

FAQs for Regional Directors

1. The members voted for “At-Large” directors last year. Why are you trying to revert back to the “old” way?

- Many members and state leaders have voiced concerns over last year’s amendment: they did not understand what they were voting for, they did not and do not want a change in the AANA board structure.
- Past and present state leaders – who best know the value of RDs – support the RD structure*
- If there has been some difficulty in securing candidates for RD positions in the past, the way to address that is not by restructuring the board of directors but by restructuring and enhancing the functions of the Nominating Committee.
- Individuals run for RD positions because they want to represent the members of the state(s) where they have served, they understand the issues facing their state and those in regional proximity, and they have relationships established in their geographic areas.
- Individuals running for at-large positions want to be on the board; their represented regions will be ‘appointed’ to them.
- At-Large block voting—also known as the ‘plurality-At-Large voting method’—has been called the oldest trick in the book. Supreme Court Justice Ginsberg cited this method, along racial gerrymandering, as a preeminent second-generation way to deny equal opportunity for minority voters and candidates.
 - At-large Director elections have the potential to ‘stack the deck’. Multiple individuals, as a group, potentially from the same 1-2 state(s), decide to run for all open positions on the AANA Board, to promote their own ‘agenda’.

By definition:

- An organization's executive board of **directors** is tasked with specific governing duties for the organization. Unlike other executive board leadership such as a president or treasurer, a member at **large** doesn't have a specific role. A member at **large** serves as a liaison to the general membership.
- **Regional Directors** are the eyes and ears of the members in the field. They represent regional membership concerns, issues and views. They bring ideas, suggestions and awareness of political and regional problems, as well as opportunities, to the association's board for review and action. They support board decisions to regional members.

2. Aren't At-large Directors better for the AANA? Won't we get better-qualified individuals on the board?

- “The Bias of At-Large Elections: “The Oldest Trick in the Book”

If you want to rig a local election, there’s an easier way than stuffing a ballot box, gerrymandering a district, or amassing a campaign war chest to scare off challengers...adopt winner-take-all ‘At-Large’ voting, where, instead of using districts, all or most....candidates must run ‘at large...’

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Congress has banned At-Large voting for all federal elections. It's been discarded by most states. No voting method has been subject to more litigation for its discriminatory impact on local elections." <https://www.nonprofitvote.org/bias-large-elections-works/>

- The premise that AANA needs to elect 'at-large' directors in order have more qualified candidates is based on a flawed premise. The Nominating Committee may, on occasion, need to actively seek out director candidates for a region. However, that does not equate to the need to change the structure of the board of directors. To not have a director from a specific geographic region could disenfranchise members and leaders from that region which may lead to unintended consequences.
 - *For most associations, board elections are large events where every member of the association has the opportunity to vote for the new slate of directors and officers.*
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 - *Board members come from the membership and are leaders who win an election cycle: Because association boards most often are elected by the broader membership, **there is less emphasis on building a.....bench of qualified candidates, and more emphasis on electing who will appropriately represent the interests of the membership.***
 - *Generally, Association director seats are competitive (with multiple candidates vying for the same seat). It is extremely rare for an association's board to have open seats for any reason other than an unexpected board member departure. Positions are seen as prestigious, and possibly highly competitive, positions. <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/whats-difference-association-nonprofit/>*

3. What do AANA Regional Directors do?

The position description of AANA lists some of these activities and responsibilities of RDs:

- Be a conduit for the flow of information *from* members to the Board of Directors, staff, and to members from the AANA
- Attend State Association meetings to present the AANA update material and meet with members to answer their questions and to gain their feedback on issues affecting the profession
- Travel to.... individual states as requested....
- Develop and maintain relationships with state leaders in AANA Regions.
- Support state presidents to utilize the *Communication Guidelines for Directors and State Presidents*
- Promote the importance of the *Guidelines for Organizational Health for State Associations*
- Facilitate "break out" sessions at AANA meetings as appropriate
- Encourage collaboration among states and between states and the AANA
- Promote...resources for state associations

- **AANA Region Directors are the liaisons to state associations and their elected boards.** As with corporations, they can assist our state ‘affiliates’ with:
 - Implementing strategy
 - Controlling costs and generating non-dues revenue
 - Maintaining relationships and creating networking opportunities
 - Reporting on state and member issues to AANA
 - Mentoring, developing local leaders and creating strategic plans and board retreats
 - Assisting with state association problems, addressing them, formulating effective solutions
 - Developing a clear understanding of the difference and similarities of states in their region, and using that knowledge in advocacy and support efforts

A few examples of AANA RD activities in their Regions:

- Region 1: RD was instrumental in helping NJ battle office based restrictions for CRNAs. While CRNAs ended up losing, it was a great help to have a regional director with integral knowledge of the battle because of their experiences within the region.
- Region 2: RDs were key in starting a State leadership retreat to strategize and discuss ongoing issues within the Region.
 - RD addressed (and got AANA emergently involved), the attempt to get ‘supervision’ language into Air Force CRNA practice (which failed). Learned of this when attending a state meeting in VA.
 - RD intervened then a JCAH surveyor cited a hospital in the region for not having MDA supervision of CRNAs.
- Region 4: RDs were instrumental in helping identify and working with states to achieve Opt-out
 - A state was able to capitalize on having a local RD with personal knowledge of rural states and how to battle AA legislation
 - RD assisted state in their region with writing grant, receive funding, and strategize to support a legislative battle
 - RD assisted in a state’s addressing crippling governance issues, developing guidelines and standards
- Region 5: RD was instrumental in helping California battle restrictive practice
 - RD assisted with a state internal structure and function crisis
 - RD assisted with supportive & PR issues related to NV needle re-use crisis
- Region 7: RD was key in helping Florida with office-based language as they understood the practice environment and regulations within Florida

4. If Directors represent ALL AANA members, why would one from a specific region matter?

- US Representatives and those in Congress are elected from, and represent, specific geographical state regions or entire states, yet they vote on matters of importance to the entire country. AANA RDs fill a similar role. Members, as constituents, understand those locally-elected individuals were specifically elected to represent them. Those elected

individuals know, and choose, the 'who' and the 'where' they are going to represent from day one.

- **At-large methods of election are often discriminatory** because they, in combination with racially polarized voting, prevent voters of color from electing their candidates of choice where they are not the majority.... Under this system, the votes of voters of color often are drowned out or submerged by the votes of a majority of white voters who often do not support the candidates preferred by Black voters. <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/At-Large-Voting-Frequently-Asked-Questions-1.pdf>

5. Issues are the same no matter where someone lives or practices. What happens in Vermont also happens in California; so why do we need a director only from a region to address issues in that region?

- Actually, there are different issues that effect different areas of the country, and even different states. Some examples:
 - When local Medicare Administrative Contractors decide not to reimburse for certain CRNA services in certain regions (Ex: propofol anesthesia for GI)
 - Certain states' CRNAs facing non-reimbursement by mainstream insurance companies 'just because'
 - State regulations restrict specific areas of CRNA practice
 - The impact MACRA (Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015) has on the fiscal stability of facilities, providers and local communities
 - Primarily rural states with critical access hospital reimbursement versus large metro areas
 - Legal and legislative challenges in different areas of the country
- The issues affecting states in specific regions also impact the CRNA RDs living and working in those areas, as well. They have a vested interest in addressing those issues in a timely and effective manner.

6. What do other professional associations do?

There are MANY professional organizations that have the RD structure on their boards. Here are a few:

- American Assn. of Nurse Practitioners
- American College of Nurse Midwives
- American Medical Women's Association
- National Council State Boards of Nursing
- American Hospital Assn.
- American Heart Assn.
- American Mental Health Counselors Assn.
- Healthcare Leadership Assn.
- National Assn. of Social Workers
- Alzheimer's Assn.
- National Assn. of Power Engineers
- International Assn. of School Librarianship
- National Assn. of Corporate Directors
- Assn. of Collegiate Conferences & Events
- National Assn. of Regional Councils
- National Assn. of State Technology Directors
- Advanced Laboratory Physics Assn.
- Assn. of Public & Land Grant Universities
- National Fire Protection Assn.
- American Medical Student Assn.
- American Assn. for Access, Equality & Diversity
- International Assn. of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators

7. Is there a financial impact for one type of director versus the other?

- It is disingenuous to state that there would be no increase in costs, directly or indirectly, to the members if we change to an at-large structure. While the financial impact of changing is difficult to pinpoint, it is easy to extrapolate the potentially negative financial consequences:

An at-large director elected from Hawaii is 'assigned' to Region 1, the New England states. Region Directors almost always attend state meetings and give updates, have Q & As, sometimes do strategic planning or have leadership retreats.

So each of the Region1's 7 states, & PR, (most of which are considered "small" with very limited budgets) asks their At-Large Director to come to their fall meetings. Rather than driving from a state in that region, they must fly almost 5,000 miles and get a hotel room. Each state will pay for that 'visit' from their RD, directly impacting their financial health.

Even a large Region, 5, with 13 states (including AL & HI) would feel the financial impact of having to fly in an At-Large Director from Maine, or Florida.

- With so many local practice, legislative and regulatory issues facing ALL states, large and small, their money would be spent more wisely on those issues.

8. How will AANA directors-at-large effect small states?

- The member-centric, member driven representation process will no longer exist. Director elections will be driven by larger states where the voting blocks are larger more so than smaller states
- If relationships and trust matters for members, directors-at-large with no commonalities nor relationships with those states he/she is unfamiliar with due to geographical distance, will make engagement difficult and challenging.

9. In order to be more effective, shouldn't AANA be functioning more like a business?

- Although they enjoy non-profit tax status associations are businesses. Similar to the job description of a Region Director of a for-profit business, the AANA Region Directors also has responsibilities to the geographical area and members they represent:
- "Regional Directors manage and guide...managers that report to them. They meet with employees to evaluate business progress and create and institute strategies to accomplish the goals of the company." <https://www.betterteam.com/regional-director-job-description>

10. So what are the supposed differences between an 'association' and a 'business'?

- **Characteristics of Associations:** generally think of themselves as membership focused-organizations, with the primary focus of providing services and benefits to members of a specific group (e.g., a professional association, trade group, industry-specific association)
- An association works for attaining the common objectives of its members. Common interests bind the members together.

- A corporation is a group of individuals, created by law or under authority of law, having a continuous existence independent of the existences of its members, and powers and liabilities distinct from those of its members.
- There is much more similarity between them than many people often realize. Both types of organizations must have effective governance, leadership, robust planning, quality services to constituents, competent and committed personnel, and cost-effective operations.
- Also, the types of issues that can occur in small nonprofits are very similar to the types of issues that can occur in small for-profits, including the constant struggle to obtain funding and good people, reacting to the changing day-to-day demands in the workplace, ensuring that customers are always satisfied, and managing time and stress to avoid burnout. <https://managementhelp.org/misc/Nonprofits-ForProfits.pdf>