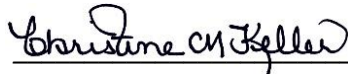


I. Ends Monitoring Report – Global Policy

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I certify that the information contained in this report is true.



Christine Keller, Executive Director & CEO

January 30, 2026

Submitted (date)

This report evaluates progress toward AIR’s Global Ends, recognizing that outcomes reflect both internal priorities and significant external constraints during the reporting period. Ends reports are provided quarterly for specific sets of policies (see BRE III and/or the [Board Operating Calendar](#)).

Global Policy Language

As a global association, AIR empowers higher education professionals to use data, information, and analytics in ways that are effective, ethical, and equitable. AIR supports data-informed decision making that amplifies student and institutional success. These must be done within AIR’s available resources and in such a manner that the value to higher education is worth the investment of those resources.

Operational Vision of Success (contextual information)

AIR’s operational vision reflects its role at the intersection of people and data, building the individual and institutional capacity to use data, information, and analytics in ways that support effective decision-making and meaningful impact in higher education.

In pursuing the Ends, AIR designs programs, services, and resources to serve three primary constituencies:

- 1. Higher education professionals, especially AIR members, who produce, analyze, and use data.*
- 2. Higher education institutions, which require sustained capacity to use data for improvement and accountability*
- 3. The broader higher education community, including systems, postsecondary-related organizations, and policymakers, through advocacy and partnerships that promote informed data use.*

While AIR’s historical focus emphasized individual professional development, recent years have expanded this scope to include institutional capacity-building and engagement. This broader orientation reflects both evolving needs within higher education and AIR’s responsibility to steward its resources toward the greatest collective value.

During 2025, significant external pressures—including the loss of a long-standing federal training subcontract, political and regulatory volatility, and increasing financial and capacity constraints across

higher education—shaped AIR’s operating environment. These conditions affected participation, revenue, and engagement patterns while reinforcing the need for AIR to respond with practical resources, shared expertise, and professional education that support effective data use and decision-making across our constituent groups.

2025 Interpretation

For 2025, the Executive Office interpreted the Global Ends through focused emphasis on a limited number of operational priorities intended to advance AIR’s sustainability, relevance, and capacity to serve the higher education community during a period of significant external constraint.

These priorities did not encompass all AIR programs, services, or activities, many of which remain essential to the association’s mission and financial viability. Rather, they represent areas of concentrated focus for the year and reflect an integrated approach to advancing the full set of Ends policies, which are monitored and reported separately on a quarterly basis.

1. Grow, retain, and engage individual and organizational members, with particular attention to evolving participation patterns and institutional constraints.
2. Expand the delivery of consulting services and technical assistance to institutions, building institutional capacity for effective data use.
3. Strengthen the use of data and technology to support AIR operations, programming, and planning.

Consistent with the Global Ends, allocation of time, resources, and financial investment across these priorities was guided by the policy that activities must be undertaken within AIR’s available resources and deliver value to higher education commensurate with that investment. In applying this policy, the Executive Office considered the following factors:

- The sustainability and diversity of revenue streams and audience reach.
- Grant and contract commitments.
- Organizational capacity, expertise, and infrastructure requirements.
- The anticipated value and benefit of programs, resources, and services to the AIR community.

The following success indicators were established as part of the 2025 interpretation and are intended to assess progress in the areas of focus described above. The indicators reflect outcomes and evidence associated with advancing the Ends policies during the reporting period and do not represent a comprehensive inventory of AIR activities.

2025 Interpretation Success Indicators

1. Continue to grow the numbers of organizational members, with a goal of renewing 85% of the current organization members and adding 180 new organizations for a total of 490 organization members.

The number of organizational members increased in 2025 from 369 to 433 with 183 new organizational members. The number of continuing members was 250 with a retention rate of 68%. This fell short of the overall target of 490 organizational members and an 85% retention rate.

While overall targets were not fully met, the growth in new organizational members indicates continued institutional demand for AIR engagement, while lower-than-anticipated retention highlights the need for further refinement of the organizational membership onboarding and retention strategies.

2. Gather additional information on the professional profile and needs of the individuals who are now AIR members through their organizations. The information and insights will be used to develop a more comprehensive recruitment, retention, and engagement strategy for these members.

This work started in 2025 and is ongoing. Two focus groups were conducted at the AIR Forum, and the 2025 Stakeholder survey was administered in July 2025 to gather member feedback. The results indicated a high level of satisfaction with organizational membership, while also highlighting a need for additional communication about membership processes and broader awareness of AIR programming. We are also working to develop membership dashboards, with the support of our fractional CIO, to more accurately track member activity, applications, and renewals. These ongoing efforts are intended to inform a more targeted and sustainable recruitment, retention, and engagement strategy for organizational members.

3. Continue to expand and successfully deliver consulting services, education/training, and technical assistance to institutions.

Over the past year, AIR has taken several steps to expand our consulting services. Milestones include the following:

- *Development and launch of our consulting brand in May 2025 – AIR Data & Decisions Consulting – including dedicated space on the AIR website <https://www.airweb.org/consulting>*
- *Formal announcement of consulting services at the AIR Forum 2025 and through regular communications to the AIR community.*
- *Successfully scoping and delivering of a range of consulting services, education/training and technical assistance including: 1) a data definitions project for a large public university, 2) delivery of the Foundations Workshop series to a technical college system, 3) technical assistance to support minority-serving institutions that participate in the National Student Clearinghouse Enrollment and Degree Verify Services, and 4) delivery of data governance training for group of institutions in a regional alliance.*

Collectively, these engagements supported institutional capacity for data use, compliance, and decision-making while establishing a foundation for expanded consulting services aligned with AIR's Ends.

2026 Interpretation

Building on the operational context and the 2025 interpretation described above, the Executive Office's interpretation of the Global Ends for 2026 reflects a necessary shift in emphasis in response to materially changed financial conditions following the loss of AIR's long-standing federal training subcontract.

While AIR's Ends remain unchanged, the loss of this revenue required realignment of priorities, with an increased emphasis on activities that both advance institutional capacity for effective data use and serve as the primary driver for the association's long-term financial sustainability. Achieving a balanced operating budget by 2028 is essential to AIR's continued ability to serve its members, institutions, and the higher education community.

Experience gained during 2025 reinforced the role of consulting as a direct and effective means of advancing the Ends—by building institutional capacity for data-informed decision-making—while also providing a viable path toward financial stability. Accordingly, the primary area of emphasis for 2026 is the continued expansion and maturation of AIR Data & Decisions Consulting.

To support the expansion of consulting services and continue to serve our three constituent groups, the Executive Office will focus on the following areas:

- Sustain and selectively expand core educational programming, membership engagement, and the AIR Forum, with careful attention to pricing, cost recovery, and staff capacity.
- Expand policy and advocacy efforts that elevate the voice of data professionals and provide practical guidance in response to evolving federal requirements.
- Continue to exercise careful stewardship of grant funding, technology investments, and operational contracts to ensure efficient use of limited resources.

Consistent with the Global Ends, these areas of focus—together with the interpretations and success indicators for AIR's other Ends policies—are intended to advance professional and institutional capacity for effective data use while positioning the organization to regain financial balance and long-term viability.

2026 Interpretation Success Indicators

1. **Expand AIR Data & Decisions Consulting.** This indicator reflects the central role of consulting in advancing AIR's Ends while serving as the primary driver of progress toward financial stability. The 2026 revenue target for consulting services is \$500,000 to support the expansion and sustainability of delivery capacity. Services provided will be a mix of core consulting (such as IR reviews, technical support for federal data submissions) and institutional training for teams (including the Data Literacy Institute and Foundations Workshops).
2. **Sustain Core Programs.** This indicator reflects the importance of maintaining core programs that deliver value to AIR members and the broader community while operating within realistic cost constraints. For 2026, success will be demonstrated by delivering the AIR Forum at levels that are

financially responsible and aligned with staff capacity. The specific target is to reach 1,375 AIR Forum attendees (including 1,240 paid registrations) while controlling expenses, so the event is revenue neutral.

3. **Strengthen Organizational Membership.** This indicator reflects a focused effort to improve the sustainability and value of AIR's organizational membership model, informed by lessons learned during the first two years of implementation. Success in 2026 will be demonstrated by increasing organizational membership renewal rates to 75 percent and adding at least 80 new organizational members, while remaining attentive to staff capacity.
4. **Expand Policy and Advocacy as a Community Benefit.** This indicator reflects AIR's role in supporting the informed and ethical use of data in higher education by elevating the voice of data professionals and providing practical guidance in response to evolving federal requirements. In 2026, success will be demonstrated through effective engagement of the Data Policy Advisory Panel to inform and strengthen AIR's policy and advocacy work by grounding it in practitioner experience and supporting targeted letters, comments, and guidance.