Monitoring Report IV: Treatment of Consumers

The information and data contained in this report covers the period of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 unless otherwise noted. Consumers encompass all the individuals who interact with AIR and access its information, products or services. AIR members are also consumers and the distinctive interactions with individuals who are members are covered in Executive Limitations Policy II.

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

Christine M Keller, Executive Director & CEO

September 30, 2020

Global Policy Language

With respect to interactions with consumers or those applying to be consumers, the Executive Director will not cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, undignified, or unnecessarily intrusive.

(Note: Interpretation 1 and Evidence 1 are also part of the Treatment of Members monitoring report for an identical Global policy statement.)

Interpretation 1
AIR will establish and communicate expectations for professional behavior and mutual respect to provide safe and dignified conditions for Association activities and events for all participants. The expectations will include the consequences of violations as appropriate.

Evidence 1
Foundational to AIR’s efforts to provide consumers with safe and dignified experiences and activities is AIR’s Statement on Racial Injustice, which commits the Association to “ensuring safe experiences for our community” and “encourage[s] and support the honest and respectful exchange of ideas and perspectives.”

AIR also follows the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) guidance for creating enforceable conduct guidelines for events and reserving the right to remove any violators as part of association best practices to avoid legal liability, and to better ensure positive experiences for consumers.

- Agreement to a Code of Conduct was included as part of the registration process for the 2020 Forum in New Orleans and was adapted for the 2020 Forum Virtual. No violations were reported to AIR staff.
- To participate in the AIR Hub online community, users must agree to the Community Rules and Etiquette. No instances of inappropriate posts have been reported to or observed by AIR staff.
Interpretation 2
The interpretations and evidence for Policies A to F reasonably demonstrate that consumers are not subjected to conditions, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, undignified, or unnecessarily intrusive.

Evidence 2
Evidence is provided within Policies A to F later in this report.

A. Policy Language
The Executive Director will not: Elicit information for which there is no clear necessity.

(Note: This interpretation and data are also part of the Treatment of Members monitoring report for an identical policy - EL II-C.)

Interpretation 1
AIR will comply with the requirements of the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regarding information that is requested from users, including members.

Evidence 1
In 2017-18, AIR reviewed and updated its data gathering protocols to comply with GDPR and to be transparent and clear about how an individual’s personal data is used by the Association. The AIR privacy policy outlines protocols for the data requested, its use, and how/when it may be shared. The privacy policy is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. For example, the policy was last updated on April 29, 2020, and is currently under review as part of the implementation of a new email marketing system.

Interpretation 2
AIR will have guidelines for information requests sent to consumers, including the use of targeted selection criteria, frequency of inquiries, and the potential value of the information collected for Association operations, the members, and the field.

Evidence 2
The established practice of carefully monitoring the number of survey requests sent to individuals members helps to strike an appropriate balance among the legitimate need to collect information for the benefit of the Association, members, and the field with an awareness of the limited time and resources of AIR members.

AIR strives to limit the number of research surveys sent to an individual member to no more than four per year, except under special circumstances. No members received more than four requests during the reporting period.
B. Policy Language

*The Executive Director will not: Use methods of collecting, reviewing, transmitting, or storing consumer information that fails to protect against improper access to the material elicited.*

(Note: This interpretation and data are also part of the Treatment of Members monitoring report for an identical policy - EL II-D.)

**Interpretation 1**

AIR will meet the requirements of the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for the collection, protection, and storing of personal information from individuals.

**Evidence 1**

Although only a small number of EU citizens are AIR consumers, AIR maintains processes and protocols that are consistent with GDPR guidelines, including a detailed [privacy policy](#) on how personal information is collected, stored, and used. Compliance with GDPR requirements is also built into the new association management system and provides another layer of assurance that AIR will remain current on changes or additions to regulations.

**Interpretation 2**

a) AIR will maintain and use a bank-operated direct processing service for orders sent by mail.

b) There will be no lapse of certificates assuring that AIR servers use HTTPS security for electronic processing of financial transactions.

c) AIR will utilize tokenization for all credit card transactions, limiting the use and local storage of actual credit card information.

d) AIR staff will be trained on the prohibition of electronically saving, storing, or emailing social security or credit card numbers.

**Evidence 2**

a) AIR had a bank-operated post office box dedicated to mail orders and payments throughout the reporting period with no gaps.

b) No incidents of expired security certificates that protect servers performing financial transactions were reported.

c) AIR used tokenization for electronic storage of credit card information on AIR servers without any gaps. AIR handles members’ credit card information during the purchasing process through the e-commerce system. (Credit card information is no longer taken over the phone or by email.)

d) The appropriate process for handling credit card information is documented, reviewed at least annually, and distributed to staff.

Note: Social security numbers are only collected from individuals who receive payments for services rendered to AIR. A typical consumer does not receive payment from AIR that requires completing W-9 or similar documents.
unless the member is also an AIR contractor. The protection of contractor personal information, including social security numbers, is monitored under policy EL II - Treatment of Staff.

**Interpretation 3**
Directory information will be appropriately protected and stored using technological tools and established organization protocols, including the following:

a) Directory lists will not be publicly available on the AIR website; access requires a login and password, in conjunction with an active membership.

b) Directory lists will not be sold or provided by AIR to commercial entities.

**Evidence 3**
a) No breaches of consumer information occurred during the reporting period and no reports of consumer data being used inappropriately were made.

b) No directory information was sold or provided to a commercial entity.

**C. Policy Language**

*The Executive Director will not: Fail to provide access to information, products, or services through appropriate accommodations for consumers with disabilities.*

**Interpretation 1**
AIR will select in-person venues that meet ADA requirements. The registration process and follow-up emails for in-person events include opportunities for attendees to voluntarily describe and request accommodations for special needs covered by ADA.

**Evidence 1**
- Hotel and meeting space contracts signed during the reporting period included commitments to comply with ADA requirements.
- No requests were received for accommodations related to IPEDS workshops through February 2020. After March 2020, in-person events – including IPEDS workshops – were cancelled due to gathering and travel restrictions and safety concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in-person events including the NCES Data Institute, the IPEDS educators meeting, and the Forum were moved to a virtual format and are covered in Interpretation 2.

**Interpretation 2**
AIR will plan and deliver virtual events that meet ADA requirements. The registration process and follow-up emails include opportunities for attendees to voluntarily describe and request accommodations for special needs covered by ADA.
Evidence 2

- The Forum Virtual included closed captioning for live-streamed sessions, simulated live sessions (recorded sessions with live Q&A), and on-demands session. Scripts or supporting materials were provided for most sessions. One ADA request was made for an interpreter as part of the Forum Virtual, but was withdrawn.

- Scripts were provided as part of the virtual NCES Data Institute and IPEDS educators meetings. No requests were made for accommodations for either event.

Interpretation 3

The AIR website will use the WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 as a benchmark for accessibility.

Evidence 3

The redesigned AIR website that launched in February 2019 was WCAG 2.0 compliant per AIR’s contract with Americaneagle.com. Those standards continue to be the benchmark for website updates and maintenance.

Interpretation 4

AIR’s educational content will provide alternative access options for consumers with disabilities.

Evidence 4

AIR’s educational content meets basic levels of accessibility, and AIR staff offer alternative options as requested or needed. In addition, the development and production of new content are attentive to more sophisticated tools and proactive approaches to accessibility for a wider array of consumers.

D. Policy Language

The Executive Director will not: Allow consumers to be unaware of what may be expected and what may not be expected from services.

Interpretation

A clear understanding of expectations is important for consumers to make informed decisions about participation or purchase, including ready access to cancellation policies. The interpretation focuses on services in which AIR invests a significant amount of time or financial resources and include high levels of interaction with consumers.

a) Education and training opportunities will have webpages that describe the content to be delivered as well as any costs, participation requirements, and/or timelines.

b) Forum sponsors will be provided with information outlining timelines, contacts, and the sponsorship benefits available for specific investments.

c) All activities that require fees in addition to registration fees will be noted on the activity website.

d) At least one webpage describing the benefits and costs of AIR membership will be available for current and prospective members.
Evidence

a) Webpages outline expectations for education and training opportunities including costs, participation requirements, timelines, and cancellation policies.

*Landing page for all professional development and training*
https://www.airweb.org/collaborate-learn/professional-development-training

*IPEDS Training*
https://www.airweb.org/collaborate-learn/ipeds-training

*Holistic Approach to Institutional Research course information*
https://www.airweb.org/collaborate-learn/professional-development-training/courses-workshops/a-holistic-approach-to-institutional-research

b) Sponsor information and resources were emailed to all potential sponsors as well as included on the website for the 2020 Forum planned for New Orleans. After the in-person event was cancelled, all sponsors were contacted and offered alternative packages for the Forum Virtual or provided a refund.

c) Registration and fees are included on activity and product websites as indicated in the pages listed in (a) above. Registration and fees information can also be found within individual promotional emails and as a part of registration and commerce processes. Consumers must agree to the relevant cancellation policy before purchasing a product or registering for an event.

d) Descriptions of the benefits of AIR membership are easily accessible from the AIR homepage.

https://www.airweb.org/about-air/membership/join-renew
https://www.airweb.org/about-air/membership

E. Policy Language

*The Executive Director will not: Leave consumers uninformed of this [Treatment of Consumers] policy, or without a way to be heard for persons who believe they have not been accorded a reasonable interpretation of their protections under this policy.*

Interpretation

A webpage describing the Treatment of Consumers Policy will be available from a link in the AIR website footer and will provide the Association’s email address, physical address, email address, and phone number for consumers to contact the executive director with any concerns.

Evidence

AIR website footer links to the Treatment of Consumers Policy - https://www.airweb.org/treatment-of-consumers
F. Policy Language

The Executive Director will not: Discriminate in opportunities, activities, 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.

Interpretation 1

AIR will establish and communicate expectations for professional behavior and mutual respect to provide not only safe and dignified conditions for Association activities and events (Global Policy), but also an inclusive environment that prompts full participation and welcomes diverse perspectives.

Evidence 1

Foundational to AIR’s efforts to provide consumers with welcoming and inclusive experiences is AIR’s Statement on Racial Injustice, which commits the Association and its staff to “providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for association events and activities and ensuring safe experiences for our community ... we encourage and support the honest and respectful exchange of ideas and perspectives.”

- Agreement to a Code of Conduct was included as part of the registration process for the 2020 Forum Virtual. The Code expressly prohibits – “Any behavior that discriminates against a group or class of people or an individual.” No violations were reported to staff.

- To participate in the AIR Hub online community, users must agree to the Community Rules and Etiquette, which states – “We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment.” No instances of inappropriate posts or interactions have been reported or observed by AIR staff.

- The Executive Director regularly communicates with staff the necessity of providing consumers with opportunities, activities, and practices that do not unfairly discriminate based on protected classifications. Further the expectation is for all staff (including the executive director) to proactively create conditions that cultivate an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment for consumers.

Interpretation 2

AIR will prioritize diversity in professional backgrounds, institutional affiliations, personal characteristics, and perspectives when considering the composition of Executive Office advisory groups and the selection of instructors, educators, facilitators, and speakers for courses and events.

Evidence 2

AIR staff make a concerted effort to include a range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives in events and educational content. For example, Forum keynote speakers over the past four years have represented a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. In addition, a scan of the volunteer members of Executive Office advisory groups in this month’s incidental report shows a range of institutional affiliations and types.

AIR Monitoring Report: Treatment of Consumers