



## **How to Charter A Women's Council of REALTORS® Network**

### **Mission of the Women's Council of REALTORS®:**

We are a network of successful REALTORS®, advancing women as professionals and leaders in business, the industry and the communities we serve.

### **Local Networks, National Strength**

The Women's Council of REALTORS® (WCR) has a unique structure, the foundation of which is our nationwide network of more than 250 local and state networks and 11,000 national members.

It's the best of both worlds - the strength and continuity of a national profile with the responsiveness and accessibility of local networks close to home. It's this combination that makes the Council different. Not only are we a dynamic network of productive people with reliable expertise, but we also are the place to acquire relevant skills to help you grow your business.

### **Purpose of the Network**

Our networks are the main distribution centers of member value. Network leaders position the network as a business resource in the REALTOR® community as you blend the key elements of WCR's brand into the programs and experiences your members receive at the local level. Key brand elements include:

*Relevant Skills* — Give members the leading edge through facilitated business problem-solving, opportunities to share best practices and consistent emphasis on being a learning community.

*Professional Credibility* — WCR members are established full-time real estate professionals ready to take their business to the next level of success.

*Business Support System* — Beyond our powerful referral network is a community of support and encouragement where your success matters to people you know and trust.

### **Planning for Excellence**

The FULL Business Plan for Local Networks provides details and insight into the expectations for operations and standards. The Plan includes Recruitment and Retention Goals, Communication, Network Effectiveness, Member Value, Governance, and Leadership Development. Anyone interested in learning more about chartering a network should [review this document](#) early in the process so as to understand the expectations for networks and their leaders.

## **Some Chartering Guidelines**

Before you get started, contact the State WCR Network President for guidance and assistance. In states where there are no state networks, please contact the national office (800-245-8512) and ask for the Membership Department. The State President, Governor or national staff will work with you to assess the viability of chartering a network in your area.

Networks will not be chartered in markets that already have a local network and or/where there are less than 1000 REALTORS® in the area.

## **What are Membership Requirements and Who May Join?**

- A minimum of 30 REALTORS® and/or REALTOR-ASSOCIATES® is required to start and maintain a network. For purposes of this document, we will refer to both REALTOR® member types as REALTORS®. These 30 members can either be new members recruited to start the network, or current members who can be transferred into the new network.
- National Affiliate Membership: To become a National Affiliate, the applicant must hold affiliate membership in a Local Board or Association of REALTORS®. Executive Staff employed by a Board or Association of REALTORS® may also join. Note that National Affiliate membership in a local network is limited to 20 percent of the total national membership in that network.

## **Getting Started**

1. Schedule a meeting and invite REALTORS® in your area who you feel would have an interest in and contribute to the Council. Put a notice in your Board or MLS publications and websites. Appoint a temporary Chairman at this meeting to coordinate the forming of the Network by scheduling future meetings and notifying all those who have expressed interest in joining.
2. The temporary Chairman appoints a bylaws committee to study and complete the model bylaws for a Local Network. Model bylaws will be emailed to you by the national membership staff and/or are available at [www.wcr.org](http://www.wcr.org) in Network Tools. See page 5 for additional bylaws information.
3. The temporary Chairman appoints a nominating committee to recommend a slate of officers. These officers remain in office until the first regularly scheduled elections, as stated in the model bylaws.

4. Call a second meeting for approval of the bylaws and elections of permanent officers. The bylaws committee submits the model bylaws to the group for acceptance. The election takes place and a list of officers along with the model bylaws is submitted to the national office. At this time, also send the checks and applications for at least 30 REALTOR® members and the names of any current members transferring into your Network. These members can be counted toward your required 30 REALTOR® members.
5. The newly elected Secretary applies for the Federal ID Number (see page 8 for more info on FEIN).
6. Complete the Network Business Plan on pages 6/7.
7. If it is taking longer than two months to get the Network organized, continue to call meetings to maintain interest. Submit the completed applications with payment to the national office as soon as they are received. These new members will be processed as members-at-large and will begin to receive the *eConnect* newsletter and have access to the Referral and Member Centers on the wcr.org. When the network is ready to be chartered, these members will be transferred into the network and will be counted toward the minimum requirement of 30 REALTORS®.
8. Send the above information using the checklist on page 4 to:

Women's Council of REALTORS®  
Membership Department  
430 N. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60611-4093

Questions:  
[wcr@wcr.org](mailto:wcr@wcr.org)  
800-245-8512

## **Network Charter Checklist** (Submit this with your charter request)

- A completed copy of the bylaws which have been approved by the Local Network members.
- A list of elected officers of the Local Network.
- Completed Network Plan (see pages 6/7).
- Federal Identification Number (FEIN)\_\_\_\_\_ (see pages 8).
- A list of the charter members, complete with their addresses, email and phone numbers. Indicate whether each is a new member or a transferring member.
- An application completed in detail from each of the new members. Current members SHOULD NOT complete an application because they are members already. Their names, however, should be noted on the list of charter members and new officers.
- Full payment of membership dues (national, state and local) from each of the new members.

### **The Approval Process**

Allow 3-5 weeks after receipt of this information in the national WCR office for the approval of your network bylaws and charter. Your installation may be held as soon as your bylaws and Network Business Plan have been approved and your membership requirements are met.

Subsequent installations of Network officers are very effective if held at the annual installation of Board officers. It is recommended that the installation of local officers be conducted by your Regional Vice President, Governor or State Network President, or by an officer of the Local Board or Association of REALTORS® or State Association, or another dignitary who has shown a marked interest in the network.

Networks are required to submit a quarterly report via survey.

## **Instructions for Completing Bylaws**

Follow the model bylaws exactly to ensure approval of your network's bylaws. Please DO NOT RETYPE. Fill in the Blanks. All BLANKS on the model bylaws must be completed. Do not re-word any language in the model bylaws.

### **ARTICLE I, Section 1 and 2:**

Name of Local Network.

### **ARTICLE II, Section 1:**

Name(s) of Local REALTOR® Association(s)/Boards(s) within whose boundaries the network exists and name of local network.

### **ARTICLE III, Section 1 (A), (B), and (C):**

The amount to be filled in on your copy of the bylaws is the local dues only. The amounts in (A) and (B) must be the same. Note that Section (C) is for National REALTOR® members only.

### **ARTICLE VI, SECTION (C):**

Term of office is typically January 1 to December 31. However the network may have reasons to use other dates; however the length of the term is always 1 year.

## Business Plan for New WCR Networks

### Network Programs

WCR networks hold a minimum of six business resource meetings a year. New networks are required to plan their first two meeting programs. This includes setting dates and finding a location so that new members and prospects can plan ahead to attend. Effective programming is defined as timely, issue driven, revenue generating topics.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Program Title</u>	<u>Business Topic Addressed</u>
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____

Sample program topics.

<b>Program Categories</b>	<b>Topic Ideas</b>
<b>Technology</b>	-Mobile, Social media (Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Building referrals using the WCR Referral Network, Lead generation and conversion, Videos, Photos, Online marketing
<b>Diverse Markets</b>	-Foreclosure & REO, Short sales, Cultural awareness, Luxury properties
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	-Mentoring, Presentation skills, Personal development, Image and identity (Branding)
<b>Economy and Demographics</b>	-Local sales outlook, Financing, Investor impact, Business trends
<b>Civic Environment</b>	-Fair housing, RPAC involvement, Elected official keynote, Zoning update
<b>Business Development</b>	-Negotiating strategies, Time management, Team development, Ownership, Business planning, Budget planning, Virtual assistants, Marketing

## Membership Goals

Part of forming a new network entails planning for future growth. Membership growth occurs through recruiting (when new members join) and retention (when current members renew).

Inception 35 REALTOR® members

Subtract: Number of the above who will not renew: - \_\_\_\_\_  
(*Turnover in real estate is high: national average is 30%*)

Add: Number of members we will recruit: + \_\_\_\_\_  
(*See below for recruiting tips.*)

Total/Goal for First Anniversary: \_\_\_\_\_ REALTOR® members

Total/Goal for Second Anniversary: \_\_\_\_\_ REALTOR® members

Recruiting Success Tip: Position Council membership as a career move designed to make *already-successful REALTORS® even more successful*. (While membership can benefit someone new to the industry, the drop out rate is 80% for REALTORS® who have been in the business for two years or less.)

## III. Market Share

Please calculate your proposed new network's market share. \_\_\_\_\_

EXAMPLE:

If there are 1000 REALTORS® in your local association, and the network has 30 members, market share is:

$$(30 \div 1000) \times 100 = 3.0\%$$

While there are currently no market share requirements for networks, we recommend that new networks aim for a market share of at least 6% by the end of their third year.

Name(s) of REALTOR® Boards and Associations and (# of REALTORS® in each) in the area of the proposed network: Networks will not be chartered in markets where there are less than 1000 REALTORS®.

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## **IV. Budget**

Please attach a copy of the network's budget. A sample budget is attached.

## **V. FEIN**

The network must apply for and report the Network's Federal Identification Number. Network FEIN is: \_\_\_\_\_

The ID# is used by the IRS as a unique identifier, the business equivalent of a Social Security Number. It is needed to apply to the IRS for federal income tax exempt status. This # is also sometimes needed by banks when opening accounts.

### **Apply for a FEIN online or use IRS Form SS-4.**

[The FEIN application can be completed online here:](#)

Instructions for completing the online Application

Legal Structure - Click the button labeled "View additional types, including Non-Profit/Tax-Exempt organizations

Additional Types - Click the button labeled "Other Non-Profit/Tax-Exempt Organizations".

Reason - Click the button labeled "Banking purposes".

Responsible Person - The application requires a responsible person to provide their name and SSN. Usually this should be an officer but any member of the network can do it.

Address - An address is required. We suggest using the applying officer's address or if approved, the local REALTOR association address. Note that a post office box is not allowed.

Legal Name - The legal name of the network is stated in Article I of the Bylaws (e.g. Womens Council of REALTORS Ocala/Marion County) Note that you will not be able to use special characters, such as the apostrophe in Women's.

Questions - The next screen asks a series of questions. Answer No to all of them.



Activity - Do NOT click "Real Estate," click "Other." In the next screen click "Other" again and then type in "Business League."

## **Reporting to the IRS and Tax-Exempt Status**

All networks must file an information return with the IRS.

In order to file, The network must be deemed exempt by the IRS.

Use IRS Form 1024 Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(6) available here: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1024.pdf>

The IRS Form 8718 (User Fee for Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request) and Fee must accompany Form 1024. The National Women's Council recommends that networks consult an accounting or legal professional in preparing the application.

## Sample 12 month Budget for a New Network

	<u>Budget Targets</u>
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>	
Membership (30 Members x \$30.00)	900.00
Strategic Partners	1,550.00
Ways & Means (Auction)	1,500.00
<b>TOTAL Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,950.00</b>
<b><u>Expenses*</u></b>	
Awards	100.00
Bank Service Charges	50.00
Discretionary Fund	50.00
Education	500.00
Leadership Orientation	150.00
Meeting Programs	150.00
Membership Pins	100.00
Newsletters	250.00
Leadership Development	
President's Travel <sup>1</sup>	1,300.00
President-elect <sup>2</sup>	400.00
Postage	150.00
IRS Tax Exempt Filing Fee (1 time fee)	750.00
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,950.00</b>

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First year, President is expected to attend at least one of the below.  
Subsequent years, President attends both.

<sup>1</sup> Midyear Meeting (May) and National Conference (Nov).

<sup>2</sup> First year, President-elect is expected to attend at least the Leadership Academy in Chicago. Leadership Academy Registration fee of \$394 is waived in first year of chartering, air fare to Chicago is network expense

\* Networks may need to budget for general liability insurance if holding events where alcohol is served and or events where individuals could claim injury. Officers and Directors insurance for the Governing Board is provided by the Council at no expense to the network.