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For REALTOR® Associations

WORKING WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

BACKGROUND

For the most part, housing opportunity is a politically attractive issue and many elected officials will view it favorably and be prime candidates to help your association establish and support a vigorous, community-wide drive for increased housing. Homeownership is a boon to local communities in terms of diversity, economy, smart growth, and broadening the sense of personal investment felt by all homeowners. The

UP CLOSE

PROFESSIONALS FIND A MARKET FOR VACANT CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES: THE SCOPE PROGRAM

Working with the mayor, city council, and local foundations, the Greater Baltimore Board of REALTORS® (GBBR) designed SCOPE (Selling City-Owned Properties Efficiently). Harnessing the skills of REALTORS® and the incentives of a market-driven system, SCOPE allows city-approved properties to be sold via their multiple listing service (MLS) by approved REALTORS®, placing minimal requirements on interested buyers. SCOPE has resulted in the sale of about 250 properties with nearly 100 more either contracted or listed for sale. Sales totaling \$5 million have generated \$44 million in additional rehab economic activity and added to the local tax base. Contributing to the program's success was GBBR's close coordination not only with elected officials, but also with key appointed officials like the Housing Commissioner and the city Comptroller.

Learn more at:

<http://www.realtor.org/wps/wcm/connect/41b01d004c237651ac33ed86fdd82741/Amb-Chap1.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=41b01d004c237651ac33ed86fdd82741>



need to help low to moderate income people hit by the housing crisis to stay in their homes is an issue that will resonate with many elected officials.

Serving alongside elected officials on local boards and commissions often provides the opportunity to find common ground and influence the outcome of issues of interest to your association like regulation or local housing funding.

SUGGESTIONS

- NAR's REALTOR® Action Center (www.realtoractioncenter.com) is a resource for generating, organizing, and directing community interest to political leaders.
- Open the dialogue now. Don't wait for a specific event to arise before approaching your local officials. Establish a rapport and broadly sketch your association's interests now. With that relationship firmly (and previously) established, your requests (for funding, appearances, endorsements, etc.) are more likely to be quickly granted.

WORKING WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS *(continued)*

- Utilize the Federal Political Coordinator (FPC) assigned to your Member of Congress. Many times FPCs have established relationships and can be a gateway to the Member. They are also well versed on political issues as well as NAR issues.
- Personal trumps mechanical — I. Politicians judge the intensity of constituents' feelings by the energy they put into their communications. Letters carry more weight than petition signatures, and personal letters carry more weight than form letters.
- Personal trumps mechanical — II. Personal conversations are always preferable to any other format. You can see expressions and judge reactions; you can address misconceptions and clear up misunderstandings; you can exchange ideas and reach agreement.
- Show understanding and keep perspective. Remember while you have a narrowly focused agenda (e.g., you want support for a housing fair), most elected officials are trying to balance many competing interests and simultaneously deal with multiple issues. Be specific, realistic, and flexible in your requests.

LEARN MORE

A Matter of Trust

This case study highlights the effectiveness of engaging elected officials in campaigns to create housing trust funds.

National Housing Institute

www.nhi.org/online/issues/150/organize.html



Ambassadors for Cities: Affordable City Living

This is a publication highlighting eight particularly successful programs that have been recognized by NAR's Ambassadors for Cities program, which encourages partnerships with local REALTOR® associations and mayors.

National Association of REALTORS®

www.realtor.org/wps/wcm/connect/5a2137004c237653ac37ed86fdd82741/AFC_final.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=5a2137004c237653ac37ed86fdd82741



Work With Elected Officials

NAR's own guide to working with elected officials is short and to the point, emphasizing the local character of housing issues. This guide is a component of the publication *Blueprints for Success*.

National Association of REALTORS®

www.realtor.org/files/government_affairs/housing_opportunity/blueprints_officials.pdf