



CHUCK SOWERS

REALTY ONE GROUP
EMERALD COAST

CANDIDATE FOR CPAR PRESIDENT-ELECT

My name is Chuck Sowers, and I would be humbled to serve as your next President Elect for the Central Panhandle Association of Realtors. My desire is to continue building on the solid foundation of CPAR while preparing for the challenges and opportunities ahead in our industry. I earned my real estate license in 2017 after serving 20 years in the US Coast Guard. As your President-Elect, I will bring the same dedication, service, and leadership I've shown throughout my military and real estate careers. I believe in collaboration, transparency, and keeping CPAR strong for the benefit of every member.

My service to CPAR, Florida Realtors, and NAR includes:

- Major Investor 2020-Present
- Leadership Academy: Graduate 2020
- Board of Directors: 2021-2023
- Leadership Academy: Chairperson 2022
- Florida Realtors Leadership Academy Graduate 2023
- Governmental Affairs: Chairperson 2024
- Grievance Committee: Co-Chairperson 2025
- MLS Committee: Member 2025
- Florida Realtors Board Certified Realtor (one of only 39 in the state)
- NAR Military Relocation Specialist
- NAR Senior Real Estate Specialist
- Florida Realtors Honor Society (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Involvement in the Community:

- United States Coast Guard:
- Emerald Coast Rotary: Member since 2018, 2024 & 2025 President

Reason for Applying to the Board of Directors:

I'm interested in serving on the CPAR Board of Directors because I care deeply about our profession and our members. Service is in my DNA, and over the past 8 years as a REALTOR®, I've worked hard to uphold high standards and advocate for clients. Having prior experience as a CPAR Director has shown me how important the Board's role is in shaping our future. I want to continue giving back, support my fellow REALTORS®, and help keep CPAR strong and forward-focused. I want to bring my background, dedication, and collaborative spirit as your future leader so we can continue building on CPAR's strengths while addressing the challenges and opportunities in our dynamic industry. Serving on the Board is not just a professional goal for me; it is a personal commitment to continue serving my fellow REALTORS® and community.



JACOB WILLENBORG

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HOME SERVICES OF FLORIDA

CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR PRESIDENT-ELECT

My name is Jacob Willenborg, and I would be honored to serve as your next President-Elect of the Central Panhandle Association of REALTORS®. With over seven years as a licensed REALTOR® with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida, I've built my career on integrity, advocacy, and a deep commitment to our profession.

Over the past two years, I've had the privilege of serving as a CPAR Director during a time of major industry change, including the challenges brought by the NAR litigation. I'm proud to have been part of the leadership team that worked hard to guide our members through this transition with clarity, professionalism, and member-first decision-making.

This year, I am representing CPAR at the state level as a participant in the Florida REALTORS® Leadership Academy, Class of 2025—an experience that further deepened my understanding of industry governance and sharpened my leadership skills.

My service to our association also includes:

- Director, CPAR - 2024 & 2025
- Disaster Relief Co-Chair - 2025
- RPAC Chair - 2024
- Governmental Affairs Chair - 2023
- Candidate Screening Chair - 2021 & 2023
- CPAR Leadership Academy Graduate - Class of 2022
- RPAC Major Investor, C2EX Certified, and Military Relocation Professional Certified

I have actively represented our association at key industry events such as the Florida REALTORS® Convention, Mid-Winter Meetings, and NAR Mid-Year Conference. These opportunities have strengthened my commitment to bringing back knowledge, resources, and innovative ideas to better serve our members.

As President-Elect, I will focus on advancing CPAR's mission through transparency, education, and advocacy—ensuring our members are equipped and empowered to thrive in a rapidly evolving market. I believe in strong leadership, thoughtful collaboration, and most importantly, listening to our members.

Thank you for your support and for the opportunity to serve our incredible association!



GARRETT AUNE

BEACHY BEACH REAL ESTATE

**CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR SECRETARY**

Greetings!!! My name is Garrett Aune, and I have proudly been serving our community as a Trusted Realtor for 3.5 years. During this brief but incredibly meaningful time, I have been blessed with the opportunity to make a real and lasting difference - both in Real Estate, and in areas extending far beyond.

I have a distinct background which allows me to bring a wide array of life experiences and skills to the Board of Directors. My Law Enforcement days taught me discipline, honesty, and integrity. My years in Business Management taught me how to be a True Leader - (more than just a manager), and how to bring people together where all sides feel heard and valued (negotiating over \$350 million in contracts). And my time in Real Estate has taught me that this business extends far beyond buying and selling property... it is about helping people through some of the biggest life decisions they will ever make.

Since I began my journey as a Realtor, I have sought opportunities to contribute to CPAR and its many amazing members. I humbly received the honor of Humanitarian of the Year in 2024 and have eagerly served on the following Boards: Governmental Affairs (Co-Chair/Chair), Grievance, Global Diversity, and Leadership Academy (Graduate/Co-Chair). I even teach regular classes on topics ranging from Time Management Skills, to How to List a Condo!

In addition to involvement with CPAR, I have always had a desire to serve our community. I work very closely with both Lucky Puppy Rescue and Heartland Rescue Ranch - organizing adoption events, personally donating well over \$26k, and helping raise another \$21k. I have even collected money/supplies after the last 3 Hurricanes hit Florida and personally delivered nearly 3,000 pounds of pet food to shelters in the impacted areas.

I have a true servant's heart and am known for having folks back any time there is a need. If elected as Secretary, I look forward to the incredible opportunity to show up for our members, to work together with our BOD, and to see the amazing things we accomplish together as a Team!



CHERIE ALEXANDER

COUNTS REAL ESTATE GROUP
PANAMA CITY BEACH

CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR DIRECTOR

Cherie Alexander, GRI, CRX, SRES, CLHMS

Applicant for Director - Central Panhandle Association of Realtors

With 30 years of experience in the real estate industry and 9 years in sales, I've had the opportunity to work in nearly every area of this business – from operations and administration to leadership and production. I currently serve as the **Managing Partner for Counts Real Estate Group's Panama City Beach office** and **Secretary for the Counts Real Estate Board of Directors**, where I support and guide our agents in both growth and professionalism.

I'm a proud **graduate of the CPAR Leadership Academy Class of 2017** and currently serve on both the **Education Committee** and the **MLS Committee**. I had stepped back briefly while serving as **President of the Bay Point Women's Club (2023-2024)**, after four years on their board, but I'm excited to be back and more involved with CPAR than ever.

Community engagement is something I care deeply about. I serve on the **Board of Directors for Anchorage Children's Home** and volunteer regularly with **Backpack Blessings**, a program that supports local children in need.

Professional Designations:

- GRI - Graduate, REALTOR® Institute
- CRX - Certified Real Estate Brokerage Executive
- SRES - Seniors Real Estate Specialist
- CLHMS - Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist

These designations reflect my commitment to continued education, high standards, and specialized service.

Why I'm Applying

I'm applying for Director because I care about the future of our industry and want to be a voice for our members. I believe in strong leadership, open communication, and staying ahead of the curve to support agents at every level.

My Goals as a Board Member:

- Expand education and training that's practical and impactful
- Support MLS improvements that benefit our members
- Encourage community outreach that showcases who we are as professionals
- Lead with fairness, integrity, and a focus on service

I would be honored to serve and represent you on the CPAR Board of Directors.



CHRIS SHELTON

BEACHY BEACH REAL ESTATE

CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR DIRECTOR

My name is Chris Shelton, and I have been a dedicated Realtor for over 4 years. My journey in real estate has been with new construction in Panama City, but have extended focus on resales and investment properties. I am very knowledgeable about my neighborhood in College Station and love seeing it grow each year. I am also very involved at Beachy Beach Real Estate, where I have been surrounded by agents who have been in the real estate field for over 20 years. They have poured their knowledge, experience and insight to me and now I can pass that knowledge on to new agents helping them to succeed.

Currently, I am an active member of the Central Panhandle Association of Realtors, serving on the 2025 Leadership Academy. In this role, I have learned how to be a leader in our community by helping non-profit organizations, speaking in front of a group, learning from our elected officials, and growing my knowledge of what CPAR does to help realtors and our community.

Also, I am part of the Grievance Committee, where I have learned the importance of Code of Ethics we must follow on a daily basis. My passion for education and professional development drives my commitment to CPAR.

Beyond my involvement with CPAR, I lead fundraising efforts for Gulf Coast Children's Advocacy Center. We raise close to \$20,000.00 a year by hosting a Trunk or Treat, Chili Cook Off, and Raffle Night. Last year, we had over 50 Trunks, 600 plus kids come through, 10 Chili Cook Off Participants and 20 raffle gifts. The event is held at the Panama City Mall Parking Lot and has grown each year.

I am applying for the Board of Directors because I am committed to the growth and success of our association. I believe my experience in this year's Leadership Academy has given me a deeper understanding of the vital role CPAR plays—not only in supporting REALTORS®, but also in making a meaningful impact in our community. I've seen firsthand how committed CPAR is to service, advocacy, and outreach.

Through the Academy, I've gained valuable insight into the issues affecting our region and discovered new ways to give back. I've also built strong connections with fellow professionals and have been encouraged by the support and collaboration within our network.

I'm excited about the opportunity to continue growing in service, leadership within CPAR, and advocate for real estate agents by starting dialogue with local, state and federal elected officials on issues facing our industry.

Designations/Certifications:

- At Home with Diversity
- C2EX
- ABR GRI 100 Series



CONNIE RIVERA

GULF LIFE REAL ESTATE

CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR DIRECTOR

My name is Connie Rivera, and I have been a dedicated Realtor® for just over four years. My real estate journey began after spending more than 20 years in the remodeling industry. I started with a focus on residential properties and have continued to educate myself and grow within the profession. I am proudly involved at my brokerage, Gulf Life Real Estate, and have had the privilege of mentoring both new agents and those aspiring to join the industry. Currently, I'm an active member of the Central Panhandle Association of Realtors® (CPAR), where I serve on the Grievance Committee. In this role, I help review ethics complaints and determine their validity, contributing to the integrity of our profession and supporting our members. My passion for education and professional development continues to fuel my commitment to CPAR. This year, I also proudly earned both my broker's license and real estate instructor license. Beyond my professional involvement, I'm active in our local and surrounding communities. I love being "Lolly" to my precious granddaughter and have a deep appreciation for dancing, music, and art. Through our custom hat and remodel business, I also enjoy giving back. I've worked alongside law enforcement to help change Florida's hit-and-run laws, supported women's and children's shelters, volunteered for years in churches, youth events, schools, Ironman events, and actively participate in brokerage and community outreach efforts. Serving others—especially the elderly and children—is a true passion of mine. I'm also known as the neighborhood animal rescuer, with a special place in my heart for dogs. I'm proud to be the dog mom of five! My community involvement reflects my deep commitment to making a positive difference and supporting those in need. I would be honored to serve on the Board of Directors because I am deeply committed to the continued growth and success of CPAR. With a proactive and collaborative mindset, I bring a unique blend of real estate experience, mentoring, and advocacy. My goals are to increase member engagement, support policies that benefit our industry, and champion initiatives that foster professional development throughout our association. In addition to my broker's and instructor licenses, I have earned the RSPS designation and am just one course away from completing my GRI certification.



DARREN HAIMAN

NATIONS REAL ESTATE

**CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR DIRECTOR**

With over 30 years of dedicated experience in real estate, I bring a depth of knowledge and proven leadership to the Central Panhandle Association of Realtors.

My previous service on the Board of Directors, President of the Association as well as my previous role as Chair of the Professional Standards Committee and participation in several other key committees, has given me a strong understanding of both the challenges and opportunities facing our association. I currently serve on the Professional Standards committee where I continue to demonstrate my knowledge of the Code of Ethics and my ability to address complex real estate issues.

Beyond real estate, I am deeply invested in the well-being of our community. I currently serve on the Bay County Planning Commission, the Bay Education Foundation Board, and the Alignment Bay County Governing Board. In addition, I have had the privilege of serving as Chair of both the Beach Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Northwest Florida, along with other community boards.

My extensive background in both real estate and community leadership sets me apart from those newer to the industry. I understand the complexities of our profession and the importance of having experienced voices guiding our association. If elected, I will continue to advocate for our members, uphold the highest professional standards, and work to strengthen the role Realtors play in shaping the future of our region.



JANET MELTON

SWEETBAY REALTY

CANDIDATE FOR CPAR DIRECTOR

Important/Qualifying Background Information: Originally licensed in Georgia in 2002, Janet obtained her broker's license in 2006 and founded her first brokerage in 2013. Upon relocating to Florida in 2016, Janet obtained a Florida broker's license and is currently co-owner of SweetBay Realty. Janet has served with multiple local, state, and national organizations in addition to CPAR:

- National Association of Home Builders – Savannah, State (GA) and National Director, Greater Savannah Associate Vice President
- National Sales and Marketing Council – State Director, Savannah Chairperson
- Bryan County, Georgia - Planning and Zoning Commissioner (during the county's time as the second fastest growing county in the state)

Current Involvement in CPAR: Janet currently serves CPAR as Secretary and participates in committees at the local and state level:

- CPAR Committee Chairperson: MLS, Policy
- CPAR Committee Member: Executive Board, Finance, Grievance, Communications, YPN
- CPAR Taskforce Member: 100-Year, Multiple MLS Taskforces
- Florida Realtors – State Voting Director
- Florida Realtors Legislative Think Tank Member: Attainable Workforce Housing / Land Use, Property Rights and Sustainable Development
- NAR – 2025 Legislative Meetings Participant

Involvement in the Community: Janet is deeply involved in the community outside of CPAR. In addition to philanthropy and volunteering with various organizations, she is a broker and co-owner of SweetBay Realty in Panama City overseeing sales in Florida's largest infill re-development project.

Reason for Applying to the Board of Directors: Janet is interested in serving as a member of the Board of Directors to further contribute to the real estate industry and CPAR. Janet's passion for real estate drives her to provide unique perspectives and valuable insights, positively impacting CPAR's present and future.

Goals and Objectives as a Board Member: If elected to the Board of Directors, Janet aims to enhance the quality of services provided by CPAR, foster a collaborative environment among members, and promote innovative solutions to industry challenges.

Optional: Designations/Certifications:

- MRP – Military Relocation Professional
- Florida Realtors 2024 Honor Society Member
- Florida Realtors 2023 ENVY Award winner - Bringing Panama City statewide recognition as home to the development that best preserves Florida's natural quality of life.



KRISTINA BRISCOE

KELLER WILLIAMS SUCCESS REALTY

CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR DIRECTOR

My name is Kristina Briscoe, and I'm proud to serve our community as a dedicated Realtor® with nearly four years of licensure and over eight years of experience in mortgage loan origination, processing, and title closings. This well-rounded background has equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of every step in a real estate transaction. I've walked in the shoes of the professionals my clients rely on, and that insight allows me to anticipate challenges, build strong relationships, and deliver a seamless experience from start to finish.

My passion for real estate is matched by my commitment to our association. I'm currently serving as Chair of YPN for 2024 and 2025, and I also serve on both the Government Affairs and Grievance Committees. I'm honored to be part of the CPAR Leadership Academy Class of 2025, an experience that continues to challenge me, grow my leadership skills, and deepen my commitment to the future of our organization.

Giving back is at the heart of everything I do. Whether I'm mentoring new agents, volunteering with Elevate Bay, supporting local nonprofits like Lavished Ministries and Save The Closet, or lending a hand with Habitat for Humanity, I believe in showing up and making an impact.

My decision to run for the Board of Directors comes from a place of deep care for our members, our clients, and our industry. I believe in protecting private property rights, advocating for fair housing, and creating opportunities for professional growth. If elected, I will prioritize transparency, inclusion, and advocacy. I want every CPAR member to feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.

I hold several designations, including:

ABR® (Accredited Buyer's Representative)

C2EX (Commitment to Excellence)

GRI 100 Series

I'm ready to listen, lead, and serve with integrity. Thank you for your consideration, it would be an honor to represent you.



MATTHEW GAINER

HORSLEY REAL ESTATE GROUP

CANDIDATE FOR CPAR DIRECTOR

My name is Matthew Gainer and I have been a dedicated Realtor® for 4 years. I began my real estate journey primarily working with first time investors in helping them achieve their real estate dreams of owning and starting their own real estate portfolio. While I still focus on this, I also have branched out into helping first time homebuyers, as well as military relocations. I did a short stint in property management, but found that I enjoy helping on the buying and selling aspect of the business, rather than the management aspects of investments. I work hard and am at my brokerage office just about every single day doing what I can for others in my office and for my clients.

I am currently an active member of CPAR and served on the FLEX MLS Committee for the year of 2024. I currently serve on the Grievance Committee, helping to determine Code of Ethics violations within our Association.

Outside of my work in the real estate industry, I have a deep love for our community and area. My family settled in the area in 1824 and has been here ever since. I have watched our community change and grow throughout my lifetime and hope to continue to see it grow here. I have a passion for serving others. I have served in my church organization as a Cub Scout Master and as a youth seminary teacher. I obtained my Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America Program at 17 and have a firm belief that as we serve others, we help strengthen our community. I value integrity, hard work, honesty, and extending a helping hand to any who are in need.

When I first got into the real estate industry, I honestly didn't care about positions like Director in CPAR. I thought it would be a waste of time. That changed a little over 2 years ago. During the GRI 100 level of classes at CPAR, my wife went into labor and I was unable to attend the last class to receive credit. I thought it would be a massive disappointment to not receive the credit for the course when I had attended all the other days of the course. I spoke with Kim Franklin and she went above and beyond to help me find a solution and set me up to be able to attend the course at ECAR the following week, allowing me to get the credit. I was so impressed by her willingness to help me during that time and her diligence in going above and beyond for me that I began to reconsider my past beliefs about serving within CPAR. I now see that CPAR is not just an association that we pay our dues to, but it is also a community that helps those around them. As they say, "it takes a village." Well, I have come to see that CPAR is a part of my village. Feeling that way, how could I not want to do my part and help others the way CPAR has helped me and my family? I feel that being in such a position would set me up for those opportunities to give back to those who are just as passionate as I am about real estate as well as help those who really could just use a community like ours.

If elected, I believe my perspective and willingness to serve others can help our association grow in business practice and conduct. My hope is that every member of CPAR will be proud to be a part of this incredible association and I will advocate for more proactive means to get involved with our association and our local area.



MELISSA HARBOUR-KRATISH

GULF LIFE REAL ESTATE

**CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR DIRECTOR**

My name is Melissa Harbour Kratish and I am a Broker and a Licensed Real Estate Instructor with over 4 years of experience. As an instructor, I have the privilege of teaching people who wish to get their real estate license. As a Broker, I am blessed to be able to help and mentor new and experienced agents better their careers and the lives of those they serve.

Currently, I am an active member of the Central Panhandle Association of Realtors, serving on the Grievance Committee and have served for the past 3 years. I contribute to the application of our code of ethics and professional standards to help in the process of resolving disputes and grievances between Realtors and those they serve. I have a passion for our industry and the fact that we operate under a code of ethics that establishes a high standard of behavior

Beyond my involvement with CPAR, I am engaged in our local community. I have organized and operated an annual toy drive to benefit the Children's Advocacy Center in NWFL. I frequently volunteer for charitable fundraising events and donate to various charities that are personal to me. I volunteer approximately 20 hrs a month tutoring students to become real estate professionals, regardless of the school they attended.

I am applying for the Board of Directors because I have benefited greatly from the support and dedication of the association and feel that I have an obligation to give back what has been so freely given to me. My primary goals as a board member is to advocate for policy improvements, and support initiatives that help improve the professionalism and efficiency of our members through education. Personally, I love this business and believe it to be a noble one and I want to be an ambassador to show people why what we do is so important.

I hold the following designations: Graduate, REALTOR® Institute (GRI), Florida Licensed Real Estate Instructor (ZH1004262), Resort & Second Property Specialist (RSPS)



SUMMER THOMAS

ELITE REALTY

**CANDIDATE FOR
CPAR
NORTHERN COUNTY DIRECTOR**

My name is Summer Thomas, and I have worked in the real estate industry for almost nine years. While my professional career began in 2016, real estate is in my blood and I am a third generation Realtor. I have even taken courses on residential real estate and contract law during my time in law school, where I graduated with pro bono honors after completing over 1,200 hours of community service.

I am currently an active member of the Central Panhandle Association of Realtors, serving on both the MLS and Grievance Committees. I am also a graduate of the 2024 CPAR Leadership Academy and a proud RPAC Major Investor since 2019.

Beyond my involvement with CPAR, I am deeply committed to my local community. I serve as a Commissioner and Vice Chair of the Chipley Redevelopment Agency, an Ambassador with the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, and Treasurer of the Chipley Woman's Club. I believe in the power of community engagement and strive to be a resource and advocate for both residents and fellow professionals.

I am seeking the position of Northern County Director because I am passionate about our industry and the future of CPAR. As a lifelong resident of the northern counties, I want to build upon the strong foundation laid by those before me by increasing awareness, involvement, and representation in these areas. I believe that through intentional outreach and consistent presence, we can further unify and strengthen our Association across all regions.

If elected, I hope to amplify CPAR's presence in our northern counties, promote greater engagement across our diverse membership, and support initiatives that foster education, inclusion, and advocacy.

I currently hold the C2EX endorsement, the At Home with Diversity certification, and the GRI, CIPS, and ABR designations. I am also in the process of completing my CRS designation.