

DIVERSITY ALLIANCE PLEDGE & TOOLKIT

2024



**DURHAM REGIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®**

Home to the Greater Triangle

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Letter from the DEI Committee Co-Chairs

Dear REALTOR® Members,

It is an honor and privilege to serve as co-chairs of DRAR's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

The DRAR DEI Committee was formed in 2020 to acknowledge the need and importance of representation and participation from a diverse population within our association and local real estate profession.

Our mission is to recognize and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among DRAR and our greater community, and provide opportunities for growth through education and action.

This Diversity Alliance Toolkit is a guide to encourage collaboration and offer resources to those who may need them. We appreciate your effort toward understanding through educated participation and by signing the enclosed pledge.

On behalf of the DEI Committee, thank you for your support.



Liz Schoeneberger

Liz Schoeneberger
Co-Chair, DEI Committee



Leah Cole

Leah Cole
Co-Chair, DEI Committee

The 2024 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee

Liz Schoeneberger
Co-Chair

Leah Cole
Co-Chair

Shelia Willis
CEO

Patty Braswell-Isler

Chris Holt

Mytesha Nunez

Teresa Brooks

Roger Hudson

Andre Ortiz

Ashley Bullock

Grace Jones

Heather Poole

Lynwood Cherry, III

Carolyn Kinneen

Carmen Posas

Tschanna Crenshaw

Thomas Kortus

Sharon Sunkel

Pete Eisenmann

Violet Locke-Harrington

Sondra Trice-Jones

Andrea Fulmore

Jo Ellen Mason

Amy West

Kia -Tishayn Harrell

Taylor McMurray

Tye Williams

Jennifer Hayden

Michelle Medley

Jessica Youngblood



DRAR's Strategic Plan: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion



**DURHAM REGIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®**
Home to the Greater Triangle

Mission Statement: To provide members with education and resources that will enable them to enhance professional growth and prosperity, to promote and enforce ethical standards, and to be a continuing source of information concerning issues impacting real estate; thereby encouraging and protecting private property.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity refers to our differences, including but not limited to race, color, ethnicity, creed, gender, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, language, culture, religion, age, (dis)ability, veteran status, and political views. **Equity** refers to fair and just practices and policies. **Inclusion** refers to an environment in which diverse backgrounds can participate and be respected. A successful community contains ALL of these. Diversity without respectful inclusion is not equitable.

EMPOWER PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

- Encourage and facilitate discussions on diversity within our communities and work together to be ambassadors of social change
- Collectively work to highlight the diversity of our members to showcase our commitment to the REALTOR® Code of Ethics
- Make DRAR a better advocate for homeownership and private property rights regardless of the communities they serve
- Identify any concerns and needs of minority members and assist in the development of actions to address their concerns and needs

PROMOTE A CULTURALLY DIVERSE LEADERSHIP

- Ensure the Board of Directors prioritizes and supports diversity within our association and the real estate profession
- Be intentional that our officers, directors, and staff recognize and represent the demographics of our membership and community
- Allocate resources to identify and offer education to members on the importance of promoting diversity, inclusion, and fair housing needs

ADVOCATING FOR EQUITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

- Continue to advance the Memorandum of Understanding with the Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS® and other housing advocates and business leaders from the Triangle community
- Focus on facilitating discussions, generating new ideas, and creating solutions for addressing housing inequality, regional and community development, gentrification, and affordable housing concerns, while also addressing any local marketplace discrimination
- Ensure the integration of our values and initiatives in advocacy work with local, state, and federally elected leaders



Diversity Alliance Pledge



As members of our local associations, we pledge to value and be intentional on diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization throughout communications, training, and initiatives. We will champion these efforts to foster an equitable opportunity platform for all of our membership and client communities



PLEDGE COMMITMENT



By agreeing to the Diversity Alliance Pledge, our firm will encourage our members to complete the following education within one year of signing.



- [NAR's Fairhaven: A Fair Housing Simulation](#)
- [At Home with Diversity® \(AHWD\)](#)

Pledging: **For myself** **For my firm/office:**

SIGNATURE

FIRM NAME

PRINTED NAME

DATE

Please email a scanned copy to services@durhamrealtors.org

CODE OF ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS POLICY

Approved by the NAR Board of Directors on 11/13/2020

Standard of Practice 10-5

REALTORS® must not use harassing speech, hate speech, epithets, or slurs based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Rationale: This proposed Standard of Practice flows directly from the requirement to not deny equal professional services or be parties to a plan to discriminate. Specifically, bias against protected classes revealed through the public posting of hate speech could result in REALTORS® not taking clients from certain protected classes or not treating them equally, which would lead to violations of the Fair Housing Act.

Progressive Discipline

Discipline imposed for violations of the Code of Ethics or for violations of other membership duties should be progressive, that is discipline should increase incrementally for subsequent violations. The disciplinary emphasis where first-time violations occur should be primarily educational. Repeated or subsequent violations should result in more serious forms of discipline being utilized, including substantial fines, suspension, and termination of membership. At the same time, a gray area can exist where a first-time violation is not attributable to ignorance or oversight but rather to blatant disregard for the Code and its obligations. While the educational emphasis of Code enforcement cannot be disregarded, the fact that the Code exists to protect the public must be carefully considered in determining appropriate discipline. Three contrasting examples are provided to illustrate these points.

Example A: REALTOR® A, who had recently earned her real estate license, was found to have violated Article 12 for advertising a listed property without disclosing her status as either a REALTOR® or as a real estate licensee. At the hearing, REALTOR® A acknowledged her oversight and it was clear to the Hearing Panel that the violation was inadvertent and unintentional. The panel concluded that a letter of reprimand and attendance at a three (3) hour Code of Ethics update session was appropriate.

Two months later, REALTOR® A was charged with a nearly identical violation. After concluding that she had, in fact, violated Article 12, the Hearing Panel was given access to REALTOR® A's files to see whether REALTOR® A had previously violated the Code so that appropriate discipline could be recommended. It was the conclusion of the Hearing Panel that a second violation of the same Article, occurring just months after the first violation, warranted more serious discipline. REALTOR® A was fined \$1,000 and required to attend a full-day ethics education program. (Revised 11/13)

Three months later, REALTOR® A was again found to have violated Article 12. The Hearing Panel was then given access to REALTOR® A's file and, upon learning of the two (2) prior violations in less than a year recommended a \$5,000 fine. (Revised 11/13)

Example B: REALTOR® B, who had recently received his real estate license, was found to have violated Article 4 for failing to disclose to his seller-client that the purchaser that REALTOR® B had procured was, in fact, REALTOR® B's wife. In determining appropriate discipline, the Hearing Panel considered REALTOR® B's limited experience in the real estate business and the fact that this was the first time that REALTOR® B had been found in violation of the Code. The Hearing Panel also considered that REALTOR® B's failure to disclose had not been inadvertent or unintentional and that REALTOR® B had knowingly concealed from his client a key fact that might have influenced the client's decision to accept the offer from REALTOR® B's wife. Based on the seriousness of the violation and REALTOR® B's conscious disregard for his disclosure obligation, the Hearing Panel recommended a \$5,000 fine and retaking the ethics orientation required for new members. (Revised 11/13)

Example C: In social media discussions, REALTOR® C posted several discriminatory and offensive comments which were deemed to be in violation of Article 10 as they discriminated against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity. In determining appropriate discipline, the Hearing Panel considered REALTOR® C's comments as hate speech and discrimination in violation of Article 10 and had reason to believe that a violation of the public trust occurred. Based on the offensiveness of REALTOR® C's comments and his total disregard for the Code of Ethics' obligation to not be a party to any plan to discriminate against members of the protected classes of Article 10, the Hearing Panel recommended a \$5,000 fine and mandatory completion of implicit bias training.

Standard of Practice 10-5 is not focused on types of speech that might be subjectively deemed “offensive” or “discriminatory” by one person and not another. The Standard of Practice is based on very particular types of speech that are directly connected to the protected classes of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity under Article 10. Only the use of harassing speech, hate speech, epithets and slurs based on the protected classes of Article 10 are prohibited. The terms “harassing speech,” “hate speech,” “epithets,” and “slurs” can be commonly understood by use of a dictionary as well as other easily available references.

For example, NAR’s Code of Conduct and Anti-Harassment Policy clearly defines “harassment” and “sexual harassment.”

- “Harassment includes inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action, or gesture-based on another person’s sex, color, race, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and any other protected characteristic.”
- Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and the display or circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or group based on a protected characteristic.”

“Sexual Harassment” includes not only physical acts but also includes verbal and non-verbal/non- physical acts. Sexual harassment can be:

- Verbal: Sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, or threats.
- Non-Verbal: Sexually suggestive objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, or obscene gestures. ... ”

Hearing Panels should look to this existing information on harassment to determine whether harassing speech has occurred and then look to determine whether the harassing speech was based on one of the protected classes.

In similar fashion, Merriam Webster’s Dictionary defines “hate speech,” “epithets,” and “slurs” as follows:

- Hate Speech: “speech that is intended to insult, offend, or intimidate a person because of some trait (as race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability).”
- Epithet: “1a: a characterizing word or phrase accompanying or occurring in place of the name of a person or thing; b: a disparaging or abusive word or phrase”
- Slur: “1a: an insulting or disparaging remark or innuendo: ASPERSION; b: a shaming or degrading effect: STAIN, STIGMA”

Again, Hearing Panels must look to whether the hate speech, epithet or slur is based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity and not on some other non-protected characteristic.

Under Statement of Professional Standards Policy #29, REALTORS® are subject to the Code of Ethics' standards in all of their activities. Thus, a violation of Article 10, as supported by Standard of Practice 10-5, can occur when a REALTOR® uses harassing speech, hate speech, epithets and slurs based on the protected classes in any media or context, regardless of whether related to their activities in the real estate business or their identification as a REALTOR®.

[Read the full Code of Ethics & Professional Standards Policies by the NAR Board of Directors](#)

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DURHAM REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® NON-DISCRIMINATION & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

6.13 Harassment Policy/Abusive Conduct

Any member of the association may be reprimanded, placed on probation, suspended or expelled for harassment or abusive conduct towards an association employee or association officer or director, after an investigation in accordance with the procedures of the association. As used in this Section, "harassment and abusive conduct" means any verbal, written or electronic communication or any physical conduct which is threatening, abusive, disruptive or obscene, or creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment, including but not limited to, unwelcomed sexual advances, stalking, unwanted touching, or either 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 or with an association meeting, educational class, presentation or event. If the investigation by the association reveals a violation of this policy, the findings shall be submitted to an investigatory team comprised of the President, President-Elect and one member of the Board of Directors selected by the highest ranking officer not named in the complaint. The investigatory team shall review the findings and take whatever disciplinary actions it deems necessary after consulting with legal counsel or other attorneys representing the association may include any sanction authorized in the association's [Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual](#). If the complaint names the President, President-Elect or a member of Board of Directors, 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.

Sexual Harassment

Individuals (including vendors, customers, and visitors) are prohibited from harassing employees, Individuals, and other covered

persons based on that individual's sex or gender (including pregnancy and status as a transgender or transsexual individual) and regardless of the harasser's sex or gender.

Sexual harassment means any harassment based on someone's sex or gender. It includes harassment that is not sexual in nature (for example, offensive remarks about an individual's sex or gender), as well as any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any other conduct of a sexual nature.

The association will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, regardless of whether it is verbal (for example, epithets, derogatory statements, slurs, sexually-related comments or jokes, unwelcome sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors), physical (for example, assault or inappropriate physical contact), visual (for example, displaying sexually suggestive posters cartoons or drawings, sending inappropriate adult-themed gifts, leering, or making sexual gestures), or online (for example, derogatory statements or sexually suggestive postings in any social media platform including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.). This list is illustrative only, and not exhaustive. No form of sexual harassment will be tolerated.

Harassment is prohibited both at the association workplace and at association-sponsored events off-premises.

DURHAM REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® NON-DISCRIMINATION & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Reporting Harassment

The Durham Regional Association of REALTORS® can only resolve matters of which it has knowledge. Any individual who feels they have been harassed or has witnessed harassment has a duty to immediately report the alleged harassment so that it may be investigated and appropriate action taken. This is true whether the alleged harasser is an employee, association member, officer or director.

To report alleged harassment, contact the CEO of the association. If the case involves the CEO, then contact the current President of the Association. In the case that he or she is the subject of the allegation, contact the next highest ranking officer. If the complaint names the President, President-Elect, or a member of the Board of Directors, 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.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the reporting individual will be informed of the action taken, if any.

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 unreasonable interfering with an individual's work performance by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment.

Education & Resources

EDUCATION

- Designations & Certifications
 - [At Home with Diversity® \(AHWD\)](#)
- National Association of REALTORS®
 - [Fairhaven: A Fair Housing Simulation](#)
 - [Bias Override: Overcoming Barriers to Fair Housing](#)

RESOURCES

- Durham Regional Association of REALTORS®
 - [DRAR's Professional Standards \(How to File an Ethics Complaint\)](#)
 - [Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee page](#)
- NC REALTORS®
 - [NC REALTORS® Legal Hotline: \(336\) 294-1415](#)
- National Association of REALTORS®
 - [Before You File an Ethic's Complaint Brochure](#)
 - [Fair Housing Journalism](#)
 - [Fair Housing Action Plan: ACT! Initiative](#)
- The North Carolina Real Estate Commission
 - [Questions & Answers on Fair Housing \(English\)](#)
 - [Preguntas y Respuestas Sobre Vivienda Justa \(Spanish\)](#)
- Fair Housing Complaints
 - [Information on filing a complaint directly with HUD](#)
 - [Filing a complaint about a real estate licensee with the North Carolina Real Estate Commission](#)
 - [North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings Housing Discrimination Complaint Process](#)

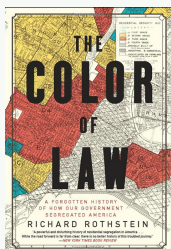
PODCASTS

- [Ensuring Fair Housing for All with NAR's Bryan Greene](#)
- [The Red Line: Racial Disparities in Lending](#)

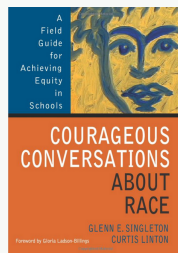
These resources are not intended to convey or constitute legal advice and should not be used in place of seeking counsel from a licensed attorney.

Education & Resources

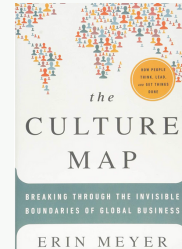
The DRAR DEI Committee recommends this list of 15 powerful books on diversity, equity, and inclusion. These books tackle important topics such as creating an inclusive organizational model, understanding unconscious and systemic bias, and providing tools for creating a diverse and inclusive community.



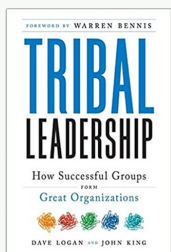
The Color of Law
Richard Rothstein



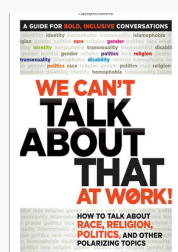
Courageous Conversations About Race
Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton



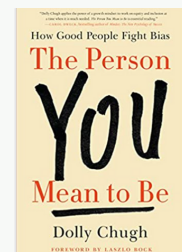
The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business
Erin Meyer



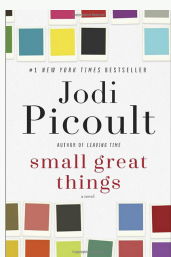
Tribal Leadership: Leveraging Natural Groups to Build a Thriving Organization
Dave Logan, John King, Halee Fischer-Wright



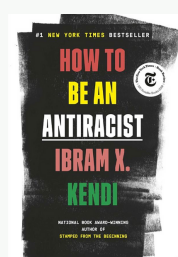
We Can't Talk About That at Work!: How to Talk about Race, Religion, Politics, & Other Polarizing Topics
Mary-Frances Winters



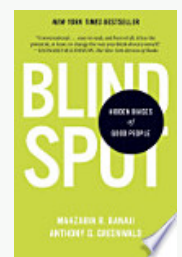
The Person You Mean to Be
Dolly Chugh



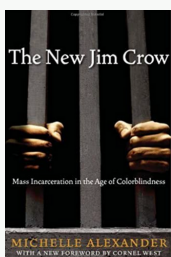
Small Great Things
Jodi Picoult



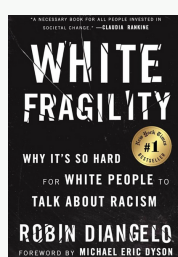
How to Be an Antiracist
Ibram X. Kendi



Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People
Mahzarin R. Banaji & Anthony G. Greenwald



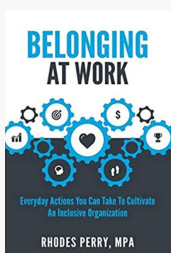
The New Jim Crow
Michelle Alexander



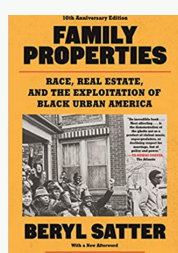
White Fragility
Robin DiAngelo



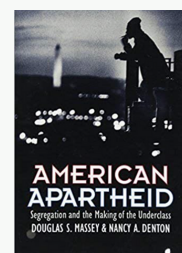
The Color of Money: Black Banks & the Racial Wealth Gap
Mehrsa Baradaran



Belonging at Work
Rhodes Perry



Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, & the Exploitation of Black Urban America
Beryl Satter



American Apartheid
Douglas Massey

When Taking Action is Necessary

Our industry is tasked with policing itself and that can create uncomfortable situations. The following suggestions are intended to help you determine a possible course of action.

1 Take a Breath

There are resources to support you.

2 Talk With the Other Party

While you may be apprehensive about taking this approach, most situations can be resolved with open communication and asking questions.

3 Talk With Your Broker-In-Charge

Talk with your broker-in-charge about what steps to take and how to handle your situation. They will have insight and resources to assist you.

4 Seek Counsel

Contact Shelia Willis, CEO of the Durham Regional Association of REALTORS® for guidance in determining a course of action for one of the following:

- filing an ethics complaint through DRAR
- contacting the NCREC for an alleged licensing law violation
- contacting a Fair Housing Intake Specialist at (800) 669-9777 or visiting the [HUD](#) website

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I've witnessed a Fair Housing violation?

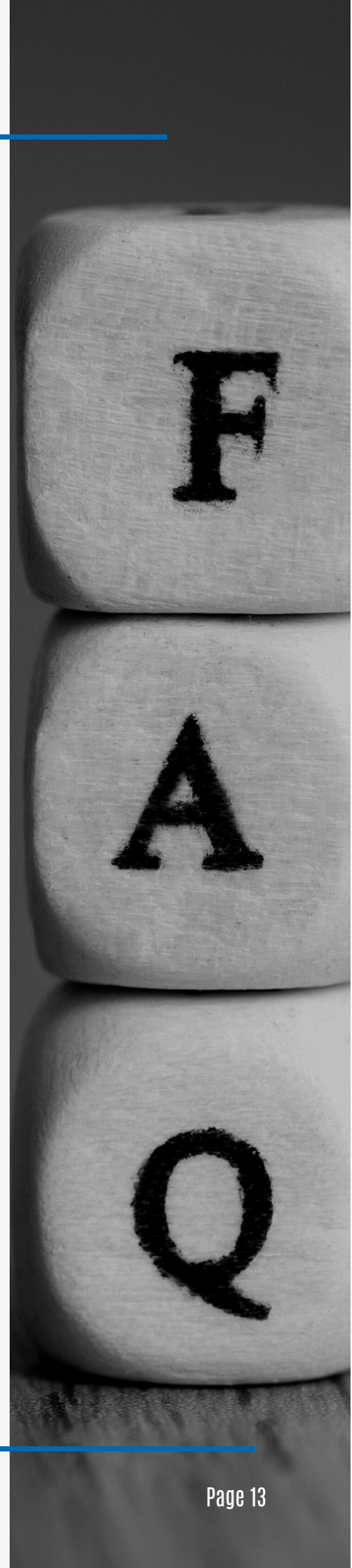
- Refer to [Education & Resources](#) on page 10 and [When Taking Action is Necessary](#) on page 12 in this Toolkit.

How can I apply diversity, equity, & inclusion (DEI) initiatives when recruiting agents for my firm?

- Refer to your firm's culture, mission, and vision for insight.
- Contact local and state REALTOR® associations or your local Chamber of Commerce for guidance.
- Share your commitment to DEI with your agents.
- Ask potential hires for their thoughts on DEI and how they see themselves fitting into your firm.
- Make an effort to create an environment that reflects the diversity of our community.

How do I address questions such as: "Is this neighborhood safe?" and/or, "Are the schools good?"

- Due to the Fair Housing Act, REALTORS® should let objective, not subjective, information be the guide.
- For safety information visit sites such as [Neighborhood Scout](#).
- Offer to refer clients to third parties. According to NAR:
 - "It's okay to talk about schools, but don't make the judgment call yourself."
 - "Give homebuyers the resources they need to make the decision for themselves. Remember, it's not about your kids. It's about their kids. Every child has different needs, and every family has different preferences."
- Objective information is easy to document and quantify and is readily available on the Internet. Some states have websites that compare schools. Some areas have websites for local school information, e.g., [Durham Public Schools](#).
 - "Keep a list of school or community-based websites that offer information about schools so you're prepared to provide those web addresses to your customers."
 - "Better still, build relationships with local schools so you know where to direct people's inquiries. Be equipped to provide contact information at schools or make appointments with the schools so your customers can go visit the school and find out for themselves."



Frequently Asked Questions

How can I create a more diverse and inclusive culture within my firm and/or business?

- Education - learn how to recognize and correct biases.
- Make DEI goals imperative and transparent. Hold your team accountable in action and through communications, such as branding, discussions, setting measurable objectives, and community outreach.
- Create a DEI taskforce to foster open dialogue around initiatives and strategies within your firm.
- Create an intentional and thoughtful hiring plan for staff, associates, and vendors.
- Work with your REALTOR® association. By supporting the national, state, and local REALTOR® associations, your firm can widen its DEI scope. Learn and participate in their programs.

How can I continue to learn more about DEI?

- Please refer to [Education & Resources](#) on page 10 in this Toolkit.

