

Membership Standards and Practices Framework

ARCA's mission is "to promote, support, and advance regional centers in achieving the intent and mandate of the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act." The organization and its Executive Director have two charges: fulfill the stated Mission under the broad policy and legislative guidance of its Board of Directors, and leading the Association to effectively define the public face of the regional center system. Success in these areas results in the preservation of local control and decision-making authority of the 21 regional centers, including the protection of this autonomy from external threats, and in working successfully with the Department, Legislature and advocacy groups to further empower the regional centers to fulfill their mission for the 400,000+ people we serve. Achievement of these mandates is only possible through collective and consistent commitments and action by all regional centers.

Henceforth, the Association will establish consistent standards for its member organizations. ARCA will support its members in pursuit of those expectations and hold each accountable to meeting them.

This work will be spearheaded by a Standards and Practices Committee, which will be a newly-created standing advisory committee comprised of seven members, including a Chair selected by ARCA's Board President in addition to three regional center Executive Directors and three Board Delegates. The Committee will recommend to ARCA's Board of Directors for its consideration standards in at least the following areas with an eye towards supporting the diverse populations served by regional centers:

1. Positive community relations;
2. Implementation of key statewide initiatives;
3. Active local political participation that advances the goals of the Association;
4. Non-adversarial appeals and dispute resolution processes;
5. Person-centered thinking and planning practices;
6. Responsiveness to those served and community partners;
7. Local board practices; and,
8. Greater consistency in purchase of service practices and patterns.

Upon request, the Standards and Practices Committee will support individual regional centers to identify sources of requested technical assistance either from consultants or other member organizations.

When prompted by significant concerns that the actions of an individual regional center present the potential for statewide implications or hampering ARCA's ability to fulfill its mission, the Committee will examine the individual situation. If appropriate, it will recommend a course of action to address and ameliorate it. Every effort will be made to identify opportunities for the individual regional center in question to again meet the standards established by the Association, including but not limited to, consultation with ARCA's Executive Director or coordinated technical assistance from other regional centers and/or consultants.

ARCA's strength comes from having all 21 of the regional centers acting in concert. However, if after a reasonable period of time following a recommendation from the Committee for correction, if an individual regional center either cannot or chooses not to meet the expectations of the Association, the Committee may recommend suspension or expulsion of the regional center from membership in the Association. During any period of suspension or non-membership, the regional center in question shall have no access to ARCA's membership benefits, which include but are not limited to, attendance at ARCA-sponsored meetings, participation in its committees, and receipt of technical assistance from the Association's Executive Director or staff. Any regional center under expulsion may apply for readmittance to the organization after a period of no less than 6 months.

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