



STARTING YOUR LOCAL RAL CHAPTER

WHAT IS A RAL CHAPTER?

A RAL Chapter is an association located in a particular district or territory. It could be state specific or more localized. RAL Chapters range from independent nonprofit organizations to small, collaborative resource groups whose goal is to provide the opportunity for the professionals who own and operate RAL homes in the same state or area to meet, share ideas and experiences, develop strategies for improving professional services to clients (or residents) in their state, influence public policy, and educate the public, other professionals, and policymakers about Residential Assisted Living.

WHY START A RAL CHAPTER?

- Contribute to providing state-level expertise and resources to other RAL homeowners and operators.
- Amplify the awareness of RAL in communities nationwide.
- Establish yourself as a leader in the RAL community.
- Work with a wide array of community partners to deliver resources and support for your members.
- Support coalition building, advocacy, and engagement with policymakers and elected representatives at the local and state levels, all to enhance the status, credentials, and knowledge of your members.
- Many REIA/RAL Chapter founders also have other businesses. Leading a chapter helps their business by establishing authority in their area and furthering their brand awareness.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT STARTING A CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA:

- What's the mission?
- What's the vision?
- What is the purpose?
Networking? Connecting members with vendors? Lobbying? Social Services?
- Do I want to form a TRUE Non-Profit?
- Do I want it to be an "informal" association?
- Do I want my chapter to be an LLC which will make it a legitimate business?
- What other RAL associations are in my state?
How can mine be different?
- What value will I bring to my members?
- Will I put in the time to lead this organization?
Do I need someone else to do that for me?
- Do I want to be paid for starting and running the association?
- Do I want or need a legitimate board of advisors?
- Will I charge for membership?
What will I charge my members?
- How often will we meet?
Will we meet on Zoom or in person?
- It takes energy to keep everything relevant. Who's going to do that?
- How will I find active RALs in my area?
- Do I have the credibility to attract homeowners to my association?
What value can you provide them if they are already running a RAL?
- Am I willing to pay for insurance if I don't pay a board of advisors? There is a potential for lawsuits, especially if I want/have a board of advisors.

TIPS

NETWORKING: Networking means building connections with other professionals in your space. Meeting new people and attending relevant events in your area can help your reputation, increase your group's visibility, build a strong support network, and ultimately improve growth over time. Collect email addresses to let people know what you're doing as often as possible.

PARTNERSHIPS: Partnering with a mobile physician, attorney, homecare agency, etc., is a good idea. Providing stellar referrals to your members is one of the best ways to provide value and make more impactful connections.

MEETINGS: Host consistent online or in-person meetings focusing on collaboration and value for your members. It's a good idea to provide structure for your gatherings to maximize member engagement and value. Keep track of what topics are well received, continue to put out information relating to them, and offer a mix of area-specific content and "general" information so that people outside your area can attend. Storing the recordings of your virtual meetings on your website as a Video Library or on your YouTube channel is also a great way to provide free value to prospects and current members.

BRANDING & MARKETING: A great brand is fundamental for any business, profit or not! Identifying your mission and vision for your organization will help you create your brand. Start email marketing in addition to having a social media presence (to whatever extent you may need to fulfill your mission and vision) to drive people to your website and your meetings.

Ways you can build your chapter's brand:

- Great logo
- Brand colors
- Simple but informative website
- Facebook page/other social media pages

MEMBERSHIP: Whether or not you charge a membership fee will depend on your vision and goal for the group. When starting, it's a good idea to offer free membership while focusing on providing value while gaining traction. In the case that you've established value and consistency, bringing in new members regularly means charging for membership is an option. A tiered membership or "Membership Portal" approach is also a commonly used approach (providing some resources for everyone and higher level, "exclusive" content and resources for paying members.)

Do you want to become one of RALNA's
state chapter resources?

VISIT RALNA.ORG



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

Vern Harris and Rene Dunnagan with DAALR
(Denver Association of Assisted Living Residences)
<https://www.daalr.com/>

Ben Dickey with the Oklahoma City, OK, RAL Chapter

William Young with RCFE (Residential Care Facility for
Elderly) <https://rcfeassociation.org/>