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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Homes4NC Receives Grant to Boost Housing Affordability**

GREENSBORO – NC REALTORS®' Housing Opportunity Foundation -- Homes4NC – has been awarded a \$140,000 Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grant from the National Association of REALTORS®. The grant will fund a new Workforce Housing Program designed to educate both REALTORS® and the public about the many housing programs available to help low- and moderate-income workers find quality affordable housing close to where they work.

Homes4NC will develop a Workforce Housing Certificate (WHC) program to educate North Carolina REALTORS® about the issues surrounding workforce housing and the programs and resources available to help them serve workforce buyers. REALTORS® who have been certified through the program can more effectively educate potential homebuyers and advocate for workforce housing in their community. The WHC program will be piloted in Asheville and Raleigh starting in January 2010, with additional areas joining the program by mid-year.

The second phase of this initiative is an extensive public education campaign designed to let consumers know that there are programs to help them with their affordable housing needs and specially-trained REALTORS® to guide them through the home buying process. A key component of this campaign will be a Web site with a searchable database where users can find housing programs and resources that are available in their local area.

Homes4NC President John Newman expects this program to fill an increasing need among first-time homebuyers. "This type of education and guidance is so important for lower-wage workers who typically don't have the knowledge or experience they need to understand the complexities involved in the typical home purchase," he said. "This program will better equip REALTORS® to provide workforce buyers with the extra support they need to become homeowners."

**About Homes4NC**

Understanding that homeownership is the key to a better quality of life, NC REALTORS® established Homes4NC to help more North Carolinians find a safe, decent and affordable place to call home. Since its inception in 2004, Homes4NC has distributed more than \$195,000 to 51 NC agencies that help families with their housing needs. Among other things, Homes4NC grants have helped build 20 Habitat homes, provided downpayment assistance to dozens of families and homebuyer education to 5,000 consumers. For more information, visit [www.homes4nc.org](http://www.homes4nc.org).

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