

# TEXAS REALTOR®

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January/February 2019 \$3.50

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and CDAs  
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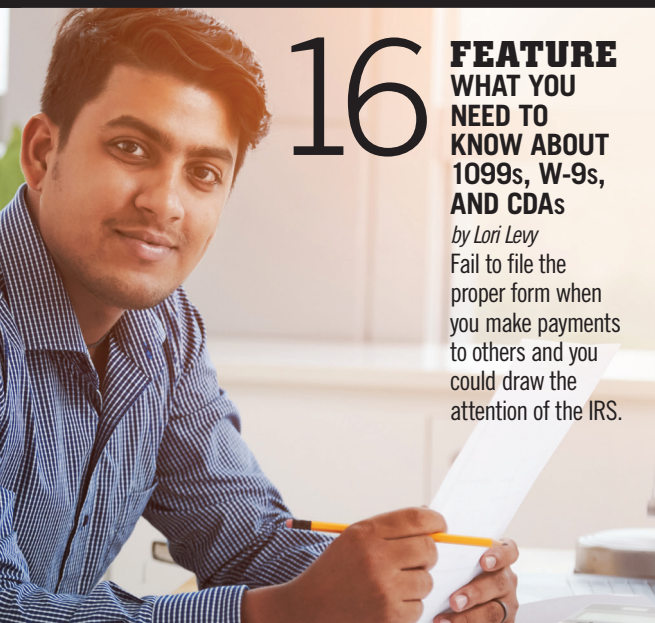
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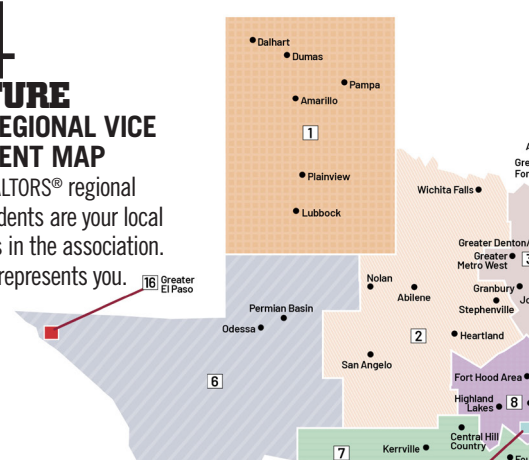


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# INSIGHTS

## A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR TEXAS REALTORS® MEMBERSHIP

# 5.2%



Texas REALTORS® ended the year with 127,991 total members, with 120,064 REALTOR® members. This represents a 5.2% year-over-year increase in REALTOR® members. Here are some other interesting statistics about Texas REALTORS® members.

- Texas REALTOR® members comprise 84% of TREC's license holders
- 16,846 REALTOR® members had joined the association in 2018 as of the beginning of December 2018, representing 14% of the membership total
- 35% of active REALTORS® have joined the association since 2016; 58% since 2012; and 68% since 2008.

## REALTORS® FROM TEXAS APPOINTED TO NAR GLOBAL POSITIONS



Three Texas REALTORS® were recently tapped to serve in leadership roles for NAR related to global real estate [above, top to bottom]:

- Richard Miranda, formerly NAR's Presidential Liaison to Mexico, will serve as NAR's Global Ambassador to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.
- Holly Hightower, past chair of the Texas REALTORS® Global Committee, will serve as NAR's Global Ambassador to Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland.
- Hanne Sagalowsky, incoming chair of the Texas REALTORS® Global Committee, will continue to serve as NAR's Regional Coordinator to Western Europe, Turkey, and Dubai.



# 31,471

That's the number of **designations** and **certifications** REALTORS® in Texas have earned.

Texas REALTORS® is the third-largest REALTOR® association in the nation, but Texas has the highest numbers of designees for the following designations:

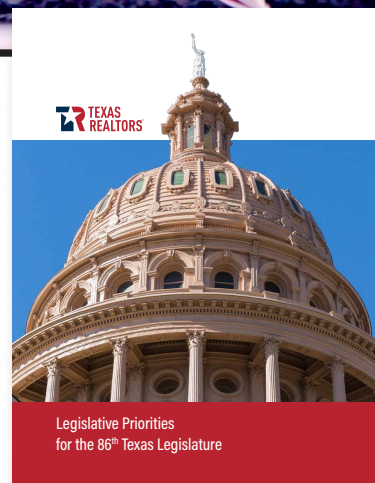
- Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR): 3,237
- Accredited Buyer's Representative Manager (ABRM): 35
- Accredited Land Consultant (ALC): 71
- Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM): 1,089
- Counselor of Real Estate (CRE): 83
- Graduate, REALTOR® Institute (GRI): 10,545
- Real Estate Negotiation Expert (RENE): 420
- Seller Representative Specialist (SRES): 1,319

Earn your designations and join thousands of other REALTORS® in Texas dedicated to growing in their professionalism and their real estate business. Learn more about the designations you can pursue at [texasrealestate.com/designations](http://texasrealestate.com/designations).

## TEXAS REALTORS® ANNOUNCES LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Every session, your association publishes its priority issues as approved by the Executive Board after a member-driven process through the Public Policy Issues Committees, Public Policy Oversight Committee, and Legislative Management Team.

Visit [texasrealestate.com/issues](http://texasrealestate.com/issues) for a PDF of the Texas REALTORS® Legislative Priorities for the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. This publication highlights areas of interest Texas REALTORS® will monitor during the 2019 session.





## REALTOR® feedback

### YOUR COMMENTS ON OPTION-FEE AND EARNEST-MONEY DELIVERY, MARKETVIEWER, AND CE EXEMPTIONS

A post on the *Advice for REALTORS®* blog about when option fees and earnest money should be delivered generated dozens of comments from members. While some wondered why the rules couldn't be changed to streamline the delivery process, **Alex Andrikos** said that it makes sense to keep the two things separate. "There isn't anything the seller can default on that would make the money revert to the buyer, so the seller should be paid the money directly, and quickly, since the buyer's option starts right away." **Scott McDonald** pointed out that REALTORS® are "supposed to put the seller's needs above all others—including our own."

**Crystal Blake** commented on a blog post about the MarketViewer data tool exclusively for members of Texas REALTORS® that she would like to see data from more neighborhoods. While there are hundreds of neighborhoods represented in MarketViewer, information is displayed only for geographic areas that provide data to the information sources used by MarketViewer. Neighborhoods must average at least five sales per month to show up in the data. Members of Texas REALTORS® can access the MarketViewer dashboard at [texasrealestate.com/marketviewer](http://texasrealestate.com/marketviewer).

Another post about brokers who are exempt from TREC's mandatory broker-responsibility course—and other CE requirements—prompted questions from many brokers who had not heard of the ability for brokers to exempt themselves. That exemption applied only to eligible brokers who applied for the grandfathered exemption in October 1991.



### GENEROSITY OF REALTORS® OUTPACES NATIONAL AVERAGE

Do you regularly contribute money to charitable causes? If so, you're in good company: 82% of REALTORS® donate money yearly. Nationally, 56.6% of Americans donate money to charity.

In addition, four-fifths of NAR's members reported that being involved in their community is an important part of their business plan. In terms of volunteering, 85% of REALTOR® association executives and MLS staff volunteer on a monthly basis for a median amount of 10 hours. And 77% of broker-owners volunteer on a monthly basis for a median amount of 10 hours, while 66% of general members volunteer monthly for a median of 8 hours. About 6% of Americans volunteer regularly.

This research comes from NAR's *Community Aid and Real Estate Report*, which outlines monetary and volunteer contributions that general members of NAR, broker-owners, REALTOR® association executives, and MLS staff provide in their communities.

### SMARTMOVE TENANT SCREENING DISCOUNT SIMPLIFIED FOR 2019



You're eligible for a discount on reports from TransUnion's SmartMove, an online system that provides a quick leasing recommendation on prospective tenants.

And unlike the monthly discount codes used previously, members can now use TXREALTORS2019 all year long to get \$10 off one screening each month.

SmartMove offers a criminal report and credit-based leasing recommendation for just \$25. Or upgrade to a full credit report and eviction report for just \$38.

Help your clients lease their properties quickly and safely with SmartMove. Learn more at [texasrealtors.mysmartmove.com](http://texasrealtors.mysmartmove.com).

# INSIGHTS

## New diversity committee

The first meeting of the newly created Texas REALTORS® Diversity Committee was held in early December in Austin. The committee discussed goals to increase participation among all members of the REALTOR® association, foster an environment of inclusiveness, and expand awareness of diversity among members, the public, and other industry groups. Members present were Alejandro Contreras, Angel Titsworth, Chauncey Pham, Eugene Wang, Evan Martin, Johnny Mowad, Kendra Norwood, Margaret Barajas-Cardenas, Rachel Bruno, Robert Wright, Sara Gerrish, and Susan Annoura.

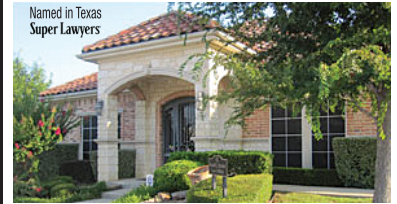


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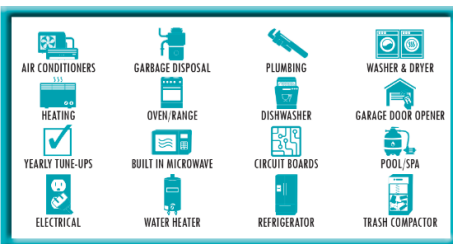
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# BUSINESS



## I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR APOLOGY ISN'T WORKING

by David Burkus

Our human nature—our need to preserve a positive image of ourselves—makes us pretty bad at apologizing. But if you've had a career for longer than a week, you've figured out that you're going to make mistakes that will only be resolved through an honest apology.

Apologies done well are powerful. In fact, an honest, sincere apology can result in positive improvements in how people perceive you. Here are three big steps you can take toward a meaningful apology.

**Express remorse.** "I'm sorry if I hurt you" or "I'm sorry if anyone was offended by this comment" are not apologies; these are examples of what people say when they *don't* want to apologize for their actions. It's better to simply say, "I am sorry. I regret doing that."

**Accept responsibility.** Don't try to explain why you did the action you're apologizing for, because that isn't taking responsibility. Although your willingness to apologize is the first step in taking responsibility, go further by saying, "I take full responsibility for this" or "I should not have done that."

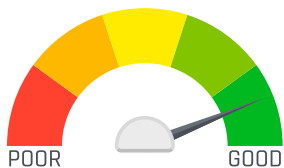
**Offer to improve.** You could offer to never make a mistake again, but this is unrealistic. Instead, promise you'll try harder next time and that you'll reflect more carefully on how your decisions affect others. Offering to improve is how you demonstrate you've actually learned from your mistake. It's also a good opportunity to offer to repair the situation, if you can.

Unfortunately, you can't always fix things. When you can't, the best you can do is demonstrate you've grown as a result of your mistake.

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**DAVID BURKUS** is a best-selling author, speaker, and associate professor of leadership and innovation at Oral Roberts University. Learn more at [davidburkus.com](http://davidburkus.com).

## NEW CREDIT SCORE DEBUTS THIS YEAR



The new UltraFICO credit score is scheduled to roll out as a pilot program early this year.

It's an opt-in score that uses data about consumers' banking behavior—the length of time their bank accounts have been open, the frequency of activity, and evidence of saving—in addition to their payment practices to calculate a score.

Experian, FICO, and Fincity estimate this new score has the potential to improve credit access for many Americans, and assert that it's particularly relevant for those with current credit scores in the upper 500s to lower 600s. Consumers with limited credit history or those with previous financial distress also could benefit.

Learn more about UltraFICO at [fico.com/ultrafico](http://fico.com/ultrafico).

## Marketing

### ARE YOU AGILE?

Named a top marketing trend of 2019 by IBM, agile marketing takes its cue from software development practices of the same name to create marketing programs and experiences that adapt to consumers. In a survey of 803 chief marketing officers, research firm Gartner found that 89% said their companies embrace some form of agile marketing. And according to IBM, the adoption of agile marketing practices will accelerate in 2019.

Learn more in IBM's 2019 Marketing Report at [ibm.com/watson/marketing/resources/2019-marketing-trends](http://ibm.com/watson/marketing/resources/2019-marketing-trends).

## 3 WAYS PROPERTY MANAGERS CAN PROTECT TENANTS ... AND THEMSELVES



### Check the property's physical attributes

On top of requirements to provide certain types of locks and other safety devices, there are steps a property manager or landlord can take to make a property safer. Remove or minimize landscaping, fences, walls, and other items that obscure windows and doors or otherwise provide cover to criminals. Adequate lighting around the property also increases the safety of tenants, guests, and property managers.

### Look for technology solutions

Video doorbells, smart locks, and other tech tools give landlords and property managers options that were not available even a few years ago. You may also want to investigate a personal safety app and a technology-based showing service for vacant property.

### Call law enforcement

The best time to call the police for assistance is *before* confronting trespassers, evicting tenants, and other contentious situations. The mere presence of law enforcement can diffuse a tense situation before it escalates—but if it does, trained professionals will already be on hand to assist you.

### Cool tool

## TURN A PHOTO INTO A SKETCH, OR PICK A PLEASING PALETTE



Adobe Capture is a free app for phones and tablets that complements programs like Photoshop and Illustrator. But the utility also has many useful features you can use on their own.

Ward Arendt, broker and co-owner of Marilyn Arendt Properties in Houston, was playing around with the app when he realized he could make a keepsake for clients buying. "I took a picture and used Capture to create an outline ... then I colored it in and got it blown up and printed." His clients were tech-savvy, but they thought Arendt had actually *painted* a picture of the house. "They were blown away," he remembers.

Arendt now uses that same illustration technique to create a lead-in picture for all his listings. "We got a lot more hits with it," he says.

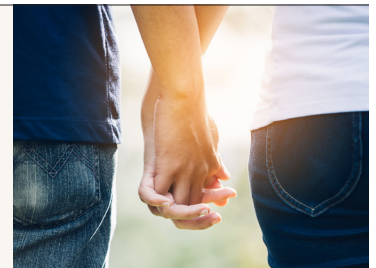
Another Adobe Capture feature assesses what colors match or complement existing items. "I can use my phone to precisely pick out colors from a rug or another furnishing that an interior designer or stager can use," Arendt says.

By exploring the app's functions and checking out YouTube tutorials, Arendt continues to find new ways to guide clients to make homes more sellable or livable. "If they want to repaint, I tell them to find a house with colors you like ... we can snap a picture, take it to the paint store, and get a great match."

### Research

*The 2018 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement from the U.S. Census Bureau highlights some of the changes in living arrangements for those living in the United States. In 2018:*

- 15% of young adults age 25 to 34 lived with an unmarried partner, up from 12% in 2008
- Among those ages 18 to 24, cohabitation is now more prevalent than living with a spouse: 9% of these young adults lived with an unmarried partner compared to 7% percent who lived with a spouse.
- There are 35.7 million single-person households, composing 28% of all households. In 1960, single-person households represented 13% of all households.
- Over half (54%) of young adults ages 18 to 24 live in a parent's home, compared to 16% of young adults ages 25 to 34.





# THERE'S A NEW CONVENTIONAL LOAN OPTION FOR MANUFACTURED HOUSING



More than 22 million families in the U.S. currently live in manufactured housing. Those numbers may increase soon thanks to a new conventional loan financing option from Freddie Mac for factory-built homes. This new offering is part of a two-year pilot program called CHOICEHome. Here are a few other facts about the program:

- Freddie Mac will treat loans secured by CHOICEHome like loans secured by single-family site-built homes.
- A factory-built home must meet certain specifications to be eligible for CHOICEHome financing, such as energy-efficient features and drywall throughout the property.
- Manufacturers and lenders must follow HUD-code guidelines for the home construction and siting of the home to meet CHOICEHome eligibility.
- Lenders must follow local and state guidelines for manufactured housing titled as real property.
- Appraisers will be able to use site-built housing as a comparable for valuation when no CHOICEHome sales are available as comps.

Learn more about this and other Freddie Mac affordable-housing programs at [freddiemac.com/singlefamily/duty-to-serve/manufactured.html](http://freddiemac.com/singlefamily/duty-to-serve/manufactured.html).

## MAKE SURE YOUR SELLERS AREN'T EXPOSING PERSONAL DATA



If your sellers' smart home devices are staying with a property, ask if they've removed the personal information on those devices. Here's a two-step process clients can use to remove their data.

### Reset the device

The manufacturer of each device has a factory reset that wipes any data on it and returns the product to its original configuration. The process differs by device—some use buttons on the device, others use the app—so have

your sellers check the owner's manual or manufacturer's website.

### Change the account

Your clients can log in to the account that manages the device. From there, they can remove the device from the account. Or, if they aren't keeping that service anymore, delete the account altogether.

Smart technology can add value to properties. It can also unintentionally reveal personal data. Remind your sellers to check their devices before they leave them behind.

## DON'T MAKE THESE 3 SOCIAL MEDIA MISTAKES



### Not linking to your Facebook business page.

Link to your business page in the footer of your website, in your email signature, and from the About Me section of your personal profile in the work section. The more people you direct to the page and the greater following you build, the more useful the page becomes.

### Not adding context to the content you share.

Don't just share a link; explain to consumers and potential clients why the information you share matters to them.

### Leaving outdated information on your profile.

Make a list of all your social media profiles and pages and go through them one-by-one whenever you switch brokerages, use a new DBA, or change contact information to make sure you aren't leaving any old information published.

# AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS IS LARGEST IN SMALL-, MID-SIZED METROS



Across the nation's 382 metropolitan areas, the American middle class is most concentrated in small- and mid-sized metros, according to a report from the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit public policy organization.

The report defines the middle class as the middle three quintiles of the national income distribution based on the 2017 American Community Survey—or between \$25,000 and \$120,000 in household income—adjusted for prices and household size by location.

Odessa, at No. 4, is the Texas metro highest in the ranking for its share of the middle class, which represents 70.3% of its residents. In contrast, 55.1% of residents in the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metro meet the definition of middle-class, the lowest share for a Texas metro. Nearly 35% of the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metro is defined as low-income, while 18.5% of Odessa residents are classified as low-income. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, 157,087 people live in the Odessa metro area while 860,661 live in the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission area.

While its relative share is largest in small- and mid-sized metros, the bulk of middle-class households live in large metro areas: 59% live in one of the 42 metros nationwide that have at least 500,000 households.

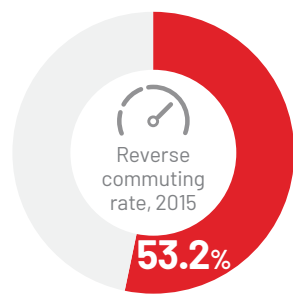
Read the full report at [brookings.edu/research/where-does-the-american-middle-class-live](http://brookings.edu/research/where-does-the-american-middle-class-live).

## WHERE HIGHLY EDUCATED LIVE IN 2 TEXAS METROS

Research from JLL, a real estate and investment management company, found that the educated population is higher in the 25 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S than it was in 2008. And while more educated individuals are moving into the city limits, the suburbs still hold the majority of educated talent. Here's a look at Dallas and Houston.

### DALLAS *More than half of Dallas's highly educated population commutes to the suburbs*

City's share of job growth, 2011-2015 **18.6%**



Increase in reverse commuting, 2011-2015 **12.6%**

■ City ■ Suburbs

Increase in jobs, 2011-2015

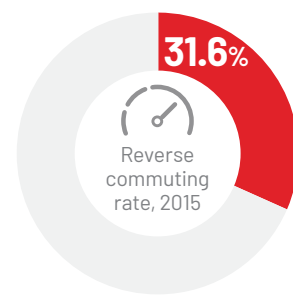
**71,101**  
**310,481**

Increase in highly educated population, 2008-2016

**59,916**  
**341,850**

### HOUSTON *Houston's suburbs are outpacing the city in growing both jobs and highly educated talent*

City's share of job growth, 2011-2015 **43.5%**



Increase in reverse commuting, 2011-2015 **18.5%**

■ City ■ Suburbs

Increase in jobs, 2011-2015

**152,057**  
**197,506**

Increase in highly educated population, 2008-2016

**119,341**  
**256,090**

Credit: JLL Research



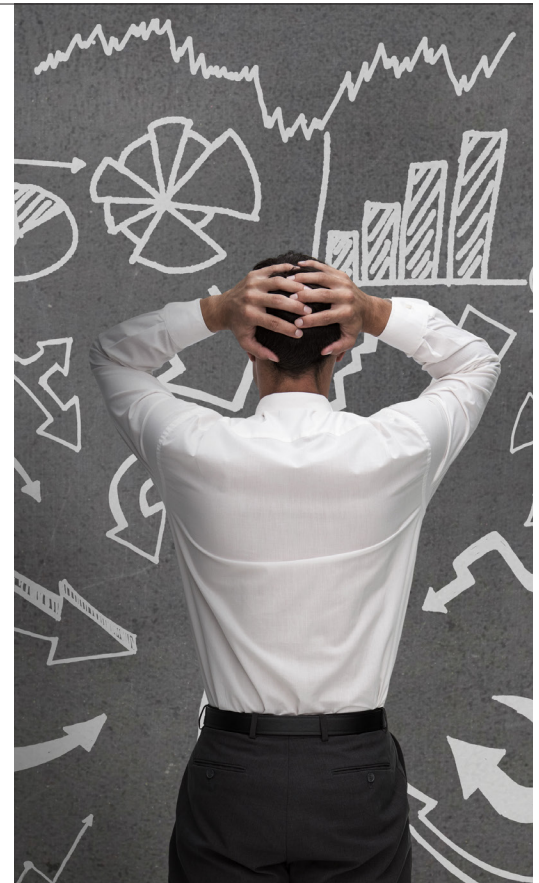
# WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR WHEN READING CHARTS

Not every graph and chart accurately represents the data behind it. Watch for these clues to investigate further.

**Check the axes and labels before drawing conclusions.** Charts with missing, inaccurate, or selective labeling can give misleading impressions about data behind them. For example, an axis that isn't labeled consistently or starts at a seemingly arbitrary number could misrepresent the effect the chart is trying to illustrate.

**Watch out for overly complicated charts or visualizations.** Often called "chartjunk," unnecessary visual elements—such as extra illustrations, icons, visual effects, or other ornamentation—can be misleading or distract from more relevant information. For example, 3-D pie charts are often misleading because of the viewing angle necessary to create the three-dimensional effect: the slice that appears closest to the viewer could be visually larger than a statistically larger slice that appears further away.

**Look for context.** A single, isolated data point—such as median prices, percentage increases, or counts—can lack context to explain whether it's part of a trend or outlier. Before drawing conclusions from isolated figures, look for more data to place it in proper context. For example, a dramatic increase in a statistic could signal the start of a new trend or be part of a seasonal effect, which would be apparent if you had data from the same time period for previous years.



**Texas is home to four metro areas with the lowest average homeowner age, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau analyzed by LendingTree. The rankings identify the average age of every householder (the head of the household as designated on the U.S. Census) who owns their home, as well as the average age for householders who rent their homes. Here's a look at the numbers, along with the average age for all people living in a given metropolitan statistical area (MSA) as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau.**

	Average Homeowner Age	Average Renter Age	Average MSA Age
Austin	50.6	34.9	35.4
McAllen	51.3	38.9	32.3
Houston	51.3	37.9	35.1
Dallas	51.6	37.7	35.6

The top 5 metro areas with the oldest average homeowner age are in Florida, with North Port ranking first among all metropolitan areas in the country with homeowners' average age at 63.3.

The top 3 metro areas with the youngest average homeowner age are in Utah, with Provo's average homeowner age at 47.3, the lowest of all metropolitan areas.

# LEGAL & ETHICS



## 5 TIPS ABOUT THE SELLER'S DISCLOSURE NOTICE THAT MAY SURPRISE YOU

- A seller isn't required to disclose if a suicide occurred in a home or that a sex offender lives nearby. However, a seller might want to voluntarily disclose such information since a buyer may learn the information from another source.
- A seller who has never seen or lived in a property he is selling is still required to disclose what he knows about the property. That knowledge can come from sources other than a visual examination.
- The questions on the *Seller's Disclosure Notice* (1406) ask if there are lawsuits or other legal proceedings that may directly or indirectly affect the property, which can include divorce, tax, bankruptcy, foreclosure, and heirship proceedings.
- A buyer isn't required by law to sign a seller's disclosure notice.
- Relocation companies with title to a property are still required to fill out the seller's disclosure notice. They can attach the notice to any inspection reports concerning the property.

### Ethics Q&A



*The owner of the property I manage said a REALTOR® in his neighborhood convinced him it's a good time to put the house on the market, with her as the listing agent, after our property-management agreement ends in April. I also list homes, and I have an existing relationship with the homeowner. Is the other REALTOR® violating the Code of Ethics by contacting my client?*

**NO.** Although Article 16 of the NAR Code of Ethics prohibits REALTORS® from engaging in any practice or taking any action inconsistent with exclusive representation or exclusive brokerage relationship agreements that REALTORS® have with clients, Standard of Practice 16-3 allows REALTORS® to contact the client of another broker to provide a service different than what is currently being provided, or to offer the same type of service for property not subject to a broker's current exclusive agreements. If you are offering property-management services, another broker can provide brokerage services to sell the same property without risking violating Article 16. And if your owner had two properties and you only managed one, another broker could provide property-management services for the home you don't have an exclusive agreement for.

However, information received through an MLS or any other offer of cooperation may not be used to target clients of other REALTORS®. In your situation, the other REALTOR® did not use these methods, and is therefore not in violation of the Code.



## Legal Hotline

800-873-9155

REALTORS® sometimes ask if they can “bring a terminated contract back to life.” For example, if a buyer paid her option fee and provided notice of termination in accordance with Paragraph 23, can she change her mind and continue with the transaction? The answer is no. If the parties want to move forward, they will need to enter into a new agreement.

The same is true if a contract automatically terminates, such as a contract with the *Addendum for Sale of Other Property By Buyer* attached. Once the date passes and the contingency is not fulfilled, the contract automatically terminates. If the parties want to move forward, they need to execute a new agreement.

—Hunter Jackson,  
associate counsel



## 5 NEW COPYRIGHT-RELATED FORMS NOW AVAILABLE FOR MEMBER

The Texas REALTORS® Legal Department created model addenda and model policies to help you reduce your risk of being subject to copyright infringement claims.

These forms cover copyright issues arising from the creation and dissemination of listing information and photographs. They are designed to work together or separately—you can use all of them or only one.

### **MODEL ADDENDUM TO INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT REGARDING LISTING CONTENT**

This form is designed to address the ownership of listing content created by an agent and third parties. It grants the broker the rights necessary for the broker to use the listing content in the MLS.

### **MODEL COPYRIGHT POLICY**

This policy instructs agents on how to properly use listing content and the types of agreements they must secure. The policy is similar to the above addendum but also addresses how the agent should use listing content and provides instruction as to how the agent should handle a notice of infringement.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY AGREEMENTS**

#### **Model Work Made for Hire Agreement**

This form states that the broker is the owner and author of the photographs from their creation.

#### **Model Assignment Agreement**

This form states that a photographer assigns all rights to the photographs to the broker.

#### **Model License Agreement**

This form states that the photographer retains ownership of the photographs but grants to the broker a license to use the photographs.

Find these forms in the *Manuals and Guides* section under *Resources* at [texasrealestate.com/members/legal-and-ethics](http://texasrealestate.com/members/legal-and-ethics).

## CAN A TENANT TERMINATE A LEASE EARLY IF HE'S BEEN ASSAULTED BY ANOTHER TENANT?

**YES.** Section 92.016 of the Property Code gives tenants the right to vacate a property and avoid liability in instances of family violence. That includes violence between lease occupants, even if they're not related. To terminate the lease early under Section 92.016, the tenant must obtain a court order as described in the Property Code, deliver it to the landlord, and vacate the property. The Texas REALTORS® *Residential Lease* (2001) includes a statutory notice to tenants regarding family violence, which helps landlords avoid other penalties and losses.

**Your forms**

*EXTENSION OF RESIDENTIAL LEASE (2005)*

This is designed to be a short-form method to amend, extend, or renew an existing lease when the existing lease was drafted on a Texas REALTORS® form. Renewals may also be accomplished by the execution of new lease agreement.

This form was updated in February 2018 and is available only to members of the association. Find all the members-only forms available to you at [texasrealestate.com/realtor-forms](http://texasrealestate.com/realtor-forms).



**WHY YOU SHOULD USE THE TEXAS REALTORS® OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM**

Before filing a formal arbitration request or Code of Ethics complaint, consider using the Texas REALTORS® Ombudsman Program when faced with a dispute. The program provides an informal way to resolve problems, and it's quicker—ombudsmen contact parties by telephone about 48 hours after being assigned a case and can help resolve disputes faster than the formal complaint process.

Texas REALTORS® ombudsmen are nominated for the position by their local board, must undergo training, and must have served on the Professional Standards Committee for at least three of the last five years. Texas REALTORS® staff works to ensure the ombudsman has no connection to either party in a complaint so he or she can remain impartial.

Your disputes don't always have to end in a formal complaint. Try the Texas REALTORS® Ombudsman Program for an efficient and effective way to clear up problems. Search the term "ombudsman" on [texasrealestate.com](http://texasrealestate.com) to learn more.



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**Over \$3.5 Billion in Farms Sold**



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WHAT EVERY  
AGENT AND BROKER  
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

# 1099s, W-9s, AND CDAs

by Lori Levy

Photo: Dragon Images/Shutterstock.com

You don't want to draw the attention of the IRS. Fail to file the proper form when you make payments to others, though, and you may do just that.

If you pay for services, have an assistant who's an independent contractor, pay commissions to agents, or manage property for landlords, you need to know what circumstances trigger the requirement to use IRS-related forms. Here are answers to some key questions regarding your responsibilities.

## What is a 1099?

A 1099 refers to IRS Form 1099. This form must be used when you (1) pay compensation of \$600 or more during a tax year (2) to an individual who is not an employee (3) for services provided by the individual (4) during the course of your trade or business. If any of those four elements do not apply to a situation, you do not have to file a 1099.

Requiring you to report these payments on 1099s gives the IRS a way to

make sure the individuals you file 1099s for report their income.

As a real estate broker, you should file 1099s for real estate commissions and referral fees or other compensation you pay to cooperating brokers, broker-associates, and sponsored salespeople. Brokers and agents are also required to report compensation paid to licensed or unlicensed assistants who are independent contractors, as well as other individuals who provide services to your business.

If you earned income that meets the criteria for a 1099 but you never received the 1099, you are not relieved of your requirement to report that income on your tax return.

A broker or agent must also file a 1099 when paying rent for office space, unless the rent is being paid to a real estate agent or a corporation, as discussed below.

#### **I see different 1099 forms.**

##### **How do I know which one to use?**

Use the 1099-MISC to report fees, commissions, and other compensation that meet the four criteria stated on page 16.

##### **Do I have to file a 1099 if I am paying a business entity? What about a partnership or sole proprietorship?**

A 1099 is generally not required when the party receiving the payment is a corporation. However, the IRS does require a 1099 if you pay \$600 or more to an attorney, regardless of the attorney's business status.

The IRS considers partnerships, sole proprietorships, and other non-corporate entities to be individuals, so 1099s must be filed when these types of entities are compensated.

##### **How do I know if a party is a corporation or an individual?**

You can find out by requesting a W-9 from all parties you compensate.

##### **What is a W-9?**

A W-9 refers to IRS Form W-9. This form provides necessary information to a party who is required to file a 1099. That information includes identifying information, and it specifies whether the payee is an individual or corporation. It is a good idea to request a W-9 from all parties you compensate to help you assess the need to file a 1099 based on the corporate or non-corporate status of the entity and to ensure you are providing accurate information on the 1099 when you do need to file.

##### **Where do I file?**

You must file the form with the IRS and provide a copy of the form to the individual who received the compensation.

##### **When do I file?**

Typically, a 1099 must be filed with the IRS no later than February or March of the tax year following the year of payment. A copy of the 1099 must be sent to the payee no later than January 31 of that year. Check with your tax consultant or go to [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) for current deadlines.

##### **As a listing broker, I always provide the title company with a Commission Disbursement Agreement (CDA) before a transaction closes to instruct the title company to pay my salespeople and cooperating brokers directly. Do I still have to provide a 1099-MISC to my salespeople and to cooperating brokers since I never actually received the money?**

Yes. A CDA is merely an instruction to the title company to directly pay to someone else money that would have first come to you and is yours to disburse. Having the title company pay those funds directly does not release you of the requirement to file a 1099-MISC when the amounts paid total more than \$600 within a tax year.

##### **I am a license holder who represents buyers. Even though I always rebate a portion of my commission to my buyer clients at closing, my broker provides me a 1099-MISC for the full commission I was to receive. Is that correct?**

Yes. Your broker is required to provide a 1099-MISC to you for the full amount of the commission you earned. Whether you direct a portion of your commission to be

paid to someone else at closing does not affect that requirement.

##### **When I rebate a portion of my commission to my client, should I provide a 1099-MISC to my client if the amount I rebate is more than \$600?**

No. Your client is not providing a service to you, so you are not required to provide a 1099 to the buyer.

##### **How do the 1099-MISC reporting requirements affect property managers?**

A property manager must provide a 1099-MISC to a landlord for rents collected. You should report the gross rent even if you retain part of the rent to cover your property-management compensation or to pay service providers. A property manager also must file a 1099-MISC for payments made to a service provider if the payments total more than \$600 during a tax year and the service provider is not a corporation. This is true even if you compensate the service providers out of funds retained from rents collected.

##### **I've heard that landlords also have to file a 1099-MISC for payments the landlord makes to service providers related to the rental property. Is that true?**

No. While at one time federal law required landlords to file 1099s for such payments, that law was quickly repealed after it went into effect. No such requirement currently exists.

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**LORI LEVY** is vice president of Legal Affairs for Texas REALTORS®.





## Meet your 2019 Chairman of the Board

# Tray Bates

by Michael Schrantz

Tray Bates can make a pretty good dip cone.

For seven years, the 2019 Texas REALTORS® Chairman and his wife, Jessica, ran a Dairy Queen in Sinton, about a half-hour north of Corpus Christi.

Following Jessica's successful run for Sinton City Council and Tray's mid-campaign proposal, the newlyweds were grousing about their local Dairy Queen when they had the idea to take it over.

"We did everything," Bates says. "We were janitors. We were fixing things. I was learning refrigeration, maintenance, and how to handle the accounting while my wife dealt with employees and helped us stay on top of what we were supposed to be doing.

"As a team, it was a good experience, but with the mandates associated with being a franchise and cost to open additional locations, I realized that I couldn't do this and my passion, which was real estate."

Thankfully for the association and his colleagues, Bates followed his passion all the way to the Leadership Team.

### Exercising His Talents

Bates is a third-generation real estate broker, but after graduating from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, he decided to start his career in Dallas rather than returning to the family business in Corpus Christi.

He worked for the real estate arm of a hospital group and as a broker for a large commercial real estate firm before joining real estate group CMD Realty Investors. The environment there and his boss, Bob Gibbons, gave Bates the opportunity to prove himself.

"He recognized the talents I brought to the table and allowed me to exercise them to be effective," Bates says of Gibbons.

"He set a vision for where we needed to be and a rationale for why certain things needed to be done," he says. "Sometimes in corporate environments, you don't get that rationale, and it

can be frustrating if you don't understand why you're being told to do things.

If you have a vision you're able to buy into, you can be unleashed to do what you do best," Bates says.

In that role at CMD Realty Investors, Bates became a top producer in the Dallas market and received the Dallas Business Journal's Commercial Real Estate Heavy Hitter award in 2002.

"That acknowledgement gave me confidence that I'd achieved what I wanted and that it was time to go home and take what I'd learned with me back to the family business," Bates says.

**"Texas REALTORS® is one of the few organizations that has a network already established across the state. All we have to do is effectively activate that network."**

### A Grassroots Rise

"We don't just fall into what we're doing," Bates says. "We plan for what we're doing.

"Years ago, I had conversations with some of my mentors where they suggested I get involved with association leadership."

Mentors like Lawrence Young and Roy Del Bosque pulled him into the organization and made him believe he had something to offer.

A self-described political animal—he was canvassing for local campaigns at age 7—Bates gravitated toward governmental affairs and TREPAC.

"I've been a grassroots guy from Day One at the local level, and that grew into the state level," Bates says. His first state-





**ABOVE:** Bates and his wife, Jessica, have three children: Landon, Blake, and Layton.

level appointment was on what's now known as the Political Involvement Committee.

"I fell in love with the organization from the moment I served on my first committee," Bates says of Texas REALTORS®. "I walked into the room and was overwhelmed by the passion our members bring to this organization."

He followed that vein of political involvement through several positions at the association, making new connections and mentors along the way—what he calls his "trail of leadership."

"As you grow in your roles, you start finding new people with unique traits who might understand certain aspects of the industry, issues, or ways of doing things that are different than what you know," he says.

While Bates entered association leadership with a focus on commercial issues, the roles he's had since have expanded his knowledge about the rest of the real estate industry.

"It's a hugely rewarding process to have that knowledge become part of who you are," he says. "My career and the opportunities I've had have definitely been enhanced by that."

One of the most important lessons he's learned over the years is that your success as a leader depends on the group you're working with.

"There are so many talented people you develop friendships and relationships with at all levels of the association," he says. "I feel blessed by the number of friends I've developed over the course of my time in leadership."

### **A Shared Vision**

This is his year leading the association, but Bates takes the long view. What Bates is most passionate about are changes that have been evolving over the course of the years he's spent climbing the leadership ranks.

"You can't wait until your year as chairman to effect change," he says. "You have to start sharing your view and providing influence much earlier in the process."

"A lot of what I want to accomplish is the delivery of ideas that started in previous years," he says. "They may be ideas and conver-

sations that started with earlier leaders, but it's a shared vision."

Improving the association's political ground game is one such initiative.

"Through my years serving on the Political Involvement Committee, I saw how much money there was in politics," Bates says. "You can never have enough money, so you have to be effective on the ground."

"We're one of the few organizations that has a network already established across the state. All we have to do is effectively activate that network."

Matching the association's history of successful fundraising and influence at the Texas Capitol with an unmatched grassroots network has been in the works for years, but Bates is excited to be chairman heading into the first session of the Texas Legislature where all the association's initiatives are in place.

Mentorship is another cause important to Bates, and he is looking forward to the rollout of a program for directors and committee members at the national and state level of the REALTOR® organization.

When first appointed to new positions, Bates says, members tend to observe rather than participate—potentially missing out on a valuable opportunity to contribute.

"Instead of that typical response, we want a paradigm shift," he says.

Through the program, new leaders will be paired with a more experienced mentor and have the access and support to be ready to contribute on Day One, Bates says.

The feeling from Bates's first committee meeting has never left him.

"It's a humbling experience to serve alongside these dedicated members," he says. "I cherish that."

"And with where I am now, I feel like I have a duty to continue to encourage members to get involved and help them understand what a wonderful experience it is."

---

**MICHAEL SCHRANTZ** is social media editor for the association.



**ABOVE:** Bates is joined at the Texas Capitol by his 2019 Leadership Team: from left, President/CEO Travis Kessler, Immediate Past Chairman Kaki Lybbert, Chairman-Elect Cindi Bulla, and Secretary/Treasurer Marvin Jolly.

**BELOW:** The installation ceremony for Bates was held during the 2018 Texas REALTORS® Conference in San Antonio, with his friends and family also in attendance for the celebration.



## FACTS AND FIGURES

Founding member of the South Texas Commercial Association

2009 REALTOR® of the Year for the Corpus Christi Association of REALTORS®

3 designations: CCIM, CIPS, SIOR

3rd-generation REALTOR®

18 years as a REALTOR®

## DID YOU KNOW THAT TRAY BATES ...

### Fills his free moments with Boy Scouts

"I have three boys, and my wife says that I fill every free moment with Boy Scouts. She says, 'I've missed you all week and now you're going camping?' I never got my Eagle Scout. I recognize now how important that would have been for me, so I'm passionate about providing that opportunity for young men. Not only for my boys, but for all the boys we work with, because I see how that can be a benefit to their lives, help jumpstart where they want to go in life, and give them more choices."

### Wanted to get married in Italy

"When Jessica and I were planning our wedding, we wanted to have it in Italy. Then we realized that not all our family members would be able to make that trip, so we decided to do something closer to home. We still haven't been able to make that Italy trip, but we'd like to take our boys with us and have them see the things that Jessica did while she studied abroad there. I haven't been to Italy, but it's a trip I'd like to do with her someday."

### Likes loud, extended goodbyes.

"At family gatherings, my dad always pulled up to the house honking the horn and would leave the same way, honking down the road. We love big, boisterous entries and extended goodbyes. And this is just another way to do that. My sister does it when her family is over for the holidays, and my brother does it whenever we see each other. I'm sure my neighbors love it, but that's just the way we do it."

### Got in trouble on his first local campaign

"When I was a young boy helping out on a local city council campaign, I was told to knock on all the doors in a neighborhood, tell whoever answered about my candidate, and give them a flyer. I did that for a while. Then, I thought there had to be an easier way and started dropping the flyers in each house's mailbox. I did the whole neighborhood that way. I didn't know there were rules about putting materials without postage in mailboxes! Someone filed a complaint, and I got in trouble. It was a good lesson to learn."



# MEET YOUR 2019



**CHAIRMAN-ELECT**  
**CINDI BULLA** GRI, TRLP, NARLA

Amarillo | 806-236-5100 | cindibulla@gmail.com

**YEARS WITH THE REALTOR® ORGANIZATION: 20+**

#### **KEY VOLUNTEER ROLES AND HONORS**

TREPAC Trustee; Region 1 RVP; Chairman of MLS and Issues Mobilization Committees; Amarillo Association of REALTORS® (AAOR) 2012 Chairman; AAOR 2013 REALTOR® of the Year; NAR Issues Policy, Conventional Finance, and Issues Mobilization Committees; Director at AAOR, Texas REALTORS®, and NAR; 2008 Texas REALTORS® Leadership Program; 2015 NAR Leadership Academy

#### **WHAT ARE SOME LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT LEADERSHIP OVER THE YEARS? WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO GROW HER LEADERSHIP SKILLS?**

Your most important work will be done before you've earned your title. Offer your best ideas freely to the leaders ahead of you, then roll up your sleeves and help them get the job done. If you care who gets credit, your heart is not right for leadership.

Learn when and how to respectfully offer alternatives, find compromise and consensus, own it if you're wrong, and respect the majority decision, regardless of whether you agree. The trust earned through those efforts will be critical when, in your leadership role, you have to ask your fellow members to trust your judgment on matters not delegated to them.

It is often said a leader's most important job is to find his or her replacement. When you have that title, be humble and reach out to those looking for leadership opportunities.

Always avoid use of the words "my" and "I".

Finally, have fun. It's serious business, but your energy, enthusiasm, and enjoyment will be infectious and should never be underestimated!



**SECRETARY/TREASURER**  
**MARVIN JOLLY** CRS, TRLP

Plano | 972-599-7000 | marv@locationdfw.com

**YEARS WITH THE REALTOR® ORGANIZATION: 19**

#### **KEY VOLUNTEER ROLES AND HONORS**

Collin County Association of REALTORS® (CCAR) President; CCAR REALTOR® of the Year; CCAR Past President; Frisco Rotary Club Past President

#### **HOW CAN SOMEONE BECOME A BETTER MENTOR AND HELP IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT FUTURE LEADERS?**

Identify an area, a topic, or a strategy of which you may have unique and valuable knowledge. Understand that effective mentoring starts with building a relationship, and that the journey may be multiyear or even lifelong, extending past structured time frames of formal mentoring programs.

Being a good mentor means committing to be the best leader you can be. Focus on others versus yourself. Be willing to listen. Be patient.

Good mentors also have:

- Personal experience in an organization or specific role
- Valuable relationships that have been developed over time
- A strong desire to see others grow and succeed
- A willingness to share information, ideas, and past successes as well as past failures, both personally and organizationally.

Finally, good mentors know how to use their time wisely. With a purposeful approach, even a small amount of time can be leveraged to get big returns.

# LEADERSHIP TEAM



IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN  
**KAKI LYBBERT** ABR, CRS, SRES

Denton | 940-320-4355 | [kaki@kakilybbert.com](mailto:kaki@kakilybbert.com)

**YEARS WITH THE REALTOR® ORGANIZATION: 24**

#### KEY VOLUNTEER ROLES AND HONORS

NAR Major Investor Council Chairman; 2012 TREPAC Chairman; 2016 NAR RPAC Fundraising Forum; 2018 NAR Chairman of Corporate Ally Council

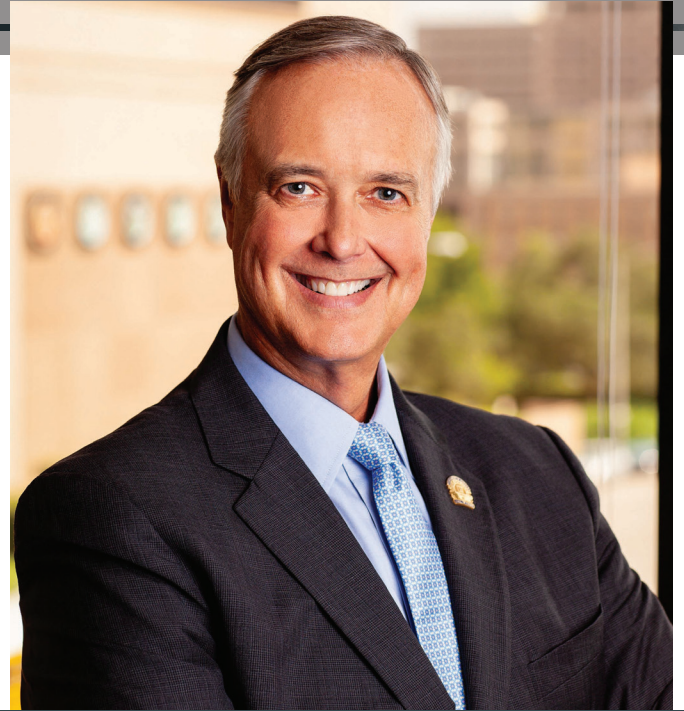
#### HOW CAN SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING ABOUT GETTING MORE INVOLVED IN THEIR COMMUNITY, THE REALTOR® ASSOCIATION, OR ANY OTHER VOLUNTEER ROLE GET STARTED?

It's OK—and maybe even necessary—to start small. Your ultimate goal may be chairman of a board, but you're not going to get there overnight. Think about what the short-term goals are on that path first.

Identify the organizations or causes you're going to lend your time and effort to. What is it about those organizations that ignite your passion to serve? What are the unique skills you bring to the table? What types of involvement would help you grow in other facets of your life, whether personally or in your real estate business?

Once you've answered those questions, show up. It's that simple. Attend the meetings, RSVP for the networking event, respond to the surveys—whatever it is you can do to start your involvement. Once you're comfortable in that step, raise your hand to help on a committee, sponsor an event, or lead a small team.

You'll begin to see the path to your ultimate goal start to clear, and in the meantime, you'll get your feet wet, meet new people, and give back to something other than yourself.



PRESIDENT/CEO  
**TRAVIS KESSLER** RCE, CAE

Texas | 800-873-9155 | [tkessler@texasrealtors.com](mailto:tkessler@texasrealtors.com)

**YEARS WITH THE REALTOR® ORGANIZATION: 41**

#### KEY VOLUNTEER ROLES AND HONORS

Texas REALTORS® Leadership Team; RPAC Fundraising Trustees; REALTORS® Relief Foundation; RPR Advisory Council.

#### WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR WAYS PEOPLE CAN SUCCESSFULLY MEET THEIR GOALS, WHETHER AT WORK OR IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES?

The best advice I can give to help ensure success in goal attainment is:

- Make a personal commitment to set measurable, achievable, and relevant goals
- Utilize and trust people who can help you achieve your goals personally and professionally
- Choose an accountability partner to help keep you on track
- Set incremental timelines for reaching and celebrating short-term goals
- Help others achieve their goals.

“No other state in the country has the passion for member service and involvement like Texas. The synergy between staff and elected leadership and membership helps create and maintain a culture of political/legislative advocacy, TREPAC fundraising, legal services, and marketing and communications initiatives to brand the REALTOR® as the professional resource for value and service.”



# 2019 REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS



**1**  
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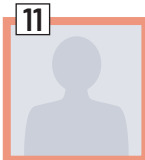
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The regional vice presidents are your representatives for policy decisions at the association. Their role is to gather feedback from their regions and provide it to the Texas REALTORS® Executive Board so it can make informed decisions about association policies. If you ever want to provide feedback or have questions about how these policy

decisions are made, contact your regional vice president.

Regional vice presidents are also available for board luncheons or office presentations and can share the latest information about the industry and your association, including how Texas REALTORS® advocates on your behalf or the value of membership.



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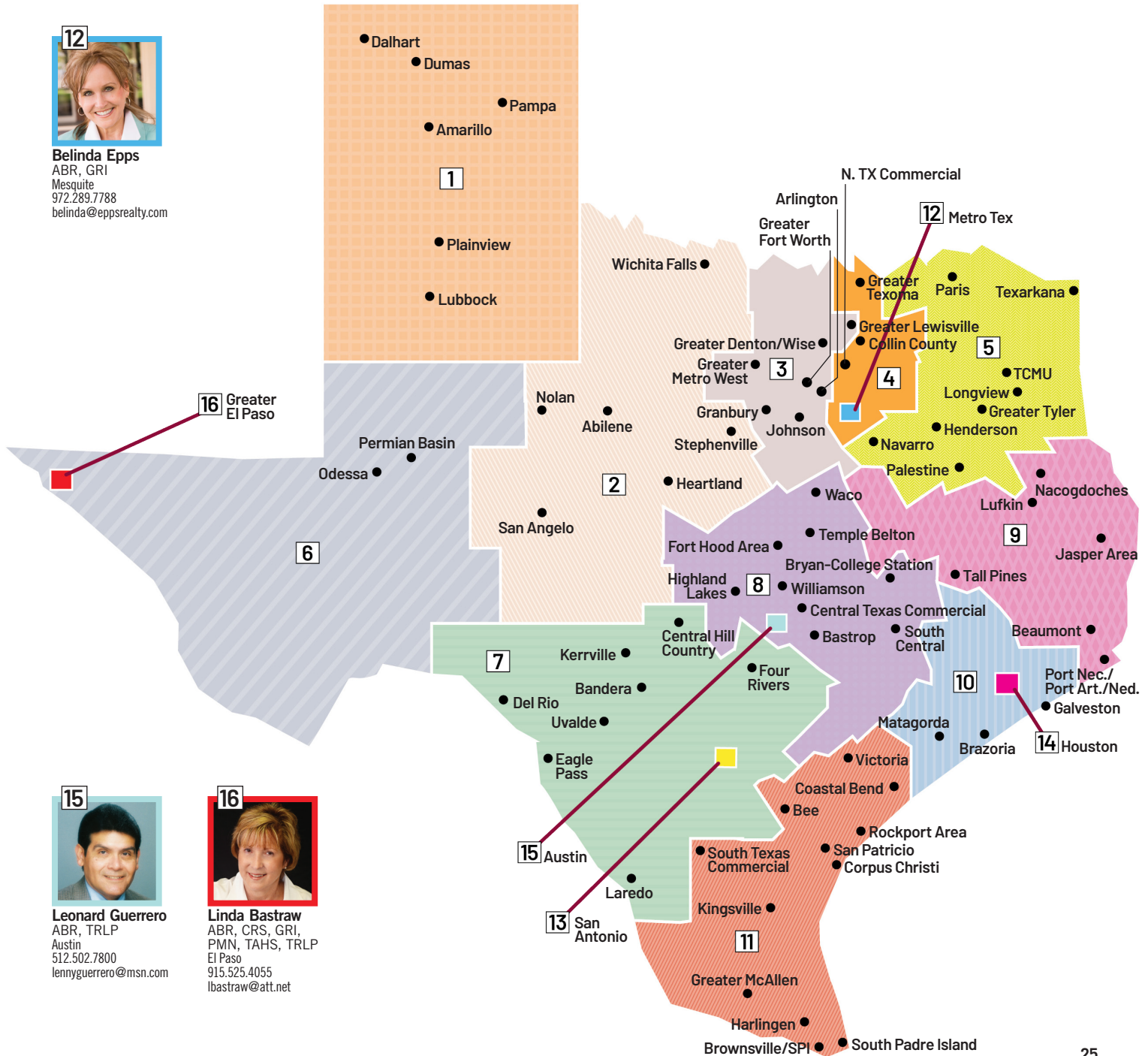
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# 2019 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Learn more about what these committees do at [texasrealestate.com](http://texasrealestate.com) and look for the volunteer sign-up in May.

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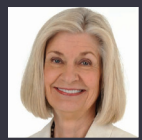
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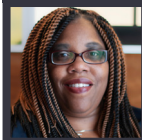
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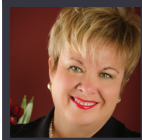
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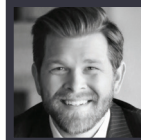
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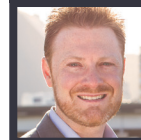
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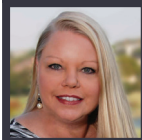
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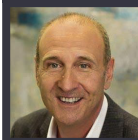
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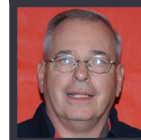
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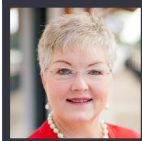
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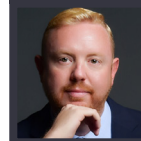
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# 2019 EXECUTIVE BOARD APPOINTEES

These appointees join the Leadership Team and regional vice presidents to constitute the 2019 Executive Board.

The Executive Board manages all the association's affairs except the following, which require approval of the Texas REALTORS® Board of Directors:

- Amending the association's bylaws
- Electing officers
- Approving expenditures more than 10% of the annual budget
- Approving the strategic plan
- Approving increases in membership dues
- Defining regional boundaries.

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# What happens next?

Real estate is an industry of continual change. Four real estate experts talk about what to expect in the future and how to leverage your marketing, strategy, and technology to achieve more success.



## NOBU HATA

National Association of REALTORS®  
director of member engagement

REALTORS® and brokerages need to shift from generating leads to nurturing those leads. They need to build trust and rapport online to get in front of people offline.

Nurturing leads is not about business today. It's about curating business for tomorrow and attracting those eyes online right now. You need to be thinking one or two business cycles ahead.

Brokers know this when they're talking to new agents: It's about knowing that who you meet today may not pay off today. But you want to make sure that you position yourself to get the payoff when a prospect is ready.

Most agent and broker marketing is the same, measuring clicks on ads, on websites, and in newsletters. You have to think like these disruptors that we keep talking about. Those disruptors think like a media company.

You can do this by conveying your expertise in short bursts of information that people are accustomed to. This isn't a generational thing; it's a time thing in that no one's got any to spare. So, you want to give people short bursts of information when they want it, how they want it.

REALTORS® in Texas need to embrace the many types of brokerage models that consumers have access to in your state. Stress what humans bring to the table. Emphasize what you can do that technology can't. Build trust and do all the other stuff that's different from what technology companies and portals can do.



**“Emphasize what you can do that technology can't.”**

—Nobu Hata

Interviews by Ward Lowe





**“You have to go where the potential clients are, and they’re not reading newspapers anymore.”**

–Rich Levin



**“You’ve got to provide the service that’s worth your commission.”**

–Marilyn Wilson

## RICH LEVIN

Founder & CEO, Real Estate Grad School

When people start panicking about things changing in real estate, I remind them that many parts of the business haven’t changed much. Buyers still want to see houses before they buy them. They still make offers. We may not write the offer by hand, but that offer looks a whole lot like every other offer that’s been written for the past 50 years.

What has changed completely is where buyers come from.

When I speak, I ask the audience to write down where their last three sales came from.

Ten years ago, the number one source for 60% of audience members was sphere of influence. The second source was traditional advertising—somebody calling from an ad, calling from the sign, stopping by an open house.

Today, the first source hasn’t changed—it’s still sphere of influence. But advertising is gone. Now it’s internet leads. But it’s just another medium. You have to go where the potential clients are, and they’re not reading newspapers anymore.

A top broker may have 60% of his business from sphere of influence referrals, and now he’s got 7% to 10% of business from his reputation. In the old days, reputation was personal. It was the people who knew you. But now it is his online reputation—reviews on websites and social media channels.

I don’t think that percentage will change too much. Most people are going to work with an agent they know and trust or who has been referred to them by someone they know and trust.

If you’re not building through your sphere of influence, other agents who are building their teams and reputation bigger than yours will get potential clients who might’ve come to you.

Commission models have changed. Now you can pay basically a flat fee to a brokerage and receive 100% of commissions. You can build a team and make more money staying under the umbrella of a large brokerage than you would starting your own company.

Those changes aren’t going away. There are new players backed by venture capital—that means they don’t have to be profitable right away like a normal broker. They’ve built a lot of technology into their companies to help agents do business more efficiently.

Those models are the ones to watch, to see how they work in the future and what they mean to the industry.

## MARILYN WILSON

Principal, The WAV Group

To stay relevant, agents need to use some form of client-relationship management technology. Sometimes agents have this feeling that technology is hard. Why would they do it if their process works just fine and they have the business they need? They are complacent, fearful, or both.

But to make it in the future, you’ve got to provide the service that’s worth your commission. That’s the bottom line.

You can’t just get leads from Zillow or realtor.com and watch them turn into dollar bills. It doesn’t happen like that. It takes work to move somebody from prospect to client. Leveraging technology like client-relationship management software can make that process easier.

If you set up your customer-relationship management software correctly, you put prospects into the system and the system helps you stay in front of them until they’re ready to talk to you. It will send property alerts or information about how the local market is performing. It will send information about qualifying for a mortgage.

Let’s say you have 350 clients in your database, and you’re working actively with five of those. The tool helps you stay in contact with the 345 other clients while you spend the bulk of your time with the five who are active.

A lot of people think, “Oh, I’m just too scattered. I can’t do it.” You have to wrap your arms around the idea that you can become more organized and technology can help you.

Companies using these systems fully are doing more business. It’s not a shiny object. You can create a consistent method for acquiring prospects and maintaining relationships with them for the long haul.

There isn’t a technology that’s going to replace old-fashioned prospecting and relationship-building. Nothing’s going to do that. But it helps you manage all of those balls in the air.

We all promise things every day when we’re out in the world—“I’ll get that for you,” “I’ll circle back with you,” “Let me fix that for you.” A customer-relationship management software—basically, a “customer for life” program—helps you keep those promises and keeps people in your sphere in front of you.

It does take commitment. Setting up one of these things is not fun. But once you do it, if you are serious about your business and if you are committed to being in this business for the long haul, you will see the difference.



## “REALTORS® need to be the ambassadors for Texas.”

—John Baen

### JOHN BAEN

Professor of Real Estate, University of North Texas

I'm so excited about Texas in the next 10 years. I'm so excited about real estate investments. Texas is now what California was in 1955. We are going to double the population within 15 years ... all the people that are coming from California, New Jersey, New York, and Florida ... and REALTORS® need to be ambassadors for Texas; be excited that they're coming.

Corporations are making their decision to come here for so many reasons. We have no state income tax. We're in the Central time zone. Employees can make a call at 7 a.m. to New York and at 6 p.m. to California. It splits the country in two. It costs less money to fly to the coasts.

We're a port state. We're a standalone oil and gas state—we're exporting oil and gas. Our climate is great. We can build our buildings cheaper and have nearly unlimited land. Our housing is affordable.

Some REALTORS® will say, “Things aren't selling well in my part of Texas.” Well that's because people who are living in their houses realize what's about to happen, and they're not going to move.

More people in Texas are staying put because they realize what's coming. The value of our houses is going to double. Even if they go up 7% a year, they double every 10 years.

We are the center of commerce in the world, not just the United States. This is serious stuff, and it's part of a REALTOR's job to be a cheerleader for Texas.

Another part of a REALTOR's job is to inform consumers of what they might be missing. And what a lot of consumers are missing right now is this dynamite market that we're going to have for 20 years in Texas, and what house prices and rents are going to do.

REALTORS® should be encouraging people to buy rental houses. REALTORS® need to have faith in the future, the staying power that Texas is going to have. They need to believe what they're selling.

I'm telling you that there is no better investment for retirement or for savings than to buy a median or below-median price house less than 15 years old in Texas and own it forever.

REALTORS® need to put on seminars for buyers and investors. They need to know what the new tax law implications are going to be for buyers.



**WARD LOWE** is associate director of communications for the association.



# WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Texas REALTORS® and affiliates get access to a variety of discounts on products and services.

These members-only discounts are just the beginning ...

## **NATIONWIDE**

Save on auto insurance with this members-only discount program. Add coverage for your home, boat, RV, motorcycle, and even your pet.

Visit [txrealtorsauto.com](http://txrealtorsauto.com) to get connected with a Nationwide agent near you.

## **TRANSUNION SMART MOVE**

This safe online system provides a quick leasing recommendation for prospective tenants, including credit report, background check, and eviction records. No subscription required so you only pay as you use it.

Get started at [texasrealtors.mysmartmove.com](http://texasrealtors.mysmartmove.com).

## **TAXBOT**

Track expenses to maximize deductions with this easy-to-use app. Use your phone to snap pictures of your receipts and use GPS to track mileage.

Get started at [tar.taxbot.com](http://tar.taxbot.com).

## **OFFICE DEPOT/OFFICEMAX**

Save up to 60% on office supplies, printing, and more at Office Depot and Office Max. This discount is available in stores and online.

Get started with the program by ordering your discount card or setting up an online shopping account at [texasrealestate.com/officedepot](http://texasrealestate.com/officedepot).

Find out more at [texasrealestate.com/benefits](http://texasrealestate.com/benefits)

## STAGING TIPS FOR YOUR HOME

Staging helps you make a good first impression with buyers, emphasizing your property's positive aspects and allowing buyers to see themselves living there. But staging isn't as simple as you may think.

Staging is not an invitation to unleash your decorating skills. A home's décor is personal, and staging is the opposite. Staging a home helps it appeal to as many buyers as possible. Here are tips to help you.

### Add natural touches

Look at the geography surrounding the home and use natural elements that reflect that area. You want to add plants and flowers to soften spaces and subliminally remind buyers that life grows here.

### Rearrange furniture

Moving furniture to open traffic flow can make a room feel bigger, or arranging it to create a conversation area gives the space purpose.

### Use lots of light

A house that's illuminated says, "Come on in." Open your blinds and curtains to let in natural light, and put the maximum allowable wattage in fixtures to boost illumination.

### Accessorize the entryway

Add strategic pieces—a table lamp, artwork, mirror, decorative box—to create a statement when welcoming people into a home.



Want help maximizing your home's potential? Ask your REALTOR® for an objective opinion about your property, or for a list of professional home-stagers in your area.



# TAKE 5

## PITCH YOURSELF AS A GO-TO SOURCE OF REAL ESTATE INFORMATION

Raise your profile and reach new potential clients by being a source for the media. Being cited as an expert in an article may lead readers to seek you out, drive traffic to your website, or improve search engine optimization for your name or company. Here are ways you can build a relationship with publishers in your market.

### FIND THE RIGHT OUTLET AND CONTACT

Collect magazines, newspapers, and a list of websites that cover your area. Pay attention to reporters and editors covering real estate and track down their direct business contact information. For newspapers or magazines, reporter contact information can typically be found on article pages or in a masthead, which is the list of people who work for the publication. (See an example of a masthead on page 2).

### START WITH A LOW-PRESSURE INTRODUCTION

If your goal is to become an ongoing source for the publication, don't start with a hard pitch of a specific property or industry recognition. Introduce yourself, your business, what you specialize in, and the ways your expertise or skills might be able to help the writer.

### HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER

Real estate writers don't have your first-hand experience in the market or access to the same data sources as you. Provide data they can't access without you, or offer to comment on a trend they're writing about. You also can volunteer to answer more open-ended inquiries or be a sounding board for article ideas.

### IF YOU HAVE A TREND, PITCH IT

Be proactive about pitching ideas and topics you think might be interesting to a publication's readers if you haven't seen it covered. You know the market and real estate consumers best. Although not every pitch will turn into a story, good ideas will earn you calls when a reporter or editor is looking for a real estate angle.

### CREATE MUTUAL RESPECT

You may not understand why your favorite pitch went nowhere or it took the writer over a week to respond, but juggling deadlines can be just as difficult as managing clients. If you respect their time and expertise as writers and editors, the reporters and editors will respect yours.



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