

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: FPC Work Group

FROM: Helen Devlin & Victoria Givens

RE: History of the FPC Program and Previous PAGs

DATE: April 11, 2021

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Dear FPC Work Group Members:

As we look to usher in a new class of Federal Political Coordinators (FPCs) and seat legislators for the 118<sup>th</sup> session of Congress, NAR is taking a close look at one of our most valuable advocacy assets, our grassroots key contact program.

***FPC Work Group Goal:*** *Enhance the current framework and guidance currently in place to nominate and onboard highly effective REALTORS® to the FPC Program.*

The following memo seeks to outline the history of the FPC Program and previous PAGs and Workgroups that have identified pain points or gaps and worked to improve the program through their recommendations, turning it into what it is today.

**History of the FPC Program**

The FPC Program began almost 50 years ago in 1974, when the NAR Political Affairs Committee divided its work into two major priorities. “Priority 1” was the formation of a Congressional Political Affairs “chairman” for each one of the 435 House congressional districts throughout America. A committee was appointed to serve under this congressional chair, made up of at least 10 REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATES, all carefully selected because they would be on an “eyeball to eyeball” grassroots level with their congressman. This network of REALTOR® congressional chairs did not have a formal name at first, but in 1976 NAR changed the program and began calling each group a Congressional Contact Team. The Congressional Contact Teams were organized by each State Association, which assigned one REALTOR® representative per senator and congressman for each local association (not congressional district). This contact team effort soon became unwieldy.

In August 1979, the Political Affairs Committee approved a resolution to improve upon the Congressional Contact Team functionality by developing “a network of Federal Coordinators, one appointed for each congressional district and U. S. Senate seat, who will be responsible for the Congressional contact effort and be the focal point of communications in all contact activities.”

**Political Communications Committee-Grassroots Work Group**

It wasn’t until November 2003, acting on a recommendation from the Political Communications Committee-Grassroots Work Group the FDC/FSC program name was changed to Federal Political Coordinators in order to clarify the Coordinators’ activities. This was the first of a handful of PAGs that would look at the FPC Program and make changes to improve its function.

**PAG to Enhance REALTOR® Political Influence (aka Political Effectiveness PAG):**

This 2006 PAG came up with over 40 recommendations on how NAR could be more politically effective and four of those final recommendations concerned recruiting and retaining FPCs. The Political Effectiveness PAG recommended the following:

- Development of a Political Profile Database to assist (in part) in FPC recruitment
- Steps to increase diversity among FPCs
- Development of a set of core competencies for FPCs
- Review process to identify & possibly replace underperforming FPCs

Of those recommendations, RPMIC approved and implemented all of them between 2006 and 2007. The most notable of which is the FPC Pledge which has only changed once with an additional promise added in 2016. The protocol for replacing FPCs was imagined and later improved upon to the procedure that is set today. [The FPC Pledge](#) and other documents referenced in this memo can be found on the [FPC Work Group Landing Page](#).

### **RPMIC Advocacy Work Group 2013**

In 2013, the RPIC Advocacy Work Group met in Washington, DC and created a new four-year plan of action, later called The Future of the REALTOR Party PAG, with the goal to strengthen and grow our REALTOR® Party efforts. Over the years, several FPC items were assessed. In 2013, they focused on FPC Teams, diversity and looked to build on the success of the 2010-13 Advocacy Plan by continuing successful programs like including new FPC training semi-annually, the "three strike" rule, and requirement of four field reports per year/FPC (one field report per quarter).

FPC Teams: RPMIC recommended a beta test in a few states to assume management and oversight (tracking, communicating) of the appointment and performance of FPC Teams (supporting each FPC) in each Congressional district. Until that point, this had been handled on a state-by-state basis with no uniformity, but the WG felt that the effort had been spotty and could be stronger in support of RP efforts. In places it was implemented, it was a success, though the committee never took it on as a whole.

Diversity: It was also recommended that FPC teams should include at least one Commercial member and reflect cultural diversity of the district. In 2014, there was a successful effort to target a couple of Congressional districts in which the FPCs will work with local multi-cultural partners with active chapters to bring REALTOR® members onto the FPC team(s). We now do this every year to great success.

### **2015 FPC Focus Group**

In 2015, a select group of FPCs were gathered in a formal focus group over the period of two days to explore how best to create continuing education for Federal Political Coordinators (FPCs) by gathering input on various training formats, including video, "deep-dive" webinars, and "individual salons." From this work group came:

FPC Salons: During every mid-year meeting, FPCs are now briefed by their lobbyist in a more specific way than before.

Most of the other information FPCs felt would help them do their jobs better were methods NAR is already considering, such as webinars, an updated training video to share with their teams, and a quarterly or monthly list of "talking points" regarding major issues coming up in the near future.

## **2017 Future of the REALTOR® Party PAG**

In 2017, the PAG on the Future of the REALTOR® Party final recommendations included improvements to the FPC program that were both a success and those that did not flourish.

FPC Advocacy Academy: Most notably, the PAG approved and implemented the Federal Political Coordinator (FPC) Advocacy Academy: An intense and interactive training program designed to elevate the progress of new FPCs. All new FPCs now must matriculate through the program and earn a certificate of completion to continue. This endures that all our advocates are exposed to the same training and thus on the same playing field

FPC Mentor Hotline: The PAG also recommended establishing a new FPC Mentoring Program, which was to feature training materials, testimonials from veteran FPCs, and a phone “hotline.” While training materials were created and disseminated and the “hotline” put in place, the hotline was rarely used and ultimately disbanded. We found that FPCs prefer to ask their RPMIC member, their state GAD, or another local authority for advice over a REALTOR® they may not know or who may not be in their state.

FPC Honor Roll: The PAG also advised that NAR create an “honor roll” that recognizes FPCs and their team members for doing exceptional work, however, we discovered that the intricacies of such a task and the value add therein did not make sense. Instead, FPCs are recognized throughout the year in the “FPC Spotlight’ portion of the FPC newsletter.

### **In Summary**

The NAR FPC Program has evolved over the years from a shoestring crew to a robust unit of special forces energized, trained, and equipped to advocate on behalf of our industry on Capitol Hill. It is not something that is stagnant that lives on its own, but instead a very agile body that has grown and thrived under the attention of many over the years.

As you consider your recommendations, we hope you will consider the history. For your further research, participants in these PAGs and full details of their recommendations can be found on the FPC Work Group Landing Page [HERE](#).