VOTE ACT INVEST

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DIRECTORS' INSTITUTE 2026

JULY 21–23

COLUMBUS, OH

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 | Pheoris West A - C

11:00 AM - 6:30 PM Registration Hours

12:15 – 1:15 PM Getting Started: New GAD & First-Time Attendee Orientation

New to GAD Institute or attending for the first time? Start your week with an overview of the GAD role, how NAR's advocacy structure supports your work, and the key resources, programs, and people that will help you succeed. You'll also learn how to make the most of GAD Institute and leave with a roadmap for navigating the conference and building connections with fellow GADs. (Lunch provided)

1:30 – 2:15 PM

- **Data That Persuades, Not Just Parades**
- **Powering Possibility: Using CDA to Drive Lasting Advocacy Outcomes**
- **RPAC 101**

2:25 – 3:10 PM

- **Policy Analysis in Practice**
- **From Policy to Plain English**
- **RPAC Fundraising Best Practices**

3:20 – 4:05 PM

- **The Legislative Triage Playbook**
- **Grassroots & Grasstops Mobilization**
- **CAP: A Program in Transition**

4:15 – 5:00 PM: GAD Exchange: Roundtable Discussions

The conversation continues after the breakout tracks. Choose the discussion room that best matches your interests—RPAC, Policy, or Association Management—and join a table focused on the topics submitted by GADs during registration. Each table is designed to encourage candid peer-to-peer conversations and problem solving.

5:00 – 7:00 PM: Welcome Reception (Gina Knee, Level 4)

Start the 2026 GAD Institute by connecting with colleagues from across the country at the NAR Advocacy Welcome Reception. Hosted by NAR Advocacy following the afternoon roundtable discussions, this casual networking event offers the perfect opportunity to reconnect with familiar faces, welcome first-time attendees, and build new relationships before the Institute officially gets underway. Join us in the Gina Knee near Registration for an evening of conversation and refreshments.

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TRACK A: FROM ANALYSIS TO ACTION | Pheoris West A

1:30 - 2:15 PM Data That Persuades, Not Just Parades
This session dives into real policy examples where strategy, not information, determined the result. We will explore how Government Affairs Directors can use data to shape the conversation, control the narrative, and influence decisions. Using contrasting case studies from recent housing policy debates, participants will see how similar data led to very different outcomes depending on how it was framed and communicated. Participants will then put these concepts into practice through a fast-paced exercise focused on delivering concise, high-impact messages in the moments that matter most.

***Speakers**: Neeley Erickson, GAD Chair, Illinois REALTORS®; Jerard Wright, Government Affairs Director, Greater Los Angeles REALTORS®; John Winston, Director, State & Local Programs, NAR*

2:25 – 3:10 PM Policy Analysis in Practice
Every policy issue requires thoughtful analysis before an association takes a position. Hear from experienced State and Local GADs as they discuss practical approaches to evaluating issues, navigating approvals, and determining next steps. Leave with a consistent framework you can apply to policy decisions in your own association.

***Speakers**: Claire Berger, Communications & Government Affairs Manager, Maine REALTORS®; Maria McHale, Governmental Affairs & Policy Director, East Tennessee REALTORS®; Julia Paranteau, Director of Public Policy, Texas REALTORS®*

3:20 – 4:05 PM The Legislative Triage Playbook
Every association tracks legislation, but not every bill deserves the same level of attention. As legislative sessions grow increasingly complex, the challenge isn't finding more bills to monitor; it's knowing where to invest your team's time and advocacy resources. Hear from GADs representing different association sizes and structures as they share how they prioritize legislation, organize tracking systems, and quickly identify the issues that warrant action. From statewide legislative tracking to managing multiple local jurisdictions, panelists will discuss the tools, internal processes, and decision-making frameworks that help their teams move beyond tracking everything equally and focus on what matters most.

***Speakers**: Jeff Ledford, Georgia REALTORS®; Shawn Cote, Tucson Association of REALTORS® Government Affairs Director; Brian Tanner, Colorado Association of REALTORS® Vice President of Public Policy; Peyton Jenkins, Georgia REALTORS®*

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TRACK B: MOBILIZING THE REALTOR® VOICE | Pheoris West B

1:30 - 2:15 PM Powering Possibility: Using CDA to Drive Lasting Advocacy Outcomes
Discover how REALTOR® associations are turning vision into action through NAR's Community Development Advocacy (CDA) program. Gain a clear understanding of CDA's value, how to use grants and resources to educate and build support, and how to strategically "stack" REALTOR® Party resources to drive meaningful results. Hear how associations are successfully using CDA funding to advocate, educate, and engage on key community development issues, maximizing impact and positioning their work for long-term success.

***Speakers**: Taylor G. Smith, Deputy Director of Government Affairs, Austin Board of REALTORS®; Charlie Hinderliter, Chief Advocacy Officer and Director of Commercial Services, St. Louis REALTORS®; Christine Windle, RCE, Director, Community Development Advocacy, National Association of REALTORS®*

2:25 – 3:10 PM From Policy to Plain English
Great advocacy starts with clear communication. Learn how to translate complex legislation into messages that resonate with members, elected officials, and the public. Through real-world examples, experienced GADs will share strategies for simplifying policy, connecting issues to everyday impacts, and ensuring members understand not just what REALTORS® support—but why it matters.

***Speakers:** Elizabeth Sharp, Government Affairs Director, Williamson County Association of REALTORS®; Josh Branum, Government Affairs Director, Greater Chattanooga REALTORS®; Greta Haas, Director of Government Affairs, Iowa REALTORS®*

3:20 – 4:05 PM Grassroots & Grasstops Mobilization
Every association approaches advocacy a little differently—but the strongest programs all have one thing in common: they engage the right people at the right time. Hear from state and local GADs who have built successful grassroots and grasstops networks, expanded beyond traditional REALTOR® advocacy, and found creative ways to mobilize members, community stakeholders, and key decision-makers. Through a candid conversation, panelists will share what's worked, lessons learned, and practical ideas you can adapt for your own association—while highlighting NAR resources like Advocacy Everywhere, Key Contact Grants, Consumer Advocacy Outreach Grants, and Issues Mobilization Grants that can help bring your strategy to life. Audience Q&A will leave plenty of time to tackle your biggest mobilization challenges.

***Speakers: Moderator:** Josh McDaniel, North Texas Field Representative Texas REALTORS®; Tim Beaubien, Senior Director, Government Affairs, Arizona REALTORS®; Louis Dettore, VP of External Affairs and Strategy, South Carolina REALTORS®; Gina Zari, Government Affairs Director, Santa Clara County Association of REALTORS®; Chip Ahlswede, Government Affairs Director, High Desert Association of REALTORS®*

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TRACK C: RPAC POWER PLAY | Pheoris West C

1:30 - 2:15 PM RPAC 101
New to RPAC or looking for a refresher? This session provides a practical overview of the REALTOR® Political Action Committee and its role in advancing the REALTOR® Party. Learn the fundamentals of RPAC fundraising, investments, governance, and member engagement while gaining the confidence to answer common questions and communicate RPAC's value. Whether RPAC is a new responsibility or part of your daily work, you'll leave with a stronger foundation for success.

***Speakers**: Ryan Adams, Birmingham REALTORS® & Elizabeth Sharp, GAD, Williamson County Association of REALTORS®; Payton Scott, REALTOR® Party Manager, Tennessee REALTORS®*

2:25 – 3:10 PM RPAC Fundraising Best Practices
Great RPAC fundraising doesn't happen by accident. Learn what to look for in future investors, how to plan events that keep members coming back, and the legal dos and don'ts every fundraiser should know. Then hear real examples from GADs whose RPAC events have become annual successes.

***Speakers:** Carlyle Smith, RPAC Fundraising Programs Representative, NAR; Taylor Shanaman, Seattle King County Association of REALTORS®; Maura Pratt, AVP RPAC Development,Virginia REALTORS®*

3:20 – 4:05 PM CAP: A Program in Transition
The Corporate Ally Program (CAP) is in a period of transition as a Work Group evaluates opportunities to strengthen and modernize the program for the future. Join members of the CAP Work Group for an overview of where the program stands today, the work currently underway, and the key questions being explored. Following a brief presentation, attendees will participate in an interactive discussion and real-time Kahoot polling to share their experiences, perspectives, and ideas that will be brought back to the Work Group for consideration.

***Speakers**: Ashytn Gammons, Political Fundraising Manager, North Carolina REALTORS®;*
Michael Clark, Director, RPAC Fundraising & Events, NAR; Lacey Everett, Director of Political Affairs, MIBOR REALTOR® Association; Brad Ward, Vice President of Public Policy & Legal Affairs, Michigan REALTORS®

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Wednesday, July 22, 2026 | Kojo Kamau Ballroom, Level 4

8:00 - 9:00 AM Breakfast (Provided by NAR)

8:00 - 4:30 PM Registration Hours

8:30 – 9:00 AM Opening Session: Together in Columbus

The 2026 GAD Institute officially begins as GAD Leadership welcomes attendees to Columbus. Celebrate the start of the conference by recognizing our hosts, Ohio REALTORS® and Columbus REALTORS®, learning about this year's GADs Give Back initiative, and hearing a special welcome from the Columbus City Council President before launching into a full day of programming and collaboration.
***Speakers**: Neeley Erickson, GAD Chair; Josh Veverka, GAD Vice Chair; Shannon Hardin, Columbus City Council President*

9:00 – 10:00 AM NAR Advocacy Update

Get an inside look at the priorities driving NAR Advocacy. Following remarks from NAR President Kevin Brown, Advocacy's executive leadership will share updates on their respective areas, highlight initiatives impacting state and local associations, and discuss how GADs can partner with their teams in the year ahead. Audience Q&A through Slido will provide an opportunity to engage directly with leadership.
***Speakers:** Kevin Brown, NAR President; Helen Devlin, SVP, Strategy & Advocacy Operations; Patrick Newton, VP, Advocacy Communications and Outreach; Joe Harris, VP, Government Advocacy; Caitlin Vannoy, Director, Legal Advocacy; Elayne Weiss, Senior Policy Advisor, Federal Financing and Housing*

10:00 – 10:45 AM National Trends in 2026

What's happening across the country and what should GADs be paying attention to next? Join NAR's State & Local Policy team for a look at the emerging legislative and regulatory trends shaping advocacy in 2026. Drawing from the Mid-Year State Policy Survey, this session will explore the issues gaining momentum, highlight how associations are responding, and examine what these developments could mean for your advocacy strategy. A panel of GADs from around the country will add real-world perspective by sharing how these trends are playing out in their states
***Speakers**: Drew Myers, State & Local Policy Representative, NAR; Jeff Ledford, Georgia REALTORS®; Greta Haas, Director of Government Affairs, Iowa REALTORS®; Will Roberts, Senior Government Affairs Director, Oklahoma REALTORS®*

10:45 – 11:00 AM Networking Break

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM: State & Local GAD Breakouts

Join your peers for dedicated breakout sessions tailored to your advocacy role. These informal, peer-led sessions provide a space to share challenges, exchange ideas, and discuss timely policy and political issues specific to your area.
Submit topics in advance or during the session in slido.
***State Moderator:** Neeley Erickson, GAD Chair*
***Local Moderator:** Josh Veverka, GAD Vice Chair*

12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch (Provided by NAR)

Use this mid-conference break to connect with your fellow GADs, follow up with session speakers or sit down with NAR staff to discuss upcoming applications.

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1:00 – 1:45 PM Policy Spotlight: Data Centers

This educational panel will explore how data centers are planned, approved, and integrated into communities through multiple perspectives, including economic development, water resources, and energy infrastructure. Rather than advocating for a particular policy outcome, the session is designed to provide attendees with a balanced understanding of the issues, terminology, and considerations that frequently arise as communities evaluate data center proposals. Attendees will leave better prepared to engage in informed conversations with elected officials, stakeholders, and members if this issue emerges in their market. ***Speakers****: Josh Veverka, GAD Vice Chair. Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®; Josh McDaniel, North Texas Field Representative, Texas REALTORS®; Brian W. Palm, Chief Executive Officer, Palm International, Inc.; Buddy Rizer, Executive Director, Loundon County Economic Development*

1:45 – 2:30 PM Modern Trust & Digital Influence in Campaigns

The communications environment surrounding public policy and politics is evolving at an unprecedented pace. AI, changing media consumption habits, and new information channels are transforming how voters engage with campaigns, public policy, and organizations. Hear from Julie Sweet as she explores how political communication is changing, what it means for advocacy professionals, and how to stay ahead of the curve. ***Speaker:*** *Julie Sweet, Director of Advocacy & Industry Relations*

2:30 – 2:45 PM: Networking Break

2:45 – 3:45 PM: Lightning Rounds

Choose Your Adventure: Explore different topics and share your experience or ask questions of your fellow GADs! Twenty-one different topics to create a session that works for you!

3:45 – 4:30 PM Local Keynote: Land Use Policy

Land use policy is one of the most important—and often most challenging—areas of local advocacy. Anthony Celebrezze will share the Columbus story, offering an inside look at how planning, redevelopment, and growth decisions come together in one of the country's fastest-growing regions. ***Speaker****: Anthony Celebreze III, Deputy Director, City of Columbus Department of Building and Zoning*

4:30 – 4:45 PM One More Thing...

Before we wrap up for the day, join GAD Leadership for a quick recap of the day's biggest takeaways, a look ahead to tomorrow's Vice Chair election and final day of programming, the latest update on GADs Give Back, and everything you need to know before heading to GADs Night Out at Jackie O's. It's the perfect sendoff before an evening of networking and fun. ***Speakers****: Neeley Erickson, GAD Chair; Josh Veverka, GAD Vice Chair*

6:00 – 8:00 PM GADs Night Out

Unwind after a full day of programming at GADs Night Out, hosted by Ohio REALTORS® and Columbus REALTORS® at Jackie O's. Take the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues or make new connections.

7:30 PM Columbus Crew v. New York City FC - ScottsMiracle-Gro Field

Make your way to ScottsMiracle-Gro Field to watch Columbus Crew take on New York City FC at home! Make sure you're there at the 60th minute for a special welcome for GADs! Tickets purchased during your registration have been distributed to your emails and available in Columbus Crew app along with your concession voucher (value $15).

Columbus Crew - 2026 World Cup Players

- *Max Arfsten (D, USA)*
- *Steven Moreira (D, Cape Verde)*

New York City FC - 2026 World Cup Players

- *Matt Freese (GK, USA)*
- *Aiden O'Neill (M, Australia)*
- *Kai Trewin (M, Australia)*

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Lightning Rounds | Kojo Kamau Ballroom, Level 4

Category	Table #	Table Name	Table Lead(s)
Association Management	1	Advocacy Staff Onboarding	Lacey Everett
Association Management	2	RCE Certification	Josh Veverka
Communication	3	Creative Advocacy Communications	Taylor Shanaman
Communication	4	Social Media & Digital Campaigns	David Stark
NAR Grants/Resources	5	NAR Grants & Grant Stacking	Elizabeth Sharp
NAR Grants/Resources	6	Independent Expenditures	Mitchell Norton
NAR Grants/Resources	7	Issues Mobilization	John Winston
NAR Grants/Resources	8	Consumer Advocacy	Erin Murphy
NAR Grants/Resources	9	Community Development Advocacy	Christine Windle, Laurie Benner, & Alex Haddad
NAR Grants/Resources	10	Political Representatives	April Gavin & Pol Reps
Political Engagement	11	Candidate Processes	Claire Berger
Political Engagement	12	Building Your Political Pipeline	Charlie Hinderliter
Political Engagement	13	Coalition Building Beyond Real Estate	Josh Branum
RPAC	14	Engaging Young Professionals & New Members in RPAC	Travis Norton & Carlyle Smith
RPAC	15	An Office of Major Investors	Josh McDaniel
RPAC	16	Overcoming Fundraising Hurdles	Tim Beaubien
RPAC	17	RPAC Events for the Unengaged	Ashtyn Gammons
RPAC	18	MI Recognition	Genessa Casanova
Policy	19	Navigating STR Policy	Drew Myers & Matt Allen
Policy	20	Wholesaler Legislation	Zack Brown & Jeff Ledford
Policy	21	Developing Association Policy Statements	Julia Parenteau

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Thursday, July 23, 2026 | Kojo Kamau Ballroom, Level 4

8:00 - 9:00 AM Breakfast (Provided by NAR)

8:00 – 8:30 AM GAD Vice Chair Election

Participate in the election of the 2027 GAD Vice Chair and help shape the future leadership of the GAD community. Following the election, attendees will hear brief remarks from the newly elected Vice Chair as we recognize the leadership and service that strengthen the REALTOR® advocacy network year after year.
***Candidate**: Jeff Ledford, Georgia REALTORS®.*

8:30 – 8:45 AM Day Three Welcome

Welcome back for the final morning of GAD Institute! Join us as we announce the results of the GAD Vice Chair election, recap highlights from yesterday, celebrate the latest GADs Give Back fundraising total, and preview a closing morning featuring innovative housing solutions from Ohio, a timely discussion on the property insurance landscape, and a keynote from David Wasserman exploring the political environment shaping advocacy ahead.
***Speakers**: Neeley Erickson, GAD Chair; Josh Veverka, GAD Vice Chair; Sharetta Smith, Mayor of Lima (OH); Alison Goebel, Executive Director, Greater Ohio Policy Center*

8:45 – 9:30 AM Blueprint for Housing: How Communities Are Accelerating Housing Development

Communities across the country are searching for practical, locally driven solutions to address housing supply and affordability. Through the Housing Ohio initiative, Ohio REALTORS® partnered with local officials, planners, and community leaders to develop a suite of tools that help communities modernize planning practices, reduce barriers to residential development, and encourage attainable homeownership. Whether your community is just beginning the housing conversation or looking for new ways to move projects from concept to construction, this session will provide real-world lessons that GADs can bring home.
***Speakers**: Veronica Cardello, Assistant Vice President, External Engagement, Ohio REALTORS®; Sharetta Smith, Mayor of Lima (OH); Alison Goebel, Executive Director, Greater Ohio Policy Center*

9:30 – 10:15 AM Risky Business: The Insurance Edition

Think you've got a handle on what's driving insurance costs? We dare you to put it to the test. This interactive session kicks off with a fast-paced, game-style challenge before diving into the real-world policy issues shaping housing markets today. From rising premiums to coverage constraints, we'll connect the dots between insurance trends and housing supply, affordability, and transactions. You'll walk away with insights to help you lead and shape policy conversations at the state and local government levels and feel more confident doing it.
***Speakers**: Brad Ward, Vice President of Public Policy & Legal Affairs, Michigan REALTORS(R); Jonathan Schreiber, Associate Vice President, State Government Relations, American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA)*

10:15 – 10:30 AM Networking Break

10:30 – 11:30 AM Inside the 2026 Elections

Join David Wasserman for a fast-paced, data-driven look at the 2026 election landscape. This session will break down key races, shifting political dynamics, and what early indicators reveal about control of legislative bodies, voter behavior, and policy implications. Attendees will walk away with an understanding of what to watch in the months ahead.
***Speaker**: David Wasserman, Senior Editor & Elections Analyst, The Cook Political Report*

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM Closing Session