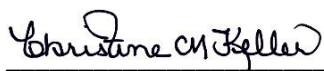


## Monitoring Report III: Treatment of Staff

This Monitoring Report was approved by the AIR Board of Directors on February 10, 2025. The entire report is for internal use only. Do not duplicate or distribute without the express written approval of the Association for Institutional Research. Copyright 2025.

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



Christine M Keller, Executive Director & CEO

1/28/2025

Date

### Global Policy Language

*With respect to the treatment of staff, the Executive Director will not cause or allow conditions that are unfair, undignified, disorganized, or unclear.*

### Interpretation

- a) AIR staff policies and processes will undergo an annual audit by a human resources (HR) expert. The HR audit report will be reviewed, and any necessary updates incorporated into the policies or processes.
- b) A majority of staff will judge the AIR work conditions to be fair, dignified, organized, and clear on the biennial staff survey administered by the Board.<sup>1</sup>

### Evidence

- a) The 2024 annual HR audit is underway by Linda Barineau of HR Solutions LLC. Linda has served as AIR's HR consultant since 2019. The documentation for the audit has been submitted by AIR. However, during the fourth quarter of 2024, Linda's review was paused so that she could focus on supporting AIR's hiring of three new staff members. (Each of the positions resulted in more than 200 applications, which took additional time for Linda to vet and screen.)

The annual HR audit includes a review of employment recordkeeping, personnel files, operational policies, practices, and processes with a focus on important areas of HR compliance (e.g., recruiting, benefits, employee relations, etc.), and general best practices.

Previous audits have provided recommendations that were subsequently implemented to strengthen AIR's HR policies and practices. For example, Linda's recommendations were helpful in the development of appropriate HR recordkeeping for AIR's transition to a fully remote workplace. An excerpt from last year's audit states, *"AIR continues to be considered a respectful and thoughtful employer and corporate citizen.*

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<sup>1</sup> The Board's biennial survey of the staff was last administered in spring of 2023 and the de-identified results were shared with the Executive Director in March of 2023. A [copy of the results](#) is linked and is also in the Board Teams account. The next survey will be in spring of 2025.

*Management of the organization is keenly focused on fostering a positive employment culture while running an efficient and effective organization."*

- b) A majority of the staff responding on the 2023 staff survey administered by the Board agreed that work conditions are mostly or always fair, dignified, organized, and clear.

#### **A. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not ... Operate without sufficient, written personnel rules.*

##### **Interpretation**

The Executive Director will ensure that personnel rules are clearly written as employment policies within an AIR Employee Handbook, and the handbook will be judged as sufficient by legal counsel or a HR expert at least every 2 years. *(See also the first interpretation for Policy VII-B. Protection of Assets)*

##### **Evidence**

The AIR Employee Handbook is reviewed each year as part of the HR audit. The Executive Director with the support of the HR consultant also monitors federal labor regulations, emerging HR practices and developments (e.g., those recommended by the Society of Human Resources Management), and considers staff needs and feedback to make periodic adjustments to the policies contained in the Employment Handbook. A more comprehensive review is being considered for 2025.

#### **A-1. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: 1) Subject staff to rules that are not clear and available*

##### **Interpretation**

- c) All employees will be aware of the Employee Handbook and its location for easy access, reference, and use.
- d) The Employee Handbook will be judged as clear by legal counsel and/or a HR expert.
- e) A majority of staff will judge the rules to be clear and available on the biennial staff survey administered by the Board.

##### **Evidence**

- a) The Employee Handbook is readily available on the staff intranet and staff Teams account. Employees are promptly notified when policies change and are required to sign an acknowledgement form that they have read and understand the changes that were made.
- b) The Employee Handbook was reviewed and judged as clear as part of the 2022-23 HR audit by AIR's HR consultant. The 2024 HR audit which is currently underway will include a review of the Employee Handbook. A more comprehensive review is being considered for 2025.

- c) All of the staff responding on the 2023 staff survey administered by the Board agreed that rules were clear and available.

**A-2. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: 2) Leave staff without an effective and unbiased method to deal with grievances*

**Interpretation**

- a) The Employee Handbook will contain complaint procedures that are judged as complete and valid by legal counsel and/or a certified HR consultant.
- b) A majority of staff will agree that there is a fair and unbiased method for dealing with grievances on the biennial staff survey administered by the Board.

**Evidence**

- a) A review of AIR's grievance process by AIR's HR consultant as part of the 2022-23 audit found, "AIR intends to provide a safe route for employees to express concerns, including the contact information for the human resource consultant." (The complaint procedures are provided in the Exhibit.)
- b) All of the staff responding on the 2023 staff survey administered by the Board agreed that there was an effective and unbiased method for dealing with grievances.

**A-3. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: 3) Subject staff to wrongful conditions, nepotism, or preferential treatment based on personal reasons*

**Interpretation**

- a) AIR's employment policies, standards of conduct, wage and salary policies, and available benefits and services will be clearly stated within the Employee Handbook. All staff members, including the Executive Director, will annually commit to abide by the policies.
- b) A majority of the staff responding on the biennial staff survey administered by the Board will agree they are not subject to wrongful conditions, nepotism, or preferential treatment.

**Evidence**

- a) All AIR staff, including the Executive Director, signed an acknowledgement in January 2025 that they had read, understood, and agreed to follow the policies in the Employment Handbook.
- b) A majority of the staff responding on the 2023 staff survey administered by the Board agreed that they are not subject to wrongful conditions, nepotism, or preferential treatment.

## **B. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: Retaliate against any staff member for non-disruptive expression of dissent.*

### **Interpretation**

- a) The policies described in the Employee Handbook will reinforce a staff member's ability (and obligation) to speak out without fear of retaliation in cases of safety violations and unlawful actions.
- b) The process for an employee to file a complaint against the Executive Director will be clearly outlined in the Employee Handbook and all staff will be aware of the process and the circumstances for its use.
- c) A majority of the staff responding on the biennial staff survey administered by the Board will agree that the Executive Director does not allow conditions in which staff are retaliated against for non-disruptive expression of dissent.

### **Evidence**

- a) The Employee Handbook includes references to an employee's ability to dissent without retaliation in cases of safety violations and unlawful actions by the Executive Director. (See Exhibit)
- b) The Employee Handbook includes multiple references to a multi-tiered complaint procedure, including specific options in the event the Executive Director is engaging in inappropriate or unlawful behavior. This multi-tiered complaint protocol reflects HR good practices, ensures that AIR staff have a reporting mechanism that does not include the Executive Director for expressing concerns, and has been judged appropriate by the HR consultant. (See Exhibit)
- c) A majority of the staff responding on the 2023 staff survey administered by the Board agreed that staff who express non-disruptive dissent are never retaliated against.

## **C. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: Allow staff to be unprepared to deal with emergency situations.*

### **Interpretation**

- a) Policies and procedures will be outlined in the Employee Handbook and shared with staff for use in emergency circumstances that affect Association operations.
- b) The management chain of command will be reviewed and discussed with all staff in the event the Executive Director/CEO is unavailable or unable to perform her duties.

### **Evidence**

- a) The emergency procedures policies (including those related to weather and cybersecurity) are clearly stated in the Employee Handbook and reflect that AIR staff are fully remote and located in many different cities and regions.

- b) All staff received and acknowledged a statement outlining the chain of command should the Executive Director/CEO be unavailable or unable to perform her duties in October of 2024. Additional information is provided in the monitoring report for *EL VI. Emergency Executive Director/CEO Succession*.

#### **D. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: Discriminate in employment opportunities or practices because of age, mental or physical disability, genetic information, ethnic or national origin, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, or any other protected classifications.*

#### **Interpretations**

- a) The process for screening applicants and selecting candidates for employment interviews will reflect non-discriminatory good practices.
- b) Any employee may request accommodation because of religious beliefs or practices, including alternative holiday schedules.
- c) All employees (including the Executive Director) will sign a statement indicating they have read and understand the AIR policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment as well as the formal complaint procedure for reporting any violation of the policies.
- d) Opportunities will be provided for employee education and training on discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment to facilitate a welcoming and respectful work environment.
- e) A majority of the staff responding on the biennial staff survey administered by the Board will agree that the Executive Director does not allow conditions that permit discrimination in employment opportunities or practices.

#### **Evidence**

- a) The AIR hiring processes continue to be refined based on current HR practices and recommendations, including sufficient standardization to mitigate discriminatory hiring practices. The current protocols include a common job application for those who reach the interview stage and the consistent use of contingency language in offer letters. Also, the HR consultant conducts the first screening of applicants to minimize the chance of personal biases impacting the selection of candidates.
- b) The Employee Handbook includes a specific policy for requesting accommodations for religious practices or beliefs as well as information within the “holiday policy” for requesting an alternative holiday schedule.
- c) In January of 2025, employees (including the Executive Director) affirmed they had read and understood the AIR policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment as well as the formal complaint procedure for reporting any violation of the policies. The complaint procedure provides specific options in the event the Executive Director is engaging in discriminatory behavior. These specific policies were described in detail during the January 16, 2025 staff meeting.

- d) All staff have access to training resources on how to avoid discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment as part of AIR's subscription to LinkedIn Learning and the courses available through our Employee Assistance Program. Required virtual training on LinkedIn Learning for staff during 2024 included courses on communicating about culturally sensitive topics, talking about race at work, and how to be more inclusive. Professional development courses for 2025 in similar areas are currently being compiled and reviewed.
- e) A majority of the staff responding on the 2023 staff survey administered by the Board agreed that the Executive Director never allows conditions that permit discrimination in employment opportunities or practices.

### **E. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: Allow inappropriate access to personnel records.*

#### **Interpretation**

Personnel files will be electronically stored using a secure platform or physically stored in a locked cabinet in a secure location. Access to either type of records will be limited to AIR staff who have a legitimate business interest and to the HR consultant while she is conducting the annual HR audit.

#### **Evidence**

Beginning in 2022, personnel records including hiring documentation and compliance items are electronically stored within Employee Navigator – a secure, online platform that was already being used by AIR to track annual leave and benefits information. While all employees have access to their own information, only three individuals have administrative access to all employee records – the Executive Director, the Operations Coordinator/Executive Assistant, and the Senior Director of Finance. As with other AIR “software as a service” platforms, Employee Navigator data are stored in secure locations, with multiple redundancies, monitoring, and backup/restoration available.

Remaining physical personnel files are stored in a fire-proof, locked cabinet/safe in AIR's locked storage unit in Tallahassee. Only the Operations Coordinator/Executive Assistant and the Executive Director have keys to the cabinet.

## EXHIBIT

### EXCERPTS FROM AIR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK KEY POLICIES & COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

A full copy of the [AIR Employee Handbook](#) is available in the Board Team's account. The handbook was last updated in November 2024.

#### **APPENDIX B:** **The Association for Institutional Research Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Policy**

It is the intent of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the Association, and the purpose of this policy is to support the Association's goal of legal compliance. The commitment of all employees is necessary to achieve compliance with laws and regulations.

If any employee reasonably believes that a policy, practice, or activity of AIR or of another individual or entity with whom AIR has a business relationship is in violation of law or regulation, that employee must file a report, in writing, to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is not immediately available, the report should be filed with the Deputy Director. If the employee wishes to file a complaint regarding the Executive Director, the employee may alternately file a report, in writing, with the Deputy Director, the Chair of the Board of Directors, or the Association's human resources consultant (contact information listed in Appendix F). A report should be submitted as soon as the employee becomes aware of a situation covered by this policy.

AIR will not retaliate against an employee who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint about a policy, practice, or activity of AIR, or of another individual or entity with whom AIR has a business relationship, based on a reasonable belief that the policy, practice, or activity is in violation of law or regulation. An employee is protected from retaliation only if the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice is brought to the attention of the Executive Director (or the Deputy Director, the Chair of the Board of Directors, or the Association's human resources consultant, if relevant) and if the Executive Director (or the Deputy Director, the Chair of the Board of Directors, or the Association's human resources consultant, if relevant) is provided with reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged violation of law or regulation.

If an employee is aware of a policy, practice, or activity that violated law or regulation and does not inform the Executive Director (or the Deputy Director, the Chair of the Board of Directors, or the Association's human resources consultant, if relevant) of the situation, the employee may be considered complicit in the unlawful policy, practice, or activity.

#### **APPENDIX C:** **The Association for Institutional Research Definitions of Discrimination in the Workplace and Complaint Procedure**

##### **Definition**

Discrimination is an action in favor of or against an individual based on a group, category, or class to which the individual belongs, rather than on individual merit.



It is illegal for an employer to treat a person unequally based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or military or veteran status. (see *Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.*)

In addition, the AIR Constitution and Bylaws and AIR policies prohibit discrimination in employment opportunities or practices because sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, transgender, marital status, pregnancy, ancestry, medical condition, or any other state or federal protected classifications not listed.

### **Complaint Procedure**

If an employee believes that discrimination is experienced in violation of AIR policies, the situation may be addressed directly and immediately to the person engaging in the alleged inappropriate behavior (Respondent), if possible. If the inappropriate behavior does not cease, or if the employee is unable to address the Respondent, or is uncomfortable doing so, the incident should be reported to the employee's supervisor.

If the employee's supervisor is in any way involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the supervisor, the employee should report the conduct to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the Executive Director, the employee should notify the Deputy Director. If both the Executive Director and the Deputy Director are involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with them, or the employee (or the employee's supervisor) should notify the Association's human resources consultant (contact information listed in Appendix F).

Any employee who witnesses or becomes aware of possible discrimination involving any employee should promptly notify the Executive Director (or the Deputy Director or the Association's human resources consultant, if relevant).

### **Consequences**

Employees who violate this policy are subject to appropriate discipline. If an investigation results in a finding that this policy has been violated, the mandatory minimum discipline is a written reprimand. The discipline for very serious or repeat violations is termination of employment. Persons who violate this policy may also be subject to civil damages or criminal penalties.

All reported allegations of discrimination will be handled in a timely and discreet manner. AIR will not retaliate against employees who file complaints of discrimination.

### **Training**

To ensure that AIR's employees remain educated about their obligations under this policy, AIR will require all employees to periodically receive training regarding our zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment at work.

## **APPENDIX D:**

### **The Association for Institutional Research**

#### **Definition of Harassment in the Workplace and Complaint Procedure**

##### **Definition**

Harassment is a form of employment discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. In addition, the AIR Constitution and Bylaws prohibit discrimination in employment opportunities or practices because of genetic information, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender, marital status, pregnancy, and veteran or military status.

Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

Anti-discrimination laws also prohibit harassment against individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws; or opposing employment practices that they reasonably believe discriminate against individuals, in violation of these laws.

Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) typically do not rise to the level of illegality. To be unlawful, the conduct must create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance.

##### **Complaint Procedure**

If an employee believes that harassment is experienced in violation of AIR policies, the situation may be addressed directly and immediately to the person engaging in the alleged inappropriate behavior (Respondent), if possible. If the inappropriate behavior does not cease, or if the employee is unable to address the Respondent, or is uncomfortable doing so, the incident should be reported to the employee's supervisor.

If the employee's supervisor is in any way involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the supervisor, the employee should report the conduct to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the Executive Director, the employee should notify the Deputy Director. If both the Executive Director and the Deputy Director are involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with them, or the employee (or the employee's supervisor) should notify the Association's human resources consultant (contact information listed in Appendix F).

Any employee who witnesses or becomes aware of possible discrimination involving any employee should promptly notify the Executive Director (or the Deputy Director or the Association's human resources consultant, if relevant).

### **Consequences**

If an investigation finds that an employee violated this policy, the mandatory minimum discipline is a written reprimand. The discipline for repeat violations may be termination of employment. Persons who violate this policy may also be subject to civil damages or criminal penalties.

All reported allegations of sexual harassment will be handled in a timely and discreet manner. AIR will not retaliate against employees who file a complaint of discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment.

### **Training**

To ensure that AIR's employees remain educated about their obligations under this policy, AIR will require all employees to periodically receive training regarding our zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment at work.

## **APPENDIX E:**

### **The Association for Institutional Research**

#### **Definitions of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Complaint Procedure**

##### **Definition**

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is illegal under federal, state, and local laws.

For the purposes of this policy, "sexual harassment" is defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines which state, "sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature." Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex, including the person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy. that explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognizes 2 types of sexual harassment – quid pro quo and a hostile work environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors.

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Both the victim and the harasser may be any sex, and the victim and harasser may be the same sex or a different sex.
- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
- Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim.
- The harasser's conduct must be unwelcomed.

##### **Examples of Prohibited Conduct**

Sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct. Specific examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as rape, sexual battery, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults, and the intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body, or poking another employee's body.

- Unwelcome sexual advances, proposition, or other sexual comments, such as sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality, sexual orientation, or sexual experience.
- Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment to an employee for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward.
- Subjecting, or threats of subjecting, an employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct or intentionally making performance of the employee's job more difficult because of that employee's sex.
- Sexual or discriminatory display or publications anywhere in the workplace by employees.
- Retaliation for sexual harassment complaints.

### **Complaint Procedure**

If an employee believes that sexual harassment or unwelcome sexual attention is experienced in violation of AIR policies, the situation may be addressed directly and immediately to the person engaging in the alleged inappropriate behavior (Respondent), if possible. If the inappropriate behavior does not cease, or if the employee is unable to address the Respondent, or is uncomfortable doing so, the incident should be reported to the employee's supervisor.

If the employee's supervisor is in any way involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the supervisor, the employee should report the conduct to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the Executive Director, the employee should notify the Deputy Director. If both the Executive Director and the Deputy Director are involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with them, or the employee (or the employee's supervisor) should notify the Association's human resources consultant (contact information listed in Appendix F).

Any employee who feels harassed should report the violation of this policy so that it can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, can be addressed under this policy. Any employee who witnesses or becomes aware of possible sexual harassment involving any employee should promptly notify the Executive Director (or the Deputy Director or the Association's human resources consultant, if relevant). AIR takes complaints of sexual harassment very seriously. As a result, all complaints of sexual harassment made pursuant to this policy will be thoroughly and promptly investigated.

During any such investigation, AIR will take a "need to know approach" to ensure appropriate measures to maintain people's confidentiality to the extent possible. Although it may be necessary to divulge some information to ensure a fair investigation, AIR will limit the sharing of information.

### **Consequences**

If an investigation finds that an employee violated this policy, the mandatory minimum discipline is a written reprimand. The discipline for repeat violations may be termination of employment. Persons who violate this policy may also be subject to civil damages or criminal penalties.

All reported allegations of sexual harassment will be handled in a timely and discreet manner. AIR will not retaliate against employees who file a complaint of discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment.

### **Training**

To ensure that AIR's employees remain educated about their obligations under this policy, AIR will require all employees to periodically receive training regarding our zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment at work.