



**Nebraska REALTORS® Association
State Political Coordinator
Program**

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I. What is the State Political Coordinator Program?

The State Political Coordinator (SPC) Program is a foundational component of Nebraska REALTORS® Association's coordinated legislative grassroots advocacy efforts.

What is a State Political Coordinator?

A State Political Coordinator (SPC) is a Nebraska REALTOR® who serves in a very important role.

SPCs:

- Cultivate and build a solid and lasting personal and professional relationship with their state senator.
- Coordinate our efforts to be the "Voice of Real Estate in Nebraska" by educating and influencing their member of the Legislature on issues important to REALTORS®, the real estate industry, property investment, and homeownership.
- Establish the Nebraska REALTORS® Association and themselves as credible and valuable resources to the Nebraska Legislature.
- Become a familiar face and local identity for issues being discussed, reinforcing our REALTOR® voice on a more personal level.
- Ground themselves in the mutual self-interest of the state senator, their constituent-customers, and our members.

What is the goal of the State Political Coordinator Program?

The goal of the SPC program is to advocate on behalf of all Nebraska REALTORS® by strengthening and utilizing existing connections and relationships between the Nebraska REALTORS® Association members in their community and our state senators in the Nebraska Legislature. When issues affecting REALTORS®, the real estate industry, property investment, and homeownership are under consideration, heard in committee, or on the floor of the Legislature, SPC members communicate Nebraska REALTORS®'s position to their designated state senator and ask for their support or vote in alignment with our stance. The SPC program ensures Nebraska REALTORS®'s viewpoints and positions on the issues are heard and considered in the lawmaking process. The foundation of this grassroots program is the belief that by working together as a team across Nebraska, our REALTOR® members can influence public policy. Through this collaborative effort, our **REALTOR® Party** voice will be heard.

What is the REALTOR® Party?

The **REALTOR® Party** is a powerful alliance of REALTORS® and REALTOR® Associations working to protect and promote issues affecting REALTORS®, the real estate industry, property investment, and homeownership. The **REALTOR® Party** speaks with one voice to advance candidates and public policies that build strong communities and promote a vibrant business environment.

The **REALTOR® Party** is the non-partisan approach. Whether an SPC or any REALTOR® member you must remain neutral and remove personal bias on the issues in order to advocate on behalf of **REALTOR® Party**-supported issues.

What qualifications are considered when appointing a State Political Coordinator?

NRA's goal is to secure a State Political Coordinator for each of the 49 members of the Nebraska Legislature. The best State Political Coordinator candidates live in the district of the state senator they the SPC for, and are a Nebraska REALTOR® member who:

- Has a strong interest in politics and is politically active in the community.
- A history of giving to RPAC as a tangible and credible sign of their commitment to the Nebraska REALTORS® Association's legislative objectives and their understanding of RPAC's importance in achieving those goals.
- Responds to Calls for Action at all 3 levels of government.
- Has an established personal and/or professional relationship with one or more state senator(s).
- Has attendance and participation at state association, governmental affairs, and RPAC meetings/events.
- Is willing to volunteer time and energy to advance **REALTOR® Party** issues.

How are State Political Coordinators appointed?

Candidates for SPCs must complete an SPC application, which shall be reviewed by the Nebraska REALTORS® Association Government Affairs (GA) Committee Chair and Vice Chair and appointed by them. Members interested are to submit their application to the NRA Government Affairs Director Jeff Hebb at jeff@nebraskarealtors.com for the Governmental Affairs Chair and Vice Chair to review for selection.

How long does an SPC serve in the role?

Length of service for the role of SPC depends on a variety of factors. Each SPC is encouraged to maintain regular contact with the Nebraska REALTORS® Association Governmental Affairs Committee and Director, as well as their local board Governmental Affairs Committee and staff. Because part of the purpose of the SPC Program is to develop lasting relationships with state senators over time, the goal is that each SPC will serve in their role during the tenure of their designated state senator's term in the Nebraska Legislature. Currently appointed SPCs will be reviewed annually by the NRA Governmental Affairs Committee Chair and Vice Chair.

What are the Responsibilities of a State Political Coordinator?

1. **Respond to ALL Calls for Action (CFA).** SPCs are expected to respond to **ALL** NAR and NRA Calls for Action they receive. As one of Nebraska REALTORS® Association primary REALTOR® communicators to the Nebraska Legislature, SPCs are looked upon as leaders by their Nebraska REALTOR® colleagues and should lead by example. After responding to any Call for Action, SPCs should encourage their fellow Nebraska REALTORS® to do the same.

What is a Call for Action? The Nebraska REALTORS® Association and the National Association of REALTORS® will launch Calls for Action (referred to as CFAs) in order to alert state senators, or members of Congress accordingly, about an upcoming issue. Statewide CFAs will request that Nebraska REALTOR® members contact their state senator (national CFAs will request all REALTORS® contact their member of Congress) about specific issues of immediate interest to Nebraska REALTORS®. CFAs include important document information such as bill numbers, talking points on the **REALTOR® Party** position, and convenient links for contacting state senators or members of Congress. Responding quickly to CFAs is critical to communicating a coordinated, powerful grassroots message. The goal of the CFA is to generate a simultaneously high volume of personalized communications from Nebraska REALTORS®.

2. **Utilize and Deliver RPAC Contributions.** In coordination with the Nebraska REALTORS® Association RPAC efforts, each SPC is asked to deliver, or help coordinate attendance for, in-district RPAC checks, or RPAC checks being delivered to fundraisers and events in Lincoln, in accordance with Nebraska State PAC guidelines. In the

event that an SPC will deliver an RPAC check to his or her state senator in-district, the state association will notify the respective local board, which may participate in the delivery or presentation.

3. **Attend Legislative Days and Other State Meetings.** All SPCs are encouraged to attend Bill Review, Legislative Days, Capitol Day and the **REALTOR® Party** Party, State Convention, Fall Meetings, and Caravan, as well as encourage other Nebraska REALTOR® members to do the same.
4. **Advocate on Behalf of all REALTORS® and the REALTOR® Party.**
5. **Maintain Contact with Your State Senator.** SPCs are encouraged to contact and communicate with their state senator as often as possible, but should have a **minimum** of three personal contacts with their designated state senator (or staff) per year. We request the SPC make at least two interactions during Session and one outside of Session; **and report on them** to the Nebraska REALTORS® Association Government Affairs Director Jeff Hebb, utilizing the SPC field report. Such interactions could include advocacy efforts on **REALTOR® Party** issues, calls and meetings, RPAC check deliveries in-district, or at fundraisers and events in Lincoln.
6. **Develop Your SPC Contact Team.** Each SPC should identify two to four REALTOR® members in their district, who have a good personal or professional relationship with your designated state senator who can assist in the SPC duties. The SPC should maintain regular communication with their team on REALTOR® issues, grassroots advocacy efforts, RPAC fundraisers and events, and all Calls for Action. The team should be ready to aid the SPC in contacting and communicating with their designated state senator, delivering RPAC checks, attending fundraisers and events, and/or facilitating meetings in the absence of the SPC or when necessary. Members of this team may be viewed as possible replacements for the SPC when their term expires.
7. **File Field Reports.** We encourage our SPCs to report each interaction with their assigned state senator utilizing the SPC field report format. Field reports will be held by NRA for the duration of that senator's term in office.
8. **Sign and return the SPC Pledge Form.**
9. **Participate in Training as Required.**

II. Help Your Communications as SPC Stand Out!

- **Get to know the issues** – Understanding an issue enables you to communicate an informed and persuasive opinion. You will also be more prepared to answer questions about the issue.
- **Get to know your state senator** – Understanding their personal interests, committee assignments, and voting record will help you gauge how best to ask for his or her support.
- **Get to know their staff** – Learning the job functions of your designated state senator’s staff will set you up for success. By developing a relationship with them, you will find yourself in a much better position to reach your state senator if the need arises. Their staff is the “eyes and ears” for the state senator and should be given attention.
- **Communicate your personal interest** – Your message as an advocate is strengthened when you describe how an issue affects you personally; and how it affects REALTORS®, the real estate industry, property investment, and homeownership in Nebraska.
- **Coordinate your grassroots activities** – While all grassroots communications promoting Nebraska REALTORS® Association’s legislative priorities are beneficial, coordinated efforts and activities with other Nebraska REALTORS® advocates help raise the volume of the REALTOR® voice in Nebraska.

Things to Do, NOT to Do, or to NEVER Do!

How to respond to *Calls for Action*

DO!

- Carefully review all material provided with the Call for Action and any information which has been previously provided by the Nebraska REALTORS® Association.
- Act Immediately. Schedule an appointment to talk with your state senator. If time does not allow for a face-to-face meeting, be prepared to explain the situation by phone.
- Convey only Nebraska REALTORS®’s position on this policy, issue, or legislation.
- Pay close attention to the date. Bills are sometimes amended which may cause the Nebraska REALTORS® Association to alter its position. This is especially important toward the end of a session, when legislation moves rapidly through their agenda.
- Personalize the situation. Relate issues to your own real estate practice and business experience(s). Explaining your request will have far more meaning if it can be directly connected to the state senator’s district and constituents.
- Provide the Nebraska REALTORS® Association Government Affairs Director Jeff Hebb with the state senator’s response. This helps in determining how issues may be considered before they come up for a vote.

DO NOT or NEVER!

- **Do not** tell your state senator that the Nebraska REALTORS® Association asked you to call or contact them. He or she should understand you are making contact as a concerned constituent as well as a REALTOR®.
- **Never** offer to compromise or change language in a bill, even when directly asked to do so by a state senator. However, as a follow-up, notify the Nebraska REALTORS® Association Government Affairs Director Jeff Hebb of the request.
- **Do not** insist that the state senator take a position. Ask for support of your position, but don’t force a commitment if he or she is reluctant. When the issue is voted on, your request will be remembered.
- **Never** give up trying to make contact just because your state senator is not readily available. These elected officials are busy and are often hard to reach by phone. When in Session, they may be on the floor of the Legislature or attending committee hearings/meetings. If you cannot reach your state senator personally, leave the appropriate information (i.e., the bill number and Nebraska REALTORS® Association’s position) with their staff. Remember, you have a relationship with staff.

III. Conduct Effective Meetings with Your State Senator

Before the Meeting...

DO!

- Make an appointment. If you drop in without an appointment, you may miss your state senator, you may wait a long time, or you may force the state senator to postpone another appointment, all of which create negative feelings instead of good will.
- Do your homework. Research the state senator's voting record, issued statements, and issues important to them.
- Get on the state senator's mailing list to be notified when he/she is in the District, attending meetings, or to learn what statements and positions have been made.
- Prepare. Keep these three meeting goals in mind.
 1. Learn more about your state senator.
 2. Convey your position on an issue.
 3. Find out how the state senator feels about the issue.
- Plan your strategy ahead of time and be prepared.
- Bullet the three to five most important points from the NRA legislative talking points, and use real examples. Include questions you would like to ask the state senator.
- Be political. State senators want to represent their constituents (YOU!), so draw a clear connection between what you are requesting and the interests back in the district.
- Be organized and concise.
- Dress and act like you take the meeting seriously.

During the Meeting...

NOTE: You may find that you are meeting with a staff person instead of the state senator due to the state senator's hectic schedule. That is acceptable. Staff often are the "eyes and ears" for the state senator and regularly advise the state senator on how to vote or stand on the **REALTOR® Party** issues. They can be a valuable asset in your relationship building efforts with your state senator.

DO!

- Arrive on time, and be polite and friendly.
- Introduce yourself, even at the second, third, or fourth meeting to the receptionist upon your arrival, and mention with whom you have an appointment. Reintroduce yourself to the state senator as you connect to meet. Be prepared to wait or to be sent to another location.
- Make certain to obtain the name and business card of any staff person who sits in on the meeting. This will help you follow up later.
- Be sensitive to the amount of time allotted you. Ask up front how much time the senator can give. If you get 15-20 minutes with your state senator (or staff), that's great!
- Stay on point and discuss REALTOR® issues only.
- Plan on using half of your time to make your point. The state senator or staff will appreciate your consideration of their time constraints. **Do NOT go over time!**
- Structure the conversation in one of three ways:
 1. The informal conversation held at social events (such as dinners, sporting events, or social events) where interaction is personal and subjects discussed are not legislative and/or organizational in nature.

2. The open-ended conversation where the topic discussed will be legislative and/or organizational in nature. You should try to identify the source of differences in opinion, **not** lobby the state senator on specific measures or try to win a debating contest. You may win the debate and lose the state senator.
 3. The pointed conversation where you hope to persuade the state senator of a point of view.
- Be brief. State your issue, using facts and examples, and ask the state senator if he or she has a position.
 - Listen. Don't be discouraged if they refuse to support your position.
 - Thank the state senator for his or her time, offer assistance, and leave any handouts, before you go.
 - Leave your business card so the state senator or staff may contact you if needed. Be sure to offer your assistance/expertise on real estate issues.

DO NOT or NEVER!

- **Do NOT** fail to show up for your scheduled meeting. Call if you are running late.
- **Do not** put state senators in the awkward position of remembering your name. Realize how many people they meet, and understand that your state senator may not remember you.
- **Never** text or email during your meeting. Your time with the state senator and/or the staff member is short. It is important that you remain focused and respectful during the meeting.
- **Do not** confuse your message by asking for too many things at one time.
- **Do not** assume that the state senator or staff knows anything about your issue.
- **Never** interrupt when the state senator or staff is speaking. Let them finish their thought or question before jumping in.
- **Do not** be afraid to say "I don't know." If you are asked a question and don't know the answer, simply say that and let them know you will find out and get back to them. **Important: Get back to them!**
- **Never** threaten the state senator when he or she doesn't agree with your views on the **REALTOR® Party** issue.
- **Never** underestimate your importance. As a voter, you have power. Your power is your vote and your ability to influence the votes of others in your community.

**** REMINDER:** The **Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act 49-14,101.02 concerns public official or public employee; use of public resources or funds; prohibited acts; exceptions.** (1) For purposes of this section, public resources means personnel, property, resources, or funds under the official care and control of a public official or public employee. **The message...** it is prohibited to deliver or receive campaign contributions by anyone in a government facility.

After the Meeting...

DO!

- Immediately send a follow-up email, and a handwritten thank you note. Include the points covered during the meeting and send along any additional information or materials you promised.
- FILE A FIELD REPORT.
- Follow through on any promises you made to the state senator or staff.
- Send the state senator a note of support when they do or say something in favor of your issue. This is especially important if the state senator was on your side, and your side was the unpopular one overall.
- Support the state senator with personal contributions to their campaign or volunteer to help in their re-election.

IV. Corresponding, Calling, and Maximizing a Relationship with Your State Senator

Through direct personal interaction you will begin to build a relationship with your designated state senator, which will help increase your impact in the long term.

Staff members are important people for you to work with – sometimes they can get more done than going directly to the state senator. They can be helpful in alerting you to essential information on legislation of importance to Nebraska REALTORS®. When you engage in correspondence with the state senator, it is not uncommon for a staff member to be your first point of contact.

Corresponding with Your State Senator

- Address your state senator appropriately. (i.e., Senator ABC)
- When the Nebraska Legislature is in Session, send all mail to their legislative address. You can find those addresses on the Nebraska Legislature website: http://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_list.php.
- When the Nebraska Legislature is **NOT** in Session, send mail to their district address.
- Write on your personal or business letterhead when possible, and put your signature above your typed name.
- Identify your affiliation in your letter. For example: “I am a REALTOR® working for XYZ Realty in Anytown, NE” or “I am the Broker/Owner of XYZ Realty in Anytown, NE”.
- Be sure your return address is on the letter, not just the envelope. Envelopes sometimes get separated from letters.
- Clearly identify the legislation you are writing about by noting the bill number and any revision of provisions. Also, because bills are often amended, it is wise to identify the specific provisions or versions you are discussing, when possible.
- State your reason for writing. Your own personal experience is your best supporting evidence. Explain how the issue would affect you, your family, business, profession, or community. Try to incorporate Nebraska REALTORS® Association’s legislative talking points where possible.
- Do not ask for the impossible.
- Never threaten a senator by saying you won’t vote for them again. It will not help your cause and may even harm it.
- Consider the timing. State your position on the bill early in the process. Your state senators need to hear your side of the issue before the bill is considered.
- Thank state senators if they supported you with a vote on an issue. On the other hand, if a vote is contrary to your position, don’t hesitate to let them know... firmly, but kindly. That will be remembered, too.

Calling Your State Senator

- Preparation:
 - Write down and review the purpose of your call and list the points you wish to make in the course of the conversation.
 - Know the appropriate bill number, the sponsor, the general purpose of the bill, and the rationale for your support or opposition.
 - Find out when and where the next action on that bill is scheduled. If it is in a committee, find out if your state senator is a member of that committee.

- When you Call:
 - If your state senator is not available when you call about a bill, ask to speak to the legislative aide, and write down his or her name.
 - State your name, your company's name, the role you hold, and your legislative district.
 - As briefly as possible, state Nebraska REALTORS®'s position on the bill or issue and stress the local support of that position.
 - Never argue or debate.
 - Try to determine the state senator's position on the bill or issue.
 - If the state senator's position is favorable to Nebraska REALTORS® Associations's position, express appreciation.
 - If the state senator is undecided, ask, "What kind of information would help you make up your mind?" "How can I assist?" or "Would you like to meet to discuss this issue?"
 - Thank the state senator or staff member for taking the time to talk with you.
- Follow-up:
 - Send a letter to the state senator reinforcing the substance of your call.
 - Single out any special assistance given to you by the staff and express your appreciation.

Maximizing a Relationship with Your State Senator

Some REALTORS® have participated in additional activities to maximize their influence in Lincoln and in their state senator's district. Here are some examples of what you can do:

- Plan and conduct a site or office visit with your state senator.
- Involve your state senator in REALTOR® activities. This will help to build and sustain a valuable lasting relationship. Ideas include invitations to speak at your monthly meetings and to attend openings of new offices or developments, groundbreakings, etc.
- Volunteering for a candidate's campaign activities will foster personal connections with that candidate. It will add credibility to your grassroots messages and help you to build a lasting relationship with your state senator.
- Support REALTOR® "Get Out the Vote" efforts. Encouraging other REALTORS® to vote for candidates who support Nebraska REALTORS® Association's legislative policy agenda is an ideal way to ensure our **REALTOR® Party** message is heard and acted on in the Nebraska Legislature.

V. The How-To's of Field Reporting

The Importance of Field Reporting

Field Reports often provide valuable information to the Nebraska REALTORS® Association (NRA) Governmental Affairs Director (GAD) that can't otherwise be obtained. NRA Lobbyists and the NRA GAD use this information to revise and craft NRA's message to the Nebraska Legislature. Those reports are the "inside scoop."

Reporting the progress you are making toward accomplishing your goal of working with, and developing a strong relationship with your state senator, is a vital part of your role as a grassroots advocate. The information you provide in your reports will help NRA better fine tune the grassroots program with NRA's larger public affairs agenda.

Reporting is one of the best measures of grassroots effectiveness – it's also the best way NRA can track what's working, and what needs improvement – so NRA's messages have an impact on state senators.

Field Reports are an important resource to help keep NRA abreast of the activity being conducted statewide on behalf of Nebraska REALTORS®.

Filing Your Field Report

Field Reports document interactions with your state senator. Please use the format included in this packet when filing a field report. They are intended to capture a meeting you have at home or in the field.

NOTES:

- Do not file a field report when you respond to a Call for Action. CFA information is captured automatically, so no field report is needed.
- If you are filing a field report for a state senator other than your own assigned state senator (say you filled in for that SPC at a meeting he or she was unable to attend), you should still file the report.

Field Report Comments

Please be sure to include a detailed description of the interaction with the state senator.

Example: "I attended the Toy Drive for Marine families at the XYZ location in Anytown, NE. I was invited by the state senator X to sit at his or her reserved table. After discussion about other topics happening in the Nebraska Legislature, I was able to bring up the topic of the First Time Home Buyers Savings Act Bill. Senator X was very emphatic and interested in making efforts to get changes made in the Revenue Committee's discussion on that Bill, so it could move forward in the process. He understands the value of keeping more Nebraskans in Nebraska and the tax revenue it generates each time a first-time home is built in our communities."



Field Report Template

Submitted by: _____

Date: _____

Full name: _____

Email: _____

State Senator: _____

Interaction Type: _____

Interaction Date: _____

Comments:

Please detach and send completed Field Report to:

Nebraska REALTORS® Association, ATTN: Jeff Hebb

800 S. 13th Street, Suite 200, Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: [402-323-6500](tel:402-323-6500)

Fax: [402-323-6501](tel:402-323-6501)

Email: jeff@nebraskarealtors.com



State Political Coordinator Application

Your membership in the Nebraska REALTORS® Association makes you part of one of the most powerful and influential grassroots lobbying organizations in the state. A key foundational component of our political power will come from the State Political Coordinator program.

By filling out this application, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the definition, qualifications, and responsibilities of a State Political Coordinator (SPC).

Name: _____ Local board: _____

Home Address: _____

Office Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Legislative District #: _____ State Senator: _____

1. An SPC's most valuable contribution to NRA is the relationship they have with their state senator. Please explain your relationship with your state senator. (Ex. Professional, Personal, Relative, Constituent, Campaign Volunteer/Contributor)

2. What is your history of voluntary service on relevant REALTOR® committees?

3. Please share any other information, including roles you have held (appointed or otherwise), that should be considered in your application?

Please detach and send completed application to:

Nebraska REALTORS® Association, ATTN: Jeff Hebb

800 S. 13th Street, Suite 200, Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: [402-323-6500](tel:402-323-6500)

Fax: [402-323-6501](tel:402-323-6501)

Email: jeff@nebraskarealtors.com



STATE POLITICAL COORDINATOR PLEDGE FORM

A State Political Coordinator (SPC) is a Nebraska REALTOR® who serves in a very important role. SPCs:

- Cultivate and build a solid and lasting personal and professional relationship with their state senator.
- Coordinate our efforts to be the “Voice of Real Estate in Nebraska” by educating and influencing their member of the Legislature on issues important to REALTORS®, the real estate industry, property investment, and homeownership.
- Establish the Nebraska REALTORS® Association and themselves as credible and valuable resources to the Nebraska Legislature.
- Become a familiar face and local identity for issues being discussed, reinforcing our REALTOR® voice on a more personal level.
- Ground themselves in the mutual self-interest of the state senator, their constituent-customers, and our members.

Each SPC should agree to perform the following duties. (Please refer to **Part I** for specific details on each duty):

1. **Respond to ALL Calls for Action (CFA).**
2. **Utilize and Deliver RPAC Contributions.**
3. **Attend Legislative Days and Other State Meetings.**
4. **Advocate on Behalf of all REALTORS® and the REALTOR® Party.**
5. **Maintain Contact with Your State Senator.**
6. **Develop an SPC Contact Team.**
7. **File Field Reports.**
8. **Sign and return the SPC Pledge Form.**
9. **Participate in Training as Required.**

With my signature below, I hereby certify that I have read each SPC duty carefully and pledge to perform them to the best of my abilities. Furthermore, I acknowledge that if I do not meet the standards of performance, I will be removed from the position.

Nebraska Legislative District #: _____

Name of State Senator: _____

SPC Name: _____ Date: _____

Your Signature: _____

Please detach and send completed pledge form to:

Nebraska REALTORS® Association, ATTN: Jeff Hebb
800 S. 13th Street, Suite 200, Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: [402-323-6500](tel:402-323-6500)

Fax: [402-323-6501](tel:402-323-6501)

Email: jeff@nebraskarealtors.com