

Stakeholder Engagement Policy

The Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA) is an independent, non-government agency, responsible for governing real estate brokerage, mortgage brokerage, property management, and real estate appraisal professionals under the *Real Estate Act* of Alberta.



Background

As the governing body for industry professionals, RECA is committed to the public interest, by promoting the integrity of the industry and protecting consumers.

RECA's mandate is to protect consumers and provide services that enhance and improve the industry and the business of industry professionals. It is an independent body that is fair, transparent, and accountable, and it follows a model of regulation that reflects the evolution of professionalism within the real estate industry.

RECA builds consumer trust and confidence in the industry professional by:

- setting and enforcing standards of conduct and professional development requirements for the industry to protect the consumer
- providing services that enhance and improve the industry
- promoting the integrity of the industry
- protecting against, investigating, detecting, and suppressing mortgage fraud as it relates to the industry

What is stakeholder engagement?

RECA defines stakeholder engagement as meaningful dialogue with individuals, firms, and organizations affected by RECA's actions as it carries out its regulatory mandate.

RECA has a vast stakeholder group, with diverging interests, backgrounds, and objectives. RECA is committed to transparent engagement with all stakeholders on matters that affect the regulation of Alberta's industry professionals. This includes, but is not limited to: new legislation and standards; strategic planning priorities; and, consumer initiatives.



Policy for stakeholder engagement

Council's decision-making process and its governance structure place a high priority on research, stakeholder engagement, and informed decision making. It is through stakeholder engagement that RECA ensures a strong industry and continued consumer protection. Stakeholder engagement is one way in which we demonstrate fairness, transparency, and accountability.

RECA, through its representatives and various communication channels, engages with industry professionals and other stakeholders. It continually scans the industry and regulatory environment to stay informed and to identify emerging issues.

RECA's primary stakeholders include:

- licensed industry professionals
- brokerages
- industry associations
 - Alberta Mortgage Brokers association (AMBA)
 - Alberta Real Estate association (AREA)
 - Alberta Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada (AIC)
 - Alberta Assessors Association (AAA)
 - Canadian National Association of Real Estate Appraisers (CNAREA)

- Building Owners and Managers Association of Calgary
- Building Owners and Managers Association of Edmonton
- Calgary Real Estate Board
- Institute of Real Estate Management
- Real Estate Institute of Canada
- REALTORS® Association of Edmonton
- other real estate boards in Alberta
- Alberta consumers
- the Minister of Service Alberta (Government of Alberta)

Council's principles of stakeholder engagement

• **Timely and consistent:**
RECA is committed to timely and ongoing stakeholder engagement activities. It will provide stakeholder engagement opportunities in advance of significant decisions that will affect its industry professionals and it will maintain ongoing and consistent engagement with stakeholders outside of specific consultation initiatives.

• **Meaningful:**
RECA will use stakeholder engagement activities that are meaningful and responsive to the needs of its stakeholders. RECA will endeavour to build consensus with affected stakeholders; however, RECA's

commitment to this principle does not mean RECA will always proceed in the manner that pleases the majority of its stakeholders. Notwithstanding the results of its stakeholder engagement activities, RECA must ensure continued fulfillment of its consumer protection mandate.

• **Transparent:**
RECA's stakeholder engagement will be transparent with all stakeholders. Among other things, it will take place at the RECA office, in public forums, through accessible surveys, and open town hall-style meetings. RECA will share results from its stakeholder engagement activities with affected parties.

• **Equal:**
RECA will treat industry associations equally and engage in substantially similar ways with all. Meetings with industry associations will be transparent, agenda driven and focus on regulatory issues.

• **Effective:**
RECA's stakeholder engagement activities will be designed to maximize engagement and minimize costs. It will use both traditional and new media, as well as in-person engagement activities when appropriate to do so.

Council's formal stakeholder engagement initiatives

• Industry sector advisory committees:

The primary purpose of these committees is to provide a direct line to industry professionals and to maintain cooperation, communication, and an exchange of information between RECA and the industry sector. Council may ask a committee to explore a specific issue relevant to the specific industry sector and the committee will report its findings to Council. The committees may also identify and advise Council on trends and issues affecting the industry and consumers, within the industry sector. The committees may also make recommendations to Council with respect to its responsibilities under the *Real Estate Act*. There are currently five industry sector committees. Each industry sector committee has a dedicated email address through which industry professionals can contact them and bring issues forward for discussion.

• 20/20 groups in real estate and mortgage:

RECA hosts "20/20" groups for the real estate and mortgage brokerage sectors. The membership of these groups is younger industry professionals. Through these groups, RECA connects with industry professionals who may not be at a point in their career where they are ready to assume a role as a Council member or industry sector committee member. At 20/20 group meetings, members bring issues forward to senior RECA staff, and RECA staff provide them with an opportunity to weigh in on RECA's current activities, and future initiatives and priorities.

• Broker forums:

RECA hosts broker forum meetings with real estate brokers. The broker forum groups bring brokers together from across Alberta with senior RECA staff to discuss issues of concern to them and to weigh in on RECA's current activities, and future initiatives and priorities.

• Real estate practice advisor:

RECA's real estate practice advisor responds to real estate broker and broker delegate questions with practical, timely information, guidance and advisory services that support them in their responsibilities and duties on a "confidential and without prejudice" basis. RECA's real estate practice advisor also conducts presentations to brokerages and industry organizations on real estate brokerage practices and regulatory issues.

• Liaison meetings with Service Alberta staff and annual meeting with Minister of Service Alberta:

RECA maintains an ongoing relationship with Service Alberta staff and meets annually with the Minister of Service Alberta. In addition to these regular meetings, RECA communicates with the Government on its initiatives.

• Consultation papers:

RECA distributes consultation papers on issues that will affect its industry professionals. In recent years, this has included consultation papers on written service agreements, condominium manager licensing, specialty licensing, and strategic planning priorities. On high-profile topics, in conjunction with these consultation papers, RECA hosts town hall-style information/consultation sessions, which its stakeholders are encouraged to

attend.

• Consumer and industry professional surveys:

RECA engages a third-party market research company to carry out surveys with industry professionals and consumers on its behalf. By hiring a third-party market research company, RECA ensures independence in the survey design and statistical accuracy in the survey results.

Council's informal stakeholder engagement initiatives

• Social media presence:

RECA maintains accounts on social media platforms to engage with consumers, industry professionals and other stakeholders on matters relating to Alberta's real estate industry.

• Consumer and Information Services:

RECA staff respond to telephone calls and emails from consumers and licensed professionals.

• Trade show attendance:

RECA exhibits at real estate, mortgage brokerage and real estate appraisal professional trade shows, as well as at various consumer home shows. Through these trade shows, RECA staff engage with stakeholders in an informal setting.

• RECA email distribution list:

RECA maintains an email database of all licensed professionals as well as related industry associations and other interested stakeholders. RECA regularly communicates with these stakeholders via email and stakeholders are encouraged to email RECA with any questions or concerns they have.