

2021-22 CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE RULES
REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI
(Approved March 2022)

ARTICLE 1 - PURPOSE

Purpose of the Circle of Excellence is to recognize outstanding residential sales performance of REALTOR® members in good standing with the REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI. Realtor® members are eligible for either the Circle of Excellence or Commercial Top Producers Club but not both (there are different qualification criteria for each). All applicants (regardless of Individual or Team Award) must be Realtor® members of RAGC and meet the criteria set forth.

ARTICLE 2 - RECOGNITION PERIOD

The recognition period shall be October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

ARTICLE 3 - PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Those qualifying for the Circle of Excellence each year will be recognized and presented an award at the Board's Annual Awards function following the recognition period. Recognition of recipients/teams will be by the company with which the recipient/team was affiliated at the close of the recognition period.

ARTICLE 4 - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Section 1: QUALIFICATION

**1.1 Real estate sales and leases shall be considered eligible for the Circle of Excellence. The words "sales" and "leases" are hereafter used interchangeably. In order to qualify, at least 80% of an applicant's award-submitted commission volume must be from residential-generated transactions and at least 80% of the submitted transactions (property) must be located in either Ohio, Kentucky or Indiana for inclusion in the Circle of Excellence. For the purpose of this section, "residential" means single-family homes, condominiums, farms with houses, multi-family dwellings (up to 12-family) and residential building lots. An applicant may qualify by either of the following methods:

Method A. Dollar Qualification: Each applicant's company must have been paid a minimum of \$110,000 in gross commissions as a result of the applicant's participation in selling, listing, referral fees, tips and/or leasing real estate during the recognition period. **Any relocation/referral fee paid out to a network or other referring company/broker must be deducted in computing the commission (this does not include franchise service fees).** Relocation/referral fees retained by the company may be claimed by the agent as part of gross commissions. Only those dollar amounts listed as compensation on the closing statement can be counted as commissions. Processing and handling fees, as well as other fees for services rendered are not commissions and cannot be counted. Additionally, when two or more agents from the same company are involved in the same transaction, the total commission claimed by each agent must be in relative proportion to the agent's commission split and may not exceed 100% of the commission paid to the company.

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Method B. Team Qualification: Each team's company must have been paid a minimum of (see chart below for qualification amounts) in gross commissions as a result of any of the team members (only those listed on the application and meet membership requirement) participation in selling, listing, referral fees, tips and/or leasing real estate during the recognition period. **Any relocation/referral fee paid out to a network or other referring company/broker must be deducted in computing the commission (this does not include franchise service fees).** Relocation/referral fees retained by the company may be claimed by the agent/team as part of gross commissions. Only those dollar amounts listed as compensation on the closing statement can be counted as commissions. Processing and handling fees, as well as other fees for services rendered are not commissions and cannot be counted. Additionally, when two or more agents/teams from the same company are involved in the same transaction, the total commission claimed by each agent must be in relative proportion to the agent's commission split and may not exceed 100% of the commission paid to the company.

- A team exists when two or more REALTORS® and/or licensees within a brokerage meet two or more of the following criteria:
 - They have a business affiliation with one another to list and sell real estate.
 - When 30% or more of their transactions are shared.
 - They hold themselves out to the public as a team in marketing or social media.
- If criteria for a team is met, applicants must apply as a team.

Method C. Unit Qualification (individuals only): Each applicant must have earned 18 units with a minimum of \$75,000 in gross company commissions. Units shall consist of as follows: Listing sold and selling = 1 unit; listing sold only = 1/2 unit; selling only = 1/2 unit; leasing = 1/2 unit; 2 or more listing agents = proportionate amount of 1/2 unit; 2 or more selling agents = proportionate amount of 1/2 unit; referral or tip fee = proportionate amount of 1/2 unit. **Any referral fee paid out to a broker/agent must be deducted in computing the commission (this does not include franchise service fees).**

Additionally, when two or more agents from the same company are involved in the same transaction, the total commission claimed by each agent must be in relative proportion to the agent's commission split and may not exceed 100% of the commission paid to the company. There will be only one level in qualifying by units.

1.3 An applicant does not need to fill in units unless qualifying by the unit's method.

2021-2022 Circle of Excellence Levels

Individual	Small Team 2-3 REALTORS®	Medium Team 4-6 REALTORS®	Large Team 7+ REALTORS®	Level
\$ 110,000	\$165,000	\$385,000	\$600,000	Bronze
\$ 220,000	\$330,000	\$770,000	\$1,200,000	Silver
\$ 440,000	\$660,000	\$1,540,000	\$2,400,000	Gold
\$ 660,000	\$990,000	\$2,310,000	\$3,600,000	Platinum
\$ 1,210,000	\$1,815,000	\$4,235,000	\$6,600,000	Diamond

Section 3: All commissions must have been paid to the applicant's/applicants' company during the recognition period. When the commission paid to the company and the closing are not simultaneous, the date on which the latter of the two events occurs shall determine the recognition period when said transaction is to be applied. Commissions that are paid on an installment basis (such as leases, land contracts, etc.) or commissions being deferred for use as collateral pledge, may be used to qualify only during the recognition period the commission(s) is paid to the company.

Section 4: Any reference to the 'applicant's/applicants' company' throughout these Rules means the company the applicant was affiliated with at the time of the subject property transaction. An applicant (regardless of individual or team award) who joins the REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI, after the recognition period has started, is eligible provided the commissions claimed were earned during membership with any Realtor® Board nationwide (subject to Article 4 Section 1), but with a minimum 3-month membership in the REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI.

Section 5: An applicant who has been found guilty of violating the Circle of Excellence Rules during the recognition period, regardless of the date of the occurrence, may be deemed ineligible for that period (see Article 9). Any applicant who has been found guilty of violating the real estate licensing laws of the Ohio Revised Code during the recognition period, regardless of the date of the occurrence, is ineligible for that period.

Section 6: If during the course of the awards period a team member decides to leave a team, the agent may apply for the Individual Circle of Excellence Awards Club claiming only those sales achieved after leaving the team through the end of the award period.

Section 7: If during the course of the awards period an agent or agents join or form a team, the agent or agents may only apply for the Teams Circle of Excellence Awards Club claiming only those sales achieved from the date that team was formed or joined through the end of the award period.

Section 8: The "Top Team" of the club will be determined by the team with highest gross commission income.

ARTICLE 5 - ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1 Section 1: To apply for recognition, applicants must submit the following through the Member Portal Application. It must be received by the end of day on October 15, 2022. Paper applications will no longer be accepted.
- 1.2 Applicant's Designated Realtor®/Office Manager must have signed the transaction form certifying its validity.
- 1.3 For all advertising and marketing purposes, individual names will appear as it is in the member portal; team names will appear as it is submitted on the application. A high-resolution headshot/team photo must be submitted.
- 1.4 The application fee of \$175 must be remitted by the application deadline. NO REFUND WILL BE MADE if applicant is ineligible because of misrepresentation.
- 1.5 Late applications will be accepted up until 5:00 PM on Friday, October 21, 2022. All late applicants shall submit a Circle of Excellence application on the member portal along with the \$175 entry fee in addition to the \$650 audit fee for each applicant. All late entries will automatically be audited. Payments must be remitted by late application deadline.

ARTICLE 6 - VERIFICATION

Section 1: All entries will be reviewed by the RAGC Staff for completeness and compliance with contest rules. Improperly submitted entries will be returned and must be resubmitted in proper order, within 7 days of notification, or applicant is automatically disqualified.

Section 2: Prior to November 10, 2022, the Committee will identify the highest dollar producer, and the highest dollar producing team as well as a number of applicants at random, for audit. If a violation of these rules is discovered during the audit process, that person will automatically be audited the next year the member/team applies for Circle of Excellence membership. Those selected for audit shall submit, within 14 days of notification the following substantiating information:

2.1 Circle of Excellence Application

2.2 Closing statement with address or legal description verifying closings (*signatures not mandatory*).

2.3 Purchase Contracts.

2.4 Listing Contracts (if claiming listing commission).

2.5 Company's transaction reports, sales records used by company, including internal brokerage commission allocation documents signed and approved by office manager or other documents verifying all pertinent information or cancelled commission checks or copies of same.

2.6 Lease Contracts: Copy of the third-party check must be submitted in support of the broker's commission amount on the transaction report; copy of the commission invoice sent to the lessor; if the transaction report does not show evidence of an agent's participation, then the agent should submit relevant correspondence between the agent and the lessor.

2.7 Referral fees must be documented.

2.8 Improperly submitted audit materials will be returned and must be resubmitted in proper order, per auditor's instruction (see Article 6 Sec. 2.1-2.7), within 7 days of notification. If the information is not received by the auditor within 7 days, there will be a \$500 fine levied against the applicant. If beyond 14 days, the applicant is automatically disqualified. Do not send original files as they will not be returned to you. Send only requested information or you may be disqualified.

Section 3: If the purchase contracts, listing contracts, or lease agreements are not witnessed or signed by a salesperson claiming participation, or if any of the above are not available, additional supporting evidence or affidavits must be furnished to the satisfaction of the Committee.

ARTICLE 7 - BROKER RESPONSIBILITY

The Designated Realtor®, on behalf of the licensees within the Designated Realtors® company, shall submit each year a Designated Realtor® Application for the Circle of Excellence. The designated Realtor®/office manager (hereinafter referred to as "management") shall sign the initial transaction form certifying the validity of the entry and that the company's commission is correctly stated; that management has read the rules, understands them, and will abide by them; that management shall be held accountable for the company's activities. IN THE EVENT THAT A SALESPERSON AND/OR MANAGEMENT MAKES A FALSE CLAIM, OR GIVES FALSE INFORMATION, THE APPLICANT(S) AND/OR MANAGEMENT AND INDIVIDUALS OF THE COMPANY MAY BE BARRED FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE CLUB FOR THE YEAR THE FALSE INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED AND/OR SUBSEQUENT YEARS.

Further, the recipient's/team's name shall not be larger than the company's name and the year shall not be larger than the recipient's/team's name.

Section 5: Those who have qualified for the Million Dollar Club in the past, should incorporate those years with the Circle of Excellence years under one heading "Circle of Excellence" and not reference the Million Dollar Club.

Section 6: Promotion and advertising of involvement in the Circle of Excellence is prohibited until after the Awards ceremony in January.

Section 7: Out-of-state Million Dollar Club designations may not appear on business cards that are showing the RAGC Circle of Excellence format.

Section 8: All promotions, must be in compliance with Ohio state law and Ohio Division of Real Estate rules.

Section 9: Award 'Thank you' videos for COE Ceremony must be filmed by RAGC.

ARTICLE 9 - ENFORCEMENT

Section 1: The Circle of Excellence Committee shall be responsible for enforcement of the Circle of Excellence Rules. When it appears that a violation of these rules has occurred, the public, a member of the Board, the Circle of Excellence Committee, or Board of Directors may file a written complaint, supported by evidence.

Section 2: If a violation of these rules is brought to the attention of the committee or RAGC Staff, the Staff Liaison to the Circle of Excellence Committee will contact the member and/or the team lead in violation and request that the violation be corrected. If the violation is not corrected within two (2) calendar days, then the violating member and/or team lead will be fined \$ \$250 for digital violation and \$500 for printed violation. If the violation is not corrected within five (5) calendar days from the first day of being notified, then the violating member and/or team lead will be suspended from the Circle of Excellence for the year of the violation.

If a member has violations in more than one year, then the violating member and/or team lead will be fined \$500, in lieu of a warning to correct the violation. If the violation is not corrected within two (2) calendar days, then the violating member will be suspended from the Circle of Excellence for the year in violation as well as the next award year.

ARTICLE 10 - COMMITTEE

Section 1: The Circle of Excellence Committee shall consist of a minimum of ten (10) members from the Board.

Section 2: The Committee's function shall be to Administer the Association's Circle of Excellence Club, including setting award levels, enforcement of the rules, and selection of awards. Association staff is responsible for executing the Circle of Excellence event. However, the Committee will assign two members to work with Association staff to coordinate key aspects of the event in accordance with a set budget. Subject to approval of the Board of Directors of the REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI.