

Membership Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to expand on the bylaws of the Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies' (hereafter referred to as ARAISA) in order to establish clear scope and regulation of membership. This policy shall serve to inform ARAISA Members, Board of Directors, Membership Committee, and Staff.

In compliance with ARAISA bylaws, this policy is approved by the Board of Directors, and will be reviewed no less than every two (2) years.

DEFINITIONS

Member is defined as any organization that has met the criteria for membership as outlined in ARAISA's By-Law No. 2 and this policy; has been approved by the Board of Directors and confirmed by ordinary resolution of the existing Full Members at an Annual General Meeting; and is in good standing, having paid fees in full for the membership year.

Membership Committee refers to a standing committee of ARAISA comprised of member representatives and ARAISA staff. The Membership Committee reviews applications for membership and prepares recommendations for the Board of Directors and provides guidance and oversight to the development of policies, procedures and strategy that supports the effective recruitment, retention, and engagement of the ARAISA membership.

ARAISA, Corporation and Association are used interchangeably to refer to the collective body of members of the Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies.

1. MEMBERSHIP

ARAISA has two (2) classes of members, namely Full Members and Associate Members, as stated in Section 2 of the ARAISA's By-Law No. 2.

Membership shall be available to "persons" interested in furthering ARAISA's purposes and who have applied for and been accepted as either Full or Associate Members. In the interpretation of this policy, "persons" means entities that are incorporated not-for-profit organizations.

2. MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

A Full Member organization must:

- be an incorporated not-for-profit organization in the Atlantic region
- deliver settlement and integration services for all immigrants and refugees as their prime mandate
- have been established for at least one year
- endorse and actively support ARAISA's mission and objectives
- receive government funding for settlement services delivery
- be governed by a volunteer Board of Directors

An Associate Member organization must:

- be an incorporated not-for-profit organization in the Atlantic region
- fulfill ONE of the following conditions:
 - deliver settlement and integration services to immigrants and refugees OR
 - be an umbrella group for immigrant settlement serving agencies OR
 - be a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP/RIF) which works to serve/address the needs of immigrants in their communities
- have been established for at least one year
- endorse and actively support ARAISA's mission and objectives
- receive government funding to support the settlement and integration of newcomers.

3. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

Organizations wishing to apply for membership must complete the online application form. Applications will be reviewed by the Membership Committee against the criteria outlined above. The Membership Committee will then make recommendations to the Board of Directors, who will either approve or reject the applications by passing resolutions. If the application is rejected by the Board of Directors, the Membership Committee will provide clear justification in writing to the rejected applicant.

All approved applicants are informed of their conditional status as a "member to be ratified" and listed as such on the ARAISA website and relevant communications. Full Members to be ratified cannot exercise voting rights until confirmation at an Annual General Meeting. Membership benefits begin upon approval by the Board of Directors and payment of fees due, as per Section 11 below.

New members approved by the Board will undergo an on-boarding process by ARAISA staff and will be informed of how to pay membership fees.

4. MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

ARAISA's vision is that member organizations are more effective as a result of its initiatives to support the sector and its contributions to regional and national forums. ARAISA engages with and supports its members to enhance their capacities to respond to settlement and integration needs by providing professional development opportunities, facilitating networking and information and knowledge sharing, convening key stakeholders, amplifying member's voices on a regional and national level, and helping to inform policy and program development.

Membership benefits shall extend to all staff of Full Member organizations or, in the case of Associate Member organizations, staff who engage in the work related to supporting the settlement and integration of newcomers.

5. MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Members will be expected to demonstrate commitment to:

- a) the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in the Atlantic region
- b) collaboration and sharing of information for the benefit of other members of the association;

- c) contributing to the collective voice representing the interests of newcomers, service providers, and service organizations in the Atlantic region; and
- d) for Full Members, and for Associate Members as determined by the Board of Directors, participation in ARAISA governance, including attendance at the AGM for Full Members.

6. MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

a) Representation

Members shall appoint one (1) representative to act on their behalf and exercise their rights as members. Unless otherwise specified, the Executive Director, CEO, or other such senior leadership of the member organization shall act as the representative. Written or electronic notification of any subsequent changes shall be provided to ARAISA staff.

b) Voting Rights

Except where article 179(1) of the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* applies, Associate Members are non-voting. Each Full Member is entitled to one (1) vote.

7. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated if a member: no longer fulfils the criteria for membership; resigns; is liquidated or dissolved; or is removed from membership in accordance with ARAISA's articles or by-laws.

If a member wishes to withdraw its membership to ARAISA, it shall notify ARAISA staff in writing of its intent. Upon receipt, membership will cease.

No fee refund will be granted, except by resolution by the Board of Directors.

8. REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP

As per Section 3.03 of ARAISA's By-Law No. 2, the Board of Directors will hold the authority to remove any member for any one or more of the following grounds:

- a) violating the articles, bylaws or written policies of ARAISA;
- b) conduct deemed detrimental to ARAISA by the Board; or
- c) any other reason that the Board views as reasonable, given the purposes of ARAISA.

Twenty (20) days notice of the reasons for the proposed removal will be given in writing to the member. The member has the right to make written submissions to the Chair(s) of the Board, or other designated officer, within those 20 days. If a written submission is received, the Board will have an additional 20 days to consider the submission and notify the member of its decision. Decisions by the Board will be final with no right to further appeal.

9. RENEWAL

Membership is renewable yearly with payment of the annual fee, unless ARAISA is notified in writing of membership withdrawal, in accordance with Section 7 of this policy. Membership is effective for the period of ARAISA's fiscal year, which runs from April 1st to March 31st.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to fill in an initial membership application form and an annual membership renewal request thereafter.

11. FEES

a) As per ARAISA's bylaws, members will be notified in writing of membership fees payable. If membership fees are not paid within three (3) calendar months of the membership renewal date, membership will cease.

b) Fees will be set by the Board of Directors and reviewed periodically.

c) Members shall be deemed to be in good standing upon payment of their membership fees.

d) Any new member who is approved after September 30th may be assessed 50% of the relevant member fee; there will be no further reductions in fees.

12. REVIEW OF POLICY

This Policy will be reviewed every other year, at minimum, by the Membership Committee or sooner if warranted by internal or external events or changes. Changes to the Policy will be recommended by the Membership Committee to the Board of Directors for approval.