



NCREALTORS.ORG



NC REALTORS® encourages members to get involved in federal, state and local issues. In a state with hundreds of local government entities, members might be confused about the best way to get involved in an issue they care about.

The resources in this toolkit will help members and association executives identify key issues and engage with local policymakers.

WHY SHOULD REALTORS® GET INVOLVED?

Local policies matter. Homeownership has become more challenging. Public policy plays a significant role in shaping the housing market through zoning, development, and resource allocation. A growing number of communities are proving the right policies ensure homeownership remains accessible.

REALTORS® have a powerful voice. REALTORS® are local business owners and play a vital role in the communities they serve. REALTORS® are often among the most informed community members on important issues like housing affordability and property rights. By engaging with your elected leaders, you can help them see how effective policies can build stronger and more diverse neighborhoods.

Keeping your issues top of mind. Connecting with your local elected officials gives you an opportunity to tell your story and raise awareness. Your relationships are critical in ensuring that your needs and concerns are prioritized.

How REALTORS® Can Make A Difference

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS



LOCAL POLITICS ARE UNIQUE

Action on many local issues is often staff-driven. There is also usually a more defined process for action. Partisan politics is always a factor, but less important at the local level. Action is often more directly driven by constituent demand.



THE PROCESS MATTERS

Especially on bigger issues in large communities, development ordinances go through a planning commission, community feedback sessions, staff research, subcommittee meetings and multiple full council or commission meetings. It is important to think about how to influence the entire process. Many elected officials want to know that advocates worked within the process.



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Local elected officials are often hesitant to pick winners and losers on contentious issues. To fully accomplish a goal, strong constituent support matters.

GOALS FOR WORKING WITH LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

REALTORS® believe that homeownership is at the core of the American dream. Unfortunately, that dream is increasingly out of reach for many families. Local elected officials play a critical role in making sure that housing remains both accessible and a good investment.



BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

Housing and real estate play a critical role in thriving communities. REALTORS® are uniquely positioned to help elected officials create policies that help communities grow and prosper.



LEADERSHIP

REALTORS® are natural leaders in the community. Solutions to local challenges are often best met through collaboration and the efforts of those who can bring people together.

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many ways for individual REALTORS® and associations to make a difference on a critical issue.

It is important for local elected officials to understand the impact of any issue directly on the community. On some of the most important issues that come before city councils and county commissions, REALTORS® are ideally positioned to:



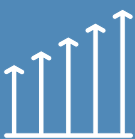
SHARE REAL WORLD EXAMPLES AND EXPERIENCES

REALTORS® work directly with residents every day. Often, REALTORS® are best positioned to share direct examples of how a local policy affects real people.



BRING TOGETHER MULTIPLE VOICES

A one-on-one meeting with an elected official is impactful. But with broad knowledge of a community, REALTORS® can bring together multiple voices that give elected officials a deeper understanding of an issue.



DEMONSTRATE SUCCESSES FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES

As part of a national organization with millions of members, individual REALTORS® have access to a broad range of potential solutions that have been demonstrated in communities across the country.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

The resources in this handbook are a guide to help REALTORS® talk about important local issues. But relationship building can start with elected officials any time. Here are a few potential topics that REALTORS® across the state can use to get the conversation started with their elected officials.



SUPPORTING BALANCED AND FAIR ZONING

Restrictive zoning limits opportunities for growth, while balanced policies promote healthy communities. Balanced policies accommodate various income levels, family sizes, and housing types.



ADDRESS THE HOUSING SUPPLY CRISIS

Share data on how the shortage of affordable and attainable housing has impacted the local area. Remind elected officials that a lack of affordable and attainable housing directly impacts the local workforce, seniors, and first-time homebuyers. Offer to share insights on best practices from other communities.



PROMOTE HOMEOWNERSHIP AS A WEALTH-BUILDING TOOL

Homeownership is one of the most effective ways to build generational wealth. Attainable housing options empower families to invest in their futures, promoting stronger neighborhoods and social stability.

Making A Plan

The most important part of making an impact is making a plan. It is not important to plan every step down to the last detail. But using this simple template, you can develop an understanding of the process for your issue and develop a broad set of necessary actions.

01

DEFINE THE ISSUE

- 1A. What is the issue and what is your position on the issue?
- 1B. What is your assessment about the broader community's position on the issue?
- 1C. Are there NC REALTORS® or NAR Resources that can help you better understand the issue (See Section Three of this Guide)?

02

DEFINE SUCCESS

- 2A. What are the best, worst, or acceptable outcomes on this issue?

City councils and county commissions of all sizes generally follow similar processes for major issues. It is important to think about where your issue stands in the decision-making process.

3A. Has a policy or ordinance been introduced for consideration? If so, what is the ordinance number or designation?

3B. What official meetings are expected (planning commission, public hearings, committee meetings)?

3C. What is the expected timeline for council/commission action?

3D. Who are the key elected officials, planning commission members and public staff?

- 4A.** Are there individuals within your organization who are experts on this issue or who are skilled at talking about the issue? Who are they?
- 4B.** How will I coordinate additional advocates and keep track of their activity (REALTOR® and non-REALTOR®)?
- 4C.** Which council/commission members are supportive of my position and which need more education and encouragement?

Coordinate Action And Use Resources

At the end of this section, we have included resources for several of the most important issues that councils and commissions tend to address. NCR staff is available to help you tailor talking points to your specific local issue.

COORDINATING MEETINGS

The most important advocacy action that REALTORS® can take at the local level is coordinating local meetings with decision-makers. This can include the elected officials, local government staff, or planning commission members. The timing and necessity of these meetings should be dictated by your planning process.

Below are important points to consider as you plan meetings.

Making an appointment

The process for a meeting starts with the meeting request. For most local elected officials, the best place to start is an emailed meeting request. The request should include the reason for meeting and an estimate of the number of constituents who will attend.

Prepare

In advance of the meeting, make sure you are comfortable talking about the issue. Also, you should have a clear “ask” in mind (for example, ask them directly to vote YES on a certain issue). If multiple people are attending, try to define roles or assign parts for each attendee who wants to speak. Other attendees might simply want to listen.

Execute

There are a few standard tips for ensuring a successful meeting with any elected official. These include:

- + Always be on time or even a little early
- + Be ready to have less time than scheduled.
- + Be direct and try not to ramble (preparation)
- + Don't argue
- + Make a clear ask for action and note the response for coordinating with others
- + Do not make up answers. If you are unsure of the answer to a question, commit to follow up.

After the meeting

Always send a follow up email thanking the elected official, briefly re-iterating your request, and answering any outstanding questions as needed.

NC REALTORS® RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

Legislative and Regulatory Lobbying/Representation

NC REALTORS® have a dedicated professional Government Affairs staff who monitor, analyze and track legislative, regulatory and political issues that impact the real estate industry. Staff also assist local REALTOR® boards with issues in their communities and strives to encourage REALTORS® to become more active in issues that impact their livelihood.

Issues Mobilization

The NC REALTORS® Issues Mobilization Fund provides financial support to local boards to assist with promoting the ideals of private property rights, quality of life principles and homeownership. This resource assists local REALTORS® with the research and lobbying of issues, public education and awareness campaigns and other purposes that serve to promote the real estate industry as a whole.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS

You can contact Katharine Wendt with the NC REALTORS® local action team at kwendt@ncrealtors.org

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

Legislative and Regulatory Lobbying/Representation

NAR has a professional staff of lobbyists, regulatory specialists and political representatives working every day to monitor issues that impact our industry. Need to talk with someone at NAR? Their staff can be reached through the group and team phone numbers listed at <http://www.nar.realtor/directories/nar-group-and-team-directory>.

Land Use Initiative

The best way to find out if a local law or ordinance is going to impact the real estate industry is to have it reviewed by a professional land use attorney. However, because of the expense involved, local and state REALTOR® associations often don't have the resources they need to have this done. Through a contract NAR has with a nationally recognized land use law firm, the Land Use Initiative provides local and state REALTOR® associations with a review service free of charge. The analysis provided through the Land Use Initiative program is an invaluable resource for REALTORS® as you advocate on behalf of the industry.

Community Outreach

NAR's Community Outreach program positions REALTORS® as community leaders and collaborators through their associations. It offers five different grants, technical assistance, and resources to match affordable housing, fair housing, community planning and development, placemaking, rural-related advocacy, education, and engagement objectives for state and local REALTOR® associations.

Calls for Action

Advocacy Everywhere is designed to expand the influence of the National Association of REALTORS® and state and local REALTOR® associations on public policy at all levels and to increase REALTOR® and consumer participation in calls for action (CFA).

NAR, with our professional services, is a full-service provider that can expedite the components of a CFA, thus lowering the time commitment necessary for an association to launch and monitor a successful CFA.

Local associations no longer need to have dedicated staff trained on the latest advocacy tools and can focus on messaging and targeting, with NAR managing the technology. State associations can opt-in for these professional services or can utilize the tools and perform the basic functions of a CFA on their own.

