



**Association for Education and Rehabilitation  
of the Blind and Visually Impaired**

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# **AER Policies and Procedures Manual**

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*The AER Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) shall be a working document and as such any section or portion may be continuously revised by a majority vote of the AER Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Bylaws and Structure Committee shall be responsible for submitting to the AER Office any revisions that were approved by a majority of affirmative votes by the AER Board of Directors following each AER Board Meeting. The Bylaws and Structure Committee has the authority to make grammatical and typographical corrections to the Manual and to bring the manual into compliance with decisions made by the AER Board, for example updating references to AER's journal if the name changes. Central office staff shall be responsible for updating the PPM, and distributing the revised copy by electronic mail to Board Members and Officers. The revised PPM shall be posted to the AER website, with an e-mail notice sent to Chapter and Division leadership, alerting them to the changes. Members in leadership positions shall be responsible for accessing the revised PPM or requesting a copy from the central office.*

## **SECTION 1: MEMBERSHIP**

### **1.1 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**

Pursuant to Article III, Section 3.1 of the Bylaws, the AER Board of Directors has determined that there shall be the following classes of individual membership:

A) Regular: Any person residing in the United States and/or Canada may apply for regular individual membership. Regular members shall have the privilege of voting, holding office, and/or serving on committees. Regular members shall be eligible to receive other benefits as determined by the AER Board of Directors.

B) Retired: Any person who has retired from full-time employment in service to blind and visually impaired people shall be eligible for this special category of membership at a reduced dues rate set by the AER Board. Retired members shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of regular members.

C) Same Household Membership: A membership available to an additional individual residing at the same household as a current AER member. The initial member will pay full membership dues while the Same Household member will pay a reduced dues rate set by the board. Both the member with the Regular Membership and the member with the Same Household membership are entitled to all the rights and privileges of regular members except that the household will receive only one copy of all AER publications when printed.

D) Secretarial/Clerical/Support: Any person whose occupational status is clerical, secretarial, or is in support of professional personnel and who is employed by any organization involved in services to blind and/or visually impaired persons shall be eligible for this special category of membership at a reduced dues rate set by the AER Board. Secretarial/Clerical/Support members shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of regular members.

E) Students: Any person who is enrolled full-time in courses of higher education and who is not employed full-time in the field of services to blind persons, but intends to pursue such a career upon completion of his/her education, shall be eligible for this special category of membership at a reduced dues rate set by the AER Board. Student members shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of regular members.

F) Transition: Any current student member of AER, upon completion of his/her student status, shall be eligible for a one year membership as a Transition Member for an annual dues payment set by the AER Board. Transition members are entitled to all the rights and privileges of regular members. At the end of one year, Transition memberships shall be converted to Regular memberships.

G) International: Any person living outside of the United States or Canada may apply for membership as an International Member. International memberships shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of regular members at a dues rate set by the AER Board.

H) Associate: Any person interested in supporting services to blind and visually impaired persons but who is not employed as a professional in the field of blind services may apply for

associate membership status at a reduced dues rate set by the AER Board. Associate members shall not be eligible to vote or to hold office, but they may serve on committees in a non-voting capacity.

All categories of individual memberships shall be eligible to receive a complimentary copy of the association's scholarly journal, except the Associate category which is not entitled to receive a complimentary copy and the Same Household Membership which is entitled to receive only one complimentary copy.

All categories of individual memberships shall be eligible to participate in affinity program(s) negotiated between AER and various service providers. Likewise, all categories of individual memberships shall be eligible to apply for participation in any insurance plan(s) offered through the Trust for Insuring Educators. AER cannot guarantee individual member acceptance in any discount or insurance plan offered.

Current Individual Membership dues rates set by the AER Board and those set by AER Divisions are noted in Appendix A.

## **1.2 CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP**

Pursuant to Article III, Section 3.2 of the AER Bylaws, the Board of Directors has determined that Corporate Membership shall be available to agencies, organizations, schools, service clubs or other similar entities wishing to offer support to AER.

There shall be four levels of Corporate Membership in AER. These members are allowed to rent AER mailing labels at a discounted rate. These members will receive discounts on certain AER products and services such as advertising, exhibit space, and professional development.

The Board of Directors determines the dues rate for Corporate Membership; current corporate membership rates and benefits are noted in Appendix A.

## **1.3 LATE DUES PAYMENT**

AER's membership is a twelve-month, rotating membership. Individual member dues become payable on the member's anniversary date, twelve months after the last dues payment. All persons who are serving in elected or other leadership roles (including committee appointments) at the International, Chapter, or Divisional level must make their annual dues payment within two months following the expiration of their membership. Any person not paying dues by that time shall relinquish his/her office or other leadership position. Non-current members shall be removed from the mailing list for membership benefits two months after their memberships have expired. For any other purpose deemed relevant by the Board, "continuous" membership shall be defined as memberships which have not been non-current for more than three consecutive months.

## **1.4 REFUND POLICY**

Individual member dues payment(s) will not be refunded except in the event of duplicate dues payment or under special circumstances (to be determined by the central office).



## **SECTION 2: DISTRICTS**

For purposes of electing AER Board Members at Large to the International Board of Directors, AER shall be divided into six North American districts. Each district shall have one representative on the Board of Directors. Districts have been drawn in order to assure wide geographic representation on the Board. In addition, insofar as is possible, each district represents approximately the same number of members. The list of states and provinces located in the six districts is noted in Appendix B.

AER Board Members at Large shall be elected by ballot pursuant to policies set forth in Section 7 of this manual, *“International Officers and Board Members Nomination and Election Procedures.”*

## **SECTION 3: CHAPTERS**

### **3.1 MEMBERSHIP IN A CHAPTER**

All members of AER are entitled to belong to one and only one chapter. While chapter membership is generally determined by the mailing address of a member, in certain limited circumstances, members may elect to belong to a chapter other than the one which would be indicated by their mailing address by notifying AER.

### **3.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR CHAPTER STATUS**

Pursuant to Article XI, Section 4, of the AER Bylaws, states, provinces or other political subdivisions may apply to the AER Office for affiliated chapter status once they have met the following requirements, or had requirement(s) waived:

- A) They must have officers (either interim or elected)
- B) They must have bylaws which are consistent with AER's Bylaws

### **3.3 RECOGNIZED CHAPTERS OF AER**

The list of active officially-chartered Chapters of AER is noted in Appendix B.

### **3.4 CHAPTERS INCLUDED IN AER's GROUP TAX EXEMPTION**

The list of officially chartered AER Chapters (with signed Affiliation Agreements) included in AER's group tax exemption are noted in Appendix B.

### **3.5 CHAPTER REBATES**

Pursuant to Article XI, Section 3 of the AER Bylaws, chapters shall be rebated ten percent of all individual dues received from members residing in, or otherwise indicating their desire to belong to, that chapter.

Rebates for dues received in any calendar year will not be paid to a chapter until that chapter has filed the required year-end financial statement for the immediate preceding year. These year-end financial statements are due no later than March 1 of the following year. If such statements have not been filed by March 1 of the following year, the chapter shall forfeit its right to claim any rebates for dues paid during that year. For example, if the 2013 year end statement has not been filed with the AER office by March 1, 2014, the chapter will not be eligible to receive any of its dues rebates for the calendar year 2014.

In addition, chapter rebate checks which are not deposited within 90 (ninety) days of issuance will be considered null and void and will not be re-issued.

No rebate check will be sent to a chapter as long as any previous check to that chapter remains outstanding.

### **3.6 CHAPTER BYLAWS**

A current copy of each chapter's bylaws shall be on file in the AER Office. Any amendments, additions or deletions to any chapter's bylaws must be promptly filed with AER. Additionally, each chapter shall have its signed and dated affiliation agreement on file in the AER Office. A blank affiliation agreement is provided in Appendix C.

### **3.7 COUNCIL OF CHAPTER PRESIDENTS**

Pursuant to the AER Bylaws, Article V, Section 1, there shall be established a Council of Chapter Presidents (CCP), composed of the presidents of each chapter of AER. It shall be the responsibility of this group, subject to approval by the Board, to formulate policies governing the relationship between AER and its chapters, including the formation of new chapters, dissolution of existing chapters, and any other policies affecting chapters.

### **3.8 CHAIRPERSON OF THE CCP - RESPONSIBILITIES**

Under the authority of the Bylaws, the CCP shall elect a Chair who is responsible for acting as the liaison between the AER's chapters and the Board of Directors and shall represent the chapters as a voting member of the Board of Directors. The Chair will preside over all meetings of the Council of Chapter Presidents. Additional responsibilities include the following:

- A) Assist with the planning of the leadership training.
- B) Maintain regular communication with Chapter Presidents through the CCP listserv, newsletters, and conference calls to facilitate communication between chapters and the AER Board.
- C) Chair any Task Force Committee, which is appointed to assist chapters at risk of dissolution.
- D) Encourage and facilitate development of leadership skills of chapter officers.
- E) Other duties and responsibilities of board members as detailed in Section 5.2 of this Policy Manual.

### **3.9 ELECTION OF CCP CHAIRPERSON**

The Chairperson of the Council of Chapter Presidents shall be elected from among the nominations of the current chapter presidents. The current Chair in collaboration with the AER Nominations Committee will solicit nominations from current chapter Presidents by February 1<sup>st</sup> of an even-numbered year. Nominations will be accepted for 30 days by electronic notification or other means. An election ballot will be provided to all chapter Presidents by March 15<sup>th</sup> of an even numbered year by electronic mail or mailed ballot. Chapter Presidents will have 30 days to cast their vote.

### **3.10 DISSOLUTION OF CHAPTERS**

Any member of the AER Board of Directors, AER Office staff or the Council of Chapter Presidents may request a formal review of chapter status to consider possible dissolution, if any of the following conditions are present:

- A) The chapter fails to maintain a complete set of officers, i.e. at least a President, Vice President (or President-Elect), and a Treasurer;
- B) The chapter fails to file an annual report for two consecutive years; or
- C) The chapter is unable to document chapter activity for the previous three years.

### **3.11 PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF CHAPTER STATUS**

A) Upon receipt of a request to review chapter status, the AER President shall refer the request to the Chair of the Council of Chapter Presidents.

- 1) Prior to any procedure for dissolution, the CCP Chair shall make every attempt to contact current officers or members of said chapter to offer assistance or support to the chapter.
- 2) Upon acceptance of such an offer, and working with the AER Office, the CCP Chair shall form a Task Force Committee of local chapters willing to assist in support of the chapter.
- 3) The Task Force Committee will develop a plan of support for the local chapter to increase the level of membership/chapter activity.
- 4) The CCP Chair shall make a written report, with recommendations, to AER within six months of the initial referral.

B). If the recommendation from the Council of Chapter Presidents includes a plan to revitalize the chapter, AER shall review and approve such plan and the chapter shall have one year to fully implement the plan.

C). If the recommendation from the Council of Chapter Presidents is to dissolve the chapter, the AER President shall, by certified mail, notify the last known officer of said chapter of the recommendation to dissolve, with the reasons for such recommendation. The chapter shall have 60 days from the date of the letter to respond to the President with (a) reasons for not dissolving the chapter or (b) agreement to dissolve the chapter.

At the first meeting of the AER Board of Directors following the 60 day notice, the Board shall consider the response from the chapter. Failure of the chapter to respond shall be considered a default and chapter status shall be revoked.

D). Upon dissolution of the chapter, all current members residing in that jurisdiction will be offered an opportunity to affiliate with a chapter of their choice. Nothing in the dissolution of chapter shall affect individual membership.

E). Chapter treasuries shall be disposed of in accordance with chapter bylaws. In the absence of such a process to distribute funds, the AER Finance Committee shall develop a plan which would provide the greatest benefit to the membership to disperse the funds. In the case of restricted funds, those monies shall be managed by the AER Office in accordance with the purpose for which they were designated.

### **3.12 PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTARY DISSOLVING A CHAPTER**

Occasionally, a chapter struggles to survive, and concerned officers and/or members may consider whether to dissolve. In that event, the following procedure should be followed:

Chapter leadership notifies the AER Executive Director that the chapter is struggling.

The Executive Director or his/her designee works with the chapter to determine whether the chapter can be revived or re-energized; if not, the parties explore the feasibility of alternatives to dissolution, such as merging into another chapter.

If alternatives to dissolution do not appear to be feasible, AER notifies all current chapter members of record that dissolution is being considered and requests them to vote for or against dissolution. The majority of those voting carry the decision.

If the chapter members vote to dissolve the chapter, the chapter president or treasurer submits a resolution to the AER Board of Directors at its next meeting to dissolve the chapter.

Once the Board approves of the resolution to dissolve, the chapter treasurer disposes of the chapter funds in accordance with chapter bylaws. In the absence of bylaws that outline the process for disposing of chapter funds, the AER Finance Committee shall develop a plan to disperse the funds.

Within 30 days of Board dissolution of the chapter, AER contacts all applicable chapter members confirming that the chapter has dissolved and soliciting from them their preference for alternative chapter affiliation. Preferences are to be reported back to AER within 30 days of notice.

## **SECTION 4: DIVISIONS**

### **4.1 MEMBERSHIP IN DIVISIONS**

All categories of individual memberships shall have the privilege of attending any duly held meeting of any Division. All categories of individual memberships except the Associate category may vote only in Division(s) matters in which he or she has paid the appropriate and required Division membership fee. Approved Divisions of AER may charge a separate fee for each Division's membership. The Division membership fee shall be collected at the same time AER dues are paid or at any other time during their current membership year. Division dues are not prorated.

The list of current AER Divisions is noted in Appendix D.

### **4.2 COUNCIL OF DIVISION CHAIRS**

Pursuant to the AER Bylaws, Article XII, Section 6, there shall be established a Council of Division Chairs, composed of the chairperson, chairperson-elect and immediate past chairperson of each division. No one individual may serve in more than one position on the Council of Division Chairs. It shall be the responsibility of this group to formulate policies relating to governance of the divisions including formation of new divisions, dissolution of existing divisions, and other policies affecting divisions.

### **4.3 ELECTION OF DIVISION REPRESENTATIVES TO THE AER BOARD**

Every two years, in the even-numbered year, the Council of Division Chairs shall elect Division Representatives to the AER Board of Directors. The term of office for these Board Representatives shall be two years and shall commence at the end of the final AER business meeting during the international conference held in the even-numbered years.

For the purpose of Board representation only, AER divisions are grouped. One representative shall be elected from each of the categorical groupings and one representative from each division with membership that comprises 20% or more of the organization's entire membership shall serve on the AER Board of Directors.

Each grouping will follow the adopted election process. Under no circumstances shall a Division representative position be shared.

## **ELECTION PROCESS**

In the even-numbered years, nominations and the election of Division Representatives to the AER Board of Directors shall be solicited by the current Chair of the CDC from current CDC members, beginning no later than February 1<sup>st</sup>. These nominations will be solicited and received by electronic mail or other means. Because Division Representatives must be current CDC members during their tenure on the Board and because Division Officers for the next biennium will not yet be elected, only Division Chairs and Chairs-elect are eligible for nomination and election.

Elections will follow procedures as approved by the Board. The out-going Board Representative from each grouping will conduct the elections.

The election process shall begin with the out-going Board Representative soliciting and accepting nominations from eligible CDC members within their perspective grouping. Ballots will be provided to eligible voting CDC members in that grouping no later than March 15 and will have 30 days to cast their vote.

## **SINGLE DIVISION REPRESENTATION**

In the case of large divisions that qualify for their own representation on the Board of Directors, the chair of the respective division shall serve as the Board Representative during the biennium in which he or she is that division's chair. The chair has the option of designating the past chair of the same biennium as the Board Representative for the full term.

Under no circumstances shall the Division Representative position be shared. The division representative shall be announced at the time of the other division representative elections.

### **4.4 ELECTION OF CDC CHAIRPERSON**

Immediately following the election of Division Representatives to the AER Board of Directors, the Chair of the Council of Division Chairs will be elected by secret ballot from the newly-elected Division Representatives. The Chair will be elected within 15 days of the completion of the Division Representative election by CDC members, with each division allowed one vote by electronic ballot or other means. In the event that there are no nominees for a Division Cluster Representative to the Board, the members of the Executive Committee may ask one of the newly elected chairs or chair of a division to accept the position of the Division Cluster Representative of the board.

### **4.5 DIVISION QUALITY STANDARDS AND INDICATORS**

Divisions of Membership were formed by AER to encourage and promote professional standards and/or improvement of services to persons who are blind and visually impaired. Divisions are responsible for providing quality services to their members. In order to determine those services that are standards and/or indicators of quality, the following criteria has been provided and approved by the Board:

**A) Standards of Quality Divisions** – Divisions strive to provide their members with the following:

- Officers will be elected and will assume responsibility for leading the Division
- A minimum number of members will be maintained (AER policy requires 50)
- Representatives will attend AER functions: meetings, conferences
- Members of leadership will participate in leadership training
- Members will be surveyed on issues of importance to the Division
- Business meetings will be conducted at least biennially
- Members will receive communication from the Division on a regular basis: newsletters, flyers, e-mail
- Members will be recognized through awards at conferences
- A division budget will be developed, and division officers will be fiscally responsible to members
- Divisions will promote professionalism within the field of blindness and visual impairment (e.g. certification, professional development, and conference planning)
- A written policies & procedures manual governing the work of the Division which is available to members and is on file in the AER office

#### **4.6 CHAIRPERSON OF THE CDC - RESPONSIBILITIES**

Under the authority of the Bylaws, the CDC Chair is responsible for acting as a liaison between the AER's Divisions and the Board of Directors and for serving as the Divisions' representative on the International Board of Directors. The chair will preside over all meetings of the Council of Division Chairs. The chair is also responsible for assisting the Divisions in their development of division activities, and the development and coordination of division activities during the International Conference. In addition, the CDC Chair, with the approval of the Board of Directors of the AER, promotes the creation, merging, or dissolution of the Divisions.

The CDC Chair is responsible for participating as an active member of the International Board of Directors; participating on committees as assigned by the AER President; convening the Division Chairs, division officers, and others as needed.

#### **4.7 AER DIVISION OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

In accordance with AER Bylaws, Article XI., Divisions requires that the AER establish Divisions of membership to encourage and promote professional standards and/or improvement of services to persons who are blind and visually impaired. Each division shall elect from its membership a chairperson-elect who shall automatically become chair, a secretary/treasurer (or a secretary and a treasurer), and any additional officers or board as decided by the majority vote of the Division members. Division officers shall serve until their successors have been elected and qualified, except that the chairperson-elect shall succeed to the chair without election. No chair shall serve for more than two consecutive terms. If there is no chair-elect to advance, this inability to obtain elected officers shall be referred to the Council of Division Chairs for guidance. If the AER membership of the



officer(s) has lapsed, the office shall be considered vacant. This vacant position shall be filled in accordance with the bylaws of the division.

While most divisions have only the officers previously noted, there are others which have a more elaborate organizational structure. The following are sample job descriptions for the more commonly held offices in various divisions.

**IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR** - The duties and responsibilities of the office of Immediate Past Chair shall include but not be limited to the following: A) to assist the Chair, as requested, in orienting to the responsibilities of that office; and B) to serve on the Council of Division Chairs.

**CHAIR** - The duties and responsibilities of the office of Chair shall include but not be limited to the following: A) to preside at all membership meetings of the division; B) in cooperation with the Chair-Elect, the Chair will set the agenda for meetings of the division; C) to appoint members to the division's committees, including the chair of each committee; D) to work with the chair of each committee of the division to develop goals and a work plan for various committees; E) to obtain the approval of the division's officers for expenditures exceeding established amounts; F) to participate as a member of the Council of Division Chairs; and G) to preside at the election of the division officers if such election takes place during the international conference.

**CHAIR-ELECT** - The duties and responsibilities of the offices of Chair-Elect shall include but not be limited to the following: A) to serve as the assistant to the Chair; B) to preside at meetings of the division members in the absence of the Chair; C) to (if the division policies & procedures so indicate) serve as the representative on the International Conference Committee; and D) to participate as a member of the Council of Division Chairs.

**SECRETARY** - The duties and responsibilities of the secretary shall include but not be limited to the following: A) preparing and reporting the minutes of division membership meetings; and B) carrying out the correspondence of the division.

**TREASURER** - The division treasurer shall be responsible for monitoring the division's account, authorizing payment of division expenses (receipts to be provided for any requested reimbursement) and informing the division's members of the division's financial status.

Divisions may choose to combine the positions of secretary and treasurer if their policies & procedures so allow.

**Removal of division officers:** Any of the division officers may be removed for not carrying out his/her duties by action of the AER Board of Directors, provided that written notice by certified mail of removal is given to the division officer so removed. Such action shall be brought before the Board by the CDC Chair, with written documentation. Prior to such an action being taken, the CDC Chair shall notify the division officer of the charge(s) in writing by certified mail and request resignation.

#### **4.8 POLICY ON FORMING NEW DIVISIONS**

An interested group of persons wishing to form a new division must submit, in writing, a proposal to the chair of the Council of Division Chairs for review. The proposal must include:

- A) A list of at least 50 individuals who are members in good standing of AER who wish to form a new division. These 50 individuals must be willing to declare membership in the proposed division (either by changing their division choices or by adding an additional division membership).
- B) A statement of purpose detailing why the interests of the above named individuals are not being met by membership in one of the current divisions.
- C) A statement of goals and objectives for the proposed division.
- D) Provisional status will be granted for two years following the presentation of the petition and documenting information to the CDC Chair prior to the biennial meeting. At the biennial meeting of the CDC, the Council will review the material and make the necessary recommendations to the Board of Directors for action.

#### **4.9 PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF DIVISIONS**

A) Prior to every Council of Division Chairs (CDC) meeting (in the year of the AER biennial conference, the first meeting of CDC is designated as the official meeting for purposes of this section), AER will notify the Chair of the CDC of divisions that are either:

- 1) Low in membership (less than 50 members) or
- 2) Have no elected officers or
- 3) Have planned no division program for the AER biennial conference.

B) The Chair of the CDC will bring this division before the CDC for discussion. The CDC may choose either of the following actions:

1) No Action - The CDC may decide that no action is necessary because there is a clear understandable, and possibly, temporary reason for the referral. If no action is the decision of the CDC, the division continues as is with no intervention by CDC. The division is brought forward each time they meet the criteria.

2) Suspension - The CDC may decide to put the division on suspension. If the CDC decides to suspend a division, the CDC Chair will appoint (from the membership of AER) a provisional "guardian" whose charge is:

- 1) to oversee the division treasury (expenditures for mailings and other provisional activities must be approved by the appropriate person at AER).
- 2) to offer support to division members to help strengthen the division.
- 3) to analyze the viability of the division.
- 4) to prepare a report for the CDC meeting at the next biennial conference with one of two possible recommendations: a) allow this decision to continue on its own, or b) terminate division status.

C) At the first CDC meeting during the biennial conference the "guardian" will present his/her report with recommendations. Members of the suspended division will also be given the opportunity to address the CDC.

D) If the CDC votes to allow the division to continue on its own, the division is put on provisional status for 2 years at which time they must demonstrate viability (as indicated in item I above - membership, officers, program), otherwise the division will be brought before the CDC for consideration at the next biennial conference and the process begins again. If termination is recommended the CDC Chair brings the recommendation forward to the AER Board which makes the final decision. If a division is terminated:

1) The division treasury is returned to the CDC to determine its use.

2) Current members of the division which is being terminated are offered membership (at no charge) in any other division of their choice until the next expiration date of their individual membership in AER. In the case of Life Members, they will be offered membership in a division of their choice for one year from the date of selection.

#### **4.10 DIVISION BUDGETS**

Because AER has the legal and fiduciary responsibility for the management and control of all Association funds, it is the policy of AER that all funds allocated to division budgets shall be maintained and controlled from the AER Office. The Division treasurer will submit the division annual expense budget to the AER Board for approval in accordance with AER's budgetary process.

## **SECTION 5: RESPONSIBILITIES OF AER**

### **5.1 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

The following is a list of the various officers established by the AER Bylaws, effective July, 2008, and the responsibilities of each as specified in the Bylaws and established by the practice of the organization to date. These descriptions are intended to be of assistance to new officers and to be updated as needed. Each officer will sign the AER Conflict of Financial Interest Policy.

#### **PRESIDENT:**

The duties and responsibilities of the office of President include the following:

- A) To preside at all membership meetings of AER;
- B) To preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors of the AER;
- C) In cooperation with the Executive Director, to set the agenda for meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors;
- D) In collaboration with the Board, sets goals and priorities for the Executive Director and ensures that an annual written evaluation is prepared;
- E) To provide support and advice to the Executive Director especially in determining those actions which are within the Executive Director's responsibility, those which are addressed by organizational policy, and those which require action by the Board of Directors for resolution;
- F) To recommend to the Board of Directors the names of members for appointment to the organization's committees, including the Chairperson of each committee;
- G) To serve as a member of the Finance Committee, to include reviewing and recommending approval of an annual budget for consideration by the Board of Directors, as well as oversight of AER banking and investment practices.
- H) To represent the organization, as needed, at chapter and regional meetings, in discussions with other organizations, and at special events or to appoint other officers or members to do so;
- I) To serve as a spokesperson for the organization as needed and with guidance from the Board of Directors as the opportunity permits;
- J) To communicate sufficiently with the President-Elect so that the latter may be adequately prepared to assume the responsibilities of the President.

#### **PRESIDENT-ELECT:**

The duties and responsibilities of the President-Elect include the following:

- A) To serve as a member of the Board of Directors;
- B) To serve as the Assistant to the President;
- C) In absence of the President, to preside at meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors;
- D) In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, to succeed to that office;
- E) To serve as an ex-officio member of all committees and report on committee activities at Board meetings when the committee liaison to the Board is unable to do so.
- F) To work with each Chairperson of each committee to develop goals and a work plan for the committee;
- G) To encourage and support officers and committee chairpersons to carry out the responsibilities associated with their positions;

- H) Responsibility for leadership training in collaboration with the Council of Chapter Presidents (CCP) and the Council of Division Chairs (CDC).

#### SECRETARY:

The duties and responsibilities of the secretary include the following:

- A) To serve as a member of the Board of Directors;
- B) In cooperation with the executive director, to be responsible for the records of AER and to see that they are properly maintained in AER's office;
- C) To work with staff in preparation of the minutes of the membership and Board of Directors meetings and provide a final version of those minutes for dissemination to the Board of Directors;
- D) To see that the minutes of previous meetings are properly reviewed, corrected as necessary, and officially approved as the formal record of AER's activities.

#### TREASURER:

The duties and responsibilities of the treasurer include the following:

- A) To serve as a member of the Board of Directors;
- B) To serve as chair of the Finance Committee.
- C) To see to it that regular financial reports are prepared in accordance with recognized accounting principles;
- D) To report on the financial status of AER at all meetings of the Board of Directors and at membership meetings of AER as directed by the Board of Directors;
- E) To work in collaboration with the President and Executive Director to draft an annual budget or budget modifications, for approval by the Board of Directors;
- F) To review and report to the Board of Directors on the financial and investment policies of AER;
- G) To see that the proper bonding policies for employees and officers of AER are maintained and followed;
- H) To see to it that an audit of AER's records is performed annually as specified by AER Bylaws and its results reported to the Board of Directors and the membership;
- I) To bring financial issues and concerns to the board of directors for discussion and decision as needed.

#### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:

The duties and responsibilities of the Immediate Past President include the following:

- A) To serve as a member of the Board of Directors;
- B) To assist the President as requested in orienting to the responsibility of that office;
- C) To serve as the chairperson of the International Conference Committee for the Biennial International Conference of AER;
- D) To report the activities of the International Conference Committee at the meetings of the Board of Directors.

## 5.2 DIRECTORS

The members of the Board of Directors, in addition to the officers specified in the Bylaws, consist of one representative from each district of AER, one representative from Canada, four representatives from divisions (including the Chairperson of the Council of Division Chairs), and the Chairperson of the Council of Chapter Presidents.

The duties of these directors include the following:

- A) To attend meetings of the Board as well as membership meetings of AER;
- B) To govern AER between the biennial business meetings of the membership;
- C) To participate in discussion of questions before the Board or other assemblies of AER and to vote on such questions;
- D) To keep one's constituents informed of issues facing the Board, and as needed, to solicit and share with the Board the input of one's constituents on issues;
- E) As requested by the President, to recommend members for the various committees of AER for the President's consideration;
- F) The chairperson of the Council of Division Chairs shall have additional responsibilities as specified in section 4 of the policy manual;
- G) The Chairperson of the Council of Chapter Presidents shall have additional duties as outlined in Section 3 of the PM.
- H) To receive an orientation to the board at the first meeting of the biennium.
- I) To sign the AER Conflict of Financial Interest Policy.

### **5.3 CONFLICT OF FINANCIAL INTEREST POLICY**

All AER Board Members must sign and adhere to AER's Conflict of Financial Interest Policy, which is noted in Appendix I.

### **5.4 LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

Leadership training is a high priority for AER. The association will develop tools and materials that assist chapter leaders, division leaders, committee members, and other volunteers in performing their duties. This guidance will help current and future leaders of the organization support the mission of AER.

## **SECTION 6: AER COMMITTEES**

### **6.1 GENERAL DUTIES OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

AER uses a number of committees to design and carry out its many programs and services. . The responsibilities of the chairperson of each committee are very similar, although specific duties will vary for each committee. The general responsibilities of all committee chairpersons include the following:

- A) To work with the President and the Board of Directors, as requested, in selecting members for the committee and in selecting replacements as needed;
- B) To work with the President and the Board of Directors to formulate a work plan for the committee and to develop specific goals for the biennium;
- C) To orient the committee members to the charge and goals of the committee;
- D) To provide leadership to the committee in deciding how the work of the committee will be carried out, whether through meetings, telephone conferencing, internet or other means;
- E) To keep all committee members well informed and to encourage and facilitate their participation in the work of the committee;
- F) To see to it that the committee communicates with members of AER who may be particularly interested in the work of the committee and who may be able to make important contributions to its work;
- G) To publicize the work of the committee through AER communications so that any interested member may respond;
- H) To maintain communications with the Board of Directors through the President-Elect and, in particular, to prepare status reports for the Board immediately prior to each scheduled meeting of the Board, including any requests for Board action recommended by the committee;
- I) To prepare and maintain adequate records of all committee meetings and activities and to share these with committee members, the President-Elect, the President, and the Executive Director;
- J) To keep the designated AER staff liaison informed of the committee's actions and issues and to properly request staff assistance in a timely manner;
- K) To share with the succeeding committee chairperson a complete record of the committee's actions and pending issues and to help orient the new chairperson to the role and responsibilities of the committee.

### **6.2 STANDING COMMITTEES**

The list of Standing Committees and their Committee Charges are noted in Appendix E. AER Standing Committees.

### **6.3 AD HOC COMMITTEES**

The list of Ad Hoc Committees and their Committee Charges are noted in Appendix F. AER Ad Hoc Committees.

## **SECTION 7: INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURES**

### **7.1 SCHEDULING OF ELECTIONS**

Pursuant to Article IX, Section 4 of the AER Bylaws, the following procedures are established for nomination and election of International Officers and Board members.

Every two years, in the even-numbered year, the voting membership of AER shall elect a President-Elect, a Secretary and a Treasurer. In addition, voting members within each of the six districts shall elect a Member at Large and voting members in Canada shall elect one at-large representative to the Board of Directors.

### **7.2 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICER'S & CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE**

No later than February 1, in the second year of every biennium, the Nominating Committee shall solicit nominations for all applicable positions from the entire membership, pursuant to policies established by the board. Only individuals who are current voting members of AER shall be eligible to nominate candidates.

Any voting member of AER who has maintained continuous membership for at least two years prior to the election shall be eligible for nomination to officer or director positions (see Section 1.3 for their definition of "continuous membership"). No one individual may run for or serve in two or more positions on the Board of Directors concurrently.

Each person who is eligible to run and has been validly nominated for president-elect, secretary, treasurer or Canadian representative shall be sent a form from the AER Office requesting biographical and professional information to be included with the ballot. It shall be the responsibility of the individuals who have been nominated to assure that the AER staff receives the necessary information in a timely manner. Each nominated individual will be contacted by a Member of the Nominating Committee to answer questions and confirm his/her nomination.

### **7.3 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE**

No later than January 15, in the second year of every biennium, the Nominating Committee shall solicit nominations from Chapter Presidents for potential nominations for AER Board Members at Large to serve on the Board of Directors, via email, mail or AER's website. Each chapter shall be invited to submit at least one name as a possible candidate (chapters are not required to submit a name).

All nominations for each district shall be compiled in preparation for a general election with no more than three candidates per district. In the event of any one district having more than three candidates, the Chapter Presidents within that district shall convene no later than March 1 to determine the three candidates to be placed on the ballot.



## **7.4 BALLOT**

No later than March 15, in the second year of every biennium, a ballot, approved by the Nominations Committee, shall be prepared. The ballot for Officers, along with the appropriate biographical and other information, shall be distributed to all voting members of AER. Only those individuals whose membership is current at the time of the ballot being sent shall be eligible to vote in that year's election. The ballot for Members at Large and/or Canadian Representative shall be sent to voting members according to their voting jurisdiction.

Each voting member shall select one candidate for each position on the ballot. Every ballot shall offer the option of a write-in candidate for each position as well as the slate proposed by the Nominations Committee. Ballots shall be returned to the AER office no later than 45 days from the original date on which they were sent.

## **7.5 DETERMINING WINNERS**

The candidate receiving the majority of votes cast for each elective position shall become the holder of the office at the final business meeting held at the International Conference in the even-numbered years, or on July 1st in the event there is no conference. In the event of a tie vote in the election for any office, the election shall thereon be decided by lot.

In the event that no one candidate for an office receives a majority of votes cast, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes (but in no event less than 35%) shall be declared the winner. If no candidate receives 35% or more of the votes, a run-off election shall be conducted. This run-off ballot shall contain the names of the two candidates who received the highest number of votes in the general election. The second ballot shall be postmarked no later than four weeks prior to the opening date of the International Conference in the even-numbered years.

## **SECTION 8: FISCAL POLICIES**

### **8.1 REIMBURSEMENT**

It is the policy of AER that officers, committee members, staff and any other designated representatives of AER shall not be reimbursed for their expenses when traveling to Board of Directors or committee meetings, or other meetings or business when officially representing AER unless approved by the AER Board of Directors.

The list of travel reimbursement items is noted in Appendix P.

Whenever Board or Committee meetings are held in conjunction with the International Conference, it is the policy of AER that reimbursement will not be available for Board or Committee members. This is based on the presumption that leaders and active members of AER would attend the International Conference.

### **8.2 RENTING AER MAILING LABELS AND LISTS**

AER may rent, at its discretion, mailing labels and email lists of its membership to corporate and individual members and to outside groups. AER members will be provided the opportunity on an ongoing basis to deny AER permission to rent their names and addresses to vendors. Labels and e-mail lists may be rented by AER corporate members for a fee and by non-members for a higher fee. All orders must be pre-paid.

The list renter must sign a list rental agreement. See appendix Q. Any electronic communication is submitted to AER for approval and distribution. AER reserves the right to reject any request for the use of AER membership labels for any reason.

AER chapters and divisions may receive lists as needed of their own chapter or division members. AER reserves the right to charge a fee to any chapter or division wishing to mail information to other membership segments.

### **8.3 AER BUDGET REALLOCATIONS**

Pursuant to AER's Bylaws, the fiscal year budget is to be prepared by the Executive Director with the consultation of the Treasurer, the Finance Committee, and President. This AER Budget is then presented to the Board of Directors for their approval. Only the Board of Directors has the authority to enact major changes in AER's budget. However, specific amounts of money allocated to programmatic line items may be re-allocated by the Executive Director after consultation with and approval of the Treasurer and President. The Executive Director shall provide a detailed explanation in writing of any line item that varies from budget by more than 10%. See Appendix K. Budget Policy.

### **8.4 BUDGET REQUESTS**

All new budget requests (including requests from Divisions, Committees, members or outside entities) for the following year must be submitted by September 1 of the prior year to the Executive Director or the Treasurer.

### **8.5 FISCAL POLICY RELATING TO BEQUESTS**

Any bequest or unanticipated contribution to AER which is not otherwise designated shall be placed in the general operating account.

### **8.6 MACFARLAND FUND AND STIPENDS**

The AER Board of Directors has designated a fund named in honor of Douglas MacFarland. The purpose of this fund is to promote professional development. In 1995 the Board voted to expand the fund's usage to include MacFarland Stipends. The following guidelines were approved for the awarding of MacFarland Stipends:

The AER Board of Directors may award MacFarland stipends to current AER members only for the purpose of attending the International Conference. These stipends shall be for a fixed amount to be determined each biennium by the Finance Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. Preference should be given to first time conference attendees, and other factors to be considered in the selection process should include the applicant's financial need, other sources of financial support available to the applicant, total cost of attending the conference, and how the applicant plans to use the information gained by attending the conference. MacFarland Stipend winners shall be selected by the AER Scholarship Committee. Availability of stipends will be announced to the membership.

## **SECTION 9: AFFILIATIONS OF AER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **9.1 CURRENT AFFILIATIONS**

It is the policy of AER to work in coalition and cooperation with other organizations both within and outside the field of services to persons who are blind and visually impaired. See Appendix H. for current affiliations.

## **SECTION 10: CERTIFICATION INFORMATION**

### **10.1 ACVREP AND AER**

On May 9, 2000, AER entered into a formal legal agreement with the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) whereby AER automatically transferred to ACVREP all AER renewable certification programs in Orientation and Mobility (COMS), Rehabilitation Teaching (RTC) and Low Vision Therapy (CLVT) on December 2, 2000. As of December 2, 2000, AER no longer issued certifications in these three disciplines, or any others.

### **10.2 CODE OF ETHICS**

Prior to May 9, 2000, the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) had established a set of general principles, and each division of AER which administered a certification program was required to establish a code of ethics specific to its discipline whose framework was similar to other AER code of ethics. AER also maintained a structure to mediate disagreements between parties regarding compliance to the code and an appeals procedure. The code of ethics and enforcement process were suspended following transfer of certification programs to the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) in 2000.

## **SECTION 11: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

With the creation of the Mangold Distance Education Webinar Series in 2010, AER strives to bring the best professional development and education to its members. Live and recorded webinars using an online education platform for the Mangold program will be developed within the AER Continuing Education Committee with the following procedures

#### **11.1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PREPARATION**

Divisions or chapters wishing to submit a topic or speaker recommendation will do so by working with the assigned Continuing Education Committee representative. Each committee member is assigned a chapter district and division cluster. Divisions and chapters are made aware of their committee representative each biennium. Details such as the topic, speaker, background of the presentation, and length of webinar will be submitted to the Continuing Education Committee during their regularly scheduled meetings. If accepted by the committee, planning will begin to add the webinar to the AER calendar. AER staff will then contact the chapter or division representative that has brought forth the submission to begin set up of the live webinar.

The Continuing Education Committee will also review chapter meetings, international conferences and other educational events for any potential webinars that would serve AER's membership in giving them continuing education credit and professional development opportunities. They will work with AER staff to determine the viability of holding the webinar.

Potential speakers for the webinars are given a "Speaker Agreement Letter" with guidelines for presentation and the notice that the content will be AER owned. See Appendix R. Once the speaker has signed the agreement form, AER staff will market the webinar using standard communication methods.

AER staff will, when appropriate, work with the speaker(s) and begin the process of obtaining CEU credits with the appropriate discipline agencies such as ACVREP, CRC, AOTA if applicable.

Training with the speaker to review the online education platform will be scheduled at least 1 week prior to the webinar scheduled date. The webinar will take place live and will be recorded for anyone wishing to view the webinar after the live event. Anyone attending the webinar live will automatically receive continuing education credit if applicable, and a transcript made available to send to them via email for their records.

#### **11.2 PRICING**

The AER Continuing Education Committee, along with AER staff, will research within other organizations the cost for their online continuing education offerings and recommend to the Finance Committee each year their suggestion for the pricing per hour on continuing

education. There will be a member price and a separate non-member price for each webinar, with a higher amount being charged for recorded webinars.

## **SECTION 12: AER MEETINGS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

AER conducts meetings in order to provide our members with quality professional development in accordance with our organizational mission, and also to generate the revenue necessary for an effective association to operate on a national scope and successfully meet the needs of our membership. AER conducts an International Conference in even numbered years. Meeting revenue is essential for AER's financial stability.

### **12.1 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES SITE SELECTION**

The AER International Conference will be held in locations that offer the best opportunity to maximize meeting attendance and minimize meeting costs, while attempting to balance the meeting location geographically from conference to conference and serve significantly numerous pockets of members. Meeting location frequently determines the financial success of a conference because: A) The city appeal and hotel room rate have a significant impact on the number of people attending and paying registration (meeting revenue), while B) The typical price ranges for food and beverage, audio visual, taxes and gratuities, etc., vary significantly by location and determine AER's cost to hold the event (meeting expense).

When it has been decided to start the site selection process, an appropriate announcement will be made to affiliated chapters. Any chapter can recommend any of their cities to host the international conference.

AER Staff develops a list of locations that offer the greatest potential for a successful meeting through RFPs and cost analysis. The list is shared with the Executive Committee and then presented to the AER Board for the final decision.

### **12.2 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HISTORY OF SITES SELECTED**

The 1994 International Conference was held in Dallas, Texas; 1996 in St. Louis, Missouri; 1998 in Atlanta, Georgia; 2000 in Denver, Colorado; 2002 in Toronto, Ontario; 2004 in Orlando, Florida; 2006 in Snowbird, Utah, 2008 in Chicago, Illinois; 2010 in Little Rock, Arkansas; 2012 in Bellevue, Washington; 2014 in San Antonio, Texas.

### **12.3 CONFERENCE FEES**

All conference registration fees, exhibit fees, and advertising fees for the International Conference shall be established by the AER Board of Directors.

### **12.4 CANCELLATION**

AER cancellation policies are developed and enforced for each meeting. A percentage of the amount returned will be determined for each meeting according to registration prices and conference dates.



## **12.5 PROGRAM**

The International Conference Committee determines format and content of the meeting based on abstract submissions and invited speakers. The Conference Committee works closely with divisions to have abstracts reviewed and recommended for presentation. Tours or social activities may not be scheduled to conflict with the conference program and must be approved by AER.

## **12.6 AUDIOVISUAL**

AER will determine audio visual needs based on the number of presentations and current budget. Any audio visual equipment not approved by AER prior to the meeting will be the responsibility of the presenter.

## **12.7 PRESENTER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Presenters must attend the conference at their own expense and must register for the conference (the registration fee may be waived by the conference committee in certain circumstances); there are no honoraria or travel funds available through AER. Presenters will be responsible for the cost of any audiovisual equipment for their presentation if other than what is provided according to 12.6. Presenters are encouraged to supply all handout materials to the AER office prior to the conference to allow time for attendees to prepare the materials in their own media type. Presenters who do not supply material(s) prior to the conference are responsible for preparing their material in accessible formats to include print, large print (16 point font) and Braille. If all three media types are not made available, the presenter will not be allowed to distribute material(s).

## **12.8 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE COSTS**

Total costs incurred throughout a biennium, including those for planning in the year preceding the conference, should be included when determining total conference costs.

## **12.9 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

It shall be the responsibility of the International Conference Committee to:

- A) Review previous conference formats, activities, and evaluations and make recommendations for any necessary changes to AER staff.
- B) Periodically review registration rates, exhibit fees and other conference fees and make recommendations to the Finance Committee as needed.
- C) Review submissions with their respective division program committees and notify AER staff of accepted proposals prior to the conference.
- D) Recommend Keynote and General Session topics and presenters prior to the conference.
- E) Evaluate committee activities as well as the overall conference process and make a report available to the incoming committee after conference.

## **12.10 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HOST COMMITTEE**

Each conference will allow for a host committee to be composed of members from the chapter where the meeting is being held. The chapter leadership is responsible for selecting a chair of that host committee to work closely with the International Conference Committee and participate in planning of the conference.

The purpose of the Host Committee is to serve as hosts for the conference and to assist the Conference Committee, and AER staff, as needed, to successfully facilitate an International Conference.

Responsibilities:

- A) Make recommendations to the AER Staff options for Host Night entertainment along with cost estimates, if such an event is to be held. AER will contribute funds towards the event as approved by the Finance Committee. Any host chapter activities must be approved by the Conference Committee and AER.
- B) Assist AER in procuring sponsors for the conference.
- C) Provide information to the attendees on local places to eat, shop, and sightsee, as well as maps of the city.
- D) Provide AER staff with information on any potential local advertisers or exhibitors to be included on the master mailing list.
- E) Contact the mayor's office and/or Chamber of Commerce to get a local figure to "welcome" the Conference to the city.
- F) Arrange for the distribution of press releases from the AER Office about the conference to the local media.
- G) Recruit members to volunteer at an Information Booth throughout the conference.
- H) Recruit volunteers to assist as sighted guides for those who are blind or visually impaired.
- I) Work with hotel to schedule training for staff in preparation for serving guests who are blind and visually impaired.
- J) Recruit members to assist AER during the conference at registration and the exhibit hall and serve as session moderators, and other duties as requested.
- K) Assist in making any other arrangements as needed by the Conference Committee and AER staff.

## **12.11 TIME FRAME AND PLANNING PROCESS FOR SITE SELECTION**

AER staff is responsible for starting the process of conference site selection by reviewing membership demographics, hotel availability and pricing, location desirability and chapter interest. Site selection should begin no later than 24 months prior to the approximate start date of the future meeting. RFP's (request for proposals) are submitted to hotels and convention and visitor bureaus in selected locations. AER Staff will narrow down the proposals and presents final proposals to the AER Board for decision.

## **12.12 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES**

It shall be the responsibility of the AER staff to:

- A) Serve as staff liaison between the International Conference Program Committee and the Host Committee.
- B) Negotiate and finalize hotel contract for the signature of the Executive Director.
- C) Develop abstract submission program and distribute conference "Call for Abstracts."

- D) Work with divisions to recruit and train abstract reviewers and oversee the process.
- E) Work with AER divisions to develop and schedule division education sessions as determined by the divisions (sessions other than abstracts submitted through the Call for Abstract submission program).
- F) Prepare a preliminary conference budget with input from appropriate sources for consideration and approval by the Finance Committee and Board. (Any changes in fee structure should be presented to the Finance Committee and Board well in advance of budget preparation.)
- G) Monitor all proposed conference activities to make sure that they fall within budget constraints.
- H) Maintain list of potential attendees, exhibitors, sponsors and advertisers.
- I) Market conference to potential attendees, exhibitors, sponsors and advertisers.
- J) Produce and distribute preliminary program and registration materials.
- K) Produce final program in both print and Braille.
- L) Arrange for items associated with all awards (e.g. Bledsoe, Allen, Shotwell, Bauman, McKenzie, Blaha, Past President, Gavel for outgoing President, McAulay).
- M) Assign complimentary rooms and parking spaces if applicable.
- N) Process exhibit registrations, assign exhibit space, send follow-up information to exhibitors.
- O) Process conference registrations prior to the conference and on-site.
- P) Arrange for audiovisual equipment needs, meeting room assignment and moderators.
- Q) Provide hotel with food and beverage selections and room set up requirement for all events.
- R) Coordinate activities in hotel throughout the conference week.
- S) Send thank you letters as appropriate following the International Conference.
- T) Prepare a final report for the Board.

### **12.13 HOTEL ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST**

See Appendix R. Hotel Accessibility Checklist.

## **SECTION 13 - PUBLICATIONS**

### **13.1 GUIDELINES FOR PUBLISHING AND DISSEMINATING PROFESSIONAL MATERIAL**

AER encourages publication of materials on topics related to professionals who serve those who are blind and visually impaired such as books, white papers, newsletters and guides. Individuals or AER divisions wishing to pursue publication of materials through AER must submit a proposal to the AER Publications Committee for consideration.

AER determines the price of the material and royalty fees (if applicable)

Material should be copyright/ownership free from organizations, the federal government, etc. in order for it to be considered by AER for publication; e.g. if material was generated by a federal grant, obtain permission to publish/disseminate. However, authors may hold a copyright on their material and publish/disseminate it through AER.

AER has a right to add a "disclaimer statement" to any material it publishes/disseminates.

### **SECTION 13.2 POLICIES RELATING TO JOB EXCHANGE**

AER Job Exchange is a job listing service that advertises jobs in the vision profession. Fees for listings of job announcements in Job Exchange are set according to AER Corporate Member Status. AER Corporate members receive discounted pricing for listings.

### **13.3 POLICIES RELATING TO NEWSLETTER COMMUNICATIONS**

AER produces AER Report, a newsletter for all AER members and distributed electronically to members as determined by the annual budget. Advertising is accepted and fees are determined by AER.

Divisions may produce member newsletters and distribute them electronically. Advertising fees for any division newsletter are determined by AER.

## **SECTION 14. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF AER AND ITS DIVISIONS**

**Preamble:** As elsewhere stated in this policy manual (Sec. 4.10) and as implied by the structure of this Association both in its bylaws and policies generally, AER's Divisions are integral parts of this Association. Thus, AER possesses the legal identity and authority to buy or sell, own or operate, lease or let, donate, borrow or enter into contract, or otherwise engage in business transactions with other organizations or entities. Such activities are conducted by AER per se on the Divisions' behalf when such business transactions do not conflict either with the policy of this Association or with business transactions or other arrangements undertaken or intended by this Association. This policy grows out of the clear need to ensure cooperation and non-competition between and among AER and its several Divisions. The following provisions describe the operation of this vital interrelationship of AER and its Divisions and are intended to ensure the success of both AER and its Divisions.

### **14.1 Authority to Transact Business:**

As Divisions are integral parts of this Association, AER per se may negotiate and enter into business or other similar arrangements with other organizations or entities. This provision shall not be construed as restricting the right of any Division representative to the free expression of creative ideas.

### **14.2 Intellectual Property:**

All publications or other documents intended for distribution (either written or electronic) produced by AER or its Divisions shall bear a copyright notice declaring the copyright owner to be "Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired." Such material shall remain the intellectual property of AER. Should AER and a particular Division agree to financial arrangements or other terms pertaining to a specific publication or document, appropriate attribution to the relevant Division shall be included in addition to the copyright notice described above.

### **14.3 Continuing Education Credit:**

With respect to the processing of continuing education credit for AER members and others, such function is the sole responsibility of AER. All arrangements (financial or otherwise) to make such credit available via AER's publications, website, or conferences and seminars held by AER or its Divisions shall be the right and responsibility of AER.

### **14.4 Representation/Advocacy:**

It is the responsibility of AER to advocate on behalf of its Divisions and professional membership. Additionally, AER participates in coalition activities and in one-on-one dialogue with other organizations (e.g., ACVREP, etc.) in furtherance of the mission of AER and its Divisions to promote professional excellence. This is necessary to ensure the unity of this Association, both in terms of AER's agenda/strategy and the way in which outside groups or organizations perceive AER. Therefore—

- A) representation by AER members or others appointed to participate in such activities, as a condition of such participation, shall be characterized as being performed on behalf of AER as a whole;

B) when a Division underwrites the expenses related to such work, acknowledgment of the Division's financial support of such representation shall be made in AER's publications/communications or at AER-related conferences as appropriate; and

C) when, in specific circumstances, the interests of AER are furthered by the involvement of more than one individual representative but where an organization's participation is limited to one individual per organization, AER members or others may be deemed to be appointed by specific Divisions of AER. However, the actual AER internal appointment or replacement of such individuals shall rest, as always, with the AER President or Board. In such circumstances, the AER President or Board shall consult with the relevant Division regarding the appointment or replacement of individuals to be deemed to represent that Division.

#### **14.5 Conferences Sponsored by Divisions:**

AER Divisions may plan, organize and fund topic- or profession-specific conferences for the purpose of promoting professional excellence/development. The following procedures shall be used to implement this policy;

**A) Request:** The Division Chair shall transmit a written or electronic communication to the AER President indicating the Division's interest in holding such a conference—such request shall be submitted to the AER Board for approval, which it may grant at its discretion. The communication must briefly outline the intended focus of conference programming. Such communication must be received by the President at least one year prior to the intended conference dates.

**B) Contract Negotiation:** Once the AER Board grants approval, the appropriate Division leadership shall work with the AER office to determine site selection. All negotiations and final conference-related contracts or other agreements must be signed by the AER Executive Director.

**C) Conference Budget:** Once the AER Board grants approval (but no later than 12 months prior to the intended start of the conference), the appropriate Division leadership (or the committee described in paragraph (4)) shall work with AER staff to prepare a proposed conference budget for review and approval by the AER Finance Committee. Such budget shall account for any and all income and expenses relating to the conference.

**D) Conference Committee:** A committee with primary responsibility for the planning and organizing of the division conference shall be formed by the Division and shall include the AER Executive Director (or his/her designee), who shall take part in all decisions/actions of the committee.

**E) Fiscal Controls:** Receipt and deposit of all conference registration fees shall be the responsibility of AER. Conference-related expenses shall be paid in accordance with AER's customary practices for the payment of Division expenses.

**F) Conference Content/Materials:** To the maximum extent possible, the conference program, promotional and other materials shall clearly portray the conference as a

conference of AER sponsored by the specific Division(s) involved. All decisions related to conference programming/content shall ultimately be the responsibility of the conference committee described in paragraph (4) above. Such committee shall ensure that promotion of the conference shall be coordinated with other AER conference-related activities.

**G) AER's Conference Presence:** The AER President and/or Executive Director (or their designee) shall be invited to make a presentation during at least one of the conference's general/plenary sessions. The purpose of such presentation may be to bring greetings to conference attendees on behalf of AER and to update attendees about AER's agenda and work.

#### **14.6 Division Position Papers**

Divisions must submit position papers to the AER Board for approval prior to final dissemination.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix A. AER Membership Categories and Dues Structure Effective January 2013

<b>AER Individual Membership Categories</b>	<u>Annual Dues (USD)</u>
Regular.....	\$170
International.....	\$170
Transitional.....	\$136
Same Household*.....	\$136
Retired.....	\$ 90
Secretarial/Clerical Support*.....	\$ 90
Student**.....	\$ 90
Associate***.....	\$ 90

\*Same Household membership is available to an additional member who resides in the same residential household as a current AER member. The household receives one copy of all AER periodicals. The member must provide the name of the current AER member who establishes eligibility for same household membership on the front of the membership renewal invoice.

\*\*Student members must complete the appropriate verification statement on the front of the membership application or renewal invoice.

Transitional membership is only available to current AER student members upon graduation for one year.

\*\*\*Associate membership is *non-voting* and not intended for blindness professionals. Associates must complete the appropriate verification statement on the front of the application or membership renewal invoice. Associate members are not eligible to receive AER's journal *Insight*.

Division Membership and Dues Structure: Division enrollment is optional. Only AER members qualify for enrollment in AER divisions.

Administration - Division 1	\$10
Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, Employment, and BEP Services - Division 2	\$10
Multiple Disabilities and Deafblind - Division 3 -	\$10
Psychosocial Services - Division 4	\$10
Information and Technology - Division 5	\$10
Low Vision - Division 7	\$10
Infant and Preschool - Division 8	\$10
Orientation & Mobility – Division 9	\$10
Education Curriculum - Division 10	\$10
Vision Rehabilitation Therapy – Division 11	\$10
Division on Aging - Division 15	\$10
Itinerant Personnel – Division 16	\$10
Personnel Preparation – Division 17	\$15
International Division – Division 18	\$10
Division on Physical Activity and Recreation – Division 19	\$10



## **AER Corporate Membership Categories and Fees**

	<u>Annual Dues (USD)</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> State/Private School for the Blind	\$625
<input type="checkbox"/> State/Provincial/Federal Agency for the Blind	\$625
<input type="checkbox"/> All Other Organizations	See Chart

### **Dues Chart for All Other Organizations**

Less than \$700,000 Annual Operating Expenses	\$600
\$700,000 - \$1,500,000 Annual Operating Expenses	\$625
\$1,500,001 - \$3,000,000 Annual Operating Expenses	\$650
\$3,000,001 - \$5,000,000 Annual Operating Expenses	\$700
More than \$5,000,000 Annual Operating Expenses	\$750

## **Appendix B. Current Active, Officially-Chartered Chapters of AER by District**

### **District 1**

Alaska  
Arizona  
British Columbia  
Colorado  
Hawaii  
New Mexico  
Northern California  
Southern California  
Nevada  
Northern Rockies (*Idaho, Montana, Wyoming*)  
Northwest Territories  
Oregon  
Pacific Northwest (*State of Washington*)  
Utah  
Yukon Territories

### **District 2**

Arkansas  
Dakotas Chapter (North and South Dakota)  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Louisiana  
Manitoba  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
Oklahoma  
Saskatchewan  
Texas

### **District 3**

Illinois  
Michigan  
Ontario  
Minnesota  
Indiana  
Wisconsin

**District 4**

New York

Northeast Chapter (*Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec.*)

**District 5**

Alabama

Florida

Georgia

Kentucky

Mississippi

North Carolina

Puerto Rico

South Carolina

Tennessee

**District 6**

DC/Maryland

New Jersey

Ohio

Pennsylvania-Delaware

US Virgin Islands

Virginia

West Virginia

Effective January 1, 2011, all chapters in the United States are registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as subordinate units included in AER's group exemption under Section 501(c)(3).

**Appendix C. Chapter Affiliation Agreement**  
**AER CHAPTER AFFILIATION AGREEMENT**

[AER Chapter Affiliation Agreement Under Revision]

## **Appendix D. Active AER Divisions & Division Groupings for Board Representation**

Administration (Division 1)

Rehabilitation Counseling and Employment (Division 2)

Multiple Disabilities & Deafblind (Division 3)

Psychosocial Services (Division 4)

Information & Technology (Division 5)

Low Vision Rehabilitation (Division 7)

Infant & Preschool (Division 8)

Orientation & Mobility (Division 9)

Education Curriculum (Division 10)

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (Division 11)

Division on Aging (Division 15)

Itinerant Personnel (Division 16)

Personnel Preparation (Division 17)

International (Division 18)

Division on Physical Activity and Recreation (Division 19)

For the purpose of Board representation only, AER divisions are grouped. As of 2012, the groupings are:

Instructional Services Divisions:

Multiple Disabilities & Deafblind (3), Infant & Preschool (8), Education Curriculum (10), Itinerant Personnel (16)

Adult Services Divisions:

Rehabilitation Counseling and Employment (2), Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (11), Division on Aging (15)

Related Services Divisions:

Administration (1), Psychosocial Services (4), Information & Technology (5), Low Vision Rehabilitation (7), Personnel Preparation (17), International (18), Division on Physical Activity and Recreation (19)

Large Divisions:  
Orientation & Mobility (9)

## **Appendix E. AER Standing Committees**

### AER Committee Member Requirements

Current AER membership

Commitment to serve a minimum two-year term

Available for committee communication including phone and email

Participate in committee meetings on a consistent basis

By agreeing to serve on an AER committee, the member acknowledges that AER owns the copyright for all work developed by the committee.

### **BYLAWS AND STRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

The Bylaws and Structure Committee, in consultation with the Executive Director, shall have full responsibility for reviewing and making recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding chapter and division bylaws. In addition, this committee shall review proposed amendments to AER's Bylaws and study the implications of and changes which might be necessary through the Bylaws when an amendment is proposed. This committee, appointed by the President, shall have balanced representation from education and rehabilitation as well as broad geographic representation.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER Continuing Education Committee is to create new professional development opportunities such as seminars, workshops and webinars (other than International Conferences or Regional Meetings) that meet AER member needs. Work with staff to ensure the financial viability of all new offerings. When advantageous, collaborate with AER chapters and divisions for workshop content, presenters and venues.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There shall be an Executive Committee, comprised of the President, President-elect, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the non-voting Executive Director. This group shall have the ability to meet between meetings of the Board of Directors, in order to handle presented issues that require immediate Board action. By majority vote, this committee shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board, in all matters, excluding Bylaws/Policy Manual revisions, increases or decreases to the overall Association Budget, removal of Board members/officers, appointment/removal of the Executive Director, or filling vacancies on the board. Minutes of the Executive Committee shall be distributed to Board Members in a timely manner, following meetings.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the AER Finance Committee is to provide leadership and direction to maintain and manage the Association's finances and policies related to those finances. The finance committee shall work with the Executive Director to develop an annual budget for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors, and shall suggest revisions to the approved budget as needed throughout the year. In addition, the finance committee shall

provide leadership in reviewing and evaluating any investment of reserve funds with appropriate outside advice, and where necessary, make recommendations to the Board. Committee members should be from the Board of Directors, and must include at least one Canadian representative.

## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

This committee is responsible for developing the program for the Biennial International Conference. The International Conference Committee shall be chaired by the Immediate Past President and members are appointed by the AER President with equal representation between rehabilitation and education representatives. (Additional policies relating to the International Conference appear as Section 12 of the Manual.)

## **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER Legislative Committee is to monitor relevant federal legislation for changes that would significantly impact AER members, chapters and divisions and recommend appropriate actions to the AER Board of Directors; assist/advise AER Chapters with legislative issues they initiate.

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER Membership Committee is to increase the value of AER membership by ensuring that AER offers excellent member benefits and services that are appropriate and highly desirable and that support the AER strategic plan. The committee advises the AER staff on the conduct and content of membership acquisition campaigns.

## **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

This committee is responsible for putting together a slate of officers every biennium. Pursuant to Section 7 of this policy manual (which was developed as specified in Article VIII, Section 4 of the AER bylaws), it is the responsibility of this committee to issue a Call for Nominations for the offices of President-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer; eliminate those nominations which are improperly submitted; and solicit nominees when necessary. In particular, it is the responsibility of this committee to attempt to secure well-balanced slates with representation from both education and rehabilitation. This committee does not have the discretion to eliminate qualified candidates who have been properly nominated. When appointing this committee, every effort shall be made to assure equal representation of both education and rehabilitation as well as a broad geographic representation.

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

This committee, appointed by the President, shall be composed of the President, the Treasurer and at least one other member of the Board of Directors. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to review and update AER Personnel Policies, recommending changes to the Board of Directors when desirable or necessary. This committee, in consultation with the Executive Director, shall make determinations concerning salary levels for AER employees.



## **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER Publications Committee is to oversee the association's *editorial* policy related to a scholarly journal provided as an AER member benefit. In accordance with the AER strategic plan, the committee is also charged with developing an ongoing series of high-quality AER books of value to AER members, university programs, and bookstores.

## **SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER Scholarship Committee is to implement the William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship Program and MacFarland Award stipends.

## **UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER University Review Committee is to oversee the AER University Review process for Personnel Preparation Programs (TVI, O&M, and VRT) by establishing administrative standards and working with AER Divisions to develop and maintain curricular standards; oversee the review process of these university programs.

## **Appendix F. AER Ad Hoc Committees**

### AER Committee Member Requirements

Current AER membership

Commitment to serve a minimum two-year term

Available for committee communication including phone and email

Participate in committee meetings on a consistent basis

By agreeing to serve on an AER committee, the member acknowledges that AER owns the copyright for all work developed by the committee

### **ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER Accessibility Committee is to recommend strategies to ensure that AER material is accessible to its members who are blind or visually impaired and to provide for accessible onsite handout materials at AER meetings.

### **AWARDS COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER Awards Committee is to provide AER members with the opportunity for recognition of significant achievements and upholding high standards as defined by each specific AER award.

Established award programs include:

Mary K. Bauman Award, Ambrose M. Shotwell Memorial Award, Alfred Allen Award, John H. McAulay Award, and Outstanding AER Chapter Award.

### **HISTORY AND MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

The charge of the AER History and Memorial Committee is to ensure that a history of AER is preserved and documented; to produce material to reflect the history of AER's activities and acknowledge the past contributors and leaders within AER and the field.

### **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE**

The charge of the Professional Personnel Recruitment Committee is to increase the visibility and stature of AER's professionals in the field of blindness and visual impairment among targeted audiences. Advance AER's efforts to help attract qualified individuals to the field in accordance with the AER strategic plan.

### **RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

This committee, appointed by the President, shall be composed of members who plan to be present at the International Conference. Every effort shall be made to assure broad representation of the professional disciplines and geographic regions within AER. This committee's charge is to prepare a list of appropriate resolutions for the convention attendees to consider and to see that these resolutions are formally prepared for presentation. They shall assist in formulating resolutions suggested by members, react to suggestions from members,

and initiate resolutions of their own. The chair of this committee shall work with AER Office staff to prepare a "Call for Resolutions" to be issued prior to the International Conference.

## **Appendix G. AER Awards**

### **MACFARLAND AWARD**

There has been established an award in memory of Douglas C. MacFarland. The award will be presented by the Council of Division Chairs to an outstanding retired member who has served in the field of blindness and visual impairment for a minimum of 25 years.

## **Appendix H. Current Affiliations**

The organizations, associations, or coalitions with which AER is currently working to support AER members:

- \* American Foundation for the Blind
- \* American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- \* Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities
- \* Braille Authority of North America
- \* International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped
- \* Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
- \* Legislative Working Group
- \* National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped
- \* National Eye Institute
- \* Public Right of Way Access and Advisory Committee
- \* Trust for Insuring Educators
- \* World Blind Union
- \* Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
- \* National Council State Administrators of the Blind
- \* Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- \* ACVREP
- \* COSB

Presidential appointments to represent AER with these or other organizations both within and outside the field of blindness shall not extend beyond the term of the appointing President.

Individuals representing AER in outside groups and activities have the responsibility to regularly update the AER Executive Director and produce written reports for the AER Board of Directors as requested.

## **Appendix I. AER Conflict of Financial Interest Policy**

### **Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Conflict of Financial Interest Policy - (Approved August 2011)**

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired ("Organization") has consistently followed a policy of avoiding a conflict of financial interest or the appearance of such conflict on the part of the members of the Board, Volunteers, staff, and all committees and task forces.

WHEREAS, it is desirable that the policy to avoid conflicts of financial interest be clarified and spelled out in a Resolution of the Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this Board hereby re-adopts and amends the following policy with respect to possible conflicts of financial interest among the members of the Board, Volunteers, staff, and all committees and task forces of the Organization:

Service on the Board and as a Volunteer for the Organization is purely voluntary and shall not be used as a means for personal or private benefit or inurement. This provision shall not be deemed to prevent a member of the Board or a Volunteer from fairly representing his or her association with the Organization on a resume or in other personal publicity. Staff members, as employees of the organization, can fairly represent their position with the Organization but shall not attempt to use their position for additional benefits beyond the pay and benefits they receive as part of their employment package.

No member of the Board or Volunteer who is a vendor of goods or services to the Organization or is affiliated (as defined below) with any vendor of goods or services to the Organization or with a competitor of any vendor of goods or services to the Organization, shall vote on, or participate on behalf of the Organization in administration of, any contract with such vendor.

No member of the Board or Volunteer who is a competitor of the Organization or affiliated (as defined below) with a competitor of the Organization shall vote on, or participate on behalf of the Organization in the awarding of, or administration of, any arrangement in which such competition exists or may exist.

No member of the Board or Volunteer who is a recipient of grants, goods or services from the Organization or is affiliated (as defined below) with a recipient of grants, goods or services from the Organization shall vote on, or participate on behalf of the Organization in the awarding of, or administration of, any contract or other arrangement with such recipient.

Such person shall, upon request of any member of the Board or committee, leave any meeting for the period of time the Board or committee is discussing any arrangement with which he or she has an affiliation.

No member of the staff of the Organization shall, without previous approval of the Executive Director (or in the case of the Executive Director, the Personnel Committee), be, or be affiliated with, either a vendor to, or recipient of grants, goods or services from, the Organization. If such a relationship has been approved, then the above prohibitions applicable to the Board and Volunteers also apply to the staff member.

No individual or entity with which a member of the Board, a Volunteer, staff, committees and task forces is affiliated shall receive any special consideration by the Board or staff. There shall be no variation in the procedures for processing grants to or contracts with such affiliated entities or individuals, except that additional scrutiny may be applied to such consideration, and the Organization shall follow such procedures as are necessary or appropriate to assure that the transaction is both in the best interests of

the Organization and does not constitute an "excess benefit transaction" under the Internal Revenue Code.

A Volunteer shall include any person, other than a member of the Board of Directors, who serves as officer, editor, committee member, or division officer of the Organization, and any principal investigator on a grant or contract administered by the Organization.

A Board member, staff member, Volunteer, committee member or task force member shall be deemed to be affiliated with an entity if the person serves as a member of a governing body of the entity, serves as an officer or employee of the entity, has a material economic relationship with such entity, or if the person's spouse/partner, parent, sibling, child, or member of the immediate household, holds such a position or has such a relationship.

A Board member, staff member, Volunteer, committee member or task force member shall be deemed to be affiliated with an individual if such individual is a spouse/partner, parent, sibling, child, or member of the immediate household of such individual or has a material economic relationship with such individual.

Where a member of the Board or a Volunteer is unsure whether a conflict or affiliation exists, he or she shall disclose the relevant facts to the Secretary (to the Treasurer in the case of the Secretary). Where a member of the staff is unsure whether a conflict or affiliation exists, he or she shall disclose the relevant facts to the Executive Director (to the Personnel Committee in the case of the Executive Director). The member of the Board, the Volunteer or staff shall abide by the decision so rendered as to the existence or non-existence of a conflict or affiliation.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent a member of the Board who is or is affiliated with a recipient of grants, goods or services from the Organization from participating in discussions or decisions relating to the scope or quality of grants, goods or services provided generally to such recipient and other persons similarly situated.

Each member of the Board, Volunteer, staff, committee or taskforce shall advise the Secretary (the Executive Director in the case of staff, the Personnel Committee in the case of the Executive Director, and the Treasurer in the case of the Secretary) of any conflict or potential conflict of interest when such person becomes aware of any such relationship that has not previously been disclosed.

Upon approval of this Resolution, a copy of the resolution shall be sent to each staff member, Board member, Volunteer, committee member or taskforce member and shall be posted on the AER website. Subsequently, this resolution shall be included in the staff manual given to all employees and provided to all Board Members and all Volunteers. As part of their annual review all staff members will be asked to update their conflict of interest forms. Similarly, all Board members will be asked to sign this form.

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Title

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## Appendix J. Reporting Potential Misconduct

- I. **Purpose and Overview:** The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) expects all members of the AER community to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in discharging their duties and responsibilities. This policy has been developed with these obligations in mind. This policy also is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within AER, and to define a process to address these concerns.
- II. **Scope of Policy:** This policy covers instances in which an individual affiliated with AER — such as a Board member, staff member, or volunteer — discovers or suspects misconduct, including but not limited to theft, fraud, embezzlement, kickbacks, diversion of AER funds for personal use, questionable financial practices, or other violations of applicable laws or regulations. If an individual submits a report under this policy that is more appropriately addressed under a different policy, the report may be referred to the appropriate person or office for resolution.
- III. **Reporting Violations and Suspected Violations:** All members of the AER community have a responsibility to report known or suspected misconduct within AER in accordance with this policy. AER encourages individuals to share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints regarding misconduct with someone who can address them properly. AER expects organizational administrators to maintain an open-door policy and to follow the processes in this policy when they receive a report concerning known or suspected misconduct by AER.
  - A. **Initial step:** In most cases, an employee should report the known or suspected misconduct to his or her supervisor or department head. Volunteers are also encouraged to report known or suspected violations; such reports typically should be made to the Executive Director.
  - B. **Report contents:** Reports of known or suspected misconduct should contain the name and title of each employee or representative against whom any allegation is being made, and a specific description of the misconduct, including dates, times, and any other relevant information needed to substantiate the allegations. In addition, the person should describe how he or she learned this information, such as first-hand observation, a report from another person, etc.
  - C. **Anonymity and requests for confidentiality:** A report may be made anonymously; however, it is critical that individuals reporting anonymously provide sufficient detail to permit an adequate investigation. In addition, a person may identify himself or herself but request that his or her identity, or details that would reveal his or her identity, be kept confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent feasible, given the need to conduct an adequate investigation.
  - D. **Guidance for individuals who receive a report:** In all situations, an employee who receives a report alleging known or suspected misconduct must promptly notify the head of Human Resources, who in turn must notify Executive Director. If



the allegations are against the Executive Director of AER, the President of the Board will determine the proper method of investigating the report.

#### **IV. Process for Handling Reported Violations**

**A. Role of Human Resources and Executive Director:** The Office of Human Resources is responsible for providing guidance to management, investigating all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of this policy, confidential record-keeping, and advising the Executive Director of all reports and outcomes. Matters may be reassigned to another office or department for investigation when deemed appropriate by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will keep the President of the Board informed, and, where appropriate, the Board Audit Committee.

**B. Acknowledgement and investigation:** When the person reporting identifies himself or herself, the assigned investigator will promptly acknowledge receipt of the known or suspected violation and may also seek additional detail about the substance of the report. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. If the person reporting includes his or her identity, the assigned investigator will inform that person when the investigation has been concluded. Due to the sensitive nature of such investigations, specific details might not be shared.

**V. Confidentiality:** All aspects of any investigation under this policy will be kept confidential to the extent possible and reasonable in light of controlling laws and policies.

**VI. No Retaliation:** Retaliation against anyone who in good faith makes a report or complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited. Retaliation can be reported under this policy in the same manner as financial misconduct. Good faith under this policy means that the individual submitting a report under this policy must have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed reflects a violation or suspected violation. Any member of the AER community who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment, or if not an employee, other sanctions appropriate for the person's role or position.

## **Appendix K. Budget Policy**

### **Budget Process**

The budget process is designed to provide:

- A means by which spending limits are set based on expected revenue levels;
- A system to allow for procedures to compare actual results to the set spending limits;
- A means for setting program priorities and allocating resources to those priorities;
- A means for comparison of actual financial results to budgeted amounts and analysis of differences from those budgeted amounts.

### **Preparation of Annual Budget**

- The Executive Director in collaboration with the Board Treasurer shall compile and review the financial results for the mission of the organization, goals, short-term plans, reserves and any other relevant information deemed appropriate.
- The Executive Director in collaboration with the Board Treasurer shall review the current year financial activity as compared to the current year budget, and then he shall project the results for the current year.
- The Executive Director in collaboration with the Board Treasurer shall prepare a draft budget with a comparison to the prior year results, the current year projection, and the plan for the year after the budget.
- If the current year projected reserves are below the minimum level established in the Reserves Policy, the Executive Director in collaboration with the Board Treasurer shall prepare a draft budget that provides for either:
  - A one-month surplus of reserves in a year with an international conference, or
  - A non-deficit budget in a year without an international conference.

### **Approval of the Budget**

- The Executive Director shall present the budget package to the Finance Committee for Review by not later than October 15 of the year preceding the budget year. The Finance Committee will work with the Executive Director to determine the format of the budget package. At a minimum, the budget package shall include:
  - Prior year results
  - Current year projection,
  - Proposed budget,
  - Plan for the follow-on year,
  - Key revenue assumptions,
  - Proposals for significant cost reductions (if necessary), and
  - Proposals for significant cost increases (if necessary).

- After receiving the budget package, the Finance Committee will review the budget and ask the Executive Director to make changes as necessary.
- The Finance Committee will present the budget package to the Board of Directors not later than November 15 of the year preceding the budget year.
- The Board of Directors shall convene a special Board meeting to review and vote on the budget prior to December 15.
- If the budget is rejected, the board shall direct the Executive Director to amend the budget for changes as directed by the board.

### **Execution of the Budget**

- Once the budget has been set for the fiscal year, the budget shall be included in the accounting system of AER.
- The Executive Director shall present financial statements with a comparison of monthly results of operations to budget to the Finance committee within fifteen days after the end of each month. The Executive Director shall provide a detailed explanation in writing of any line item that varies from budget by more than 10%.
- The most recent financial statement shall be presented by the Executive Director at regular Finance Committee meetings.
- The most recent financial statement shall be presented by the Chairman of the Finance Committee at regular Board of Director meetings.
- When deemed necessary, the board shall revise the budget to fund additional services or make allowances for other unbudgeted revenues or expenses.

## **Appendix L. Reserve Policy**

The financial reserve objective of AER is to maintain net assets that are equal to three months of budgeted operating revenues. Budgeted operating revenues are defined as the amount of all budgeted revenues less international conference revenues.

Board approval is needed to authorize any disbursements from the reserve. The Board shall review the reserve when it exceeds six months and determine whether to reduce it.

The Executive Director shall report the reserve level to the Finance Committee on a quarterly basis.

## **Appendix M. Dues Policy**

AER shall increase dues fees every other year in the odd years by no less than three percent (3%) or by an amount designated by the AER Board of Directors beginning January 1, 2013.

## **Appendix N. Program Review Policy**

Any proposed program not included in the approved annual budget that is projected to cost at least \$10,000 more than projected funding must solicit comments from the Finance Committee before approval by the AER Board of Directors. Members of the board shall have at least 14 days to review the programs before voting.

## Appendix O. Record Retention

### Policy

It is the policy of Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) to retain records as required by law and to destroy them when appropriate. The destruction of records must be approved by the Executive Director, and logged into the Organization's Destroyed Records Log. The formal records retention policy of AER is as follows:

Accident reports/claims (settled cases)	7 Years
Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	7 Years
Accounts receivable ledgers and schedules	7 Years
Audit reports	Permanently
Bank reconciliations	3 Years
Bank Statements	3 Years
Cancelled Checks	7 Years
Contracts, mortgages, notes and leases:	
Expired	7 Years
Still in effect	Permanently
Correspondence:	
General	2 Years
Legal and important matters only	Permanently
Routine with customers and/or vendors	2 Years
Deeds, mortgages and bills of sales	Permanently
Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Duplicate deposit slips	3 Years
Employment applications	3 Years
Expense analyses/expense distribution schedule	7 Years
Financial statements	Permanently
General ledgers/year end trial balance	Permanently
Insurance policies (expired)	3 Years
Insurance records (policies, claims, etc.)	Permanently
Internal reports	3 Years
Inventories of products, materials and supplies	7 Years
Invoices (to customers, from vendors)	7 Years
Journals	Permanently
Minute books of directors, bylaws and charters	Permanently
Notes receivable ledgers and schedules	7 Years
Payroll records and summaries	7 Years
Personnel records (terminated)	7 Years
Petty cash vouchers	3 Years
Property records (incl. depreciation schedules)	Permanently
Purchase orders	7 Years
Retirement and pension records	Permanently
Sales records	7 Years

Subsidiary ledgers	7 Years
Tax returns and worksheets, examination reports and other documents relating to determination of income tax liability	Permanently
Time sheets/cards	7 Years
Trademark registrations and copyrights	Permanently
Training manuals	Permanently
Withholding tax statements	7 Years



## **Appendix P. Travel Reimbursement Items**

Reimbursement, if approved, shall include:

- The cost of airline, train, or bus transportation; or mileage at the per mile rate approved by the US Internal Revenue Service;
- Taxis and/or parking;
- The cost of hotel room plus tax; a per diem to cover food expenses at a rate of \$50, allocated as follows:
  - \*\$10/breakfast;
  - \*\$15/lunch; and
  - \*\$25/dinner
- Registration fee(s) may be reimbursed; however, if banquets, luncheons or other meals are included in the registration fee, per diem shall not be paid for those meals.

## Appendix Q. AER Membership List Rental Agreement

In consideration of the premises contained herein, this Agreement is made as of the date first written below between the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), a Virginia non-profit corporation having its principal offices at 1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 440, Alexandria, VA 22311, hereafter referred to as List Owner and

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hereafter referred to as the List Renter, acknowledging and agreeing to comply with the stipulations and limitations governing the use of the AER Membership Mailing List rented pursuant to this Agreement.

1. The List Renter shall rent the AER Membership Mailing List for the fee and terms stated in the invoice and the agreement.
2. The List Renter acknowledges and agrees that the AER Membership Mailing List, and any portions thereof, is the exclusive property of the list owner.
3. The List Renter shall provide the List Owner a sample of the mailing piece or e-mail content for approval prior to release of the mailing list.
4. The List Renter agrees that all names and addresses furnished are provided on a rental bases for one-time use only. The List Renter guarantees the names and addresses shall not be copied, reused, sold, electronically reproduced or used by any party except as specified in the written order to List Owner. The List Renter shall mail only the sample mailing piece which has been approved by List Owner. The List Renter or its agents shall not transfer names or information to its own customer files or re-contact names derived from the mailing list, or provide the names for another to make such contact, without prior written approval of List Owner.
5. Upon completion of each one-time mailing, the List Renter shall immediately destroy all unused mailing labels, letters, envelopes, and other typed or printed matter which contains names and addresses supplied by the List Owner.
6. The List Renter shall make a full payment for the mailing list in the amount specified in the List Owner's invoice for each order within 30 days of the date of invoice.
7. The List Renter agrees that the rental conditions described herein shall apply to any present and future rentals of the mailing list.
8. If the completed order is determined to be incorrect, List Renter must notify AER List Rental Service within 30 days after receipt of order. Otherwise, the order shall be determined correct and payment in full shall be due.
9. The List Renter understands that there is a NO RETURN POLICY on all label orders. If the List Renter has any doubts of how the order will be perceived when processed, then the AER List Rental Service must be contacted for clarification before placing the order. No refunds or credits will be made after an order has been processed.
10. All label/e-mail counts received by the List Renter from List Owner prior to completion of the actual mailing list are approximate and subject to change daily. List Owner shall not be responsible for shortages or overruns of materials based on estimates.
11. List Owner reserves the right to "seed" their lists using decoy names to protect against unauthorized use.

List Owner's liability for any damages or losses incurred by List Renter through the use of any list shall be limited to the actual cost of the mailing list rental paid by List Renter to List Owner.

## Appendix R. Hotel Accessibility Checklist

The following Hotel Accessibility Checklist was developed by a subcommittee of the Board in 1994 and supplemented responses from the membership following an article in the AER Report. Information from it will be used along with other criteria to help the Board determine whether or not a facility should be used as an international conference site.

ACCESSIBILITY CRITERIA		
Does hotel entrance have a ramped or level area for wheelchair users?		
Is there an availability of sidewalks around the hotel?		
Is the area around the hotel generally safe especially during the daytime?		
Is there a discernible edge between the sidewalk and street/driveway in front of the hotel?		
Is there an open atrium in the hotel which would present difficulty in negotiating other parts of the hotel?		
Are areas within the hotel easy to locate (e.g. elevators, restaurants, restrooms) via a clearly defined path?		
Are any stairs in lobby area well delineated?		
Do the stairs have railings?		
Is there adequate lighting of the stairs?		
Is there contrast on the risers of the stairs?		
Do different elevators travel to different floors of the hotel?		
Are elevators accessible to wheelchair users?		
Do elevators have braille and large print raised signage inside and on the door jamb at each floor?		
Are there several restaurant choices of different price ranges within the hotel?		
Are all hotel restaurants accessible to wheelchair users?		
Does hotel provide an adequate number of restaurant menus, room service menus, and guest services directories in braille?		
Does hotel provide maps of their facility in braille and large print?		
Are hotel maps placed at a level where they can be easily read by wheelchair users provided print maps are not available.		
Are there objects that protrude out of the walls at body level (e.g. planters, fire extinguishers, etc.) which cannot be moved?		
Are there any head-high obstructions in walking areas that cannot be detected by a cane?		
Are there assistive listening devices and a TDD available?		
Does hotel have fire alarms that flash?		
Are restroom doors labeled in braille and large print raised letters at the proper height?		
Are restrooms in the meeting room level wheelchair accessible?		
Is there a "relief area" for dog guides?		

Can "relief are" be easily accessible?		
Are acoustics in meeting rooms acceptable?		
Are acoustics in the lobby areas acceptable?		
Is there any ambient noise within the hotel (e.g. waterfalls or fountains) which might hinder the mobility of a blind traveler?		
Is lighting adequate in hotel hallways?		
Is lighting adequate in all meeting rooms?		
Do public and guestroom phones have amplification for the hearing impaired?		
Are all meeting rooms on the same level?		
Is there some semblance of consistency in the location of meeting rooms if they are not all on the same level?		
Are meeting rooms accessible by elevators, stairs and escalators?		
Are meeting rooms names labeled in braille, large print or raised letters?		
Are meeting rooms wheelchair accessible?		
Are guestroom doors wheelchair accessible?		
Are bathroom doors in guestrooms wheelchairs accessible?		
Are numbers for guestrooms beside the door on the latchside (ADA requirement for new and renovated hotels)?		
Are numbers on guestroom doors in braille, raised or indented for identification?		
Are guestrooms keys crafted or marked in a way to make them easy to use?		
Are amenity containers in the guestroom marked in some way for easy identification?		
Is closed captioned TV decoding equipment provided for televisions in guestrooms?		
Is the hotel phone message system in guestrooms accessible?		
Are vending and ice machines marked with braille instructions?		
Are the hotel exits marked in Braille?		
Is the pool/gym marked in Braille and raised characters?		
Does the hotel provide signature guides for blind persons to use at the registration desk and in the hotel restaurants?		
Is hotel willing to have staff attend a training session on blindness prior to the conference?		
Is hotel willing to put together a brochure (in print and braille) describing their services for persons with disabilities to be distributed to conference attendees at registration?		
Are there restaurants & entertainment within walking distances of the hotel?		
Are areas close to the hotel easily accessible?		
Is airport transportation to and from hotel wheelchair accessible?		

## Appendix S. AER Speaker Agreement

### AER Speaker Agreement

Presenter Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree to present the following program:

Name of Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

2. I agree to comply with all program-related deadlines provided to me by AER, including but not limited to deadlines for handouts, A/V requests, etc.
3. I agree to notify AER immediately in the event that an emergency should prevent me from meeting my obligation to present at the conference.
4. I grant AER a royalty-free license to use, reproduce and distribute my presentation (including all handouts and PowerPoint presentations) in any way in the future, with appropriate attribution to me. I understand that this license does not change the fact that I retain copyright ownership of my presentation and does not prohibit me from using my presentation in any way or from allowing others to use it.
5. To the best of my knowledge, my presentation does not violate any proprietary or personal rights of others (including any copyright, trademark and privacy rights), is factually accurate, and contains nothing defamatory or otherwise unlawful. I have the full authority to enter into this agreement and have obtained all necessary permissions or licenses from any individuals or organizations whose material is included or used in my presentation.
6. I authorize AER to use my name, likeness, photograph, and biographical data in connection with the use and promotion of the program.
7. I will be responsible for all travel arrangements and expenses that I incur. I understand that I will not receive any royalties, honoraria, reimbursement of expenses, or other compensation from AER in connection with the program or the rights granted above.
8. I understand that any additional equipment and/or materials (audio visual, Wi-Fi, special room set ups, hand-outs, i.e.) requested by me after \_\_\_\_\_ (date), will be my responsibility and will be arranged directly with the hotel or appropriate vendor.
9. I support AER's efforts of "Going Green" as much as possible during our conferences.

Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ I provide consent for AER to record my presentation in audio and/or visual form. I understand that AER will be the sole copyright owner of the recording and can distribute and sell it, along with any supporting materials. This recording will be used by AER for continuing education purposes following the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (conference name).

\_\_\_\_\_ I do **not** provide consent for AER to record my presentation in audio and/or visual form.

By signing this Presenter Agreement, I understand and agree to the above terms and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presenter Printed Name Date

Rec'd by AER: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix T. Antitrust Compliance Form

### Antitrust Compliance

AER chapters based in the U.S. and divisions are subject to antitrust laws. To avoid violations of these state and federal laws, AER is providing some guidelines to U.S. chapters and divisions.

In 1890, the U.S. Congress passed the Sherman Act, defined as a “comprehensive charter of economic liberty aimed at preserving free and unfettered competition as the rule of trade.” In 1914, Congress passed the Federal Trade Commission Act and the Clayton Act. All three of these antitrust laws are used by the courts today. Please review the laws on the [Federal Trade Commission’s Website](#).

How do these laws impact AER? Most or all of our members are considered “competitors” according to association law, either directly or through the organizations they work for. Therefore, association members are not allowed to discuss certain subjects when meeting, either in person or on conference calls. These include meetings and sessions at AER conferences, chapter and division board meetings, and any other instance when a group of members convene to hold discussions.

The subjects which members may not discuss include:

- Prices, fees or rates, or features that can impact (raise, lower or stabilize) prices.
- Elements of price, such as discounts, costs, salaries, terms and conditions of sale, warranties, or profit margins. *Note that a price-fixing violation may be inferred from price-related discussions followed by parallel decisions on pricing by association members — even in the absence of an oral or written agreement.*
- Agreeing with competitors as to uniform terms of sale, warranties or contract provisions.
- Exchanging data concerning fees, prices, production, sales, bids, costs, salaries, customer credit, or other business practices unless the exchange is made pursuant to a well-considered plan that has been approved by AER’s legal counsel.
- Agreeing with competitors to divide up customers, markets or territories.
- Agreeing with competitors not to deal with certain suppliers or others.
- Trying to prevent a supplier from selling to your competitor(s).
- Agreeing to any association membership restrictions, standard-setting, certification, accreditation, or self-regulation programs without the restrictions or programs having been approved by AER’s legal counsel.

Meeting leaders should ensure that AER meetings have agendas that are circulated in advance and that minutes of all meetings properly reflect the actions taken at the meeting. Meeting minutes should be brief and only include a short description of the topic discussed and the decisions made; opinions and comments should never be included in minutes. Identifying people or organizations by name in a negative way can also have an adverse impact on AER. Slander and defamation are serious offenses.

If you feel that improper subjects are being discussed, leave the meeting immediately and ask that it be noted on official documents that you are leaving the meeting and why. Please also contact an AER staff member immediately, so AER can take remedial action.

Ensure that if questions arise about the legal aspects of AER's activities or your individual responsibilities under the antitrust laws, seek advice from your own counsel or from the staff or counsel of AER.

AER cannot stress enough how seriously state and federal enforcement officials treat instances that could be in violation of antitrust laws. They harbor no distinction between small or large organizations. According to the laws, individual members, as well as AER's leaders can be prosecuted for this.

We will be asking the board of directors to approve instituting an antitrust compliance policy, and additional training will be provided in a future AER LIFT Webinar.

Please contact AER if you have any questions. Thank you.