

Affiliate Marketing Strategies

For Attracting and Retaining More Local
Independent Rental Owners (IROs)



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Definition of an Independent Rental Owner (IRO)

The National Apartment Association (NAA) defines an Independent Rental Owner (IRO) as an individual or individuals who own or manage rental properties, and are actively involved, from an ownership perspective, in the management of their properties. This could mean someone that owns as few as one unit or a person with thousands of units.

For many NAA affiliates though, an IRO is defined as small-volume rental property owners or managers who have fewer than 100 individual units, or those who have no full-time employees. All NAA affiliates are free to use their own definitions in defining their local and/or state IRO membership. Many of the smaller IROs do not have the resources to attend NAA national meetings so much of the value they receive will be from the local apartment association benefits as well as NAA's targeted IRO benefits (ex. Online resource center, conference calls, resource guide and community site).

Demographics of IROs within NAA

The NAA is comprised of over 23,000 members that own/manage 500 units or less.

Why should you market to IROs?

1. **Strength in numbers** – the more members that you have within your membership the stronger your voice is with your jurisdiction's political powers.
2. **Revenue** – Signing multiple new IRO members to the association can assist with your bottom-line revenue.
3. **Education** – NAA provides the Independent Rental Owner Professional (IROP) designation, which teaches owners how to effectively manage their properties. Educating your local IRO constituency will support their growth which in turn will support the association's revenue. Also, educating smaller owners on the "do's and don't's" of managing properties will support positive multifamily housing legislation that impacts members at all levels.
4. **Lifetime member value** – The opportunity to reap substantial benefit from the above listed items will support all aspects of the association (ex. membership growth, programming, lobbying).

What is an Independent Rental Owner Committee (IROC)?

An Independent Rental Owner Committee (IROC) is a committee of IRO members formed on a local, state and national level with the focus of providing education, idea exchange, networking and a host of other benefits and services that assist IROs in growing and developing their businesses. Owners/managers who have both large and small properties in their portfolios can benefit from IROC activities.

NAA's IRO Committee is designed for independent rental owners (IROs) of all sizes with the purpose of identifying and creating member benefits that enhance the overall value the NAA provides. This group develops programs such as forums, seminars and networking opportunities that assist IROs in developing and growing their businesses.

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Specific NAA IRO Benefits that will Support Your Recruitment Efforts

NAA has designed a multitude of benefits specific to IROs of all sizes.

- ▶ NAA has designed an **IROC Manual** which provides a step-by-step on how to develop and sustain an IRO Committee on a local/state level. You can access the document in the Affiliate Center of the NAA web site. If you cannot locate the document please contact Joshua Dick at joshua@naahq.org or 703-797-0624.
- ▶ **Independent Rental Owner Professional (IROP) designation program (Formerly Rental Owners Course)** – Course provides fundamentals in property management that enables owners to establish a strong and successful rental property business. The IROP can assist new Independent Rental Owners (IROs) with an “insider’s view” of property ownership and management practices, as well as provide more experienced owners with a refresher course on items needed for sustainability.
Some of the benefits of the IROP designation include:
 - Improving efficiency of operations
 - Teaching owners how to avoid problems
 - Knowing how to comply with changing regulations
 - Relieving stress and worries
 - Increasing income and reducing costs
- ▶ **IRO-Related Articles** – Grouped into important subject matter (ex. Fair housing, operations management, and marketing).
- ▶ **IRO Member Spotlight** – Designed to provide best practices in areas of business importance to smaller owners from the perspective of a successful IRO owner. The initial IRO Member Spotlight is in units magazine and then transferred online.
- ▶ **IRO Best Practices Guides** – NAA has created three recent annual education guides that provide best practices information tailored to the owner community. Originally created as hard copy guides but have since been transferred to a web format for easier member access.
- ▶ **IRO Community Site & Online Resource Center – *New Benefit!*** - The IRO Community Site provides IRO members a vehicle to communicate and learn best practices from other members through an interactive exchange of industry information. The Community Site also has an IRO Resource Center that gives members access to important industry information such as:
 - Employment Handbook
 - Policies and Procedures Manual (Operations, Personnel & Payroll, Maintenance)
 - Independent Contractor Agreement
 - Acquisition Due Diligence Checklist
 - Bed Bugs Documents and Information
 - IRO Best Practices Guides
 - All of the documents can be downloaded and can be used by the member immediately (ex. independent contractor agreement).**-Access at IRO Community Site & Online Resource Center at community.naahq.org**

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- ▶ **Click n' Lease for Independent Rental Owners (Lease Program)** – NAA BlueMoon lease is identical to what is used by all the largest property management companies. The NAA lease is constantly updated to ensure compliance with state and local laws. The Click n' Lease is designed to be affordable for the IRO member by reducing the number of minimum clicks.
- ▶ **National Best Practices Conference calls** – Designed to provide industry best practices information and sharing tailored to specific areas that directly impact the IRO. Spearheaded through the NAA IROC. The calls last roughly one hour and 15 minutes.
- ▶ **Forums** – Designed in conjunction with the NAA Education Conference and Exposition. The IRO Forum was created to address key topics that are impacting the owner community nationally (ex. Financing options in today's environment). Spearheaded through the NAA IROC.
- ▶ **Networking Events** – Designed in conjunction with the NAA Education Conference and Exposition. The networking event provides owners at the conference the opportunity to network and develop relationships with their peers from around the country. Spearheaded through the NAA IROC.
- ▶ **(IRO) Savings Program** – Assist owner members with saving time and money on the following commonly used products and services:
 - Maintenance Products and Services
 - Resident Screening
 - Debt Collection
 - Shipping Services

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NAA Tools that Support Affiliate IRO Marketing & Recruitment Efforts

1. **IRO Marketing DVD** – Outlines the NAA Network and reasons to join an NAA affiliated state/local apartment association. The video features NAA IRO members from around the country giving their testimonials on the benefits that they have received through the NAA Network.
2. **IRO Resource Guides** – Annual hard-copy education guides. NAA has copies to ship to affiliates upon request.
3. **IRO Brochures** – Brochures highlighting the NAA benefits provided IRO members.
4. **IROC Manual** – Step-by-step guide to developing and sustaining an IRO Committee locally.

If you would like to order additional DVDs, resources guides or brochures or have specific questions regarding the IRO Program please contact Joshua Dick at joshua@naahq.org or 703/797-0624.

Marketing Strategies

Objective: Attract more Independent Rental Owners (IROs) to join local/state NAA affiliated apartment associations through specific strategies that enhance the value resulting from their membership.

Strategies

1. Do research and develop list of IROs within your local area.
2. Partner with Housing Authorities to offer Independent Rental Owner Professional (IROP) designation to owners that are a part of the city/counties voucher-section 8 program.
3. Outreach to local financial institutions and gain support for the IROP designation as an asset for owners vying for loans/financial support.
4. Develop marketing model that communicates the new IROP designation to member and non-member owners as an education tool that can support their portfolio growth.
5. Partner with local associate members to barter or receive free ad space via their publications and develop marketing collateral that would market association and IRO benefits.
6. Use the IROC Manual as a guide to develop/enhance Independent Rental Owner Committee (IROC) on a local/state level.

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Strategy #1: Do research and develop lists of IROs in your local area.

Tactics

1. Work with local supplier members, current industry members and government agencies such as the local housing authority and identify IROs within jurisdiction.
2. Compile list and gather as much data as possible for marketing purposes (ex. full property address, owner's name, email).
3. Be sure to highlight where information on non-member was obtained. This will support marketing efforts, if for example, there are members that have a direct relationship with the prospect and can provide member development support.
4. Develop list and identify if non-member IRO is receiving support from another industry association.
5. If non-member IRO is receiving support from another association, identify benefits being offered through that association. This will help your association develop appropriate marketing collateral that effectively communicates the value-added you provide (Strategy #5).

Strategy #2: Partner with Housing Authorities to offer Independent Rental Owner Professional (IROP) designation program to owners that are a part of the city/counties voucher-section 8 program.

Tactics

1. Discuss education partnership opportunities with your local/county housing authorities to provide the IROP designation program to current and prospect owners that are a part of their housing program.
2. Highlight the revised/updated IROP designation and the education it can provide to current and prospect program owners.
3. Outline the IROP as a designation program with the NAA's Education Institute (NAAEI) and send new IROP to housing authority for review.
4. The IROP has an online exam that can demonstrate for the housing authorities which owners have the highest competency and understanding of the laws.
5. If need be have NAA support initiative through calls, presentations, etc.
6. Use local/state affiliate board of director members who have relationships with housing authority and can support initiative in ensuring it is reviewed and evaluated by the right person.

Strategy #3: Outreach to local financial institutions and gain support for the IROP as an asset for owners vying for loans/financial support.

Tactics

1. Contact financial institutions within local jurisdiction and highlight the IROP designation as a local, state and national education tool.
2. Provide course for their review.
3. If there have been partnerships developed with other local/state entities (ex. Housing Authority), highlight partnerships.
4. Ask for feedback on IROP and if the designation could be considered a positive when owners are looking for loan funding.
5. Inquire about the opportunity to partner with the financial institution so the IROP is the education tool recommended by the institution when dealing with owners who do not meet institution's requirements.

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Strategy #4: Develop marketing model that communicates the new IROP designation to member and non-member owners as an education tool that can support their portfolio growth.

Tactics

1. Contact local government and housing authority to gain comprehensive list of owners located in jurisdiction.
2. Use other methods to gain owner contacts (former members, prospects, referrals, and Google local real estate clubs).
3. Compile list of all current owner members.
4. Develop marketing materials with the support of NAA/NAAEI tailored to owners highlighting the benefits that the IROP designation can provide (ex. knowledge of key components of effective property management, federal housing laws and industry standards that can demonstrate high level of understanding for lending institutions).
5. Market IROP designation through email, mailers and newsletters.

Strategy #5: Partner with local associate members to barter or receive free ad space via their publications and develop marketing collateral that would market association and IRO benefits.

Tactics

1. Identify local associate members that have online and/or hard-copy publications such as apartment listings companies and newspapers.
2. Communicate with each to barter services where the association can place ads in publication targeted to IROs.
3. Design different marketing pieces that highlight different local, state and national services specific to IROs as well as highlight overall benefits offered through the NAA Network.

Strategy #6: Use the IROC Manual and focus groups as a guide to develop/enhance Independent Rental Owner Committee (IROC) on a local/state level.

Tactics

1. Use the updated IROC Manual as a framework to identify best methods to creating IROC programs that can enhance the services offered to IRO members.
2. Create focus group of five or six IROs within your association and find out top needs and what the association can do to assist and support.
3. Based on recommendations from IRO Committee, focus group, and surveys if needed, create programs and services.
4. Develop testimonials from IROs on benefits association services have provided and add testimonials to marketing materials.
5. Create marketing materials and send out to prospects and current IRO members to generate involvement in IRO Committee and in the association.

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Current NAA Affiliates with Successful IRO Programs

1. The Utah Apartment Association
Contact: Paul Smith - Paul@uaahq.org; 801/487-5619
2. Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles
Contact: Jim Clarke - jim@aagla.org; 213/384-4131
3. The San Diego Apartment Association
Contact: Alan Pentico - apentico@sdcaa.com; 858/278-8070
4. The Houston Apartment Association
Contact: Jeff Hall - jhall@haaonline.org; 713/595-0300
5. The Apartment Association of Greater Dallas
Contact: Joel Kin Oldham - koldham@aagdallas.com; 972/385-9091
6. Apartment Association of Tarrant County
Contact: Perry Pillows - ppillow@aatcnet.org; 817/616-0354
7. Apartment Association of Orange County
Contact: Lou Penrose - lou@aaoc.com; 714/245-9500
8. Triangle Apartment Association
Contact: Josie Eatmon - jeatmon@triangleaptassn.org; 919/782-1165 x8
9. Apartment Association of Metro Denver
Contact: Mark Williams - mwilliams@aamdhdq.org; 303/329-3300 x14
10. The Arizona Multihousing Association
Contact: James Tunnell - jtunnell@azama.org; 602/296-6212
11. Apartment Association of New Mexico
Contact: Kelly Senye - kelle@aanm.org; 505/822-1114
12. Multifamily NW
Contact: Deborah Imse - Deborah@multifamilynw.org; 503/226-4533