

CREATING A FUNDRAISING PLAN

The biggest mistake that fundraisers make is not having a plan. If it isn't written down, it doesn't exist. Most of you have a business plan. You have to know where you are going and how to get there. The same is true in fundraising. Meet with your association executive or government affairs director, but develop the plan with your committee. If the committee does not have an opportunity to contribute to the plan they will not be vested in it. It will be viewed as your plan, not theirs.

Raising money for RPAC requires careful planning, a high degree of organization, and thorough implementation of your fundraising plan. RPAC fundraisers have a tremendous advantage over the majority of fundraisers nationwide - a highly-organized network in every state at both the state and local levels. A carefully thought out fundraising plan will establish the goals, time schedules and organizational structure for the year. A written plan for everyone involved with meeting the goal will help everyone work together to have a successful fundraising year.

1. SET GOALS

- Overall dollar goal – your total fundraising goal for the year should be at a minimum the state's "Fair Share" goal, which is \$25 per REALTOR® member. Some boards choose to establish a higher "Fair Share" goal per member, or may have different goals for brokers and agents. It is a good idea to set separate goals for corporate and personal investments.
- Percentage of participation goal – roughly 30% of NAR members nationwide invest in RPAC. Much emphasis has been placed on increasing participation. A very basic rule of fundraising is the more people that are giving on a regular basis, the more money you will raise. Always set a participation goal higher than the previous year's level.
- Organizational goal – Where do you want to be as an association? Do you want to raise the most money of all the associations in your state? Or maybe you want to have a minimum number of Sterling R's or "99 Club" members? The more goals you have to shoot for, the greater the chances for increased enthusiasm and opportunity for success.

2. DEFINE METHODS TO ACHIEVE GOALS

How will we achieve the goals that we have established? A solid program including a mixture of dues billing, phone banks and special events will help you maximize your efforts and your income.

3. ESTABLISH TIME FRAMES

Before the year begins, it is imperative to have a timeline in place that clearly outlines when you will be undertaking specific activities. The earlier in the year money is raised, the better off you are. The time schedule for an RPAC drive can vary greatly from state to state and association to association. Many designate an "RPAC Month" or "50 Days to Goal" time frame to heavily concentrate their efforts and sustain a continuous, focused fundraising drive.

In general, local associations must submit all RPAC funds to GAR by the beginning of October (the actual date varies each year). The submission deadline must be observed to allow GAR sufficient time to process and forward RPAC funds to NAR before NAR's deadline. Any funds received at GAR after the official deadline will be counted towards the following recognition year.

4. ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY

The more individuals involved in the fundraising process, the more enthusiasm and support are generated, and a greater number of people are solicited. In addition, it is beneficial to have a point person for the different methods of fundraising (special event chair, phone bank chair, etc.). Assign specific job responsibilities to everyone involved in the RPAC fundraising process - Association/Board officers and staff, RPAC Chairmen and Trustees, etc. Never assume that anyone knows what they are supposed to do. These individuals are one of your greatest fundraising resources; be sure to use them to your maximum advantage.