

**Georgia Association of REALTORS®
Disaster Relief Fund, Inc.
Policies and Procedures Manual**

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Georgia Association of REALTORS® Disaster Relief Fund, Inc. Policy and Procedures

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The Georgia Association of REALTORS® Disaster Relief Fund, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the "Fund") is established to provide financial assistance to Georgia Association of REALTORS® (hereinafter referred to as "GAR") members who experience damage or displacement due to officially declared natural disasters. This Fund is intended to address specific losses directly related to natural disasters.

SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY FOR GAR DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS

GAR members who are Active Members at the time of the damage or loss, and no more than one hundred-twenty (120) days following the event, shall be eligible for assistance, provided that the member's primary residence or real estate business is located within the state of Georgia. Non-members are not eligible for GAR Disaster Relief Fund assistance, but may qualify for NAR REALTORS® Relief Foundation grants as outlined in Section 9 of this policy.

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these Policies and Procedures, the following definitions shall apply:

3.1 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

A tax-exempt nonprofit entity, as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, that operates for charitable purposes, including disaster relief efforts. Contributions to 501(c)(3) organizations are generally tax-deductible.

3.2 501(c)(6) Organization

A nonprofit business league, as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, that promotes the interests of its members, such as REALTOR® trade associations. Unlike 501(c)(3) organizations, contributions to 501(c)(6) entities are not typically tax-deductible as charitable donations.

3.3 Active Member

"Active Member" shall mean an individual who is currently enrolled and in good standing with the Georgia Association of REALTORS® (GAR). To be eligible for grant

funds, an individual must have also been an active member at the time of the declared natural disaster and subsequent property damage, having paid all applicable dues, fees, and assessments, and must be in compliance with all membership requirements and policies of the Association.

3.4 Application

The most current, official GAR Disaster Relief Fund application. A formal written request submitted by a GAR member, local association, or board seeking financial assistance from the Fund. The application must be completed in full, signed, and accompanied by all required documentation as outlined in this Policy.

3.5 Conflict of Interest

A situation in which a Fund Director has a personal, financial, familial, or business relationship that could improperly influence their decision-making regarding Fund disbursements. In accordance with this Policy, any Director with a conflict must disclose and recuse themselves from related deliberations and voting.

3.6 Declared Natural Disaster

A natural disaster formally recognized through an official emergency declaration issued by a state or federal governing authority, including but not limited to hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes, or flooding.

3.7 Disaster Relief Fund ("Fund")

The Georgia Association of REALTORS® Disaster Relief Fund, established to provide financial assistance to GAR members in good standing who are impacted by declared natural disasters.

3.8 Displacement

The condition in which a GAR member is forced to vacate their primary residence within the state of Georgia due to structural damage or loss of essential utilities (e.g., electricity, water, or gas) as a result of a declared natural disaster.

3.9 Eligibility Period

The period during which an applicant must have been an active GAR member to qualify for financial assistance. Under this Policy, a GAR member must have been in good

standing at the time of the declared natural disaster and subsequent damage and must submit an application within 120 days of the declared disaster to be considered.

3.10 Fraud

Any act of intentional deception, collusion, misrepresentation, or falsification of information for the purpose of obtaining funds under this Policy. This includes, but is not limited to, the submission of altered or forged documents, providing false statements regarding eligibility, or misrepresenting damage to obtain financial assistance.

3.11 Fund Administrator

A designated GAR staff member(s) or representative responsible for reviewing applications, verifying documentation, and ensuring compliance with this Policy. Fund Administrators do not have the authority to approve or deny applications but may return incomplete or non-compliant applications for correction.

3.12 Fund Directors (Board of Directors)

The governing body responsible for reviewing applications, determining eligibility, approving financial assistance, and overseeing compliance with this Policy. The Fund Directors serve as the Board of Directors for the Fund.

3.13 Fund Recovery

Fund recovery refers to the process by which the Fund requires the return of any unused funds, which must be returned to the Fund without exception, irrespective of the reason, or due to misallocation, misuse, non-compliance, or failure to meet reporting requirements.

3.14 Government-Issued Identification

A current official identification document issued by a federal, state, or local government agency that includes the applicant's name, photograph, and date of birth. Acceptable forms include a state driver's license, U.S. passport, military ID, or state-issued identification card.

3.15 Grant

A financial disbursement awarded by the Fund to assist eligible GAR members with disaster-related losses. Grants are subject to grant funds availability and do not compensate for the full extent of damages or insurance deductibles.

3.16 Ineligible Claims

Applications or requests for financial assistance that do not meet the eligibility requirements of the Fund. These include, but are not limited to, claims for non-essential property, vehicles, food spoilage, cosmetic damages, corporate-owned properties, and incomplete or late applications.

3.17 Large Grant

A financial disbursement exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) allocated to local Georgia Associations/Boards of REALTORS® for disaster relief. Large grants must be distributed incrementally, with no more than one-third (1/3) of the total amount disbursed initially.

3.18 Lessee / Renter

3.18.1 Lessee:

A person or entity who enters into a formal lease agreement with a property owner (lessor) for the right to occupy and use the property for a specified term, typically one year or more. The lease agreement outlines the rights and obligations of both parties, including rent payments, property maintenance, renewal options, and conditions for termination. The lessee holds exclusive legal rights to the property during the lease term, subject to the terms and conditions of the lease.

3.18.2 Renter:

A person who rents property, often on a short-term or month-to-month basis, under a rental agreement that may not include the more formal or long-term commitments found in a lease. The renter typically has fewer legal rights than a lessee and may be subject to simpler or less detailed rental agreements. The relationship between the renter and the property owner (landlord) is generally governed by the terms of the rental agreement, which may address issues such as rent, maintenance, and termination.

3.19 Local Georgia Board/Association of REALTORS®

A local board or association operating under a National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) charter and GAR, representing REALTOR® members at the local level within the state of Georgia.

3.20 Motorhome

A self-propelled, motorized recreational vehicle designed for temporary living accommodations. Motorhomes are considered vehicles under this Policy and are not eligible for reimbursement of damages under the Fund.

3.21 National Association of REALTORS® REALTORS® Relief Foundation Grants

Financial assistance provided by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) REALTORS® Relief Foundation (RRF) for disaster relief, administered by the Fund in accordance with NAR policies and guidelines.

3.22 Non-Essential Property

Non-Essential Property shall mean any item, structure, or equipment located on or associated with the applicant's primary residence or real estate business that is not directly related to the habitability of the dwelling or the operational functionality of the business premises. This includes, but is not limited to, portable air conditioning units, fences, fans, generators, portable heaters, landscaping, lawnmowers, medical equipment, pumps, swimming pool furniture and equipment, shop vacuums, barns, sheds, and other outbuildings. Non-Essential Property is expressly excluded from eligibility for financial assistance under this Policy, irrespective of ownership, use, or condition. Claims for damage to such property shall be deemed ineligible for grant consideration under the Fund.

3.23 Policy

This Policy, being the established guidelines and procedures governing the administration and distribution of the GAR Disaster Relief Fund. This Policy may be amended by the Fund Directors in accordance with the governance structure outlined herein.

3.24 Primary Residence

Primary residence shall mean the GAR member's principal place of abode, located within the State of Georgia, where the member resides. Such residence shall be evidenced by ownership documents, including but not limited to a deed or mortgage statement, not

more than sixty (60) days old, or by a legally valid lease agreement. Properties owned by corporations, limited liability companies (LLCs), partnerships, or other legal entities are ineligible for relief under this Policy.

3.25 Real Estate Business

For the purposes of this Policy, a real estate business is a commercial real estate office that is owned and operated by a GAR member, located within the state of Georgia, and engaged in conducting real estate transactions. To qualify for assistance, the business must have sustained damage as a direct result of a declared natural disaster.

3.26 Reporting Fraud or Misuse of Funds

It is the duty of all GAR members and staff to report any suspected fraudulent activity or misuse of Fund resources. Reports must be made in writing to the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer of the Fund for investigation and potential referral to legal authorities.

3.27 Required Documentation

The necessary evidence that must accompany an application for financial assistance, which may include, but not limited to, government-issued identification, proof of property ownership, photographic evidence of damage, repair estimates, lease agreements, and lodging receipts.

3.28 State Association of REALTORS®

A State Association of REALTORS® is a REALTOR® trade association operating at the state level under a National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) charter, such as the Georgia Association of REALTORS® (GAR). A State Association is responsible for coordinating activities among local REALTOR® boards, advocating real estate-related public policy, promoting professional standards, and providing services to its members statewide.

For the purposes of this Policy, only NAR-chartered State REALTOR® Associations qualify as a "State Association of REALTORS®." Organizations such other NAR affiliated specialty groups do not meet this definition and are expressly excluded.

3.29 State-Licensed Contractor

An individual or business entity that has obtained a valid license from the Georgia State Licensing Board for Residential and General Contractors. This license authorizes the

contractor to engage in residential or general contracting activities, including the construction, repair, or renovation of residential homes and buildings.

3.30 State-Licensed Insurance Adjuster

An individual who has obtained a license from the Georgia Department of Insurance to investigate, evaluate, and settle insurance claims. This includes determining the extent of damages, estimating repair costs, and recommending compensation amounts.

3.31 Subject Property

Real property and structures directly related to the habitability of a primary residence or the functionality of a real estate business, excluding non-essential items (See Section 5.3).

3.32 Temporary Housing

Short-term accommodations, including hotels, motels, and commercial short-term rentals, secured due to displacement caused by a declared natural disaster. Private rentals (e.g., stays with family or friends) are not eligible for reimbursement.

3.33 Third-Party Verification

A process in which external sources, such as insurance adjusters, government agencies, independent inspectors, or any other individual or entity requested by the Fund Directors, confirm the validity of claims, damages, or expenses submitted by applicants.

SECTION 4: APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS FOR GAR DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS AND NAR REALTORS® RELIEF FOUNDATION

4.1 Submission Process

Applicants must complete and submit the most recent official Fund application, including all required documentation, within 120 days of the declared disaster. Failure to submit the completed application and all required documentation within this 120-day period shall result in automatic disqualification from consideration for assistance.

If an application is submitted but is deemed incomplete due to missing information or documentation, the applicant shall be notified by the Fund Administrators and afforded a single opportunity to cure the deficiency. The applicant must submit the corrected

application or provide the missing documentation within fifteen (15) days from the date of notification. Failure to cure the deficiency within this timeframe shall result in the automatic denial of the application, and the applicant shall have no further recourse for reconsideration under that particular submission. Applicants who have had their application denied due to an incomplete submission and have failed to cure the deficiency within the prescribed fifteen (15) day period shall be granted a single opportunity to submit a new application, provided that the subsequent submission includes all required supporting documentation and complies fully with the application requirements in effect at the time of resubmission.

All application records and related documentation shall be maintained in a manner that ensures the confidentiality of the applicant's personal and financial information. Access to such records shall be restricted to authorized personnel solely for the purpose of application processing, review, and compliance. The Fund shall implement reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the confidentiality and security of applicant information in accordance with applicable laws and best practices.

4.2 Fund Administrator (Staff) Review

Fund Administrator(s) shall review each application to ensure completeness and compliance with the eligibility requirements set forth in these policies. Any application deemed incomplete shall be returned to the applicant at the discretion of the Fund Administrator(s), in accordance with Section 4.1. A complete list of all applications returned as incomplete, including the reasons for return, shall be provided to the Fund Directors at their next scheduled meeting. Only applications determined to be complete and compliant shall be forwarded to the Fund Directors for consideration.

4.3 Fund Director Review

The Fund Directors shall evaluate eligible applications based on available funds and determine appropriate grant or reimbursement amount. Decisions of the Fund Directors shall be final.

SECTION 5: ELIGIBILITY FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE ASSISTANCE

5.1 Primary Residence and Real Estate Business Requirement

Financial assistance shall be provided to GAR members whose primary residence or principal place of real estate business (owned and operated) has sustained damage or destruction as a direct result of a natural disaster formally declared by a state, or federal

governing authority. Member's real property must be located within an area affected by the disaster and is in compliance with the requirements set forth in this policy.

5.2 Documentation Requirements

Applicants must provide the following documentation for eligibility:

- a. The current, completed, and signed GAR Disaster Relief Fund application located at GARealtor.com;
- b. National Association of REALTORS® Membership Number (M1 Number), if applicable;
- c. Proof of ownership (e.g., deed or mortgage statement dated no more than sixty (60) days prior to application submission) for the affected property.
- d. Government-issued photo identification;
- e. Photographic evidence of damage, including exterior photos of the property (front, sides, rear, and roof), and at least six (6) photos of the damaged areas. If the interior is affected, a minimum of four (4) photos per affected room(s) (360-degrees) must be provided; or
- f. In lieu of photographic evidence, a written damage estimate prepared by a state licensed contractor or insurance adjuster licensed by the state of Georgia may be submitted. The estimate must provide a detailed assessment of the damage, including but not limited to the nature and extent of the damage, the estimated cost of repairs, and date of both the estimate and the damage sustained to the property.
- g. Any additional documentation requested by the Fund Directors to substantiate the claim.

5.3 Ineligible Claims

The following are expressly excluded from eligibility for financial assistance under the Fund:

- a. Reimbursement request related to non-essential property, equipment, and structures, including but not limited to portable air conditioning units, fences, fans, generators, portable heaters, landscaping, lawnmowers, medical equipment, pumps, swimming pool furniture and equipment, shop vacuums, barns, sheds, or other outbuildings.
- b. Expenses related to tree removal shall also be ineligible, except where a tree or trees have fallen onto the primary residence or real estate business, causing direct structural damage.
- c. Damages to or loss of vehicles, including but not limited to all-terrain vehicles, automobiles, motorcycles, motorhomes, trailers, and farm machinery, regardless of whether such property is used for personal or business purposes.

- d. Reimbursement for perishable food spoilage due to power outages or other disaster-related causes.
- e. Cosmetic or non-structural damage, including but not limited to damage to awnings, mobile home skirts, or underpinning.
- f. Losses or damages related to properties held in the name of a Corporation, Limited Liability Company (LLC), Partnership, or other legal entity, regardless of whether any member or members of the Georgia Association of REALTORS® (GAR) have an ownership or other financial interest in such entities, shall not qualify as a primary residence for purposes of assistance under this Fund.
- g. Requests submitted after the expiration of the one hundred twenty (120) day application period following the declared natural disaster.
- h. Submissions with incomplete applications and/or insufficient supporting documentation, as determined at the sole discretion of the Fund Administrator or Directors.
- i. Losses or damages not directly attributable to displacement or property damage resulting from a formally declared natural disaster.
- j. Property damage submitted by renters or individuals leasing a primary residence. However, such individuals may be eligible for reimbursement of temporary lodging expenses if displaced by a declared natural disaster, as outlined in Section 6.

SECTION 6: GRANT CATEGORIES AND LIMITS

Financial assistance provided by the Georgia Association of REALTORS® Disaster Relief Fund is intended to offer limited relief to eligible applicants who have sustained damage due to a qualifying disaster. **The Fund is not designed to compensate applicants for the full extent of their losses, restore them to their pre-disaster condition, or cover insurance deductibles.** Grants, as disbursements, constitute a form of temporary financial assistance intended to mitigate immediate hardship. All grant disbursements are contingent upon the availability of funds, substantiation of loss, and approval by the Fund Directors.

Grants are determined based on the severity of damage, as assessed by the Fund Directors:

6.1 Minor Damage

Verified damages up to \$5,000: Eligible for financial assistance up to \$1,000.

6.2 Moderate Damage

Verified damages between \$5,001 and \$10,000: Eligible for financial assistance up to \$2,000.

6.3 Severe Damage

Verified damages exceeding \$10,000: Eligible for financial assistance up to \$3,000.

The Fund Directors reserve the right to modify grant amounts, establish additional eligibility requirements, or impose further conditions as necessary to ensure the equitable distribution of funds as outlined in Section 13 of this policy.

SECTION 7: TEMPORARY HOUSING REIMBURSEMENT

7.1 Eligible Temporary Housing Expenses

The Fund shall provide reimbursement for reasonable temporary housing expenses incurred as a direct result of a GAR member's displacement from their primary residence (which is owned, leased, or rented) due to a declared natural disaster. Displacement shall be deemed to occur when the property sustains significant damage or a substantial loss of essential utilities, such as electricity, water, or gas, rendering the property uninhabitable.

Eligible accommodations for reimbursement shall include, but are not limited to, hotels, motels, and commercial short-term rental services. Reimbursement for private rentals, including but not limited to stays with family, friends, or other private individuals, shall not be eligible under this provision.

The maximum reimbursement amount for temporary housing expenses incurred due to displacement shall not exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). For request submitted by GAR members under Section 5 and 6, any reimbursement for temporary housing expenses shall be included within, and not in addition to, the total amount of funds authorized.

7.2 Required Documentation

To qualify for reimbursement under this Fund, applicants must submit the following documentation:

- a. The current, completed and signed GAR Disaster Relief Fund application located at GARealtor.com;
- b. National Association of REALTORS® Membership Number (M1 Number), if applicable;
- c. Government-issued photo identification;
- d. Photographic evidence of damage, including exterior photos of the property (front, sides, rear, and roof), and at least six (6) photos of the damaged areas. If the interior

- is affected, a minimum of four (4) photos per affected room(s) (360-degrees) must be provided; or
- e. In lieu of photographic evidence, a written damage estimate prepared by a state licensed contractor or insurance adjuster licensed by the state of Georgia may be submitted. The estimate must provide a detailed assessment of the damage, including but not limited to the nature and extent of the damage, the estimated cost of repairs, and date of both the estimate and the damage sustained to the property.
 - f. Any additional documentation requested by the Fund Directors to substantiate the claim.
 - g. A legally valid and fully executed lease agreement, signed by all parties, providing proof that the applicant was a lawful tenant of the affected property prior to the date of the declared disaster. The lease agreement must be dated prior to the disaster declaration;
 - h. A paid invoice, itemized receipt, or credit card statement issued by the lodging provider, which must clearly identify:
 - i. The name and address of the lodging provider;
 - ii. The dates of the applicant's stay; and
 - iii. The total amount paid for temporary lodging.
 - i. Proof of payment, such as a bank statement or credit card statement, verifying that the lodging expense was incurred and paid by the applicant. The proof of payment must correspond with the lodging provider's invoice or receipt;
 - j. Evidence substantiating displacement due to the declared disaster, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Photographic or documented proof of structural damage to GAR members primary residence;
 - ii. A formal signed notice from the landlord confirming that the property was rendered uninhabitable due to the disaster; or
 - iii. An official evacuation order issued by a governmental authority.
 - k. Handwritten receipts, reservation confirmations, or any unverifiable documentation will not be accepted.

Failure to submit the required documentation, or the submission of incomplete, altered, unverifiable or illegible documents, shall result in the denial of the reimbursement request.

SECTION 8: DISCRETIONARY GRANTS BY THE FUND

At the discretion of the Fund Directors, the Fund may allocate grants as follows:

8.1 Grants to 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations for Disaster Relief

Grants may be distributed directly to other 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations for disaster relief efforts, both within and outside the State of Georgia, in response to a declared natural disaster. Such organizations must demonstrate their ability to effectively utilize the funds for disaster relief purposes, and the allocation of funds shall be made in accordance with GAR's guidelines and the Fund's policies. The recipient organizations may be required to furnish the Fund with a detailed accounting of the use of funds to ensure transparency and proper utilization for disaster relief efforts.

8.2 Grants to State REALTOR® Associations Without a 501(c)(3) Disaster Relief Fund

In the event that a state REALTOR® association does not maintain an established 501(c)(3) Disaster Relief Fund, the Fund may, at its discretion, provide grant funds directly to another state's 501(c)(6) REALTOR® association for the specific purpose of disaster relief. The recipient state REALTOR® association may be required to furnish the Fund with a detailed accounting of all grant funds disbursed, including but not limited to, the total amount distributed, the recipients of the aid, and a report on how the funds were utilized. The recipient association must comply with all applicable reporting and documentation requirements to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of the disaster relief funds. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the withholding of future funding.

8.3 Grants to Local Georgia Associations/Boards of REALTORS®

Grant funds may be requested by local Georgia Associations/Boards of REALTORS® for disaster relief efforts within their National Association of REALTORS® jurisdiction, provided that the affected area has been officially declared a state of emergency or disaster area.

8.4 Use of Grant Funds by Local Georgia Associations/Boards

Any grant funds allocated to local Georgia Associations/Boards of REALTORS® shall be designated solely for providing services and/or supplies that benefit the community at large. Such funds shall not be distributed to individuals, other nonprofit entities, or government agencies. Furthermore, the local Association or Board may be required to provide documentation detailing the use or distribution of said funds within sixty (60) days of such usage or distribution. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the recovery of the funds or disqualification from eligibility for future allocations.

8.5 Large Grant Allocation of Funds

In the case of a large grant to local Georgia Associations / Boards of REALTORS® over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00), the Fund Directors shall allocate the funds in increments, with no more than one-third (1/3) of the total amount disbursed initially. Subsequent distributions shall be contingent upon the recipient's compliance with the Fund's accountability standards and submission of adequate documentation for the funds previously disbursed. Each disbursement shall be subject to a detailed accounting process, including the provision of receipts, proof of expenditure, and a progress report on the usage of the funds. This incremental approach ensures transparency, prevents misuse or fraud, and provides a mechanism for the Fund Directors to monitor the ongoing use of the funds and ensure proper allocation for disaster relief. Failure to adhere to these conditions may result in the withholding of remaining funds and/or the recovery of previously distributed amounts.

SECTION 9: ADMINISTRATION OF NAR REALTORS® RELIEF FOUNDATION GRANTS

9.1 Incorporation into Policies and Procedures

The Fund is authorized to administer any National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) REALTORS® Relief Foundation (RRF) funds granted to the Georgia Association of REALTORS® Disaster Relief Fund in strict accordance with the guidelines, policies, and directives established by NAR.

9.2 Procedures for Administering NAR REALTORS® Relief Foundation Grants

Fund Administrators shall adhere to all required procedures when processing and distributing RRF grants, ensuring compliance with all applicable policies and reporting obligations.

9.3 Eligibility for Concurrent Assistance from GAR Disaster Relief Fund and NAR REALTORS® Relief Foundation

Nothing in these policies shall preclude a GAR member from applying for and receiving assistance from both the GAR Disaster Relief Fund (the "Fund") and the NAR REALTORS® Relief Foundation (the "NAR RRF"), provided the applicant independently meets the eligibility criteria established by each respective entity. Each application shall be evaluated on its own merits in accordance with the governing policies

and procedures of the applicable Fund or NAR RRF. The receipt of assistance from one shall not, in and of itself, disqualify an applicant from receiving assistance from the other.

All distributions shall be subject to the availability of funds and compliance with the specific requirements and limitations set forth by GAR and NAR.

9.4 NAR REALTORS® Relief Foundation Grant Availability

When NAR REALTORS® Relief Foundation grants are activated, GAR will ensure that these funds are made available to the general public, including GAR members in good standing, in accordance with NAR guidelines and eligibility requirements. The availability of these funds will be communicated through similar channels, including email, social media, local Association Executives, and the GAR website. GAR members will receive guidance on how to apply for these funds and the specific criteria required for eligibility.

SECTION 10: BOOKKEEPING, RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

10.1 Record-Keeping and Accounting Standards

The Fund Administrator(s) shall maintain accurate, complete, and current records of all applications, supporting documentation, financial transactions, grants, and reimbursements for a minimum period of seven (7) years. Such records shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and all applicable nonprofit financial reporting standards.

All receipts and disbursements of funds shall be timely documented, categorized, and reconciled using sound bookkeeping practices to ensure fiscal integrity, facilitate audits, and support accurate financial reporting. Access to these records shall be restricted to authorized personnel and used solely for legitimate administrative purposes. The Fund shall implement and maintain appropriate safeguards including physical, electronic, and procedural security measures to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and protection of all records against unauthorized access, modification, or disclosure.

10.2 Audit and Accountability

The Fund shall undergo periodic audits, conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) or other applicable financial regulations, to ensure compliance with all policies and fiduciary responsibilities. The Fund Directors shall review audit findings and take corrective actions as necessary to maintain financial transparency and accountability.

SECTION 11: RECORD INSPECTION RIGHTS AND LIMITATIONS

11.1 Right to Inspect Corporate Records

Any Member of GAR, GAR itself, or Director of the Fund shall be entitled to inspect and copy the following corporate records at a reasonable time and location specified by the Fund, upon written request made at least five (5) business days in advance:

- a. Articles or restated Articles of Incorporation, including all amendments currently in effect.
- b. Bylaws or restated Bylaws, including all amendments currently in effect.
- c. Resolutions adopted by GAR or the Board increasing or decreasing the number of Directors or classification of Directors.
- d. Financial statements furnished for the past three (3) years.
- e. A list of the names and business or home addresses of current Directors and officers.
- f. The most recent annual report delivered to the Secretary of State.

11.2 Additional Record Inspection by Members or Directors

Any Member of GAR, GAR itself, or Director of the Fund may inspect and copy the following records upon written request made at least five (5) business days in advance, provided that:

- a. The request is made in good faith and for a proper purpose reasonably relevant to the individual's legitimate interest as a donor, Member, or Director.
- b. The request describes with reasonable particularity the purpose and the specific records requested.
- c. The records are directly related to the stated purpose.
- d. The records will be used only for the stated purpose and not for any unrelated or unauthorized purpose.

The records subject to inspection under this section include:

- a. Excerpts from minutes of any Board meeting, records of action of a committee of the Board, and records of action taken by the Board without a meeting.
- b. Accounting records of the Fund.

11.3 Costs Associated with Record Requests

The Fund may impose a reasonable charge to cover the cost of labor and materials for copies of any requested documents. The requesting party shall be notified of such costs before copies are made.

11.4 Confidentiality and Limitations on Access

Notwithstanding any provision in this section, the Board of Directors may limit or deny access to certain records when necessary to protect confidential or privileged information. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Attorney-client privileged communications.
- b. Executive session meeting records.
- c. Financial records or accounts of GAR that contain confidential donor or applicant information.
- d. Any records that, if disclosed, would violate privacy laws or pose a legal or financial risk to the Fund or its members.

SECTION 12: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A Fund Director who identifies a potential or actual conflict of interest must promptly disclose the conflict to the Board prior to any discussion or decision-making regarding the matter. In instances where the matter involves financial assistance to a recipient who is related to the director by blood, marriage, business relationship, or otherwise qualifies as an eligible director, the director with the conflict shall neither be counted toward the quorum nor participate in the deliberations or vote on the matter. While the director may remain present during preliminary discussions, they must refrain from any advocacy or influence regarding the outcome and must physically exit the meeting room prior to the vote. All disclosures, recusals, and departures must be accurately recorded in the meeting minutes. A supermajority of two-thirds (2/3) of the disinterested Fund Directors is required for approval.

SECTION 13: EMERGENCY FUNDING FLEXIBILITY

In the event of a catastrophic disaster, the Fund Directors may, by unanimous vote of the Board, enact temporary modifications to grant or reimbursement limits or eligibility criteria solely for the purpose of addressing widespread disaster relief needs. Any such modifications must be applied uniformly and shall not be used to evaluate or alter individual applications. All changes remain subject to the availability of funds and shall not create any entitlement or precedent for future applications.

SECTION 14: FINALITY OF FUND DIRECTOR DECISIONS

All determinations made by the Fund Directors concerning applications for grants, disbursements, or reimbursements shall be final, binding, and not subject to appeal or further review.

SECTION 15: GRANTS TO LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS/BOARDS AND STATE DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS

The Fund may accept and distribute contributions designated for specific disaster relief efforts in compliance with applicable policies.

SECTION 16: FRAUD PREVENTION AND WHISTLEBLOWER

16.1 Purpose

The Georgia Association of REALTORS® (GAR) Disaster Relief Fund ("Fund") is committed to safeguarding the integrity of its financial assistance programs by preventing, detecting, and addressing fraudulent activities. This section establishes clear reporting requirements and outlines measures to prevent fraud.

16.2 Definition of Fraud

Fraud includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Knowingly providing false information or misrepresenting facts on an application.
- b. Forging, altering, or submitting fraudulent documentation.
- c. Applying for assistance for ineligible damages or non-disaster-related losses.
- d. Submitting multiple applications for the same disaster under different names or entities.
- e. Failing to disclose duplicate benefits received from other sources.
- f. Misusing funds for non-qualifying expenses.

16.3 Fraud Prevention Measures

- a. All applications and supporting documents are subject to verification by the Fund Directors, Fund Administrators, or third parties such as insurance adjusters, government agencies, or licensed inspectors.
- b. The Fund reserves the right to conduct audits, require additional documentation, and verify financial disbursements to ensure compliance.

- c. Any application found to contain false or misleading information may be denied or rescinded.

16.4 Whistleblower and Reporting Requirements

All GAR members and staff are required to report any suspected fraudulent activity or misuse of Fund resources. Reports must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Fund and/or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for investigation. Reports may be made confidentially, and retaliation against whistleblowers is strictly prohibited.

16.5 Committee Review of Suspected Fraud

The Fund Directors shall have full discretion to determine how to handle incidents of suspected fraud, including conducting internal reviews, requiring repayment of misused funds, permanently disqualifying applicants from future assistance, or referring cases to legal authorities if warranted.

SECTION 17: POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

17.1 Review of Policy and Procedures

The Fund Directors shall review these policies and procedures at least annually to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as well as to determine the effectiveness of the Fund in meeting its stated goals. Any proposed changes to these policies shall be discussed and approved by the Fund Directors.

17.2 Amendments to Policy

Any amendments to these policies and procedures shall be approved by a majority vote of the Fund Directors. The amended policies will be made available to all eligible applicants and the general public via the GAR website, and such amendments shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Fund Directors.

SECTION 18: COMMUNICATION OF FUND AVAILABILITY

18.1 Fund Availability Notification to Members

The Georgia Association of REALTORS® may communicate the availability of grants from the GAR Disaster Relief Fund to all members in good standing through email, social media, local Association Executives, and GAR's official website.

SECTION 19: FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fund Directors shall exercise fiduciary oversight of the Disaster Relief Fund to ensure the proper administration, distribution, and financial integrity of all funds. Their responsibilities shall include:

19.1 Financial Review

Conducting regular reviews of financial statements, disbursement records, and fund balances to ensure proper allocation and compliance with this Policy.

19.2 Audits

Ensuring that the Fund undergoes periodic financial audits, as determined by the Board, to verify accuracy, detect irregularities, and maintain accountability.

19.3 Compliance Monitoring

Overseeing adherence to applicable laws, regulations, and internal policies governing the Fund's financial operations.

19.4 Reporting

Present annual financial reports to the GAR Board of Directors outlining expenditures, income and Fund year to date balance.

The Fund Directors shall have full authority to implement corrective measures if financial discrepancies, misallocations, or misuse of funds are identified.

SECTION 20: COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Directors shall serve without compensation for their services as members of the Board. Directors may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

In the event a Director is requested by the Chair and Chief Executive Officer to respond to a declared disaster situation on behalf of the Fund, the Director may be reimbursed for mileage at the prevailing IRS rate, and a per diem not to exceed seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) for meals. All travel must be pre-approved in writing by both the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer prior to the commencement of travel.

Requests for reimbursement must be submitted to GAR Accounting Department at Accounting@garealtor.com no later than sixty (60) days following the date of the event for which reimbursement is sought. Receipts shall be required for all individual expenditures exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00). Reimbursable expenses pursuant to this section shall not be deemed compensation.