

# Recruiting for Diversity

Members recruited for participation or leadership should be selected on the basis of their individual qualifications, their skills, and their experiences. Where to find them? You may need to look beyond the usual places. Some of your best prospects likely will have displayed their leadership abilities elsewhere, in their place of worship or chamber of commerce, for example. Those same skills can be applied to leadership in their capacity as REALTORS®.

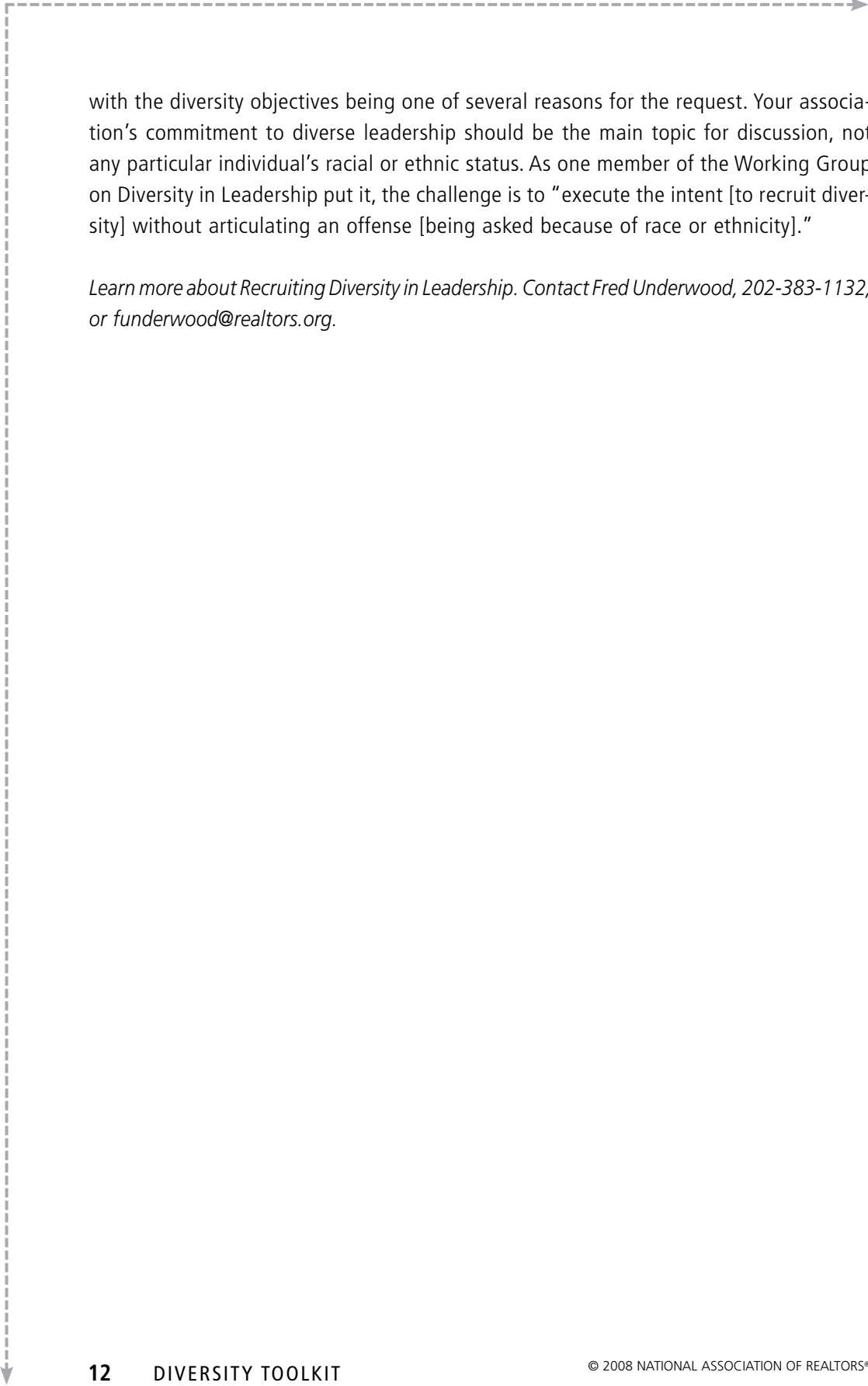
As you begin to recruit for diversity, remember that the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in access, membership, or participation in real estate organizations. To recruit for diversity, therefore, you might consider examining your qualifications for leadership, expand where you look for potential leaders, and develop a diverse pool of potential leaders for the future.

**Qualifications.** One reason to have diversity in leadership is to better represent a diverse membership or diverse communities served by your membership. Members representing diverse parts of your membership or who have special relationships with different communities in your service area will bring more diversity to your leadership. The Chicago Association of REALTORS® used geographic districts to bring diversity to their board (see “Ambitious Outreach Programs Yield a More Representative Board,” page 53).

**Outreach.** Attend meetings of your local chapter of the Asian Real Estate Association of America, NAHREP (National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals), or Realtists. Visit real estate offices that serve diverse populations. Introduce yourself to members of your own association whose ethnicities differ from yours. All of these initiatives will bring you into contact with potential leaders.

**Build a pool of potential leaders.** Members bring to the association various reasons for volunteering. It may be a passion for professional standards or an interest in public policy. Learn what motivates your members, and look for opportunities to let them exercise leadership in their areas. You might try the methodical approach taken by Benny McMahon, Executive Vice President of the Texas Association of REALTORS®, who organizes his search for prospective leaders by maintaining an up-to-date database of members’ knowledge and interests.

The way members are asked to participate has a direct impact on their response. It depends how diversity is addressed in the “asking.” The request should be made during a conversation with a potential participant or leader, and the request should not be the initial reason for the conversation. The talents of the individual should be accentuated,



with the diversity objectives being one of several reasons for the request. Your association's commitment to diverse leadership should be the main topic for discussion, not any particular individual's racial or ethnic status. As one member of the Working Group on Diversity in Leadership put it, the challenge is to "execute the intent [to recruit diversity] without articulating an offense [being asked because of race or ethnicity]."

*Learn more about Recruiting Diversity in Leadership. Contact Fred Underwood, 202-383-1132, or [funderwood@realtors.org](mailto:funderwood@realtors.org).*