

Institute Affiliate (IA) Membership Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are Institute Affiliate Members?

Institute Affiliate (IA) Members are one of three types of members that together comprise the Board Member category of membership in the National Association of REALTORS®. The three types of members, REALTORS®, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE@s and Institute Affiliates all have in common the fact that they hold membership in all three levels of the organization: local, state and national. However, unlike REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® members, Institute Affiliate members join the REALTOR® Organization at the national level through one of the commercial Institutes, Societies and Councils affiliated with the National Association. IA membership applies to individuals who hold ALC, CCIM, CPM, CRE, or SIOR designations or a class of membership in one or more NAR commercial Institutes, Societies and Councils (commercial Affiliates) that confers the right to hold office. The NAR commercial Affiliates are: the CCIM Institute, the Counselors of Real Estate, the Institute of Real Estate Management, the REALTORS® Land Institute, and the Society of Industrial and Office REALTORS®. IA members are required to hold membership in both NAR and their designating organization in order to maintain their designations.

2. Is this something new?

No. Institute Affiliate membership has been a membership category recognized by the National Association since the 1970's. While it has been modified from time to time, it remains a membership option exclusively for those who hold designations in one or more NAR commercial Affiliate, or individuals who hold a class of membership in an NAR commercial Affiliate that confers the right to hold office.

3. Who is eligible to be an Institute Affiliate member?

Only designees and others with the right to hold office in one or more NAR commercial Affiliates may be Institute Affiliate members.

4. What are the changes to Institute Affiliate membership effective January 1, 2002?

The primary change is that ALC, CCIM, CRE, CPM, and SIOR designees who opt for the Institute Affiliate category of membership will no longer obtain their membership through a local association. Rather, they will pay their annual IA dues directly to their national designating organization, which will assume Point of Entry (POE) responsibility (**entry into NRDS**) for its IA members. A portion of these dues, along with membership information, is forwarded to their local NAR association. Local NAR associations are responsible for maintaining IA members data in their own local membership database. IA members may not be charged additional local initiation/application fees or dues. Local boards may, however, provide a special service package and charge IA members a fee for these services.

5. How much are Institute Affiliate Member dues as of January 1, 2002 and how are they paid?

Beginning with the 2002 membership dues, Institute Affiliate dues have been reduced to a flat annual rate of \$75. Each year the five commercial Affiliates will collect IA dues from their eligible members who are not REALTORS® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATEs. NAR will distribute this amount equally between the three levels of the REALTOR® organization: local, state and national.

6. Are there other fees in addition to the \$75 annual IA fee?

Local and state associations may not establish any initiation or application fees or dues in addition to their \$25 IA dues portion. However, they may provide service packages to which Institute Affiliate members may voluntarily subscribe for a fee.

7. I thought maintaining active membership in an NAR commercial Affiliate was all that was required to earn and retain a commercial designation.

Membership in NAR as well as in an NAR commercial Affiliate organization is required in order to retain the ALC, CCIM, CPM, CRE, or SIOR designations. This requirement has always existed but until now has not been consistently enforced.

8. Will those with multiple designations have to pay IA dues for each designation?

No. Multiple designees only need to pay IA dues to one organization each year. The NAR commercial Affiliates will determine which one will collect the IA dues. The annual IA dues payment fulfills your NAR membership requirement and entitles you to retain these designations so long as you continue to be an active paid member of the designating organizations.

9. What are the consequences of not complying with the NAR membership requirement?

Those not in compliance will lose their commercial Affiliate membership status and the designation (retaining the designation is based on maintaining membership in both the designating organization and NAR). Those who falsely hold themselves out to hold a professional designation from an NAR commercial Affiliate are in violation of state license law.

10. Will existing IA members have to choose a board?

If you are already an Institute Affiliate member of the local board in whose jurisdiction your office is located, your membership will continue (except see question 12). If you hold IA membership in a different board, your membership will be assigned to the board in which your office address is located.

11. What determines which board of REALTORS® will receive my Institute Affiliate dues?

All IA members (new and existing as of January 1, 2002) will be assigned to local boards based upon their office address. In those jurisdictions where there are Commercial Overlay Boards (COBs), IA members will be assigned to COBs unless they specifically request membership in the applicable local residential board.

12. Why is my local membership based on my office address rather than the market in which I work?

Office location is the simplest and most consistent way to administer membership. If your emphasis is on market served, and your office is located within the jurisdiction of a COB, you'll probably want to be a member of the Commercial Overlay Board because they generally encompass larger market areas than their residential counterparts. Once you are an Institute Affiliate member of a local association, you may purchase service packages from that or any other association inside or out of your market area.

13. Can I belong to more than one association?

While IAs are members of the association in whose jurisdiction their principle business address is located, they may purchase commercial services from other associations that provide them.

14. I am already an active member of my local board of REALTORS®. How will this affect my involvement with the local board?

If you already hold REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® membership in a local association you may continue to do so. If you are already an Institute Affiliate member of the local board in whose jurisdiction your office is located, your membership will continue (see question 12).

15. Will being an IA member limit involvement in my local board?

Local associations may establish the rights and privileges to be conferred on their Institute Affiliate members. Many local associations offer fewer services to IA members than to REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® members. Those considering IA membership should contact their local association and ask about the level of service they provide to IA members.

NAR policy mandates that:

- a) IA members may not use the term REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®.
- b) They may not use the REALTOR® or REALTORS® Commercial Alliance logo or wear a REALTOR® pin.
- c) They may not serve as President of the local association.
- d) They forgo the rights to MLS participation that they might otherwise have as REALTORS®.

16. Aren't "Institute Affiliate" and "Affiliate" membership the same?

No. Some local boards have developed a membership category for title company representatives, attorneys, lenders and others who are involved with real estate but do not qualify for REALTOR®, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® or Institute Affiliate membership. Some refer to them as "Affiliate" members. The difference between the two is that "Institute Affiliate" membership meets the requirement of full membership at all three NAR levels whereas "Affiliate" is only a local category of membership and does not meet the required level of membership in NAR.

17. How do I find my local board of REALTORS®?

A special [online program](#) has been developed to assist you in locating your local association of REALTORS®. Enter your business address and the results will be returned in both text and map formats.

18. What are the benefits and services of Institute Affiliate membership? Are they the same as those available to REALTOR® members?

The benefits and services available to all members of the National Association of REALTORS® at the national level are fundamentally the same. However, Institute Affiliate is a special membership category with limited dues and services. While they are members of NAR, IA's do not share in all the benefits available to REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE@s. Refer to the online [comparison grid](#) that details the benefits, services and obligations for REALTOR® and IA categories of membership.

19. How can I find out what IA benefits and services are offered by my local board of REALTORS®?

Benefits and services will vary from board to board and state to state. Use the [online program](#) to locate your local board Web site to find out what services it offers IA members, or to contact them directly.

20. How will I know when I am an IA member?

As each Commercial Affiliate collects dues it must enter its IA members into the National REALTOR® Database System (NRDS). A welcome email is automatically generated by the system to notify you of your membership and the local board to which you belong. The system will also notify the local board of your membership.

21. Will being an Institute Affiliate Member affect the other people in my office?

- a) If you belong to an office where all the principals are REALTORS®: all the licensees in the office will either hold NAR membership as REALTORS®, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE@s or Institute Affiliate members or they will be included under the "dues formula" of the REALTOR® principal with whom they are affiliated.
- b) If you do not belong to a REALTOR® office: being an Institute Affiliate member does not require the other licensees to be members of NAR.

22. What if no Commercial Overlay Board exists in our area and the residential board to which we belong is not able to meet our needs?

If no such board or other commercial structure exists in your local association and you are interested in starting one, contact the NAR Member Policy department (312.329.8399) or refer to the online [Commercial Overlay Board Guide](#) or [Commercial Structure Guide](#) (contains guidelines for establishing Commercial Overlay Boards and other local Commercial Structures).

23. Are IAs treated the same as REALTORS® regarding the Code of Ethics and arbitration?

In general, if the respondent is not a REALTOR®, then he or she is not subject to the REALTORS® Code of Ethics. IAs are not REALTORS® and therefore are not subject to the jurisdiction of local associations of REALTORS® with respect to the REALTORS® Code of Ethics. However, complaints should be filed with the Commercial Institute, Society, or Council in which the IA holds membership alleging a violation of the code which that organization has adopted and enforces.

24. Does paying IA dues replace the dues I pay to my local Affiliate Chapter?

No. Fulfilling your NAR membership requirement is unrelated to your membership in a local chapter of an NAR commercial Affiliate organization. They are two separate memberships and their dues are separate.

25. Can I fulfill the requirement by belonging to my local Affiliate Chapter instead of a local board of REALTORS®?

No. You need to be a member of the REALTOR® Organization at all three levels in order to meet the requirement of membership in NAR. While you may have more in common with your fellow Chapter members than the local board, membership in the local Chapter does not meet the NAR membership requirement. Stated positively, look on your REALTOR® board membership as an additional source of commercial practitioners with whom you can network and do business with even if they don't share the same specialty designation.

26. Will the National REALTOR Database System (NRDS) administer the collection and disbursement of IA dues? Will this information be posted to the financial record of the dues paying member?

The commercial Affiliate organizations will administer the collection of IA dues (and the posting of the member information in NRDS). NAR will administer the distribution of dues to the local boards. It is through NRDS that all the organizations will track IA members.

27. What about if during the course of the year I decide to change membership categories?

According to NAR's bylaws, you would be treated like any new member whose dues are prorated on a monthly basis. Your previous membership category and how much dues you paid would have no impact -- there would be no refunds and no credits. While local and state association bylaws might vary, you might be better off making the change at the beginning of the membership year.

28. Who do I contact for:

a) Dues billing: Contact the Membership Department of your designating organization

- The CCIM Institute (800.621.7027).
- The Counselors of Real Estate (312.329.8427).
- The Institute of Real Estate Management (800.837.0706).
- The REALTORS® Land Institute (800.441.5263).
- The Society of Industrial and Office REALTORS® (888.891.7467).

b) Locate my local REALTOR® Association:

- Check the [online program](#)

c) IA membership questions:

- NAR Information Central (800.874.6500).

d) Designation questions:

- Contact your designating organization.