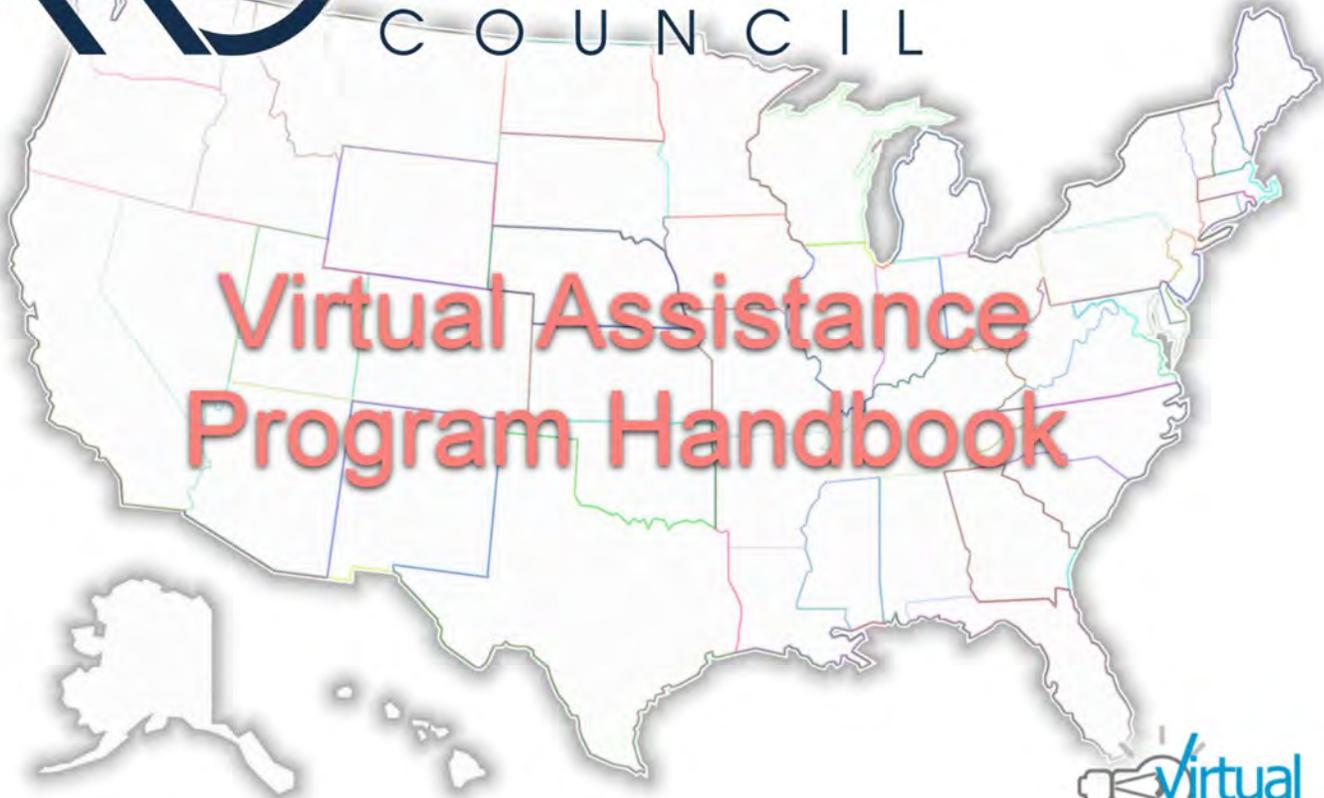


# 2020



## Virtual Assistance Program Handbook



Handbook of services and processes developed for the Residential Real Estate Council Leadership to improve and increase membership communications, branding and event marketing.

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# RRC Virtual Assistance Program

## Virtual Assist USA

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[Virtual Assist USA](#) provides services and solutions to small businesses, entrepreneurs and even Fortune 500 corporations, who do not have the space, equipment, funds, desire or need to hire an in-house employee. It has been in existence since the industry's beginning in 2008 and as the industry's longest-standing multi virtual assistant team, they have developed a business model that will stand the test of time.



### Here's why VAUSA stands out as a Virtual Assistant company...

VAUSA operates fully in the United States of America. All of the consultants are U.S. citizens and native English speakers. With a wide-range of business services, the team can handle marketing, website design, social media, human resources, bookkeeping and more.

As a client, you are assigned to one main dedicated consultant, with access to hundreds of services. VAUSA blends the best of the virtual assistant company models to deliver this solution. For more information about the services provided by Virtual Assist USA visit their website [www.VirtualAssistUSA.com](http://www.VirtualAssistUSA.com). The RRC Assistance Program is a free service provided to you by the RRC national organization and has limited services. Please use the website contact form if you are interested in additional services from VAUSA.

## Assistance Program Terminology

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**Newsletter** - The newsletter is used as a **periodic communication via email to provide information and drive traffic to the website and social media outlets**. Emails sent using an online service, such as Constant Contact, the main focus is to increase the number of people who receive the email, visit the website, register for an event and follow social media outlets. Encouraging the use of social media outlets for information helps to reduce the chances of unsubscribes from the newsletter due to overuse. **Newsletters are not sent more than once every 7-10 days** and social media is recommended to repetitively promote upcoming events and share valuable information.

Each month the national organization recommends the following monthly correspondence with the local state membership:

1. Communicate with the state/region members – Update them on upcoming events/activates/news
2. Congratulate New Designees/Welcome New Members
3. Promote network group events. States are to host networking events once each quarter
4. Promote leadership team (local leaders included) meeting/conference calls

**Bulk email communications are sent using an online email service that ensures the communications are legal. Attachments cannot be sent and PDF flyers are provided as links to download and not as images within the body of the email.**

**eBlast** – A shorter version of a newsletter used to promote a specific event. Also sent as a reminder several days before an event is to occur.

**PDF** – A file version that is used for sharing documents or flyers that will be printed or downloaded. PDF flyers are created as needed to share detailed information, including links, with other organizations. **PDFs are inserted into email communications or posted on social media**, but a links will be created to download the interactive file.

**PowerPoint** – The branded PowerPoint presentation template, provided by council will be customized for use for special events or promotions. Please provide a minimum of 1 week for completion.

**Website** – Refers to the CRS.com RRC state web page. Events and classes are posted through the national organization. All events and classes are to be uploaded to the website using the appropriate survey link below to begin the marketing process:

- **RRC Courses** – <https://crs.com/learn/license-a-course>
- **State Events** – <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZXZGFVV>

## Task Requests

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Task requests are submitted via email and are scheduled within the next two-business days. For tasks that require multiple steps, please allow 3-4 days for completion. To avoid conflicting information and to expedite the process, **one representative should be designated for your state to provide updates and approval**. Please only include the program manager on direct task requests and not inter-leadership communications.

To assist with keeping track of the multiple states and representatives, when submitting task requests and communications, please provide the following information:

1. **Email Subject Line**-Format the subject line to include your state and specific task request.  
(Example: **RRC/NY- January Newsletter**)
2. The main **contact name for the task and position**
3. **Deadline** for the task
4. **Details** listed in Task Assignment & Scheduling section of this document.

## Email Service - Constant Contact

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Constant Contact and MailChimp are services used to send emails, newsletters and invitations to large groups. The use of these programs helps to ensure the bulk emails adhere to the many legal requirements. Using an individual or business email account to send bulk mail, does not contain the legally required information and approvals.

**Sending bulk emails and attachments from outside of these services can lead to your email address being labeled as SPAM, preventing future emails from being delivered.**

Newsletter tasks can begin after setting up a Constant Contact (preferred) email account. RRC Volunteer Services can provide you with the information needed to choose and set up an account, if your state does not have one. You will be required to choose an account that meets the number of contacts that you'll be communicating with and the monthly cost that fits within your budget. **The lower-cost, nonprofit account offered by MailChimp is not recommended.** Once you have selected your account, council will complete the setup by adding the payment information and provide the login to the project manager.

When the project manager receives the login, a branded template using RRC/CRS colors and logos and the first email draft will be created. Emails will not be sent until the account billing information and the associated email account have been verified.

**The database will be populated and managed by the program manager.** Contacts gathered through an online opt-in form can be included. The program maintains and sends correspondence to the RRC membership only, unless contacts are collected using legal methods. Lists provided by state leadership will not be used without the proper approval from all individuals on that list.

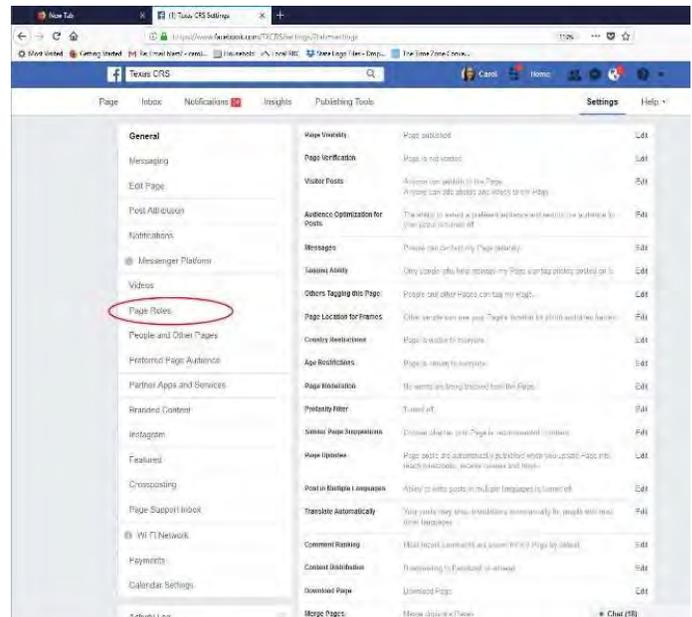
Our focus is to increase the marketing of upcoming events, distributing RRC information, while driving traffic to the website or Facebook page.

## Facebook

In order to post/manage the state RRC Facebook Page, the consultants will need to be listed as **'Editors' to the page**. If your state has a Facebook Group, a page can be created for marketing purposes and to reach a larger audience.

**How to Give Someone a Role on a Facebook Page.** If you're an admin:

1. Click **Settings** at the top of your Page.
2. Click **Page Roles** in the left column.
3. Type a name or email in the box:
  - If the person is your Facebook friend, begin typing their name and select them from the list that appears.
  - If the person isn't your Facebook friend, **type the email address associated with the persons Facebook account.**
4. Click **Editor** to select a role from the dropdown menu.
5. Click **Save** and enter your password to confirm.



## Task Assignment & Scheduling

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Once Constant Contact is set up and access to the state RRC Facebook Page has been granted, the process becomes easy. (Leadership duties are underlined)

Each month you will receive an email with a list of topics to be distributed to the membership for upcoming local and national events. Leaders can add 1-2 additional articles (dependent on space) for your state. The additional articles can include a letter from the President, photos from previous events, classes or events, that have not yet been uploaded to the state website. Please respond to this email to be added to the schedule.

1. The topics provided are prewritten and the state leadership will need to provide any additional information to be included. Letters and text from leadership should be provided in a Word document. Provide full-sized event photos and any website links that are outside of the RRC website. Photos will be touched-up and cropped to meet the product's needs.
  - All event and class information will be resourced from the RRC website or State web page. Photos and logos for event sponsors, speakers, etc. will be resourced online, unless the leadership has full sized, high quality images to supply.
  - You can send information in separate emails to be collected, until the majority of the content needed to complete the task is provided. At that time the single task requests will be **scheduled to begin within 2-business days.** The leadership response times may extend this estimate.

## Class & Event Promotions

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The process for event and class promotions are as follows. When a class or event has been scheduled for the membership, submit all details to be posted to the website. (Leadership duties are underlined)

RRC Courses – <https://crs.com/learn/license-a-course>

State Events – <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZXZGFVV>

1. The leadership completes the appropriate form to submit the details to council to post on the website. This process ensures that all information needed for marketing is included and provides an opportunity to double-check the information is correct, before promotions begin. The survey should be completed by the organizer of the event and follow the instructions provided in the **How to Complete the RRC Event Registration Setup Form** section of this handbook.
2. **Council will provide the link to the event and registration within 5-7 business days.**
3. **The details that are uploaded in the survey will be used as the template for all marketing materials.**



## How to Complete the RRC Event Registration Setup Form

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The process for marketing upcoming events begins with the details being entered into the corresponding event survey. To insure all of the information is complete and available to the membership on the local community RRC website, the following details need to be include when completing the survey.

### RRC Event Registration Setup Questions ([SurveyMonkey.com/r/ZXZGFVV](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZXZGFVV))

1. Do you plan to offer RRC Maintenance Credit for the event, or portion of it? Yes or No
2. What State RRC is organizing the event?
3. Submitter's Contact Info
  - Name
  - State RRC Role
  - Email
4. Event Name – Here are some tips for choosing an event name:
  - The name should be short, represent the activity and interest the audience.
  - Questions: What is the event about or trying to accomplish?
  - What do you want to emphasize about the event or key theme?
5. Event Date(s)
  - Start Date – Written as Month day, Year, (example, January 30, 2019 not 1/30/2019)
  - End Date
6. Event Time
  - Start Time – Time the event begins.
  - End Time
7. Event Description (This is the text that will appear on the website. Please include any information you want to be displayed on the website, including speaker info)
  - Questions: Why would the attendees want to come? What will they learn or how will they benefit from attending? Who will be the guest speakers/instructor? What is their title and specialty? Will there be food/beverage included? What kind of service (buffet, continental, dinner)? Are there co-hosts or sponsors to mention? What should the attendees bring (business cards, can goods, etc.)?
8. Location
  - Name – Venue name as listed on their website or marketing.
  - Address - As listed on their website or marketing
  - City

- State
- Zip

9. How many RRC Maintenance Credit Hours are available?

10. What will participants learn?

11. What is the format of the educational segment?

- Presentation
- Panel
- Workshop
- Other. If other, please explain:

12. Will registration be taken through the State RRC event page?

- Registration will be taken through the State RRC event page
- Registration will be taken through an outside organization – Provide direct link to registration page.

13. Do you want automated registration reports sent to you?

14. Cost

- RRC Member Price
- Non-Member Price

15. Maximum Registrations

- Total – Is there a limit to the number of attendees you can have at the event (max occupancy, etc.)?

16. Do you want to use the standard RRC cancellation policy below? If not, please list your own. Note that if you do not list a refund policy, full refunds will be issued to anyone that requests one.

- RRC reserves the right to cancel any scheduled event. If an event is cancelled you will be notified via e-mail or phone and will be given a full refund.
- RRC is not responsible for any expenses incurred by the registrant due to cancellation. Cancellations will be accepted until one week prior to the event.
- Cancellations will be refunded minus a \$25 administrative fee. No-shows will be charged the full registration amount.

17. If you use our cancellation policy and your event price is \$25 or less:

- Waive the \$25 cancellation fee
- Do not issue refunds for this event

18. Discount Code (optional)

- Amount off
- Start Date
- End Date
- What should the code be named?

- Is this for RRC Members
- Is this for Non-Members

19. Any additional information you would like to include

- Please list registration links to be included.

20. If an attendee has questions who should they contact?

- Name
- Email

## RRC Work Examples

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### Newsletters

MD/DC Smart Home Cert <https://conta.cc/2Dd9gvL>

PA December News <https://conta.cc/2Esck83>

NV Event Reminder <https://conta.cc/2QWYcad>

Indiana Volunteer Survey <https://conta.cc/2CrU9hB>

Kentucky December News <https://conta.cc/2S0Yldg>

NY CRS Week <https://conta.cc/2FJliNC>

Iowa New Year <https://conta.cc/2COvvhQ>

### Facebook Pages

New Mexico <https://www.facebook.com/CRSNewMexico/>

Alabama <https://www.facebook.com/Alabama-CRS-165439500144534/>

Nevada <https://www.facebook.com/NevadaCRS/> (slider cover)

Iowa <https://www.facebook.com/IowaCertifiedResidentialSpecialist/>

Alaska <https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaCRS/>

## FAQ

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**Can you send the PDF in an email?** The digital marketing industry standard practices discourage the use of a PDF or JPG in digital marketing. PDFs when inserted into an email or posted on Facebook converts to an image. Inserting a large image of text created to be easily read at 8.5x11 in an email or on social media does not allow the program software (Constant Contact, Facebook, etc) to adjust the text to be legible on all devices. The image cannot be easily read and strips the email of all functionality, that make it simple for the recipient to RSVP, register or get more information about the desired subject. Sending an image-only email increases the likelihood you'll end up in the spam folder. It is the programs goal to make sure emails have a good image-to-text ratio by using headlines and adding text blocks.

**How can I reach more people when marketing an Event or Class?** You may want to look into boosting the event to reach more people on Facebook and post to other groups and social media outlets you have access to. You can pay as little as \$10.00 to advertise an event on Facebook. This is set up through Facebook using your payment information. If you choose to boost the event, you will need to set up the payment information and we can create the ad.

**How to I begin marketing and event or class?** After the event is planned, there is one step for leadership to complete to begin marketing. With all classes and events, the details need to be submitted to council to post online before promotions start. This is a task that council requests be completed by leadership and we resource all class/event information from the website to use for marketing. When the post and link are available (usually 3-5 business days) we take over the process by creating the marketing document for print if needed, the Facebook event set up, posts and email communications. These tasks can be completed quickly when we have access to the information online. The program receives weekly updates of classes for states and monitor web pages for new information, but it is always good to let us know an event has been submitted for your state.

**Why can't you complete the task like we always have?** The RRC VA Assistance Program has been developed over the last three years to create a consistent look and feel to communications states send out. The processes in place have been developed to resolve issues our client, the Residential Real Estate Council has and represents their goals and branding. Our main responsibility is to drive traffic to and populate the state web-pages and social media accounts, while managing the number and frequency of the email correspondence and increasing membership participation.

**Can I add you to our leadership group email list?** When all 50 states are incorporated into the program, it will be too hard to manage communications with more than one person per state. The program manager works with one leadership representative per task. Usually, with the President, Education or Communications leader. This person reviews, updates, manages responses and changes from other team members, and provides me with the updates and approvals. Please reserve the program contact email for direct task requests.

**Can you just prepare and send the emails without approval?** We try our best to produce a draft that is free from errors and omissions, but since we are not involved with the planning of events, it is necessary for a leadership member to review and approve emails before they are sent. Each email will have the following instructions:

This is the draft for the \_\_\_\_\_ News. \*Please review the text, images and links (underlined words & images) for errors or omissions and then respond to my email \_\_\_\_\_@virtualassistusa.com with your changes or 'Approval to Send'. Please Do Not Reply to the Draft email. ~Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_

**Can you schedule to send a promotional email every three days?** There are two types of consent for sending emails. We have implied consent, meaning we can add our membership to our mailing lists, because of their association with the RRC. Because it is the only means for us to reach the membership and they did not actively opt-in to the mailing (expressed consent), we need to make sure that we do not cause the member to unsubscribe or report the organization as SPAM. Repetitive marking is appropriate when a person signs up to a list, like for a retail business. If they unsubscribe, they can be replaced, but that is not the case with the membership. Sending the same email repetitively leads the recipient to believe the emails are not valuable. Statistics show that the open rate for most emails is four days. Sending more often inundates the members emails with multiple repetitive emails. This leads to the membership either unsubscribing or ignoring the emails.

Social Media marketing allows us to market more heavily to the membership without overusing the email system and allow them to assist by sharing posts and events. In each email we promote following the Facebook Page or Groups and increase the membership interaction.



## **To be signed by the RRC State Leadership**

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I have received the Residential Real Estate Council Virtual Assistance Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the procedures contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

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State President Signature

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State President Name (Print)

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Date