



Local associations play a critical role in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in Virginia’s real estate industry. Based on the National Association of REALTORS’ [Actionable Roadmap for Local Association Diversity and Inclusion](#), this toolkit offers specific actions you can take to help better understand your membership, build awareness of why encouraging diversity is important, and promote DEI initiatives. Use this toolkit to begin your efforts—or to build on existing efforts—to engage the full spectrum of your membership, including those potentially underrepresented, through activities and volunteer and leadership opportunities.

DIVERSITY IS BEING INVITED TO THE PARTY.

INCLUSION IS BEING ASKED TO DANCE.

EQUITY IS BEING ON THE PARTY PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Bottom Line: Diversity is essential to business—by 2045, the U.S. population will shift to being majority minority (Whites will make up less than 50% of the population). Businesses need to make changes now in order to meet the demands of their clients currently and in the future.

This toolkit is organized around three key steps:

Step 1. Discover. Learn more about the demographics of your membership and understand if the characteristics of your REALTOR® members represent your local market. Examine the important role diversity, equity, and inclusion play in a successful real estate industry, and educate your members and affiliates about the benefits of diversity.

Step 2. Engage. Expand efforts to recruit volunteer leaders from diverse backgrounds. Explore different volunteer options and innovative recruitment processes. Reach out to new partners to identify potential leaders and collaborators.

Step 3. Inspire. Sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by mentoring and supporting new leaders. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of the association’s work. Monitor and evaluate progress towards building an inclusive association.

Step 1. DISCOVER

Increase knowledge about the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the local association. Gain a better understanding of how well the association's members and leadership represent the local real estate market. Take the time to understand the history of various groups, learn about the discriminatory policies and practices that may have resulted in present-day disparities, and take measures to check your own biases.

1A. Understand the demographics of association members.

Do association members represent demographics of the local market? Do the demographics of your association leadership reflect the demographics of your members and local market?

The local association's Point of Entry (POE) can access demographic data via the National Association of REALTORS® M1 Dashboard.

- Go to the M1 Dashboard: <https://nar.m1.realtor/home>
- Sign in using your NRDS login and password
- Click on Analytics & Insights
- Click on Association Demographics (age, gender, race)

An example of the information available from the M1 Dashboard is available in [Appendix A: M1 Tool GPR Demographics](#).

1B. Compare association demographics to demographics of local market areas.

- Visit Virginia REALTORS® website and click “Local DEI Resources” for your local association's census data: <https://virginiarealtors.org/ae2ae/local-dei-resources/>
- General demographic data for counties, independent cities, and metropolitan areas are available from the U.S. Census Bureau's website: <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/>

1C. Consider conducting a demographic survey of members.

The M1 Dashboard data has some limitations. Instead of collecting data on individual member characteristics, NAR estimates aggregate statistics. Sometimes these statistics are not truly reflective of the association members' true demographics.

- To improve information on member demographics, a local association could conduct a survey of members to collect more information on the characteristics of not only members, but also association volunteers and leadership.

1D. Invite a DEI speaker, host an implicit bias workshop, and/or offer training. Use these events to discuss how racism and bias can limit inclusion of diversity.

Resources:

- [See Appendix B: 2021 DEI and Fair Housing Speakers List](#)
- **[Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Grants](#)**: NAR has grants that can be used for many initiatives, including speaker series and partnerships with multicultural organizations.
 - The Charlottesville Area Association of REALTORS® (CAAR), for example, used a diversity grant to host a diversity series where author Richard Rothstein spoke about his book [The Color of Law](#).
- **[At Home With Diversity® \(AHWD\)](#)**: NAR's course and certification program designed to present a picture of the changing face of the real estate industry. The online AHWD course is now approved for 6 hours of continuing education (CE) credit in Virginia.
- **[Fairhaven](#)**: NAR's free, interactive, fair housing training Tool. Virginia REALTORS® 2021 President Beth Dalton has challenged association members to complete the Fairhaven training. The top 5 local associations with the highest percentage of Fairhaven completion will be honored at VAR's fall convention.
- **[Implicit Bias Training](#)**: NAR's free, implicit bias training video is called *Bias Override: Overcoming Barriers to Fair Housing*.

1E. Identify and build relationships with the real estate professionals serving your underrepresented or growing market demographics.

- Identify which of your members are members of multicultural or affiliate real estate organizations. Partner with local chapters in your area (where applicable).
- Learn the specific needs of the various underrepresented communities in your markets. See Appendix for recent reports by the multicultural organizations that highlight needs in various communities.
- **Resources:**
 - **[National Association of Real Estate Brokers \(NAREB\)](#)**: Virginia has three NAREB chapters: Hampton Roads, Richmond, and Northern Virginia.
 - **[Asian-American Real Estate Association of America \(AREAA\)](#)**: The [DC Metro Chapter](#) covers Northern Virginia, DC, and Maryland.

- [National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals \(NAHREP\)](#): Virginia’s NAHREP Chapter is the [Northern Virginia Chapter](#).
- [The National Association of Gay and Lesbian Real Estate Professionals \(NAGLREP\)](#): NAGLREP’s presence in Virginia is the [Washington D.C. Chapter](#).

See [Appendix C](#) for recent home ownership reports by the multicultural organizations that highlight needs in the Black, Asian, and Latino communities.

1F. Provide training to general membership about DEI and about serving underrepresented demographic groups in the market area.

- Association leaders and volunteers must understand and implement DEI in order for culture change to occur.
- Collaborate with community-based organizations, especially those who serve the populations you aim to target.
- Seek input and create effective messaging of DEI efforts—within your association, as well as externally with related industries (i.e., lenders and appraisers) and prospective clients.
- **Resources:** [Seven Steps to Successful DEI Training](#)

Step 2. ENGAGE

After learning of the underrepresented markets in your area, you must actively engage with your members from diverse backgrounds. Develop partnerships with outside organizations, helping them realize the benefits of good relationships with REALTOR® associations. Strengthen relationships with brokerages to encourage more member involvement, as well as to recruit more diverse agents into real estate. This is the only way to see successful inclusion.

2A. Be transparent about your leadership and volunteer recruitment processes.

- Clearly describe committees, responsibilities, opportunities, and time commitments. A template for summarizing committee information is provided in [Appendix D: Committee Description Template](#). This information should be clearly available on the local association’s website.
- Publish information about the process and timeline, and go beyond e-mail to include social media, focused outreach from the President and President-Elect, etc. In addition to information about committees, local associations should publish information that clearly explains the process and timeline for recruiting board members and committee members.

2B. Appoint members based on their passions, interests, expertise, and new perspectives.

- Include questions about interests, expertise, and activities (e.g., community service) on board and committee applications.
- Develop a pool of prospective leaders reflecting your market's diversity. Focus on/present those leaders with volunteer opportunities.
- Produce marketing materials that include photographs and testimonials from members from a wide range of backgrounds (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, geographic location). See [Appendix E: Member Testimonials for 2021 Committee Applications](#) as an example from Virginia REALTORS® that was e-mailed to all members announcing the opening of 2021 Committee applications.
- Learn of members' skillsets and interests in order to find the best volunteer opportunities; please **do not** appoint merely based on where you think they should serve.
- Consider creating scholarships for underrepresented members to attend state and national meetings, like the Fredericksburg Area Association of REALTORS® (FAAR). For more information, visit <https://www.faarmembers.com/diversity-inclusion/>.
- **Resources:** [Practical Steps to More Diverse Boards](#)

2C. Build DEI into your strategic plans.

- With [new 2021 Core Standards](#) from NAR, associations must now include DEI and fair housing components in their strategic plans, as well as conduct related activities.
- Many organizations now recognize the need to hire more diverse talent and, thus, reach and expand into more diverse markets. Managing and leading in culturally and demographically diverse groups are critical skills for entrepreneurs today.
- **Resources:**
 - Lynne Wherry, Director of Association Relations, can assist with developing your strategic plan and including DEI initiatives. To contact Lynne, e-mail LWherry@virginiarealtors.org.
 - [The 6-Step Guide to Developing a Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#)
 - AEI year-round Facebook page

2D. Communicate DEI-related programming at new-member orientation.

- It is best to educate and engage new members as soon as they join the association; this is a great point of entry to foster DEI and identify association leaders early on.

- **Resources:** The [Bristol Tennessee/Virginia Association of REALTORS® \(BTVAR\)](#), for example, now requires all new members to complete NAR’s fair housing training, [Fairhaven](#), as a part of their new-member orientation.

2E. Expand the types of volunteer and leadership opportunities.

- Plan volunteer opportunities that are one-off events to allow members with time constraints (e.g., just starting their businesses, having young children at home) to get involved. For example, leverage a member to teach a course or facilitate a session at a Board of Directors meeting.
- Beyond typical volunteer opportunities, create micro-volunteer opportunities to get more diverse members engaged.

2F. Engage your leadership to reach out to members involved in local multicultural organizations.

- Attend meetings the partner organizations host, and allow them to use your association space for their meetings/events.
- Establish an advisory group of affiliate partners and/or host regular meetings with their leaders and your local association’s Leadership Team. This way, leaders from all organizations can learn of each others’ needs and jointly create solutions.

2G. Foster good relationships with brokerages, and partner together on DEI.

- Brokers set the culture for their firms; associations can help them understand if that culture reflects diversity, includes different points of view, and ensures equal access to various opportunities, it will be a win-win for all—and vice versa.
- Communicate with brokers about the importance of inviting agents to get involved in association activities and events.
- Assign a Board of Directors member to be a point-of-contact for the major brokerages that touch your association.
- Consider establishing a Small Brokers Committee or work group.

Step 3. INSPIRE

Sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, continue to build understanding, and inspire others—both within and outside of the local association—to expand opportunities within the real estate community.

3A. Mentor and train rising leaders.

- Establish a leadership academy in order to create a pipeline of future association leaders, and work to select diverse members to participate. Also, promote the Virginia REALTORS® Leadership Academy.

3B. Include diverse members on committees addressing diversity, advocacy, ethics, and professional development.

- Consider establishing a standing committee designed to guide DEI efforts. Leverage that group to incorporate DEI throughout your association.

3C. Evaluate diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

- Establish metrics for evaluating diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Examples of metrics include the following:
 - Number of members attending DEI events/programs
 - Race/ethnicity, age, and demographic characteristics of members, volunteers, and leadership
 - Number of events attended/co-sponsored with multicultural organizations
- Report out your progress on DEI efforts. Prepare a formal report and present to your board.
- Survey your members to obtain their input on your DEI efforts; focus on members from underrepresented groups in particular.
- **Resources:** If you need assistance with creating evaluating metrics or surveys, please contact Dr. Lisa Sturtevant, Virginia REALTORS® Chief Economist, at LSturtevant@virginiarealtors.org.

3D. Regularly promote your DEI activities.

- Regularly communicate your DEI activities and initiatives to the members, the media, community partners, etc. via multiple channels, including e-mail and social media.
- Create a portion of your website dedicated to DEI resources.

For questions or further assistance, contact:

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