



POLICY MANUAL
Aspire North REALTORS®

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Policy No. 1 The Law and Policy of Real Estate Commissions

The Law

Real estate commissions are not established by law. Furthermore; Federal and State law prohibits real estate brokers from agreeing among themselves on the fees they will charge the public for their service. Real Estate Brokerage commissions or fees are to be determined, like any other fee for professional service, or through negotiation and agreement between the broker and the client.

Policy

Many real estate brokers in this area belong to Aspire North REALTORS®. As Association members, they are guided by the policies of Aspire North REALTORS®, the MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

Basic policies of Aspire North REALTORS® and its affiliated MLS concerning the establishment of fees and charges by members of the Association are stated below:

Policy: Aspire North REALTORS® or its MLS shall not: fix, control, recommend, suggest, or maintain any percentage division of commissions or fees between cooperating members and between members and non-members.





Policy No. 2 Standards of Conduct for REALTOR® Associations and Unacceptable Business Practices

Preamble

Strong, cooperative working relationships among REALTOR® Association (local and state associations, MLS, foundations, etc. herein referred to as REALTOR® Associations) have long been a strength of the REALTOR® organization. To ensure that competitive challenges do not create adversarial relationships through diminished cooperation, Standards of Conduct for REALTOR® Associations have been established for board members and staff.

Through comprehensive awareness of Unacceptable Business Practices and thorough adherence to the Standards of Conduct for REALTOR® Associations, a cooperative spirit among REALTOR® association organizations can be preserved and enhanced.

Standards of Conduct for REALTOR® Associations

The Standards of Conduct describe high standards of professional conduct and service among REALTOR® Association volunteers and staff leadership. Through inspirational, these standards, which instill member and public confidence in the integrity of the REALTOR® Association leadership, are intended to be signed each year by the volunteer leadership and Association staff to demonstrate their commitment to these principles.

1. Maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
2. Actively promote and encourage the highest degree of ethics at all levels within the real estate industry.
3. Maintain loyalty to the REALTOR® association, and pursue its objectives in ways that are consistent with member and public interest.
4. Abide by association policies, procedures, and laws impacting REALTOR® associations.
5. Strive for excellence in all aspects of leading and managing the association.
6. Serve all association members fairly and impartially.
7. Refuse to engage in a decision-making capacity or to accept a personal benefit from business-related activities, which might create a conflict of



- interest, without full disclosure and knowledge of the association's governing board.
8. Maintain confidentiality of privileged information entrusted or known by a virtue of an office or position, unless disclosure is necessary to protect the interests of the association.
 9. Refuse to engage in, or countenance, activities for personal gain at the expense of the association or the real estate industry.
 10. Refuse to engage in, or countenance, unlawful discrimination.
 11. Ensure that communicated data and information is accurate and truthful.
 12. Cooperate in every reasonable and appropriate way with other association executives and officers, and work with them in the advancement of the association and the real estate industry.
 13. Create and promote a positive public image and role for the REALTOR® Association and the real estate industry.
 14. Ensure that the objective of all association actions and pursuits is to provide the best possible services for the REALTOR® member.
 15. Accept the responsibility for cooperating with and respecting the viewpoints of other board members.
 16. Utilize every opportunity to improve public understanding of the REALTOR® movement and to enhance the REALTOR® image in the community.

Unacceptable Business Practice:

Unacceptable Business Practices outline behaviors and business practices to be avoided by REALTOR® associations. The Unacceptable Business Practices are intended to encourage awareness of behaviors that REALTOR® associations should avoid, and eliminate such practices from the industry.

1. Knowing or recklessly false or misleading representations about other REALTOR® associations or the association's programs, products, or services.
2. False, deceptive, or misleading advertising or marketing practices.
3. Illegal business practices.
4. Knowing violation of state or national policies or mandated local policies.
5. Undisclosed conflict of interest.



Policy No. 3
Code of Leadership Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

CODE OF LEADERSHIP ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

The Board of Directors ("Board") of the Aspire North REALTORS® seeks to create and sustain an ethical real estate business climate, which is critical to the success of the association and in the best interests of the members of Aspire North REALTORS®. Each director and staff member of the association must observe the highest standards of ethical business conduct, including strict adherence to the Realtor® Code of Ethics and this document. Each director and staff member of Aspire North REALTORS® must comply with the letter and spirit of the following and must certify annually that it has reviewed and agrees to comply with the following:

1. Conflict of Interest

Scope

This statement of policy with respect to conflict of interest applies to all directors and staff of Aspire North REALTORS®. It is intended to serve as guidance for each director and staff member.

Fiduciary Responsibilities/Disclosure

All decisions of the Board and recommendations made by staff are to be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interests of Aspire North REALTORS. The integrity of Aspire North REALTORS® must be protected and advanced at all times.

It is the responsibility of each director and staff member to ensure that the Board is made aware of situations that involve personal, family, or business relationships that could be construed as a conflict of interest. Thus, the Board requires that each director and staff (1) annually review this policy, (2) promptly disclose any possible personal, family, or business relationships that reasonably could give rise to a conflict involving the association by advising the CEO at the time the director or staff member first becomes aware of such possible conflict of interest, and (3) annually acknowledge by his or her signature on the signature page below that he or she is in compliance with the letter and spirit of this policy.



Each director and staff member shall execute the attached signature page and complete and file with the board president on a Disclosure Form (the "Disclosure Form"), if applicable, on an annual basis on or about December 1st of each year. New directors and executive officers shall be provided with a copy of the Policy and a Disclosure Form immediately upon taking office and shall complete and sign the form and return it to Aspire North REALTORS® within 30 days of taking office.

Definition of Conflict of Interest

A director or staff member shall be considered to have a conflict of interest if: (1) such director or staff member has existing or potential financial or other interests which impair or might reasonably appear to impair such person's independent, unbiased judgment in the discharge of his or her responsibilities to Aspire North; (2) such director or staff member is aware that a member of his/her family (which for purposes of this paragraph shall be a spouse, parents, siblings, children, and any other relative if the latter reside in the same household as the director or staff member), or any organizations in which such director or staff member (or member of his or her family) is an officer, director, employee, member, partner, trustee, or controlling owner, has such existing or potential financial or other interests that are adverse to a stated goal or undertaking of Aspire North and that could reasonably subject Aspire North REALTORS® to criticism, embarrassment, or liability.

In considering whether a conflict of interest may exist in a given situation, Aspire North REALTORS® shall consider the fact that each director represents his or her company and that such company may have a financial stake in the outcome of a particular issue being considered by Aspire North REALTORS®. The very purpose of having representation on the Board from various professionals is to encourage full debate and to foster accomplishments of Aspire North REALTORS® mission of growing real estate business and building community. As a result, notwithstanding the definition set forth above, a conflict of interest will not be deemed to exist if the organization in which such director or staff member (or member of his or her family) is an officer, director, employee, member, partner, trustee, or controlling owner is



affected financially by a decision of Aspire North REALTORS® so long as the financial impact is the same on such company as it is on other companies in that industry.

Any director or staff member who is uncertain whether a conflict of interest may exist in any matter may request the Board to resolve the questions by majority vote.

Restraint on Voting

Directors who have a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest may, after disclosing the conflict, participate in the discussion of the proposed recommendation or transaction but shall not vote on any such recommendations or proposed transactions.

2. Standard of Conduct

Each director and staff member agrees to:

- a. Recognize that to serve as a director or staff member of Aspire North REALTORS® is to commit oneself to achieving the stated missions of Aspire North with vision and perspective.
- b. Devote time, energy, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of his or her office so that he or she may render effective and creditable service to Aspire North REALTORS®, its members, and the community.
- c. Work with his or her fellow board members or staff members as applicable, in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debates of points of issue. Directors and staff members shall not engage in attacks which are purely personal in nature and shall not attack the integrity of individuals without factual foundation. Directors and staff shall promote mutual respect among one another and among all Aspire North REALTORS® employees and shall not use his other position to embarrass, intimidate, or threaten other directors, staff, Aspire North REALTORS® employees, or members. Directors are leaders in the community and in each of their professional disciplines, and their conduct is important to Aspire North and all constituents.
- d. Base his or her decisions upon all available facts in each situation and vote his or her honest convictions in every case, un-swayed by partisan bias of any kind.





- e. Remember at all times that as an individual he or she has no legal authority to act or speak for Aspire North REALTORS® outside his or her position; therefore, each director and staff member must conduct his or her relationships with the community, Aspire North REALTORS® employees, members and the media on the basis of this fact and not engage in any private action that will compromise Aspire North REALTORS®.
- f. Resist influencing the vote or other action of other directors, or the actions of any employee, through threat, promise of award, deception, exchange of vote, or by means other than legitimate open discussion.
- g. Inform the president of any request for information about Aspire North REALTORS® or any inquiry or contact from inside or outside Aspire North REALTORS®, about any issue pending before the Board.
- h. Bear in mind that the primary function of: (1) the Board is to establish effective policies for Aspire North REALTORS® and to delegate authority for the administration of these policies and the conduct of association business to the CEO, and (2) the CEO is to implement the policies established by the Board.
- i. No director, officer, or staff member shall accept any loan or borrow any funds from Aspire North REALTORS® directly or indirectly.

I have carefully read the Aspire North REALTORS® Code of Leadership Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy for the Board of Directors and staff members and hereby acknowledge that I understand and agree to comply with this document and its provisions.

Printed Name

Signature

Date





Policy No. 4 Board Meeting Policy

1. Business Before the Board of Directors

Business to come before the Board of Directors of Aspire North REALTORS® will be placed on the agenda by the CEO after discussion with the president of the association. The president may instruct the CEO to include items of business at his/her discretion.

2. Distribution of Minutes

Minutes of all Board of Directors meetings shall be distributed to the Directorate in accordance with the Bylaws in advance of the next scheduled meeting. Assembly of actions may be printed and distributed to the membership.

3. Meeting Sites

The regular meetings of the Board of Directors and all other committees of the Association shall meet at the Association office unless otherwise scheduled by arrangement with the Association staff. No meetings of the Directorate or any committees shall be held without prior notification of Association staff.



Policy No. 5
Officers Duties Policy

1. President

- Represents the Association of REALTORS® in situations that call for a single spokesperson.
- Leads the Association in developing and implementing policy.
- Will work closely with the CEO to ensure that the actual operations reflect the current policies.
- Will act as the chairperson for monthly board meetings and conduct the General Membership Meeting.
- Appoints committee chairs with the approval of the Board of Directors.
- Is a member of the Budget and Finance Committee.
- Will attend appropriate meetings of the Michigan Association of REALTORS® and the National Association of REALTORS®.

2. President-Elect

- Will step in and replace the president should it become necessary due to the absence of the president.
- Should monitor as many committee activities as possible and keep the president current with their activities.
- Is a member of the Budget and Finance Committee.
- Will attend appropriate meetings of the Michigan Association of REALTORS® and the National Association of REALTORS®.

3. Immediate Past President

- Will serve in conjunction with the Board of Directors and have a vote with regard to matters that come before the Board of Directors.
- Will act in advisory capacity whenever possible.
- Is a member of any ad hoc committee on strategic planning.

4. Secretary-Treasurer

- Signs checks as required.



- Recommends to the Board of Directors policies covering all financial matters.
- Acts as a chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee and conducts the meetings.
- Oversees the formulation, review, and establishment of the annual budget.
- Reviews the financial statements monthly.

5. Board of Directors

- Represents the membership as a whole and ensures that the association policy benefits the total membership.
- Formulates policy and oversees the general operation of the association via the CEO
- Reviews and passes judgment on any and all matters that come before the Board of Directors.
- Maintains close contact with the general membership to determine the needs and desires.
- Ensures adequate representation to the Michigan Association of REALTORS®, the National Association of REALTORS®, and the Northern Great Lakes REALTORS® MLS.
- Ensures the financial stability of the Association.
- Adopts a strategic plan for Aspire North.

6. Board Composition

- There shall be 15 members on the Board of Directors
- These 15 board members will include a business community representative and the Affiliate ambassador chairperson who are honorary, non-voting positions of the board that serve a one-year term at the pleasure of the president and with board approval.
- The 15 Board Members also include a reverse mentor without voting authority.
- These 15 Board Members also include the chairperson of the MLS Committee who is a member of the directorate and a voting member of the board.

7. Indoctrination of Board Members

- Newly elected members of the Board shall take the oath of office and be sworn in during the Installation of Officers and Awards event in January preceding the January board meeting. (02-20)
- Directors who are appointed by the president, and with approval of the Board, to fill out a vacancy on the Board of Directors shall not be considered fully installed until the president or CEO imparts on them the oath of office.

Policy No. 6 General Committee Protocol

The purpose of each committee is as delineated in this Policy Manual. Committees shall be reviewed from time to time and committee purposes reviewed as needed.

The standing committees of the Association shall be delineated in the bylaws and as may be supplemented and construed by Board Policy. The Board of Directors may establish other committees, as it may deem appropriate. The Board of Directors shall have the right to appoint any task forces, special, and/or ad hoc committees in accordance with the bylaws of the Association.

1. Requests for Budget Appropriations

Requests for budget appropriations from all committees shall be handled as delineated below:

- From the committee chair to the CEO
- From the CEO to the Budget and Finance Committee
- From the Budget and Finance Committee to the Board of Directors

2. Reports

Reports from the permanent committees approved task forces, and special ad hoc committees appointed directly by the Board of Directors shall be handled as delineated below:

- From the committee chair to the CEO
- From the CEO to the president and/or the Board of Directors

3. Committee Responsibilities

- Review minutes and recommendations of prior committee's work manuals and the strategic plan to become familiar as to what has gone on before and what is recommended for the future.
- Review any committee responsibilities assigned to the committee by the Board of Directors and/or the president.



- All committee meetings should have a prepared agenda and minutes should be kept. Association staff will type and distribute agendas and minutes.
- If there is an anticipated necessary expenditure of association funds, budgeted or not, such requests should be made in a timely manner to allow ample time for approval from the Board of Directors. A committee request form shall be completed with all projected income and expenditures listed.
- Determine early in the year the responsibilities of the committee and/or what projects shall be undertaken.
- Plan and schedule the number of committee meetings necessary to fulfill either the objectives or the responsibilities of the committee.
- Ask for association staff assistance in coordinating meeting dates and locations. Take advantage of staff knowledge and familiarity with association operations.
- Channel all communications through the association office for distribution to committee members.
- Copies of all committee minutes shall be made available to the Directors so that they shall have knowledge of all committee plans and accomplishments.
- Take responsibility to augment the committee if necessary and/or replace non-participating or non-dependable members with members who are willing and able to serve the committee in the best interest.
- Motions should be made in the form of recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding changes, policies, and/or requests for the expenditure of funds.

4. Ex Officio Members

The president and president-elect are ex officio voting members and the CEO is an ex officio non-voting member of all committees thereon. They shall not be included when determining the maximum or minimum number of committee members and shall not be counted when determining a quorum. The CEO may delegate his or her committee membership to another staff position. (*Reference: Article XIII Section 4 of the Bylaws*).



Policy No. 7 Standing Committees and Task Teams

1. Affiliate Ambassador Committee

A standing committee according to the Aspire North Bylaws, the Affiliate Ambassador Committee shall be comprised of no less than six (6) and no more than twelve (12) representatives made up of Affiliate and REALTOR® members, with a 1:1 ratio being the desired but not mandatory mix. Members shall be appointed by the president subject to board approval.

The chair of this committee shall be an Affiliate elected by the members of this committee. The chair of the Affiliate Ambassador shall have a seat on the Aspire North Board of Directors with full voting privileges except for REALTOR®-only matters (i.e. Code of Ethics, Professional Standards) or those matters that directly impact the MLS operations.

The purpose of the Affiliate Ambassador Committee shall be to develop membership relationships with a focus on a beneficial business-to-business partnership and support strategy with an outcome that assists in promoting the REALTOR® brand within the regional community. This committee shall also appoint a liaison to the Membership Committee who shall be a voting member on both committees. In addition, The Affiliate Committee should remain as the sole decision maker for the Affiliate of the Year award winner.

2. Budget and Finance Committee

A standing committee according to the Aspire North Bylaws, this committee consists of the treasurer as chair and five other members as appointed by the president. Members of the committee must be REALTOR® OR Affiliate members. Their responsibilities are to develop and prepare the association's annual operating budget, oversee the financial affairs of the association, evaluate budget requests, and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. The Budget and Finance Committee is responsible for developing and recommending the financial policies of the association to the Board of Directors.



3. Education Committee

A standing committee according to the Aspire North Bylaws, the purpose of the Education Committee is to collaborate with the director of education in the research and development of educational programming for the membership and to review curriculum and delivery strategies. The committee is also charged with helping to drive membership to association programs as well as educational and technological opportunities.

4. Executive Committee

This committee shall consist of the president, president-elect, and immediate past president or, if not available, the secretary-treasurer. The purpose of this committee is to act on behalf of the Board if action is necessary before a board meeting can be held and to discharge such functions as are delegated to the Executive Committee by the Board. At least three affirmative votes in the Executive Committee are necessary to take action. Pursuant to NAR process guidelines and considerations, the Executive Committee shall conduct performance evaluations of the CEO and decide any matters regarding merit increases, bonuses, and contract negotiations within budget limitations. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Board at its next regular meeting.

5. Grievance Committee

A standing committee according to the Aspire North Bylaws, this committee reviews complaints alleging NAR Code of Ethics violations and requests for arbitrations, forwarding cases to the Professional Standards Committee for hearings. The Grievance Committee is composed of at least five (5) REALTOR® members in good standing. Members must be active REALTOR® members for a minimum of two years to be eligible to serve on the Grievance Committee. Appointed members must attend an Aspire North-approved Professional Standards Training program. The Grievance Committee will hold meetings in a manner to ensure timely review of ethics complaints and arbitration requests.



6. Investment Committee

The Investment Committee should consist of three Association members and the CEO of Aspire North REALTORS®. One member shall be at least an ex officio member of the Budget and Finance Committee. The purpose of the Investment Committee is to monitor the investments of Aspire North REALTORS® and to formulate policy for the prudent investment of these funds.

Appointments to the Investment Committee shall be made by the Board of Directors and shall be for staggered three (3) year terms. There shall be no limit to the number of terms served by a committee member.

The committee then recommends to the Board of Directors any policy changes and investment vehicles for its approval.

The Investment Committee members shall receive copies of association financial information for review on a monthly basis. The committee shall meet as required to make new investment decisions.

The CEO shall make the actual investments of the funds and reinvest funds from mature accounts according to established policy. The funds for Aspire North REALTORS® should be invested in relatively low-risk investments. The basic investment objective shall be to provide maximum returns at minimum risk with short-term liquidity being maintained.

“Low risk” is defined, but not limited to:

- Money Market Funds
- Certificate of Deposit, Federally Insured
- Government Securities
- Bonds, Rated AAA

7. Membership Committee

A standing committee according to the Aspire North Bylaws, the purpose of the Membership Committee is to review the applications for membership made to Aspire North by potential REALTOR® and Affiliate members after a





preliminary screening by staff is completed. After the review the applications are forwarded to the Aspire North Board of Directors.

The committee shall consist of no less than three (3) members and no more than seven (7) members all appointed by the president subject to the approval by the Board of Directors. The chair of the committee shall be appointed by the president and shall have full voting privileges on the committee.

This committee shall also function as a vehicle for membership engagement, relations, outreach, and development programs. Subcommittees or task teams of the Membership Committee shall include but are not limited to, the Legacy Project, communications, education, and development.

8. Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Committee

A standing committee in accordance with the Aspire North Bylaws, there shall exist an MLS Committee appointed by the president subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. This committee shall be comprised of no less than nine (9) and no more than eleven (11) committee members. All committee members must be MLS participants. The president, subject to board approval, shall appoint the committee chair and vice chair. The chairperson shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Directors. All MLS Committee members shall serve two-year staggered terms on the Aspire North MLS Committee with one-half of their numbers being appointed each year. Each new term begins on January 1.

The committee's purpose is to provide oversight, review policy, rules & regulations, and provide recommendations to the Board and the Aspire North representatives on the NGLRMLS Board on matters related to MLS operations. The MLS Committee is also responsible for proposing local MLS-related fees, subject to review and approval of the Board of Directors.

Aspire North is currently an equity owner/partner in the Northern Great Lakes REALTORS® MLS LLC, which provides an MLS solution to the membership of Aspire North. Aspire North is represented on the NGLRMLS Board of Representatives by two (2) voting members. If allowed under NGLRMLS rules, these representatives shall be the chair and the vice chair of the MLS





Committee and are appointed to serve alternating two-year terms on the NGLRMLS Board of Representatives.

These representatives shall also be subject to the selection criteria of the NGLRMLS LLC.

9. Professional Standards Committee

A standing committee according to the Aspire North Bylaws, the Professional Standards Committee is comprised of a group of REALTORS® members who have attended an Aspire North-approved professional standards training program. Members must be active REALTOR® members for a minimum of two years to be eligible to serve on the Professional Standards Committee. Appointed members must attend an Aspire North-approved professional standards training program. The committee conducts hearings on ethics complaints and requests for arbitration referred by the Grievance Committee and recommends appropriate disciplinary action to the Board of Directors.

10. RPAC Committee

The REALTOR® Political Action Committee, otherwise known as the RPAC Committee, shall be responsible for the development and growth of Aspire North's political action efforts at the local, state, and national levels in accordance with the Michigan REALTORS® and the National Association of REALTORS® political action programs.

The RPAC Committee shall consist of no less than five (5) REALTOR® members including the chairperson who shall be appointed by the president and approved for the position by the Aspire North Board of Directors. The chair of this committee shall select the RPAC team on an annual basis subject to the approval by the Aspire North Board of Directors.

The RPAC Committee shall appoint one member to serve as a liaison to the Public and Environmental Affairs Committee. This liaison shall have full voting privileges on both committees.





11. Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee/Task Force

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Committee/Task Force (consisting of REALTOR® members) is to analyze the potential growth and long-range needs of the Association, formulate growth strategies and make recommendations to the Board of Directors, which will help develop and meet the future goals of the Association. A responsibility of this committee is to monitor progress of the plan.





Policy No. 8 Dues Policy

Each new member of Aspire North REALTORS® shall be required to pay an application fee to the Association and an entry fee to the Multiple Listing Service if applicable. Upon receipt of these fees, plus the appropriate annual dues, the members application will be processed.

Annual REALTOR® Dues

Annual dues of Aspire North, NAR and MR will be billed to each Designated REALTOR® in an amount equal to the number of licensees associated with his/her firm.

Refund of dues shall not be made for any reason except in the event of an overpayment. In this instance the amount overpaid will be returned with a letter of explanation.

Each Designated REALTOR® shall be required to verify the number of licensees when remitting annual dues. This verification will be checked with the membership lists as provided by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Real Estate Licensing Division.

MLS Fees and Other Assessments

The Multiple Listing Service shall, by the tenth (10th) of each month issue to each participant a statement reflecting all services rendered during the preceding month. Unless objections are received within fifteen (15) days of the date in which the statement is sent from the MLS office, all charges reflected on the statement shall be deemed correct and appropriate. Under these rules the amount reflected upon that statement shall be due in full on/or before the last day of the month in which it was sent. All MLS services will be automatically discontinued to any member who has not paid his/her account as required above.

Beginning on the last of the month in which the statement was issued, a service charge equal to one-and-one-half percent (1.5%) of the outstanding balance per month shall be assessed on each unpaid account. During this discontinuance, the



member shall not be entitled to receive or utilize any MLS reports or written material, nor shall their listings be processed upon receipt of the MLS office.

Reinstatement

No formal notice of discontinuance needs to be given by the MLS Office. If the sum reflected upon referenced statement is not paid by the fifteenth (15th) of the month following the issuance of the statement, a reinstatement fee of \$100.00 shall be automatically assessed against the delinquent member. If the sum reflected on the statement, plus all accrued charges and reinstatement fees are not paid by the last day of the month following the issuance of the statement, the person will be dropped from MLS Membership. To be reinstated, the participant must apply as a new member and pay all related entry fees in addition to all of the past due service fees and outstanding account balance. On reapplication, the participant shall submit to the MLS all listings taken during the period of discontinuance and update all listing activity reports.

Dues Refunds/Waivers

1. Members who have paid renewal dues as of July 1 and cancel membership before December 31 following are entitled to a refund of MAR and NAR dues of that year. Request for the refund must be in writing and approved by the CEO.
2. Members who have paid local Association renewal dues may be entitled to a refund in cases of extreme hardship. Requests for a local Association dues refund shall be submitted in a separate letter addressed to the Board of Directors and detailing the nature of the hardship.
3. Suggested guidelines for determination of extreme hardship may be as follows: Debilitating illness, and unforeseen personal crises.

Application Fee Refunds/Waivers

Request for waiver of application fees shall be in writing and presented to the proper governing body for review and decision based on individual circumstances. Refund of application fee shall not be made for any reason except in the event of the rejection of application of membership. In the event that an applicant for





membership has terminated his/her membership shortly after filing the application, the Board of Directors shall review the circumstances and render the decision concerning the request for refund.

Affiliate Dues

Aspire North Affiliate dues shall be determined by the Board of Directors and payable on an annual basis.





Policy No. 9 Communications Policy

1. All Aspire North REALTORS® written/public material will emanate from the Association office.
2. No member is authorized to generate written or electronic material on behalf of Aspire North REALTORS®.
3. Use of association stationary and other copyrighted materials, including logos, is limited to staff at the association office, and the president, and will not be made available for use to members for any purpose whatsoever without express written approval of the CEO.
4. All statements to the media concerning Aspire North REALTORS® shall be made by the president and/or the CEO.





Sponsorship Request Form

Aspire North REALTORS® contributes thousands of dollars to community programs and organizations. While we firmly believe in the value of these gifts, it is fiscally impossible to honor all the requests submitted annually. We are committed to supporting as many people and events as possible, especially those in our community.

Sponsorship or donations will only be considered if this form is filled out entirely.

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact _____ Phone _____

Email: _____

Purpose of Donation: _____

Amount of Your Request: _____

Event Date: _____

Description of Event:

Will the Aspire North REALTORS® Logo be used? Yes No

If yes, how will the logo be used?





Will the media be involved in this Event? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Are there any special details we should know about in considering your request?

Have you or a member of your organization worked with an Aspire North REALTOR®?

Yes No

If yes, please provide their information below.

Member Name: _____

Are they your sponsor? Yes No

Staff Use Only

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

We appreciate your involvement!

Please send the completed form to kim@aspirenorthrealtors.com



Policy No. 10 Travel Allowances

Specific travel allowances for Aspire North REALTORS® are budgeted annually and described elsewhere in this manual. General travel policies for Board Member are described below:

1. Those who qualify will receive travel expenses (including mileage) for meetings, conference, seminars, etc. which they attend as representatives of Aspire North REALTORS®.
2. Request for those travel expenses shall be prearranged and included in the annual operating budget. If a proposed expenditure has not been included in the current budget, specific approval must be requested in writing from the Budget and Finance Committee and/or the Board of Directors.
3. Reimbursement for accommodations for those members of Aspire North REALTORS® representatives shall be at the "single occupancy" rate. No reimbursements shall be made for spouse and/or family.
4. When travel is by car, mileage shall be calculated from the Association office to the point of destination and the current IRS mileage allowance shall be paid.
5. No reimbursements shall be made until an expense form is submitted to the Association within thirty (30) days of the travel date. All expenses over \$5.00 must be substantiated with receipts, including parking and/or taxi fees. Leadership and members requesting reimbursement are expected to file a written report of the meeting or seminar for which travel expenses have been allotted at the time the expense request is filed.
6. If a registration form is required for the event, such forms shall be completed and signed by the registrant. Such forms shall then be forwarded by the CEO to the appropriate entity. Registration fees shall be paid in advance by the Association.
7. If airline travel is required, the registrant shall be responsible for finalizing the arrangements. Approved airline travel can be reserved through Aspire North's travel agency, Passageways Travel. In order to facilitate the best possible fares, arrangements should be booked well in advance with the prior approval of the CEO. In some cases, discount programs have been pre-arranged by Aspire North REALTORS®. Departure from these arrangements may incur extra expense which will be borne by the registrant, with the Association reimbursing the lowest available fare.



8. Policy for Aspire North president's and president-elect's use of Aspire North Credit Cards: Upon election to office, the president and president-elect of the Aspire North Board of Directors may each be issued an American Express Aspire North business credit card. This card is to be used for business expenses of the president and president-elect when she/he travels to conventions or other Aspire North-approved business meetings. It may also be used for purchases under the "President's Expense" category, which includes meals with leaders and/or staff, staff gifts, and director gifts, all of which shall be directly related to the transaction of Aspire North business. All receipts, with written explanation, for charges using the Aspire North credit card, will be submitted to the Aspire North business office for review and approval. The card will be turned back into the Aspire North office upon election of the next board president and president-elect. These cards may be revoked at any time at the request of the CEO of Aspire North due to improper use or ineligible charges to Aspire North.
9. Director Travel Policy for NAR Meetings: Aspire North will, if provision for such travel is included in the annual budget, reimburse any Director wishing to attend a NAR meeting an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00. Application for this grant should be made in writing, in advance, and approved by the Board of Directors prior to the event. Directors should then file an expense statement, along with appropriate receipts and a written report to the Board of Directors within 30 days of the event. It is expected that the Aspire North president and/or president-elect will attend the NAR Convention and Mid-Year Meeting, as outlined in the officer job descriptions in this policy manual.
10. Director Travel Policy for MAR Meetings: Aspire North will, if provision for such travel is included in the annual budget, reimburse any director the cost of registration for and mileage to the annual MAR convention and up to \$100.00 per day reimbursement for hotel and meals at the annual convention of the MICHIGAN REALTORS®, in accordance with the guidelines outlined elsewhere in the policy manual and upon the filing of an expense statement and written report of the event.



Policy No. 11
Michigan REALTORS® Delegates
National Association of REALTORS® Delegates

1. Michigan REALTOR® Delegates

Delegates to the MICHIGAN REALTORS® shall be the president and president-elect. While terms are for one calendar year, every effort shall be made to ensure continuity and experience of the representatives to the MICHIGAN REALTORS® delegate body.

2. NAR Delegates

Delegates to the National Association of REALTORS® Region 6 Caucuses held at the annual meetings and the National Association of REALTORS® Board meetings shall automatically be the sitting Aspire North president and president-elect. Should either or both the president and president-elect be unable to attend the meetings or caucuses then they shall notify the Michigan REALTORS® in advance of the event(s) and assign their proxy vote(s) to the Michigan REALTORS® leadership.

3. Expense Reimbursements

Aspire North REALTORS® will reimburse the direct expenses of any delegate member attending a meeting of the MICHIGAN REALTORS® or National Association of REALTORS delegate bodies in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Policy 10, and upon the filing of an expense statement and written report.

4. Voting

Whenever feasible, Aspire North REALTORS® delegates shall request advisory votes on issues and candidates for elections from the Directors of Aspire North REALTORS®. It is the intent of this policy to involve the Directors and the members of the Association in the activities of the MICHIGAN REALTORS®.





Policy No. 12 Financial Policy

The following is the present Financial Policy of Aspire North REALTORS®:

1. Financial Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the staff and the Budget & Finance Committee to maintain the balance sheet, monthly statement of income, and expenses, as well as a monthly summary of cash receipts and disbursements.

The administration of the financial program of Aspire North REALTORS® shall be the responsibility of the CEO.

The Board of Directors shall approve or disapprove all policies as recommended by the Budget & Finance Committee, and all modifications to the budget.

2. The Fiscal Year

The Fiscal Year of Aspire North REALTORS® shall be July 1 through June 30.

3. Books and Records

The Executive Vice president of Aspire North REALTORS® shall maintain the following records in compliance with Internal Revenue Service requirements and policies of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

4. External Auditors

The firm of Kindlinger & Company, P.C. currently acts as external accountants for Aspire North REALTORS®. On an annual basis, the Board of Directors shall select the external accountants and determine the type of the audit/and or review by an engagement letter.



5. Internal Financial Support

The staff of Aspire North REALTORS® shall provide, on a monthly basis, to the Board of Directors the following financial report:

- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Income and Expense

6. Budget Preparation and Approval

It shall be the responsibility of the CEO and appropriate staff to prepare an annual budget for review and modification by the Budget & Finance Committee. The Budget & Finance Committee will in turn forward the budget to the Board of Directors for approval. In addition, the budget will be reviewed as needed by the Budget & Finance Committee and amended as appropriate.

7. Insurance

It should be the responsibility of the Budget & Finance Committee, and the CEO, to maintain insurance, which reflects adequate coverage for the facilities, equipment, and, as fitting, for the Officers, Directors, and staff of the Association.

8. Method of Accounting

The accounting records of Aspire North REALTORS® shall be maintained in a combination of cash and accrual methods.

9. Bank Accounts

- Bank Accounts: Aspire North REALTORS® shall maintain minimal deposits in lending institutions.
- Signatures on Bank and Checking Accounts: At the end of each year, signature cards will be reissued with the names of the new president, secretary-treasurer, the CEO, and the Operations Manager as signers of checks and on Certificates of Deposit, and other investment accounts.

Aspire North REALTORS® checking account requires two signatures: The CEO and the Operations Manager are authorized to sign checks for regular business expenses. Other expenditures must be co-signed by either the president or the Treasurer.

- **Authority to Borrow Funds:** The authority to borrow funds rests in the hands of the Board of Directors and its designees, with the recommendation of the Budget & Finance Committee.

10. Funds

The currently approved special funds policies of Aspire North REALTORS® are as follows:

- The Reserve fund to accumulate to a minimum of \$75,000.00. The Budget & Finance Committee and two-thirds (2/3) of the Board of Directors will make any decision as to any expenditure from this reserve fund.
- Anything above would be available for loans, terms and length to be determined by the Budget & Finance Committee and recommended by the Board of Directors.

11. Rationale

Aspire North REALTORS® supplies its members with significant business services, which must be maintained regardless of economic conditions. These services must be maintained despite the number of members in the organization.

The level of reserves recommended for an Association of REALTORS® by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® is an amount equal to one (1) year's operating expenses. The investment objective of Aspire North REALTORS is as follows:

- The Reserve Fund may be borrowed from; however, it must maintain a \$75,000.00 minimum balance.
- All appropriations from the fund can be made only by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

- Funds shall be segregated from the general operating budget.
- A minimum goal of one month's operating reserve or \$75,000.00 shall be attained.
- The Reserve Fund shall be monitored regularly.
- Investments for the Reserve Account fund shall be the responsibility of the Investment Committee, and shall be in a safe, long-term (up to three (3) years) investment account.
- MICHIGAN REALTORS®/NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® dues shall be collected in July and paid according to current MAR/NAR policy.
- All reserve funds shall be placed in federally insured accounts.
- No short-term investment funds shall be committed for over twenty-four (24) months.
- All maturities should be staggered. The Investment Committee shall cooperate with the Budget & Finance Committee to ensure adequate and timely funding of future obligations.
- When investing funds, priorities shall be given to local financial institutions that are Aspire North Affiliate members.
- Whenever possible, all Association monies shall be deposited in interest bearing accounts.

12. Leadership Grand Traverse

The Association will set aside scholarship funds toward the tuition for Leadership Grand Traverse for a qualified and accepted applicant.

- Applicants must be a Full REALTOR® Member of Aspire North.
- Applicants must show documentation of acceptance from Leadership Grand Traverse.
- Must demonstrate commitment to the REALTOR® Organization and continue to contribute leadership to Aspire North.
- Must exhibit commitment to the REALTOR® Code of Ethics.
- Any full REALTOR® member who is accepted into the Leadership Grand Traverse program may apply for the five hundred-dollar (\$500) Judith Lindenau LGT tuition scholarship provided by Aspire North through the Legacy Fund. The member should also indicate to the Aspire North CEO his/her desire to be considered for the Richard "Dick" Smith Scholarship at the time of making an application to the Chamber of

Commerce. Applications for the five hundred-dollar (\$500) Richard “Dick” Smith Scholarship for Leadership Grand Traverse must be submitted by a deadline as determined by the Chamber of Commerce.

- A slate of Aspire North member applicants accepted by the LGT program will be forwarded to the Board of Directors who shall determine and approve the scholarship(s) for one of the applicants. The balance of the Leadership Grand Traverse program cost shall be borne by the selectee, their broker or, a sponsor.
- Aspire North shall not subsidize, loan or underwrite any balance of the LGT program beyond these scholarships.



Policy No. 13
MLS Participants Policy

A new participant in the Multiple Listing Service shall be charged a one-time fee of \$250.00. However, if a participant's status remains within the existing ownership structure (e.g., participant status shifts from one partner to another) the charge shall be reduced.





Policy No. 14 Whistleblower Policy

Policy Statement

Aspire North recognizes its obligation to its employees, members and constituents to maintain the highest ethical standards. To protect the integrity of Aspire North's community, and to ensure the highest standards of conduct by and among members of the Aspire North community, Aspire North will investigate any alleged Improper Activity by its employees or members. Anyone found to have engaged in an Improper Activity is subject to disciplinary action by Aspire North up to and including Board and/or membership dismissal, and civil or criminal prosecution when warranted.

All members of the Aspire North community are strongly encouraged to report any potential Improper Activity. The preferred method of reporting any issue of concern is for the employee, officer, member, or other constituent to file a report describing the potential Improper Activity and the person or persons involved with the CEO. To initiate an investigation, the report should be in writing. Aspire North may, in its discretion, investigate any report made orally that is subsequently not made in writing.

Additionally, constituents of Aspire North may report a potential Improper Activity through Aspire North's whistleblower hotline when one is uncomfortable reporting the potential Improper Activity to the CEO of Aspire North or if the potential Improper Activity involves the CEO. Aspire North has contracted with a third-party vendor to administer its confidential whistleblower hotline. Protocol will be established to distribute any reports received through the hotline according to a distribution matrix, unless the individual listed in the distribution matrix is also named in the report. In such an instance, the report will be distributed to legal counsel.

Once a report has been filed, the CEO of Aspire North or legal counsel shall undertake an investigation by appointing another administrator or other qualified person to conduct the investigation. The CEO may obtain the assistance of Aspire North's attorneys in the investigation. The report and the identity of the person who filed the report will not be disclosed except when necessary for a full investigation of the report. The investigator shall file a written report of his/her findings with the CEO



of Aspire North or legal counsel within 28 working days after the report has been made. If the investigatory report cannot be completed within this time frame, the report shall state the reasons for the delay. The person who filed the report will be notified of the findings of the investigation within ten (10) working days of its filing. Aspire North will not tolerate any: (i) retaliatory actions against any employee, officer, member of constituent for making a good faith report of a potential Improper Activity; or (ii) direct or indirect use or attempted use of the Official Authority or Influence of an employee's position or office for the purpose of interfering with the right of another employee or constituent to make a Protected Disclosure directly to Aspire North or through Aspire North's whistleblower hotline. Aspire North will take whatever action may be necessary to prevent and correct violations of this Whistleblower Policy; notwithstanding the foregoing, any individual who files a Baseless Allegation shall not be protected under this policy.

Scope of Policy and Definitions

Aspire North's Whistleblower Policy shall incorporate the following definitions:

Baseless Allegation

Any allegation of improper activity made without reasonable cause to believe that the information disclosed is true. Individuals making such allegations may be subject to institutional disciplinary action and/or legal claims by individuals wrongfully accused of such conduct.

Improper Activity

Any activity undertaken by an employee or officer/director which is found, after due process, to be in violation of any applicable local, state, or federal law, rule, or regulation, or Aspire North policy or procedure, including, but not limited to, those relating to: corruption; malfeasance; bribery; theft; fraud; coercion; conversion; or misappropriation or misuse of assets.

Official Authority or Influence

Promising to confer or conferring, any benefit; effecting or threatening to effect, any reprisal; taking, or directing others to take, or recommending, processing, or approving, any personnel action, including, but not limited to, appointment,





promotion, transfer, assignment, performance evaluation, suspension, or other disciplinary action.

Protected Disclosure

Any good faith communication that discloses or demonstrates an intention to disclose an alleged Improper Activity.

Questions

Any questions about Aspire North's Whistleblower Policy may be directed to:
Kimberly Pontius
Aspire North REALTORS®
852 S. Garfield Ave. Traverse City, MI 49686
231 947-2050 kim@aspirenorthrealtors.com





Policy No. 15 Manual Review Policy

As new policies are established and former policies revised, the staff shall update the policy manual in a timely manner. The Board of Directors shall review the policy manual on an annual basis. When establishing or revising policies, the Board of Directors shall clearly indicate that a policy has been established as a part of the motion being approved.





Policy No. 16 Bylaws Clarification Policy

Certain Bylaws of Aspire North are in need of clarification or interpretation to allow the efficient operation of the organization. Therefore, the following clarifications and interpretations are hereby made:

- Article IV, Section 1.1. Emeritus members are REALTORS® who have been actively practicing real estate for 40 or more years. This change is to conform to NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® requirements.
- Article XI, Section 3. The Board of Directors also includes the secretary/treasurer and has a total number of 15 members. Article XII, Section 4. Notifications to members may be made electronically unless a member requests otherwise.
- Article XII, Section 5. A plurality of the Board means a majority of the total qualified Board Members in office at the time. A quorum of the Board for REALTOR® matters is six (6) voting members who are qualified to vote.
- Article XII, Section 5. If there is no quorum for the transaction of business of the general membership at a regular or special meeting of the membership, any business or action scheduled to be voted on by the membership may be acted upon by the Board of Directors unless such business or action may only be done by the general membership pursuant to the Bylaws.
- Article XIII, Section 1. The grievance committee and the professional standards committee shall be separate standing committees.
- Article XVIII, Section 1. The multiple listing service maintained for use of Aspire North members shall be the Northern Great Lakes REALTORS® Multiple Listing Service, LLC of which Aspire North is a member.
- Article XVIII, Section 3. Affiliate Members shall not be permitted access to the MLS pursuant to NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® requirements.



Policy No. 17
Aspire North Process and Protocol for Making Changes in NGLRMLS Operating
Policy, Rules, and Regulations

- **Step One:** Aspire North member wishing to recommend a change in rules, regulations or policies shall approach an Aspire North MLS Committee member, an Aspire North LLC Representative of NGLR or a member of the Aspire North Board of Directors with a written request outlining their recommendation and some supporting documentation as to why this request is being made. Whoever receives shall immediately forward to the president of Aspire North.
- **Step Two:** The president shall determine whether the Aspire North Board of Directors should take said request under advisement or if it is appropriate to be sent directly to the Aspire North MLS Committee. If presented and accepted by the Board then it shall be forwarded to the MLS Committee for additional review and research.
- **Step Three:** After researching the issue and making a determination of proposed action the MLS Committee shall bring forward to the Aspire North Board of Directors a recommendation at its regularly scheduled meeting or at a special Board of Directors meeting if so required and if the special meeting is in compliance with Aspire North bylaws and policy.
- **Step Four:** The Aspire North Board of Directors shall review the MLS Committee's recommendation(s) and determine if the recommendation gets:
 - Rejected – in which case the recommendation fails.
 - Accepted – in which case it gets presented to the NGLRMLS LLC Board at their regularly scheduled meeting by the Aspire North LLC Representatives.
 - Returned to MLS Advisory Council for further study and review.
- **Step Five:** Should the recommendation be accepted the Aspire North LLC Representatives report back to the Aspire North Board of Directors the result of the NGLRMLS decision and the MLS Committee chair shall notify the Participant(s) who filed the recommendation a message stating of the outcome.



Policy No. 18 NGLRMLS Representative Selection

Aspire North REALTORS® as an equity owner is permitted two volunteer Representative seats on the Northern Great Lakes REALTORS® MLS LLC (NGLRMLS) Board of Representatives with full voting privileges. The process for the selection of these positions shall be in alignment with Article 7 of the NGLRMLS Operating Agreement and shall also meet the following Aspire North requirements.

1. Any Aspire North REALTOR® member may nominate themselves or any other member of Aspire North for consideration by first submitting a petition consisting of 25 signatures of Aspire North REALTOR® members in good standing.
2. The Aspire North Board of Directors shall receive nominations at least 30 days prior to the selection process.
3. The Aspire North staff shall announce all potential nominees for the position(s) of NGLRMLS Board of Representatives to the membership in the next weekly electronic newsletter. Members may contact the board office with any concerns, issues or endorsements prior to the selection process. These membership communiqués shall be delivered to the Aspire North Board of Directors and used in their deliberation and vetting process.
4. Nominees shall meet the following baseline criteria:
 - Must have been a REALTOR® member in good standing of Aspire North for at least five (5) years
 - Shall have served on either the Aspire North Board of Directors of the Aspire North MLS Committee for at least one (1) year prior to the selection process.
 - Must have taken Paragon Broker load or be able to exhibit a proficiency in and understanding of the MLS system.
 - Must be willing to serve a two-year term.
 - Must be willing to travel to regional MLS meetings.
 - Must be willing to attend special training when required.
 - Must be willing to sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement.





- Must be able to meet the requirements of Article 7 of the NGLRMLS Operating Agreement.
5. Nominees who meet these requirements shall be interviewed and vetted by the Aspire North Board of Directors.
 6. The Aspire North Board of Directors shall select the nominee that is deemed most capable and qualified for the position. The selection of the Aspire North Representative to the NGLRMLS LLC shall be announced to the Aspire North Membership immediately following the selection process.



Policy No. 19 Harassment Policy

Any member of the association may be reprimanded, placed on probation, suspended or expelled for harassment of an association or MLS employee or association officer or director after an investigation in accordance with the procedures of the association. As used in this section, harassment means any verbal or physical conduct including threatening or obscene language, unwelcome sexual advances, stalking, actions including strikes, shoves, kicks, or other similar physical contact, or threats to do the same, or any other conduct with the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment. The decision of the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken shall be made by the investigatory team comprised of the president, and president-elect and/or vice president and one member of the board of directors selected by the highest-ranking officer not named in the complaint, upon consultation with legal counsel for the association. Disciplinary action may include any sanction authorized in the association's Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual. If the complaint names the president, president-elect or vice president, they may not participate in the proceedings and shall be replaced by the immediate past president or, alternatively, by another member of the board of directors selected by the highest-ranking officer not named in the complaint.

Harassment of Association Staff

Harassment is illegal conduct and is contrary to the policy of the association. As used in association policy, harassment means any verbal or physical conduct including threatening or obscene language, unwelcome sexual advances, stalking, actions including strikes, shoves, kicks, or other similar physical contact, or threats to do the same, or any other conduct with the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment.

Complaint Procedure

Any employee who believes that he/she has suffered harassment by any member of the association must bring the problem to the attention of



the president or CEO. The complaint does not have to be in writing; however, it is helpful if details of dates, times, places and witnesses, if any, to the harassment alleged can be provided.

All complaints will be investigated promptly and with strictest confidentiality by an investigatory team comprised of the president, president-elect and/or CEO and one (1) member of the Board of Directors selected by the highest-ranking officer not named in the complaint after consultation with legal counsel for the association. If the complaint involves the president, president-elect and/or CEO, they shall be replaced on the investigatory team by the immediate past president or, alternatively, by another member of the Board of Directors selected by the highest-ranking officer not named in the complaint.

Both the complainant and the accused will be provided a full opportunity to present their cases. Witnesses interviewed will be provided only such information as is necessary to elicit from them their observations and other relevant information.

Disciplinary action against any member found to have harassed an association or MLS employee may consist of any sanction authorized in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual, such as verbal or written warning, probation, suspension or expulsion depending on the gravity of the incident. Prior incidents of similar behavior shall be taken into consideration when determining the appropriate disciplinary action. The investigatory team shall make such a decision.

Clear, strong, and convincing shall be the standard of proof by which alleged allegations of harassment is determined. Clear, strong, and convincing shall be defined as that measure or degree of proof, which will produce a firm belief as to the validity of the allegations, sought to be established.

It is contrary to the policy of the association for a member to retaliate against any employee who files a charge of harassment. All possible steps will be taken to eliminate the possibility of retaliation resulting from the filing of a complaint. In the event a complaint of harassment is found to be totally and completely without basis, appropriate disciplinary measures may be taken against the employee who brought the complaint.



While this is in no way intended to discourage employees who believe they have been the victims of harassment from bringing a complaint, the association recognizes that a charge of harassment can cause serious damage to the personal reputation and professional career of the accused.

<http://www.realtor.org/governance/policies/harassment-complaint-policy>





Policy No. 20
Aspire North REALTORS® Facilities Rental Policy

1. The Aspire North facility is first and foremost a corporate event and training facility to be used for REALTOR® association-related functions which shall have priority over all other REALTOR® and non-REALTOR® functions provided proper planning is employed. Aspire North Affiliates are considered members of the Association and therefore member uses and rates apply.

Members and Non-members shall not be permitted to use the facility for social events such as weddings, receptions, parties, or for community nonprofit functions, church meetings or any other non-business-related events.

A Member may request a special exception for the facility for such a use but only with prior request and approval of the Executive Committee and/or the CEO of Aspire North. In such instances the Non-member rental charges shall apply. An additional \$250 facilities management fee will be charged for all after hours or weekend events.

2. The person reserving space in the facility (the "renter" must be present at all events and meetings where the facility is used, and must sign the Conference Center Rental Agreement contract for rental responsibilities, such as damage to the equipment or facility, and cleanup.
3. The mandatory rental contract shall be signed and kept on file at the Aspire North business office prior to any non-Association sponsored event or facility rental. Payment shall be deposited with Aspire North upon a contract submission.
4. An additional \$250 deposit will be required if the building is rented when the business office is not open (after hours and weekends). The deposit or a portion thereof will be refunded only after staff has made a building inspection and it has been determined that the building was left locked, undamaged, and clean and the heat/cooling and lights turned down appropriately. Aspire North reserves the right to withhold any refund at its discretion. Any normal business hour daytime use of the facility, that results in damage or cleanup, will result in a minimum \$100 charge billed to the office or responsible party.



5. Usage priority:

- Aspire North official events and education classes (Orientation class, REALTOR® Training)
- Aspire North Membership activities, Lunch & Learns. These shall take priority over all other events.
- Aspire North Board and committee meetings (no charge)
- Aspire North Affiliate events (no charge)
- Scheduled meetings of Member offices - rentals
- Other Member Office Meetings (special office training, agent meetings, etc.) -rentals
- Professional Activities of Members (condo associations, Institutes, etc.) rentals
- Women’s Council of REALTORS® Wednesday morning Home Tour (no charge)
- Community groups - Association partners – rental

Room Rates:

- Fees include room set-up
- A ½ day is any event that is 4 consecutive hours or less.
- A whole day is any event exceeding 4 hours within normal weekday working hours 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.
- A deposit equal to the room rental charge may be collected for all Non-Member facility rentals.
- All Non-Member Renters shall provide a valid government ID and a credit card.

Large Conference Room - For REALTORS®/Affiliates

Large Conference Room – For REALTORS/Affiliates (90 max.)

- \$100 for ½ day
- \$150 for full day

Large Conference Room – Non-Members

- \$150for ½ day
- \$250 for full day



Small Conference Room – REALTORS/Affiliates (12 max.)

- \$55 for ½ day
- \$80 for full day

Small Conference Room – Non-Members

- \$100 for ½ day
- \$150 for full day

Boardroom/Classroom – REALTORS/Affiliates (30 max.)

- \$90 for ½ day
- \$125 for full day

Boardroom/Classroom – Non-Members

- \$125 for ½ day
- \$200 for full day

Library – REALTORS/Affiliates (4 max.)

- No charge: but may only be reserved for one hour at a time unless receiving prior approval from the business office.

Library – Non-Members

- \$25 an hour

Room Cancellation Fee applies if there is less than a 72-hour written or emailed notice. This shall result in a forfeiture of the deposit for a Non-Member or a \$75.00 room cancellation fee for a Member.

Computer /Projector & Screens / Two-Way Video & Audio / Microphone Use/ Dry Erase Boards/Plug & Play Capability

- Members - \$50 ½ day or \$100 full day
- Non-Members - \$100 ½ day or \$150.00 full day

Food Services



The Aspire North facility does not provide a food service but rather permits catering services from approved vendors to use the catering kitchen. Please ask to see a list of approved catering operations. If your caterer is not on the list please ask to have them submit an Approved Caterer Application with the business office. All caterers shall be ServSafe® Certified and must be approved by the business office before being permitted to serve on the Aspire North premises. All catering needs shall be arranged, coordinated and paid for by the Renter directly with the caterer.

- Catering kitchen service fee -\$150 (\$100 may be waived if kitchen is left clean and in good order)
- Outdoor gas grill and fire ring use - \$100
- Coffee & Tea Service (includes cups, sweetener & creamer) - \$1.50 Per Person

AND/OR

- Keurig Coffee Bar, Bottled Water, & Sodas - \$2.50 Per Person

Aspire North is a non-smoking facility. Violations of the non-smoking policy shall result in a \$500 fine.

No alcohol shall be permitted on premises without prior written approval from the business office. This shall include a waiver acknowledging that a certified bartender is onsite.

A Renter shall be responsible for damages to the facility caused by the Renter or his or her guests or invitees.

No events after 4:30pm or anytime on Saturday or Sunday unless approved in writing and in advance by the business office. The \$250 facilities management fee shall apply.





Policy No. 21 Awards Policy

Only the Aspire North Board of Directors may approve Aspire North members for any award sanctioned by the Association. The exception to this policy shall be the optional President's Award, which shall be awarded at the discretion of the outgoing president and therefore Board approval shall not be required.

Awards shall follow an established process and protocol that includes a nomination process, a staff review and acknowledgment of qualifications, and a vetting process by the Awards Task Team.

The Awards Task Team leader shall be appointed by the president and approved by the Aspire North Board of Directors and the task team shall be made up of no less than five and no more than nine participants also approved by the Board at the January Board meeting.

The Awards Task Team shall be appointed every year and shall serve from January 1st to the end of that calendar year. In order to avoid any bias at least half of the task team members should be new to the team each year.

There shall be basically two main duties of the Awards Task Team.

First, the Awards Task Team shall convene in June of the calendar year to review, interview and select final nominees for the Aspire North REALTOR® of the Year so as to meet the Michigan REALTOR® of the Year appointment in August. These ROTY nominees shall then be presented to the Aspire North Board of Directors by the Awards Task Team at the July meeting for the final selection process by the Board.

Second, The Awards Task Team shall meet in October to collect nominations for the other awards that Aspire North shall confer on the award recipients at the Aspire North Christmas Party held in December. The awards finalists shall be presented to the Aspire North board of Directors at their November Board meeting. These awards consist of but are not limited to the following.

- Rookie of the Year
- Good Neighbor Award
- Public Advocacy Award





- Political Advocacy Award
- President's Award





Policy No. 22
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT MEMBER POLICY

Property Management agents are required to be licensed by the State of Michigan. As a licensee they shall follow the same path as the REALTOR® or Appraiser member as it applies to the dues formula. Any Property Management agent that is operating under a licensed REALTOR® Broker either directly or indirectly shall be required to be a part of that brokers due's formula and responsible for local, state and national dues. Therefore, licensed property managers shall be considered as full REALTOR® members as it applies to dues.

This said, Aspire North REALTORS® recognizes that Property Managers often do not require the use of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and as such shall be eligible to sign a waiver along with their Broker stating that they do not wish to have MLS access and therefore shall not be billed by Aspire North for this monthly expense. The waiver shall be the same as the MLS of Choice waiver and shall carry with it the same fines and penalties should the Property Manager violate the access to the MLS by the use or sharing of another's login and password.



Policy No. 23
CAPITALIZATION POLICY

A **capitalization policy** is used by a company to set a threshold, above which qualifying expenditures are recorded as fixed assets, and below which they are charged to expense as incurred. The policy is typically set by senior management or even the board of directors.

1. Purpose

This accounting policy establishes the minimum cost (capitalization amount) that shall be used to determine the capital assets to be recorded in the accounting records (books) and financial statements of the business.

2. Capital Asset Definition and Thresholds

A "Capital Asset" is a unit of property with a useful life exceeding one year and a per-unit acquisition cost exceeding \$5,000*. Capital assets will be capitalized and depreciated over their useful lives. The full acquisition cost of tangible personal property below these thresholds will be expensed in the year purchased.

3. Capitalization Method and Procedure

All Capital Assets are recorded at historical cost as of the date acquired.

Tangible assets costing below the threshold amount are recorded as an expense in the accounting records and financial statements of the business. In addition, assets with an economically useful life of 12 months or less must be expensed for both book and financial reporting purposes.

4. Documentation

Invoices substantiating the acquisition cost of each unit of property are to be retained for a minimum of 7 (seven) years.

**Tax Capitalization Threshold: The IRS suggests you choose one of two capitalization thresholds for fixed-asset expenditures, either \$2,500 or \$5,000. The thresholds are the costs of capital items related to an asset that must be met or exceeded to qualify for capitalization. A business can elect to employ higher or lower capitalization thresholds. The permissible ceiling for deducting otherwise capitalizable expenditures is \$5,000 when our business has applicable financial statements. The threshold is limited to \$2,500 in the absence of applicable financial statements.*





Business Name: Traverse Area Association of REALTORS® dba Aspire North REALTORS

Accepted by: Aspire Board 12-08-23.

Implemented By: Kimberly R. Pontius CEO

Date: 12-14-23

