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For REALTOR® Associations

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### BACKGROUND

REALTORS® have a long history of community involvement and public service. Examples include working with Habitat for Humanity®, partnering with local housing groups, providing disaster assistance, making funding available to first-time homebuyers, raising emergency funds, and repairing the homes of the elderly and others unable to maintain their housing. Others fund scholarships for real estate students, offer counseling and homebuying assistance, support local shelters, install smoke detectors, and provide assistance in purchasing heating fuels.

In order to raise funds and involve the wider community in their efforts, many associations form charitable foundations as the focus of their community activities. NAR has compiled a listing of some 40+ REALTOR® foundations, located in 28 states, with links to their web sites:



[www.realtor.org/government\\_affairs/housing\\_opportunity/resource\\_center/foundations](http://www.realtor.org/government_affairs/housing_opportunity/resource_center/foundations).

### SUGGESTIONS



- If your association does not have or is not associated with a charitable foundation, NAR can provide details on how to establish one. See the NAR *Field Guide to Establishing A Charitable Foundation* on the web site at: [www.realtor.org/library/library/fg609](http://www.realtor.org/library/library/fg609).
- REALTORS® provide help in two principal ways: either through the establishment of assistance programs or by undertaking and supporting more focused assistance events. Both require extensive planning and coordination. See the Toolkit section called *Getting Started* for some planning and budgeting advice.
- You may want to create a web site (or a new section to your existing site) as an informational hub focusing on your activities. Be sure to give the site address to all of your sponsors, partners, and contributors so they can link to you and create a greater awareness of your efforts.
- Get the local media involved, either as a sponsor or as a reporter.
- Creating a simple logo for your charitable activities will give you and your partners a way to stand out and increase community awareness.
- Find professionals to volunteer for work that is potentially dangerous or requires inspection/certification (e.g., electric, plumbing, etc.), or requires specialized skills like accountants or attorneys.
- Give people a variety of ways to support your good work, in addition to monetary contributions, such as in-kind donations and volunteer services.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT *(continued)*

- Try to document what you've done with photographs or, if possible, movies, which can be displayed on the web, shared at meetings, or sent to local newspapers. Even cell phone cameras can capture the energy and spirit of your work. For repair events, for example, show before and after views to drive home the value of what you have accomplished.

### LEARN MORE

#### **Community Involvement**

On this site, the Bay County REALTOR® Association (FL) highlights some of the volunteer and fund-raising activities they have undertaken in the past few years for Habitat for Humanity®, Council on Aging, Toys for Tots, the American Red Cross, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. They are politically active, and have also raised funds for RPAC (REALTORS® Political Action Committee).

*Bay County Association of REALTORS®*  
[www.panamacityrealtors.com/community.htm](http://www.panamacityrealtors.com/community.htm)

## UP CLOSE

### **REALTORS® CARE DAY**

The Charlotte Regional REALTOR® Association sponsored a REALTORS® Care Day in April of 2009 that saw over 700 REALTOR® members participate in repairing and painting 33 homes in the Charlotte area. Altogether, eight other organizations, including Habitat for Humanity®, joined with the CRRRA to make this event a success. Two videos of the day can be found at the link below. They give a good sense of the accomplishments, contributions, and pride of the participants.

Learn more at:  
[www.carolinahome.com/realtorscare/default.aspx](http://www.carolinahome.com/realtorscare/default.aspx)

#### **Community Involvement**

On its web site, the Greater Kalamazoo Association of REALTORS® (MI) highlights examples of its volunteer efforts, which have included blood drives, flower planting at nursing homes, a walk for the homeless, immunization programs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and even a fair housing poster contest for local 5th graders.

*Greater Kalamazoo Association of REALTORS®*  
[www.gkar.com/page.php?menu\\_id=45](http://www.gkar.com/page.php?menu_id=45)



#### **Prospecting: Community Involvement**

NAR lists reasons why you should volunteer in your community, provides a self-test for choosing where to volunteer, and offers some inspirational stories about REALTORS® who have volunteered.

*REALTOR® Magazine*  
[www.realtor.org/toolkits/pros14](http://www.realtor.org/toolkits/pros14)