# **Iowa Association of Realtors 2021-2026 Equity Action Plan**



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## IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

**Community and Economic Development** 

#### **Iowa Association of Realtors – Equity Action Planning Report**

#### Introduction

The Iowa Association of Realtors (IAR) requested assistance with equity action planning for the next six months to five years. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach through the Community and Economic Development unit agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

- 1. Conduct preliminary planning meeting with the Diversity Committee.
- 2. Survey the participants with an online SWOT questionnaire.
- 3. Conduct an 8-hour Action Plan goal-setting session with the board members.
- 4. Preparation of this final report.

#### **Action Planning Work Session**

The IAR Diversity Committee met in person on Thursday March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in West Des Moines.

Welcome
Iowa Association
of Realtors!

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
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#### **Welcome and Trust building**

The group spent the first part of the session going through exercises and discussion aimed at building trust and knowledge between the members of the committee. Each member shared what attracts them to the IAR Diversity Committee. Many of the comments referred to having life-long experiences and interest in diversity. Others mentioned that they have a passion to improve the opportunities for lowans.

Participants were also asked "What is the Super Power that you bring to IAR's Diversity

Committee?":			
'Experience"	"Old"	"Passion on fair hous	sing and diversity issues"
'Funny"	"Social"	"I like to get stuff (the rig	ght things) done"
"Unex	pected and surp	orising"	"Communication"
Knowledge o	of struggles that	t people go through beca	ause of a dimension"
"Relia	bility"	"Daring"	"Empathy"
'The more I kr	now, the less I k	now, I am vulnerable to	learn more"
	"Problem solve	er"	
	"Old white guy	<b>y"</b> "Relation:	ship builder"

#### **Diversity Wheel Exercise**

To start from a place of shared understanding we reviewed some definitions of diversity and culture. We recognized that there are many definitions of diversity and that for the purpose of this work session we would use the following one: "Diversity: Differences among people with respect to age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practices, and other human differences". We also looked at a definition of culture: "The shared experiences of people, including their languages, values, customs, beliefs and mores, as well as worldviews and ways of knowing and communicating". The group the spent time going through the Diversity Wheel exercise to recognize what strengths and weaknesses (or perceptions of) each dimension has.

## THE DIVERSITY WHEEL





To ensure that the plan reflects a realistic path forward for IAR Diversity Committee, the group answered to an online survey to consider their ability to succeed. The group was asked what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were for both the team and for the organization, in terms of accomplishing the mission.

#### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats as a Team

#### **IAR Strengths**

Tell us about the top 3 strengths that IAR already has that can help further advance diversity, equity and inclusion within our Association.

- 1. IAR diversity committee seems like a motivated group, headed in the right direction.
- 2. IAR board and President Burkamper have done a great job facilitating and standing by the committee. 3. Utilizing outside community resources shows humility and local expertise. I think the biggest thing is that they see a need and are not turning their back on the issue.

Their Leaders: We are so fortunate to have fantastic leadership at IAR that have a desire to advance DEI. | Their Members: I truly feel that the majority of our Members want to do better and they want to learn.

- 1. The Leadership Team, staff and Gavin Blair see the importance of a Diversity Committee.
- 2. We have wanted a Committee for quite a while, since Diversity comes in so many forms, we a Realtors need to address this now

Access to educators, ability to mandate, public presence

Committed individuals that are willing to put in the work, a positive message all ready in place with in our communities, a strict code of ethics that we abide by

Community Events, Educational programs and Political Affairs

Clear Communications, Diverse Representation,

a task force has formed

1. Eagerness to learn more 2. Awareness-Inviting an open dialogue 3. Education and the betterment to learn and grow

#### **IAR Weaknesses**

What are the top 3 weaknesses that IAR has right now in addressing diversity, equity and inclusion within our Association?.

Right now it feels to me like we're a small group doing the right thing, and bringing others on board will be hard

#### Inexperience

Too much focus on the margins | let's focus on the masses, the margins are either going to "get it" or "not get it" but the chances of them "getting it" are higher if the masses are exuding their knowledge and positive around DFI

One of the Issues is that people don't know they are being treated differently or given fewer opportunities than others. Realtors need to believe that if they are not part of the problem then they cannot be part of the solution

Lack of educational classes within these topics, lack of public stance within these topics,

Rogue individuals. Difference of opinions, folks that won't bother looking at materials that are put in front of them

The staff shown on the website at IAR is 100% white, Advertising in our state to address diversity, and using social media regularly to address these topics. I am including women as well as black/brown and LGBTQ people there are a lot of great ideas, but we need to

there are a lot of great ideas, but we need to form a mission and focus

1. No solid foundation yet 2. Too broad of topics 3. Lack of understanding mission statement

A Diversity and Inclusions committee, Individuals that have a desire to make changes, the platform that is IAR.

I think the classes covers the information needed for once get clients so that makes for everyone to have the same equity as it comes to basic knowledge of what is needed with the paper portion of real estate, but there is no teaching realtor on how to, I have not attend any IAR events so I do not about diversity at those IAR events, but I have been at two brokerages and I think real estate seems much like high school with the cliques so diversity and inclusion is as good as bad as the brokerage,

#### Willingness, open minded

We have a limited amount of diverse realtors in lowa that are passionate about broadening diversity in lowa. Iowa is a very white state, so getting white people to understand diversity can be tough. Not sure they have a lot of strengths in this arena.

Willingness, financial ability, broad representation

Lack of resources, Lack of discussion,

I'm in my 3/4 year, I think addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion is an issue for many industries in Iowa, so I see it first as what does diversity mean I think as an association that IAR could step up its perception of type of Realtors seen and heard on advertisement (by this I mean like America is a melting pot, some accents/dialects, some different looks, and etc.), equity (this industry is all about who you know or money/time you have to market, I think if IAR could come up with a way to make it so everyone succeeds then there will be not so much turnover [maybe an unpopular opinion: but I think it is so easy to pass the exam so does the industry need a higher standard of entrance to lower the turnover rate and provide better business training to members]), inclusion (for me personally, I think IAR is big that it is hard to make everyone included unless you host more events that are not targeted at your mass population of Realtors)

I am not sure the IAR understands the problem. They have white straight people running diversity committees. They don't even talk about LGBTQ people or issues ever.

History, misunderstandings, fear

#### **IAR Opportunities**

Share with us what you see as the top 3 opportunities for IAR to increase diversity, equity and inclusion within our Association.

Get all the state's associations to initiate something.

Realtors need to realize "silence is acceptance" is NOT acceptable. IAR can offer Implicit Bias Training, At Home With Diversity, ETC. Increase Awareness through Social Media. Suggest Books to Read such as "Color of Money" and provide videos

**Educational classes** 

#### IAR Threats

What do you think are 3 threats that IAR is likely to face in the near future regarding efforts to increase diversity, equity and inclusion within our Association?

I think our biggest threat is ourselves. Many in our membership base will be unhappy with progressive changes, and fight them under the guise of "political disagreements." I think any problems will stem from that.

Individual bias.

We are ambassadors to our communities in which we work so we can share that info. Increased awareness to it's members through classes and trainings. Diversity within our own membership

Create a marketing plan around these topics and incorporate Social media, TV spots and develop educational programming for local communities to use

Additional communication about appropriate interaction with the public

education, learning events, CEU opportunities

- 1. Have a cultural diversified group with multiethnicities 2. Having a strong leader that is open minded to discussion 3. Get our community involved and learn from others across the nation and ideas what works Events to bring awareness, Open forum options to the public to bring awareness,
- 1) Have non force discussions about diversity, so it is as normal as showering, 2) for equity, acknowledged that Realtors is a very unfair business to start in without funds or proper training and IAR does not ensure that a brand new member knows how to run a business, 3) for me, the inclusion is just the personal touch from IAR like have a conversation with me or send out a survey to all members asking what inclusion is because when I see events for IAR I'm like oh that events is for young agents, experience agents, or etc., like for instance that Gala IAR has every year I feel like is not for agents like me but only for agents who are doing mass volume or sold amount, if there could be a gala just for agents to enjoy other agents without worrying/thought of numbers I think that would be great or even if there at are gal for newer agents, intermediate, and seasoned agents

Sponsorships, Speaking at schools, High Schools

Well first all the white straight people need to fully understand there is a problem. Not sure how you awake that in them. Talking about the issue state wide. Probably need to force the conversation about this at the National

Making sure IAR realizes all aspects of Diversity. Not understanding the feelings of Realtors. Not treating the public with respect.

Violations, loss of public's trust, loss of client

Peoples inability to listen. Members not taking it seriously enough. People having their own individual interests

lowans won't consider a career in real estate, threats made against Realtors who are ethnic or LGBTQ, The population is changing so we must be inclusive in housing, hiring and giving marginalized people a seat at the table.

I think there is a need for this, so I believe you will find more allies and advocates

1. We will play a "watchdogs" role however that can be negative as there may a lot of public shaming 2. Misguided mission where one set of group of people may not feel that their needs are addressed as much as another 3. It is a tough topic that can be misguided with stories of one person's experience instead of the groups whole discussion. The last meeting there was a lot of stories of "I" stories instead of what "we" as a community can do when things like racial injustices happens to us or someone else (best approach)

lack of acknowledgement and push back from people that don't believe there is an issue. Lack of support for additional "required" trainings. Too many directions to go and individuals pushing their own agendas vs working for the big picture

1) diversity- if you ask people to name diverse agents and you get that long pause because you need to think of someone beyond those in your brokerage, diversity is kind of link to what is known about IAR in different communities, 2) equity in the business aspect is the business set up of Realtors - I think that is a threat but only if members think of it as an issue, IAR could survive even without addressing its members business, 3) inclusion is that you will not know whom you leaving out if you don't ask and if the person does not respond.

Blowback from older realtors not wanting inclusion.

level. The NAR needs to go big here and take the lead in this.

Openness and opportunity to show all agents what we all know is the full lack of diversity specifically in people of color.

White straight people. We are a very white stage that is a red state. White straight people are threatened by the thought of inclusion and that there is room for all of us. They don't want to share.

Fear, whiteness of our areas, regionalized inclusion.

The group was also asked what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were for the organization to advance equity efforts for homeowners in Iowa.

#### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in Iowa

#### Strengths

Tell us about the top 3 strengths that IAR already has that can help further advance diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with the public related to homeownership.

Community Events, large group of Realtors to demonstrate diversity and inclusion, IAR is an advocate for NAR's Federal issues

connections to the community

- 1. Large diverse group 2 Eagerness to learn and do better 3 Very respectful members Community Events, Educational programs and Political Affairs
- 1. Legislative and lobbying power. lowa realtors have a strong influential voice at the Capitol and the ability to enact change where needed legislatively. 2. An acknowledgement that there's a problem within the association and industry and the willingness of many to accept responsibility for our part in the past and present inequity. 3. A diverse group of members and platform to reach those members. And a passionate, dedicated diversity committee that is committed to making meaningful change.

#### Weaknesses

What are the top 3 weaknesses that IAR has right now in addressing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with the public related to homeownership?

Helping builders create more affordable housing, Home Ownership Education & Counseling, push NAR for reintroduction of the American Housing & Economic Mobility Act of 2019

- 1. using this platform and talk more of "I" instead of "we" 2. Too broad topics 3. Not a clear vision yet
- 1. As an association we are reactive and not proactive. 2. The lack of diversity in our current and past leadership has led to an inability or lack of willingness to truly understand how inequities persist. Many feel that because they don't see it, it's a thing of the past. 3. There is no unified voice within our association. The divisiveness in the world translates directly to those in our association.

Timeliness. Lack of pushing out resources. Lack of Awareness of IAR to the general public

I think the data is not there for IAR to really dive into of what factors impact beyond

Access to Education, Media Platform to spread awareness. Large group of agents willing to participate

I would need you to tell me. I ask myself that, but have not dig on the IAR website to find out what if any

Knowledge of past transgressions, truth, opportunity

money, for equity it will be data needed to determine the difference from rural to urban to suburbs(I think without the data how will you be able to identify the homeownership), 3) inclusion in what sense will help me address that for strength and weakness more literature/videos for potential homeowners.

Things are fine attitude, ignoring the facts,

#### **Opportunities**

Share with us what you see as the top 3 opportunities for IAR to increase diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with the public related to homeownership.

Working with lenders to create Home Owner Education & Counseling programs, Community Events, Develop Marketing campaign using radio, TV and Social media

- 1. Mission statement and focus on the topic on hand 2. Have strong leaders that are well spoken and diplomatic 3 Raising awareness within our community and help model after other groups across the nation that are doing great work in their advancement in the inclusion of others
- 1. Take the lead on meaningful efforts to close the gap between white and minority homeownership rates in lowa. 2. Tell our stories. Realtors have the opportunity to empower members and the public to tell their stories and provide real life examples.
- 3. People are listening right now. Good or bad, everyone is engaged in the topic and change is inevitable. We just need to ensure we are on the right side of that change and not just as a silent participant.

Bring more brand awareness to the public. Working with the local boards.

Make more awareness of what is going on with different groups as it pertains to ownership and what solutions IAR offers

#### Threats

What do you think are 3 threats that IAR is likely to face in the near future regarding diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with the public related to homeownership?

Threats against Realtors of color, ethic and sexual identity, Decline in professionals considering real estate as a career, Political environment bubbling up against people of color, immigrants.

- 1 Public shaming 2 Embarrassment to speak up and feel uncomfortable sharing with others 3 We may not touch on every group and one particular group may feel left out
- 1. There is so much work to be done and it feels overwhelming. It's a struggle to figure out where to start. Even those who want to be a part of the solution don't know how. 2. The division in our country will likely lead to vocal critics of anything and everything we do. 3. Change will be slow. There's no simple solution or quick fix. It will take a lot of hard work to move the needle just a small amount in the right direction. We have to be tenacious.

Push back for missing a target group of individuals. Too many avenues to pursue. Lack of awareness of IAR will make initiatives less impactful.

1) not collecting information on these concerns, 2)not acknowledge there are

(like direct people to nonprofit or government programs)

We have the general public on the right side to make meaningful change

differences and permitting a new industry to be created to take over, 3) a disinterest population in why homeownership matters for a society

Apathy, unknown racial barriers, bias

Do you see the role of this committee to primarily focus on internal diversity efforts, external diversity efforts, or a combination of both? Which do you see as a higher priority and why?

#### Combination

Establish Core Standards for Local Regions. Realize that buying a home is important to build wealth. Work together with local Regions and recognize what NAR has created. Find ways to undo more than 100 years of unfair housing. We need to understand the history that moved this country to where it is today. We need to think from within

Internal, leading by example to make a difference

This committee must include both efforts. We must begin from the inside and that means training for awareness of biases. Then we can put our training to use externally.

Committee can help to raise awareness about diversity and appropriate ways that REALTORS® should engage with the public.

combination of both is necessary for change

I think a combination of both but really the main directive I see is really to have an external diversity efforts. The high priorities is maybe do a survey from a diverse group of people and see what their feelings? What are some major concerns, what are major improvements, where are we lacking as a community and where do we really need to focus on and improve upon in our community

Absolutely a combination. I think internal efforts should be a priority because we need a unified voice within our association to ensure we can all come together to make meaningful, lasting change.

Both. Internal issues first because you need to have the representation and issues fixed before helping others.

External because that will increase IAR name and bring more willing to help with improving the homeowner market

Start with internal first.

#### Both!

Internal diversity is the first step to external efforts. We need to get out house in order so we have a solid base for representing others

#### **SWOT Themes**

The group worked through the survey results identifying common themes. The following themes emerged:



#### **Moving into Action**

The SWOT exercise provide the group with a sense of what IAR has and what IAR needs. It provided a background and a strong foundation to move into action. To start with the visioning portion of the Action Plan we asked the group to individually think of the focus question: **What do we want to see in place in 2026 as a result of this plan?** 



## What do we want to see in place in 2026 as a result of this plan?



## What's different now? What has changed as a result of this conversation?

- This is a roadmap that we didn't have before.
- Recognizing that this is a process that will take some time, and hopefully won't prevent us from implementing small changes in the short term while we get to that destination.
- What steps can the IAR Diversity Committee take in the next 3 months, 3 months to 2 years, 2-5 years to advance equity efforts in IAR and in the communities that we serve?

**Visioning Themes:** Six clear themes emerged from the individual, small groups and large group visioning exercise:





Increase Quality of Life Bridging Home
Ownership
Gap

Fair Financing and Partners

Education

#### Goals:

Finally, the group identified specific actions that must be taken in order to bring the above visions to reality. After identifying a number of actions, they were categorized based on which should be overseen by the same people. The group then created six work groups (one with no members assigned).

The team members listed with each group self-identified as responsible for ensuring that the goals listed under each working group are accomplished. The goals listed below will serve as a starting point, but the team members may add or modify action steps as they make progress.

The members of each group committed to **meeting at least monthly** by email or virtually to discuss progress and coordinate action items. The team lead is responsible for coordinating this with the members of each team. **Each month at the committee meeting** there will be an update from the groups on the progress that has been made. The group will schedule a meeting in six months to evaluate progress, celebrate victories and look ahead for the following six months.

#### **Work Teams:**

#### Education

Victories:

1. Feasibility Study Grant received from Legacy

2. FOP receives USDA funds for tennis courts

Team Lead: Gabe E.

Team Members: Adrienne H., Chris,

<ul> <li>Internal realtor education vs. educating the public</li> </ul>	0-6 months
Exploring educational requirements	0-6 months
Exit interview research at brokerage level (local) "What stats	0-6 months
do you have?"	
Educate realtors on issues	0-6 months
Role modeling in community	0-6 months
Job shadowing	0-6 months
Realtor "exit interview" on why not relicensing to increase	6mo-2yrs
retention	
<ul> <li>Internships</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
Schools: How to become a realtor	6mo-2yrs
Schools: How to buy a home	
Mentorship programs	6mo-2yrs

<ul> <li>Expanded class offerings for realtors (Spanish, ASL etc)</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
Mandatory broker DEI training	6mo-2yrs
<ul> <li>Expanded electives for relicensing/professional development</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
Analyze number of realtors/success numbers	6mo-2yrs
Education – Long Term	
Increased community trust	
<ul> <li>Meaningful changes in licensing/training. Flexibility in options</li> </ul>	
Establish formal and required courses on diversity	
Realtor success accessible to all despite background	
Understanding economic value of diversity	

## **Bridging Home Ownership Gap**

Team Lead: Nora Team Members: Lana

Identify target markets/schools	0-6 months
<ul> <li>Identify community organizations, churches etc. currently helping diverse communities</li> </ul>	0-6 months
Develop/pilot implicit bias training for realtors and lenders	0-6 months
Identify employers with diverse populations	0-6 months
Pilot outreach/education programs with schools and community outreach and employers	6mo-2yrs
<ul> <li>Fully implement (roll out) implicit bias training for realtors and partners</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
Fully roll out Outreach and education with schools, community and employers	2yrs-5yrs
Create continuous improvement and review of programs	2yrs-5yrs
<ul> <li>Review multicultural/other groups seeing barriers to entry and adjust homebuyer programs</li> </ul>	2yrs-5yrs
Bridging Home Ownership Gap – Long Term	
Increasing diversity in homeownership	
<ul> <li>True inclusion: your zip code no longer shapes quality of your education</li> </ul>	
Increase in multicultural home ownership	
Diversity in neighborhoods	

• Building wealth through homeownership is widespread

#### **Fair Financing and Partners**

Team Lead: Joe

Team Members: Marie

Taskforce with State Association of Lenders	0-6 months
Establish guidelines for best practices for new agents	0-6 months
Ask partners on DEI Education process	0-6 months
<ul> <li>Feature IAR preferred lenders (lenders that have a DEI record)</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
<ul> <li>Preferred lenders with best practices</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
Create a process to check on compliance	2yrs-5yrs
Have a process to deal with out of comliance	2yrs-5yrs
Fair Financing Long-term vision	
Fair financing and appraisals for everyone	
More objective and clear lending products	

### **Industry Diversity**

Team Lead: Alexandra

Team Members: Lance, Pauline,

<ul> <li>Identify new diverse leaders (brokerages, boards, peers)</li> </ul>	0-6 months
<ul> <li>Identify barriers: What is stopping you?</li> </ul>	0-6 months
<ul> <li>Create a story, dialogue and plan to communicate</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
A) Education offerings	
B)Personal outreach – Bring a buddy	
C)Brokerage communication	
D)Spotlight video	
E)Orientation	
Leadership development program	2yrs-5yrs
A)Encourage diversity	
B)Train diversity	
Industry Diversity – Long Term	

Increase in multicultural leadership	
Increased diversity in association and brokerage leadership	
More representation at brokerage	
Membership diversity reflects diversity of citizenship	
More diverse leadership	

### **IAR Programs and Support**

Team Lead: Krista

Team Members: Anthony

Just do it	0-6 months
Increase IAR presence in diverse social events	0-6 months
Hire diverse speakers that all of our members can relate to	0-6 months
<ul> <li>Sponsorships (consistently, continuity)</li> </ul>	0-6 months
IAR lobbying efforts reflect our commitment to DEI	6mo-2yrs
Develop guidelines on when IAR lobbyist acts on issues outside	6mo-2yrs
of real estate relating to DEI	
IAR to hire a DEI individual	6mo-2yrs
<ul> <li>Create diversity hotline for questions or reporting</li> </ul>	6mo-2yrs
Set up program to discuss diversity or implementing at	6mo-2yrs
brokerage level	
Spotlight diverse populations in newsletter and publications	6mo-2yrs

## **Quality of Life**

Team Lead: None Team Members: None

Quality of Life – Long Term	
Appreciation acceptance of differences	
Improved people's lives	