



October 13th, 2026

The Honorable Jonathan V. Gould
Comptroller of the Currency
Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
400 7th Street, SW Washington, DC 20219

The Honorable Travis Hill
Chairman
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
550 17th Street, NW Washington, DC 20429

**Re: Community Reinvestment Act Regulations; Docket ID OCC-2026-0694;
RIN 1557 AF57; RIN 3064-AG31**

Dear Comptroller Gould and Chairman Hill:

On behalf of the more than 1.4 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), we thank the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding proposed changes to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) regulations.

By way of background, the National Association of REALTORS® is America's largest trade association, including NAR's five commercial real estate institutes and its societies and councils. REALTORS® are involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries and belong to one or more of some 1,200 local associations or boards, and 54 state and territory associations of REALTORS®. NAR represents a wide variety of housing industry professionals committed to the development and preservation of the nation's housing stock, along with its availability to the widest range of potential homebuyers.

NAR applauds the Administration for its focus on housing affordability. According to NAR's latest [Profile of Homebuyers and Sellers](#), the share of first-time buyers is now at the lowest level since we started recording the data. The median age of the first-time buyer is now 40 years old, and those who achieve homeownership have higher incomes than ever before. As we confront this crisis, NAR supports policies that responsibly expand homeownership opportunities for qualified buyers.

Since Congress enacted the CRA in 1977, the law has played a vital role in expanding access to credit and financial services in low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities. Because of the CRA, millions of Americans have been able to achieve the goal of homeownership. REALTORS® across the country have benefitted from the CRA and its requirements that depositories make a strong effort to serve the communities in which they operate. In turn, creditworthy borrowers in underserved areas have gained important access to mortgage credit because of the CRA, unlocking a pathway to generational wealth they did not have before. REALTORS® also believe that the CRA strengthens communities by supporting strong housing markets, localized investment, and greater opportunities for business development.

The CRA requires federal banking regulators to evaluate how well financial institutions meet the credit needs of the communities they serve, including through lending and investment in LMI areas. Those evaluations inform agency decisions on applications for mergers, acquisitions, and other activities, giving institutions a strong incentive to meet their community obligations.

NAR agrees that every financial institution must serve its entire community, especially in areas with the greatest need, and provide fair access to credit and financial services. Any modernization of the CRA should strengthen that obligation and expand access to credit across all neighborhoods. That goal remains urgent: nearly 60 years after enactment of the federal Fair Housing Act, substantial racial homeownership gaps persist, and the Black-White homeownership gap remains comparable to the gap that existed before the law's passage. NAR therefore urges the agencies to preserve consistent CRA standards, carefully assess changes that could reduce lending or investment in LMI communities, maintain strong fair lending accountability, and recognize programs that expand sustainable homeownership opportunities.

Modernization Must Preserve CRA's Core Mission Through Consistent Standards

Above all, maintaining the core mission of CRA is vital. REALTORS® believe the CRA's intent is more fully realized when the joint agencies work in concert. As currently written, only the FDIC and OCC will operate under the new proposed rules, leaving the Federal Reserve Board with a separate set of regulations for financial institutions that they oversee. This uneven regulatory environment may leave gaps or inconsistencies between banks that even operate in the same areas. NAR supports a more unified approach and hopes the three banking regulators can come together for a common set of principles to provide a fairer playing field for financial institutions.

The Proposed Asset Thresholds Risk Reducing Investment Where It Is Needed Most

The latest proposal also drastically changes the asset thresholds under CRA. Banks with less than \$1 billion in assets would now be considered small banks, a rise from the current \$412 million threshold. Banks with assets between \$1 billion and \$10 would be considered intermediate banks, and banks with more than \$10 billion in assets would now be deemed large banks. This is a drastic change in asset thresholds that will reimagine how banks serve the communities where they operate.

While NAR does not have a position on the proper asset size and the bank size definitions, we do recognize that a change like this will likely lead to less investment in communities that need it most. We ask that the joint regulators reassess this proposal and instead study the direct effects on credit availability in communities where the changes will be felt most. This includes the effects on Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (especially in light of the passage of the *21st Century ROAD to Housing Act* and the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*) and their availability and the likelihood of bank branch closings in LMI areas and the effects on unbanked and underbanked consumers.

Product-Line Flexibility Must Not Come at the Expense of Mortgage Credit

REALTORS® also believe that more diligence should be spent on evaluating the changes to banks and their “major product lines.” Under the proposal, this would mean that institutions can choose from one of their major community development activities, such as only being evaluated on deposit accounts, without looking at other investments, such as mortgages or commercial lending. Because of the inherent risk in home lending relative to other product lines, NAR is concerned that this change may inadvertently reduce mortgage lending and lead to an even more difficult housing market in LMI communities.

Given the current lack of housing supply, the high interest rate environment, and many of the challenges in LMI communities, including the persistence of institutional investors purchasing available housing stock, it’s important to not set back communities even further.

CRA Accountability Requires Consistent Oversight and Strong Fair Lending Standards

NAR also supports a strong and consistent oversight. Any CRA qualifying “credits” or other future performance rating methods must support the mission, be clearly identified and defined, and be consistent over time and between examiners. To prevent the churning of loans for CRA credit, credit for CRA lending should reflect the duration that the investment is on the books of



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the lender, but that credit should diminish over time. Any metric-based evaluation system should be holistic and must not diminish the analysis of the true needs of communities.

In addition, NAR supports strong enforcement of federal fair lending laws, including the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and the Fair Housing Act. CRA evaluations should continue to account for fair lending and consumer protection concerns that reveal whether institutions are serving all consumers and communities fairly. NAR urges the agencies to ensure the final rule preserves consideration of evidence related to redlining and other discriminatory credit practices, as well as factors such as root cause, severity, duration, and pervasiveness, so CRA evaluations can reflect the real-world impact of violations on consumers and communities. A CRA framework that overlooks these concerns would weaken accountability where fair lending protections and community investment are most needed.

Transparent, Current Evaluation Methods Are Essential to Measure Community Needs

Tracking the true effects of CRA is also important, and publicly discussed data allows not just regulators but the public, including dedicated REALTOR® members, to see if banks are living up to their obligations. Assessment Area definitions, used in the evaluation process, must be updated through collaboration between the regulators and the financial institution to reflect changes to geographic coverage, but also the nature of lending and the need for banking services. If community's lending needs within a lender's assessment area(s) are met, lenders should be able to receive credit for CRA-eligible investments outside of their assessment area(s). The methods of examinations should be also consistent, transparent and readily available.

The Performance Context, a research-based understanding of the credit and community development needs and opportunities, should be defined and updated in real time in conjunction with the supervised financial institution and used in the evaluation process as well as in the forward-looking strategic investment plan of the financial institution.

CRA Credit Should Reward Proven Paths to Affordable Homeownership

NAR also believes that certain housing programs deserve special consideration. REALTORS® support the use of down payment assistance programs on both the state and federal level. Saving for a down payment remains one of the greatest hurdles to overcome when purchasing a home, especially for low-income and minority communities. Many first-time homebuyers receive down payment assistance from friends and family. However, many do not have that luxury. Giving credit to lenders that



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emphasize this type of investment, including closing cost assistance, would doubly serve the consumers and their communities.

NAR also supports the creation and adoption of Special Purpose Credit Programs (SPCPs) for underserved communities. SPCPs are a novel approach that offers a flexible way of creating a program to provide sustainable housing opportunities. Examples of the programs include down payment assistance, rate buy-downs, closing cost assistance, and housing grants. NAR believes that properly structured and monitored SPCPs can help more qualified buyers achieve and sustain the American Dream of homeownership.

Other unique models should be rewarded by the joint regulators. Shared-equity lending models, when designed with appropriate consumer protections, can also provide additional pathways into homeownership while helping families build wealth over time. In a shared equity program, a first-time buyer partners with banks, a local housing authority, a non-profit, or federal government to purchase a home together. The home buyer receives in effect an interest-free loan in exchange for a share of the equity appreciation of the home when it is sold or refinanced. The homebuyer only mortgages their portion of the property and faces a much lower monthly payment, and there is no second loan for the borrower to repay. Over time, these programs may become self-sustaining with the capital banks receive, making it easier to recycle funds back into the program.

Unique approaches to investments like these are areas the regulators should explore further in rewarding CRA credit.

Conclusion

We thank you for your leadership on these important issues. CRA has played a vital role in communities across the country, and NAR looks forward to working with all the regulators to strengthen the program now and for generations to come. If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to Matt Emery, Senior Policy Representative for Financial Services, at memery@nar.realtor.

Sincerely,



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2026 President
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