

# AE COMPETENCIES/RCE CAE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

## January 2024

The AE Competencies/RCE Body of Knowledge identifies 28 topic areas that REALTOR® association Certified Executives (RCE) candidates should know and understand to prepare for the RCE exam.

This document specifically identifies areas from the Body of Knowledge that comprise the RCE CAE exam.

The RCE CAE exam consists of 50 multiple-choice questions. Candidates are required to obtain a passing score of 75% to earn the RCE designation. RCE exams are offered online annually in April and October, with an RCE proctor.

*The Answer Book*, the main study reference for the exam, is comprised of 28 chapters that mirror the 28 topic areas outlined in the AE Competencies/RCE Body of Knowledge. The RCE CAE topic areas are highlighted below, and a customized blueprint of the competencies are on the following pages.

### Module 1 – Association Management and Business Operations

- Communications
- Education
- Facilities and Equipment
- Financial, Budget, and Tax Management
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Meeting Management
- Membership Development
- Planning and Visioning
- Product/Program Development
- Professional Services
- Public Relations
- Technology
- Volunteer, Staff and Partner Relationships

### Module 2 – Legal and Policy

- Governing Documents and Policy
- Legal and Regulatory Activities
- Membership Policies and Procedures
- MLS Policies and Delivery of Services
- Professional Standards

### Module 3 – REALTOR® Organization and Real Estate Industry

- Advocacy and REALTOR® Party
- Association Structures and Relationships
- Commercial Services and Structures
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Fair Housing
- General Real Estate Practices
- Global
- Institutes, Societies and Councils/NAR Designations, Certifications, and Certificate Courses
- Real Estate Trends

## **MODULE 1**

### **ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

#### **PRODUCT/PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

- ❖ Identify core vs. optional services and determine whether the product/service offering is consistent with association's mission statement, strategic plan and value proposition.
- ❖ Identify available REALTOR® association programs and products and communicate the offerings to membership.
- ❖ Assess the impact of a product or program to identify potential liability, impact on tax status, and staffing for the association.
- ❖ Develop and regularly conduct a member needs assessment to determine products and services needed by membership to determine the product life-cycle stage.
- ❖ Develop and conduct member, market, and competitive research to determine if the product/service is feasible for delivery, including a cost/benefit analysis.
- ❖ Create a business plan for products/services including the product requirements, rationale, funding and implementation plan.

#### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

- ❖ Develop, maintain and revise a media relations plan.
- ❖ Define and understand public relations (PR) and the differences between PR and publicity.
- ❖ Create and communicate a strategy for a public relations program that promotes REALTOR® value and positions and the REALTOR® organization as the recognized voice for real estate.
- ❖ Determine what content is relevant and newsworthy (articles, photos, videos, blogs) and the most appropriate media outlets for dissemination.
- ❖ Develop consumer outreach programs as required by NAR Core Standards guidelines.

## **MODULE 2**

### **LEGAL AND POLICY**

#### **GOVERNING DOCUMENTS AND POLICY**

- ❖ Understand the components of and be able to apply/comply with the following: Bylaws, NAR Model Bylaws, Constitution and Articles of Incorporation.
- ❖ Know the function and purpose of governing documents, policies and procedures.
- ❖ Maintain governing documents in compliance with NAR policy.
- ❖ Be able to certify governing documents with NAR (a condition of coverage under NAR's Master Professional Liability Insurance Policy).
- ❖ Understand and ensure compliance as mandated by the NAR Core Standards.
- ❖ Understand the difference between bylaws (broad statement) and policies (precise statements); understand how and who can modify or amend bylaws and policies.

#### **LEGAL AND REGULATORY ACTIVITIES**

- ❖ Maintain, or have access to, legal counsel, as mandated by the NAR Core Standards, and understand how to select and manage outside counsel relationships, including litigation management and basic litigation principles.
- ❖ Understand the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), state and local regulations applicable to association activities and ensure compliance, including website accessibility compliance.
- ❖ Understand the fundamentals of antitrust laws, ensure association's compliance with these laws, provide antitrust laws training to volunteer leadership as well as information about antitrust laws to members.
- ❖ Implement and maintain a document retention policy and ensure compliance.
- ❖ Minimize liability for the association, officers, directors, and volunteers by training leadership on fiduciary duties and other key responsibilities including anti-harassment training.
- ❖ Understand and ensure compliance with trademark policies applicable to the REALTOR® trademark.

- ❖ Understand intellectual property laws including copyright law concepts, and the licensing of music, software, photos, etc. used in association assets and social media to ensure compliance and avoid legal liability.
- ❖ Understand insurance policies, coverage, and claim limits, particularly NAR's professional liability policy, and combine with commercial coverage where applicable.
- ❖ Understand basic contracting principles and concepts including contract clauses such as indemnification, limitations of liability, force majeure, and governing law to protect the association from potential liabilities.

### **MEMBERSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- ❖ Understand Board of Choice (BOC) and how BOC policies apply to other association services:
  - ❖ Identify how BOC applies to a designated REALTOR®.
  - ❖ Identify how BOC applies to a firm's licensees where the firm's DR belong to different boards/associations and where the firm operates in multi-state markets.
  - ❖ Identify the requirement for a REALTOR® (non-principal) to choose an association as primary.
  - ❖ Identify whether a secondary member may receive multiple listing services.
- ❖ Identify, implement and enforce member policies and procedures, including:
  - ❖ Types of membership.
  - ❖ Membership qualification criteria.
  - ❖ Application process.
  - ❖ Membership privileges and obligations (including triennial Code of Ethics training requirement).
  - ❖ Membership suspension, expulsion or termination.
- ❖ Understand and enforce the REALTOR® dues formula:
  - ❖ Identify how NAR dues formula applies to a DR who holds both primary membership in one association and secondary membership in another.

### **MLS POLICIES AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES (updated August 2024)**

- ❖ Understand the value and purpose of MLS, including ancillary services.
- ❖ Be able to describe the differences between core, basic, and optional services.
- ❖ Understand the difference between an MLS subscriber and participant and how their rights/privileges differ.
- ❖ Understand that REALTOR® membership is a preferred prerequisite for participation but not required in all MLSs across the country.
- ❖ Understand the different MLS operational structures (committees, corporations and regional entities) and the NAR MLS policies and model documents.
- ❖ Understand listing content management and distribution including ownership (copyright vs. license), authorized displays and possible uses of MLS data by participants, subscribers, and others including IDX, VOW, syndication, aggregation and other service vendors.
- ❖ Understand NAR Model MLS Rules and their impact on MLS services and delivery.
- ❖ Ensure local MLS policies are in compliance with mandatory NAR MLS policies and model documents.
- ❖ Understand the value, functions and awareness of RESO, data dictionary, WEB API, and industry data standards.
- ❖ Enforce NAR MLS Rules and Regulations, including the NAR MLS Antitrust Compliance Policy.
- ❖ Understand the use of listing content, intellectual property rights, and applicable copyright laws.
- ❖ Understand the role of MLS policy and license agreements to authorizing the access to and use of MLS data.
- ❖ Understand the potential benefits of MLS regionalization, cooperative, reciprocal, and consolidation agreements.
- ❖ Develop and implement policies regarding data feeds for subscribers, participants, and third-parties.
- ❖ Develop and implement policies regarding the public distribution and use of MLS statistics.
- ❖ Review the NAR MLS best practices to evaluate any local gaps in data, service, governance, and compliance.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

- ❖ Know components of the Code of Ethics, the NAR Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, and the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual.
- ❖ Be able to explain the duties of the REALTOR® under the Code of Ethics and how they apply to their daily business.
- ❖ Describe the general steps for processing an ethics complaint and for processing an arbitration request (including who is eligible to file and the differences between an ethics complaint and an arbitration request).
- ❖ Know the role and scope of the Grievance Committee, Professional Standards Committee and the Board of Directors in conducting ethics hearings, arbitration hearings and appeal hearings.
- ❖ Understand and enforce NAR's Code of Ethics training requirements.
- ❖ Understand and enter into a cooperative enforcement agreement.
- ❖ List the basic principles of due process and how they apply to administrative timelines and the role of the Association Executive to ensure parties receive a fair and impartial hearing.
- ❖ Understand the differences between mandatory and voluntary arbitration.
- ❖ Know the elements of an ethics decision including:
  - ❖ Clearly articulated findings of facts that support the conclusion and are reasonably applicable to the cited articles.
  - ❖ Progressive discipline.
  - ❖ Use Declaratory Relief when appropriate.
- ❖ Understand what a REALTOR® association may publish about a member found in violation of the Code of Ethics.
- ❖ Promote and explain the benefits of the mediation and arbitration process.
- ❖ Promote and explain the benefits and process of the ombudsman service as compared to the ethics and arbitration process.
- ❖ Understand both employee and member roles in the observance of confidentiality.
- ❖ Understand who must be disqualified/excused from any tribunal considering a professional standards matter.
- ❖ Understand the NAR Core Standards that apply to professional standards.
- ❖ Understand the relationship between REALTORS® on the various tribunals and their roles compared to the AEs in the professional standards process.
- ❖ Promote and explain the benefits of the dispute resolution system for buyer and seller processes (DRS).
- ❖ Understand the optional sections in the NAR Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual as they may be adopted at the discretion of the association.
- ❖ Understand the options available to REALTOR® associations to expedite complaints – fast track processing, ethics mediation, citation policy, anonymous complaints, and expedited administrative ethics procedures.
- ❖ Understand sanctioning guidelines (Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual, Appendix VII to Part Four) and the principles of progressive discipline.

## **MODULE 3**

### **REALTOR® ORGANIZATION AND REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY**

#### **ADVOCACY AND REALTOR® PARTY**

- ❖ Be familiar with the resources on [www.realtorparty.realtor](http://www.realtorparty.realtor) and [www.nar.realtor](http://www.nar.realtor); and be able to find information about the REALTOR® Political Action Committee (RPAC), political funding, grants, programming and other resources at the local, state, and national levels.
- ❖ Understand the purpose of the Federal Advocacy program, public policy agenda and role of volunteer leadership and staff.
- ❖ Understand the expectations and directions of the NAR Core Standards Advocacy section.
- ❖ Understand the local, state, and national expectations and goals for Call-For-Action (CFA) rates and REALTOR® Political Action Committee (RPAC) fundraising.
- ❖ Understand PAC fundraising laws, evaluation of candidates, the candidate interview process and legal requirements for disbursements of PAC funds.
- ❖ Identify information, programs and data available for REALTOR® voter registration and voting engagement efforts.
- ❖ Understand and identify the fundamentals of applying for NAR REALTOR® Party grants, programs, and services.
- ❖ Generate connections with government affairs professionals who administer political and government affairs activities, including PAC legal compliance at the local, state, and national associations.
- ❖ Develop and administer education programs for REALTOR® on political and legislative processes.
- ❖ Develop and administer programs for monitoring and advocating for government affairs priorities at the local, state, and national level.
- ❖ Understand the role of the local Government Affairs Director (GAD) and associated responsibilities (monitoring governments, reporting to members, representing the association in public policy development, etc.).
- ❖ Identify both traditional and non-traditional coalition partners and ways REALTOR® goals and values align with other organizations such as real estate industry organizations, housing and finance trade associations, property rights coalitions, workforce and affordable housing organizations as well as chambers of commerce.
- ❖ Identify strategies to affect public policies, including utilizing REALTOR® Party programs, services and grants, and other methods to elect REALTOR® friendly candidates; mobilize members when action is needed and to influence in community development decisions.
- ❖ Identify resources available for policy development strategies and support.

#### **COMMERCIAL SERVICES AND STRUCTURES**

- ❖ Understand commercial structures and overlay boards.
- ❖ Understand the services offered to associations through NAR's Commercial team.
- ❖ Understand how NAR supports the commercial real estate sector, including resources and services available for members on [www.nar.realtor/commercial](http://www.nar.realtor/commercial).
- ❖ Understand the Institute Affiliate Dues structure.
- ❖ Understand NAR's industry partners, including the five NAR commercial affiliate organizations and other external organizations.
- ❖ Provide access to NAR's commercial resources, including research and technology tools (RPR Commercial) and commercial advocacy information.

#### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

- ❖ Be knowledgeable about the many types of diversity (e.g., age, gender, racial and ethnic background) in local markets, in the membership, and in association leadership.
- ❖ Identify and understand the purposes of the DEI Strategic Plan and other resources (e.g., Actionable Roadmap for Local Association Diversity and Inclusion, L.E.A.D. DEI Course, Leading with Diversity Workshop and Diversity and Inclusion Grants).
- ❖ Understand and communicate the importance of meeting the association's goals of structuring the board of directors/committees to be inclusive and reflect the diverse membership.

- ❖ Communicate demographic trends, statistics, the value of inclusion, and ideas to the membership and leadership.
- ❖ Identify and promote community outreach programs, leadership development programs, and mentoring programs for advancing diversity in the marketplace and the association.
- ❖ Be familiar with different diversity groups including the following multicultural organizations: the Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA), LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance, National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals (NAHREP), National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB).

### **FAIR HOUSING**

- ❖ Be knowledgeable about federal, state, and local fair housing laws, types of potential violations and their consequences, as well as where complaints may be filed.
- ❖ Understand the importance of and the application of Article 10 of the Code of Ethics, including Standard of Practice 10.5.
- ❖ Promote the principles of fair housing.
- ❖ Develop regular fair housing communications to members.
- ❖ Be familiar with NAR fair housing resources and grant opportunities to support local initiatives.
- ❖ Understand how fair housing laws, including those relating to advertising, are enforced in the community.
- ❖ Educate members on fair housing testing and its implications.
- ❖ Incorporate fair housing issues into education programs.

### **GENERAL REAL ESTATE PRACTICES**

- ❖ Know the basics of real estate contract law.
- ❖ Identify agencies that regulate licensees and understand license law and regulations including agency disclosure and record keeping.
- ❖ Understand the transfer and ownership of real estate, including funding, document processing, title and escrow, and taxes.
- ❖ Understand the liabilities inherent in real estate activities (e.g., misrepresentation, negligence).
- ❖ Be knowledgeable of disclosure requirements and related documentations to reduce liability (e.g., Megan's Law, stigmas).
- ❖ Understand basic listing/sales procedures and terminology.
- ❖ Describe the difference between Exclusive Right to Sell and Exclusive Agency agreements.
- ❖ Understand brokerage models (e.g., split commission, 100% commission, limited service), broker-agent relationships, and independent contractor status.
- ❖ Be knowledgeable about agency and agency relationships.
- ❖ Have a general understanding of basic real estate forms, particularly those offered by the local and state associations, and ensure forms are regularly updated.
- ❖ Identify NAR resources for brokers.
- ❖ Understand privacy laws (Do-Not-Call/Fax, Can Spam, etc.) as they pertain to real estate.

### **GLOBAL**

- ❖ Be knowledgeable about demographics and cultural diversity (e.g. racial and ethnic background, languages spoken, etc.) within the local market, in the membership and in association leadership.
- ❖ Be knowledgeable of NAR Global Programs and services, as well as the Global Achievement Program to share with members.
- ❖ Understand your role as a leader in connecting your association with economic development groups or local government entities to ensure the real estate industry is part of the larger discussions on foreign direct investment opportunities in your state.

### **INSTITUTES, SOCIETIES, AND COUNCILS/NAR DESIGNATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND CERTIFICATE COURSES**

- ❖ Identify the Institutes, Societies and Councils and understand the scope of their respective designations.

- ❖ Identify the various NAR Designations and Certifications as well as Certificate Courses and understand their purpose in the marketplace.
- ❖ Identify and assess the need to develop specialty sections or councils (e.g., appraisers, property managers), and to offer specialty designations and certification courses.

### **REAL ESTATE TRENDS**

- ❖ Stay informed about market, industry and demographic trends and how those trends affect the business activity of members.
- ❖ Analyze the impact of changing consumer trends and provide direction to members and the association.
- ❖ Understand the evolving profile of REALTORS<sup>®</sup>.
- ❖ Be knowledgeable about brokerage trends.
- ❖ Stay informed about agent trends.
- ❖ Be familiar with competitive entities and services to REALTORS<sup>®</sup>, such as FSBOs, third party aggregators, syndication, and sustainability.