

Understanding & Managing Short-Term Rentals: Highlights from the GNAR Academy Course (A GNARly Vlog)

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Since the GNAR Initiative launched in 2020, one topic has surfaced over and over as a source of challenges and disagreement in gateway communities: short-term rentals (STRs).

STRs are controversial because they directly impact many different personal values that community members may hold – personal property rights, neighborhood character, ability to live in your community, ability to make a living, etc. – which can make them especially thorny for leaders to navigate. Add to this the fact STRs are a mostly online industry with rapidly-developing technology and linked to the global tourism economy, and sometimes it can feel almost impossible for community leaders to manage – especially those in small rural communities with limited capacity.

When we launched [GNAR Academy](#) last April with our Gateway Community Leadership 101 course, we hoped we'd someday be able to develop in-depth topic specific courses that could help gateway community leaders navigate their most pressing issues. So it seemed only fitting that our first in-depth course would focus on STRs! Our goal with this course was to help communities define what *they* want to see with STRs – whether that's growth, stability, or a reduction – and then share knowledge that could help them feel empowered to address STRs in whatever way they see fit. Does your community see STRs as a helpful way to bring visitors and tap into the tourism economy? If so, how do you ensure that they're safe, and that they grow in a way that benefits and helps the community meet its goals? Does your community see STRs as a challenge? If so, how do you try and address and/or limit them in ways that are legal, easy to execute, and realistic and for your community to enforce?

While accessing [the full course](#) costs money, we wanted to share some course highlights and key takeaways so any community leader can learn from our research findings, regardless of whether they take the course or not. This is where we feel like GNARly "vlogs" - or video blogs (e.g.: *webinars*) - can help make the content more accessible to everyone!

This "vlog" is a recording of a presentation given at the Utah APA conference in Spring 2025. To take a peek inside the course and learn more about it, check out the presentation below!