

FALL 2022

# AEXPERIENCE

FOR ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES.  
POWERED BY REALTOR® MAGAZINE.  
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## Destination: Diversity

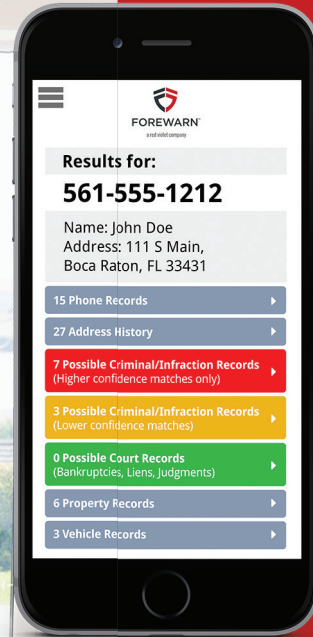
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Carrie Chang



## ON THE WEB

### Resources for New Association Executives

New to the REALTOR® association world? The National Association of REALTORS® can help you succeed with a wide range of resources—including checklists, advice from peers, and guidance on meeting the Core Standards for operating a state or local association.

[nar.realtor.com/ae/manage-your-association/resources-for-new-aes](https://nar.realtor.com/ae/manage-your-association/resources-for-new-aes)





AEC CHAIR

## Priorities and Perspective

**W**hen you prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion, you prioritize your entire membership. REALTOR®

associations across the country are creatively developing and implementing DEI initiatives to benefit their members and the communities they serve. Through this work, REALTOR® association executives can impact the industry, innovate within the marketplace and provide exceptional value.

The Association Executives Committee DEI Work Group is creating models and templates that can help associations. This includes an Actionable Roadmap, available on the National Association of REALTORS® website (nar.realtor/dei-roadmap). The Roadmap can help guide you in researching and understanding your membership and discovering which demographic groups might be underrepresented in your market. It is a useful first step to engaging your full spectrum of membership.

You can then take additional meaningful steps to create a welcoming environment and opportunities for greater levels of engagement and success. One way we celebrate diversity in a visible way at the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS® is by having an international flag display at our headquarters with the top 10 represented countries in Northern Virginia. It's a



Ryan T. McLaughlin, RCE, CAE, is CEO of the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS® and 2022 AEC chair.

physical reminder of how we incorporate DEI into all that we do.

Offering courses, programs, designations and certifications relating to DEI—such as the recently launched Bias Override CE course—is another excellent way to educate your staff and membership. At NVAR, we also have several cultural forums (Hispanic, Vietnamese, Korean and African American REALTOR® Forums), plus a DEI Advisory Group and an International Business Forum. These groups host activities with the mission to celebrate and learn more about their respective cultures, and all members are encouraged to attend these events. A recent example is a Juneteenth celebration where nearly 200 members took part in a private tour of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

By implementing meaningful DEI initiatives, you are directly adding value to your association for your members. Providing underrepresented members a space, a platform and a seat at the table creates a stronger sense of community and opportunities for growth and success in the real estate profession.

## AEXPERIENCE

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# GOOD NEWS!

## REALTORS® ARE GOOD NEIGHBORS



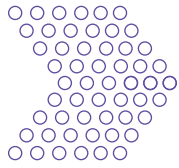
**REALTORS®** volunteer in their communities at nearly **3x the national average**. Celebrate your members' giving spirit by highlighting how they uplift others. When you tell these stories of community impact—to consumers, to your members, and to NAR—you show the world that REALTORS® are Good Neighbors.

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- Share your volunteer stories at [nar.realtor/rgn](https://nar.realtor/rgn)
- Launch a local Good Neighbor Award at [nar.realtor/gna](https://nar.realtor/gna)
- Use hashtag **#RealtorsAreGoodNeighbors** when you post about community service
- Follow us at [@RealtorsAreGoodNeighbors](https://twitter.com/RealtorsAreGoodNeighbors)



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# AOR IN ACTION

NEWS AND IDEAS FROM YOUR PEERS

## REDEVELOPMENT

### Transforming Neighborhoods

Say a neighborhood gets new housing stock or recovers from a natural disaster. It attracts commerce and offers affordable options for its residents. The result is that our economy thrives.

So, what do you do when your area is experiencing just the opposite? Those challenging real estate problems are the focus of Transforming Neighborhoods, a grant program and partnership of the National Association of REALTORS® and The Counselors of Real Estate® Consulting Corps.

Through the program, the Corps provides analysis, plans and actionable recommendations to help local and state associations—and the communities they serve—work through their most pressing real estate issues. Each engagement includes collaboration with key public and private stakeholders. The Corps is currently working with three grant winners:

- Knoxville Area Association of REALTORS® in Tennessee, focusing on creating a strategy to redevelop and revitalize

Knoxville’s downtown waterfront, including production of more multifamily housing.

- Huntsville Area Association of REALTORS® in Alabama, focusing on a corridor study addressing redevelopment opportunities, including housing, economic development, equity and sustainable growth.
- Peoria Area Association of REALTORS® in Illinois, focusing on a study to determine redevelopment potential of distressed areas with an eye on housing and economic development.

Established in 1953, CRE®, an affiliate of NAR, is an international consortium of credentialed real estate problem solvers who provide expert advice on complex real property and land-related matters. As a public service initiative, the CRE® Consulting Corps works with municipalities, local REALTOR® associations, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions and government entities.

[realtorparty.realtor/transforming](https://realtorparty.realtor/transforming)



## BEST PRACTICE

### Did You Know?

As a new REALTOR®, you don’t know what you don’t know. So, Sarah Scattini, 2022 local president for the large board of the Reno/Sparks Association of REALTORS® in Nevada, started to ask the question, “Did you know?”

“I wanted to help level up our industry standards and make people aware of best practices,” says Scattini, who developed a weekly *Did You Know?* video series covering local political candidate

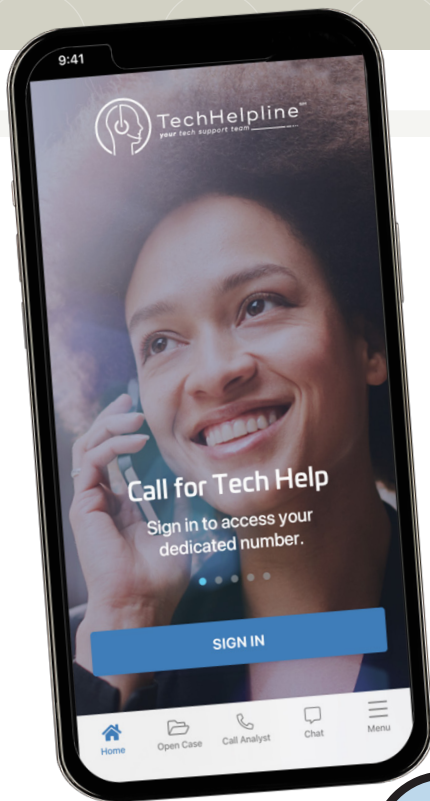
interviews, fair housing training, branding, post-closing duties, compliance regarding data accuracy and more.

As host, Scattini works with RSAR CEO April LaBrie, RCE, CAE, EPRO, and Executive Administrator Katie Fletcher to develop the scripts. She then shoots three or four segments at a time with a professional videographer who provides a teleprompter. “We keep them short and sweet, at most two minutes,” she says.

Videos are released in an e-newsletter on Mondays, posted on the RSAR site and shared on social media. “I always say, ‘If there’s something you want to know about, let’s talk about it,’” says Scattini, who has also shared scripts and tips with other associations. “If I can help others get their points and information across, I’m happy to do it.”

[rsar.net/did-you-know-videos](https://rsar.net/did-you-know-videos)





“One of our members’ biggest pain points is tech support. What resources are available for REALTORS®?”



One resource used by 80-plus associations across the U.S. and Canada, representing 725,000 REALTORS®, is Tech Helpline, owned and operated by Florida Realtors®. It offers unlimited IT support and is available by phone, chat or email. Referred to as real estate’s “Genius Bar,” Tech Helpline handled 113,000 cases in 2021, including fixing email and Wi-Fi issues, connecting wireless printers, removing viruses and adware, and recovering files. Associations can offer Tech Helpline as a standard member benefit at a cost based on the organization’s size. It’s often ranked as the top benefit by associations that survey their members about benefit preferences, according to Florida Realtors®. It also debuted a mobile app earlier this year.

 [techhelpline.com](https://techhelpline.com)

**“Technology is a core component to agents’ workflow today, whether they are in the office, working from home or doing business remotely. If their technology fails, they need help, and they need it fast!”**

*Margy Grant, RCE, CAE, Florida Realtors® CEO*

## MARKETING

### Positive Posts

Ten thousand positive stories of REALTORS®—in just one day?

“I got the idea a long time ago,” says Missouri REALTORS®’ President John Mayfield. “I thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be cool if we could have a million blog posts in one day to show how positive the real estate market is?’”

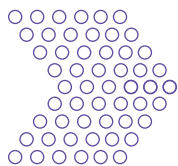
So, when the National Association of REALTORS® encouraged attendees at 2021’s REALTORS® Conference & Expo in San Diego to go home and tell their stories, Mayfield was all in.

One million turned into a more realistic goal of 10,000 positive social media posts by REALTORS® in Missouri. Mayfield got board buy-in at the end of April and set June 1 as the target date. Member announcements went out in early May, mid-May, and the week and the day before the event.

Mayfield also shared the event on NAR’s Hub, inviting other associations to join in. Members were given examples of what they could share on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or TikTok—“but what we wanted more than anything was for our members to just take the time to tell a story about a transaction that was successful for them and benefited buyers and sellers.”

Mayfield says with all the stories flooding in on June 1, it was difficult to keep an accurate count. But his association plans to hold the event again next year. “I was talking to someone who said that even if we didn’t reach 10,000 but we had 3,000 posts go out that day, that’s 3,000 positive stories that resonated through social media that those people’s friends and network wouldn’t have seen had we not tried it.”





## OUTREACH

### Only a REALTOR®

Broward, Palm Beaches & St. Lucie REALTORS® in Florida tracked 7 million impressions and more than 3 million entire video plays just two months after launching its first-ever consumer campaign, Only a REALTOR®. The time was right, says CEO Dionna Hall, RCE. Before launching the campaign, the association brought its ideas and creative strategies to the National Association of REALTORS® to ensure they dovetailed with the national “That’s Who We R” campaign. Orlando-based agency &Barr helped bring the vision to life. The result is 30-, 15-, 10- and six-second spots that showcase how REALTOR® expertise and adherence to a code of ethics help connect consumers to REALTORS® as trusted sources. According to Hall, members are sharing the spots and other resources on social media. “On the community level, we see local municipalities and key community-based players recognizing our association as the local voice of real estate in South Florida,” she says. “As we gather data, we are learning more about consumer behaviors and where major touch points are.”

[rworld.com/campaign](http://rworld.com/campaign)

**“Consumers, now more than ever, need to be reminded of the value of REALTORS®.”**

*Dionna Hall, RCE, Broward,  
Palm Beaches & St. Lucie REALTORS® CEO*



## KUDOS

### Hultz Wins Magel Award

Long Island Board of REALTORS® CEO Tessa Hultz, RCE, CAE, was named the winner of the 2022 William R. Magel Award of Excellence by the National Association of REALTORS® during its 2022 Legislative Meetings.

[nar.realtor/ae/magel-award](http://nar.realtor/ae/magel-award)



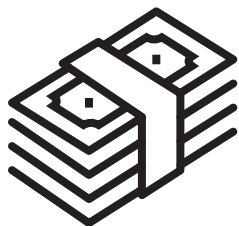
### The REALTOR® Difference

Help members articulate their value to consumers. A new website from the National Association of REALTORS® offers language and supporting assets that guide members in succinctly describing the REALTOR® difference to current and future clients. For example, social posts—both static and animated versions—invite consumers to: “Ask me why REALTORS® are committed to a code of ethics” or “Ask me why REALTORS® are experts in real estate.”

These assets complement NAR’s popular “That’s Who We R” consumer ad campaign.

[thedifference.realtor](http://thedifference.realtor)

## 401



The number of state and local REALTOR® association grant requests approved by NAR in 2022 in support of advocacy, engagement and education efforts. That’s up 20% from 2021.





Tyrone Adams



Jean Beck



Katie Johnson

## Kudos to Smith Society Inductees

Congratulations to Tyrone Adams, RCE, CAE, of the Colorado Association of REALTORS®, Jean Beck, RCE, of the Hilton Head Area REALTORS® (S.C.); and the National Association of REALTORS®' Katie Johnson on their induction into the Dr. Almon R. (Bud) Smith, RCE, AE Leadership Society. Members of the Smith Society are leading contributors to the industry and the profession. Induction recognizes those who excel in the association management profession by demonstrating uncommon leadership, a willingness to help others and acceptance of a responsibility to constantly improve themselves.

 [nar.realtor/ae/smith-society](https://nar.realtor/ae/smith-society)



## DEI Scorecard

# 47%

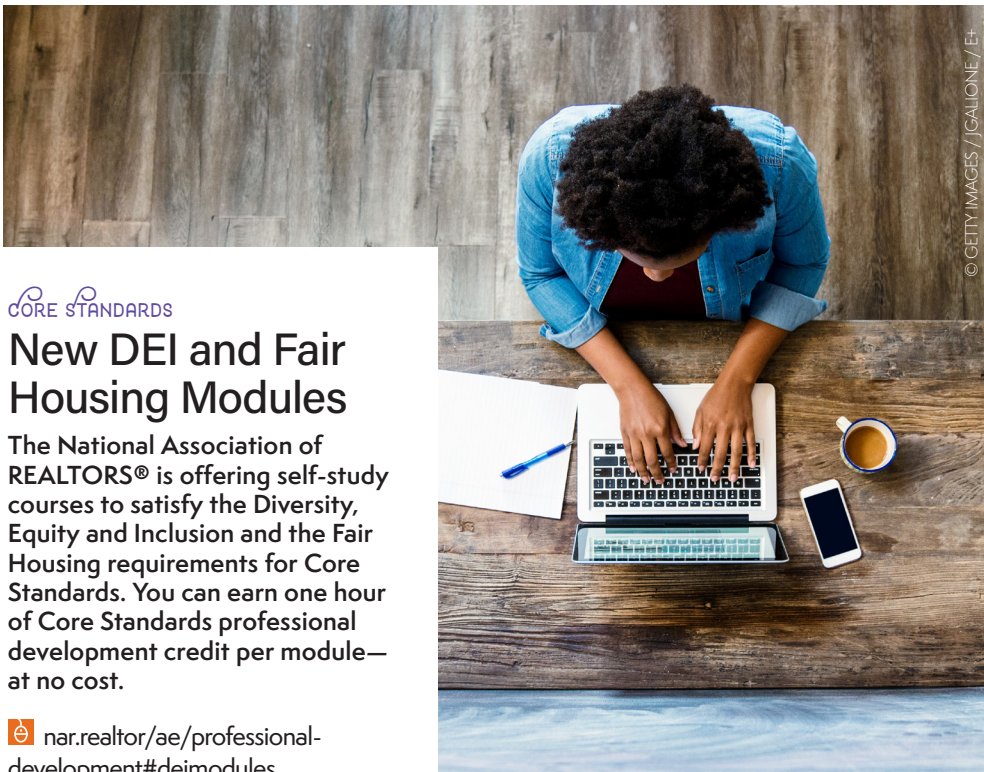
Percentage of AEs who said they were familiar with the NAR Actionable Roadmap for advancing diversity, equity & inclusion

# 16%

Percentage of AEs who said they'd used the Actionable Roadmap

*For guidance on implementing the Roadmap, see page 16.*


SOURCE: POLL, AEI YEAR-ROUND WEBINAR, "ACTIONABLE ROADMAP," AUG. 16, 2022, NAR.REALTOR/AEI-YEAR-ROUND-VIRTUAL-SESSIONS



CORE STANDARDS

## New DEI and Fair Housing Modules

The National Association of REALTORS® is offering self-study courses to satisfy the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Fair Housing requirements for Core Standards. You can earn one hour of Core Standards professional development credit per module—at no cost.

 [nar.realtor/ae/professional-development#deimodules](https://nar.realtor/ae/professional-development#deimodules)



## DESTINATION:

# DIVERSITY

**Associations are pointing the way to more inclusive cultures, doing more than ever to reflect their communities and eradicate discriminatory practices of the past.**

BY M. DIANE MCCORMICK

In 2018, the Chicago Association of REALTORS® apologized publicly—in a statement developed in collaboration with the National Association of REALTORS®—for past discriminatory practices that fueled the city’s segregation. Those practices included an association policy banning African Americans from membership until 1963. Acknowledging the trauma and pain of many members who, in recent history, would have been barred from joining was the first step on “a journey to empathy,” says CEO Michelle Mills Clement, RCE, CAE.

Then, in the summer of 2020, as the murder of George Floyd and other terrible events sparked reflection on racial and social justice, the Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS® in Washington, D.C., realized that, while it had long been actively promoting levels of diversity in its board and committee memberships, it could do more. “We’re not going to change all this overnight,” says GCAAR CEO Edward Krauze, “but one local association at a time, maybe we’ll start bending the curve a little bit.”

In this environment, REALTOR® associations across the U.S. delved into new ways to further develop diversity, equity and inclusion. Now, DEI is a permanent strategic priority, placing associations on the pathway to remedying past wrongs, building and conveying an inclusive culture and ushering more Americans toward homeownership.

### **A Stronger Foundation**

The summer of 2020 hit the world with “things that shook us to our core,” agrees Jessica Coates, RCE, then-CEO of Howard County Association of REALTORS®, Maryland.

HCAR issued a statement in support of racial justice efforts, which led to conversations about being part of the solution. Leadership incorporated a DEI module into the association’s three-year strategic plan, reached out to multicultural groups and created Spanish-language education for first-time home buyers.

The board also voted unanimously to establish a DEI committee—an essential first step for many associations—which attracted an outpouring of interest from potential members. The committee is meant to support DEI within the association and the communities it serves by promoting equal opportunity and cultural diversity in member engagement and leadership recruitment.

Likewise, in 2020 CAR reenvisioned and relaunched its diversity committee, naming it The 77 to highlight its representation of every one of Chicago’s neighborhoods. A major project was its recent audit of CAR’s fair housing course. Working with the National Fair Housing Alliance, CAR revamped the course to make it more Chicago-specific and raise awareness of the “coded” discriminatory practices that continue to infiltrate real estate transactions. The committee also conducts community outreach and raises funds for small-business grants to promote economic development.

At the state level, when Maryland REALTORS® placed its focus on recruiting diverse voices for leadership, the response was overwhelming. “We reached out,” says CEO Chuck Kasky, RCE. “We created a welcoming environment and a sincere desire to have all our members represented in everything we do.”

In fall 2019, Maryland REALTORS® convened a Presidential Advisory Group to address DEI. A concurrently running Bylaws Task Force accepted and successfully presented to the board the PAG’s top two recommendations: the addition of two seats to the board of directors—including one on the executive committee—and creation of a standing DEI Advisory Group. Both were in force by Oct. 1, 2020.

The DEI Advisory Group, whose duties include recommending board appointments, has offered “a wealth of ideas,” says Kasky. Recently, the group considered recommending that elected officers, committee chairs and vice chairs be required to complete NAR’s Fair Housing Challenge—Fairhaven, At Home With Diversity and Bias Override. That recommendation is pending.

Maryland REALTORS® is also leveraging remote and hybrid meetings to increase geographic diversity, a conscious effort that retains the association’s meritocracy while extending opportunities for involvement to a broader cross-section of members, says Kasky.

The advisory group produced a video, *Your Voice Matters*, featuring diverse Maryland REALTORS® leaders with the goal of increasing diversity within the association’s committee structure, especially among chairs and vice chairs. The results were “immediate and dramatic,” says Kasky. “Representatives of many groups were speaking to the camera, saying, ‘We want you; we are actively seeking your involvement,’ and it works,” he says. “We had more committee signups this year than last, which was more than the year before, and I suspect this engagement will continue to grow.”

### A Brighter Light on DEI

Associations are also working on recognizing members who embrace DEI, both to thank them for their support and to incentivize others to join them. For example, HCAR’s diversity committee is working on a presentation to its board of directors to create a recognition tentatively named Agents of Change. The recognition would combine national-level training with local impact: It would be awarded to members who complete the Fair Housing Challenge and NAR’s C2EX program and who demonstrate a passion for DEI by volunteering with HCAR or in the community.

REALTORS® with the Agent of Change recognition would be seen by consumers and peers as professionals who make DEI a priority and are committed to learning how to be inclusive and fair, says Coates, who recently became CEO of the Sacramento Association of REALTORS® in California. The recognition’s significance extends beyond fair housing, which is enshrined in law, by revealing a REALTOR® who is “going the extra mile,” Coates says. “This is something we all need to embrace, beyond being human and doing the right thing in our profession. This is where the profession is going—understanding different cultures, being more inclusive and welcoming and basically banning bad behavior that has plagued the country for years in housing.”

As part of its multipronged DEI approach, GCAAR’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee created the GCAAR Diversity & Inclusion Champions, awarded to members who finish the three programs of NAR’s Fair Housing Challenge. The Challenge is “a godsend,” says Krauze, as it provides tools for GCAAR and other associations to craft their efforts.

Beginning in 2023, all board members and applicants for committee seats must become GCAAR D&I Champions. Krauze is proud that the majority of GCAAR staff members have already demonstrated their commitment by taking the courses. Upcoming testimonial



We’re not going to change all this overnight, but one local association at a time, maybe we’ll start bending the curve a little bit.”

— Edward Krauze, RCE, CEO, Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS®

videos will showcase D&I champions and why they sought the credential.

GCAAR President Harrison Beacher also had the idea to piggyback on the association’s existing awards by adding the Pathways Awards, recognizing members who go above and beyond to help people find homes. The 25 inaugural recipients were recognized for efforts including partnering with investors to rent homes to voucher-eligible families and launching a podcast to educate the Hispanic community on the region’s new housing developments.

### Celebrating Identity

Back in Chicago, the association is furthering member engagement by elevating the visibility of traditionally underrepresented groups. Heritage and Pride month events serve as vocal celebrations of members’ identity. A strategic approach makes sure that all identities are recognized and gives the events a unified objective. “Our goal is to bring awareness to different communities, to tie it back to real estate and provide options in the community,” says Mills Clement.

Recent programs included a Pride Month panel reflecting on the professional journeys of gay and lesbian members and a Black History Month event recognizing the appointment of CAR Past President Zeke Morris as the first African American president of the Illinois Association of REALTORS®. Members trekked through a snowstorm—heavy even by Chicago standards—to join that celebration.



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## Embracing DEI?

### IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ALL ASSOCIATIONS TO RECOGNIZE DIVERSITY, WHETHER THEIR COMMUNITIES ARE DIVERSE OR NOT.

But what should you do if your leadership doesn't see DEI as a priority? We asked a few AEs to share their suggestions.

"Introduce your leadership team to other organizations in the community that have a robust DEI program. Also begin a drip campaign that keeps planting seeds about DEI and its meaning and benefit for your community at large."

**Kimberly Pontius, RCE, CAE**  
**CEO, Aspire North REALTORS® (Mich.)**

"I would say strategically that even if they don't see it as a priority, remind them that different personality types and different passions can bring a much-needed look at our membership's health. That with a broader dialogue, we have a much higher chance at meeting expectations. For instance, someone who's fast paced might get things done more quickly, while someone who really thinks things through might be checking to make sure that what we're doing makes sense for the common good. It takes all kinds of personalities to really consider every aspect of a plan, and that's the best thing we can do when it comes to our business plan and goals."

**Kim Cox, GRI**  
**CEO, Ozark Gateway**  
**Association of REALTORS® (Mo.)**

Even associations that say their communities are not diverse should recognize heritage and Pride months, Mills Clement says. The efforts ensure that all consumers are recognized and could open doors to new members.

"A simple acknowledgement can go a long way," Mills Clement says. "That person may join your association or get into real estate because they see themselves being represented. Heritage and Pride months are there to celebrate a heritage and celebrate identity. By simply acknowledging them, you're showing that you are aware of this, you're a partner in this and people who celebrate these different identities are welcome."

### Advocating for Inclusion

In the mid-1990s, Brian Toohey, RCE, was considering buying lots in an older part of Columbia, Mo. Toohey, now the Columbia Board of REALTORS® CEO, was shocked to discover the properties were bound by restrictive covenants. He was even more shocked by the response he received when he questioned those covenants: "They're still there, but they're not enforceable, so they don't matter anymore."

"I had no idea those kinds of things could still be in there," says Toohey. "That has always bothered me."

But as of Aug. 28 this year, restrictive covenants are on their way out in the state. Missouri REALTORS® successfully advocated for a new law requiring that covenants barring buyers based on race, national origin or religion be stripped from any newly filed deed. Under the law, current property owners can also petition for removal of the outdated language.

In 1948, the Supreme Court struck down restrictive covenants, but discrimination in sales and rentals of housing based on race, color, national origin, religion and sex wasn't banned until the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

As Missouri's new law takes effect, CBOR has informed property management companies and reached out to the city of Columbia's Office of Neighborhood Services, notified groups in older neighborhoods where restrictive covenants were

common and communicated with the county recorder's office to learn procedures. From there, it will develop step-by-step instructions for members, property buyers and property owners to make changes.

The REALTORS® won passage of the law, in part, with stories of real estate agents whose clients—especially those in protected classes—felt uneasy about buying properties burdened with discriminatory restrictions, says Toohey.

"This is a great opportunity for REALTORS® to be able to reach out and help people," he says. "Hopefully, they feel more secure living in their property when those kinds of restrictions are no longer attached to the deed."

### The Work is Ongoing

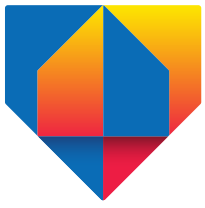
As associations sustain their efforts, there's still much work to be done.

"Our goal is to identify and cultivate policies and procedures that will increase HCAR's commitment to DEI, as well as foster and maintain relationships with local chapters of multicultural real estate professional organizations," says HCAR Marketing & Communication Manager Mikesa Ponder. "For HCAR, promoting DEI is ongoing, extensive and in the forefront of everything that we do."

For Maryland REALTORS®, in coming years, the focus will include teaching members how to provide real estate services to diverse client bases with different needs, such as LGBTQ+, Latino and other groups. "We're proud to be a very forward-looking association," says Kasky. "It wouldn't have happened without the right people in place and the right attitude and the openness to it."

Likewise, GCAAR plans to continue engaging members across its geography and from brokerages large and small to ensure that the association is mirroring its community. "Hopefully, it's opened people's eyes a little bit to the fact that this is not some big, scary thing," says Krauze. "We were doing it already." ●

*M. Diane McCormick is a Pennsylvania-based freelance writer and author.*



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# YOUR ROADMAP TO DIVERSITY

Consider these NAR tools and resources  
your guide for the DEI journey.

BY ROBERT BITTNER

**D**espite becoming a larger part of the REALTOR® conversation over the last few years, the journey toward diversity, equity and inclusion is just beginning, according to Ryan Davis, National Association of REALTORS® director of engagement, diversity and inclusion. “DEI within the real estate industry is still in its infancy among organizations that strive to be responsive to the needs of a diverse constituency and to achieve equity in the marketplace,” he says.

To promote DEI as an integral part of daily business, NAR has included it in each of its strategic priorities for 2022 and beyond. It encourages members and requires state and local REALTOR® associations to do the same in their own strategic planning. In addition, NAR is developing a growing number of resources to support local and state associations in their DEI efforts.

“One of our goals is to help bring everyone within the industry to a healthy level of awareness,” Davis says. “We have ever-changing demographics that populate our nation. It’s becoming a more diverse United States than ever before. We need to come to a shared language and understanding about how people see themselves, evolving our nomenclature and discourse so we can have meaningful and humanizing conversations with everyone.”

### Getting Started? Follow the Roadmap

For associations just beginning their DEI journey—or that want to better understand the big picture—Davis recommends starting with the *Actionable Roadmap for Local Association Diversity and Inclusion*, available on NAR’s website.



## Partner Organizations

NAR collaborates with these multicultural associations in a wide range of areas, from promoting homeownership to identifying new association leadership.

Asian American Real Estate Association of America: [areaa.org](http://areaa.org)

LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance: [realestatealliance.org](http://realestatealliance.org)

National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals®: [nahrep.org](http://nahrep.org)

National Association of Real Estate Brokers: [nareb.com](http://nareb.com)

Start your own collaborations by finding local or regional chapters at [nar.realtor/diversity/multicultural-real-estate-organizations/directory](http://nar.realtor/diversity/multicultural-real-estate-organizations/directory).

The *Roadmap* presents a four-step outline for DEI:

- **Step 1: Research.** In your community and market area, whose needs and interests may be overlooked or misunderstood? What are the demographics of your membership and leadership, and who on the association staff can take on DEI responsibilities?
- **Step 2: Discovery.** If you find one or more demographic groups that are not well served, “identify those [members] who are serving the underrepresented community, if and where they gather to discuss real estate, the real estate–related issues they need action on, their knowledge and experience with the community and their passions for member education, ethics and advocacy,” the *Roadmap* advises. “Find ways to build personal relationships between your existing leadership and these members.”
- **Step 3: Engagement.** Encourage the involvement of these members in the association and build relationships that broaden community connections.
- **Step 4: Outreach and growth.** Mentor and train new leaders, build upon ongoing efforts to include diversity on your key committees and in your activities and create cooperative relationships with any multicultural or related group of REALTORS® in your area.

The *Roadmap* points the way toward DEI success. But even the best map isn’t enough by itself to get you where you want to go.

## Available Assistance

NAR has a variety of grants specifically designated to support DEI initiatives at local and state associations. With DEI a priority, “we didn’t want finances to be a barrier,” says Davis.

Grants of up to \$1,000 are available to support, among other things, an association’s diversity and inclusion events, collaboration with multicultural real estate organizations and conference attendance. Grants of up to \$5,000 are available to increase diversity and inclusion among leadership, for education and workshops, and for other activities that advance DEI.

Associations are finding creative ways to put their diversity grants to use. “Funds might pay for document translation for clients who did not learn English as their first language or scholarship programs to attract members from demographic groups underrepresented in the association,” Davis says.

Or a local association might team up with a partner organization and invite leaders to host a panel discussion or seminar. “These partner organizations include the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance, the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, the Asian Real Estate Association of America and the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals, all of which have local chapters,” he adds.

## Taking the L.E.A.D.

Most associations focus grant money on DEI education and learning, often through courses developed by NAR. One specifically designed for volunteer leaders is the latest addition to the L.E.A.D. series. (L.E.A.D. stands for learn, elevate, accelerate and deliver.)

“You can find all kinds of leadership training out there, but there’s very little that is tailored to the needs of REALTORS®,” says Amanda Stinton, NAR’s director of leadership and sustainability/member development. “We wanted to craft courses to help fill that need, taking a research-based approach to provide a pathway for every stage of a volunteer leader’s journey.”

Developed by experienced AEs and REALTORS® who’ve held national leadership positions, the four L.E.A.D. courses aim to help REALTORS® and AEs become effective and visionary association leaders.

Within the DEI course, Stinton says, “We talk about what DEI means, defining the difference between ‘equity’ and ‘equality’; dive into how stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination can prevent volunteer leaders from practicing DEI principles; and help students gain a better understanding of all the ‘isms’ that fall under the scope of DEI: racism, sexism, ageism, ableism. And we explore all these topics from the perspective of leadership and how DEI can benefit the members of your association, your workplace, your committee—whoever you’re working with.”

Long Island Board of REALTORS® CEO Tessa Hultz, RCE, CAE, was one of the course’s subject matter experts. Her participation reminded her just how important it is to continually address DEI assumptions and overlooked opportunities.

“Despite how much DEI issues are part of our conversation and mindset, it is still very easy to have blind spots,” she says. “I mean, look at how we are still being told to think about the different generations: ‘Boomers are like this, Gen X is like this, Gen Y thinks like this.’ As stereotypes go, these are fairly benign. But nobody is just one thing.”

“Generalizations about any group of people, no matter how benign they may seem, need to be questioned and challenged in our own thinking,” Hultz says. “A big part of DEI education is simply uncovering all of those implicit biases, all of those times that we use shorthand to suggest we know something about someone when we actually don’t.”

The course has been available since November 2021, and Stinton says the response has been encouraging. “Several state and local REALTOR® associations, as well as brokerages, have contacted us about providing this course to their members or volunteers. They’re making a commitment to train their agents and volunteer leaders on DEI. Some are even purchasing bundles of courses to distribute so they can



**“The reality is that we’ll always need to be reaching out to educate and inform people who haven’t had exposure to or an understanding of DEI topics.”**

—Ryan Davis, NAR director of engagement, diversity and inclusion

ensure their members have the educational baseline on DEI principles that the course provides,” she says. “Although these topics have been part of the conversation for a while, there is still a need for DEI education. It’s especially important that it is woven throughout our standard practices and not approached as a separate topic or an option. It truly is a significant puzzle piece in an overarching volunteer-leadership strategy.”

### Sharing Directions

When it comes to empowering underserved communities and ensuring inclusiveness, that includes reaching out beyond the industry. NAR is doing that through a mentorship program that encourages people from underrepresented and underserved communities to consider a career in real estate.

That program, NAR Spire, was piloted in 2021 and launched this year. It pairs mentors with mentees and “presents all different facets of the real estate industry—not just transactions, not just residential, commercial and land, but supporting career paths as well in areas like marketing, IT, mortgage, staging, being an administrative assistant,” says Kasey Stewart, NAR’s director of member development.

Eleven career paths are represented so far, with more than 450 participants involved as mentors and mentees. Mentors should have the passion, experience and time to guide someone new to the industry. And Spire relies on local and state associations to recruit mentees from diverse areas. For example, some are partnering with historically Black colleges and universities.

As an example of a Spire success, Stewart mentions Ahmed, a residential practitioner who, after seeing a commercial real estate presentation by a member named Mike, expressed his interest in being mentored by Mike. The Spire team made the introductions and helped ensure that the relationship got off to a strong start.

“They have learned so much from each other,” Stewart says. “We normally schedule mentorships to last about four

months, but Mike and Ahmed have chosen to continue that mentorship experience beyond that period.”

In the future, Stewart says, the program will be expanding with more educational content and additional career paths. She also hopes to see more state and local REALTOR® associations participate in the Spire program. “We want to identify diversity champions at the state and local level who can help bring mentorship programs like this to their local market areas.”

### A Never-Ending Journey

Arizona REALTORS® Chief Operating Officer Christina Smalls, RCE, is one such diversity champion. Introduced to Spire at the AE Institute in March 2022, she was convinced the program would be a meaningful one for her association. “Our DEI committee was already in the process of researching a mentorship program in our state,” she says.

“Anytime we can help our members participate in a program that speaks to their passion of helping people, it can only make our membership stronger,” Smalls adds. “I’d like to encourage more associations to form committees or work groups dedicated to DEI initiatives. If the size of their staff makes that difficult, they can partner with other local associations or reach out to their state association for support. Associations also can offer classes and webinars to help members navigate and understand the importance of complex subjects such as race and the challenges faced by their minority colleagues.”

None of these goals—mentoring, training association leaders and building a more diverse, inclusive membership—is achieved through one-time effort. They’re ongoing. “As association staff, we have the ability and responsibility to provide the best resources and information to our members,” Smalls says. “Let’s help our members be better equipped to represent all consumers and support the growth of more inclusive communities.” ●

*Robert Bittner is a Michigan-based freelance journalist.*



### For More

*Actionable Roadmap for Local Association Diversity and Inclusion:*  
[nar.realtor/dei-roadmap](http://nar.realtor/dei-roadmap)

NAR Diversity and Inclusion Grants:  
[realtorparty.realtor/community-outreach/diversity/grant-applications](http://realtorparty.realtor/community-outreach/diversity/grant-applications)

L.E.A.D. and other NAR professional development resources:  
[learning.realtor](http://learning.realtor)

NAR Spire: [nar.realtor/spire](http://nar.realtor/spire)



## Staying Out of Court

Follow these best practices for professional standards proceedings.

BY DEANNE RYMAROWICZ



Over the past couple of years, more respondents than ever are challenging the outcome of professional standards hearings and the procedures followed by the associations handling these matters. Associations can help reduce the risk of a legal challenge by adhering to established procedures and ensuring due process for all parties.

In 2021, professional standards claims accounted for a record 20% of all claims filed on the National Association of REALTORS® professional liability policy; all these claims related to ethics hearings. In 2020, challenges to ethics hearings comprised only 4% of all claims, possibly due to hearings being held in abeyance during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the rate of claims arising from ethics proceedings alone has increased threefold since 2017. There's no clear indication of what is driving this increase in challenges to ethics proceedings.

These statistics emphasize the importance of associations minimizing their risks by consistently adhering to the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual when handling professional standards cases. In the past, courts have deferred to the rules and procedures of the CEAM because it ensures due process and fairness to all parties.

A recent court decision illustrates the significance of fairly and consistently applying the CEAM. Respondents in an ethics proceeding demanded that a court reporter record their appeal hearing; the association denied the respondents'

request, relying on the CEAM, which specifically does not allow appeal hearings to be recorded. Respondents petitioned the court to force the association to permit the recording. The court denied the petition, stating that the CEAM's rule against recording an appeal proceeding was "unambiguous." The court further noted that "[Respondents'] constitutional due process rights do not include the right to alter or revise the disciplinary procedure of the association, which they voluntarily joined and in which they agreed to abide by the governing bylaws, rules and regulations."

To help your association minimize its risks and successfully defend a challenge of a professional standards proceeding, follow these best practices:

- **Consider using the resources and guidance available in the CEAM.** It's strongly recommended that the sample forms, hearing scripts and arbitration worksheet provided in the CEAM are implemented and that disciplinary guidelines are followed. Hearing panels should also make note of any Case Interpretation that may be helpful.
- **Provide annual training for Grievance Committee and Professional Standards**

### **Committee members.**

While not required by NAR policy, annual training will reinforce the principles of due process and focus on changes to the Code of Ethics, the Statements of Professional Standards Policy and new Case Interpretations.

- **Rely on association counsel.** Counsel can and should attend hearings, especially where complex or unique issues are present. Counsel can also provide pre-hearing guidance on due process and evidentiary issues and review the Findings of Fact to identify any factual gaps and potential issues.

While there are no guarantees that an unhappy respondent or complainant will not file a lawsuit or make other demands on an association, adhering closely to the CEAM's established processes and procedures will help put the association in the best possible position should a challenge arise.

Training materials and additional resources for professional standards administrators are available at [nar.realtor](http://nar.realtor). ●



*Deanne Rymarowicz is associate counsel for legal affairs at the National Association of REALTORS®.*

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## Respecting Religious Holidays

It's a simple move that helps advance inclusion in your association.

BY SARAH RAYNE



When a National Association of REALTORS® director took to the Hub earlier this year to express his disappointment that the 2022 Legislative Meetings & Expo conflicted with the end of Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr, those who were paying attention witnessed a thoughtful, constructive exchange between that director and NAR leadership.

“The REALTOR® family works alongside and serves people of all walks of life, and thus we must strive to be intentionally inclusive in all that we do,” NAR President Leslie Rouda Smith said in response to the Hub post.

Initially, the 2022 conference was to be held at Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C., and did not conflict with the Muslim holidays. However, when the hotel closed and NAR shifted the conference to National Harbor on short notice, it was forced to schedule during the holidays or cancel the conference altogether.

“NAR regrets that the dates conflicted with these important days for Muslims, and we will strive to avoid that in the future,” Smith added.

Admittedly, my own association—the Howard County Association of REALTORS®—scheduled an event after sundown on the first day of Yom Kippur last year. It was again a situation where we were aware of the holiday but could not find another date that worked for our venue. We apologized to our Jewish members who contacted the association and assured them we will do everything we can to avoid this situation in the future.

To truly be an association that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion, an association executive must look at every aspect of association management through a DEI lens. This includes

ensuring inclusivity by accommodating members of various religious faiths.

The large Christian population in the U.S. shapes the way many organizations observe certain holidays, says Ryan Davis, NAR director of engagement, diversity and inclusion. “But we know we have members who represent all kinds of religious beliefs and denominations, so the goal is to proactively identify dates of religious observance,” he says.

Davis suggests that AEs survey members to understand their association’s demographic data, including religious affiliations. Be sure members know that surveys are anonymous, the information will be aggregated and questions are optional.

If an association drops the ball and schedules an event on a major religious holiday, Davis says, “Apologize and thank the members for bringing it to your attention. Tell them you will do the work to ensure this doesn’t happen again. Move the event if possible. If that’s not possible, let the members know the reason you can’t move it.”

The best way to avoid these situations, Davis says, is to plan ahead, solicit input from your DEI committee and ensure the staff member in charge of events is culturally responsive. ●



Sarah Rayne, RCE, CAE, AHWD, EPRO, C2EX, is

interim CEO at Howard County (Maryland) Association of REALTORS®.

## Save These 2023 Dates

Here’s a non-exhaustive list of major holidays of the top five religions in the United States according to Pew Research Center. Avoid meetings and events if possible. For certain religions, work may not be permitted during these times.

**March 6-7**  
Purim, Jewish

**March 7**  
Holi, Hindu

**March 22–April 20**  
Ramadan, Muslim

**April 21-22**  
Eid al-Fitr, Muslim

**April 5-13**  
Passover, Jewish

**April 9**  
Easter Sunday, Christian  
Also, Good Friday is April 7 and Easter Monday is April 10.

**May 5 (varies by country)**  
Vesak, Buddhist

**May 25-27**  
Shavuot, Jewish

**Sept. 15-17**  
Rosh Hashanah, Jewish

**Sept. 24-25**  
Yom Kippur, Jewish

**Sept. 29–Oct. 6**  
Sukkot, Jewish

**Oct. 7**  
Simchat Torah, Jewish

**Nov. 12**  
Diwali, Hindu

**Dec. 25**  
Christmas, Christian



## SMALL BOARD

# The Power of Storytelling

Sometimes it takes a book to spark a deep conversation. **BY HEATHER WIEDRICH**



Part book club, part speaker series, REALTOR® Reads is an opportunity for members in small and large communities alike to learn about diversity, equity and inclusion. The program was developed by Neeley Erickson, government affairs director for Illinois REALTORS®, and other associations have since picked up on the idea.

“We were finding that many members throughout the state of Illinois didn’t believe that there was a problem in their communities with fair housing, diversity, equity and inclusion,” says Erickson. “In fact, many have now learned that there were issues that they were unaware of.”

Local associations throughout Illinois were offered the opportunity to partner in REALTOR® Reads, and many jumped on board. The programs are in person, hybrid or virtual to accommodate many different comfort levels. And, by participating in REALTOR® Reads, associations can meet an Advocacy requirement of Core Standards: the requirement to conduct or promote a DEI activity. “To make improvements and address inequities, we must empower members to be champions of DEI,” says Erickson. “We do that by increasing comfort level, gaining knowledge and sharing stories.”

Program sessions have included discussions on:

**Disability Visibility:** The RAMP Center for Independent Living and a children’s author from Dixon, Ill., helped offer a better understanding of disability rights, discussed how to ensure healthy and open dialogue with clients, and educated attendees on disability issues related to children. In addition to *Disability Visibility* by Alice Wong, the discussion focused on *You Can’t Stop Sophie Now!* by Sarah Fischer.

**The State of Hispanic Homeownership Report:** This publication by the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals coalesces a broad cross-section of data and research from within and outside the housing industry.

**We Can’t Talk About That at Work:** Author Mary-Frances Winters discussed how to create stronger, more inclusive organizations by structuring intentional conversations so people can safely confront biases and stereotypes.

**Nobody Wants to Talk About It: Race, Identity and the Difficulties in Forging Meaningful Conversations:** The session was presented by Michael Fosberg, an actor, activist and author. He shared how to have meaningful conversations about race.

**Iconic Interviews:** Baltimore REALTOR® JoAnne Poole, a National Association of REALTORS® Distinguished Service Award recipient, and Chicago REALTOR® Frank Williams



NEELEY ERICKSON, ILLINOIS REALTORS®

As part of Iconic Interviews, artist Roni Golan hosted an interactive painting session. Members painted collaboratively on a single canvas, using the painting as a conversation starter for what they learned at the event.

spoke about their encounters with discrimination.

**The Color of Law by Richard Rothstein:** We read this groundbreaking examination of how federal, state and local governments in the 20th century deliberately imposed racial segregation on metropolitan areas nationwide.

Currently, 200 members statewide are enrolled in REALTOR® Reads. Local associations encourage member participation and cover the cost of books for members who register. NAR’s fair housing grants and Housing Opportunity grants are available to help offset costs for programs just like this and have been a huge benefit. We

pay a match of only 10% of the total grant, which can be offset through session sponsorships.

Through REALTOR® Reads, associations in Illinois have empowered members to feel comfortable sharing their stories. It has not only brought associations and members together, but also helped members to understand and confront their biases and learn more about DEI. Together, we are better. ●



Heather Wiedrich, RCE, EPRO, C2EX, AHWD, is association executive at HomeTown Association of REALTORS® in Sycamore and Sterling, Ill.

## More About REALTOR® Reads

Seven local associations in Illinois are participating in REALTOR® Reads. Program partners include RAMP Center for Independent Living, National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals, Dearborn Realist Board and the housing authorities of Bloomington, Ill., Elgin, Ill., and McHenry County, Ill. To learn more about the program, contact Neeley Erickson, [nerickson@illinoisrealtors.org](mailto:nerickson@illinoisrealtors.org).



## Handling Disagreements

Culture is as important as personality when settling conflicts. **BY CAROLE KAPTUR**



Everyone is different.

Many people have taken a DiSC assessment or a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator evaluation. Through those types of assessments, we learn more about ourselves and how other

types of people are different and have different needs. This enhanced understanding helps us in our interpersonal interactions, especially if those interactions turn difficult. Or does it?

Most people don't enjoy having difficult conversations. Often, when we do have these tough conversations, we start from a presumption that we come from the same frame of reference. While understanding different personality types is a good practice, it might serve us better to try first to understand the other person's cultural reference.

For example, people from the United States are known for having direct, get-down-to-business conversations with people. Countries with similar cultures include Germany, Austria and some parts of Canada. This approach is built on the idea that being direct and forthright enhances honesty and mutual understanding. These types of cultures tend to like making things clear and believe doing so helps to develop a mutually agreeable solution that all parties understand.

But in other cultures, people may prefer to have a relationship-building conversation first and respond best to an indirect approach, even when handling disagreements. Their initial goal is to establish mutual goodwill and understanding. Middle Eastern and Asian countries are examples of cultures that may prefer this indirect style of communication.

When interacting with people from relational or indirect communication cultures, our approach may need to be adjusted if we want a mutually satisfactory resolution. Typically, indirect cultures take some time to engage in polite dialogue. This demonstrates respect for the other person.

So, when the need arises to handle a difficult situation, here are some things to consider:

- Would a direct or indirect style work best to resolve any misunderstanding or difficulty?
- What type of setting might best facilitate a resolution? Cultures with a direct style might not put much stock in the setting; however, indirect cultures might prefer to conduct a conversation in a relaxed office environment.



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- Does the other individual need formality or informality? People from indirect communication cultures often have a more formal approach to establishing relationships, whereas it's often the opposite for direct communication cultures.

However, it's also important to keep in mind that as we are trying to understand the needs of others, we should not make presumptions based on how someone appears. Consider instead the style other people present in their interactions and use their communication method as a clue to how they might best respond. For example, someone who approaches you in your role as a leader with a very conversational style may very well respond to engagement in that style. Let that person bring up the situation they want to discuss. Then respond with a similar situation you handled and talk about how it was resolved. Ask if that solution would work in this situation.

If someone approaches you saying there is a

problem to discuss, it's likely you can get right to it and propose a workable solution. The person likely will walk away pleased with the quick resolution.

Reflecting on the needs of others is an important consideration for any type of relationship. Now might be a good time to consider your members, your board and your staff. What cultural considerations do you need to be aware of to facilitate smooth working relationships? Who might need to be approached under a different presumption? Then, consider how you can adapt your style to maintain and improve these relationships, regardless of whether there's conflict. ●



*Carole Kaptur, RCE, SHRM-SCP, HCS, GRI,*

*C2EX, is a consultant in the National Association of REALTORS®' Strategic Association Management Services, Talent Development and Resources group.*



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## Conscious Realization

Awareness can push associations toward solutions and overcome inequities. **BY BOB TAYLOR**



In a diverse group, I would be the SAWC-MOM (straight, American, white, Christian, married, old, male). Over a decade ago, that was my label when I found myself chairing a fair housing committee for my local association. The reason I needed a label was because everyone else had one.

That need to create an identity for me may have been the first time I consciously realized inclusion in a diverse group requires us to all be treated equitably. This means that if there are to be labels, either I need one, no one should have one or—if we have them—they should not define who we are but allow us to celebrate the different perspectives we each bring to the table.

So, for REALTOR® associations, what do diversity, equity and inclusion look like? While every association is different, here are some steps every association can take.

- 1. Discover your diversity:** Think beyond the typical race, heritage, country of origin or sexual orientation and diversity in age, gender, education, income, net worth and so on.
- 2. Educate on equity:** Some associations have been having this conversation for years. For others, it may feel uncomfortable. If you are in that latter category, starting the conversation is the first step. Once you begin, the resources available are significant. For example, read *Speaking Across Generations: Messages That Satisfy Boomers, Xers,*



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*Millennials, Gen Z and Beyond* by Atlanta minister Darrell E. Hall with a foreword by Haydn Shaw, a leading author and speaker on the five generations. Listen to *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*, a podcast by Emmanuel Acho. These will give you the backstory on where we are in America today.

- 3. Investigate inclusion:** For associations with easily identifiable diver-

sity, how is that diversity woven into the fabric of your association? Where your diversity is a bit more subtle, how can you broaden your interactions to include more diverse populations? At our association, we did two things to address how we looked and who we interacted with:

- Eight years ago, the average age of a director on our board was 57 years. One of several



## Challenge yourself and those around you to learn from this history and to explore solutions.

changes was a policy that created a board position called “Young Professional Advisor,” involving those new to the business or association or who are simply young at heart. These advisers have become ambassadors, encouraging younger demographics to attend events, participate in committees and become involved in governance. It has also eliminated the notion that you must “put in your time” or that governance is dominated by a system only the favored can join. As a result, we’ve reduced the average age of a director to 47 years.

- We broadened our interactions by joining Fair Housing Centers, Habitat for Humanity, NAACP chapters, etc., and getting members placed on state and national fair housing committees.

One of the most important things you can do is follow the old saying “walk a mile.” As one example, think deeply about how

racial inequity in housing has exacerbated the wealth gap in this country, affecting members of your association and their clients. Say two buyers in 1922 purchased a home for \$5,000. For one, the

home appreciated 5% a year for 100 years. For the other, the home appreciated 4% a year for 100 years, because that person was not allowed to buy in the same neighborhood as the first buyer. As the years progressed, the value difference was:

- After 10 years: \$743
- After 30 years: \$5,393
- After 50 years: \$21,804
- After 100 years: \$404,981

By the way, after just 20 more years, that difference will be nearly \$1.2 million.

Understand the history of the issue, and let it make you angry like it did me. Allow your anger to push

you toward learning more about how systems and structures were put into place. Then, challenge yourself and those around you to learn from this history and to explore solutions. Mere discussion of the problem does not do this. In seeking solutions, work from where you want to be back toward where we are today. It is the fastest way to solve any problem. ●



*Bob Taylor, RCE, is CEO of the Grosse Pointe Board of REALTORS® in Michigan.*

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## Advanced Solutions to Elevate Your Agent Tools

Think schedules, client management, data privacy and safety. **BY ANDREW SIMS**



he real estate industry is fast-paced and demanding. In this era of inventory shortages, anxious clients and rapid sales cycles, agents need to be as organized and efficient as possible. And, as the value of real estate data rises and more companies are being acquired each year, the need for data privacy and security has never been greater.

While it is common for most agents to engage with several apps, tools and resources to assist in managing their business, cross-functionality and ease of use is critical. To assist members with these needs, association executives should remain aware of the latest technology enhancements that are providing the industry with advanced solutions for schedule management and client management, all while maintaining data privacy and safety.

### Easy and Fast Schedule Management

Managing a daily schedule can be overwhelming, especially for agents with many showings, meetings, home inspections and contractors on the schedule. A mobile app that keeps track of day-to-day activities—and includes an AI virtual assistant—is a necessity. The SentiKey Showing Service is

one tool that offers agents multiple options for daily management, such as:

- The ability to build and launch itineraries directly from within your MLS platform of choice.
- The ability to quickly schedule an appointment and provide a temporary code for a one-time showing, with the code expiring at a preselected time. Showing instructions including alarm codes and property specifics can also be communicated through the app.
- Multiple options for accommodating out-of-area agents in your market for your listings.
- The ability to coordinate schedules and showings with clients and agents through in-app chat features.
- Office managers and brokers have additional tools

available to manage the schedules and appointment requests of teams and offices.

### Client Management

Effective client management is important for numerous reasons. Clear communication is essential. So is being able to keep track of buyer clients' home-buying preferences. Tools like SentiKey Showing Service offer features that enhance your client relationships. Look for:

- Tools that help you fully engage with your clients, such as in our ClientConnect mobile app for property search and showings.
- A dashboard that offers easily accessible schedule creation for appointment approval and details about their listing.
- Ability to create and share driving routes optimized for efficiency, with recommendations for shorter routes and estimated travel times.

### Data Privacy

Agents constantly deal with sensitive information on properties and their clients. So, privacy and safety are at the forefront of any technology solution. Luckily, there have been major advancements in the area of data protection. For example, with the SentiLock suite of solutions, you can be assured that your members' data and information are never shared, there is no third-party involvement, and their data will never be sold. All communications are encrypted, and our tools will



Tools continue to evolve to provide even-more secure channels of connection and access.

continue to evolve to provide even more secure channels of connection and access.

**Agent and Homeowner Safety**

Agents need to be keenly aware of their surroundings and the people they connect with each day. For added security and protection, the SentiKey Showing Service

has embedded a simple-to-use agent safety feature giving your members a way to automatically, and discreetly, alert an emergency contact when necessary.

Today’s associations are uniquely positioned to assist their members by sharing resources, information and tools. Through updated alert systems, new tools for showing management,

improved lockbox integration, continued upgrades and ongoing technology reviews, SentiLock works with associations to give their members a solid foundation for their business needs. ●



*Andrew Sims is the national sales director at SentiLock.*



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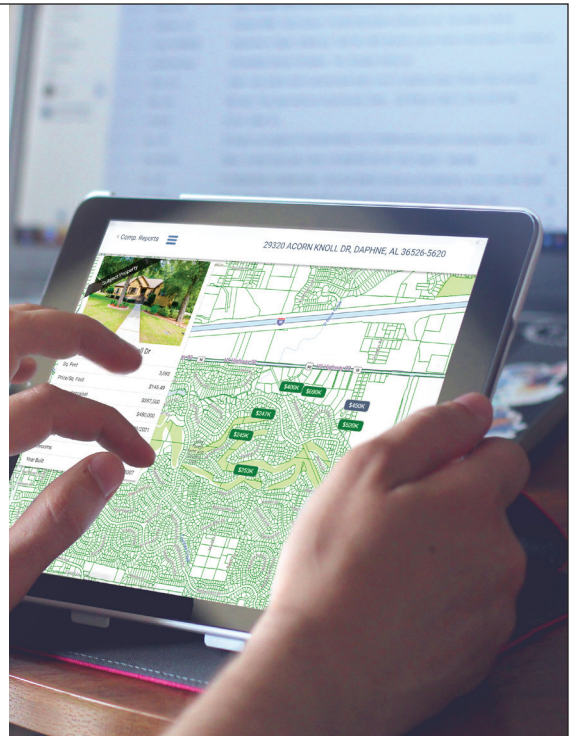


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## Positive Force

Minneapolis Area REALTORS®  
CEO Carrie Chang  
is breaking barriers.

When Carrie Chang was tapped to serve as CEO of Minneapolis Area REALTORS® in 2019, she was the first woman and the first person of color to take on that role. Those firsts, she says, are an honor that she doesn't take lightly. "I want to be a positive force in the industry, representing all regardless of my own identity," says Chang. "I think our board selecting me for the association executive role really shows the progress we are making and starts to break down the 'old boys' club' pervasive in association leadership."

### Carrie, what does inclusive leadership mean to you?

It means staff from all walks and perspectives are recruited, developed and compensated in equitable ways. In the boardroom, it means some folks take up a little less space so others can grow into their leadership. For me as the CEO, inclusive leadership means having the courage to face microaggressions, exclusion or bias, and name them; coach where possible; and correct as needed and in a

timely way. This wouldn't be possible without support from my board president and staff leaders, who share this vision of inclusive leadership.

### How is MAR helping improve homeownership access to all?

As a local association, there is a lot we can do to advance this, but little we can do alone. For example, with a local nonprofit, we hosted a first-time home buyer workshop. As a required class for buyers seeking many loan types and down payment assistance, it's a tangible way we can help. We also worked with the Minnesota state association to change purchase agreements and eliminate certain language in loan assistance programs to assure buyers utilizing these programs aren't placed at a disadvantage in the offer process. This October, we took the important step of issuing a public apology for past discrimination and outlining action steps for the future.

### What about the diversity of the profession?

As one example, MAR partnered with our state association to pilot Pathway to Achievement, which provides mentoring and scholarships to encourage people of color to participate in the profession. MAR defrays first-year business costs by covering local dues, MLS and lockbox fees, and we offer our New Agent Academy class free of charge.

### What's one trend AEs should plan for in 2023?

People are our biggest resource, and employee wellness, transparency and flexibility are crucial in a post-COVID-19 world. We work hard to build in appreciation and support for each other. I'm certainly not perfect in this, but I work at it because relationships are the key to achieving our goals for the industry and a more positive society. ●

# 250

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