

National Association of REALTORS®



# Federal Political Coordinator Contact Team Member Toolkit



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# How to Build a Successful FPC Contact Team

Every FPC experience is unique—levels of advocacy experience, knowledge of the public affairs world, and personal connections to lawmakers all vary to a large degree. As a result, it is important to develop an FPC Team to support you in executing your significant grassroots activities and duties to the best of your abilities. The following guidelines will help you build a new team or help if you are struggling with your current support structure.

## Step 1: Identify Your Needs

Take stock of your needs as an FPC and build your team accordingly. When choosing members of your FPC team, keep in mind that ideal NAR advocates hold the following attributes:

- An understanding of the key issues affecting REALTORS®;
- An interest in politics;
- A willingness to play an active role in specified NAR grassroots initiatives;
- Existing relationships with legislators, community and business leaders.

Many REALTOR® advocates may have more specialized experience. Areas of advanced familiarity might include:

- Relevant issue expertise and/or a history of advocacy;
- Campaign experience;
- Leadership experience within NAR.

## Step 2: Ensure Strong Team Qualities

Your goal in building an FPC team is to help you better carry out your duties and increase responses to Calls for Action. As a result, ideally your team should include:

- A minimum of one FPC Team Member for each U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative serving under each FPC.
  - Representatives of various major boards in the district and perhaps even the affiliates (Women’s Council of REALTORS®, Commercial members, etc.)
- Representatives of the minority population in your district if it is significant (i.e., National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals (NAHREP), Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA), or National Association of Real Estate Brokers (Realtists))
- REALTOR® members on your board you know will also respond to Calls For Action;
- Those who serve on Government Affairs Committees and RPAC.
- Also, consider asking members with different real estate specialties (i.e., Commercial, Land, Broker etc.)

## Step 3: Seek Advice

There are significant resources available to every FPC to help them recruit and build a high potential FPC Team. Consulting with the following groups will help you identify and recruit individuals who are interested and capable advocates on behalf of NAR. They include:

- State and Local Associations;
- Government Affairs Staff;
- State and Local Association Executives;

- NAR Political Field Representatives;
- Leaders within NAR (i.e., committee chairs and committee members).

#### **Step 4: Hold an Organizational Meeting**

Once chosen, it is important that you meet with your team and learn their interests, advocacy history and strengths. This will help you seamlessly work together to maximize the team resources in order to play a fundamental role in NAR's grassroots public affairs agenda. The organizational meeting may be in person, by conference call, or tied to an already scheduled meeting to take advantage of team members being in one place.

During this meeting, FPCs should gather information to establish regular contact patterns with team members, which can also be activated when hot issues emerge or when specific Calls for Action are made. Below are some examples of information that you may want to gather:

- Phone number;
- Primary email address;
- Home/work address;
- Fax number.

#### **Step 5: Get on the Same Page**

Your team members should all be equally familiar with their members of Congress. Since legislators have different committee expertise or issue areas that are of interest to them, communications directed at legislators should reflect the REALTOR® advocate's familiarity with an issue and his/her understanding of its importance to the particular member of Congress.

Provide your team with a biography of your lawmaker. Other materials can be provided by your NAR Political Field Representative.

#### **Step 6: Ensure Participation**

Some FPC Team Members will be more involved than others depending on the time they can dedicate. To help ensure maximum participation, we suggest the following:

- Ask your team members about their level of time commitment.
  - This will help identify which members are willing to do what activities.
- Delegate!
  - Giving Team Members greater responsibility for certain projects often generates a feeling of ownership over the goals of grassroots, and eventually your team's overall success.

#### **Step 7: Provide Recognition and Positive Feedback**

Team members who go above the call of duty or who have made great strides in furthering the team's goals should be acknowledged and appreciated in newsletters, email updates or in other forums. If the team has been successful (i.e., getting your member of Congress to be a co-sponsor or getting a vote), the team should celebrate its victory. Please notify NAR staff if you have a particularly victorious win.

# FPC Contact Team Recruitment Letter

[Date]

Dear [Insert FPC Team Contact]:

I am writing today to see if you would be interested in joining my team. Over the next two years I will be serving as the Federal Political Coordinator (FPC) for [Insert your Senator/Congressman] during the 116th Congressional session on behalf of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR). In this capacity, I will work closely with [insert member of Congress/Senator] and [his/her] staff to ensure that [he/she] has a good understanding of the issues before Congress that impact housing and the real estate industry. But I cannot do it alone. I need your help.

FPCs are the face and voice of real estate for lawmakers in Washington, D.C., and essential to NAR's continued success and growing influence on Capitol Hill. It is important to me that [insert your Senator/Congressman] grasp the full picture of the real estate industry and the breadth of what we represent. That's why I need you. Your experience as a (commercial broker, Women's Council Member, NAHREP leader etc.) is invaluable and will help me better do my job as FPC. Together we will paint a clear picture of the issues affecting our industry and the homeowners in [insert your state].

As an extension of the grassroots voice, my FPC team will help organize and implement advocacy efforts to help me further build a strong relationship with our legislator. You will be especially crucial in bolstering each Call for Action.

Please let me know if you would be willing to serve at my side over these next two years. I would be honored to have you as my team member.

Sincerely,

[Name]

FPC for [Senator/Congressman]

**1.3  
million**

NAR members  
representing the  
nation's real estate  
industry.

# FPC Contact Team Submission Form

<b>CD</b>	<b>FPC Member</b>	<b>NRDS</b>	<b>Team Member First Name</b>	<b>Team Member Last name</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Expertise Added (Commercial, Broker, Women's Council member, AREAA/NAHREP rep.)</b>

## FPC Contact Team Member Responsibilities

- Respond to all NAR Calls for Action.
- Motivate others in your network to respond to NAR Calls for Action.
- Advocate on behalf of the REALTOR® Party.
- Assist your FPC with any in-person meetings in the district or in Washington.
- Help your FPC to develop any materials requested by legislative offices or staff.
- Be a resource for your FPC on any issues they may not be as cogent on.
- Help organize events for the member of Congress in the District (board meetings, meet and greets).

**43**

Years the FPC  
Program has been  
in existence.



## Introduction to the REALTOR® Party Website

Log on to [www.realtorparty.realtor](http://www.realtorparty.realtor)

The REALTOR® Party website is at the heart of the REALTOR® grassroots effort. This web-based, two-way political communication system was created to make contact with federal legislators as easy, efficient, and especially as effective as possible. All Federal Political Coordinators utilize the REALTOR® Party website to access resources and carry out a majority of their advocacy activity. If you ever have any questions about the REALTOR® Party website, or problems logging on, please contact Brandon Maddox, Program Systems Manager, at 202-383-1043 or [bmaddox@realtors.org](mailto:bmaddox@realtors.org).

### Calls For Action

- A Call For Action will periodically come to the email used when you registered.
- The Call For Action will prompt you to send either an email, fax, or phone call to your member of Congress right from the email message.
- Responding to a “Call For Action” is quick and easy, and is a required activity for all Federal Political Coordinators.
- All FPC team members are also encouraged to answer every Call For Action.

Because the personal relationship with your member of Congress is so important to the success of the grassroots program, the Field Reporting feature of the REALTOR® Party website was created. This allows NAR staff to track your interaction with your legislator and provides key information for your fellow volunteers, team members, NAR lobbyists and field staff so they can be informed during their next meeting with the member of Congress.

### Field Reporting

- The Field Reporting tool allows NAR to recognize all the hard work you do building a relationship with your member of Congress.
- Once on the REALTOR® Party website, go to Tools & Resources > Member & Consumer Mobilization > File an FPC Report.
- On the FPC Field Report page, do a search and select your affiliated legislator.
- Verify your FPC information or type in a different name and email address if your name doesn’t correspond with the search results. Click the confirm button.
- Next, find the category that best describes your most recent communication with your member of Congress.
- Fill in the text boxes with the details of your interaction with your member of Congress. These text boxes appear small but will actually allow you to type several paragraphs if you like.
- Your input is instantly sent to NAR’s political and legislative staff informing them of your efforts. They use this information on Capitol Hill to demonstrate our cohesive membership.



# Do's and Don'ts: Meeting with Members of Congress



## Before the Meeting

- Prepare by reading up on your member of Congress on his/her website.
- Learn your Members' committee assignments, where his/her specialties lie, as well as his/her personal interests.
- Plan your strategy ahead of time. Decide who will lead the meeting if multiple REALTORS® are attending and what talking points each person will cover.
- Choose talking points. Create a list of 3 to 5 important issues you want to cover and use real examples to communicate your point.
- Organize by making sure you know where the meeting is taking place and at what time. Arrive on time, be polite and well dressed.
- Touch base with your NAR Lobbyist before the meeting so he/she can provide any insight on the Member's position on the issue.

## During the Meeting

- Be sensitive to the amount of time allotted to you. Ask up front and if you get 15-20 minutes with your member of Congress (or staff) that's great!
- Present the need for what you're asking the member of Congress to do. Use data or cases you know.
- Present your business card up front.
- Relate situations in his/her home state or district.
- Ask the Representative's or Senator's position and why.
- Show openness to and knowledge of counterarguments and respond to them cordially.
- Admit what you don't know. Offer to try to find out the answer and send information back to the office.
- Spend more time with Members who may not have embraced the NAR position on an issue. You can lessen the intensity of the opposition and perhaps change it.

## End of the Meeting

- Get the name and business card of any staff person who sits in on the meeting. This will help you should you need to follow up after the meeting.
- Give the Member and staff any handouts you have on your talking points.
- Thank the office for any support the Member has given on our issues.

## After the Meeting

- Write a thank you e-mail to the staff with whom you met and offer to be of any assistance on real estate issues in the future.
- Follow through on any promises you made to the Member or staff.
- FILE A FIELD REPORT.

## Do's and Don'ts: Meeting with Members of Congress

- Send the member of Congress a note of support when they do or say something that is helpful to NAR. This is especially important if the Member was not initially supportive of an issue and worked with us even if it was unpopular.



- Don't fail to show up for your scheduled meeting. Call if you are running late.
- Don't discount Congressional staff. Many Congressional staffers look (and are) young. However, do not assume that such a staffer does not have significant responsibility and the ear of his or her member. In many offices, the staffer you are meeting with will prepare a summary memo for the Member that carries extreme influence and power.
- Don't overload a Congressional visit with too many issues.
- Don't confront, threaten, pressure or beg.
- Don't be argumentative. Speak with calmness and commitment so as not to put him/her on the defensive.
- Don't overstate the case. Members are very busy and you are apt to lose their attention if you are too wordy.
- Don't expect members of Congress to be specialists. Their schedules and workloads tend to make them generalists.
- Don't be put off by smokescreens or long-winded answers. Bring the Members back to the point. Maintain control of the meetings.
- Don't make promises you can't deliver.
- Don't be afraid to take a stand on the issues.
- Don't shy away from meetings with legislators with known views opposite your own.
- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Offer to follow up with them after the meeting when you can obtain the correct information.
- When meeting in Washington, D.C., don't be offended if you are asked to meet in a hallway or tight space. Capitol Hill is a busy place with limited real estate. Where you meet does not matter, but what is said and how you conduct yourself does.

## Do's and Don'ts: Delivering RPAC Checks

RPAC (REALTORS® Political Action Committee) serves as a critical FPC resource to support pro-REALTOR® candidates in their election efforts. In the 2016 elections, RPAC was the largest association PAC in the nation, with direct contributions totaling over \$5.2 million. RPAC allocates certain funds for FPCs to use each cycle, including “In-State” funds and “Special Recognition Funds. The following is a reminder of the importance of delivering your RPAC checks and the rules surrounding the gesture. ***Do not put yourself at risk or embarrass the lawmaker or his/her staff by forgetting these important guidelines.***

### In-State Funds

- \$1,000 for each FPC for a Congressional two-year election cycle and
- \$2,000 for each FPC for a Senate six-year election cycle.

In-State Funds are funds that can be used to attend in-district receptions or events for members of Congress to support their re-election efforts. These funds must be used by December 31 of the year preceding the election. For example, for the upcoming 2016 cycle all in-state checks should be requested before the end of 2015.

### Special Recognition Funds

Before each election, your state association's RPAC trustees will meet to consider additional support for your member of Congress based upon their voting record on REALTOR® Party issues. Once the NAR trustees approve your state's request, your state association will receive a special recognition check for your member's re-election.



DO:

- Deliver your RPAC check in-person.
- Meet your member of Congress at a non-government location like a coffee shop, your office, or their campaign headquarters. **NEVER** deliver a check at his/her office or on any other government property.
- Deliver the RPAC check within 15 days of receiving it from NAR
- Contact your state association if you cannot deliver the check to the candidate, so another REALTOR® representative may be appointed to deliver it.
- Praise the member of Congress for his/her work in the district and for supportive actions he or she has already taken to further REALTOR® Party issues.
- It is important to only comment on action they have taken **IN THE PAST** and not on any legislation currently in play.
- Even better is to avoid discussing specific legislation at all while presenting a check.
- Keep close track of all RPAC checks. If for some reason the check is lost, please report it to your NAR Political Representative **IMMEDIATELY** so that it can be canceled and re-cut.

## Do's and Don'ts: Delivering RPAC Checks

### DON'T:

- Never deliver an RPAC check in a government office OR on government property. It is **ILLEGAL!** This includes everything from federal office buildings to federal parks and preserves to all other types of federal facilities.
- Note: Even presenting the check in the parking lot can still be considered government property and it may be unlawful. **DO NOT DO IT.**
- Never make any political "ask" of your member of Congress while presenting your RPAC check.
- For example, **DO NOT** say "please vote for this bill." Again, it is **ILLEGAL** to solicit a legislative vote in exchange for a contribution.
- Don't delay delivering your RPAC check. If the check is not cashed within 60 days, the check will be voided and it will be necessary to obtain a replacement check from RPAC.
- Don't deliver an RPAC check after the election-day (primary or general) for which the check is designated. After Election Day, RPAC may no longer contribute to a candidate and we miss the opportunity to demonstrate our support.
- Don't mail a check unless it is absolutely unavoidable. Please deliver all checks in-person if possible.



## Including a Multicultural Chapter Representative on Your Contact Team

In Congressional Districts with ethnically diverse populations, NAR recommends that you recruit members of your contact team to reflect that diversity. The national multicultural real estate organizations have chapters in or near many of these ethnically diverse districts. Reaching out to the chapters can help you identify REALTOR® leaders in those chapters who could contribute to the success of your contact team.

1. Find out if there is a chapter of one of the organizations in your area.
  - Contact your local association Government Affairs Director to see if he/she knows if there is a chapter and if so, who to speak with locally, or
  - Call the national group and identify whether there is a chapter and who you can speak with locally.
2. Set up an in-person meeting to discuss why the contact team is important to the industry; why a representative of the chapter is important on the team; and how participation in the team helps build a stronger chapter and stronger voice for real estate.
3. Remember that although most members of the chapters are REALTORS®, the organizations are independent of NAR. The involvement of a REALTOR® who is active in the chapter will help that contact team member build leadership skills they can use in both organizations.
4. Explain what a contact team does and what individual team members are asked to do.
5. Ask that your request be considered by the chapter's leadership and for a recommendation from the chapter for a team member.

If you have any questions, please contact Fred Underwood, NAR's Director of Diversity and Inclusion, at 202-383-1132 or [funderwood@realtors.org](mailto:funderwood@realtors.org).

### Links

The Asian Real Estate Association of America – [www.areaa.org](http://www.areaa.org)

The National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals – [www.nahrep.org](http://www.nahrep.org)

The National Association of Real Estate Brokers – [www.nareb.com](http://www.nareb.com)

The National Association of Gay and Lesbian Real Estate Professionals – [www.naglrep.org](http://www.naglrep.org)

# NAR Staff Directory

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For a complete list of NAR staff,  
visit [www.nar.realtor/directories/advocacy-group-directory-by-functional-area](http://www.nar.realtor/directories/advocacy-group-directory-by-functional-area).





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