NICAR 2026 Strategic Plan Approved May 13, 2026

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1. Strategic Purpose

Mission
Leading Illinois commercial real estate by providing access to advance the success of industry professionals.

Vision
Driving the success of Illinois commercial real estate through education, growth and member interests.

Value – Advancing Illinois commercial real estate through connection, knowledge, and a powerful collective voice.

Strategic Intent
Over the next three years, NICAR will deliberately transition from an event-driven association to a member-value, influence, and execution-driven commercial organization.

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2. Strategic Pillars, Outcomes & Ownership

A. Networking (Tier 1 Priority)

Objective: Grow participation and retain engaged members through purposeful, high-quality programming that offers networking and new connections.

Key Outcomes (KPIs):

- ≥10% membership growth by 2027
- Average event attendance growth of ≥10% annually
- ≥10% of attendees are first-time participants
- Annual and event sponsorship intake (combined total) to increase by ≥20% annually

Core Initiatives:

- Quarterly flagship networking events with an educational component
- "Bring a Friend" incentives (discounts) with the goal of membership conversion
- Expanded collaboration with REALTOR® associations, industry groups, and municipalities
- Extend our reach and visibility to other real estate firms, business segments, and individuals
- Bolster sponsorship opportunities for heightened supporter visibility and assistance to NICAR
- Provide assistance with Broker Breakfasts, Broker Site Tours, and one-off events, if needed

Ownership: Programs & Events
Secondary: Marketing / Membership / Sponsorship
Tertiary: Philanthropy

B. Education (Tier 1 Priority)

Objective: Establish NICAR as the primary source of commercial real estate education in Illinois.

Key Outcomes (KPIs):

- Minimum of 2 commercial-focused CE programs in 2026 and 2 more in 2027
- Average program satisfaction score ≥4.5/5
- Increased participation from professionals new to commercial real estate

Core Initiatives:

- Industry-led workshops and panels
- Partnerships with educational institutions
- Commercial CE expansion focusing on Managing Broker renewal in 2027 and certification-aligned programming

Ownership: Education Committee
Secondary: Program and Events/CGBN
Tertiary: Membership

C. Advocacy (Tier 1 Priority)

Objective: The Northern Illinois Commercial Association of Realtors supports commercial real estate owners, professionals servicing the commercial real estate industry and service providers for all commercial property types with advocacy and education. We can provide resources, legislative advocacy, and professional opportunities to help you expand your world of commercial real estate contacts and grow your business.

Key Outcomes (KPIs):

- Grow RPAC contributions by 15%
- Quarterly advocacy communications to members
- Increase attendance at advocacy programs and/or Capitol Conference by 10%

Core Initiatives:

- Increase Economic Development Members
- Increase sharing of media mentions of local legislative concerns
- Coordination with GAD and RPAC on commercial priorities

Ownership: Government Affairs
Secondary: Professional Standards
Tertiary: Philanthropy

D. Best Practices & Operations (Tier 2 Priority)

Objective: Improve internal systems, data, and member experience.

Key Outcomes (KPIs):

- Improved onboarding process for new members, committees and board members
- Post-event survey participation rate ≥10%
- Updated and actively used member tools database, Converting CRM, and exploring other tools for member benefits

Core Initiatives:

- Procedural policy manual
- Standardized feedback and follow-up processes
- Review and improve membership options
- Regular data hygiene, file management, and improved communication cadence

Ownership: Executive Board
Secondary: Board Officers and Staff
Tertiary: Forms Task Force/Professional Standards

E. Leadership & Industry Positioning (Tier 2 Priority)

Objective: Position NICAR as a recognized commercial industry leader and resource

Key Outcomes (KPIs):

- Established NICAR Speaker Panel
- Increased representation at state, national, and global forums and professional real estate associations
- Growth improvement of 10% in affiliate and sponsor engagement

Core Initiatives:

- Speaker development and placement
- Affiliate member expansion across commercial service providers
- Strategic sponsorship of industry events
- Expansion statewide via our Strategic Alliance Partnerships
- More outreach and collaboration with Commercial NAR Institute Affiliates and other professional associations other professional real-estate associations

Ownership: Executive Board + Board of Directors/Committee Chairs
Secondary: President Advisory Board/Past Presidents Committee
Tertiary: Nominating Committee/Sponsorships

3. Strategic Phasing

Year 1 (2025): Foundation Ownership Exec board, BOD, and AE.
Fix systems, communications, onboarding, and core programming quality.

Year 2 (2026): Expansion
Grow partnerships, geographic reach, and advocacy footprint.

Year 3 (2027): Influence
Solidify NICAR as the leading commercial voice and resource.

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4. Strategic Guardrails

NICAR will prioritize:

- Commercial relevance over volume
- Execution over experimentation
- Member value over one-off programming

NICAR will not:

- Compete with residential-focused associations
- Launch initiatives without ownership or outcomes
- Dilute focus through unfocused programming

Ownership: Executive Board + Board of Directors and AE