# Checklist for New AEs – By Category

# This checklist includes general job functions and guidelines listed by category but not necessarily in priority order. Please note that the time of year, the length of time the position was previously vacant, and specific expectations communicated at hiring may significantly impact the timing and order of these functions and duties.

# Orientation

\_\_\_ Contact the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® by completing and returning [a form that provides your contact information](http://www.realtor.org/sites/default/files/applications-and-forms/2011/new-ae-information-request-2011-07-18-form.doc) (MS Word; 25 KB) to be added to the New AE list and receive important New AE communications and resources. You will also receive an invitation to the New AE Orientation in Chicago.

\_\_\_ Add yourself to NRDS as a new member (member type – staff). NRDS (National REALTORS® Database System) is a single internet database that stores the member and office records for the entire REALTOR® organization. (call 800-868-3225 for assistance). You'll be automatically added to the mailing list for all AE information and materials. The data is maintained by Points of Entry (POEs) - who are most often staff at local associations and in some cases, the state association acting for the local association. Access the [NRDS monthly news](http://www.realtor.org/NRDSNEWS.nsf/).

\_\_\_ [View and access the Core Standards for Local and State Associations](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/core-standards-for-state-and-local-associations) (links to RO Core Standards)

* Contact state association for Core Standards deadlines for local associations
* Review association’s previous year Core Standards submission

\_\_\_ Review the [Local Operational Procedures At-A-Glance Checklist](http://www.realtor.org/forms/ae-roadmap-local-association-operational-grid) for guidance on how to address certain association activities.

\_\_\_ Review the exit interview with your predecessor (if one exists); checklists you can reference, passwords, specific issues you should be aware of, etc.

\_\_\_ Address computer security issues:

* Change computer passwords.
* Back up of all files for storage (do not overwrite existing files/tapes); back-up data as necessary

\_\_\_ Meet with staff, if applicable, to review job descriptions and responsibilities. Express your leadership and management style.

* Review your key goals.
* Meet individually with each staff member.

\_\_\_ Meet with your volunteer leadership.

* Download and review the [President/Chief Staff Executive Checklist](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/president/chief-staff-executive-task-list-introduction) with your president to discuss the roles and duties of the chief staff executive and association president.
* View the [State & Local Leadership section](http://www.realtor.org/state-and-local-volunteer-leaders) on Realtor.org for information and resources for your volunteer leaders.
* Meet with your treasurer to review budget and accounts. (if applicable)

\_\_\_ Contact your state association:

* Introduce yourself (they may not know your association has a new AE) and have them change their records to list you as the AE.
* Ask about available resources and publications that you should be receiving from the state association.
* Ask about involvement at the state level on committees and task forces
* Confirm state meeting schedule
* Inquire whether the state association has a mentor program
* Begin a state staff contact list

\_\_\_ Learn about [NAR’s AE Mentor Program](http://www.realtor.org/ae/ae-mentor-program)

\_\_\_ Plan to attend a day and a half New AE Orientation held twice a year at NAR in Chicago where you will learn about NAR programs, resources, and [NAR staff](http://www.realtor.org/directories/nar-staff-directory-for-aes) (link to staff directory) essential to your new role. Questions? Contact Krystal Allen

\_\_\_ Review your MLS's rules, regulations, and bylaws. Access NAR's [model MLS governing documents](http://www.realtor.org/policy/mls-policy/model-mls-governing-documents).

* What are your MLS enforcement policies and fines (Review [MLS Policy Statements](http://www.realtor.org/2013-handbook-on-multiple-listing-policy/policies/policies-enforcement-of-rules))?

\_\_\_ Identify other Web sites and other online resources you should reference:

* Local association Web site
* Realtor.org
* Your MLS vendor site

\_\_\_ Learn and understand the [three-way agreement](http://www.realtor.org/RAMsource.nsf/pages/S2Ch1Sub3V9?OpenDocument) between the local, state, and national REALTOR® organizations.

\_\_\_ Explore professional development opportunities for association executives (chief staff and staff specialists) on the [AE Professional Development page](http://www.realtor.org/ae/professional-development), including:

* [REALTOR® Certified association Executive (RCE) designation](http://www.realtor.org/designations-and-certifications/rce-designation)
* [e-Pro Course](http://www.epronar.com/)
* More online self-study courses

\_\_\_ Enroll in NAR's FREE [REALTOR® Association Management Self-Study Courses](http://www.realtor.org/ae/professional-development/realtor-association-management-self-study-courses) to help you increase your awareness and understanding of REALTOR® association management. This course is only available online. Students review or download the questions and submit their answer electronically, receiving instant results.

# Advocacy

\_\_\_ Know and understand [RPAC – the REALTORS® Political Action Committee](http://www.realtor.org/topics/rpac). (For more information call, 202-383-1072)

* [View RPAC FAQs](http://www.realtor.org/topics/rpac/realtors-political-action-committee-faq)
* Learn and adhere to required legal deadlines for processing PAC and PAF contributions and submitting them to the state association

\_\_\_ Review [RPAC fundraising resources](http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/rpac/for-associations/resources/) and develop a plan for your association

\_\_\_ Know and understand legislative issues; determine your associations role in the local legislative and political arena. Get started by visiting the [REALTOR® Action Center.](http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/)

# Communications

\_\_\_ Identify means of communicating with members and leadership (Web site, newsletter, message board, e-mail, snail mail, listserv, social media)

\_\_\_ Review the [Value Positioning Toolkit](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/value-positioning-toolkit) to learn how to talk to members about the value of association membership and develop your association’s value proposition.

# Finance

\_\_\_ Have a financial audit conducted.

\_\_\_ Review and secure association financial records, documents and past audits.

\_\_\_ Meet with the association’s accountant/bookkeeper (if applicable) to address the following:

* Accountant's responsibilities and fees
* Sales tax and tax deposits
* Property taxes (review)
* Tax returns (review the last one) and filing requirements
* Location of checkbook, CDs, safe deposit box, etc.

\_\_\_ Identify authorized check signers and their amount limits.

\_\_\_ Document all association’s fiscal and physical assets (have leadership sign-off):

* Do you own a building?
* What equipment do you own?
* What savings accounts, investments, and bank accounts do you have?

\_\_\_ Understand [dues collection policies and procedures](http://www.realtor.org/narfininfo.nsf/pages/DuesCollectionPolicy?OpenDocument)

* Determine when dues are collected. Develop a schedule so invoices are sent far enough in advance to meet deadlines.
* Contact your state association for dues disclosures.
* Work with the state association to make sure you collect state and NAR dues and transmit them properly.
* Know member and nonmember dues policies.
* Collect new member dues throughout the year.
* Outline procedures so you can be consistent year to year.
* Determine whether your association uses the [REALTOR® Ecommerce Network](http://www.realtor.org/narfininfo.nsf/pages/REALTOREcommerceNetwork?OpenDocument).

\_\_\_ Know the association’s revenue sources, such as dues, product sales, classes, or marketing alliances.

\_\_\_ Locate the letter of tax determination status from the IRS. Read this article from *REALTOR® AE Magazine*: [To Profit or Not to Profit? Is the REALTOR® association tax status a help or a hurdle in today's business model?](http://www.realtor.org/eomag.nsf/19bdb5de5bddd558852565230049cbdf/23356260b8160e2986256af00051277d?OpenDocument)

\_\_\_ Know the association’s travel policy (possible sources of information: written financial policies, bylaws, budget, treasurer, bookkeeper/accountant, office manager)

* Who is covered in the budget to travel to which state and national meetings?
* What travel expenses are covered in the budget; what are the IRS travel requirements?
* What are the mileage reimbursement rates?
* Is there a policy about sharing hotel rooms?
* Does the president get a credit card?
* Is there a travel expense form?

\_\_\_ Confirm with leadership who makes travel reservations and which travel events the chief staff is responsible for planning and organizing.

\_\_\_ Develop or update financial policies; review the association’s system of checks and balances.

# General Admin

\_\_\_ Review the NRDS Manual online for more about these topics:

* Know what a POE (Point of Entry) is, what your responsibility is with NRDS, and how to get to NRDS
* Be sure you have your own member staff record in NRDS and a separate association record in NRDS with your contact information
* Add the following staff specialists (if applicable) to NRDS to ensure that they receive important information from NAR:
	+ Education Director
	+ Government Affairs Director
	+ Communications Director
	+ MLS Director
	+ Member Services Director
* Begin to understand the functionality and limitations of your association’s own membership system or operation and how it interfaces with NRDS
* Keep NRDS helpline number and email handy: 1-800-868-3225; nrdshelp@REALTORS.org

\_\_\_ Assess association’s meeting capabilities (conference call, video, online, etc.)

\_\_\_ Assess the association’s minimum IT requirements (software and hardware) and office equipment needs.

* Determine whether equipment is leased or owned; identify pros and cons of each option.
* Conduct needs assessment for replacement/addition needs.
* Prepare, as needed, a capital budget request plan.

\_\_\_ Identify all outside contractors or professionals such as accountants, lawyers, or educators, and arrange a meeting.

\_\_\_ Understand your association's membership policies:

* Dues policies (nonmember sales assessments)
* Types of membership
* Basic "Board of Choice" (secondary membership, MLS of choice, across state lines)
* Proration of dues
* National Association's Public Awareness Campaign assessment
* Membership application form

\_\_\_ Review and reference your association’s annual calendar:

* Determine if a calendar already exists. If one does not exist, create one.
* Consult with the board of directors and president as you compile the new calendar.
* Be sure to include the following: membership, board, and committee meetings (check bylaws for required frequency); social events; annual installation; officer elections; state and national meetings; community service events; holidays and office closings.
* Access NAR's [REALTOR® Association Online Calendar](http://www.realtor.org/aecal.nsf/DateWeb?OpenView) for a list of national events.

\_\_\_ View the [NAR Future Meeting schedule](http://www.realtor.org/futurcal.nsf) and add dates to your association calendar.

\_\_\_ Contact neighboring associations for advice and guidance.

* Introduce yourself
* Begin to develop a contact list of other association executives

\_\_\_ Plan to attend the [Annual AE Institute](http://www.realtor.org/events/ae-institute). The AE Institute is the premier professional development event for local and state REALTOR® association staff. The Institute offers programming for all staff levels of the REALTOR® organization, from newer AEs and those who manage small associations to veteran AEs

\_\_\_ Become familiar with the commonly used real estate- and association-related [definitions and acronyms](http://www.realtor.org/about-nar/nar-acronyms).

\_\_\_ Locate and review your association's insurance plans:

* Directors and Officers (D&O)
* Errors and Omissions (E&O)
* Workers' compensation
* Business policy
* Indemnification clause for D&O
* Indemnification for building
* Bonding

\_\_\_ Learn what types of product and service discounts you and your members can receive through NAR's [REALTOR Benefits® Program](http://www.realtor.org/programs/realtor-benefits-program).

\_\_\_ Learn what education resources are available to you and your members – professional designations, publications, Web sites, technology hotline. Visit Realtor.org's [Education Page](http://www.realtor.org/education) for an overview.

\_\_\_ Know and understand basic real estate practices. To learn the business of your members, read the NAR member magazine, [*REALTOR® Magazine*](http://realtormag.realtor.org/), Realtor.org and other industry publications and resources. Search topics can include:

* MLS issues (including IDX, VOWs, REALTOR.com)
* REALTOR® Safety
* Real estate terminology
* Financing (Fannie Mae, etc.)
* Data security issues
* Consolidations and mergers
* Independent contractor
* Agency relationships
* Business relationship between broker/agent
* Personal assistants
* Business climate
* Risk management

\_\_\_ Develop a strategic planning process involving volunteer leaders. [View NAR’s Strategic Business and Vision Planning resources](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/strategic-business-and-vision-planning)

* Become familiar with the [Strategic Planning Resources Toolkit](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/strategic-planning-resources-toolkit/strategic-planning-resources-toolkit)
* Recognize models for associations – specifically, the [Association Models Planning Tool](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/association-models-planning-tool) available from NAR.

# Governance

\_\_\_ Identify and review your association’s governing documents. Review [NAR's model documents](http://www.realtor.org/policy/model-documents-and-publications) for an overview.

* Association Bylaws
* Articles of Incorporation
* MLS Rules and Regulations
* MLS Bylaws

\_\_\_ Locate and review your association’s internal policies, procedures, and employee manual.

* If written policies do not exist, start writing them as you go along, and be sure the items below are included. Access association internal policies from other associations at the [REALTOR® Association Resource Exchange](http://www.realtor.org/rare.nsf/policies?OpenView) (RARE).
* Annual dues – bylaws
* Election of officers – bylaws
* Installation and new member induction
* REALTOR® of the Year (ROTY) selection
* Human resources issues
* Harassment policy
* Consult with current and past leaders who are familiar with how things have been done.
* Know what your association’s policy is regarding distribution of membership rosters and email addresses.
* Determine whether emergency procedures are in place – unplanned staff vacancies, weather emergencies, and other crises.
* Find out when employment reviews and appraisals are conducted. [View the Chief Staff Evaluation Resources on Realtor.org](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/human-resources-toolkit/chief-staff-performance-evaluation) for guidance
* Check holidays and other office closings.

\_\_\_ Know how to prepare for and coordinate meetings. Read this chapter on [Managing Meetings from The Answer Book](http://www.realtor.org/ramsource.nsf/wAB8Content?OpenView&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=7&Date=1#7).

* Read past agendas and minutes.
* Identify which committees need to meet.
* Identify who sets meetings, creates agendas, and prepares minutes.
* Communicate with committee chairs and the president to implement goals; determine whether goals are stated in the strategic plan.
* Know what events are on the association’s annual calendar.
* Review the budget for events.
* Plan ahead to reserve dates and space for each event.
* Reference past plans, so you don’t reinvent the wheel.
* Talk to past volunteers to identify protocol and traditions.

# Human Resources

\_\_\_ Identify NAR resources for HR and employment laws at the state and federal levels. Visit [the Human Resources Toolkit](http://www.realtor.org/ae/manage-your-association/human-resources-toolkit) on Realtor.org.

# Legal

\_\_\_ Arrange meeting with the association’s legal counsel to learn the following

* Legal counsel's responsibilities and fees
* Basic understanding of antitrust concerns for real estate—no standard commissions, boycotting
* All pending legal issues

\_\_\_ Locate your association's letter of incorporation; check with secretary of state or bureau of corporations to be sure corporate status is current.

\_\_\_ Locate and review the contracts and agreements listed below. Know the terms and renewal dates of all contracts.

* Lease agreements for office equipment; note time frames and expirations
* Rental agreement on building space
* Maintenance agreements
* Tenant contracts, if you own the building and are the property manager
* MLS and all vendor contracts
* Web site domain registrations

\_\_\_ Know and understand [NAR’s Errors & Omissions (E&O) insurance](http://www.realtor.org/programs/professional-liability-insurance-program).

* Find out what E&O insurance covers and what the requirements are for maintaining coverage, including responsibilities with governing documents.
* Find out what policies can affect E&O insurance—employee policies, antitrust.
* Learn the procedure for filing a claim.
* Add [NAR Legal staff](http://www.realtor.org/letterlw.nsf/pages/profiles?OpenDocument&Login) to your NAR staff contact list.

\_\_\_  [Liability issues](http://www.realtor.org/realtororg.nsf/pages/legalsearchpages?OpenDocument) – antitrust, fair housing, legal hotline, E&O insurance policy, legal action committee, MLS (REALTOR® requirement, nonmember MLS).

# MLS

\_\_\_ Understand basic MLS policy, including the common terms below. Refer to NAR's [Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy](http://www.realtor.org/2013-handbook-on-multiple-listing-policy) for definitions. Also, contact your MLS vendor and review contracts. Understand:

* Who is a "Participant"?
* Who are "Subscribers"?
* What's your MLS billing policy?
* What's a "Lockbox"?
* Is the MLS a wholly owned subsidiary corporation or a committee of the association?

\_\_\_ Know and understand your responsibilities regarding bylaws and MLS rules

* Determine when your association bylaws and MLS rules were last reviewed by NAR
* Send bylaws and MLS rules to NAR for review (required annually), and whenever you make changes
* If your bylaws revision or approval date is more than a year old, contact NAR’s Member Policy Department to find out if there are any changes to model bylaws that you need to incorporate. Call 312-329-8399.
* Add [NAR Member Policy staff](http://www.realtor.org/infoexp.nsf/StaffDeptNmORP?OpenView&Start=1&Count=30&Expand=2.2&Login#2.2) to your NAR staff contact list

# Professional Standards

\_\_\_ Become familiar with [professional standards procedures and policies](http://www.realtor.org/policy/code-of-ethics-and-professional-standards).

* Determine if the association currently has a certified professional standards administrator; if it is you, determine when and how you will receive mandatory training (state, regional, or NAR training). Access NAR's [Professional Standards Procedures training materials](http://www.realtor.org/policy/professional-standards-and-code-of-ethics/professional-standards-training-information-resources).
* [View Statements of Professional Standards policy](http://www.realtor.org/policy/statements-of-professional-standards-policy)

\_\_\_ Review the [Code of Ethics](http://www.realtor.org/governance/governing-documents/the-code-of-ethics) and review NAR’s [Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual](http://www.realtor.org/2013-code-of-ethics-and-arbitration-manual)

\_\_\_ Know the new member orientation requirements, which must include [Code of Ethics training](http://www.realtor.org/code-of-ethics/code-of-ethics-training-home):

* How often are orientations scheduled, and when was the last one?
* Is there a program agenda in place?
* Does it meet NAR requirements – antitrust, fair housing, and ethics?
* Who teaches the orientation? Assign speakers or instructors.
* When and how many times a year is your orientation required? Review the bylaws.
* What AV equipment is needed to deliver orientation materials?

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