

Ways to Make the REALTOR® Governance Process More Inclusive

Local, state, and national REALTOR® associations constitute large, complex organizations. Such a large entity offers a wealth of opportunities for potential leaders with diverse talents, interests, and backgrounds. Unfortunately, the size and complexity of REALTOR® governance can strike many as formidable. To a member who wants to become more involved, it may not be apparent what steps to take—or whom to ask.

REALTORS® committed to a more diverse leadership will find this section helpful for explaining to novices how things work. Even experienced REALTORS® may need a refresher, and there are basic elements of the NAR governance process that all of us should understand—potential leaders and potential mentors alike.

Help a Member Find a Place in REALTOR® Governance

Some of this information is also available in the handy new brochure, *Leadership: What It's Worth, How to Get Started*, written for the new member or someone first contemplating greater involvement.

A REALTOR® leader is someone who fills a niche so well that he or she becomes indispensable to colleagues in the association. Members who want to participate in association governance should find their niche and let their colleagues know.

State and local associations have their own ways of keeping track of members who are interested in serving on committees or pursuing leadership in other ways.

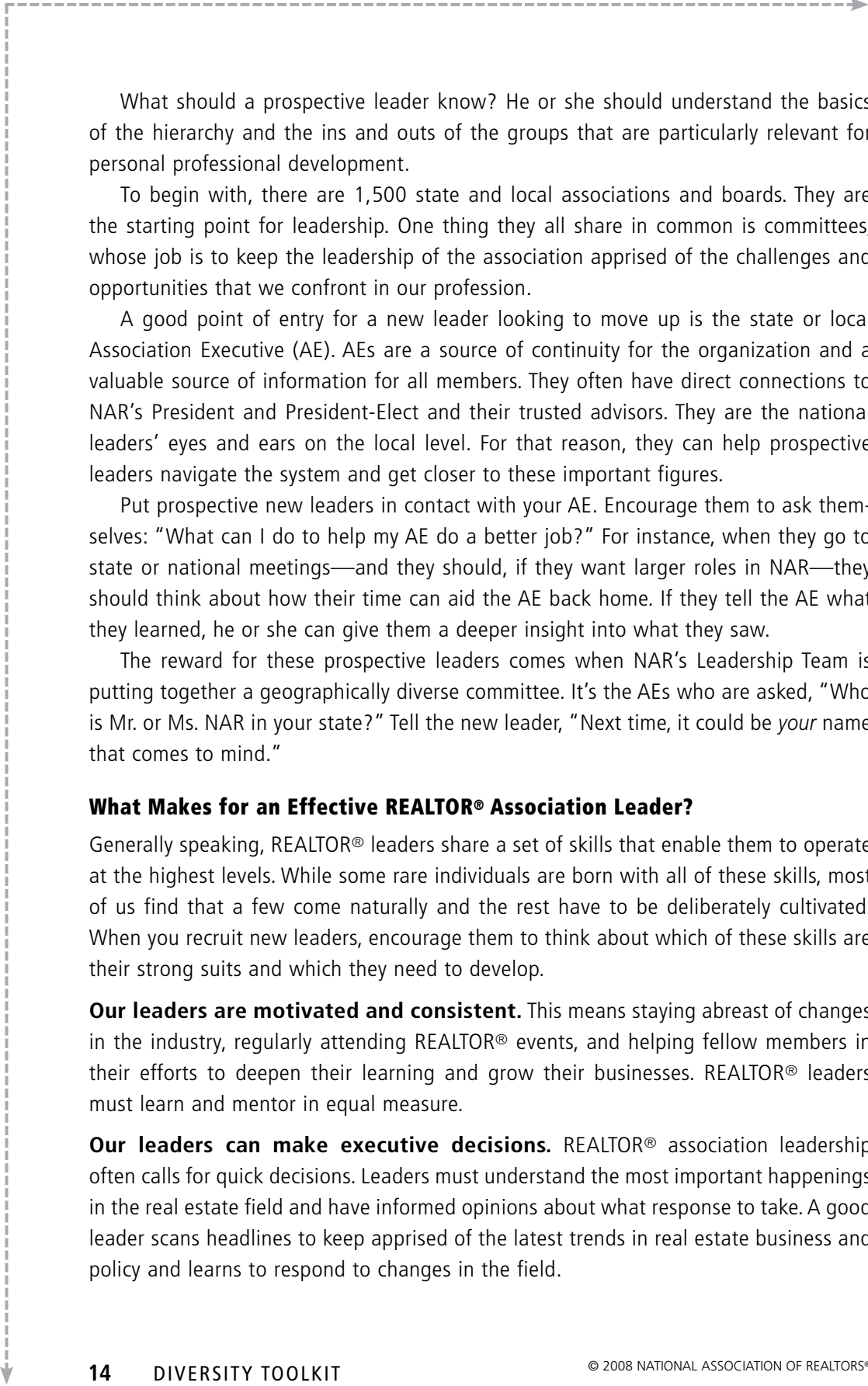
At the national level, prospective leaders should create Expertise Profiles on the NAR Web site, www.realtor.org/governance. This will allow them to define their public identities as real estate professionals and provide them calling cards for committee nominations.

Another important step is for the member to find a mentor—several, if possible. Established leaders can help prospective leaders begin to understand how things get done. A mentor who shares the member's interests is not only a valuable source of information but also an entry point into the network of like-minded REALTORS®.

What a Prospective Leader Should Know

This organization is vast. NAR represents 1.3 million individuals, making it America's largest trade association. Every last one of the top officers and committees performs an important function.





What should a prospective leader know? He or she should understand the basics of the hierarchy and the ins and outs of the groups that are particularly relevant for personal professional development.

To begin with, there are 1,500 state and local associations and boards. They are the starting point for leadership. One thing they all share in common is committees, whose job is to keep the leadership of the association apprised of the challenges and opportunities that we confront in our profession.

A good point of entry for a new leader looking to move up is the state or local Association Executive (AE). AEs are a source of continuity for the organization and a valuable source of information for all members. They often have direct connections to NAR's President and President-Elect and their trusted advisors. They are the national leaders' eyes and ears on the local level. For that reason, they can help prospective leaders navigate the system and get closer to these important figures.

Put prospective new leaders in contact with your AE. Encourage them to ask themselves: "What can I do to help my AE do a better job?" For instance, when they go to state or national meetings—and they should, if they want larger roles in NAR—they should think about how their time can aid the AE back home. If they tell the AE what they learned, he or she can give them a deeper insight into what they saw.

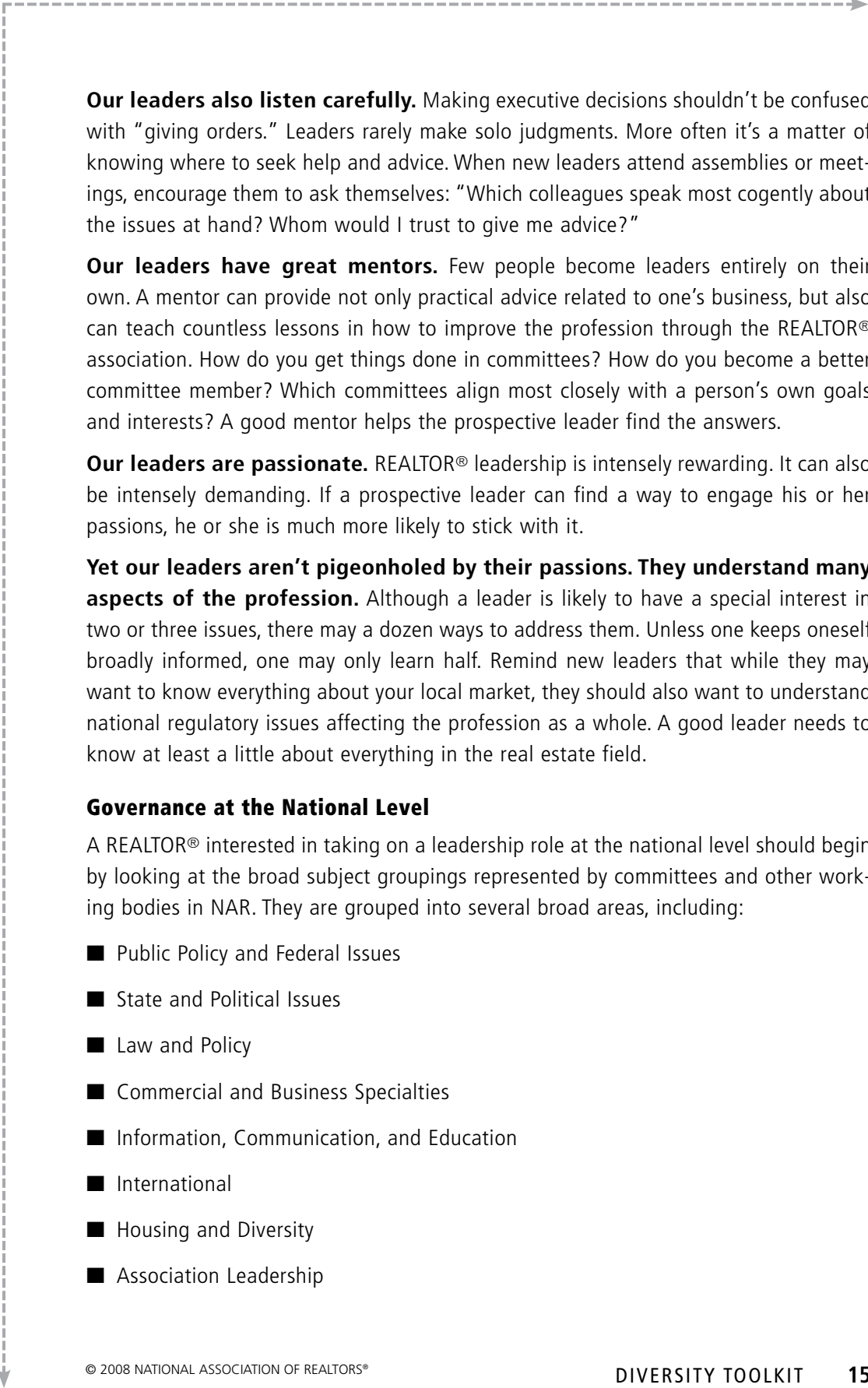
The reward for these prospective leaders comes when NAR's Leadership Team is putting together a geographically diverse committee. It's the AEs who are asked, "Who is Mr. or Ms. NAR in your state?" Tell the new leader, "Next time, it could be *your* name that comes to mind."

What Makes for an Effective REALTOR® Association Leader?

Generally speaking, REALTOR® leaders share a set of skills that enable them to operate at the highest levels. While some rare individuals are born with all of these skills, most of us find that a few come naturally and the rest have to be deliberately cultivated. When you recruit new leaders, encourage them to think about which of these skills are their strong suits and which they need to develop.

Our leaders are motivated and consistent. This means staying abreast of changes in the industry, regularly attending REALTOR® events, and helping fellow members in their efforts to deepen their learning and grow their businesses. REALTOR® leaders must learn and mentor in equal measure.

Our leaders can make executive decisions. REALTOR® association leadership often calls for quick decisions. Leaders must understand the most important happenings in the real estate field and have informed opinions about what response to take. A good leader scans headlines to keep apprised of the latest trends in real estate business and policy and learns to respond to changes in the field.



Our leaders also listen carefully. Making executive decisions shouldn't be confused with "giving orders." Leaders rarely make solo judgments. More often it's a matter of knowing where to seek help and advice. When new leaders attend assemblies or meetings, encourage them to ask themselves: "Which colleagues speak most cogently about the issues at hand? Whom would I trust to give me advice?"

Our leaders have great mentors. Few people become leaders entirely on their own. A mentor can provide not only practical advice related to one's business, but also can teach countless lessons in how to improve the profession through the REALTOR® association. How do you get things done in committees? How do you become a better committee member? Which committees align most closely with a person's own goals and interests? A good mentor helps the prospective leader find the answers.

Our leaders are passionate. REALTOR® leadership is intensely rewarding. It can also be intensely demanding. If a prospective leader can find a way to engage his or her passions, he or she is much more likely to stick with it.

Yet our leaders aren't pigeonholed by their passions. They understand many aspects of the profession. Although a leader is likely to have a special interest in two or three issues, there may be a dozen ways to address them. Unless one keeps oneself broadly informed, one may only learn half. Remind new leaders that while they may want to know everything about your local market, they should also want to understand national regulatory issues affecting the profession as a whole. A good leader needs to know at least a little about everything in the real estate field.

Governance at the National Level

A REALTOR® interested in taking on a leadership role at the national level should begin by looking at the broad subject groupings represented by committees and other working bodies in NAR. They are grouped into several broad areas, including:

- Public Policy and Federal Issues
- State and Political Issues
- Law and Policy
- Commercial and Business Specialties
- Information, Communication, and Education
- International
- Housing and Diversity
- Association Leadership

A detailed listing of NAR committees appears at the end of this section and at www.realtor.org/governance.

When a member is ready to pursue leadership on a national level, the first step is to be invited to join a committee. Different people may extend the invitation, depending on the committee. Generally, the incoming President selects the Chair of each committee, and the President-Elect selects the Vice Chairs.

The President appoints committee members. At NAR, he or she goes to the Committee Recommendation Database located in the Governance section of www.REALTOR.org. Anyone, including the candidate him- or herself, can nominate a committee member. Most committee members are nominated or recommended by active leaders, including:

■ NAR Leadership

- President, President-Elect, First Vice President, Treasurer
- Vice Presidents & Liaisons to Committees and Government Affairs
- Immediate Past President, Committee Liaisons, Regional Vice Presidents

■ State Association Leadership

- State President and State Association Executive

■ Chair, Vice Chair, past Chair, and Staff Executive to a committee

■ Local Board President and Association Executive

■ Past NAR Presidents, Regional Vice Presidents, State Presidents

■ Presidents and Executives of Institutes, Societies and Councils

■ NAR Directors

■ At large members

By letting leadership know of one's interests and qualifications, through NAR's Expertise Profiles, the member gives the President and other leaders the tools to make effective appointments. A conversation in the hall is unlikely to be remembered. Members need to put their interest in writing and document their qualifications.

Endorsements are also crucial, and some matter more than other. The prospective leader should observe who has influence in the Association. At the top are the officers, followed by current and past leaders of the committees. And, of course, one must not overlook the AE and staff.

There are many different ways to be active within NAR. In addition to NAR committees, there are working groups, federal political coordinators, and volunteering for many special projects. One does not need to sit on a committee, in most cases, to attend and (in some cases) participate in discussions. The greatest opportunity for a member to participate is in the forums, which are open to everyone's input and discussion.

Nominations are due in February, and appointments are announced in July.

For a detailed discussion of the committee appointment process, including the screening criteria, go to the Governance section of www.REALTOR.org.

The NAR Leadership Team: Where the Buck Stops

The Leadership Team keeps NAR moving. It is responsible for appointing Committee chairs and for taking action on the Committees' recommendations. Most, if not all, members of the Leadership Team have logged time on a Committee. They gain their positions of authority and trust only after mastering the Committee structure.

Who's Who in the Leadership

- The **Board of Directors** is the governing body of the Association.
- The **Leadership Team**
 - The **President** is the chief elected officer and presides over meetings of Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. She or he appoints a host of personnel, including the Chairs of all committees, committee members, the Vice Presidents and Liaisons to Committees, and some members of the Executive Committee.
 - The **President-Elect** assumes responsibility if the President is absent and selects all Committee Vice Chairs. At the end of the President's term, the President-Elect succeeds to the office of President.
 - The **First Vice President** fills vacancies in the office of President-Elect. Among the duties of the First Vice President are coordinating the work of the Regional Vice Presidents and acting as the Leadership Team's Liaison to NAR's Institutes, Societies and Councils.
 - The **Treasurer** is the custodian of all the Association's funds and securities
 - The **Immediate Past President**
 - The **Vice President and Liaison to Committees** is the team leader of all Committee Liaisons and works with the **Vice President and Liaison to Government Affairs** to provide executive summaries of action and informational items, manage communication between leadership and committees, facili-

tate collaboration on issues that impact more than one committee, and identify new NAR talent.

- ❑ The **Executive Vice President/CEO** enacts policy and program decisions by managing the Association’s staff and financial resources.

■ Others in Leadership Positions

- ❑ **Committee Liaisons** facilitate communication between committees under their purview and the leadership. They also help committee leaders identify and achieve committee goals, and identify future talent.
- ❑ **Regional Vice Presidents**, elected spokespersons—one for each of the 13 regions, who identify and communicate issues and opportunities, chair the Regional Caucus and regional conferences, and lead the team of State Presidents within their region.
- ❑ **Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs** work with staff and the Committee Liaison to review issues and recommend policy or programs, identify hot issues for strategic resolution, encourage committee member involvement and leverage the committee’s talents, and identify new talent.
- ❑ **Forum Chairs and Vice Chairs** provide programs on “hot button” issues for greater member involvement, input, and awareness. They forward recommendations to full committees.
- ❑ **Committee members** participate in discussions and debate and communicate issues and needs raised at local or state associations or within the institutes, societies, or councils.
- ❑ **NAR staff.** The Executive Vice President and CEO manages all national personnel and staff. NAR staff work in partnership with leadership and are responsible for implementing the policies and programs approved by the Board of Directors.

How NAR Makes Decisions

Issues are discussed and debated at the appropriate committees. If the issue is covered under existing policy or programs, the committee determines the appropriate NAR action or response to the issues. If new policy or programming is needed, the committee recommends that policy or program. The recommendation is then provided to the committee liaison and the VPs and Liaisons to Committees and Government Affairs, who assist the committee leadership and staff in presenting the issue to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee either approves the recommendation or recommends an alternative.

The committee recommendation, along with any Executive Committee action, is considered by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors sets public policy positions, approves the Association's budget and programs, and establishes governing policies. Changes to the NAR Constitution and to articles of the NAR Code of Ethics are approved by the Delegate Body.

Committees and Other Bodies

For a complete, up-to-date list of committees, go to www.realtors.org/governance.

Public Policy and Federal Issues

- Public Policy Coordinating Committee
 - Legislative and Political Forum
 - Regulatory Issues Forum
 - Real Estate Related Services Forum
- Business Issues Committee
- Conventional Finance & Lending Committee
- Federal Taxation Committee
- Federal Housing Policy Committee
- Land Use, Property Rights, & Environment Committee
 - Land Use, Property Rights, & Environment Forum
- Public Advocacy Advisory Group

State and Political Issues

- REALTORS® Political Involvement Committee
- RPAC Trustees Committee
- Issues Mobilization Committee
- State & Local Issues Committee
- Smart Growth Program Advisory Group

Law and Policy

- Legal Action Committee
- Risk Management Committee
 - Risk Management & License Law Forum
- Multiple Listing Issues & Policies Committee
 - Multiple Listing Service Forum



Committees and Other Bodies *(continued)*

- Professional Standards Committee
 - PS Interpretations and Procedures Subcommittee
 - Professional Standards Forum
- Membership Policy & Board Jurisdiction Committee

Commercial and Business Specialties

- REALTORS® Commercial Alliance Committee
 - Commercial Legislation & Regulatory Subcommittee
 - Commercial Real Estate Research Subcommittee
 - Economic Issues & Commercial Real Estate Business Trends Forum
 - Property Management Forum
 - Commercial Leadership Forum
- Appraisal Committee
 - Auction Forum

Information, Communication, and Education

- Communications Committee
- Professional Development Committee
 - Professional Development Forum
- Research Committee
 - Economic Issues & Residential Real Estate Business Trends Forum
- Meeting & Conference Committee
 - Forum—Conference Program Subcommittee
 - Member Information Services Forum
 - Business Technology & Information Systems Forum
 - Marketing Forum

Association Leadership

- Board Leadership Forum
 - Mega Board Subforum
 - Large Board Subforum
 - Medium Board Subforum
 - Small Board Subforum
- State Leadership Forum
 - Large State Subforum
 - Medium State Subforum
 - Small State Subforum


Committees and Other Bodies *(continued)*

Association Executive Committee Forum
AEC/AE Institute Advisory Board
AEC/RCE Certification Board
AEC/Recommendations and Recognition Subcommittee
AEC/State EO Forum

International

International Operations Committee
International Forum
International Local Council Forum
International Networks Advisory Group
CIPS Advisory Group
CIPS Faculty & Oversight Group
Resort & Second Home Real Estate Committee
Resort & Second Home Real Estate Forum

Housing and Diversity

Equal Opportunity–Cultural Diversity Committee
Equal Opportunity–Cultural Diversity Forum
Housing Needs Committee
Housing Opportunities Advisory Board

Large Firm Relations

Business Technology and Information Systems Forum

The following Committees report to the leadership team or specific officers

Distinguished Service Award Committee
Executive Committee
Finance Committee
Reserves Investment Subcommittee
Institute Advisory Committee
Nominating Committee
Past Presidents' Advisory Committee
Real Property Operations Committee
Strategic Planning Committees
Strategic Investments Reserve Advisory Board