaming at MiamiRealtorsLive.com.

Many live events were broadcast via Zoom, including its economic outlook series.

- Chicago REALTORS®, like many other associations, encouraged members to take advantage of existing online education opportunities to meet continuing education requirements and earn designations. One Chicago REALTORS® Facebook post read, "Our online CE options are easy to complete while at home practicing social distancing! The virtual classes will help you knock out your CE credits during downtime." The

National Association of REALTORS® made it easier to do by offering no and low-cost options to obtain CE through Right Tools, Right Now.

- The California Association of REALTORS® kept members informed on the latest coronavirus-related real estate news via a series of special we-

binars, including "Safer Seller Disclosures During COVID-19." The association also plans to conduct a virtual legislative day and virtual committee and director meetings in place of its Spring Business Meetings.

- The NAR announced in March that the REALTORS® Legislative Meetings and Trade Expo would go on in May as a virtual event and include key sessions and committee meetings and elections.

"No matter what we are facing, we are a team no matter where we are located," NAR CEO Bob Goldberg said in a statement. "Together, we will get through this by sharing information and by following the best protocols for health and safety—both for us and for our clients and customers."



Maryland REALTORS® staff and leadership participate in a Habitat for Humanity Team Build Day in Annapolis.



Now the nation's third-largest local REALTOR® association, the newly formed 34,000-member Broward, Palm Beaches & St. Lucie REALTORS® unveiled a new logo and a new website, www.Rworld.com, in January.



Kentucky REALTORS® launched a grant program to fund initiatives that drive economic growth, make quality of life improvements, and support homeownership in the state. During 2020, the association will make \$60,000 in grant funding available to qualified programs and projects across Kentucky.



The Nebraska REALTORS® Association awarded grants totaling more than \$27,000 to 109 first-time home buyers through its Home Buyer's Assistance Foundation. Grants are available to first-time home buyers who use a REALTOR®, purchase a home for \$170,000 or less, take a home buyer education course, and turn in their application within six months of closing.

New Cyber Liability Insurance for Members

The value of REALTOR® association membership just got higher with the addition of NAR REALTOR Benefits® Program partner CyberPolicy.

Malware, hacks, and data loss remain very real threats in the real estate industry where high value transactions and sensitive customer information are a prime

target for hackers.

Finding a policy to meet the needs of real estate professionals is a challenge, which is why NAR partnered with CyberPolicy to create a customized and comprehensive cyber liability insurance program for REALTOR®-owned brokerages.



of their existing errors and omissions or general liability cyber policies, these specialized plans meet the unique needs of real estate professionals. Through this program, members also have third-party funds transfer coverage (in addition to first-party). This is a unique benefit that covers clients. For example, when a fraudulent email (instructions for wire transfer, etc.) is sent to clients, and it results in their financial loss, that loss is also covered.

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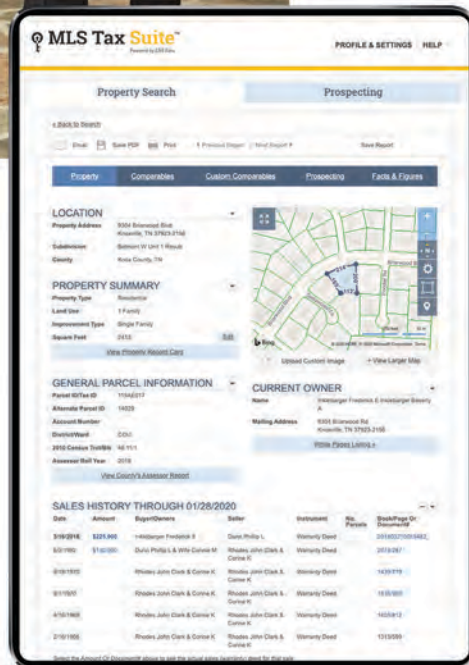


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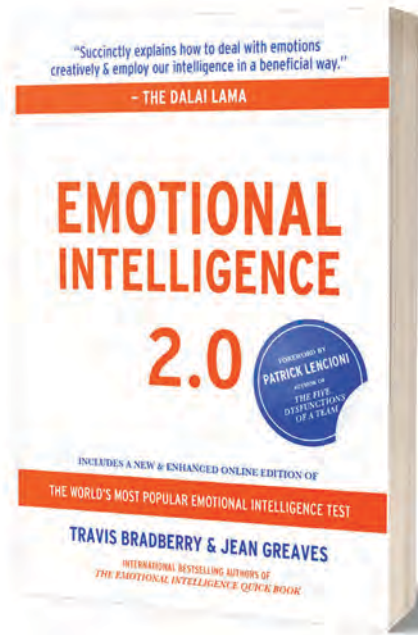
Reader: Chuck A. Kasky, RCE,
CEO, Maryland REALTORS®

Emotional intelligence is just as important to professional success as your management ability.

When I first became interested in the CEO position I now have, I sought advice about traits that members look for in their AE. I talked at length with my predecessor and had the great fortune to count her as a mentor. I also had been observing her for many years, especially how she managed her facial expressions and body language in meetings. No matter how difficult or contentious a debate became, she was unflappable, and one never knew from the outside what she was thinking. I, on the other hand, wore my emotions on my sleeve and members could tell when I was not happy. It became obvious that to take the next step in my career, I needed to take control of my emotions and become the professional facilitator of our members' decision-making.

A book I turned to at the time and have relied on ever since is *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves. Emotional intelligence, as you may know, is the ability to identify, consider, and control your own emotions and to recognize emotions in others. Your emotional intelligence grows as your self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management matures. Some say emotional intelligence is more important than IQ in determining success.

One part of the book that resonates with me still is the description of how our brains process feelings. We are hardwired



“Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way, this is not easy.”

— Travis Bradberry, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*

and direct your thoughts and actions

- **Relationship management:** the ability to effectively manage interactions and relationships

The relationship between staff and volunteer leaders recently has become something of a *cause célèbre* within the AE community. Whether it's not feeling the love on AE Appreciation Day or wondering how to keep members in their "lane," this issue has gotten our attention. To the extent that AEs can control how we deal with difficult situations, I believe we should, and becoming more emotionally intelligent may help.

Being in control of your emotions and in tune to others' is particularly applicable to working through conflict. This component enables you to combine awareness of self and others, along with management of emotions, to carefully craft and mold interactions. For example, I avoid expressing a negative assessment of any idea. Instead, I focus attention on an alternative that achieves the same result.

There are a lot of emotions in REALTOR® association management, so it's a good idea to know the volunteer leaders whose personalities determine how successful the year will be. I spend a lot of time observing others and learn as much as I can. That allows me to adapt to the proclivities of the new leaders.

Emotional intelligence is key to workplace success. With it, we can build strong relationships, maintain positive team dynamics, manage reactions appropriately, and be aware of when these are not taking place. Increased emotional intelligence can improve our ability to serve as examples for others and give us tools to deal with difficult people and situations.

for emotions to control us. Our brain cannot stop them from forming. Emotional intelligence lies at the intersection of our rational and emotional selves. The communication between the emotional part of our brain and the rational part of our brain will determine our level of emotional intelligence. Applying the techniques in the book helped me develop the ability to choose the right action and response despite my emotions.

The book contains specific strategies you can use immediately, including breathing right, taking time to process information, staying positive, and being conscious of your body language. My goal was to get to the place where members did not know what I was thinking or what my opinion was about the issue being discussed. It's their association. I see my job as a facilitator of member decision-making without influencing. Acquiring emotional intelligence was truly a life-changing journey.

Bradberry and Greaves detail the four realms of emotional intelligence as:

- **Self-awareness:** being aware of your own emotions and managing your own behavior
- **Social awareness:** tuning into other people's feelings, moods, and behavior
- **Self-management:** being able to adjust



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The video studio at Washington REALTORS® features a green cyclorama soundproof wall and a sound booth for recording voiceovers. Here, Washington REALTORS® 2019 President Dale Chumbley prepares for a taping.



IT'S BETTER WITH VIDEO

Top 5 Ways to Use Video at Your Association.

Does a day go by when you don't view video content? Probably not. Whether it's a TED Talk for motivation, a quick YouTube tutorial, or a news clip on Twitter, we're surrounded by video in the office and at home. This is why more REALTOR® associations are incorporating video content into every facet of association communications, training, and outreach.

But is there real return on investment for video programs?

Associations with some of the largest video production endeavors say it's money well spent.

"We made a video series of testimonials about our leadership program to attract applications, and we got the most applications ever," says Suzanne Westrum, vice president of communications and marketing at the San Antonio Board of REALTORS®, which has a full-time video producer and an in-house studio.

Westrum also uses video to explain

complex advocacy issues that she thinks members might not otherwise take the time to read about. "We just had a call to action about a local issue we're opposing, and it was hard to explain so we did a video featuring our members—and other footage—to break down the complex issue and get members on board." The results so far show a large number of views and shares among members.

At the Spokane Association of REALTORS®, Public Affairs Director Tom McArthur says there's a jump in member

engagement whenever he uses videos to communicate. "We made a video to promote our member survey and got a 35% response rate when the survey vendor said we could reasonably expect only 6% to 10%."

Association results mirror the growth of video in general. The latest video marketing statistics from Social Media Today show that video is the most engaging content type on every social media platform, 72% of people prefer to learn about a product or service through a video, consumption of video content rises by 100% every year, and emails are opened 7% more with the word video in the subject line.

Done right, video content can drive greater response than other communication vehicles, but quality and relevance is the key in today's video-cluttered digital space.

Not every message makes a good video

"Video used to be difficult to do and do well. That's just not the case anymore," says Eric Berman, RCE, former communications

The Florida REALTORS® video studio opened in 2009 and is used for a wide range of video project including promotional videos for upcoming events, which are often shot featuring the year's president reading from a teleprompter. Here, staff attorney Brittany Nesmith shares legal tips with members.



director for the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®. “My kids can edit videos on their phones. There’s a lower bar to entry for everybody.” But, he cautions, don’t make a video just for the sake of it. “You have to have a good reason to do it,” he says. “And if you’re going to do it, you have to think about it before you hit ‘record.’”

The Massachusetts Associations’ most-viewed videos are its monthly housing data animations, RPAC testimonials, and commemorative REALTOR® of the Year videos, but Berman says MAR has turned away from video in some instances in favor of audio podcasts because people will listen to longform media more readily than they will watch it.

The Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS® also has scaled back video production recently.

“In our first year of having an in-house studio and a full-time videographer on staff, we produced over 100 pieces of video content,” says Kevin Juliano, the association’s digital director. “We learned a lot and now have a more thought-out process for video production and a dedication to quality content over quantity. We struggle with members saying, ‘Oh, just create a one-minute video on that.’ What we need to ask ourselves is whether it’s something that truly needs a video.”

Posting fewer but better-quality videos has boosted overall member engagement with video content, says Ann Gutkin, vice president of communications at the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®.

“When we first began doing video, the thought was, ‘Let’s use video for everything in the world and put everything out there.’ We were streaming a lot of programs, which involved a lot of staff time, and people weren’t sitting and



The New Jersey REALTORS® invites local associations to use its video studio once a quarter to film a video of their choice, which is usually a newscast-like video where they update members on what’s happening in their association.

watching the whole thing,” says Gutkin. Every association class and event did not make for compelling video, she realized, so she decided to take a more strategic approach and focus on the issues and programs that were the most significant.

“One thing we’re going to do this year is take longer videos and break them down into micro-learning opportunities to get out more bite-size information that members can consume when they have a few minutes,” says Gutkin. Another new video initiative is filming a committee chair or co-chair directly after a meeting when there’s something important to share with members. These quick recap videos get members talking about the latest things that volunteers are working on or the latest real estate–related legal cases. “We often video our board president or sometimes our CEO if there’s a really compelling issue that we want people to pay attention to.”

Gutkin’s video library, produced by the association’s in-house team, spans promotions, education, legislative issues, RPAC fundraising, orientation, leadership, legal, professional standards, and even training videos for the grievance committee. “Every area here has video potential,” she says, but not everything makes a good video.

— By Carolyn Schwaar

WHAT VIDEOS SHOULD ASSOCIATIONS MAKE?

Although every association is different, association communications directors say there are five core types of videos that resonate well with REALTORS®.

1. The 15- to 30-second social media promo

You have just a few seconds to grab your members’ attention and deliver an enticing message that encourages them to act. In fact, according to research by Visible Measures, 20% of your viewers will click away from a video in 10 seconds or less. This means you should skip the intro music and opening scene, and make those first 10 seconds matter by asking viewers to take action, whether it’s clicking to register for an event,



GREAT VIDEO: Central Alberta REALTORS® Association’s “Municipal Zoning,” youtu.be/WvpXC2lwtlc.

volunteer for a committee, or sign up for a class. Try sparking your audience’s curiosity by asking questions (“Have you signed up for the best real estate event of the year yet?”) and using teasers (“You’ll never guess what happened in the metro area real estate market in March”) to hook their attention right away.

Videos that are 15 seconds or shorter are shared 37% more often than those that last between 30 seconds and 1 minute.

2. Housing data or local market updates

Issued on a regular schedule to boost anticipation, housing data videos are a member and media favorite. Because data—particularly read-



ing data—can be boring, many REALTOR® associations have turned to easy-to-use animation software (PowToons, Blender, OpenToonz, Stykz) to liven up and better illustrate the numbers.

3. Legal, political, & policy issue updates

Complex topics are most relatable and more quickly grasped when explained by someone in a video. Although audiences tune out after two minutes on average, that's more than enough time to relay the essentials of legal or legislative issues and point members to either a longer video or article on your website.

Washington REALTORS® produces 60 to 80 videos per year, and about 90% of the video content features the association's legal hotline lawyer, says Steve Klaniecki, the association's director of communications and marketing. "They are not art, usually a talking head with titles, [but] our members love them, and member offices and local associations are using them in group meetings."

When a new and complicated state tax



GREAT VIDEO: Iowa Association of REALTORS® "Legal Breakdown: Clear Cooperation—MLS Policy 8.0," youtu.be/ktwiBhWo3Vk.

rule hit Pennsylvania, REALTORS® inundated their state association with questions. "We had our CEO [Mike McGee] sit down with the state secretary for a video interview," says Juliano. "Even though it was a very dry interview—that we tried to help with some B-roll and snazzy sound effects—it turned out to be one of the most trafficked videos for us because it answered members' questions."



GREAT VIDEO: Greater Metropolitan Association of REALTORS® "Why REALTORS® Should Invest in RPAC," youtu.be/jXvC5nt13Yk.

4. Member testimonials

Messages coming from fellow members are more authentic and have a greater effect than those that come from staff, says Gutkin. "The members in the videos share them on their social accounts widely so they get a lot of extra traction that way."



GREAT VIDEO: Orange County Association of REALTORS® "Here's a glimpse into the largest local REALTOR® association in California, Orange County REALTORS®," facebook.com/theocrealtors/videos/575018743331342.

This is the power of REALTOR® testimonials to convince members to contribute to RPAC, attend an event, volunteer their time, or participate in advocacy. During your events, record member testimonials on a range of topics to use in future promotions.



GREAT VIDEO: Oregon Association of REALTORS® "OAR Education - Learn More, Earn More!," youtu.be/4f0K01Ut4bl.

5. Business-building tips

Nothing builds engagement—and a sense of getting value for dues dollars spent—than business tips and advice members can use right away to boost their bottom line. "When we brainstorm about how we can better develop content, we try to hit those high-level topics members want, such as how does this keep me out of jail, how does this help my clients sell their house faster or buy a house quick, and how does this ultimately help my business's bottom line," says Juliano. "These are the things that get the biggest interaction."



GREAT VIDEO: Contra Costa Association of REALTORS® "The Ethics Zone," youtu.be/vHjbbQu9dUA.

A regular series of video tips on listing, technology, negotiating, staging, or even small-business accounting presented in 5- to 10-minute videos from fellow members or staff can create a loyal following.

Share NAR videos

If you don't have a library of your own videos to share with members yet, you can share videos from the National Association of REALTORS® YouTube channel, including news, legal and market updates, business tips from REALTOR® Magazine, advocacy, events, and more.



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Dive into Making Videos

A how-to primer for associations on a budget.

Video is the most effective way to get your message to members. Not only is the average smartphone user more likely to watch a video than read a post, science has found that people retain more information from video content.

But before you start sending and posting videos, there are a few things to consider to ensure that your video communications are successful—and not a waste of your time and resources.

Where to start

“My local associations often ask how to get into video production when they cannot afford to hire a contractor and want to do it in-house,” says Steve Klaniecki, director of marketing and communications at Washington REALTORS®. Local AEs tell him their biggest concerns are:

- **Cost of equipment and software to get started**
- **Not knowing how to edit and post video**
- **Not having the time to film, edit, and learn new software**
- **Not having the space for a studio**

I've found that cost is rarely an obstacle when you're just getting started. You can pay thousands for sophisticated equipment, but all you really need is your smartphone and basic video tips that you can find on YouTube.

But first, I want to emphasize that posting bad video content (and I'll describe that in a second) is worse than not doing video at

all, so make sure that your videos are well planned and not spur of the moment.

Separating the good from the bad

“The number one thing not to do in video is have bad audio,” says Eric Berman, former communications director at the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®. “People can accept jumpy footage and even the picture not being that great, but if the audio isn't good, they're going to shut it off right away.”

One thing I've run into when making videos for my association is an environment that's not conducive to quality audio. Many of us have an office with poor acoustics or random noise that would be picked up on a regular camera.

A quick fix to most audio problems is a simple and inexpensive microphone that can cost less than \$20 and offer high-quality sound. I use a lavalier mic when I make videos and plug it directly into my smartphone. (The Rode smartLav+ is a lavalier, or tie-clip mic, specifically built for smartphones.)

Your smartphone camera is good enough

I still do most of my videos with my smartphone even though we've invested in a larger camera. With the proper setup, my phone can produce videos that are at the same quality as those with the larger camera.

If you are ready to move up to a camera with better resolution, you can find great options for less than \$500, including the Canon PowerShot and

A ring light casts an even light onto subjects, reducing shadows. With stand, ring lights can cost as little as \$30.



I use my phone for most of my association videos because it offers comparable quality to a larger camera and is easier to use.

Canon EOS Rebel. Canon even has a YouTube channel at CanonUSA featuring videos on how to make videos with its cameras.

Another option is to use your laptop's built-in webcam and recording features. If your laptop doesn't have a camera, or you want one with more features such as auto-focus, light correction, or full HD video, buy a stand-alone webcam for your PC for as little as \$35. Plug your webcam and your mic into your laptop, open a free video app, such as Windows Camera (PC) or QuickTime Player (Mac), and you're ready to go.

Filming tips for beginners

If you're like me, you've balanced your phone on a stack of books to make a video. It works but doesn't offer a lot of versatility compared with a physical stand or tripod, which can cost as little as \$10.

After sound, what most first-time videographers get wrong is lighting. Natural light is your best bet, but even when you have a window nearby, you can still have strong shadows or strange glares that pop up on video. I use a mount I bought on Amazon for about \$35 that has a light built into it. Other options such as ring lights and softbox lighting kits make your subjects look their best in video and can cost less than \$50.

If you're handy, there are a lot of DIY solutions to lighting that you can make with items around the house or from your local hardware store. There are great video tutorials on YouTube to help you out, including “Quick Tips: DIY Lighting Kit!”

I've never used a formal backdrop or green screen in my videos because I think



“Our annual member communication survey identified our video program as one of the top benefits of membership.”

— Steve Klaniecki, director of marketing and communications, Washington REALTORS®

an informal background can make the video feel more personal for the viewer. That’s why most of the videos I’ve made were done in my office. Plus, since my members know my staff and me and have likely come to our small offices, it adds a level of familiarity. If your office isn’t suitable, there are easy backdrop options you can make and some kits that include a green screen plus lights on Amazon for less than \$100.

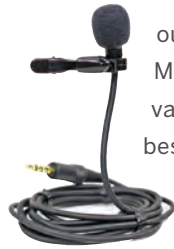
After sound, lights, and a camera, the piece of equipment that will save you tons of time and effort and take your videos to the next level is a teleprompter. In its most basic form, it’s a simple and free or inexpensive laptop or tablet app (such as Teleprompter Pro, QuotTeleprompter, and VoicePrompt) that slowly scrolls the text you need to read across your screen. Of course, you should practice the text a few times to sound more natural when you’re reading, but a teleprompter helps you stay on track, keeps you from looking down at notes, and saves you from multiple retakes for forgetting what to say.

Video editing is the most time-consuming step

Now that you’ve filmed, you’re only halfway there. Gone are the days when you could sit in front of a camera and just talk for two to five minutes, then upload that video to YouTube and be done.

As we’re inundated with video, studies have shown that

Movavi software (right) is easy to use for editing videos and also enables you to edit photos and do screen recording.



our attention spans have shortened. Members are used to videos that offer variety of shot styles and things to look at besides just a talking head.

You need to learn editing software—there’s no way around it. But don’t worry; the basic programs today are easy to use, and many of them are free.

I use Movavi, which costs me only \$80. It’s easy to use and gives me the option to add text, such as captions showing who’s speaking, subtitles, transitions between shots, still photos, and graphics. There are great free video editing options you can even use on your smartphone, including iMovie that comes free on iPhones, or Windows Movie Maker, which is included with most editions of Windows.

To edit charts and infographics into your videos, just create them using any type of graphic tool, such as Photoshop or Canva, and drag and drop them into your video editing software. I use Canva for flyers, but it also works great to create stills for your video. The subscription version costs \$12.95 a month and it is a very versatile program.

One last step in video production that is becoming increasingly popular is subtitles. Studies show that 85% of Facebook videos are watched without sound, so unless you have subtitles, you won’t reach a huge chunk of your audience. Each video editing program handles inserting subtitles differently, and it does take effort to write down everything said on the video, but it’s worth the time.

Once your video is done, you need to upload it online. YouTube is the clear choice for housing your videos because it’s free and makes sharing easy



I had an opportunity to sit down with John Raney, our Texas state representative, to film an 86th Legislative Session wrap-up video. Our regular videos include a monthly video newsletter, event promotions, and event recaps.

though social media, email, and on your website. Experts say, however, that when you upload a video directly to Facebook, the user experience is much better because the video is displayed as a full image across the timeline, it plays automatically in the news feed, and the organic reach is much greater. So consider uploading your videos separately to Facebook and Twitter.

Just do it

When it comes to association videos, don’t be afraid to start off small and build as you go.

“We started on a shoestring about 10 years ago,” says Klaniecki. “We purchased used equipment on eBay and used shop lights from Home Depot. Each year we added one or two new items to the studio and learned a couple of new tricks with the software.” Today, Washington REALTORS® has a dedicated studio, a soundproof audio booth and the equipment necessary for in-studio and on-location shoots. “Our annual member communication survey identified our video program as one of the top benefits of membership.”

Still leery about video? Consider reaching out to your local university or high school to see if any students want a project. Many will jump at the chance to gain experience for their resume, and they can acquaint you with the nuts and bolts of the process.



Amy Dubose, RCE, is the AE at Bryan-College Station Regional Association of REALTORS®, Texas. Contact her at 979-846-3751 or ae@bcsrealtor.com.



Members Want Your Texts

Texting is an effective way to get your message out to members as long as you follow a few basic principles.

It's been several years since REALTOR® associations started experimenting with text message programs, and, by most accounts, it has been working well. Important safety and MLS outage alerts reach members faster than email and quick event reminders keep attendance up. Dues payment text notices linking to online payment methods have reduced late payments, and texts to associations from members are surpassing phone calls in some cases. So, what's holding you back — cost, time, or where to start?

Starting (or growing) a program

Selecting a texting platform is the most time-consuming part of establishing a texting program, AEs say. REALTOR® associations use TextBox, Text Request, Skipio, Textedly, and many others, all varying widely in price and features.

To know which service is right for you, first detail a plan for what you intend to text to members, how often you want to text, and which members should receive your texts.

What to text

"We launched our member texting program with a provider called Textedly," says Candy Joyce, RCE, CAE, EVP at the Middle Tennessee Association of REALTORS®. "It has definitely been worth the cost and effort

because it has increased participation and early preparation for programs and meetings. It helps us all to be more professional and safe, and it saves money." The safety aspect of texting programs comes into play when they're used to send alerts and reminders to members. "I used it once as a safety notice when we had an incident with a member and a showing."

Joyce estimates that she sends about 14 texts a month to her board of directors, five texts a month to each of her 15 committees, and one full-membership text, which is mostly a reminder to attend events, such as RSVPs to the annual leadership installation and luncheons, dues deadlines, and lockbox renewal deadlines. "The morning of the meeting they should be attending, we send the reminder text to get back in their schedule and top of mind," she says. As a result, committee participation has increased. "We try to be selective with the full-membership texts to avoid members blocking us or ignoring texts."

Maria Brogan, RCE, CEO of the Northeast Association of REALTORS®, Mass., is also conscious not to excessively text members and "abuse their opt-in," she says. "We send deadline reminders for things like dues, COE training, awards, and event reminders only to those registered. We also send safety alerts, calls for action, and office or class

closures due to weather."

Lauri Rottmayer, AE at the North Central Board of REALTORS®, Ark., says her members love the association's texting program. "I used a text message to announce a CE class that was free for the first hundred members [who responded], and it was like we were giving away free cars," she says. "The class filled in under an hour."

Members like text communication from the Knoxville Area Association of REALTORS®, Caitland Orlicz found through her recent member survey. As communications director of the 4,500-member association, Orlicz uses the service Mozeo to communicate MLS and phone outages and unexpected office closings, and she is considering texting for election notices and dues deadlines.

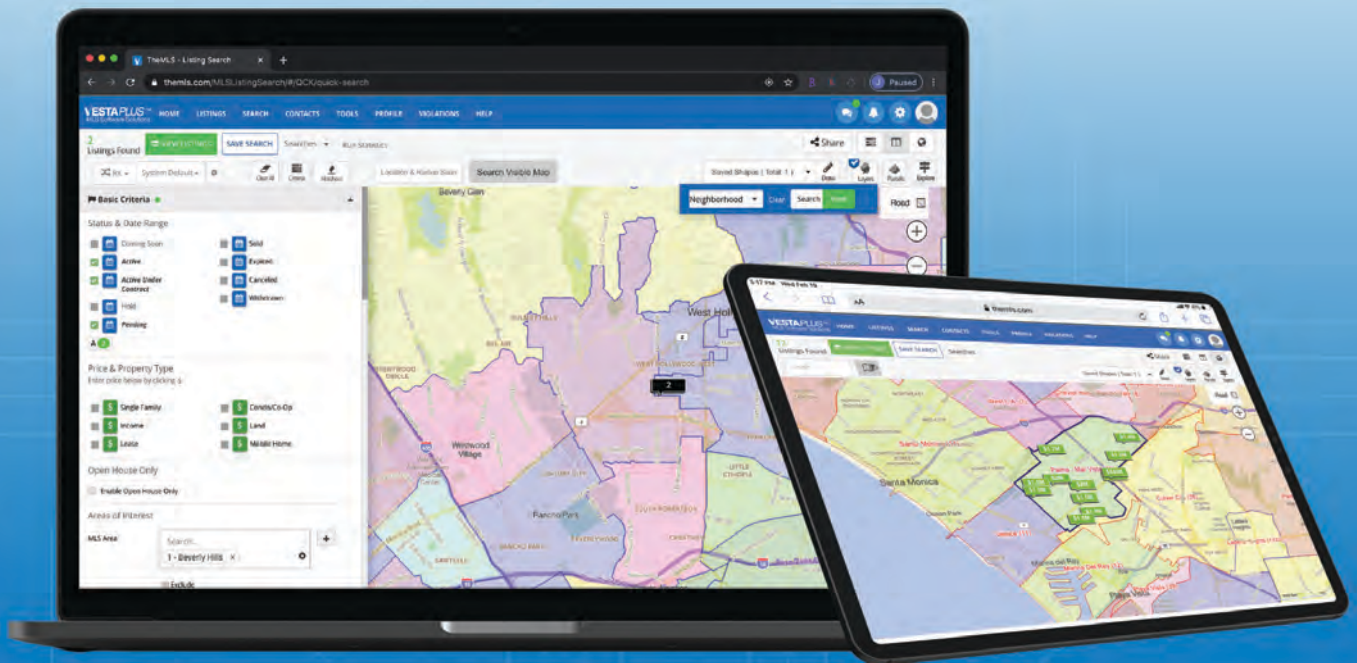
The largest texting program among REALTOR® associations is the National Association's REALTOR Party® Mobile Alerts with more than 200,000 subscribers nationwide. When a national or state legislative call for action is launched, subscribers get a short text message, containing information to take action.

On the local level, associations use their own texting platforms for advocacy. "We text our members to remind them to register to vote and to encourage their clients and customers to vote," says Lisa Yelichek, RCE,

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AE at the Stark County Association of REALTORS®, Ohio. “We have lists of our members by their school districts and encourage them on levies in their specific areas that the association supports.”

Whom to text

The ability to segment groups within your membership, such as committee members, those registered for an event, or those who have not yet paid dues, is an essential feature of a texting program. Some services offer only the ability to message an entire list, not groups within a list.

Jim Schiefelbein, marketing and communications director at the North Shore-Barrington Association of REALTORS®, Ill., uses the service Text Request, which enables him to target not only specific populations within his membership list but also members in certain geographic areas.

“Our texting solution has become an absolutely essential tool for member communications in this new era of physical distancing,” says Schiefelbein. “Texting is one of the things that has helped keep NSBAR up, running, and available as always, to service our members.”

Another feature of texting programs that associations value is the ability to integrate with association management software so membership lists don’t have to be updated manually in the texting software. Some texting services, such as TextBetter, integrate with Outlook. Navica Association Management System has a built-in texting feature.

One important point to keep in mind is that texting without members’ specific consent beforehand is not only rude but illegal. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act requires your association to secure prior

“We send [text] deadline reminders for things like dues, COE training, awards, and event reminders only to those registered. We also send safety alerts, calls for action, and office or class closures due to weather.”

— Maria Brogan, RCE, CEO of the Northeast Association of REALTORS®, Mass.

express consent before sending informational text messages to members, and prior express written consent before sending marketing text messages to members. Both forms of consent can easily be incorporated into your membership applications.

Remember, your text message platform must also allow your members to opt of receiving future text messages.

“We’ve changed our membership application language to include consent for text messaging,” says Orlicz. “We did initially try to get them to opt in, but it was an incredibly low percentage.”

Brogan also includes consent language on her association’s membership application and adds it to event registrations. She promotes the text option in email newsletters, via social media, and at live events where members can text an opt-in code to the association’s number. “We currently have about 50% of our membership opted in, which is about 900 members,” she says.

asking a question. “It was a rocking hit from day one,” says Schiefelbein. “More members are finding it organically and loving it. It will ultimately pass phone calls for answering their questions.”

Schiefelbein’s solution also comes with a text feature on the association website where members can initiate a text conversation with staff by entering their name, phone number, member ID number, and questions. Staff can then text back the answer.

Chat apps for instant response

Similar to texting, chat apps on association websites enable members to ask quick questions without having to email or call. Christy Broccardo-Grove, digital media manager at Illinois REALTORS®, says the MyLiveChat app is especially helpful around renewal time to answer quick questions about CE credits. “We have also used it during times of change, such as when we needed to have our members create a new login for our website. It greatly reduced the extra phone calls that we had been experiencing during this period.”

The Scottsdale Area Association of REALTORS® in Arizona receives only three or four chats a week though its Tidio chat app, with more during dues season; the app has not cut down on the number of phone calls. “In all, though, we do like the way the chat works, and so do the members,” says Sylvia Rodriguez, the association’s membership coordinator. “They have the ability to rate the chat line service, and the rate is pretty high.”

Anything that boosts members’ interaction with the association and makes it easier for them to receive information and communicate with their association is worth the effort, association executives agree.

— by Carolyn Schwaar

Some of the texting platforms used by REALTOR® associations



Managing inbound texts from members

The Text Request app serves as a member helpline at the North Shore-Barrington Association of REALTORS®. The number is the same as the association’s main telephone number. The advantage to this setup is that no opt-in is required because the member initiates the contact. When a text message is received, the phone number can be matched to the member in the association’s database, allowing a staffer to see more background information about the person

the REAL ESTATE FOR REHABILITATION story.

In 2012... Joseph and JoAnn Callaway wrote a book. Being Real Estate agents in Scottsdale, AZ since 1996, they wanted to share their unique reason for their success. This book, *Clients First: The Two World Miracle*, became a New York Times Best Seller in 22 days, catapulting Those Callaways into the National Spotlight.

Attracted to the book's message of honesty, competence and care, The Salvation Army invited Joseph and JoAnn to join the Army's Phoenix Advisory Board.

As part of this process, the Callaways toured the Adult Rehabilitation Center and warehouse. Joseph and JoAnn learned that the Salvation Army accepts people suffering from addiction into a free six month program. They feed them, house them, clothe them and restore them to productive lives, and they do it for not one penny. They also learned that this life saving effort was entirely paid for through the sale of donated goods.

Joseph and JoAnn realized that everyone they knew was moving. The Home Ownership Industry was in a unique position to fill those trucks.

Joseph and JoAnn started Real Estate for Rehabilitation in Phoenix asking Title Companies to place small 2" tall model trucks along with Moving Cards in their closing rooms and on reception counters.

Starting with Old Republic Title the effort grew rapidly.

In two years, over 300 various Title Company offices were on board helping clients with their unwanted items.

The impact of this program on the Phoenix Adult Rehabilitation Center has been spectacular. A once struggling warehouse is now overflowing. The men's program has more than doubled and they have begun a women's unit. This remarkable life changing effort is a result of our Home Ownership Industry efforts. Today, this program is expanding nationally to more than 120 metropolitan markets with Adult Rehabilitation Centers.

Joseph and JoAnn are asking agents, brokers, lenders, title officers and affiliates to get involved in this fundraising effort.

"We can save lives," JoAnn says, "We can restore families and we can do it as a community."

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By SASid, Inc., Administrator for NAR's REALTORS® Insurance Marketplace

Plans for Your Members – Built Just for Them

When it comes to health coverage options, like most other Americans, members of the National Association of REALTORS® seek out both pricing and convenience. REALTORS® Insurance Marketplace is here to help: It's an online comparative shopping site designed to simplify the insurance buying process.

Plans available* within the Marketplace include health, dental, vision, supplemental coverage, and more. They are designed exclusively for NAR members, and include options that make sense for most budgets and lifestyles. Your members can browse and compare coverage options, obtain quotes and enroll easily.

They'll also find personal assistance: Licensed benefit specialists are available to provide complimentary consultative services, and can give advice on cost-saving strategies. This is all available exclusively through the REALTOR Benefits® Program and is administered by SASid, Inc., a trusted longterm NAR partner.

Custom Resources, Just for You

As state and local association executives, you are often the go-to resource for solving the myriad challenges your members face every day. One of the biggest hurdles for self-employed individuals is finding workable and affordable personal insurance. Navigating the insurance landscape can be tricky. Your members come to you for help. That's where we come in. We're experts, so you don't have to be, and we've built a variety of resources to assist you in sharing information about REALTORS® Insurance Marketplace with your members.



The Marketplace website contains a helpful page just for association executives and staff. It provides a variety of educational materials you can share with your members, including a products brochure, presentation materials, and a short overview video that introduces all the benefits available through the Marketplace.

You'll also find a convenient support request box you can use to ask us to send you materials for meetings, orientations, new member welcome kits, and more.

Finally, we can create for you a complimentary branded benefits page for your association's website that will enable your members to access coverage information on their own. We do the work, you get the link!

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www.realtorsinsurancemarketplace.com/ae

I LOVE the information (especially the tri-fold brochures) I get from REALTORS® Insurance Marketplace and consistently use it with our members. When a new member signs up, and during orientations, I always give the information out and go over it!

Elizabeth Hiett
AE, Newnan-Coweta Board of REALTORS®

“ Our goal is to bring members together with the tools they need to be successful. REALTORS® Insurance Marketplace supports our efforts with quick links, brochures, and fun giveaways. This makes learning about member health and wellness benefits easy for our members, and that’s a win for all of us. ”

Carol Ward
AE, Valley Association of REALTORS®

Plans Available Through REALTORS® Insurance Marketplace

Within the Marketplace, your members and their families will find both a *Major Medical Health Insurance Exchange* providing access to qualified (ACA) plans and a *Members Medicare Exchange* offering a variety of supplemental Medicare insurance options.

They will also find *Flexible Term* major medical plans (providing coverage for 30-364 days), and REALTORS® *Dental Insurance* and REALTORS® *Vision Insurance* group plans, with affordable coverage options for all budgets.



There are also supplemental options that can expand major medical coverage and potentially reduce total out-of-pocket expenses:

- *Members TeleHealth* provides 24/7/365 access to U.S. board-certified physicians for non-emergency medical issues by telephone, smartphone, tablet app, web chat, or email. See a doctor without leaving home.
- *Members Accident Protection* helps pay for out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred through an accident.
- *REALTORS® Core Health Insurance* is an innovative alternative health coverage option providing cost-effective and workable alternative coverage compared to pricier ACA options. It’s a guaranteed acceptance plan that provides coverage for everyday healthcare needs.
- *Pet Health Insurance* provides coverage for cats and dogs. It helps lessen financial worry by providing reimbursement for covered pet healthcare costs.
- Finally, within the Marketplace site members will also find links to auto, home and renters insurance, errors and omissions (E&O) coverage, and cyber liability insurance, with more to come.



Update: A Brief Word on Association Health Plans

In 2018, the Department of Labor issued a new rule opening the door for small employers and self-employed individuals to participate in association health plans, but a federal district court struck down parts of the rule in 2019. NAR supports the final rule and the administration’s appeal of the decision. For the latest on the legal battle, visit [NAR.realtor/health-care-reform](https://www.nar.realtor/health-care-reform).

*Product availability and eligibility requirements vary by product; see website for details, terms, and conditions.



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MLS 8.0 Implemented. Now What?

Resources for answering members' Clear Cooperation policy questions.

By now, all MLSs should have implemented the mandated MLS Statement 8.0, NAR Clear Cooperation policy, which promotes greater access to available for-sale properties to brokers and consumers. This doesn't mean MLSs and AEs are not still facing challenges, including educating their members and getting those agents and brokers to educate their customers.

The topic of Clear Cooperation has been a hot one in 2020—so much so that the Facebook group for MLS directors and staff created its own hashtag, #theocho (“ocho” is Spanish for 8).

Here are the top questions and answers gleaned from the MLS Facebook page and vetted by the National Association of REALTORS® MLS guru Rene Galicia. (See sidebar for more resources and guidance.)

Q ■ Multiunit new construction developments are not subject to the Clear Cooperation Policy, but when a single-family home is under construction and being advertised to the public, at what point does it fall under Clear Cooperation?

Each MLS may handle this differently. Chris Carrillo, CEO of MetroMLS in Milwaukee, says he continues to work with local builders on implementing Clear Cooperation. “New builds are not required for submission into MLS until there’s a frame and roof,” he says.

Angie Baker, technology training and outreach specialist at the MIBOR REALTOR® Association, Ind., says, “We require input if there is a listing contract, period. We have a series of new construction fields that can be applied.”

Listing brokers are encouraged to check

with local and state licensing authorities as there may be additional requirements before a new-construction property can be listed and sold.

Q ■ If a member has a listing on a waiver and the seller posts on a social media page that they're selling their house, does the listing then have to be entered into the MLS within one business day?

Yes. Prior to entering into a listing agreement, listing brokers must explain to their clients their obligations under the MLS rules, including the requirement to share the listing with other MLS participants if it is publicly marketed by anyone. Brokers should also fully explain an Office Exclusive strategy to their sellers when privacy concerns are involved. Once public marketing occurs, those privacy concerns no longer exist and the listing will be required to be shared cooperatively with other participants in the MLS.

Q ■ My MLS is in a nondisclosure state where the sale price does not have to be reported. What implications does that have regarding 8.0?

State nondisclosure simply means there is no state law requiring sales prices be entered into the public record. It doesn't apply to marketing practices or properties being entered into the MLS.

In most MLSs, participants are required to submit status changes, including the details of a sale and the sales price. However, this does not prevent the MLS from exploring and establishing local options and

specific criteria to withhold sales data when requested by the seller (or buyer). MLSs are encouraged to work with local brokers to determine their needs.

Q ■ How does Clear Cooperation apply to REOs, HUD, etc.? HUD often requires pre-listing photos that include the agent's sign on the property and many times listing agents don't get the green light until after one business day. Banks often ask agents to post their contact information or sign on the property prior to giving them the green light to list the property. Both of these situations would cause the agent to put the property on the MLS after one business day.

Third-party requirements do not modify the Clear Cooperation rules. If you come across any bank, REO, or HUD policies that may be contrary to NAR or MLS policy, report them to your MLS, which may be able to open a dialogue with banks. Similarly, NAR's advocacy team can voice concerns directly to federal entities, such as HUD.

Q ■ If a listing is put in a “coming soon” status in the MLS, does Clear Cooperation require that listing to be included in an MLS's IDX displays or syndication to third-party sites?

No. While listings that are marketed on the Internet must be submitted to the MLS and distributed to other MLS participants for cooperation, submitting a listing for cooperation within the MLS, either in coming soon or any other status, does not necessarily require that listing to be included in an MLS's IDX display or feed to third-party

sites, if the seller has opted out of all internet display. Per MLS rules, participants can work with their listing clients to determine an appropriate marketing plan, taking into account the client's needs and full disclosure of the benefits to market exposure.

Q. It is common for agents from the same office to view a home before it goes into the MLS if there is any question in the listing agent's mind about the price. If the agent conducts this showing prior to having the signed listing agreement, there is no violation of Clear Cooperation, correct?

Correct. If there's no signed listing agreement, there's no violation. Also, agents are still able to do office exclusives and caravan listings interoffice, but the minute there is a listing agreement and a sign goes in the yard or the agent publicly markets the property in any other way, such as including brokers or agents from a different company in the caravan, it must be shared in the MLS.

Q. What happens if a broker doesn't have a signed listing agreement but has been told by an owner to bring buyers. That broker takes to social media and says: "I know of a property in XXX Township where the owners are looking to sell. It's a ranch, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, on 5 acres, at \$179,900. If anyone wants to see it, let me know."

The Clear Cooperation policy applies to those properties subject to a listing agreement as specified under NAR's Listing Procedures Section 1. It is important for brokers and agents to have an executed listing agreement to ensure they can legally represent the seller and to comply with state and local laws. Advertising a property without a signed listing agreement may present potential violations of The Code of Ethics and state law.

Clear Cooperation Resources & Guidance

Window to the Law: Understanding the MLS Clear Cooperation Policy ▶

youtube.com/watch?v=gUgOFXIAC0c

NAR: Updated FAQs about the Proposal + Webinar

nar.realtor/about-nar/policies/mls-clear-cooperation-policy

NAR: Backstory Behind the Clear Cooperation Policy Proposal + Video

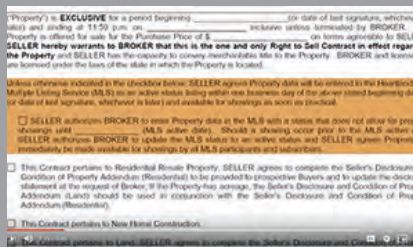
nar.realtor/backstory-behind-the-clear-cooperation-policy-proposal

REALTOR® Magazine: Restoring the Norm of MLS Cooperation

Looking for more ways to explain Clear Cooperation to members? Model your outreach after this REALTOR® Magazine article. Visit magazine.realtor and search for "The Norm of MLS Cooperation."

Kansas City Regional Association of REALTORS® Clear Cooperation Forms ▼

This association created a video explaining the changes to its standard forms. youtu.be/qR-savTLR6A



Iowa Association of REALTORS®: Legal Breakdown: Clear Cooperation - MLS Policy 8.0

youtu.be/ktwiBhWo3Vk



New Mexico Association of REALTORS® Legal Update: Clear Cooperation, MLS Statement 8.0 ▼

youtu.be/3pUY3Lit5AY



Bright MLS: Off-MLS Policy Resource Guide

brightmls.com/services/sites/default/files/pdfs/Off-MLS-OnlineResourceGuide020320.pdf

NorthstarMLS: Clear Cooperation Policy ▼

northstarmls.com/clearcooperation



Central Panhandle Association of REALTORS®: Member Resource Page

centralpanhandlemls.com/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=clear&link=clear

Your Admin Questions Answered

Update your policy documents to address these often-overlooked topics.

Q. Do all members of the association have the right to vote?

Short answer: If you're a REALTOR® member, yes. If you're a REALTOR®-Associate or Institute Affiliate member, it depends.

All REALTOR® members of an association, whether their membership is primary or secondary, have the right to vote on association matters as outlined in your individual association's governing documents. NAR's Board of Choice policy does not allow for associations to prohibit secondary members from voting.

REALTOR®-Associates, student members, Institute Affiliates, and honorary members may have voting rights, but that decision is up to your association's board of directors. The rights and privileges of affiliate memberships may be explained in your association's policy manual, but, if not, consider taking the steps to revise your manual in order to clarify.

Q. Who qualifies to be an Institute Affiliate member and how much are the dues?

Institute Affiliate membership is available to designees of the following institutes, societies, and councils:

- CCIM Institute (CCIM)
- Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM)
- Counselors of Real Estate (CRE)
- REALTORS® Land Institute (RLI)
- Society of Industrial and Office REALTORS®

Of course, members of these organizations can also become REALTOR® members, but, typically, professionals in these specialties find that the costs of obtaining REALTOR® membership outweigh the benefits. Institute Affiliate membership was developed in the

early 1970s as a limited, low-cost alternative. Each of these organizations is responsible for collecting and remitting the necessary dues for local association Institute Affiliate membership (currently \$105 and split equally between the national, state, and local levels of the REALTOR® organization). For example, if members of the REALTORS® Land Institute want to join your association as Institute Affiliate members, refer them back to the membership department of the REALTORS® Land Institute.

The rights and privileges of Institute Affiliate members are up to each local association, with the exceptions that Institute Affiliates cannot use the term REALTOR®, cannot serve as president of their local REALTOR® association, and cannot participate in the local MLS.

Q. What should I do if we regularly have trouble establishing a meeting quorum?

A quorum, as defined by *Robert's Rules of Order*, is "such a number as must be present in order that business can be legally transacted." Your association bylaws should clearly define what that number is because what constitutes a quorum can vary from association to association. Whether a certain percentage of board membership or a specific number of board members, the guiding principle of a quorum is that it should be a large enough number to be representative of the membership as a whole.

Begin meetings by counting to be sure

It can be difficult to consistently obtain a **quorum** at meetings. If this is the case, consider more flexible meeting formats such as electronic meetings, proxy voting, or ballot voting.



you have a quorum, and if you don't, remember that the president (or chair) does not necessarily have to adjourn the meeting immediately. Although no decisions will be binding and no actions can be taken without a quorum, you can often still make progress on business that can be voted on at a later meeting with a quorum present.

It can be difficult to consistently obtain a quorum at meetings. If this is the case, consider more flexible meeting formats such as electronic meetings, proxy voting, or ballot voting. However, be sure to check with your state association to see if these alternatives are admissible under the law.

Visit the Good Sense Governance Guide at nar.realtor for more information on a wide variety of association governance topics.



Daniel Doepke is the National Association of REALTORS®' director of member policy. Contact him at ddoepke@nar.realtor or 312-329-8410.



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More Ways to Comply

Explore activities that fit in the “other” category of requirements

As a newer AE, one of my biggest fears was how my very small association was going to meet the Core Standards requirements every year. That fear mostly subsided when I created a condensed checklist*, which goes with me everywhere. I refer to it regularly, ticking off the items as they're completed and noting when I have downloaded the documentation on my computer. I review the checklist with my board of directors to keep everyone apprised of where we stand for the current cycle and what activities are coming up next.

As I became more comfortable with the checklist, I realized that I could be missing some great Core Standard opportunities because they fell under the mysterious “other” category, and I never considered what we might be doing already that meets the criteria for “other.”

In the Core Standards online compliance tool, several requirements list an “other” category where you can submit that your not-listed activity meets one of the requirements. Besides showing up under the NAR and state Calls for Action, the “other” category is under REALTOR® Party “Vote-Act-Invest” sections, in the “Being the Voice for Real Estate” section, and the Community Involvement and Investment sections. To ensure that your activities under any of the “other” categories actually do meet the requirement, check with your state association first.

NAR provides a link in the compliance tool to the REALTOR® Party Tracker (realtorparty.realtor/tools-resources/realtor-party-tracker), where you can get some ideas of how to use NAR grants and resources for programs you may not have thought of.

As noted in the new compliance tool for

2020, there are a few options from years past that are no longer there. This creates a renewed need to share these “other” ideas so that we don't all continually recreate the wheel. So I reached out on the AEI Year Round Facebook page and took a poll to see how many of us are using “other” initiatives or activities to meet a Core Standard. I was inspired by the number of responses.

REALTOR® Party Vote

Because the REALTOR® Party Vote section has a limited number of options, I was excited to see many associations had found creative alternatives. These included having a member attend the “Choosing REALTOR® Champions” training offered by their state; creating and sending out a personal Get Out the Vote email; and adding voting information or a voter registration link on the association website. Additional options for the Vote section were publicizing voter registration in the member newsletter and the association Facebook page; having staff or a member serve as a voter registrar for the county; or setting up a table at a community event to hand out voter registration information.

REALTOR® Party Act

With the elimination of several options in the REALTOR® Party Act section, a great alternative for associations to consider is an activity that revolves around the 2020 census. NAR is providing reference material for associations to use at nar.realtor/census. Because laws vary from state to state, spe-

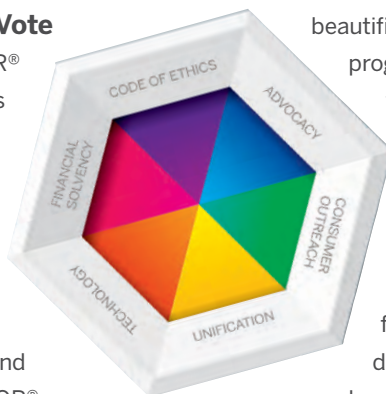
cifically when it comes to RPAC fundraising and advertising, be sure to get approval on the state level before forging ahead with a new idea or program.

Community Involvement and Investment

“Other” activities in this area included participating in a beach cleanup, which coincided with a state Give Back Day, a downtown beautification project, and a scholarship program. NAR has also added participation in the Food Recovery Network Program, which was launched at Leadership Summit in 2019, as an option. Many associations indicated that they already participate in food recovery on some level by donating leftovers from events to local hunger-fighting nonprofits and eliminating the waste of food.

Although there is not a compiled list of activities or initiatives that fall under the “other” categories by NAR or our state association, they both proved to be valuable resources for ideas. I've also seen great information shared via the AEI Year Round Facebook page, the state AE Facebook page, and the AE community on the Hub. So take a chance and look around you for great “other” ideas for fulfilling your Core Standards requirements.

*The condensed Core Standards checklist is available on the REALTOR® Association Resource Exchange (RARE), search “2020 Core Standards Template.”



Carla Rose is the CEO of the Salisbury/Rowan REALTORS®, N.C. Contact her at main@salisburyrowanrealtors.com or 704-636-1811.



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Mingling CE and RPAC

How to ensure that your fundraising and continuing education events don't run afoul of the law.

New RPAC fundraising ideas are great, and association staff consistently find creative ways to increase REALTOR® support for RPAC. One relatively recent idea combines RPAC fundraising with continuing education courses. If done right, such a fundraising strategy attracts members with the offer of required credits while effectively raising RPAC awareness and investments. There are, however, hurdles to hosting this type of event. As with any RPAC fundraising activity, associations must be sure to comply with applicable campaign finance laws. Here's how.

Associations promoting RPAC in conjunction with a CE course may do so only by treating it as they would otherwise treat a separate RPAC fundraising event. In other words, all relevant campaign finance laws applicable to an RPAC fundraising event become applicable to the dual RPAC/CE event. And, because most RPAC fundraising events raise both state and federally regulated RPAC investments, such events are regulated by state and federal law. Since it is impossible to address every state law here, we'll focus on relevant federal campaign finance law, but remember to always check state campaign finance laws for additional requirements.

Promoting the event

RPAC fundraising events can be advertised to and attended by only the solicitable class. As a reminder, the solicitable class is limited to REALTOR® members, association executive and administrative staff, and their respective immediate family members. Because the RPAC/CE event is treated as an RPAC event, it is bound by the solicitable

class restriction. This means that advertising and communications promoting the RPAC/CE event can be distributed or made available only to REALTOR® members or association staff. This limits your ability to promote the event using social media because you can post only to private, members-only Facebook groups. Posting on Twitter, Instagram, or any other platforms that do not have a private group feature would violate federal campaign finance law. Your RPAC or education committee chairs can't post it publicly from their accounts, either.

Funding the event

Associations facilitating an RPAC/CE event may use their general treasury account only to pay for 100% of related food, beverage, and venue expenses. Payments for the CE presenter, CE course materials provided to participants, and RPAC auction items must follow the one-third rule.

The one-third rule limits the amount of money associations may use from their general treasury account for entertainment or enticement costs associated with an RPAC event. Your presenter, materials, and auction items are considered "enticement costs."

Simply put, an association may not spend more than one-third of the total amount raised at an RPAC event on enticement costs. For example, if you pay a CE instructor \$1,000 to teach the relevant course, \$200 for CE course materials, and \$300 for RPAC auction items, the RPAC/CE event must raise at least \$4,500 before you can pay for those things 100% from your general treasury account. If the event raises less than \$4,500, then RPAC must reimburse the association for the difference. In the example



above, if the event raises \$3,000, RPAC must pay the association's general treasury account \$500. ($1/3 \times \$3,000 = \$1,000$. $\$1,500 - \$1,000 = \$500$)

Event agenda

Your RPAC/CE event doesn't have to segregate the education from the fundraising. You can solicit RPAC contributions at or during the CE course, or the RPAC fundraising portion may be held ancillary to the CE course, either before or after.

The most important rule to remember here is that an association cannot require CE course participants to make an RPAC contribution in order to participate. You can solicit RPAC contributions at the time of CE course registration, but you must include the required notice that RPAC contributions are voluntary, and you must be sure to provide all the legally required solicitation disclaimers. If you charge a fee to attend the CE course, you also must make it clear that the CE course registration fee is separate from any voluntary RPAC contribution. If you offer a CE course at no fee but ask for voluntary RPAC contributions, RPAC contributions cannot be required for participation in the CE course.











Jonathan Waclawski is the senior political compliance counsel & director of legal affairs for the National Association of REALTORS®. Contact him at jwaclawski@nar.realtor or 202-383-1248.

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Foster Stronger Appraiser Membership

How to grow and benefit from this vibrant segment of your association.

Local associations, no matter the size, can increase membership, member value, professionalism, and competency by encouraging appraisers not only to join the association but also to serve in some capacity on the local level. And for this you have to offer them something in return.

My association's appraisal committee started in 2013 when we asked ourselves, "Do we want to be the association that is just the cost of doing business for appraisers, or do we want to be the association that is an integral part of the local appraiser business community?"

Appraisers are an important component of our real estate ecosystem, and we wanted not only to include them but to create an environment where they could be strong allies both legislatively and in member education.

Here are a few examples of how our small association made strides in the appraiser membership space.

Give them a space of their own

First, establish an appraisal committee. I know, the last thing any association executive wants is another committee, but this

one is worth it for a number of reasons. For example, if you have an MLS, this committee can provide important input and collaboration on a variety of issues. Create a liaison leadership position in which an appraiser member sits on your MLS committee and reports back to appraisers and vice versa. If you do not have an MLS, this is still a committee you want as part of your association to show your support of their issues.

Next, we created a local chapter of the Ohio Coalition of Appraisal Professionals to meet the needs of appraisers in our area and to be an easy funnel of members to our appraisal committee. In Ohio, as in many states, there is a state appraisal organization. Check if your state has a state appraisal organization here: naappraisers.org/stateorganizations.

Nondues revenue with appraisal education

Appraisal forums for the general membership have been a game changer at our association. Members love hearing appraisers' expertise. With the help of NAR's brochure, Residential Appraisal Process

- FAQs for Agents (available as a free download from the REALTOR® Store) and input from agents, brokers, and lenders, our forums bring together all the pieces of the real estate transaction puzzle for new and experienced members.

We also offer regular

education for appraisers through our committee, which develops the classes and, in most cases, secures the instructors. Once approved by the state regulatory body, the class is promoted to all appraiser members and appraiser MLS participants. We charge a minimal fee that is still a good source of nondues revenue. Some classes have been appropriate for real estate continuing education as well, opening up the classes to even more of the membership. If not CE-approved for real estate agents, it is still open to them to attend for information only. This has been well received by all members.

Scholarships for appraiser REALTORS®

If your state association has appraiser or real property valuation committees or forums, a scholarship to attend these meetings is an amazing opportunity that they might not otherwise have or even know about, creating more value for their membership and participation.

Depending on your region, appraisers may be part of more than one association or MLS, as is the case with our association. I asked them to describe the difference between belonging to an association with an active, thriving appraisal committee and one that has none. The answer: "I feel like I'm part of the process, the big picture. At the other associations, I feel like being an appraiser member is just a job and the cost of doing business."

Our active appraisers have created a greater understanding at my association of how all REALTOR® appraisers and agents work together to achieve the same goal: successful real estate transactions.



Misty D. Miller, e-PRO, RCE, is the EO of the Ashland Board of REALTORS®, Ohio. Contact her at 419-281-2700 or eo@ashlandboardofrealtors.com.



The Ashland Board of REALTORS®' 2020 Appraisal Committee meets every other month.

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Service Through Tech Know-How

MIBOR's CEO on positioning REALTORS® as the source for market intelligence.

It's been three years since Shelley Specchio made the leap from being CEO of a large regional MLS in Nevada to CEO of the MIBOR REALTOR® Association, a large local association in Indiana with its own MLS, but she continues to rely on her tech savvy to drive programs and member services.

"What I appreciate most about being able to operate both the association and the MLS is directing the important balance between the technological through the MLS and the fundamental protection of homeownership and professionalism through the trade association and its outreach and advocacy arms," she says.

Technology and data are the tools Specchio wields to drive innovation, efficiency, and professionalism at MIBOR. We recently caught up with Specchio for some association tech talk.

done in blockchain, and then there's the industry's painful transition from RETS to RESO API for MLS data distribution. In fact, I had a whole TED Talk-style presentation ready to go for the March AE Institute about why it's so important that, as an industry, we move forward with RESO API.

There are several ways for MLSs to distribute their data through APIs. The one MIBOR has invested in is called the MLS Grid, which is a long-term brokerage solution to national market and data-access issues. It was created by a network of MLSs and is designed to help brokers, MLSs, and product vendors work efficiently together to provide a single, standardized data access point to brokers for MLS access and management.

I think the MLS Grid is a significant technology for many reasons. It creates efficiencies for vendors, saves our brokers money, and gives them control over their own proprietary data. Ten MLSs so far have come together to support it and are working with more than 300 vendors to power more than 5,000 websites with about 8.5 million listings, and it's working beautifully.

Q. How did your association's own professional certification program come about?

We are incredibly proud of the work that went into getting MIBOR Master Professional launched and the response and participa-

tion of our members. The idea came from a question in our annual member survey where we asked, "How professional do you feel your peers are, and who is responsible for ensuring members are professional?"

The answers were alarming, and we began to focus on improving professionalism.

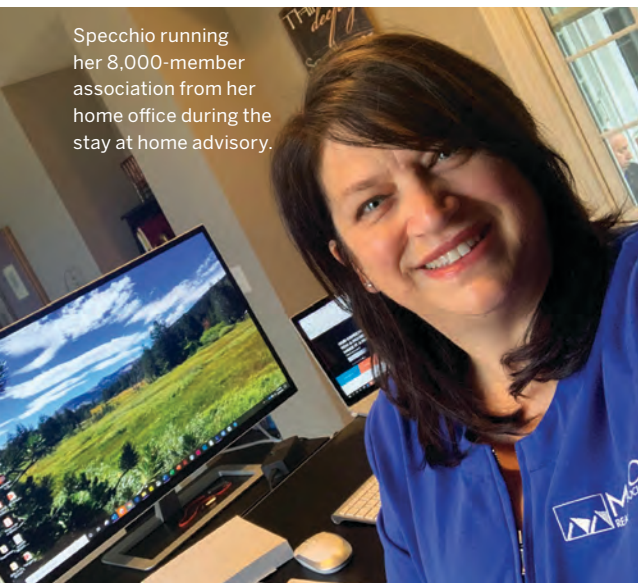
We were very excited about C2EX and wanted to build on that certification by adding a local component. Our program includes coursework on navigating our state contracts, attending industry and community partner sessions, fair housing education, a deep dive into our Broker Listing Cooperative rules, and becoming proficient with technology tools.

We have only launched it this year so I can't speak yet to the impact, but we are meeting all our goals in the number of members signing up, and I am very optimistic.

Q. Briefly describe a benefit, program, or service that your association launched in the past year that has been particularly successful.

Well, beyond distributing our IDX, VOW, and broker back-office data through the API with MLS Grid, launching MPRO, and generally freshening all of our member-facing websites, portals, and dashboards, the benefit I am most proud of is a new application for looking at monthly market data.

We call the tool Market Insights, and it has both a public- and member-facing component. Basically, this meets our goal that REALTORS® should be the definitive source for real estate data in Central Indiana. By providing this tool in conjunction with our monthly market trends press release, members can become much more granular in answering the age-old question, "How's the market?" And media and consumers both can access a pared-down version on our consumer-facing website. I am super proud of it, and it is growing each month in member adoption.



Specchio running her 8,000-member association from her home office during the stay at home advisory.

Q. What piece of technology is having the most significant impact on your members today?

We're keeping an eye on artificial intelligence while we continue to watch the work being



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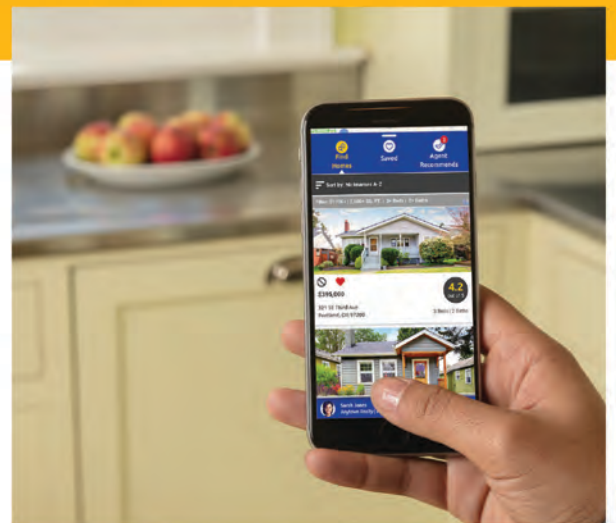
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