

Diversity Grant Program

Support for state and local diversity initiatives.

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® supports a wide range of diversity projects through the State and Local Diversity Initiative Grant Program. The program provides up to \$5,000 in matching funds for activities that reinforce the role of REALTORS® as leaders in our country's increasingly diverse communities, and that extend the benefits of homeownership to more Americans.

Apply online: Visit the diversity Web site at www.realtor.org/diversitysupport to find the application form. Applications are accepted each spring and fall and can be submitted electronically.

For more information, contact:

Hugh Morris, Community Outreach Representative
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
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Application and evaluation process: NAR's Equal Opportunity Cultural Diversity Committee will appoint a review panel to evaluate funding applications. Funding criteria include: effectiveness in advancing NAR's eight-point Fair Housing and Cultural Diversity Strategic Plan; the extent to which the project is also funded at the local and/or state level; and cooperation between the state and local associations.

Associations that have recently received support: These state and local REALTOR® associations are developing and implementing a variety of initiatives to promote diversity among their members and serve emerging markets. Most are working to advance several strategies at once, although each is noted here under only a single point of NAR's Fair Housing and Cultural Diversity Strategic Plan.

1. Develop and promote a business case for diversity for REALTORS® and brokers.

The **Williamson County Association of REALTORS®**, Tennessee, organized an international council to better understand the cultures and homebuying practices of recent immigrants. Contact: Theresa Wilson, 615/771-6845, theresa@williamsoncountyrealtors.org. Case study, page 121.

Washington REALTORS® formed a task force to create tools for brokers and agents working with clients from various cultures and to educate brokers about the importance of diversity in their companies. Contact: Janet Ruddick, 800/562-6024, janet.ruddick@warealtor.com.

2. Increase diversity in the NAR membership and in the real estate workplace.

The **Portland Metropolitan Association of REALTORS®**, Oregon, hosts career nights to introduce minority audiences to careers in real estate. Contact Kathy Querin, 503/459-2161, kquerin@pmar.org.

The **Columbus Board of REALTORS®**, Ohio, offers financial support for new multicultural agents to offset the cost of marketing materials, lock boxes, and other startup expenses. Contact: Larry Metzger, 614/475-4000, lmetzger@columbusrealtors.com.

3. Expand diversity in association leadership.

The **Nebraska REALTORS® Association** created a Diversity Advisory Council to reach out to people from various ethnic backgrounds. Contact: Tamela Brookhouser, 402/323-6500, tammyb@nebraskarealtors.com.

The **Greater Fairbanks Board of REALTORS®** is exploring ways to recruit members from Alaskan Native communities. Contact: Stacy Risner, 907/452-7743, gfbr@gci.net.

4. Build and enhance alliances with minority real estate organizations.

Members of the **Iowa City Area Association of REALTORS®** serve their community as Fair Housing Ambassadors. Efforts include mentor training, NAHREP affiliation, multicultural forums, and involvement with the community's Professional and Technical Diversity Network. Contact: Cheryl Nelson, 319/338-6460, Cheryl@icaar.org.

The **San Francisco Association of REALTORS®** invited members of the Chinese Real Estate Association and the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals to join its cultural diversity committee, which planned a summit designed to enhance the business skills of a culturally diverse audience. Contact: Linda Harrison, 415/738-7023, Linda@TheHarrisonTeam.com.

5. Promote diversity and fair housing "best practices," encourage diversity planning, and provide diversity and fair housing training.

The **Rockford Area Association of REALTORS®**, Illinois, holds homebuyers' fairs, institute diversity training for association leadership, and builds coalitions with local grassroots and fair housing groups. Contact: Jackie Cozzi, 815/395-6776, Jackie@raar.com.

The **New York State Association of REALTORS®** will transform a successful classroom course entitled “Serving People with Disabilities” into an online class, expanding the number of REALTORS® who can benefit from its content. Contact: Priscilla Toth, 518/463-0300, ptoth@nysar.com.

6. Increase visibility of the association and its members in minority communities through coalition building and other activities.

The **Southern Twin Cities Association of REALTORS®**, Minnesota, will sponsor a homeownership fair aimed at people in underserved communities. Contact: Decklynn Theisen, 952/997-5212, dtheisen@hotmail.com.

The **Merced County Association of REALTORS®**, California, sponsored a series of workshops for minority first-time home buyers. Topics included credit, mortgage options, and fair and affordable housing programs. Workshop advertising and materials were translated into languages spoken locally. Contact: Sue Koehn, 209/725-2165, koehn@mercednet.com.

7. Address the business and political issues faced by minority members.

The **Northwest Montana Association of REALTORS®** conducted a two-day workshop with members of the Salish-Kootenai Tribe about home ownership on reservation land, including special water, fishing, hunting, and other property rights and financial programs for purchasing Tribal Trust properties. Contact: Kathleen Schulte, 406/752-4313, kathys@digisys.net

The **San Antonio Board of REALTORS®** worked with the Texas Association of REALTORS® and the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals to offer a certification course educating real estate professionals about Latino culture and preparing them to assist minority homebuyers. Contact: Travis Kessler, 210/593-1200, travis@sabor.com.

8. Develop and advocate an effective agenda addressing real estate issues affecting diverse communities and NAR’s diverse membership.

Children’s artwork depicting “what a home means to me” illustrated a calendar being developed by the **Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®** to promote and support equal opportunity in housing. Contact: John Dulczewski, 781/839-5507, johnd@marealtor.com.

The **Kansas City Regional Association of REALTORS®** created a program to translate forms into Spanish, host a homebuying seminar in Spanish, market REALTORS® in the Latino community, and help REALTORS® understand Latino culture. Contact: Cristalle Johnson, 913/498-0018, cristallej@kcrar.com. Case study, page 145.