



Pennsylvania Association Creates Online Tool to Help REALTORS® Understand Diversity in Their Communities

The Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS® (PAR) has had a very active Diversity Committee for decades. Now, thanks to a \$5,000 Diversity Grant from the National Association of REALTORS®, the members of PAR are benefiting from an innovative website feature that helps them to maximize their ethnic and cultural sensitivities, neighborhood by neighborhood.

“The Diversity Explorer came about according to the Diversity Initiative Plan adopted by the Committee several years ago,” explains Kim Shindle, Media Relations Manager of the 29,000-member association. “Anticipating the release of the 2010 U.S. Census data that would be coming available, we asked ourselves ‘How do we make use of all this?’”

The website feature that answered that question was developed by Strategic Guidance Systems (SGS,) a political datamining firm that PAR had worked with often in the past. The new Diversity Explorer on the PAR website compiles the most recent U.S. Census data in an easy-access, simple-to-use format. Through interactive charts of targeted markets throughout Pennsylvania, members get a quick overview of their areas’ changing demographics. The Diversity Explorer features 39 markets targeted by the Census, and 15 categories within each of those markets. A corresponding article and a short webcast explain how to use the feature.

“The Census data is so hard to make sense of, if you don’t know what you’re doing,” says Shindle. “But this great tool helps our members to access it, to better understand their communities. Once REALTORS® have captured the information that applies to their neighborhoods, they can apply it to their businesses.” For example, beyond revealing a general Asian demographic, the Diversity Explorer will actually pinpoint the population of residents from a particular Asian country in a given community. In fact, when SGS was creating the feature, they were struck by the number of Bhutanese living in Erie; a little research showed that a large refugee population had, indeed, settled there from Bhutan. REALTORS® can then take such statistics to educate themselves about a given immigrant culture, and reach out to these populations, helping them to better understand issues of homeownership here.

“Sometimes people think of ‘diversity’ as just a matter of color,” notes Shindle, “when in fact, the Census data breaks it down by ancestry, as well. It may be that second-generation immigrants from a certain country speak our language and are more culturally indoctrinated – but they may still carry the cultural background of the old country, where homeownership is concerned. These are important nuances for REALTORS® to understand.”

The Diversity Explorer feature was launched at PAR’s Spring Business Meetings, where the many local association executives in attendance were excited to return home and share the power of the information with their members. PAR tracks the usage of the feature, and knows that those who visit the page do stay on for several minutes -- a long



time, for the web! “It’s still too soon to have any anecdotal evidence,” says Shindle, “but we’re really looking forward to hearing the feedback and stories at the Fall Meetings.”

“NAR’s Diversity Division is a great resource,” she adds, noting that she will call them for help with programs – or just as a sounding board. “There’s so much help available there, I really can’t say enough good about them!”

To learn more about the Diversity Explorer feature, contact: Kim Shindle, Media Relations Manager, Pennsylvania Association of Realtors®, kshindle@parealtor.org , 800.555.3390 x3005

PAR’s Online Diversity Explorer

The screenshot shows the 'Diversity Explorer' interface on the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors website. The page includes a navigation menu with options like 'About', 'Education', 'Standard Forms', 'Legal', 'Legislative', 'Media Center', and 'Programs'. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled 'Diversity Explorer' and features a 'Show Regions' dropdown menu and a 'Display Tips' button. Below this, there are several sections for data exploration:

- Family and Social Characteristics:** Includes links for 'Households by Type', 'Marital Status', 'Average Family Size', 'School Enrollment', 'Education Attainment', and 'Veteran Status'.
- Race and Ethnicity:** Includes links for 'Race', 'Asian Heritage', 'Hispanic or Latino Population', and 'First Ancestry Reported'.
- Immigration:** Includes links for 'Place of Birth', 'Citizen Status', and 'Year of Entry Into the United States'.
- Language:** Includes links for 'Language Spoken at Home' and 'Ability to Speak English'.

Two horizontal bar charts are displayed:

Households by Type

Region	Nonfamily Households (%)	Family Households (%)
Harrisburg-Carlisle	~38	~62
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington	~38	~62
Pittsburgh	~38	~62

Marital Status (Among Those 15 Years of Age and Older)

Region	Married (%)	Divorced (%)	Widowed (%)	Never Married (%)
Harrisburg-Carlisle	~65	~10	~10	~15
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington	~65	~10	~10	~15
Pittsburgh	~65	~10	~10	~15