



Utah Association Uses Game Changer Grant to Boost Vote-by-Mail Option Among REALTORS®

This is a big election year all over, but in Utah, the political focus is especially strong these days, with the Governor running for re-election, a new congressional seat up for grabs, and many interesting local races created by recent redistricting. This, in addition to the Presidential race, in which the challenger is an ‘adopted son’ of the state.

“Voter turnout is obviously a key factor in any election,” says Megan Brimhall, Government Affairs Director of the Utah Association of REALTORS® (UAR.) “Statistically, we know that citizens who vote by mail are more likely to vote. So we thought, ‘Let’s get our REALTOR® members to vote by mail, so we can command a higher voting percentage in our communities!’”

UAR received a \$15,000 Game-Changer grant from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® to launch its Vote-by-Mail initiative; these funds were augmented by smaller grants from UAR and a number of Utah’s local boards. The Vote-by-Mail program simply urges the UAR membership to register to vote by mail. Having done so, each member who has registered receives a ballot from the county clerk, fills it out, and returns it by mail or at the polls on Election Day.

The initiative is a multi-step process. This spring, ahead of the primaries, UAR sent all its members an email explaining the Vote-by-Mail program, with a link to register for a mail-in ballot. A direct-mail campaign followed, encouraging members to register with an enclosed form. Next came the auto-dialed phone call reminders, and, finally, door-to-door voter registration for those who have not responded to the prior solicitations – “that’s the most costly and labor-intensive method, one that we’ll save as a last-resort for the ‘high-hanging fruit,’ so to speak,” explains Brimhall. Through Utah’s county clerks’ offices, UAR will be closely tracking how many of its 11,500 members have registered to vote by mail. They would be happy to sign up 40-50 percent, according to Brimhall. “This is turning out to be a great reason to capitalize on all the election buzz this year,” she adds.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that voters who cast ballots by mail appreciate the time it gives them to research the candidates and their platforms and determine which best represents their views, with the ballot right at their fingertips. Add to that the ease and convenience – no waiting in line, no bad weather issues – and it’s clear why voting by mail appeals to so many voters. Those who have registered to vote by mail can still opt to bring their completed ballots to the polls on Election Day, or vote at the polls if they choose, instead – so there’s no down-side risk.

UAR expects that this campaign to enroll its members as voters-by-mail will enable it to heighten REALTOR® awareness and activism through continued outreach. It also hopes that the initiative will serve as a model to other associations, a notable requirement of all the Game-Changing programs supported by the national association.

Voting laws vary widely from state to state, but there seems to be a movement toward embracing the practice of voting by mail. Ten states already allow it at some level --



including Oregon, where *all* the voting is conducted by mail; at least two others permit counties to conduct special elections by mail. Beside the fact that voter ‘turn out’ is greater among those who vote by mail, states are drawn by the significant savings of not having to hold conventional elections, with all the attendant costs of polling stations.

“NAR has always encouraged members to be politically active,” says Brimhall. “Any voting tool that makes it easier and more convenient for members to engage in the political process is a tool worth using. Making it easy for members to vote for candidates who are going to work hard for them and for the business of real estate is a no-brainer. ”

To learn more about Utah’s Game-Changing Vote-by-Mail campaign, contact Megan Brimhall, Government Affairs Director of the Utah Association of REALTORS®, at 801-676-5200 or megan@utahrealtors.com.

The graphic has a dark blue background with a large, stylized star in the center. The star is filled with a pattern of white stars and stripes, reminiscent of the American flag. The text 'VOTE BY MAIL!' is written in large, bold, white and blue letters across the star. The overall design is patriotic and celebratory.

BECOME A VOTE BY MAIL VOTER!

You recently received a pre-filled Mail-In Voter form encouraging you to register to vote by mail. With vote by mail, you can avoid long lines and bad weather on Election Day, vote from the convenience and privacy of your home, and receive your ballot up to 30 days before the election.

REALTOR® participation

in the political process is crucial to the strength of the REALTOR® party.

The Utah Association of REALTORS® encourages you to sign, date, and return your pre-filled ballot application to your respective county clerk by October 5th so you can participate in this convenient voting option. If you have questions, please contact Megan Brimhall with the UAR at (801)676-5200. You can also visit voter.utah.gov and register to vote by mail online.



Utah Association
of REALTORS®