

NYSAR **ADVOCACY** **GUIDEBOOK** **2024**



New York State Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION



Joe Rivellino, 2024 NYSAR President

Dear fellow REALTOR®,

It is an incredible honor to serve as your 2024 NYSAR President.

REALTOR® advocacy is such an important part of what we do as an association in New York State – and it is vital that we continue to elevate our advocacy, as we elevate our profession.

The 2024 edition of this advocacy guide covers many of the programs, committees, and tools NYSAR utilizes to advocate on behalf of you – the REALTOR® professional.

On the legislative and regulatory front, NYSAR continues to face many challenges to our industry in New York State. Given these challenges, NYSAR's ability to advocate effectively requires ongoing investments, strategic partnerships, thoughtful deliberations, and constant communication. While this guide mostly covers advocacy programs, committees and tools at the state association level, your advocacy through your local board or association, as well as the National Association of REALTORS®, is also important.

NYSAR's advocacy is only possible with the dedicated commitment you have exhibited over the years as licensed real estate professionals or staff working for your local board or association.

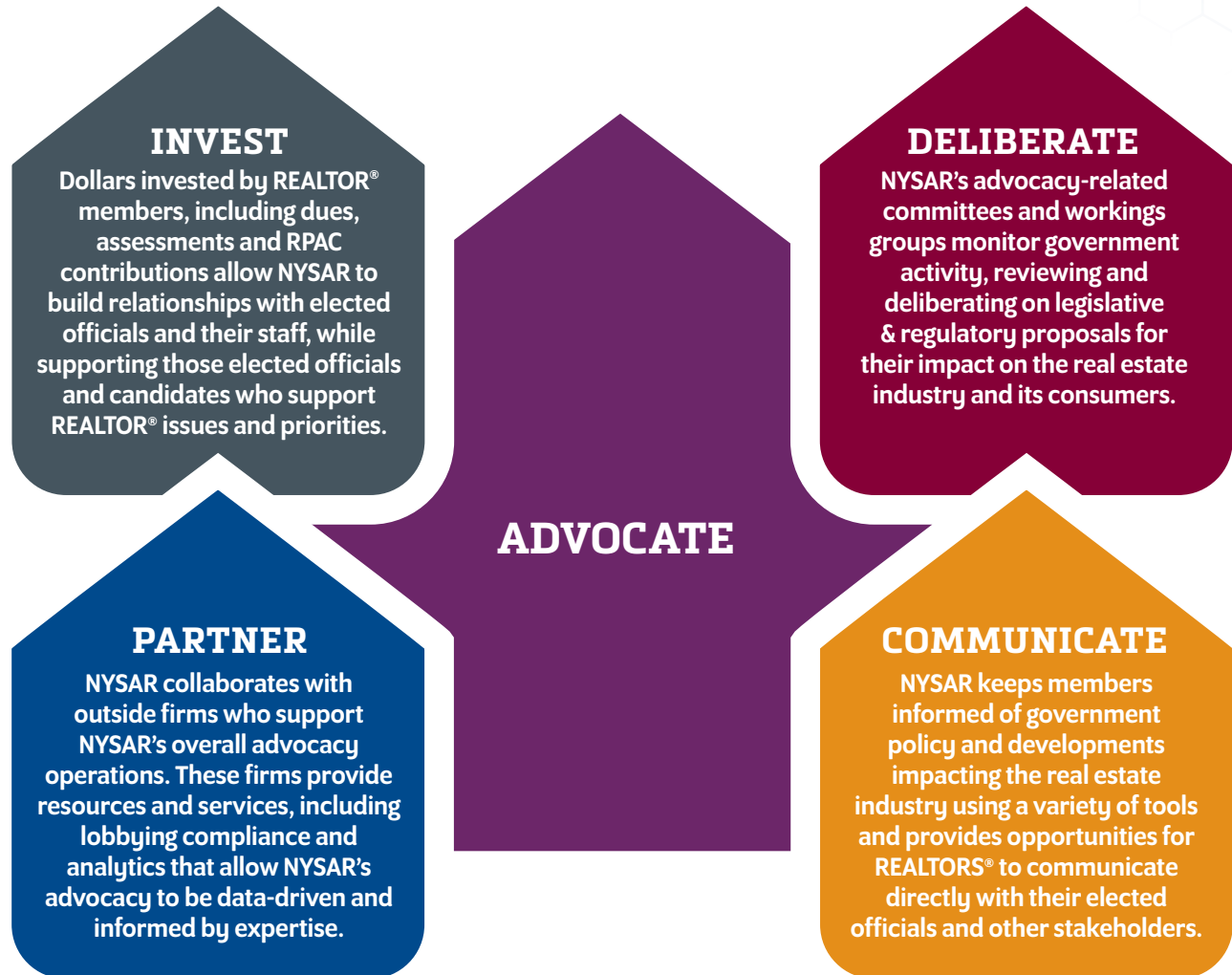
I thank you for this dedication and look forward to another strong year of New York REALTOR® advocacy in 2024!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JRivellino", written in a cursive style.

ADVOCACY OVERVIEW

NYSAR's advocacy operation is built on four pillars of action:



All four of these pillars culminate in a comprehensive advocacy strategy at NYSAR. Importantly, NYSAR's advocacy is designed to meet the needs of REALTORS®, consumers and the broader real estate industry in New York State through the ongoing involvement of NYSAR's members in each pillar of NYSAR's advocacy.

REALTORS® POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (RPAC) OF NEW YORK

RPAC of New York is one of the most important pieces of the New York REALTOR® advocacy playbook. The investments that you make in RPAC – through individual contributions and fundraising events – drive the engine that makes effective advocacy possible.

RPAC is used to provide financial support to candidates for elected office who support private property rights, homeownership, and other priorities of New York REALTORS®. The financial contributions made by RPAC help NYSAR build relationships with elected officials and have meaningful conversations about public policy that impacts consumers, property owners and the real estate industry.

In addition to individual contributions, local REALTOR® associations and boards typically hold multiple RPAC events throughout the year. These events contribute to overall annual fundraising totals. Additionally, RPAC of New York typically hosts fundraisers in conjunction with the NYSAR business meetings and Lobby Day.

Annual fundraising goals for RPAC of New York are set by the National Association of REALTORS®. In 2023, RPAC of New York raised more than \$1.4 million, meeting or exceeding its fundraising goal for the 12th year in a row!

Investing in RPAC is one of the best ways to support the real estate industry. Here are more details on how you can contribute to RPAC.

Major Investor Plans

Major Investor Installment Plans

This plan gives members the option to spread their RPAC investments over several months to achieve Major Investor status (\$1,000+) by the end of the fundraising year. Participants in this program pledge to become a RPAC Major Investor and select the five months of the year they would like NYSAR to charge their credit card.

“Pay as You Go – Major Investor Pledge”

This program allows Major Investors to pledge their RPAC support at the Major Investor level and to pay incrementally throughout the year. This may be accomplished by attending state and/or local RPAC events or by investing in RPAC whenever financially convenient during the year. This program gives Major Investors the flexibility to pay as they go and will also assist staff in maintaining an accurate list of Major Investors across the state, to ensure all are on track to fulfilling their pledges by the close of the fundraising year.

NAR President’s Circle

This program was developed in 2003 to mobilize REALTOR® members to invest directly in REALTOR® champions who take the lead on our issues in Congress. You must be an RPAC Major Investor to join the President’s Circle. President’s Circle members give a total of \$2,000 in direct contributions to NAR-selected candidates/committees. These contributions can be made in four \$500 increments spread out from January – September. Federal Political Coordinators, or FPCs, may give one of the \$500 increments directly to the Member of Congress in which they serve as FPC. The President’s Circle is well known on Capitol Hill and a powerful political tool.

RPAC ANNUAL INVESTMENT LEVELS

Platinum “R”	\$10,000+
Golden “R”	\$5,000 – \$9,999
Crystal “R”	\$2,500 – \$4,999
Sterling “R”	\$1,000 – \$2,499
President’s Club	\$500 – \$999
Capital Club	\$250 – \$499
99 Club	\$99 – \$249





RETURN ON INVESTMENT: WHAT DOES RPAC DO?

RPAC works to elect lawmakers who support REALTOR® business interests and private property rights. RPAC played an important role in electing lawmakers and influencing legislation important to REALTORS® such as:

- Enacting New York's 2-percent property tax cap
- Enacting New York's STAR Property Tax Relief Program
- Enacting a law to prohibit private transfer fees in New York
- Extending the National Flood Insurance Program and Mortgage Cancellation Relief
- Extending the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program
- Making FHA Financing for Condos more accessible
- Defeating legislation that would have prevented New York State REALTORS® from conducting business outside their home county
- Defeating proposals that would have increased closing costs in New York State
- Defeating a proposal to require a 20-percent down payment
- Defeating a proposal that would have prohibited Broker Prepared Contracts in New York
- Defeating a proposal to require a county-wide cease and desist zone throughout King County

Gina Marie Bettenhauser

2024 RPAC Trustees Chair

Long Island Board of REALTORS®

Kira Witherwax

2024 RPAC Trustees Vice Chair

Clinton County Board of REALTORS®

OTHER RPAC DETAILS

RPAC Trustees

RPAC of New York is overseen by a body consisting of 18 REALTOR® trustees from across our state that meet multiple times a year, including at each business meeting. The trustees typically meet during even-numbered years to discuss campaign contributions to candidates for state senate and assembly. In addition to these funding decisions, the trustees oversee the administration of RPAC funds and approve annual RPAC budgets.

Candidate Questionnaires

Candidate questionnaires are used by RPAC of New York to evaluate candidates for elected office. These questionnaires typically ask candidates about their stance on legislative and regulatory issues related to private property rights, homeownership, and real estate taxation, among others. The questionnaires are used as part of the decision-making process by the RPAC Trustees that results in contributions to candidates for elected office.

INVEST IN RPAC TODAY!

NYSAR is committed to ensuring that your RPAC dollars work to protect you and our industry. For more information and to invest in RPAC, contact NYSAR or your local board. You may invest by:

- Contributing directly through your local board
- Calling NYSAR Political Affairs Coordinator Derick King directly at 518.463.0300 x238; or
- Visiting nysar.com/advocacy/rpac to download, complete and return the investment form to NYSAR or your local board/association.

CONTACT:



Derick King

Political Affairs Coordinator

dking@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 238

ISSUES MOBILIZATION FUND

NYSAR's Issues Mobilization Committee reviews and considers requests for financial support from the Issues Mobilization Fund (IMF) for the organization and management of effective issue campaigns that promote REALTOR® policy. Any local board or NYSAR Committee may apply for funding from the IMF, which is overseen by a committee made up of 16 REALTORS®. The IMF differs from independent expenditures in that it cannot be used to support a candidate for elected office.

NYSAR works with NAR, political strategy and polling firms and campaign vendors to execute issue campaigns. Examples of issue campaigns that have been financed by the IMF in the past include opposition to local real estate transfer tax proposals, opposition to good cause eviction legislation and support for first-time homebuyer legislation.

James DiNapoli

2024 IMF Chair

Sullivan County Board of REALTORS®

Barry Kramer

2024 IMF Vice Chair

Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®

CONTACT:



Mike Kelly

Director of Government Affairs

mkelly@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 215



INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE CAMPAIGNS

NYSAR works with NAR, political strategy firms, and campaign vendors to run “independent expenditure” or IE campaigns in support of a select number of candidates for elected office in New York State. These campaigns are designed to back real estate-friendly candidates who support sound public policy for the industry, REALTORS® and consumers. By law, these campaigns cannot collaborate or coordinate with the candidate’s campaign. IE campaigns typically fund educational and persuasive mail pieces, phone calls, websites, radio, TV, and social media ads, and other efforts to get out the vote.

Independent expenditure campaigns are funded in part by a small assessment that each REALTOR® pays annually as part of their NYSAR membership dues. All independent expenditure campaigns financed by NYSAR’s IE Fund must be approved by its five-member Independent Expenditure committee.

NYSAR has run 23 independent expenditure campaigns in support of state legislative candidates since 2014, supporting the winning candidate in 19 out of 23 competitive elections (an 83 percent success rate). These campaigns have supported candidates in Long Island, the Hudson Valley, Capital Region, North Country, Southern Tier, Central and Western New York.

CONTACT:



Mike Kelly

Director of Government Affairs

mkelly@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 215



LEGISLATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

NYSAR's 22-member Legislative Steering Committee is the chief committee responsible for reviewing legislative and regulatory proposals and taking positions on public policy issues impacting the real estate industry. The committee implements strategies to communicate association positions to government officials and the public sector. It meets multiple times a year, including at each NYSAR Business Meeting.

The committee provides reports to NYSAR's Board of Directors. It also reviews motions sent from four legislative workings groups: Article 12-A, CO-OP Issues, Commercial Issues and New York City Issues. Any motions or recommendations that change NYSAR policy require consideration by NYSAR's Board of Directors.

The Legislative Steering Committee may apply for funding from the Issues Mobilization Fund to finance campaigns related to legislation or ballot initiatives of importance to the real estate industry.

Jennifer Vucetic

2024 Legislative Steering Chair

Greater Capital Association of REALTORS®

Brittany Matott

2024 Legislative Steering Vice Chair

St. Lawrence Board of REALTORS®

CONTACT:



Mike Kelly

Director of Government Affairs

mkelly@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 215

LEGISLATIVE WORKING GROUPS

NYSAR's four legislative working groups enable its members to focus on specific issue areas. Membership is open to any member. These four working groups report directly to the Legislative Steering Committee. The working groups are:

- **Article 12-A:** This working group discusses issues related to Article 12-A of the New York State Real Property Law, which covers the licensing laws for real estate brokers and salespersons.
 - **Elizabeth Trego**
2024 Chair
St. Lawrence County Board of REALTORS®
 - **Carol Christansen**
2024 Vice-Chair
Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®
- **CO-OP Issues:** This working group discusses issues impacting cooperative housing in New York State, including the expansion of cooperative transparency and disclosure laws to different parts of the State.
 - **Frederic Greene**
2024 Chair
Long Island Board of REALTORS®
 - **Jessica Akde-Elmazi**
2024 Vice-Chair
Long Island Board of REALTORS®

- **Commercial Issues:** This working group discusses issues impacting commercial real estate, such as multifamily housing or development issues.
 - **Clayton Livingston**
2024 Chair
Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®
 - **Karen Wentz**
2024 Vice-Chair
Greater Capital Association of REALTORS®
- **NYC Issues:** This working group focuses on legislative and political issues affecting real estate licensees and consumers in New York City.
 - **Brian Phillips**
2024 Chair
Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®
 - **Laura Copersino**
2024 Vice-Chair
Long Island Board of REALTORS®

The chairs of these working groups serve on the Legislative Steering Committee and report to the Legislative Policy Forum at each NYSAR Business Meeting. Many issues are discussed by multiple working groups. For example, transparency and disclosure in cooperative housing sales is being pursued in both New York City and at the state level, therefore, it is often discussed by both the NYC and CO-OP Issues working groups.



LEGISLATIVE POLICY FORUM

The Legislative Policy Forum advises NYSAR's Legislative Steering Committee on governmental and legislative issues affecting the real estate industry and membership. The forum is open to any member who wishes to join and meets twice a year – at each set of NYSAR Business Meetings. These meetings typically feature speakers who update members on real estate-related legislative and governmental issues. Members can ask questions to featured speakers during forum meetings. In the past, speakers have included members of the state Legislature, the Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of State, NYSAR and NAR staff representatives, and executives from other industry groups.

Jennifer Vucetic

*2024 Legislative Policy Forum Chair
Greater Capital Association of REALTORS®*

Brittany Matott

*2024 Legislative Policy Forum Vice Chair
St. Lawrence Board of REALTORS®*

CONTACT:



Mike Kelly

*Director of Government Affairs
mkelly@nysar.com
(518) 463-0300 ext. 215*

CALLS FOR ACTION

NYSAR Calls for Action (CFA) allow REALTORS® to send electronic messages via text or email to their elected officials. These messages typically urge lawmakers to support or oppose pending legislation and other advocacy issues of importance to the real estate industry in New York State. Calls for Action are drafted by NYSAR so it's easy for a REALTOR® who receives a CFA alert to respond and send a message. Local boards and associations may also request local Calls for Action by contacting NYSAR directly.

Past Calls for Action include opposition to a statewide “good cause” eviction standard, support for legislation to remove telemarketing restrictions and opposition to local real estate transfer tax proposals.

Calls for Action are most effective when large numbers of REALTORS® respond, as lawmakers are more likely to pay attention to an issue when there's a groundswell of support or opposition coming from their constituents. So, if you receive a Call for Action on an important advocacy issue, please support your industry and fellow REALTORS® by responding and sending a message to your lawmaker!

CONTACT:



Jared Burns

Legislative and Political Affairs Coordinator

jburns@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300, ext. 235



FLASH UPDATES

NYSAR's Flash Updates are used to communicate with REALTOR®-members about important and timely legal, legislative and regulatory issues that may impact their business. For example, Flash Updates were used frequently during the COVID-19 shutdown period to update members on reopening guidance. At other times, Flash Updates have been used to inform members about new laws taking effect, such as a series of new fair housing laws that went into effect in 2022.

NYSAR launched its monthly "Advocacy Video Updates" series in 2022, where members get to hear directly from NYSAR's leadership and staff on a variety of advocacy issues. These videos are sent via email and are available on NYSAR's website.





LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

NYSAR considers its annual list of legislative priorities and approves them at its Mid-Winter Business Meetings. The legislative priorities feature bills and issues on important real estate topics, such as transfer taxes, property rights, licensing law (Article 12-A), fair housing, housing affordability, and regulatory issues. The priorities are modified periodically as new legislation gets introduced or other issues arise. Once reviewed and approved by the Legislative Steering Committee, they are published in the weekly e-news and on the NYSAR Advocacy webpage.

Legislative priorities are discussed with key legislators and staff in Albany and used as a road-map for NYSAR's annual advocacy. NYSAR typically publishes its position on various individual pieces of legislation, which often means supporting or opposing a specific bill. NYSAR works to inform lawmakers and staff of the impact of various legislative priorities on the real estate industry and consumers, seeking to influence the passage or defeat of these bills.

CONTACT:



Mike Kelly

Director of Government Affairs

mkelly@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 215

WEEKLY GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT

The weekly government affairs report includes updates and news clips related to real estate issues of importance at the local, state and federal government levels. For example, if a significant real estate related bill passes the Legislature or is signed into law by the governor, you can expect to read about it in the weekly E-News. News coming from the National Association of REALTORS®, or a local government proposal with a substantial impact on the real estate industry, would also be reported in the E-News. The government affairs report is included in the weekly E-News, which is sent via e-mail on Saturday mornings to NY REALTORS®.

NYSAR staff reports on trends and developments related to government policy and real estate through the government affairs report as well. You will find updates on NYSAR staff activity, including meetings with lawmakers on legislative issues and bills. Archives of the weekly government affairs reports can be found at www.NYSAR.com/advocacy.

CONTACT:



Jared Burns

Legislative and Political Affairs Coordinator
jburns@nysar.com
(518) 463-0300, ext. 235



COMPLIANCE

NYSAR retains legal counsel to provide guidance on advocacy, and to help comply with lobbying and campaign finance laws. This firm assists NYSAR in the filing of periodic reports with the state’s lobbying and ethics agency. It also provides legal advice on other issues as new laws and regulations affecting NYSAR’s advocacy arise.

In the past, NYSAR has worked with this firm to provide summaries to members of the “Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act.”

This standing relationship helps NYSAR ensure it is adhering to the law and proper ethical standards when it comes to lobbying, advocacy and political activity, thereby protecting NYSAR from fines, penalties and other government actions that could harm the association.





INDUSTRY GROUPS & TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

NYSAR frequently partners with other industry groups and trade associations. For example, NYSAR is a member of the New York State Business Council, and often collaborates with the Business Council on government affairs issues. NYSAR also works with other real estate industry groups, such as the New York State Builders Association.

NYSAR's relationships with other industry groups and trade associations often result in collaboration on cross-industry legislative issues. For example, in 2022 NYSAR helped spearhead a multi-industry coalition designed to get New York State to remedy the defect in New York's telemarketing laws that prohibit telemarketing during declared states of emergency. The coalition consisted of insurance companies, telecommunications companies and other business groups impacted by the ban on telemarketing.

In recent years, NYSAR has also been part of a coalition called "Homeowners for an Affordable New York." The coalition has implemented a campaign to oppose statewide "good cause" eviction legislation by engaging with registered voters in several legislative districts.



LOCAL REALTOR® BOARDS & ASSOCIATIONS

There are 25 REALTOR® boards and associations in the state affiliated with NYSAR and NAR. NYSAR works with these local boards and associations to keep members informed of state and federal issues, and to protect and advance the real estate industry at the local level. NYSAR provides several advocacy-related services to local boards/associations, including partnering with outside vendors to track local government activity, running issues mobilization campaigns or independent expenditures in localities and providing advocacy support to local boards in multiple regions of the state. NYSAR also helps local boards/associations run RPAC events.

Local Government Tracking

NYSAR partners with an outside entity (Curate) to track local government legislation and activity in the state, excluding New York City. This tracking tool is provided on a complementary basis to local boards/associations. Curate helps local boards/associations stay on top of city council, town board or village trustee meetings, and monitor their legislative activity.



NYSAR's affiliation with the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) helps to better serve their shared members. As all New York REALTORS® are also members of NAR, the partnership between the two associations is critical to achieving our legislative and political goals. From collaborating with NAR on the Federal Political Coordinator program, to utilizing important NAR & REALTOR® Party resources, such as Issue Mobilization grants and Independent Expenditure funding, NYSAR is constantly looking for ways to effectively partner with NAR to further the goal of homeownership, defend property rights and champion other REALTOR® causes.

For example, NYSAR utilized an IMF grant from NAR to help support efforts to pass first-time home buyer legislation in New York State. *Below are other examples of how NYSAR has leveraged its partnership with NAR to support REALTOR® advocacy in New York:

- Working with an outside consultant to research and develop talking points in opposition to a statewide good cause eviction proposal through NAR's Land Use Initiative
- Receiving NAR IMF funding to support research on the impact of New York's Climate Action Council proposals on housing affordability
- Obtaining an IMF grant to oppose local real estate transfer taxes in New Paltz
- Working with NAR and outside vendors on independent expenditure campaigns in support of congressional and state legislative candidates in New York State
- Obtaining a Housing Opportunity Grant to support the expansion of access to affordable housing in the Greater Capital Region
- Collaborating to engage potential REALTOR® allies and improve response rates to Calls For Action by utilizing the Consumer Advocacy Outreach Grant and Broker Involvement Program

NYSAR worked with NAR to disseminate information to its members concerning the COVID-related federal programs and policies impacting REALTORS® and consumers in New York. These include Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loans and Emergency Rental Assistance Program, among others.

*Although this legislation was passed by the state Senate and Assembly, it did not become law. NYSAR continues to advocate for a different version of this legislation to be enacted.

FEDERAL POLITICAL COORDINATORS

The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) runs the Federal Political Coordinator (FPC) program, which in New York State, typically consists of 28 REALTORS® (for 26 congressional representatives and 2 U.S. Senators) who work to educate members of Congress on issues of importance facing the real estate industry. FPCs are recommended by the NYSAR President and appointed by the NAR President to serve two-year terms. NYSAR staff supports New York's FPCs by working with NAR to plan events and provide periodic updates and briefing materials to the FPCs.

A FPC's most valuable contribution is the relationship they develop with their Member of Congress (MOC). In addition to regular contact with their assigned MOC, there are several other specific tasks which are required to fulfill the role of FPC. These are:

- Responding to all NAR Calls for Action
- Advocating on behalf of all REALTORS® and the REALTOR® Party
- Filing field reports for specific actions throughout the year
- Participating in training
- Attending the NAR Annual Legislative Meetings
- Developing a Contact Team
- Supporting their assigned MOC
- Periodically sending news and other information to MOCs
- Reporting all activities to NYSAR staff at the end of the year
- Signing and returning the FPC Performance Agreement

CONTACT:



Franklin Esson

Government Affairs Coordinator

fesson@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 216



STATE POLITICAL COORDINATORS

State Political Coordinators (SPCs) are volunteer REALTOR® advocates who support NYSAR's legislative advocacy by building relationships with key state legislators and their staff. Each SPC is assigned to a state senator or assembly-member and expected to contact the legislator's office or campaign at least four times per year. SPCs often meet with their elected officials to discuss legislation and other political issues of interest to REALTORS®, consumers and the real estate industry. SPCs also attend political fundraisers (using RPAC dollars) in support of their state legislators and provide periodic updates to NYSAR staff on their interactions with their respective state legislator.

SPCs are expected to live or work in the district of their assigned state legislators. Each SPC serves a two-year term, that aligns with the two-year legislative session of the state Legislature. Appointments are made by the NYSAR President, with the recommendation of local boards. Each SPC typically attends a biannual training session, NYSAR Lobby Day in Albany & NYSAR's Fall & Mid-Winter Business Meetings.

CONTACT:



Franklin Esson

Government Affairs Coordinator

fesson@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 216



LOBBY DAY

NYSAR's Lobby Day takes place in Albany at the State Capitol. The event – which is usually held each spring – provides hundreds of REALTORS® with the opportunity to meet directly with their state lawmakers and staff. The event cannot happen without the efforts and support of local boards and their members. NYSAR helps cover some of the costs for members and local boards to participate in Lobby Day, typically offering reimbursements of up to \$150 for each member who attends and 50 percent of bus or car rentals.

Lobby Day kicks off in the morning with remarks by the NYSAR President, a legislative speaker and remarks from NYSAR's Government Affairs Director. REALTORS® and local board staff then hold meetings – often several throughout the day – with lawmakers who represent the districts overlapping with their local board's jurisdiction. There is often a RPAC fundraiser held in conjunction with Lobby Day (in recent years these fundraisers have included an event at the Albany Institute of History and Art and a reception at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Albany).

Lobby Day is a great way for REALTORS® to get their message out, connect with lawmakers and staff in Albany and influence the passage or defeat of key real estate related bills.





NEW YORK CITY ADVOCACY

NYSAR maintains an active presence before New York City Government, working with a well-respected firm to monitor activity and lobby the City Council, Mayor's office, and City agencies on behalf of its New York City members and four NYC-area local boards. NYSAR frequently meets with City Council members to discuss local legislation and issues impacting REALTORS® and consumers in New York City. NYSAR and the NYC area local boards also work to build and strengthen relationships with local government officials in New York City by attending fundraisers and supporting candidates for elected office in New York City through RPAC.

NYSAR's New York City lobbyists keep NYSAR staff and its NYC members updated on political and legislative developments in New York City. This includes providing briefings to the NYC Issues Working Group at NYSAR's business meetings. New York City legislative issues are sent to the Legislative Steering Committee, which makes decisions on whether to support, oppose or remain neutral on these issues.

LOBBYING AT THE STATE CAPITOL

NYSAR has an active lobbying presence at the New York State Capitol in Albany. Meetings between lawmakers and staff, and NYSAR's chief lobbyist and other NYSAR staff occur frequently, particularly during the state legislative session. Many lawmakers and staff look to NYSAR's government affairs team to provide critical input on real estate-related legislative bills, before and after these bills are introduced.

Lobbying at the State Capitol is essential to advocacy on behalf of New York's REALTORS®, sometimes resulting in multiple meetings per day with state lawmakers or their staff. The government affairs team communicates with NYSAR's positions and perspective of legislative proposals, after consulting with NYSAR committees and working groups.

NYSAR's office location in downtown Albany is critical to ensuring that NYSAR's government affairs team can maintain an active presence before New York State lawmakers and their staff. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, NYSAR's government affairs team typically made frequent trips to the State Capitol buildings to meet with lawmakers and staff. Many of these meetings took place virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regardless of whether meeting in-person or virtually, NYSAR's government affairs team is well known and representing the interests of REALTORS® and consumers in Albany.

CONTACT:



Mike Kelly

Director of Government Affairs

mkelly@nysar.com

(518) 463-0300 ext. 215

THE REALTORS® POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE IS WORKING FOR YOU.

Your contributions to RPAC support federal, state and local lawmakers who share the REALTOR® commitment to promoting homeownership and private property rights.

Contribute at www.nysar.com/advocacy/rpac.



New York State Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

New York State Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

130 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210
Phone: (518) 463-0300
Fax: (518) 462-5474