

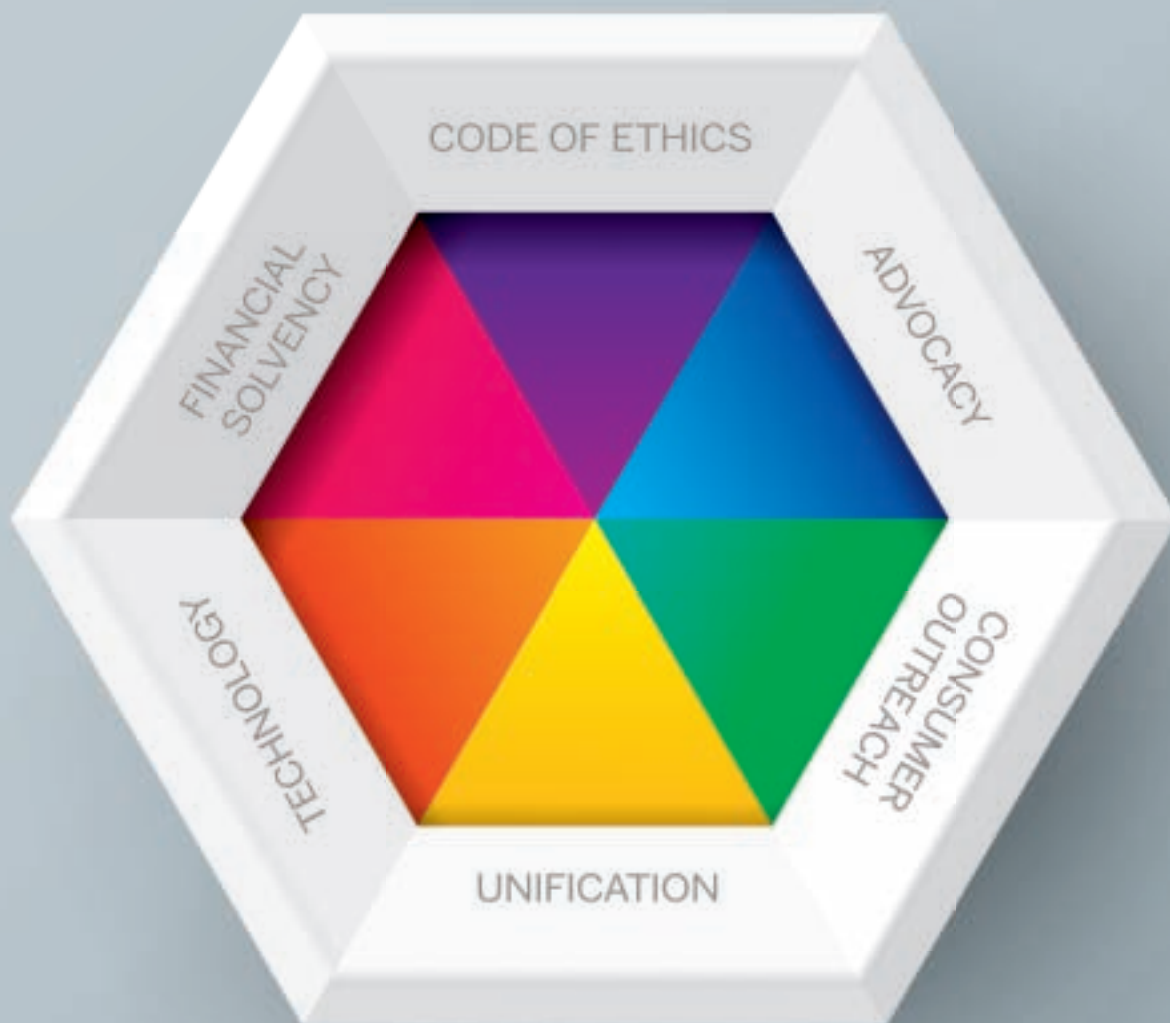
REALTOR[®] AE

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Core Standards

How to comply with the six new association requirements.

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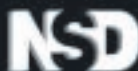
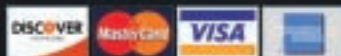
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feature

Core Standards

By June 30, 2015, every local and state REALTOR® association is obligated to prove its compliance with the six new minimum service and organizational criteria. Read about NAR's progress to date gathering existing resources, developing new ones, training facilitators, and answering the myriad questions that have arisen.

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AE voices

AE COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATE

The new standards are a time of exploration, growth, and excitement within the REALTOR® organization. [PAGE 2](#)

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A new legal publication from NAR delivers timely insights on the legal issues, new laws, and risks facing members. [PAGE 26](#)

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Bill Martin, p. 28

Opportunities in Organizational Shift



Andrea Bushnell, RCE,
EVP, North Carolina
Association of
REALTORS®, 2014 chair
of the AE committee

My youngest son, Noah, graduated from high school in June. In just a few short months, he will be joining his older brother Gabriel at a lovely, academically rigorous university not too far from home. This event reflects a great shift for my son, for me personally, and for the entirety of my family (including Twister, our Australian cattle dog who has slept with Noah almost every single night for the past 10 years). We are sadly at the end of one era, but we are standing at the cusp of another that will be filled with exploration, growth, and excitement. I have chosen to look at this not as a time to “let go” but, rather, as a time to engage in an even more significant way with both of my sons. No, I don’t get to ensure that they are safely tucked into their own beds each night, but I do get to help them focus on and achieve their own goals and ambitions. I get to witness how they build on all they have learned since their births while pursuing

their individual life paths.

My REALTOR® family is also in the midst of a great shift. We are moving into an era of greater reflection, higher levels of professionalism, loftier goals and ambitions, and measurable performance. Just as I am choosing to view the future with my sons as a time of exploration, growth, and excitement, I am adopting the same attitude about this professional transition within the REALTOR® organization. I am looking forward to seeing how much better we can all be together. I am looking forward to working even more closely with my peers and exploring how we can help each other focus on and achieve our professional goals and ambitions. I want to go beyond the mandates and truly seek what is possible in the world. And I want each of you to have the same opportunity.

This edition of REALTOR® AE magazine is filled with articles about the new Mandatory Core Standards. For some of you, these standards are easily achievable. To you, I would implore you to stretch even further, to challenge yourselves to even greater performance, and to help others who are perhaps struggling a bit more. For others, these standards seem out of reach. To you, I would encourage you to

dig deep, but to also ask for help and to seek the assistance of your members, the neighboring associations, and/or your state association. This is not something that any of us need to, or even can, accomplish alone. One of the goals of these Standards is to improve the unity of our organization. Unity can and must start with all of us working together to achieve what may currently seem to be impossible.

At the end of the day, our members want and deserve for their professional association to be the very best it can be at the local, state, and national level. NAR leadership should be commended for providing REALTOR® association executives the opportunity to participate in creating the very model of what an association for any industry should be for its members. No, there is nothing easy about this shift and what is expected of each of us. To quote John F. Kennedy: “We are not here to curse the darkness, but to light a candle that can guide us through that darkness to a safe and sane future. For the world is changing. The old era is ending. The old ways will not do.” And never forget that a rising tide lifts all boats. We are in this together and I cannot wait to see where the tide takes us.



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By Amy DuBose, RCE, association executive, San Marcos Area Board of REALTORS® (center) in collaboration with Regina Tubré, RCE, (left) and Laura Harm (right).

Our Merger: How It All Started

Three Texas associations merge to keep regional identity.

Pictured: San Marcos Area Board headquarters.

Over the course of 20 years, our three associations—New Braunfels/Canyon Lake association (650 members), San Marcos Area board (325 members), and Seguin board (135 members)—talked a lot about merging. We started a regional MLS system in 2000 and collaborated on classes and luncheons occasionally. Our three main Texas communities are only 20 to 30 minutes from one another and many of our members have worked together. Our housing markets are strong and there is a lot of new development.

The conversation about merging never went anywhere until July 2013, when the presidents of each association met with the idea of merging. They were the initial driving force of the merger.

At one time, our markets were distinct; they were a college community, a rural community, and a tourist community, but rapid development blurred the lines. Our three associations are sandwiched between two large markets, Austin and San Antonio, and although we didn't live in fear that our associations would be gobbled up by our neighbors, our leadership knew the importance of preserving our identity as one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. We also wanted added benefits for our members while still keeping a local voice. It was the right time, and we had the right leaders in place. Their strength and dedication to success for all propelled the merger forward.

The merger process was successful for us because we had equal say. We all followed the same process from start to finish. Our

merger committee was composed of equal representation: eight from each association and the AE. After many meetings, our merger agreement was drafted. Then it was time for the membership vote. Each association had more than 40 percent participation in this vote, and more than 95 percent of the voting members approved the merger, which was authorized and finalized by the National Association of REALTORS® on Dec. 23, five months after talks started and only a month and a half after our first merger committee meeting.

Our new name, reflecting our distinct area, is pending approval from NAR.

Tear It Down to Build It Up

A merger requires a lot of rebuilding. Even though you may have two or three associations that are already formed and running, it does not mean that you will have all you need for the newly merged association. Piecing together components from each association is helpful but doesn't give you the end product immediately. Your board of directors and staff need to be accepting of this and allow time for development of new policies, procedures, and structures. NAR has some great tools to help associations through hiring the new AE, structuring governing documents, and creating policies. We took advantage of these and received financial assistance from NAR's Unify program to hire Jerry Matthews as our merger consultant.

Continued on p. 6

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Continued from p. 4

Jerry helped us form our merger committee, walked us through NAR's process, and offered guidance on everything within our merger agreement. Consultants are very helpful, but do not expect them to have all the answers. You need to know your local agents, markets, and structures. Each organization is different, and your newly merged one is no exception.

If we learned one thing from the process, it is that merging three companies into one is extremely hard. Unless you have a seasoned CPA on staff, please do not try to go this alone. I wish we had hired a CPA firm to work with us on building our new accounting system because each association had a different method.

Besides consulting an attorney to receive his or her blessing on your new governing documents, it is also very important to ask what your state requires for a merger. In Texas, we were required to fill out paperwork, send the attorneys our merger agreement, and provide a very detailed account of each vote taken.

From merging our NRDS databases and reconfiguring our association management system to storing tons of membership data from the dissolved associations and renegotiating contracts with vendors, there's a lot to be done.

Communication with members is very important throughout the process. We took all three membership spreadsheets and put them in the Constant Contact e-mail management system. It wasn't perfect, but it allowed us to start communicating with our much-larger membership database immediately.

Everything All at Once

We've compared going through a merger and simultaneously running an association with having two full-time jobs running in parallel. We are thrilled that the behind-the-scenes challenges were not evident to our members; however, they are aware of increased member benefits with no break in services.

If your association is looking into a merger, it's important for everyone to have realistic expectations. No, things won't work as seamlessly as you want. Yes, things will fall through the cracks. The bottom line is the benefit to the member. Don't be afraid of the merger. We've run into our fair share of speed bumps. But when members ask us about the merger, we affirm that it was best for them—that's what we're really all here for.

Note: The San Marcos Area Board of REALTORS® now represents more than 1,150 members from five counties between Austin and San Antonio. It is currently going through its second application to change its name. Amy DuBose (amy@smabor.com) is the association executive of the newly merged board. Regina Tubré, former AE from New Braunfels/Canyon Lake, is director of finance and operations; and Laura Harm, former AE from Seguin, is director of education and programs.

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

Birmingham Association of REALTORS®, Ala.



Honoring our Veterans ♦

Members of the Birmingham Association of REALTORS® public relations committee delivered bags of essential items to veterans at the Birmingham Veteran's Hospital.

Coeur d'Alene Association of REALTORS®, Idaho



Beautification Efforts in Idaho ♦

Members of the Coeur d'Alene Association of REALTORS® participated in a highway cleanup community beautification project.

Oklahoma Association of REALTORS®



Oklahoma Debuts New Branding

The Oklahoma Association of REALTORS® new office gallery reflects the refreshed brand of the association, which includes a new logo and the slogan: Connecting. Informing. Uniting.

Example of a program that meets an NAR core standard: ● Advocacy engagement. ● Consumer Outreach: Voice for Real Estate®. ♦ Consumer Outreach: Enhancing the REALTOR® image. ■ Consumer Outreach: Engaging the public in legislative or political issues. ◀◀ Consumer Outreach: Community investment.



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NAR President Steve Brown addressing the ASPAI conference in Lima, Peru, where he encouraged them to work closely with NAR and realtor.com® “so we can all learn and prosper together in a global economy.”

NAR Delegation Delivers Collaboration Message in Peru

NAR President Steve Brown, accompanied by association staff, REALTORS®, and Christine Todd, RCE, CEO of the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®, spoke at the Peruvian real estate conference and expo in Lima in June.

The Northern Virginia Association is the National Association of REALTORS®’ ambassador association to Peru. Todd has visited Peru before and hosts delegations of Peruvian real estate professionals every year at NAR conferences.

“I arrange for them to visit our offices and several real estate offices,” says Todd. “I am always struck by how generous our REALTORS® are with their time, and the Peruvians are always eager to see how our MLS and lockbox system work.”

The Northern Virginia-Peru partnership started in 2007 when NVAR President Luis Lama, a native of Peru, asked Todd if she could help him gather educational material for the newly formed real estate association in Peru. “The leadership of ASPAI specifically asked for classes on how we market, sell, finance, and appraise real estate in the United States,” says Todd. “They wanted a code of ethics and to create an association that was respected by the media and governing bodies.”

NVAR’s current president, Mario Rubio, serves as the NAR liaison to Peru and, with financial assistance from NAR, travels to Peru at least once a year to attend meetings and offer guidance to the ASPAI leadership.

Before the ASPAI conference in Lima, Rubio and Todd visited the organization’s offices. “President Maria-Teresa Secca, who teaches the code of ethics to new members, gleamed with pride as she showed us their office and classroom,” says Todd.

Most gratifying to Todd is the progress she’s seen over the years as ASPAI has matured, she says. “Today I can say that along with their MLS, ASPAI truly is the ‘Voice for Real Estate®’ in Peru.”

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®



REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill ●

Members and staff of the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS® took to the state capitol June 11 to meet lawmakers and represent the interests of home owners.

Mainstreet Organization of REALTORS®, Ill.: REALTOR® Assoc. of the Fox Valley, Ill.



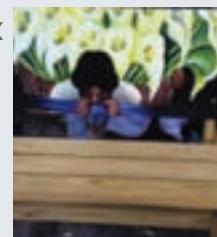
Two Illinois Associations Host Joint Housing Expo «

The city of Aurora, west of Chicago, has been lauded as a highly livable city. It has a strong down-payment assistance program and plenty of affordable housing—yet a high percentage of the employees working in Aurora commute from elsewhere. The 15,000-member Mainstreet Organization of REALTORS® and the 1,500-member REALTOR® Association of the Fox Valley partnered with the city and local lending institutions to get the word out about affordable housing in the Aurora area. They used a Housing Opportunity Grant from NAR to host a housing expo and trolley tour they called “Experience Aurora.”

Kankakee-Iroquois-Ford Association of REALTORS®, Ill.

Seating by REALTORS® «

The 214-member Kankakee-Iroquois-Ford Association of REALTORS®, Ill., made use of an NAR REALTOR® Party Placemaking micro-grant for a project to fund decorative park benches for use at the community farmers’ market and other area events. Local students built the benches and local artists painted them.





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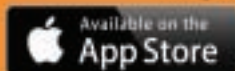
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Judith Lindenau

1941–2014

The REALTOR® family lost one of its most prolific, visionary, and beloved association executives on May 13 when Judith Lindenau, 72, passed away after her third battle with cancer.

Retired from the Traverse Area Association of REALTORS® in 2007 after 29 years, Lindenau enjoyed a second career as a consultant to REALTOR® associations across the country. She freely shared her insights on association management through her blog and contributions to this publication and others. She served as a mentor and adviser to many in association management and the real estate community.

Prior to joining the REALTOR® family, Lindenau was a professor at the University of South Dakota and later an instructor of music and creative writing at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Mich.

In 2003 Lindenau received the William R. Magel Award of Excellence in REALTOR® Association Management. She served on several state and national committees including the National Association of REALTORS® Strategic Planning Committee. She was a charter member of the REALTOR® Certified Executive (RCE) certification board and an RCE scholarship now bears her name: the Judith Lindenau, RCE, CAE, Scholarship.

Lindenau served on the Board of the International Real Property Foundation, and served as an envoy to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bosnia, Georgia, Russia, Africa, and Armenia to assist in the creation of real estate trade associations in emerging nations. Lindenau wrote the IRPF's "Handbook for Real Estate Associations," a publication used by the volunteer leaders and staff of real estate associations around the world.

Judith is survived by her two children, stepfather, and a brother. Remembrance donations can be made to the American Cancer Society or the Judith Lindenau, RCE, CAE, Scholarship, care of the AE Professional Development Fund, National Association of REALTORS®, 430 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.



AEs On The Move

● **Brittani Cowles**, 84-member **Wilkes County** Association of REALTORS®, N.C. ● **Brandy Gofourth**, 134-member **Stillwater Board** of REALTORS®, Okla. ● **Annalee Hickey**, 121-member **Spanish Peaks** Board of REALTORS®, Colo. ● **Lori Kelly**, 262-member **New Canaan** Board of REALTORS®, Conn. ● **Davina Lara**, 768-member **Palm Springs Regional** Association of REALTORS®, Calif. ● **Robyn Locke**, **Montana** Association of REALTORS® ● **Norman Morris**, 11,138-member **Louisiana** REALTORS® Association. ● **Christopher Nave**, 788-member **Outer Banks** Association of REALTORS®, N.C. ● **Amber Robertson**, 37-member **Idyllwild** Association of REALTORS®, Calif. ● **Dave Stefanides**, 10,965-member **Orange County** Association of REALTORS®, Calif. ● **Robert Taylor**, 640-member **Grosse Point** Board of REALTORS®, Mich. ● **Brian Toohy**, RCE, 508-member **Columbia** Board of REALTORS®, Mo. ● **Chelsea Westerberg**, 1,528-member **Alaska** Association of REALTORS®. ● **Tracy Wommack**, 168-member **Texarkana** Board of REALTORS®, Ark.



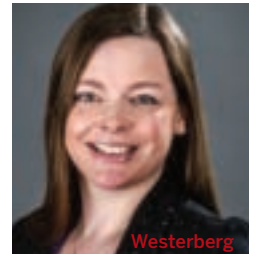
Morris



Nave



Taylor



Westerberg

New Resources From NAR

State Association Consumer Advocacy Highlighted at realtor.com®

NAR is now accepting current consumer-centered public policy content for posting on realtor.com®. Stories detailing your associations' efforts to promote private property, smart growth, affordable housing, fair housing programs, tax deductions, and other legislative, regulatory, legal, or development initiatives can be featured on realtor.com®'s home sales listings pages for the respective states. The content should be about a positive decision or action taken in which the REALTOR® association was instrumental in the outcome. Currently NAR is seeking submissions from state REALTOR® associations but expects to include local association content later this year. For more information, contact Rick Miller, 202-383-1107, rmiller@realtors.org. Make submissions using the form at RealtorActioncenter.com/consumersubmissionform.



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NATIONAL
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Standards & Beyond

Following the New Mandatory Core Standards for Associations of REALTORS®



“By instituting a set of core standards for every one of our 1,400 local and state associations, we take a giant step forward in ensuring that we reach our goals together,” says National Association of REALTORS® President **Steven Brown**.

“Only as a united association with common goals and a common vision are we stronger.”

In early 2014, Brown convened a Presidential Advisory Group of association executives to determine just what those core standards should be. The standards developed by the Organizational Standards PAG—with feedback from AEs across the country—were approved in May by the NAR Board of Directors.

Consisting of six components—Code of Ethics, advocacy, consumer outreach, unification, technology, and financial solvency—the standards will require some associations to institute new programs and practices. Yet, many associations are close to meeting these standards and will only need to comply with the reporting criteria, says **Andrea Bushnell**, chair of the standards PAG and CEO of the North Carolina Association of REALTORS®.

“The goal of the standards is to ensure that every member is provided with the services they deserve and that every association is contributing to the strength of the organization as a whole,” Brown says.

By June 30, 2015, every local and state REALTOR® association is obligated to prove its compliance with the six new minimum service and organizational criteria. A charter revocation procedure will be initiated for associations that are not compliant by the deadline.

“Hopefully, there won’t be any charter revocations,” NAR CEO **Dale Stinton** says. “Our intent is for every associations out there to meet these core standards in one way or another.”

The initiative has a \$20 million budget, all of which is earmarked to help associations meet the standards.

“We know that there will be mergers,” says standards PAG member **Christine Todd**, CEO of the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®, “but also more consolidation of resources, both human and financial, that will give the associations the resources they need to do their jobs.”

Associations can share services to meet these standards, hire outside firms, merge with other associations, or opt to become a chapter of another association.

“I believe we now have not just an opportunity but an obligation to use our collective resources towards winning legislative issues and legal challenges, securing the value of our brand to the public, and providing opportunities for increasing the professionalism of our membership,” says standards PAG member **Cindy Butts**, CEO of the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®. “If this PAG plays even a small role in bringing us all toward working together in the big fights being waged against our industry, it will have been worth any effort to get there.”

The standards printed in the following pages are the vision. The work underway now at the national association and among its volunteer committees is to develop a clear definition of what, exactly, is required and how associations comply, Stinton says. NAR is gathering existing resources and developing new ones, training facilitators, posting updates and FAQs on realtor.org, and fielding questions. The online reporting system where associations will detail how they’ve meet the standards’ criteria is expected by November.

Small associations may be thinking, “How can we possibly do all this?”

“You can,” says Bushnell. “With staff and volunteer participation, and the assistance of NAR and your state, every association has the ability to make it happen.”

How to Get Started

The first step is to download and familiarize yourself with the standards and the compliance criteria posted at realtor.org. Highlight the areas where you’re already meeting the requirements and circle the areas where you’ll need to develop a new event, practice, or document.

NAR’s resources are vast and each state will also have a menu of services available to local associations. Communicate the standards to your leadership and volunteers in a way that highlights available opportunities, both financial and other. Talk with neighboring associations about collaborating on programs and events to meet the standards. Eventually, meeting these core standards on an annual basis will become routine.



Faster & Easier Ethics Enforcement

Core Standard I: Code of Ethics

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

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

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

When it comes to the new Code of Ethics standards, the biggest change may come as very welcome relief to associations, Todd says. Revisions to the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual, expected this fall, are aimed at simplifying and expediting the hearing process and should make the task of upholding the Code of Ethics faster and easier for all associations, she says.

"The problem we noticed and wanted to address with the new requirements was that a large number of professional standards cases are going unheard or unfiled because of a lack of resources, and that had to end," Todd says. "From a staff point of view, COE enforcement is a very time-consuming process. If a member files a professional standards case against another REALTOR®, the paperwork involved is mind-boggling and eats up large chunks of time."

The proposed enhancements to the enforcement procedures may include a citation system option, in which members can plead guilty, pay the fine, and skip the long hearing process. Other recommended changes proposed by the standards PAG include ways to expedite hearings, such as using e-mail, without taking away someone's right to a fair hearing.

Ensuring that the Code is enforced will go a long way toward improving member professionalism, Todd says. "At my association, we have two or three professional standards hearings a month, and we can do that because we have three lawyers on staff and a large grievance committee that meets in shifts once a week—so there's no delay in the process."

But for smaller boards with fewer resources, members know that the professional standards process can take months and can result in a complaint being withdrawn. The new standards cause associations to rethink their Code enforcement strategies and may result in the formation of new regional enforcement agreements or states adopting the administration of professional standards for local boards, says Todd.

"Some of the bigger states have professional standards down to a science, but that's not the case nationwide," Todd says. "What we want this Standard to achieve is for local associations to evaluate their resources and pursue the enforcement of the Code locally, but if they can't, then give the task to the state."

Either method will meet the requirement.

Compliance System

Electronic Reporting Platform

Compliance with the standards has to be made as clear, objective, and simple as possible, says **Cliff Niersbach**, NAR associate general counsel charged with implementing the core standards initiative. To that end, an online reporting platform, in development

at NAR, is expected to include check boxes and data fields and enable associations to attach documents. The online system will streamline compliance reporting, ensure that all criteria have quantifiable measures, and eliminate subjectivity.



Choose From the Advocacy Menu

The REALTOR® Party Initiative and \$40 political activity dues increase in 2011 established that political advocacy is every REALTOR®'s responsibility. In the past three years, REALTORS®' grassroots activity has surged, resulting in more political clout and legislative victories in every corner of the country. Associations have expanded their political presence not only at the state capitols but also in the town halls, where local candidates vie for REALTOR® association endorsement because it carries weight throughout the community.

Although associations have made great strides in a short time, this standard aims to codify political advocacy in every association's mission and mindset, not only by including it in the required strategic plans but also by requiring local participation every year.

"If you're getting nervous about how to meet the advocacy requirements in the new core standards, we have more than 40 programs, grants, and tools, as well as expert staff to help your association meet the various advocacy and community involvement requirements," says **Susan Helm**, RCE, NAR vice president for advocacy operations and communications.

NAR has a menu of sample activities and blueprints for outreach to meet the needs of every association big or small, experienced in advocacy or not, Helm says.

For example, NAR's REALTORS® Political Action Committee staff can help each association that doesn't already have an RPAC solicitation on dues bills craft one that complies with its state campaign finance laws and meets this core standard.*

This section of the standards also specifies that each association provide its members with information about the value of investing in RPAC. There are RPAC promotional and informational materials available in the RPAC section of the REALTOR® Action Center that associations can use to comply (realtoractioncenter.com/rpac/for-associations).

As for boosting and demonstrating participation in NAR Calls for Action, one of the first steps is to see how active your members have been. Call for Action response rates on federal issues, sorted by state and local association, are provided on the REALTOR® Action Center at realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/cfa-report.

If your state association issues Calls for Action on state legislative

Core Standard II: Advocacy

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

Notwithstanding the above, a local association that chooses not to include a PAC or PAF contribution on their dues bills, may, in the alternative, meet this Mandatory Core Standard if they deliver to NAR the full amount of any NAR established RPAC goal contributed by whatever legal means determined to be in the best interest of the local association (i.e., a corporate contribution in the full amount of the NAR established goal). In whatever manner the NAR established RPAC goal is met, funds shall be sent to RPAC or the PAF individually or collectively by/through the State Association (i.e., one check concept). The intent of this standard is to provide the best opportunity for every association to meet its goal.

Unless prohibited by state law, it is recommended that to reach the highest participation levels possible, each local association include the contribution to either the PAC or the PAF "above the line" with appropriate disclaimers about the voluntary nature of the member contribution.

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

C. Each association shall demonstrate participation in Calls for Action delivered through the REALTOR® Action Center (e.g., promotion through websites, newsletters, office visits, etc.). It is the state and local association's obligation to provide adequate proof of participation. NAR shall monitor state association participation primarily through the REALTOR® Action Center Response Reports. If there are signs of insufficient participation, NAR shall investigate and encourage compliance. The state associations shall monitor local association participation primarily through the REALTOR® Action Center Response Reports. If there are signs of insufficient participation, the state association shall investigate and encourage compliance.

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

E. Each association shall demonstrate advocacy engagement. For program ideas go to My REALTOR® Party Resource Guide at realtoractioncenter.com/realtor-party/documents/MPR-Resource-Guide.pdf.

*Contact Brooke Roth, managing director, RPAC Fundraising, broth@realtors.org, 202-383-1158.

Advisers, Funding, & Incentives

The NAR Board of Directors approved up to **\$20 million** to support implementation of the core standards: \$5 million to help associations create or update their business or strategic plan; \$3 million to assist states with compliance; and \$12 million to assist associations that choose to merge, consolidate, dissolve, or become a chapter or council of another association.

Grants of \$2,500 to \$5,000 will be available to associations to develop a strategic plan or to enhance an existing strategic plan. Funds can be used for any purpose the association deems appropriate, including facilitator fees, meetings and facilities, administrative expenses, travel expenses, etc.

Grants will be disbursed after the strategic plan has been completed and submitted to and approved by NAR. Grants will be based on the number of REALTOR® members at \$10 per member, with a minimum grant of \$2,500 regardless of association size. Grants will be available for strategic plans created or enhanced between **May 17, 2014, and June 30, 2015**.

NAR-trained facilitators are available to guide associations through the process. NAR invited experienced association management professionals to apply to attend specific core standards facilitator training in Chicago in July. Participants are listed in the facilitator database on realtor.org. Associations can choose from these facilitators, use a facilitator of their own choice, or develop a strategic or business plan without the assistance of a facilitator.

State associations can apply for a grant up to \$100,000 to create and implement resources to assist local associations in meeting the core standards.

or regulatory issues, the local association must demonstrate promotion of those CFAs to members in websites, social media, newsletters or any other promotional and marketing avenues used by the association.

The final requirement under advocacy is engagement; among the types of engagement are diversity, smart growth, and housing opportunity initiatives, which can all be supported by NAR grants. A number of specific resources to help are being developed and will be available soon on the REALTOR® Action Center. In the meantime, dozens of programs, resources, and grants are listed in the REALTOR® Party Association Resource Guide at realtoractioncenter.com/realtor-party/documents/MRP-resource-guide.pdf.

"These resources are available to all associations to help raise RPAC funds and activate member mobilization so we can elect REALTOR® Champions to public office and advance public policies to protect and encourage real estate ownership," Helm says.

FAQs & Advice

Fleshing out the Details

Will our annual charity bowl-a-thon count as community outreach? How detailed does our strategic plan need to be to qualify? What if our political activity is for a candidate that our state association doesn't endorse?

Hundreds of questions, broad and specific, surface in an initiative this enormous. Questions from AEs, elected leaders, and workgroups tasked with fleshing out the programs and writing the resources will all be answered, says Niersbach.

"Right now, we're asking REALTORS® and association executives to be patient while tools are being developed," he says. "There's still a year before the deadline and most associations are doing most of the required activities already. That being said, there are some things that are going to be new to associations, so we are busy collecting and creating resources."

Six teams of NAR staff are tackling questions, compiling resources, and preparing guidance for associations on following the new standards. Already, an extensive FAQ document and other resources are available at realtor.org.



Strengthen the Fabric of the Community

“Local and state associations connect with and support their communities every day in meaningful ways to improve the lives of members and neighbors,” says standards PAG member **Marc Lebowitz**, CEO of the Ada County Association of REALTORS®, Idaho. From Habitat for Humanity builds to sponsoring housing fairs to volunteering at homeless shelters, community outreach is often the association activity that attracts the most member participation, AEs say.

“The PAG believed this would likely be the easiest area of compliance for local associations, as community service is what many of them routinely do,” Lebowitz says. “In fact, there were more questions from all-sized associations about having to report the vast amount that they do versus trying to come up to the standard.”

Yet community outreach is multifaceted. This Standard covers four distinct types of outreach, each with its own purpose and benefit: being the Voice for Real Estate®, community involvement, advocacy efforts, and community investment.

To be the Voice for Real Estate®, associations can release local housing statistics and make statements on local real estate issues; community investment can range from charity events to holding a seat on a school board. Advocacy efforts aren’t necessarily political but are issue-driven, such as advocating for a subsidized housing development or a new public transit system; and community investment includes involvement in smart-growth initiatives or a neighborhood revitalization project.

The goal is to get the members engaged in consumer outreach activities and not to have it be solely a staff function, Lebowitz says. “Some functions, such as representing the Voice for Real Estate®, could fall into the job description of the association executive but would also involve other volunteer spokespeople, either for quotes or media contacts.”

If any association believes it falls short in any area, NAR has extensive materials in each aspect, including templates for media releases and ad campaign materials, that may be easily customized for local use.

“The role of the member in community outreach is more prominent in some communities than in others,” Lebowitz says. “The goal is for associations to offer community outreach, on behalf of the membership, that addresses the four key activities.”

Core Standard III: Public Outreach

A. Every association will demonstrate engagement in not less than four meaningful consumer engagement activities annually, reflected by:

1. Being the “Voice for Real Estate®”: Promoting market statistics and/or real estate trends and issues (e.g., release through press releases, interviews, etc. of MLS statistics, local market statistics, NAR research reports, local/state analysis of NAR statistics, etc.);

2. Community involvement: Promoting the value proposition of using a REALTOR® and/or engaging in community activities which enhance the image of the REALTOR®;

3. Advocacy efforts: Engaging the public in legislative/political issues that impact real estate and related issues; and

4. Community investment: Organizing human resources (i.e., assisting in a Habitat for Humanity build, etc.) or fundraising for the benefit of charitable/community organizations.

To meet this four-activity per year requirement, each association must execute from some combination of at least 3 of the 4 listed engagement activities during the year. It will not be enough, for example, for an association to engage in the same activity 4 times each year nor will financial support of a charitable organization alone be considered to have met this Mandatory Core Standard. Additionally, any one activity can only be quantified in one category.

Example: Assume Association A releases quarterly market statistics to the media satisfying (1) above. Association A must also engage in some combination of the other listed activities as follows: a community involvement activity (2) and an advocacy effort (3); or a community involvement activity (2) and a community investment activity (4); or an advocacy effort (3) and a community investment activity (4).



Core Standard IV: Unification Efforts and Support of the REALTOR® Organization

A. Every association will maintain, have access to or will have legal counsel available.

B. Associations shall adopt and maintain corporate documents, policies and procedures that conform to local, state and federal laws. Associations will timely file legally required reports and documents (e.g., corporate renewal documents, state and federal tax returns, etc.).

C. Every association shall have and annually adopt a business or strategic plan including an advocacy component. If, for example, an association develops a 3-year strategic plan, that plan must be adopted and the adoption reported annually.

D. Local and state association chief staff must complete at least six hours of REALTOR® association professional development on an annual basis. (i.e., state, regional or national).

E. Each state individually or in cooperation with another state association must annually provide at least six hours of professional development opportunities for local association executives.

F. Associations will promote to their members the importance of participating in any NAR conducted effort to assess member understanding of the overall value provided by associations at all three levels of the REALTOR® organization.

G. Licensees in limited function referral organizations (LFRO) shall be identified by the local and/or state associations for the purpose of inviting their participation in political advocacy (e.g., PAF and Calls for Action).

H. To ensure proper dues reporting and collection, every state association will provide to each local association a comparative list of non-member licensees to the state membership records, at least semi annually.

Together We Are Strong

Unification is the bricks and mortar of the required core standards for associations. Its eight components are designed to ensure that a strong and consistent infrastructure is in place, because without a sound and transparent organization at the root, any association member service, product, or initiative is in jeopardy, Bushnell says.

Many of the components of this standard have been in place for a long time and some are new, reflecting the challenges and opportunities in today's business and political arena. One significant new requirement is for every association to have a strategic or business plan that includes an advocacy component, says standards PAG member **Gavin Blair**, CEO of the Dayton Area Board of REALTORS®.

"The purpose of a strategic plan is to list goals and the process around how to achieve these goals," Blair says. "It is a living, breathing document that helps guide organizations into the future."

Most associations review and update their strategic plan annually, yet many associations sporadically develop plans or have never felt the need for one.

"I often say, 'You don't know what you don't know,'" Blair says. "We just did our first strategic plan in Dayton in many years and the membership was amazed at what they didn't know about the association."

The advocacy component of a strategic plan could include goals such as becoming

more involved in the selection of elected officials or developing position statements on ongoing local issues.

Bill Malkasian, NAR's vice president of political strategic initiatives, and his team of REALTOR® Party consultants are available to help every association not only identify advocacy activities best suited for their location and resources but also execute them—from applying for the grant or program to completing the entire project.

NAR already has a strategic planning tool kit for associations on realtor.org with samples, videos, a step-by-step guide, and related materials. New with these standards are a financial incentive to complete and submit a valid strategic plan by the deadline and advisers to come to your association and walk you through the process (*see sidebar on p. 16*).

Another requirement under the unification standards is for ongoing continuing education of the association executive. This education standard is intended in part to keep AEs apprised of organization-wide initiatives and resources, Bushnell says. AEs can comply with this by attending the now-mandated six hours of state association-offered AE education, regional AE events or conferences, or the annual AE Institute. Online, AEs also have the options of NAR's free REALTOR® Association Management course, self-study courses on professional standards, and classes leading to the REALTOR® AE designation, RCE.



Core Standard V: Technology

A. Every association must have an interactive website (defined as the ability to move between websites and create active links), post access to professional standards and arbitration filing processes on the website and create a link to the websites of the other levels of the association for promotion of member programs, products and services.

B. Every association must utilize an email and/or internet based means for member communication.



Core Standard VI: Financial Solvency

A. Every association must adopt policies to ensure the fiscal integrity of their financial operations.

B. All associations, state or local, with revenue of \$50,000 or more must submit a report from a CPA which includes either an audit opinion or an accountant's review report on an annual basis. For those associations with revenues less than \$50,000 annually, a compilation report prepared by a CPA will be acceptable. These thresholds apply to all associations whether tax exempt or for profit. It will be left to the discretion of each association as to the frequency of an audit versus a review, recognizing that the costs of each type of engagement vary greatly.

C. Any association considering bankruptcy must first obtain NAR's consent to file for bankruptcy. To the extent permitted by law, any association that declares bankruptcy will be subject to automatic charter review.

Technology Backbone

“Whether it’s on a smartphone, tablet, or computer, we know that the majority of Americans are plugged in somehow and all REALTOR® associations have to be as well,” says **Jarrod Grasso**, PAG member and CEO of the New Jersey Association of REALTORS®. “It’s essential that when consumers are looking to buy or sell a home that our associations around the country have an online presence and can be a resource in that process.”

For this reason, all associations are required to have an interactive association website and use e-mail. NAR’s Center for REALTOR® Technology is available to assist associations with technical advice in launching a website, although nearly all associations already comply.

To emphasize that only REALTORS® (and

not nonmember licensees) are subject to the Code of Ethics, all association websites must have information for members and consumers on filing a complaint. “It’s important that associations have an online presence where members and nonmembers can easily find information about programs and services at the local, state, and national association,” Grasso says.

Members need communications about important events, activities, and programs sent to them by the association to maximize their investment. An association can choose to supplement e-mail communications using social media channels. More specific and technical guidance is online at realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/realtor-association-core-standards-technology-compliance-guide.

Opportunities to Ensure Financial Stability

It’s not often, but it has happened where an association’s staff or volunteers give in to the temptation of funds that are routinely inadequately accounted for.

“I served on the NAR Finance Committee for four years and it was very sad for me to see a board come before the committee and say; ‘We can’t afford to pay our national dues—money that we billed and collected—because someone absconded with it,’” Todd says.

This standard’s goal is to minimize the opportunities for theft by detecting financial vulnerabilities before something tragic happens, she says.

“By increasing the levels of oversight required, by requiring an audit or a review in most cases, the hope is that the financial controls within the REALTOR® family will be strengthened so that opportunities for fraud or malfeasance will be reduced,” says **John Pierpoint**, NAR chief financial officer. “This better protects

our REALTOR® brand nationally and keeps our associations out of the news for all the wrong reasons.”

“REALTORS® are held to a very high fiduciary duty when it comes to the deposit money they get for escrow,” Todd says. “If the REALTORS® are being held accountable for the money that’s being entrusted to them, why shouldn’t the associations be held to the same standard?”

Financial policies to ensure fiscal integrity can range from document retention policies to payment policies. Other topics to consider are conflicts of interest, how dues are collected, and expense reimbursement.

The standard’s annual financial review requirement will be a new budget item for many small associations.

“What we are hoping for is that the associations that truly don’t have the staff or the money to abide by the standards will either merge or form a chapter,” says Todd.

Contemplating the Future

In Montana, Texas, and Idaho, as in every state, small rural associations are starting to ponder the core standards, what they mean, how to comply, and how to report compliance. The state associations are in gear, communicating standards news and developing resources, while small, volunteer-run associations are planning their future.

"I'm wondering what our REALTOR® associations—staffed and unstaffed, local and state—will look like in the next year or two," says **Tia R. Robbin**, RCE, EO, Northwest Montana Association of REALTORS®. "Some associations are waiting for the discussion to begin to identify the options and weigh the benefits and costs of maintaining a local association, merging, or becoming a chapter of a local or the state association."

Mergers may be a good option in highly populated areas with overlap of services and memberships. But in rural eastern Montana where some the REALTOR® associations are 200 miles apart, the idea of merging with another local association is not practical simply because of distance, Robbin says. And also, each community and real estate market is very different.

Small but ready to meet the challenge

The district vice president for South Central Montana, **Tim Hudson**, a broker in Billings, met with 14 members of the 70-member Lewistown Board of REALTORS® in early May to talk about the proposed minimum standards and the assurance that there will be support for them, provided by NAR, the state association, and possibly other local associations. This small board does not see the six areas of the core standards as intimidating, says Hudson, but as a requirement it needs to complete.

"And they don't see themselves as wanting to be a division of a larger association. They want to be their own, local association, and maintain their structure as best they can," he says.

In Montana, there are 15 local associations; eight have no paid staff. And there are 85 members at large, meaning they have no local association in their area. The state association sees a huge benefit in keeping local boards' presence in their community, Montana Association of REALTORS® CEO **Peggy Trenk** says. "They are a part of the community and have the political and business connections in that region that benefit all REALTORS®. We don't want to take that away or undermine that presence at all, but maybe the state association can help the local meet the standards by offering a menu of services where the local association contracts some of those services from the state, such

as professional standards administration or website creation."

Texas Association of REALTORS® CEO and standards PAG member **Travis Kessler** anticipates no change in the number and type of associations in his state due to the new requirements. "The core standards will change some of these local boards' responsibilities, but it doesn't mean that they can't meet them," he says. "If there's a willingness to take on these new responsibilities, then absolutely they can do it. We can help them with the ideas, we can generate the tools, but in the end they will have to get the work done."

State associations ready assistance plans

Already, the Texas association is meeting with local associations to discuss the standards and local needs. "We'll be working with each of them to develop a strategic plan with an advocacy component, which is something most of them don't currently have," Kessler says. "It gives them an opportunity to enhance their role in consumer engagement and advocacy responsibilities that maybe they've done but it hasn't been part of their plan."

Unique to Texas is the large number of local associations (23 in all) managed by the state association. "The viability of our small local associations with no AE on staff remains very strong," Kessler says. "We help them retain their autonomy and their identity because of their role in our political system. They are engaged in our fundraising for PAC dollars, they are key for us in grassroots mobilization in elections. So if they want to be a viable board of REALTORS®, we're going to help them retain that because we see the strength in the local associations working within their community with our elected officials. If they wanted to merge, we would help them facilitate that, but only if they see it as the best decision for their membership."

Of the 22 associations in Idaho, nine have paid staff, about the same number are managed by an association management company, and the rest share services, says standards PAG member **Marc Lebowitz**, CEO of the Ada County Association of REALTORS®, Idaho. "I had several people come to me early on and ask if the standards were an effort to reduce the number of associations, and I said no, they're not," he says.

"I've spoken to all of our local associations about the standards and all but a couple will be able to comply with the requirements using resources that will be made available," Lebowitz says. "For the other two, they'll need to share services, contract with a management company, or find another model, but I think we will keep the same number of associations."

Evaluating AEs

A survey of REALTOR® association executives shows that meeting strategic goals is rewarded financially.

Your job performance review is an essential part of your association's overall management. When conducted properly, the review validates your performance, sets a course for the future, and cements a common management vision between the AE and the elected leaders. When conducted improperly, performance reviews are demotivating and frustrating and can negatively affect morale and job performance.

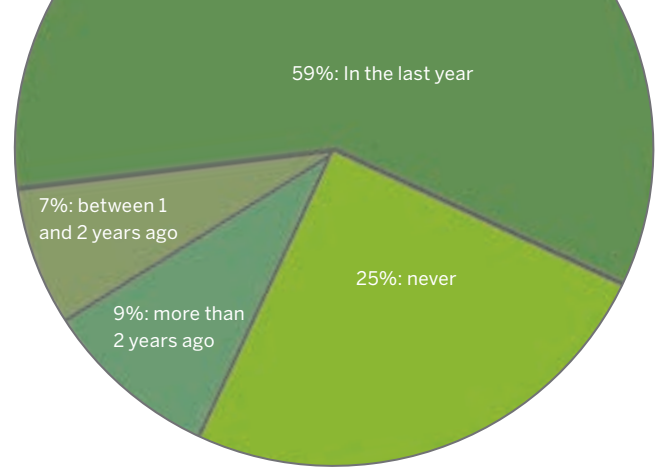
An overwhelming 651 REALTOR® AEs completed our AE performance review survey earlier this year, indicating high interest in reporting their experiences and expressing their views.

The good news is that 69 percent of survey respondents had a review completed within the last year. Feedback is important in order to

understand where your strengths are and identify areas where you can improve and grow professionally. Nearly 69 percent of respondents are reviewed annually. Unfortunately, 11 percent of AEs said they had never had a review.

Performance past and future

Another disappointing survey result is that performance goals were set for only half of the respondents. A performance



When I last received a bonus.

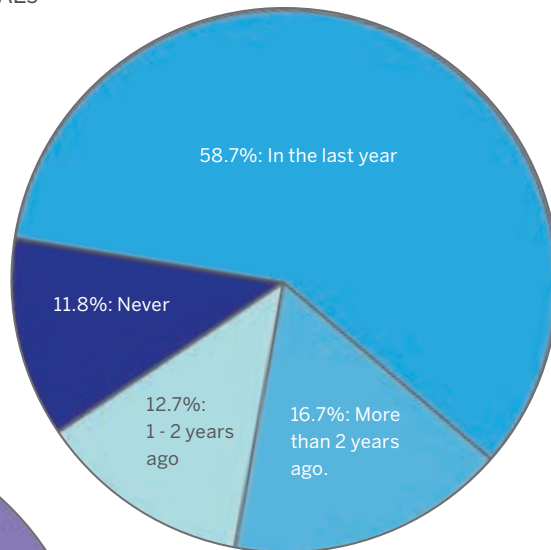
“My contract says they must budget a 15% increase and bonus for me each year. Very handy. Prevents ‘We like you but have no money.’”

— AE survey respondent from a medium-size REALTOR® association

review without goals for the future leaves AEs with no understanding of leadership's expectations or priorities. Only through an open discussion of initiatives, timelines, and measurable outcomes will AEs stay focused and meet leadership's goals.

Presidents' point of view

According to the survey, more than half of AEs are reviewed by their associations' president, usually together with the immediate past president and others from the leadership team. AEs are often reviewed by a personnel committee consisting of leadership and other

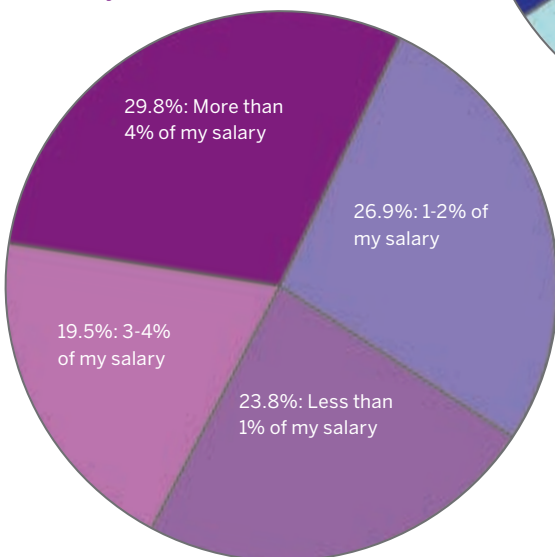


My last salary increase.

“I think the volunteers have no idea what AEs and staff do on a regular basis. We try to keep them informed, but what we do on a daily basis is so foreign to what they do.”

— AE survey respondent from a medium-size REALTOR® association

My last bonus.



So many questions.

Why do we need a new domain?

How do you secure one?

How will consumers know?

Why is NAR securing .REALTOR?

What are the benefits?

What is a TLD?

How do members market it?

When is it available?

What about my .com address?

Do associations get one?

Why is NAR securing .REALTOR?

What is a TLD?

Why do we need a new domain?

How much does it cost?

Who can use it?

What are the benefits?

Why are there so many new domains?

How do members market it?

How much does it cost?

How do we get members to adopt it?

How do you secure one?

When is it available?

Do associations get one?

How will consumers know?

What about my .com address?

Who can use it?

www.dotREALTOR.org

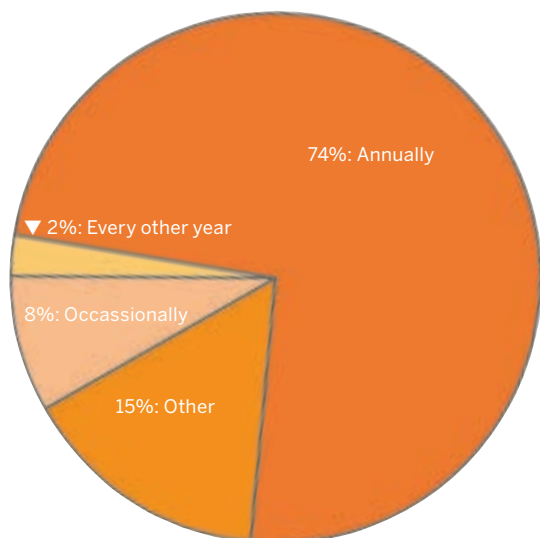
Now, there's one place for all the answers on .REALTOR

We've created the new www.dotREALTOR.org site to answer these questions—and more—regarding the new .REALTOR domain. With hundreds of new domains on the horizon—and many already here—NAR has secured .REALTOR to bring order in this increasingly complicated online world. Similarly, www.dotREALTOR.org has been developed to give Associations and members one place to get all the information they need on .REALTOR and this new world of domains. In a section for Associations, there are also materials for you to promote all the benefits of .REALTOR to members. Exclusively available only to members of the REALTOR® family, .REALTOR will be the trusted source for real estate online.

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How often I'm reviewed.

members. Unfortunately, 28 percent of AEs said their reviewers did not fairly or accurately evaluate their job performance. Many AEs said elected leaders failed to show up for reviews or that planned reviews are never scheduled. Common among the survey comments were statements such as, "The volunteers have no idea what AEs do on a regular basis. We try to keep them informed, but what we do on a daily basis is so foreign to what they do."

Toot your own horn

One key to a successful job evaluation is to present your reviewers with highlights

of your accomplishments in the past year (since they most likely won't remember all of them). Just over half of survey respondents said they present the review board with a written report, while others said they present a verbal report.

Tools for fair and accurate reviews

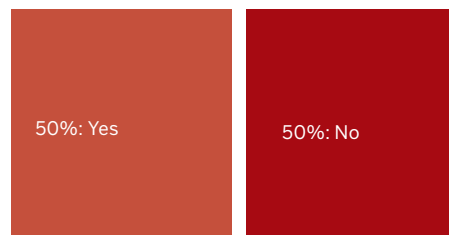
Although there are many ways to conduct an AE performance review within an association, NAR has compiled resources, samples, and guidance from associations across the country to help you and your elected leaders clarify the review's purpose and follow the most common best practices for conducting the review. The sample review forms are varied to meet your leadership's needs and include a 3-, 4-, and

"Though some of us do have smaller associations, we are all held accountable by NAR to provide the same types of services, yet this is not always reflected in our pay scale."

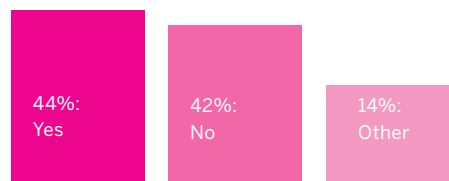
— AE survey respondent from a small REALTOR® association

5-point scale. Sample forms can be found at realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/human-resources/toolkit/chief-staff-performance-evaluation.

The review process can go smoothly if you understand expectations, keep a record of your accomplishments, and provide the tools to your leadership to guide them along the way.



Q. During your last review, were performance goals set for the coming year?



Q. Are your performance goals linked to your association's strategic or business plan?

"Initially, there wasn't an evaluation process, but I have worked with leadership in creating a system that allows for open communication between all parties. Goals and directives are clearly stated and reviews documented, and with that, there is a collective understanding among all parties."

— AE survey respondent from a small REALTOR® association



Donna Garcia is director of human resource services for the National Association of REALTORS®. Contact her at 312-329-8311 or dgarcia@realtors.org.

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NEW RESOURCE

On the Front Lines of Legal Challenges & Trends

New legal publication from NAR delivers timely insights on the legal issues, new laws, and risks facing members.

The legal landscape is anything but static. Every day, judges overturn long-held case law, legislatures toss out and rewrite statutes, and regulatory authorities come up with new and exciting ways to keep folks busy trying to stay out of trouble. For real estate professionals, knowing the law as of now—as opposed to the law as of 10 months ago—is imperative. And AEs are keenly aware of how vital it is for their members to stay apprised of the legal risks and compliance challenges they may be facing on tomorrow's front lines.

For more than 20 years, NAR's Legal Affairs team has been closely tracking and compiling data on emerging legal issues that directly affect real estate professionals. Historically, compiled data was published once every two years in the now-retired Legal Scan, a hefty document whose contents spanned the previous 24 months of real estate-related legal happen-

ings. In 2013, Legal Affairs set out to create a new tool for industry professionals that would release more timely legal updates in a shorter, more easily palatable format. Thus was born The Legal Pulse Newsletter, the first issue of which was published in early May of this year.

The Legal Pulse offers succinct summaries of cases and statutory and regulatory changes from the previous three months that affect the real estate community. In addition, it sets forth national legal trend data by topic, tracking spikes in litigation in particular subject matters. The newsletter is issued quarterly and focuses on three of the most common subjects presenting litigation and compliance risks to brokers and agents: agency (very often situations in which disgruntled buyers or sellers seek to hold brokers liable for the acts of their salespeople), property condition disclosure disputes, and RESPA issues, including cases related to affiliated business arrangements, kickbacks, fee-splitting, and statutory disclosure requirements. In addition, each release of the Legal Pulse features an issue-specific topic that highlights an especially hot-button matter from the previous quarter. May's issue, for example, featured employment-related litigation disputes, including a suit premised on the breach of an employment contract, a class-action suit addressing employee misclassification and independent contractor status, and a bad-faith termination claim.

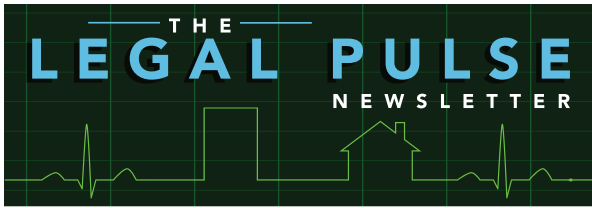
Does a buyer's real estate agent owe a fiduciary duty to a seller, even if that seller is represented by a different salesperson?

2014's second issue of the Legal Pulse, due out in early September, is currently in the works, and key cases and statutory developments are being identified on an ongoing basis. A few teasers for the next publication:

In the arenas of agency, employment, and fiduciary duty: Does a buyer's real estate agent owe a fiduciary duty to a seller, even if that seller is represented by a different salesperson? According to a California court of appeals, if both agents are licensed with the same broker, the answer is "yes." In *Horiike v. Coldwell Banker*, the buyer of a luxury Malibu property brought suit for breach of fiduciary duty against the seller's salesperson, claiming that he had overstated the square footage of the mansion's living space by more than 5,000 square feet. The trial court dismissed the cause of action against the seller's agent, holding that he owed no fiduciary duties to the buyer. The appellate court reversed, finding that by merit of the fact that both the buyer's agent and the seller's agent



Associations are welcome to reprint the new Legal Pulse newsletter, link to it, and post the Legal Pulse highlights video clips (pictured above) on their site and social media pages.



The Legal Pulse offers succinct summaries of cases and statutory and regulatory changes from the previous three months that affect the real estate community.

were licensed under the same broker, a dual agency relationship had been created, and the seller's agent owed the buyer the same fiduciary duties owed by his broker. (The full opinion is available at www.courts.ca.gov/opinions/documents/B246606.PDF)

In the arenas of commission entitlement and procuring cause: Where 18 months have passed since a broker showed a duplex condominium to a potential buyer, and where the buyer ends up selecting a different unit entirely from that originally shown by the broker, can the broker still be considered the "procuring cause" of the sale? The Supreme Court of New York County recently held that if the right circumstances are present, the answer may very well be "yes." *SPRE Realty v. Daniel Dienst et al.* sheds some light on the kinds of situations that determine whether a broker is entitled to commission under New York law. (The full opinion is available at <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/ny-supreme-court-appellate-division/1667231.html>.)

Each issue of The Legal Pulse Newsletter will be published at realtor.org/publications/legal-pulse. In addition to the written publication, the Legal Affairs team also prepares an accompanying five-minute video recap of the previous quarter's research, available at the same Web page. Back issues of The Legal Pulse Newsletter will also be archived and available at the same Web address.

AEs should feel free to republish The Legal Pulse Newsletter on their websites. Please reprint the publication only in its entirety, and be sure to give NAR credit for

the publication. In addition, AEs can encourage their members to use The Legal Pulse Newsletter as a teaching tool in broker office meetings, continuing education seminars, and other situations where risk management and compliance will be discussed.

Look for an announcement of the next issue in the AE INS and the NAR Weekly Report newsletters.

For more on the newsletter, contact Finley Maxson, NAR senior counsel, at fmaxson@realtors.org, or Jessica Edgerton.



Jessica Edgerton is associate counsel at the National Association of REALTORS®. Contact her at 312-329-8373 or jedgerton@realtors.org.

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PROFILE

Natural-born Leader in the REALTOR® Family

Martin named the recipient of the 2014 William R. Magel Award of Excellence in REALTOR® Association Management.



“REALTORS® have such great life stories, and they really represent the last frontier of individual entrepreneurs,” says Bill Martin, CEO of the Michigan Association of REALTORS®, explaining what he enjoys most about being in the REALTOR® family.

Like the members he serves, Martin has a great life story. He served his country in the Army, wore a badge as a state trooper, represented his county in the state legislature, and ran the state lottery and the state prisons before joining the REALTOR® association in 2002.



“I have been blessed with a great many opportunities to serve,” he says. “All of them presented their own challenges and rewards.”

Martin currently sits on the board of the Michigan Society of Association Executives

and is a trustee emeritus at Western Michigan University, his alma mater. He is a past board member for Habitat for Humanity (the organization’s Public Official of the Year in 1999) and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. In 2011, Martin was appointed to the Michigan Economic Growth Authority Board of Directors and Executive Committee by Gov. Rick Snyder. In 2012, the governor appointed him to the Michigan Strategic Fund.

Martin’s involvement in state political, governmental, and legislative issues is deep and multifaceted.

“REALTOR® organizations have always been significant players at the state level, particularly in state legislative races and constitutional offices,” Martin says. “However, the one area where the associations are starting to engage more fully is the Independent Expenditure space.”

The power of local REALTOR® associations to rally members and home owners to participate in political campaigns that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a candidate is growing across the country, he says.

“This expands the advocacy tool box for REALTOR® organizations and, in doing so, makes us a real power on several different political fronts. There are few, if any, associations that can play as significant a role as we do in that arena,” he says.

And with the new core standards focusing every association on advocacy initiatives, the REALTOR® organization’s role is further expanding.

“There is no question that being a federation has increased our ability to engage in the political process in ways we could not have done by going it alone. As we work together in Michigan, both at the state and local levels, to achieve these new standards, I believe it will help create a stronger bond and level of trust between the organizations.”

Pausing to reflect on the organizations he has led, Martin says: “Out of all the great opportunities I have had, not one of them offers the opportunity for making long-lasting friendships like the REALTOR® family does. I have said that REALTORS® could visit every state in the country and stay with a friend in each. In fact, I might try that—I think it would make for an interesting book.”

Not only because of his leadership accomplishments but because of his warm and open leadership style as well, members and AEs seek his advice.

“I like to think the best advice is simple advice,” he says. “Whatever you are doing, do not make things more complicated than they really are. Regardless of how sophisticated your association is, regardless of how much technology you have and how big your budget is, the biggest asset you have will always be your people. They are the ones you will live or die with and actually do the work. Treat them with respect and give them praise.”

Martin will be officially recognized at the REALTORS® Conference & Expo in New Orleans during the BOD meeting Nov. 10.

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