



## **Hopkinsville-Christian & Todd County REALTORS® (KY) Showcase Homeownership as a Win-Win for Employers and Employees**

Out in western Kentucky, the small but resourceful Hopkinsville-Christian and Todd County Association of REALTORS® understands that the American Dream of homeownership may be a win-win for employers and employees, but that sometimes dreams need a helping hand.

Gay Wilson, Executive Officer of the 68-member association, and Becky Johnson, who served as its President in 2007 and 2012, are leading the effort to move the local workforce in to homes that they own. The value of homeownership is bigger than just the individual owners, they explain, and bigger than the increased stability of the workforce, too. “This benefits the entire community,” says Johnson. “When more of our residents are invested in their homes here, the quality of life will rise for all.”

The association made its first effort in 2007, through NAR’s “Home From Work” program, but the economic collapse the following year made it a non-starter. Undaunted, Wilson and Johnson were determined to try again, and the association received a \$1,000 Housing Opportunity Grant from NAR, towards hosting an Employer Assisted Housing (EAH) class at the Kentucky Association’s second-quarter Business Meetings in June 2012. Open to the entire region of western Kentucky, the class drew 30 participants from seven different local boards, all with fewer than 80 members. A number of the local boards also contributed to the cost of the class. “We were very proud of the turn-out,” notes Wilson, “and we are very thankful to NAR for making it possible.”

After the class, seven members of the Hopkinsville-Christian & Todd association formed an EAH team, and received a second grant from NAR, this time for \$5,000, to implement what they had learned.

They call the local program “Hopkinsville HOPE,” short for “Home Ownership for Performing Employees.” They’ve created a simple but effective website, [www.eah-hopkinsville.com](http://www.eah-hopkinsville.com), to post their information and news. They’ve produced brochures for employers, and flyers for employee workshops. They’ve had pens bearing the EAH program information made, to get the word in to as many hands as possible – literally.

In September 2013, the team held a homeownership workshop for the public school system, the region’s largest employer; it was so successful that they were invited to make it an annual event. They are working on scheduling a workshop for the human resources office of the local hospital, which employs over 800 people. The Chamber of Commerce is helping to connect them with other large employers in the region, which is home to a number of automotive factories. The city and county governments are also very interested in the program.

“Our goal has been to provide information to help renters become owners,” says Johnson. “Once we get our local employers to catch on and take the initial step – just saying ‘yes’ to the training – then it may really take off. We’ve been more than pleased with the response so far.” A retired long-time teacher with the public school system, herself, she continues,



“Education is the key to anything. So, getting the word out is the most important part of the process.”

To learn more about how the REALTORS® of western Kentucky are helping to create a more stable workforce and vital permanent communities in their region through Employer Assisted Housing, contact Gay Wilson, Association Executive of the Hopkinsville Christian & Todd County Association of REALTORS® at 270-885-8365 or [www.hopkinsvillemls.org](http://www.hopkinsvillemls.org).

## Flyers and brochures help to explain the benefits of making homeownership a possibility for employees



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### Want to Build Your Business?

**An Employee Benefit that Hits Home.**

An employer-assisted housing (EAH) benefit program makes it easy for you to strengthen your employees' potential to purchase their own homes.

It's easy and effective. It's also the right thing to do for your business, your employees, and your community.

An EAH benefit plan brings distinct benefits to your small business or large corporation:

- Easier employee recruitment
- Improved employee retention
- Economic revitalization of local economy
- Higher employee productivity
- Enhanced employee-employer relationships
- Reduced employee commuting
- Recognition in your community as an employee-friendly business.

**Make Homeownership Easier for your Employees with an Employer-Assisted Housing Benefit Program**



The connection is real...  
OWNING A HOME MAKES BETTER EMPLOYEES.

### Empower Your Business.

Today's business owners face many challenges—from high turnover rates and labor shortages to all-too-chronic absenteeism. An Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) benefit offsets these challenges by providing employers with tools for educating, counseling, and sometimes, funding their employees to realize the American Dream of homeownership.

Improved retention, more effective recruitment, and reduced training costs all result from an EAH benefit. With EAH you can increase productivity, improve morale, and ultimately, strengthen your bottom line through employee homeownership.



### Empower Your Employees.

Through an EAH benefit you can provide your employees with one or more of the following options:

Homebuyer & homeownership workshops, conducted by REALTORS® and real estate professionals as well as participating non-profit organizations and lenders. These workshops provide clear explanations of complex issues like home affordability, property taxes, homeowners' insurance, mortgage applications, closing costs, credit issues, and more.

One-on-one homeownership counseling, with a certified counselor, will help your employees understand their options for homeownership, correct credit issues, and learn budgeting to become mortgage ready or avoid foreclosure.

Financial assistance, such as forgivable loans, grants, or matched savings, provided by your company to help employees purchase a home. Additionally, employees will learn how to leverage local, state and federal down-payment assistance programs.

For many new or relocating employees, the road to homeownership can be especially challenging. For others, who focus on real estate investing, the task is just as daunting. But through an EAH benefit you can empower all of your employees and build trusting relationships within the company and within your community as well.



### Empower Your Community.

Nationwide, salaries have not kept pace with rising home prices. As a result, homeownership has become out of reach for a large portion of the workforce. Teachers, emergency personnel, retail clerks, hospitality staff and other employees often cannot afford to live near their places of work or are uninformed about the range of homeownership options available to them.

Employer-Assisted Housing enables workers to live and work in the same community and can help to stabilize and revitalize a community. EAH strengthens your community and empowers your workforce.

