



The American Education Research Association

Director of Meetings

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Position Overview

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) seeks a Director of Meetings with the skills, experience, and expertise to bring innovative and dynamic vision, set strategic goals, and implement plans to advance the mission of AERA. The Director of Meetings is responsible for operational planning and execution of annual meetings, public events, convenings, and governance meetings throughout the year. A key member of the senior staff, the Director of Meetings leads a team of three professional staff. The Meetings Department works collaboratively and cross-functionally with AERA's membership, communications, professional development, governance, publications, and information technology teams to accomplish the mission and goals of the Association, advance education research, build capacity, elevate the visibility and impact of the field, and serve the public good.

The ideal next Director of Meetings will bring innovative ideas, technological savvy, the ability to articulate and operationalize plans of action, and preside over complex events with multiple concurrent components with a proven track record of doing so, as well as be attentive to the financial needs of a major scholarly research association. The ideal candidate will show the commitment to fostering and providing a welcoming, inclusive, accessible, safe, and supportive environment for events.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide strategic insight and thought leadership to ensure that events are innovative, of highest quality, and deliver maximum value to members and the public, including a robust process to survey and collect feedback from meeting attendees to further develop program enhancements.
- Plan and manage successful annual meetings attended by more than 15,000 education researchers. This will include the planning, development, marketing, and delivery of a wide range of sessions, keynotes/plenaries, award ceremonies, professional development courses, business and committee meetings, and receptions.
- Oversee the consideration of more than 12,000 annual meeting submissions and the scheduling of approximately 3,000 sessions, professional development courses, governance and business meetings, and receptions, including the coordination of affiliate organizations, sessions, and approximately 200 receptions.
- Provide oversight to key annual meeting functions, including online registration through AERA's Association Management System (AMS); onsite food and beverage planning; signage, staging, and decoration; audio visual planning and execution; exhibit and sponsorship development, marketing, and execution; accessibility services; childcare services; security services, planning and staging major association-wide events; and staff planning.
- Stay abreast of technological innovations to recommend, design, plan, and manage the implementation of new types and modes of deliveries for conferences and events, including but not limited to virtual and hybrid meetings utilizing online platforms and mobile apps for virtual poster presentations, on-demand and live webcasts and meetings, with the goal of expanding the reach, relevancy, and value of AERA conferences, events, and workshops.

- Manage site identification, recommendation, and selection processes for annual meetings and other events and meeting activities; lead negotiations with host city convention bureaus, hotels, vendors, and contracting processes with legal counsel and the equivalent for venue.
- Provide event and meeting oversight and expertise for all AERA events, including placed-based and virtual; the annual Brown lecture; Capitol Hill and other briefings; and forums/activities at the AERA Convening Center or other venues (e.g., National Press Club) in and outside of Washington, DC.
- Provide event and meeting oversight and expertise for AERA governance meetings (e.g., AERA Council, Leadership Committee Meeting) and programmatic and professional development events/activities (e.g., AERA-NSF Grants Program Research Conference), small convenings, receptions, retreats, and so forth.
- Through events, education, sponsorship, and other new opportunities, sustain and grow non-dues revenue and enable mutually beneficial networks of members, vendors, and service providers.
- Prepare and manage the department's annual budget and ensure accurate financial planning, reporting, and projections throughout the year.
- Responsible for benchmarking best practices and leveraging them in meetings and event planning.
- Provide oversight to all annual meeting and event-related content featured on the AERA website, social media channels, and news releases.
- Ensure that policies and procedures are in place, reviewed regularly to maintain relevancy and accuracy, communicated clearly, and executed effectively to maximize efficiency and success of all events operations.
- Serve as a staff liaison to committees that support meetings activities.
- Ensure conference, travel, and hospitality-related contract negotiations are conducted effectively on behalf of AERA.
- Perform other duties as required that are not outlined in this job description.

Qualifications and Experience

- A Bachelor's degree; a master's degree and/or a CAE, CEM or CMP preferred.
- A strong and evident commitment to diversity, inclusion, and access.
- A thorough understanding of meetings services, conferences, exhibits, and major public events, including at least seven years of experience in conferences, events and/or meetings.
- Experience with complex conferences with more than 14,000 attendees preferred.
- Experience in and understanding of complex conferences and meetings as well as operations of scientific, scholarly, and/or research-focused membership associations preferred,
- Experience developing, marketing, and managing in-person, virtual, and hybrid conferences and meetings.
- A business and analytical mind-set that results in maximizing positive financial returns for successful events and ability to manage, optimize, and allocate current resources and generate new sources of revenue.

- Strong organization, time, and project management skills. Experience and track record of managing competing priorities and projects within deadlines and on budget.
- Hands-on experience and desire to roll up sleeves to get work done in cooperation with other staff.
- Proven supervisory and staff development experience.

Desired Personal Qualities

A leader with the following qualities and leadership style:

- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Superior communication (written and oral) skills, including the ability to effectively communicate with internal and external constituents).
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively across departments, organizations, and with partners and vendors.
- Ability to listen with an open mind and actively solicit input from constituencies to gain a well-rounded perspective to support strategic and decisive actions.
- Accessible, inquisitive, compassionate, fair, transparent, with strong problem-solving ability, and able to engage in meaningful conversations on challenging matters.
- Organized and disciplined approach to time management and ability to follow through in a timely manner.
- Optimistic and positive attitude with unwavering commitment to excellence.
- Sound judgment with the ability to delegate and provide appropriate guidance.
- Unquestionable personal and professional integrity, absolute transparency, and empathy.
- Strong work ethic necessary to help advance the Association to the next level of national prominence.

The Organization

The **American Educational Research Association (AERA)** is the largest national interdisciplinary research association devoted to the scientific study of education and learning. Founded in 1916, AERA advances knowledge about education, encourages scholarly inquiry related to education, and promotes the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.

AERA's more than 24,000 members are faculty, researchers, graduate students, and other distinguished professionals with rich and diverse expertise in education research. They work in a range of settings from universities and other academic institutions to research institutes, federal and state agencies, school systems, testing companies, and nonprofit organizations. Based on their research, they produce and disseminate knowledge, refine methods and measures, and stimulate translation and practical application of research results.

AERA is international in scope. Nearly 14% of members, representing over 96 countries, reside outside the United States. Over 30% of AERA members are students—approximately 7,750 graduate students and 230 undergraduate students. Over three-quarters (78%) of AERA members report that education is the field of their highest degree. Other disciplines represented by AERA members include psychology, statistics, sociology, history, economics, philosophy, anthropology, and political science.

AERA Executive Office and AERA Convening Center

The AERA Executive Office is located at 1430 K Street, NW in Washington DC. With a staff of 25-30 persons, AERA occupies a custom-built office space on the top two floors of an office condominium building constructed in 2006. The open concept office is equipped with individual offices, workspace for teams, and conference rooms of varying sizes to facilitate innovative and cross-functional collaboration. The Association's key departments include Meetings, Membership & Constituent Relations, Governance, Professional Development, Communications, Publications, Government Relations, Grants Program, Research & Research Policy, Information Technology/Web Services, and Finance & Administration.

In addition to the Executive Office, the building is also home to the AERA Convening Center—a separate floor with 6500 square feet of flexible and configurable meeting space and broadcast studio. The Convening Center provides a new environment for advancing education research, connecting to policy and practice, and creating opportunities to link and communicate with diverse publics. This meeting place is a place to learn, contribute, and benefit from a range of activities, including events, meetings, discussion panels, lectures, releases of latest findings, professional development opportunities, and more.

AERA Annual Meeting

Each year, the AERA Annual Meeting is the world's largest gathering of education researchers and a showcase for groundbreaking, innovative studies in an array of areas. The 2023 Annual Meeting was a dual-component conference. The place-based component, held in Chicago, IL on April 13-16, attracted over 14,000 attendees. The virtual component, attended by over 2,600 registrants, took place on May 4-5. The 2024 AERA Annual Meeting will continue to be a dual-component meeting with Philadelphia, PA being the site for the place-based meeting (April 11-14) and with the virtual component to be held on April 25-26.

Digital Presence

Web www.aera.net

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AERAEducationResearch>

Twitter [@AERA_EDResearch](https://twitter.com/AERA_EDResearch)

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/american-educational-research-association/

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/aeranews>

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Vetted Solutions is a Washington, D.C. based executive search firm specializing in association and nonprofit recruiting and consulting. We focus on CEO and senior staff positions.

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