

DC-MD AER POLICY MANUAL

This document records the current policies and procedures used by the DC-MD AER Chapter. The symbol "[BL]" indicates the policy comes from the bylaws, and can be changed only with an amendment voted on by the membership -- all other policies can be changed by the Board.

This Policy Manual was updated February 2023.

MEMBERS

All members of AER residing or working in DC-MD are eligible to be members of the DC-MD AER Chapter.

BOARD

The Board consists of a President, Past President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and 6 Members at Large [BL], each serving a two-year term, starting at the annual conference.

Board meetings:

The Board shall meet at each annual meeting and shall hold at least two additional meetings during each calendar year. A board meeting may be called by the President or by three other members of the Board. The Board may participate in meetings by means of telephone conferencing or electronic communications.

Officers:

Qualifications: President and president-elect are limited to members of the Chapter with previous experience on the Board of Directors. Any individual member of the Chapter at large is eligible to serve as secretary or treasurer. Any officer candidate must be current with annual dues. No two offices may be held concurrently by the same person.

Terms of officers:

The Secretary and the Treasurer may be re-elected to successive terms of office, but no other officer shall be re-elected to the same office until at least one year has passed following the date of expiration of that officer's term. The term of each office shall commence at the close of the annual meeting.

President shall:

- plan and preside over all meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors;
- be the responsible executive officer and administer the affairs of the chapter between meetings of the Board of Directors;
- appoint committees, both standing and special, in accordance with the bylaws;
- Reach out to each committee for updates before each board meeting

President-Elect shall:

- serve as assistant to the President,
- in the absence of the President, plan and preside over meetings of the membership and of the Board of Directors
- chair the Bylaws committee.
- succeed to the presidency at the end of the term or, if the office of President becomes vacant before the end of the term, complete the unexpired term of office.

Secretary shall

- be responsible for the records of the chapter
- record the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings
- conduct routine correspondence as directed by the President and/or Board of Directors
- see that records are transmitted to the successor at the completion of his/her term of office;
- Update the DC-MD AER Policy Manual when the board changes or establishes new policies or procedures and/or the bylaws are amended;
- preside at Board meetings in the absence of the President and President-Elect.

Treasurer shall

- be the chief financial officer;
- see that regular financial statements are prepared in accordance with recognized accounting principles;
- submit a yearly financial statement to AER as required, after Board approval;
- submit an annual financial report to DC/MD AER members;
- prepare the annual budget prior to the end of December with the budget period being from January 1 through December 31;
- preside at board meetings in the absence of the President, President Elect, and Secretary.

The Treasurer may be bonded at the agreement of the Treasurer, President, and Board members.

The Board shall review and approve the budget prior to implementation.

Immediate Past-President shall

- serve as the assistant to the President;
- be an ex-officio member of all committees;
- serve as the conference committee chair;
- serve to coordinate between chapter committees and the president;
- Serve as Program Chair for the annual conference

Members at large:

In addition, a webmaster is designated to maintain the website. The webmaster does not have to be a board member but is in close contact with the Board.

COMMITTEES

The standing committees *[BL]* are as follows:

- ***Membership and Nominations*** shall develop and implement a membership recruitment and retention program for the chapter in conjunction with the AER International office and recruit candidates to fill any vacant positions on the board.
- ***Program*** shall plan and prepare, with the full assistance of the Board of Directors, for the annual chapter meeting and other events. The Past President serves as the Chair of the Program Committee.
- ***Awards*** shall establish the chapter's awards and criteria; and recruit nominations for and then select the recipients of the awards. This committee shall have at least 3 members.
- ***Mentor*** shall develop and maintain a program in which veterans in the field are teamed up with newer professionals who seek guidance from someone with more experience in the field.
- ***Media*** shall maintain an online presence for the chapter through our website and other social media platforms, including promoting chapter activities.

Other committees may be established as needed

Committee chairs/Co-chairs will be appointed by the President for a period of one year – they must be in contact with the board. Committee members and chairs must be members of the DC-MD AER chapter.

Each committee shall provide the Secretary a current list of its members, minutes of its meetings, and any proposals which it makes

At the end of a committee's term the following shall be shared with the new committee Chairperson and/or committee members: a contact list of current committee members, proposals or projects that have been discussed or worked on, as well as relevant notes or documentations of the committee's objectives.

AWARDS:

The awards are:

- ***Excellence in Direct Service in Education***
for an active professional who provides excellent direct instruction or support to children with visual impairments ages birth to 21.
- ***Excellence in Direct Service in Rehabilitation***
for an active professional who provides excellent direct rehabilitative service or support to enhance the lives of individuals with visual impairments. Accomplishments may include facilitating independence, self-advocacy, vocational and/or life goals, etc.
- ***Excellence in the Field of Blindness and Visual Impairment***
for a person or group who has made outstanding contributions to the field of blindness. Accomplishments may be in such areas as administration, advocacy, development of policy or curriculum, contributing to the body of knowledge with research or publications, lifetime contributions in education or rehabilitation, etc.
- ***Friend of the Blind and Visually Impaired Community***
to recognize contributions of an individual or a group affiliated with, but not primarily involved in, the education or rehabilitation of individuals with visual impairment. Accomplishments should include providing goods or services which help foster independence and self-worth within the blind and visually-impaired community. Examples may include a supermarket assisting in teaching a group class how to effectively shop, a community group donating white canes to an agency, an airline making an effort to hire blind personnel in customer service, etc.

Award nominations from the membership will be recruited at least ninety days prior to the annual meeting; proposed award recipients will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval at least thirty days prior to the presentation of the awards.

Award Policies:

- Nominations do not need to come from a DC-MD AER member, and the nominee and award recipients do not have to be members.
- The awards are presented at the annual chapter conference, usually during lunch. Committee members cannot nominate anyone for an award, but they can reach out to personally encourage other people to nominate.
- If someone on the committee is nominated for an award, that member can choose to either decline the nomination, or be recused from participating in selecting the recipient for that award.

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The chapter will plan a conference once a year, and as many other events as are appropriate. All conferences and events are accessible to people with disabilities.

The conference

- is usually in the Spring, scheduled to not conflict with Penn-Del or Virginia AER chapter conferences.
- is scheduled for one day every other year, and two days every other year.

COMMUNICATION

DC-MD AER has a website and a facebook page. The website is maintained by a chapter webmaster, and is linked to the national AER website.

The board or committees can send email messages to the members by one or both of the following:

- forward the message to the AER national office and ask them to send it to our members
- Send the message directly to the members (from an individual board or committee member, etc.)

MEETINGS:

An annual business meeting shall be held at a time and location determined by the President, Board of Directors, and program committee. The membership will then be notified of the time and place of the meeting. *[BL]*

The purpose of the annual business meeting shall be to communicate with the membership.

If possible, the business meeting will occur concurrently with the annual conference. The membership will be notified of this meeting at the time of the conference announcement.

ELECTIONS:

All voting members shall be eligible to vote for the offices of President, President-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board of Directors *[BL]*. The Nominations Committee will use the following procedure to select candidates for election:

- The Nominations Committee shall solicit from the membership, approximately 90 days prior to the annual chapter meeting, via mail or email, nominations for each elective office or seat on the Board of Directors.
- Before any nomination shall be considered valid, the nominee shall submit a written biography of not more than 150 words and a written statement of willingness to serve if elected. Current paid membership of the nominee and the nominator will be verified by contacting the AER office.
- In the event that at least two nominees for each elected office are not submitted by the membership, the Nominating Committee will attempt to solicit two nominees for each elected position on the election ballot.
- Approximately 30 days prior to the annual meeting, the Chapter Nominations Committee will mail, or email, each member a copy of the biographical sketch of each of the nominees, along with a ballot.
- Elections shall be held by ballot pursuant to the procedures established by the Board of Directors, either held prior to or during the annual meeting by mail or other electronic means.
- Each voting member may vote for one (1) candidate for each elective office or board seat on the ballot.
- The candidate receiving the most votes for each elective position shall become the holder of the office at the close of the annual meeting. In the event of a tie vote in the election for any office, the election shall thereupon be decided by a runoff election.

Compliance with Federal Regulations:

The DC-MD AER chapter is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code). As such, the chapter shall keep apprised of and follow any regulations required of organizations filed under Section 501 (c) 3. *[BL]*

As of 2023, this means that:

- No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, directors, officers or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of Section 501 (c) 3 purposes.
- No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.
- The chapter shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code) or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax Code).
- Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code), or shall be distributed to the Federal Government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.
However, if the named recipient is not then in existence or no longer a qualified distribute, or unwilling or unable to accept the distribution, then the assets of this organization shall be distributed to a fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated exclusively for the purposes specified in Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code).