

Candidate Credentialing and Campaign Rules Policy

For REALTORS® and
REALTOR ASSOCIATES®
Seeking National Women's
Council Elected Office

Guidelines are subject to change.

May 2024

DEFINITIONS

Candidate Credentialing and Campaign Rules Committee (CCRC) – The CCRC 1) determines candidate eligibility for all National Level Elected Positions, 2) monitors and enforces campaign rules and 3) presides over any appeals.

Appointed Leaders - An appointment made by the President to a leadership position as needed. (i.e. NAR appointed Liaisons, appointment to Executive Committee)

Elected Positions - National Women’s Council of REALTORS® President, President-Elect, First Vice President, Treasurer, National Liaisons.

Election Year – The year in which the election is held for the Candidate, or Applicant.

Applicant - A Women’s Council member who has filed an Application for National Women’s Council Elected Position, but who has not yet been deemed to be a Candidate.

Candidate – An Applicant deemed eligible by the CCRC to campaign for National Women’s Council Elected Position.

Notification Date – The date on which the list of Candidates is released, which shall be on or about October 1, or the first business day thereafter, of the year prior to the year in which the election will be held.

REALTOR® and REALTOR ASSOCIATE® - A member of the National Association of REALTORS®

IMPORTANT DATES AND TIMEFRAMES

April 1 to June 30: Submission period

- Applications accepted for elected positions

May Midyear Business Meeting

- CCRC is elected or appointed
- CCRC Term of service begins the day following the end of the Midyear Business Meeting) thru the following year at the adjournment of Midyear meeting (typically May to May)

July 31

- Applicant background checks to be performed. Applicants to comply with requests for information within a one-week timeframe.

On or before September 1

- CCRC Chair to notify ineligible applicants

On or about October 1

- Notification & Confirmation of Candidates released by CCRC

- Candidates will be notified that campaigning must not begin until January 1 of the following year. Early campaigning can be potential terms for disqualification by the CCRC
- Campaign financial support can begin

November National Conference

- Candidates have the opportunity to address Governing Board in a short speech.

Midyear Business meeting the following year

- Candidate Forum/Q & A
- Election meeting

APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligibility for Application

If an individual is serving in any of the following positions - State President, State President-Elect, State First Vice President, State Treasurer, District Vice President, State Liaison or National Liaison - they are ineligible from serving in both a National and State position concurrently.

Because of the time of elections and when newly elected positions take office, those elected to a national position who also hold another Women's Council leadership position at the time of the election must complete the existing position's service before taking the new office or position.

Timeframe for Application:

A Women's Council REALTOR® member may file an Application for National Women's Council Elected Office between April 1 through June 30 of the year prior to the Election Year. Campaigning is not allowed during this timeframe.

All applications will be submitted online. Applicant forms must be completed in their entirety and truthfully. All supporting documents such as a resume, 5 letters of recommendation, and a letter-of-good-standing from your local association of REALTORS®, will be submitted electronically as part of the online application.

Application Process Extension:

If after the submission period no applications were received or no Applicants were deemed eligible for a particular Elected Position, then within seven (7) days, or as soon as practical, the CCRC will open an application period for thirty (30) days during which time Women's Council of REALTOR® members may file an application for that Elected Position. The CCRC will release a list of the Candidates by the earliest date practical following the close of the extended application period, but in no event earlier than the Notification Date.

CANDIDATE CREDENTIALING AND CAMPAIGN RULES COMMITTEE

1. The purpose, composition, and structure of the CCRC is outlined in the Bylaws under Article IX.

2. CCRC meetings, panels and deliberations are closed meetings and strictly confidential.
 - a) The Chair is responsible for advising committee members of any significant issues brought to their attention and preparing correspondence on behalf of the Committee.
 - b) The Vice Chair is responsible assisting in the review and due diligence of applicants, and other actions supporting the role of the Chair.
 - c) The CCRC represents Women’s Council of REALTORS’® interests in maintaining a fair and efficient campaign and election process for Elected Positions.
 - d) The CCRC makes decisions free of the influence of any personal matters.
 - e) The CCRC abides by the Policies for CCRC Members outlined within this document.
 - f) The CCRC plans and executes the Candidates’ Forum at the Midyear Meeting. (see "Important Dates & Timeframes")
 - g) The CCRC hosts a recorded and required virtual orientation meeting with Applicants.
 - h) The CCRC provides a list of the Candidates to the Women’s Council members and voting delegates by the Notification Date (see “Important Dates and Timeframes”).
 - i) If Chair is unable to serve, the current National President of the Women’s Council shall appoint an Active Past National President able to serve as chairperson of the committee.
 - j) In no case shall the same person serve as chairperson for two successive years.
3. Upon a temporary vacancy of a member of the CCRC, the National President of the Women’s Council shall appoint the replacement from the Alternate Pool.
 - a) Upon a vacancy of a member of the CCRC for more than 2 meetings, the position may be considered vacant, and an alternate may be appointed from the Alternate Pool by the National President.
 - b) Eight (8) members of the CCRC will establish a Quorum.
 - c) The Chair or Immediate Past Chair must be present to establish a quorum.

APPLICANT REVIEW PROCESS

BACKGROUND CHECKS AND PROFESSIONAL DUE DILIGENCE

The CCRC will review all completed applications for Elected Positions that were submitted by the deadline. The Committee requires criminal and financial background checks on each Applicant, and a legal audit conducted by a third party.

The Committee reviews the following information:

1. Completed position applications and responses
2. Letter of Good Standing from the local associations where Applicant has membership. Said Letter of Good Standing is to be signed by a person of authority within the respective Association.
3. The Women’s Council will hire a professional organization to conduct the appropriate background checks. (Women’s Council – National will cover the cost to conduct the background checks). See “Applicant Review Process” in the Women’s Council Election

Rules and Campaign Guidelines document for additional information.

4. Results of the background check and professional due diligence process will be submitted to the National Women's Council Chief Executive Officer for review. Should items of material issue be revealed about an applicant, said information will be submitted to the CCRC.

Incomplete/Partial applications will not be reviewed.

Examples of issues that may be considered material include, but are not limited to, the following:

- REALTOR® Code of Ethics violations resulting in the termination or suspension of membership
- Failure to comply with Women's Council campaign and election rules
- All criminal convictions, excluding traffic violations (however driving under the influence may be considered a material issue)
- Regulatory enforcement actions (personal or business) where a violation was found
- Pending regulatory investigations (personal or business)
- Pending litigation (personal or business)
- Judgments (personal or business)
- Violations to Women's Council of REALTORS Social Media Policy for Volunteer and Elected Positions

Convictions, regulatory investigations, pending litigation, judgments, facts, or circumstances that could reasonably represent a source of liability, or conflict with Women's Council of REALTORS® policies could affect the eligibility of the Candidate.

If after reviewing the Background Check and Professional Due Diligence process, the CCRC determines whether there are any material issues that may prevent an Applicant from being deemed a Candidate, the CCRC Chair will promptly disclose such material issue(s) to the Applicant. The Applicant will then be provided thirty (30) days to correct any inaccurate information or offer any mitigating information relevant to such issue(s). In addition, the CCRC may, in its discretion, request a personal interview with the Applicant. Upon completion of the Applicant review, the CCRC will release the list of Candidates to the membership of Women's Council on the Notification Date (see "Important Dates and Timeframes").

APPLICANT APPEAL PROCESS

1. Within ten (10) days of receipt of the CCRC determination of an Applicant's ineligibility to campaign for Elected Position, an Applicant may file a written appeal with the CCRC Chair.
2. The Applicant's appeal must include all of the following information:
 - a. Basis for Applicant's appeal
 - b. Supporting documentation for the Applicant's basis for appeal
 - c. Whether the Applicant requests an opportunity to make their appeal in person
3. Within ten (10) days of receipt of the written appeal, the CCRC Chair will forward a copy of the Applicant's appeal and supporting materials to the full CCRC for its review.

4. If the Applicant requests a hearing, a virtual hearing will be set, within five (5) days of receipt of the appeal, the CCRC Chair will notify the Applicant of the date of the appeal hearing.
5. A majority of the CCRC must be present in order to conduct an appeal hearing.
6. To prevail on appeal, an Applicant must receive a 2/3 affirmative vote from the CCRC members voting at the appeal hearing.
7. Within five (5) days of the date of the appeal hearing, but in no event earlier than the Notification Date of September 1st, the CCRC Chair shall notify the Applicant of the decision of the CCRC in writing.
8. The decision of CCRC on the Applicant's appeal is final.

CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES

1. Campaigning must not begin until January 1 of the election year
2. Candidates must ascribe to the Women's Council Election Rules and Campaign Guidelines as outlined in the document.
3. All candidates are expected to conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner, with particular consideration for the rights and privileges of other candidates. The candidates are expected to avoid activities that would disrupt Women's Council classes and official governance meetings of the Council or any State/Region Networks or Networking Groups.
4. All candidates will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Women's Council campaign and election rules. Applicants and Candidates may request clarification on existing campaign rules, and such questions, along with the CCRC response, will be provided to all candidates.
5. All candidates' marketing should be compliant with the CAN-SPAM Act and TCPA (Telephone Compliance Protection Act) - includes the Do Not Call Registry and text messaging.
6. Negative or derogatory campaigning and/or comments are not allowed.
7. All candidates are responsible for developing their own contact list. Use of national, state/region or local membership list by any party other than the Council in connection with campaign activities of any nature (e.g., phone calls, emails, text messages, etc.) is strictly prohibited.
8. All candidates and supporters of candidates are not allowed to make statements of support when serving in an official capacity at any Women's Council national, state or local classes, meetings or events, with the exception of specially-scheduled election forums requiring all candidates present.
9. All candidates and their supporters may share information on their personal campaign websites and social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, websites, blogs, etc.).
10. All candidates and supporters must refrain from tagging the people in the following groups when posting online - CCRC Committee, Executive Committee, Past National Presidents or Leadership Team.
11. All candidates must avoid any behavior or actions that disrupt in-person or virtual meetings.
12. All candidates are allowed to campaign in person in their own state and at Women's Council major meetings, as permitted. All other campaigning must be virtual.
13. May distribute campaign materials during Candidate Forum and Candidate Speech

sessions.

14. While on a National Women's Council business virtual meeting/event, customized backgrounds, virtual banners, candidate campaign materials or statements are prohibited. In addition, names must be correctly displayed without any campaign reference.
15. All candidates will be asked to submit to the Council a most recent photograph and a bio of not more than 350 words that summarizes their education, career accomplishments, leadership experiences, and awards and honors. The Council may publish this information in its electronic and/or print communication for membership to review.
16. Each candidate will be asked to prepare a short video statement of goals (not more than three minutes) that presents their views of the future of the Women's Council. Women's Council will distribute these via email for all attendees to review.

CONFERENCE CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

The intent of the Conference Campaign Checklist is not to disrupt in-person or virtual meetings.

Banners

- Banners are not permitted

Campaign Materials/Campaigning

- Must be approved by CCRC Chair
- No campaigning will be permitted at any Ticketed Events (i.e., PMN courses)
- Campaign events can only be held offsite of National Meetings and should not interfere with any National events being held. Events are not allowed, in person or virtually, on the day of the Women's Council Governing Board Midyear Meeting or Election Meeting.
- At the midyear meeting, campaign materials are allowed on the tables at the first day Welcome Breakfast
- If a candidate chooses to distribute food items, only pre-packaged, promotional treats may be distributed.
- All campaign materials must be removed at end of the Welcome Breakfast. All candidates are responsible for cleaning up any campaign materials/display throughout the process.
- Campaign materials may not be distributed to a REALTOR®'s hotel room nor advertise on a REALTOR®'s hotel room television.
- Campaign advertising is not allowed on any electronic screen in a hotel's public spaces.
- Election Day campaigning is permissible at Meet the Candidate only.
- Candidate may not sell goods in exchange for campaign funding.
- Candidate cannot raise campaign funds through an online fundraising platform, such as Go-Fund-Me.

CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

1. Women's Council will not provide campaign funds to any candidates.

2. Women's Council State or Local Networks will not provide campaign funds to any candidates.
3. Candidates are prohibited from selling goods to raise campaign funds.
4. Candidates are prohibited from starting virtual fundraising accounts.

CAMPAIGN RULE VIOLATION COMPLAINT PROCESS, SANCTIONS AND APPEAL PROCESS

Any Women's Council member may file a written complaint with the CCRC Chair, and the CCRC may initiate a complaint, for a suspected campaign violation.

If a Women's Council member, Applicant, or Candidate believes that a campaign rule violation has occurred, such individual is encouraged to file a written complaint with the CCRC Chair pursuant to the procedure outlined below.

Process for Submitting a Complaint:

1. Written complaints must be submitted on the Women's Council complaint form with the CCRC Chair and copied to Women's Council CEO. Forms can be obtained by contacting the CCRC Chair and/or Vice Chair.
2. All complaints must be submitted through the proper form and contain the name of the complainant, the date the complaint was submitted, and a summary of the allegations (photos & screen shots can be used to support complaint). Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.
3. The CCRC Chair, in consultation with Women's Council CEO or designated staff will review the complaint to determine whether the complaint sufficiently alleges that a campaign violation may have occurred. If it does, then a group consisting of the Candidate Credentialing and Campaign Rule Committee Chair and one (1) member of the CCRC (selected by the CCRC Chair and Women's Council CEO or designated staff) will contact the respondent directly and attempt to resolve the matter in a mutually agreeable manner, which may include the imposition of a sanction. If the matter is not resolved, the CCRC Chair, will assemble a five (5) member panel consisting of members of the CCRC and the chair, to further investigate and consider the matter.
4. If a panel is assembled, the panel may request the complainant and/or respondent to provide additional information or appear before the panel in person or virtually. The panel is bound by the rules of evidence and may consider any evidence to determine whether a campaign violation has occurred.
5. The resolution of the matter must be agreed upon by a majority vote of the panel.
6. The CCRC Chair, in consultation with Women's Council CEO or designated staff will document the resolution of the matter and communicate such resolution to respondent. The complainant will be notified as to whether or not a violation occurred and that any sanctions/actions are confidential to the respondent.
7. If the respondent wishes to appeal the sanction or the panel's decision for any reason, an appeal may be filed with the CCRC Chair. Complainants have no appeal right.

Sanctions:

If a campaign violation is deemed to have been committed, the panel has the discretion to impose any one or more of the following sanctions:

- Confidential written warning to the candidate, with a copy to the candidate's campaign manager (if applicable).
- Confidential cease and desist letter and/or letter of censure to the

candidate, with a copy to the candidate's campaign manager (if applicable).

- Letter of censure delivered to the Women's Council voting delegates (Bylaws Article X, Section 2B).
- Prohibited from running for any Women's Council Elected Office or Elected Position during the current and immediately following election cycle.

Appeal Process:

1. Within five (5) business days of the respondent's receipt of notice of the panel's decision, respondent may file a written appeal, which must include information supporting the basis of the appeal.
2. Within three (3) business days of receiving the candidate's appeal, the CCRC Chair will notify appellant of the date and time for the hearing.
3. Appellant has the right to present their appeal to the full Candidate Credentialing and Campaign Rules Committee. Members of the CCRC who served as part of the original review panel are excluded from the appeal, except that the CCRC Chair shall preside over the proceeding, but not vote. Appellant will have thirty (30) minutes to present any relevant evidence to the Candidate Credentialing and Campaign Rules Committee.
4. The CCRC will review the complaint anew, affording no deference to the panel's previous decision.
5. Within five (5) days of the appeal hearing, the CCRC Chair will notify the appellant of the CCRC decision on the appeal.
6. The decision of the CCRC is final.

CCRC Guidelines:

CCRC members, National Liaisons and/or National Liaisons- Elect must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. May not introduce or speak on behalf of a candidate or participate in photo opportunities with candidates.
2. If a CCRC member attends a campaign event, then he or she should attempt to attend campaign events of all candidates to avoid any appearance of favoritism.
3. May not wear or distribute campaign-related items.
4. May view information on candidates' websites and social media platforms, but must refrain from taking any action that is, or could be construed as an Endorsement. For example, "liking" or "following" a candidate's campaign social media page is prohibited.
5. If it comes to the attention of the CCRC Chair that a Candidate or CCRC member has this, the CCRC Chair, in consultation with the committee and Women's Council CEO or designated staff, will address the alleged violation and determine an appropriate resolution of the violation.
6. If it comes to the attention of the Women's Council CEO, a National Officer or a CCRC member that the CCRC Chair or Vice Chair has violated the Campaign Endorsement Policies, the National President, in consultation with the Women's Council CEO or designated staff, will address the alleged violation and determine an appropriate resolution of the violation.

J. ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF ELECTED OFFICERS

Women's Council Midyear Election Meeting:

Per the Bylaws, Election of officers shall be by viva voce or roll call vote, or written or electronic ballot as per rules of the day. A majority vote shall elect an officer. In the event that no candidate on the ballot for a particular office receives a majority vote, the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes cast shall remain on the ballot and a run-off election shall be held between those two candidates. The candidate receiving the majority of votes cast in the run-off election shall be declared the winner.

Women's Council Annual Meeting:

Per the Bylaws, the officers and elected positions of the Women's Council shall be installed and take office at a time to coincide with the installation and taking of office of the officers of the National Association of REALTORS®.