

2019 NAR Advocacy Success: State & Local

Community Outreach Highlights

Communities across the country benefited from local REALTOR® association involvement funded by grants from the National Association of REALTORS®. In total, more than 400 Community Outreach grants were awarded in 2019 totaling nearly \$1.8 million. These efforts focused on a variety of community needs, including growing and revitalizing communities; creating new public spaces and destinations; enhancing and promoting housing affordability; and advancing and protecting fair housing. Grants provided include [Smart Growth](#), [Placemaking](#), [Housing Opportunity](#), [Diversity](#), Mega-Association grants, [Urban Initiative-Opportunity Zone grants](#), and [Transforming Neighborhoods](#) (addressing vacant properties). Additionally, resources were developed for associations serving rural communities.

Urban Initiative: Opportunity Zone Grant

With enactment of the legislation creating Opportunity Zones, NAR developed the [Opportunity Zone Grant](#) to foster collaboration between local REALTOR® associations and other community leaders to make the most of Opportunity Zones in their community. In total, 46 grants were awarded totaling \$180,000. These funds helped to bring together REALTORS® along with local elected officials, economic development leaders, and investors to explore the possibilities of local Opportunity Zones. Efforts included exploration of community needs, bus tours of available sites and expert guidance on make Opportunity Zone development a reality.

Transforming Neighborhoods; Neighborhood Revitalization

Through the [Transforming Neighborhoods program](#), local associations initiated conversations with community stakeholders to address vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties in their neighborhoods. Associations hosted day-long trainings that provided REALTORS®, elected officials, nonprofits, city leaders, and the business community the valuable opportunity to learn together. National experts presented case studies and best practices from across the country about the causes of vacancy and abandonment as well as programs and policies that can facilitate the return of properties to productive use. These trainings showcased REALTORS® as leaders of efforts to develop location-specific solutions to the issues of vacancy and blight.

Smart Growth

The [Smart Growth Action Grant program](#) awarded 98 grants in 2019. For example, following the devastating wildfire that destroyed Paradise, California, the town was faced with the prospect of rebuilding from a clean slate. For neighboring communities like Oroville, whose population swelled by 20% as it accommodated refugees from the fire, the need for significant housing expansion was urgent. The Oroville Association of REALTORS® were determined to promote new growth toward smart growth in part by using a Smart Growth Action Grant to bring in an expert to help provide some vision as to how the two communities could make the most of their situations.

2019 NAR Advocacy Success: State & Local

Land Use Initiative

Sixty-four state and local associations were provided expert analysis on proposed legislation through the [Land Use Initiative](#). This service provided detailed information on how the legislation would impact their communities, helping REALTORS® to advocate for issues that protect property rights. Most requests focused on rental issues including short-term rentals, rental property registration, vacation rentals, and residential rent stabilization. Other typical requests regarded sign ordinances, stormwater management, and zoning codes. Nine of the 64 requests came from state REALTOR® associations. All the past analysis are available for review on the REALTOR® Party website, and can be searched by keyword, issue, state or date.

Consumer Advocacy Outreach

State and local associations engaged consumers in their advocacy efforts through the [Consumer Advocacy Outreach Program](#) and successfully promoted legislative efforts that encourage housing and commercial development. The program educates and engages 9 million consumers on public policy issues at the state, local, and national levels. In 2019, the program collaborated with state and local associations to keep consumers apprised of important real estate issues and engaged them on critical legislation. The following examples demonstrate how consumers can amplify the REALTOR® voice to public officials.

Mississippi REALTORS® sought statewide support of HB 366, The Mississippi Broadband Enabling Act, which amended the statute to permit Electric Cooperatives to provide broadband services in addition to electric power. HB 366 was passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor. Mississippi REALTORS® is certain that dependable high-speed internet has immense potential to positively impact Mississippi's youth and be an integral part of providing access to educational opportunities in rural areas.

Missouri is one of 10 states (AL, CO, IA, MN, MS, MT, OK, OR, VA) that passed legislation which allows prospective homebuyers to now save for a down payment with a First-Time Homebuyer Savings Account — a savings account dedicated to the purchase of a first home. This legislation encourages personal saving so that prospective homebuyers can overcome the financial barriers to owning a home.