

2023-2024 CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE RULES

REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI

(Approved February 21, 2024)

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 including Individual or Team/All Team Members must be REALTOR® members of RAGC and meet the criteria set forth. Any team member that is not a RAGC member cannot have their sales volume added to the team volume.*

ARTICLE 2 - RECOGNITION PERIOD

The recognition period shall be October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024.

ARTICLE 3 - PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Those qualifying for the Circle of Excellence each year will be recognized and presented with 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. *Tickets to the Circle of Excellence Event are available to members of REALTOR® Alliance of Greater Cincinnati only except for Broker office staff and/or non-licensed assistants.*

ARTICLE 4 - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Section I: QUALIFICATION

1.1 Real estate sales shall be considered eligible for the Circle of Excellence. In order to qualify, at least 80% of an applicant's award-submitted Sales 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.

Leases will not be counted towards qualification for Circle of Excellence recognition.

An applicant may qualify by either of the following methods:

Method A. Individual Qualification: Each applicant must have closed a minimum of \$3,500,000 in Sales Volume as a result of the applicant's participation in selling, listing, referral fees and tip fees related to the sale of real estate during the recognition period. Only the "Sold Price" in the MLS will be counted as Sales Volume.

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Method B. Team Qualification: Each team must have closed a minimum of (see chart below for qualification amounts) in Sales Volume 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 and tip fees related to the sale of real estate during the recognition period. Only the "Sold Price" as shown in the MLS will be counted as Sales Volume.

- 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.

2023-2024 Circle of Excellence Levels

Individual	Small Team 2-3 REALTORS®	Medium Team 4-6 REALTORS®	Large Team 7+ REALTORS®	Level
\$3,500,000	\$5,500,000	\$13,000,000	\$20,000,000	Bronze
\$7,000,000	\$11,000,000	\$26,000,000	\$40,000,000	Silver
\$14,000,000	\$22,000,000	\$51,000,000	\$80,000,000	Gold
\$20,000,000	\$33,000,000	\$77,000,000	\$120,000,000	Platinum
\$40,000,000	\$60,000,000	\$140,000,000	\$220,000,000	Diamond

Section 2: SALES VOLUME CALCULATION

2.1: Sales Volume will be calculated using the “Sold Price” in the MLS. The listing agent and the selling agent can each claim the full amount of the Sold Price (minus any referral or tip fee percentages). For example, Sold Price in MLS is \$100,000 (with no referral or tip fees), the listing agent and the selling agent can each claim \$100,000 in Sales Volume.

2.2: Sales Volume for referral or tip fees received will be calculated based on the percentage of the referral or tip fee received. For example, Sold Price in MLS is \$100,000. The agent who received a 25% referral or tip fee can claim \$25,000 in Sales Volume. The agent who received the referral can claim the remaining \$75,000 in Sale Volume. This also holds true for out of area referrals to other brokers/agents.

Referral fees paid to relocation companies or lead service do not need to be deducted from Sales Volume. For example, if the Sold price in MLS is \$100,000. The relocation company’s fee is 35%. The agent still claims \$100,000 in Sales Volume.

2.3: If an agent is both the Listing Agent and the Selling Agent the agent can claim two times the Sold Price. For example, Sold Price in MLS is \$100,000 and the same agent listed and sold the property, \$200,000 can be claimed as Sales Volume.

2.4: If there are two (or more) listing agents or two (or more) selling agents who are NOT a team then each agent can claim the percentage of Sales Volume based on the number of agents involved. For example, two agents co-list a property and they are not an official team. The home sells for \$100,000. Each agent can claim 50% of the Sold Price in MLS as \$50,000.

2.5: If an agent is involved in a For Sale By Owner transaction and that transaction is not listed in the MLS, the agent will supply a copy of the closing statement with their application.

2.6: If an agent places a referral to an out of area broker where the sale will not be recorded in the Cincinnati MLS and receives a referral or tip fee, the agent will supply a copy of the out of area MLS sheet showing the “Sold” transaction as well as a copy of the referral agreement showing the referral or tip fee percentage.

2.7: An agent with sales in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio that are not listed in the Cincinnati MLS will supply a report from that local MLS showing the agent’s name and transaction history for the transactions claimed.

Section 3: 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 Sales claimed were earned during membership with any REALTOR® Board (subject to Article 4 Section 1.1), but with a minimum 3-month membership in the REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI.

Section 4: 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 5: If during the course of the awards period a team member decides to leave a team and work as an individual, the agent may apply using the Individual Qualification method claiming only the Sales Volume achieved after leaving the team through the end of the award period.

Section 6: If during the course of the awards period a team member decides to leave a team and join another team, the agent must apply under the Team Qualification method and the team that is joined must add that team member to their total agent count as related to the team size in the 2022-2023 Circle of Excellence Levels chart in Article 4, Section 1.1. Only the Sales Volume achieved by the newly added team member from the date joining the team can be claimed through the end of the award period.

Section 7: If during the course of the awards period an agent or agents form a team, the agents may only apply using the Team Qualification method claiming only the Sales Volume achieved from the date that the team was formed through the end of the award period.

Section 8: The “Top Team” of the club will be determined by the team with highest Sales Volume regardless of team size or level attained.

ARTICLE 5 - ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Section 1: To apply for recognition, applicants must submit the following through the Member Portal Application. It must be received by the end of the day on October 14, 2024. Paper applications will no longer be accepted.

1.1: Applicant's Designated REALTOR®/Office Manager must have signed the transaction form certifying its validity.

1.2: 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.

1.3: The application fee of \$175 must be remitted by the application deadline. NO REFUND WILL BE MADE if the applicant is ineligible because of misrepresentation.

1.4: Late applications will be accepted up until 5:00 PM on Monday, October 21, 2024. 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 the late application deadline.

ARTICLE 6 – VERIFICATION

Section 1: All entries will be reviewed by the RAGC Staff and/or the Committee 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, 2023, the Committee will identify the Individual agent with the highest Sales Volume, and the Team with the highest Sales Volume 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 Sales Volume).

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

2.6 Referral and Tip fees must be documented.

2.7 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 or listing contracts 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 REALTOR® 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 Sales Volume 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.

ARTICLE 8 – PROMOTION

The spirit of this article is to permit certain types of INDIVIDUAL/TEAM promotion, **NOT** company promotion.

Section 1.1: A Circle of Excellence individual recipient may announce their personal participation in the Circle of Excellence in individual advertising, printed promotional pieces, individual news releases, articles and/or social media. This rule allows individual promotion, not collective promotion for multiple recipients of the Circle of Excellence. Companies/Brokerages must follow individual rules.

Section 1.2: A Circle of Excellence team/team member may announce their team participation in the Circle of Excellence in team advertising, printed promotional pieces, team news releases, articles and/or social media. Companies or offices may participate in collective announcements of Circle of Excellence. This rule allows a team member to be promoted but only under the team's name, no individual that is part of a team will be permitted to promote themselves as an individual of the Circle of Excellence. Companies/Brokerages must follow team rules.

Section 1.3: Companies or offices may only participate in collective announcements of the entire RAGC Circle of Excellence. (i.e. Congratulations to ALL RAGC COE Recipients), any other collective announcements that promote multiple recipients, teams or groups of recipients/teams will not be permitted. (i.e. you cannot say congratulations to all (company name) COE recipients.

Section 2: When advertising Circle of Excellence, advertisements and promotional pieces must include the name of the club, (REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI Circle of Excellence), the year or years of club membership and must list the Team Award for team applicants. Levels (bronze, silver, etc.) may be included in any advertising or promotional pieces. A promotion for a team that includes Circle of Excellence **must not** include team members that were not listed on the team's Circle of Excellence application for that year.

Section 3: The names, (team name, when applicable) pictures and company affiliation (at the close of the recognition period) of Circle of Excellence recipients, in alphabetical order by REALTORS®, will be placed on the Association's website and any other advertising as deemed appropriate by the Association's Marketing & Communication Director from year-to-year. An asterisk will indicate that a member changed company after September 30th.

Section 4: Those individuals/teams who qualify for the Circle of Excellence in any given recognition period may indicate the following on their business card in these exact formats:

Individual COE Award Format:

3-line format: Circle of Excellence
REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI
1996, 1997, 1998, 2011, Silver - 2021

Or

Circle of Excellence
RAGC
1996, 1999 thru 2020* Bronze - 2021
**Years must be inclusive.*

2-line format: RAGC Circle of Excellence
1996, 1999 thru 2021

1-line format: RAGC Circle of Excellence 1996, 1999 thru 2021

Team COE Award Format:

3-line format: Circle of Excellence – Team Award
REALTOR® ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI
2019, 2020, Bronze - 2021, Silver - 2022

Or

Circle of Excellence – Team Award
RAGC
2019 thru 2022

2-line format: RAGC Circle of Excellence – Team Award
2019, 2020, Bronze – 2021 thru 2022

1-line format: RAGC Circle of Excellence – Team Award 2019, Bronze – 2021, Silver - 2022

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: *Agents may advertise their individual awards on social media. Congratulatory statements and/or award photos are permitted. Any reference to prior award years must refer to Article 8, Section 4.*

Section 6: 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 7: Promotion and advertising of involvement in the Circle of Excellence is prohibited until after the Awards ceremony in held in early 2024.

Section 8: Out-of-state Million Dollar Club designations may not appear on business cards that are showing the RAGC Circle of Excellence format.

Section 9: All promotions must be in compliance with Ohio state law and Ohio Division of Real Estate rules.

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.

Section 3:

Intentional misrepresentation of a Circle of Excellence award, (i.e. advertising that you made an award when you did not or advertising an incorrect level), may result in a lifetime ban on receiving the award and/or an ethics complaint at the state.

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. The 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.