

NAR Grants Help Make Homeownership More Affordable for Working Families

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Despite today's tight economy, many areas of the country have not seen a significant drop in their high cost of living. To help meet this critical need for more affordable housing for low- to moderate-income working families, the National Association of Realtors® has awarded more than \$3.4 million through the Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grants program.

Teachers, firefighters, police officers, and restaurant and retail workers provide vital community services -- however, they often cannot afford to live in the communities where they work. This segment of the population can be shut out of the local housing market in high-cost communities, which can lead to longer commutes, sprawl and traffic congestion.

Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grants are awarded to state and territorial Realtor® associations to help fund programs that promote safe, decent housing for people with low and moderate incomes. Established in 2009, the program is named in honor of Ira Gribin, a former NAR president who was a tireless advocate for fair and affordable housing for diverse populations.

"Realtors® build communities and care about the high cost of housing and the lack of affordable, decent homes available to working families in many of our communities," said NAR President Vicki Cox Golder, owner of Vicki L. Cox & Associates in Tucson, Ariz.

"Realtor® associations are working hard to address affordability problems in their states, and through the Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grants program, they are able to provide even more affordable housing opportunities to working families. That's good for the entire community."

Grants can be used to support a broad range of workforce housing solutions, including downpayment and financial assistance programs, home buyer or Realtor® education, public awareness and advocacy campaigns, and housing construction and rehabilitation. The one-time grants are awarded on a sliding scale based on Realtor® association membership. To date, NAR has awarded grants to 31 Realtor® associations, totaling \$3,443,500.

The following state Realtor® associations or their foundations have been awarded an Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grant since the program's inception: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

A new NAR report, "Tackling Workforce Housing State by State," describes the status and progress of the 2009 Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grant recipients. The report provides detailed program summaries and contact information for each of the grantees and is available at www.realtor.org/iragribingrant.

"The 'Tackling Workforce Housing State by State' report is a great resource for Realtors® or community organizations who are looking for a guide or need inspiration to handle workforce housing issues in their own community," said Cox Golder.

The two-year grant program concludes at the end of 2010; applications are due no later than October 31, 2010. For more information about Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grants, visit www.realtor.org/IraGribinGrant.