

Texas AER Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Division Policies and Procedures (P&P) Manual



Adopted March, 2014

Table of Contents

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES	3
MEMBERSHIP	3
OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	3
DUTIES OF OFFICERS	4
Chair	4
Chair-elect	4
Secretary	4
Newsletter Editor	5
Members-at-Large	5
DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEES	5
The Executive Committee	5
The Nominating Committee	5
The Awards Committee	6
The Public Relations Committee	6
By-Laws Committee	7
Ad Hoc Committees	7
MEETINGS	7
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	8
ELECTIONS	8
Nomination and Election Procedures	8
AWARDS	8
Nomination Procedures	8
Past Recipients of the TAER O&M Best Practice Award	9
Past Recipients of the Bob Bryant/Bill Bryan Leadership Award	9
Past Recipients of the Mike Shirley O&M Student Award	9
APPENDICES	10
TAER O&M DIVISION	11
NOMINATION FOR OFFICE	11
TAER O&M DIVISION	12
AWARD NOMINATION	12
The TAER O&M Best Practice Award	12
Bob Bryant/Bill Bryan O&M Leadership Award	12
The Mike Shirley O&M Student Award	12
O&M Division Timeline	13
Even Numbered Years	13
Odd Numbered Years	13

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1. The purpose of TAER O&M Division is to encourage and support professional standards and improvement of orientation and mobility (O&M) practices and services in accordance with the bylaws, policies and procedures of AER. This shall be accomplished through:
2. Offering professional development opportunities in O&M at the state and local levels, through conference programs, newsletters, distribution of professional materials, workshops and any other means of promoting professional growth and education.
3. Advancement of professionalism in O&M by supporting professional certification, certification standards and competencies specifically related to the practice of O&M.
4. Working to improve and expand O&M services for individuals with visual impairments by:
 - a. Supporting research and innovative program development.
 - b. Advocating for public policies which benefit persons who are blind and visually impaired and the professionals that work with them; and
 - c. Providing a forum for discussion of issues and opportunities related to the delivery of O&M services.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Eligibility. The membership of TAER O&M Division shall be open to all individual members of TAER. **For official voting purposes, the membership shall consist of TAER individual members who are members of Division Nine of AER.**
2. Non-Discrimination. No person otherwise eligible shall be denied membership in TAER O&M Division on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, or disability.
3. **Voting Rights. Any person who is a voting member of AER who has selected membership in the O&M Division shall be eligible to vote.**

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. **Officers.** The Officers of the TAER O&M Division shall be Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor.
2. **The Executive Committee** shall consist of all elected officers and two members elected at large. Each Executive committee member shall be elected for a **two year term**.
3. **Members-at-Large.** There shall be two Members-at-Large from the TAER O&M Division membership.
4. **Qualifications of Officers and Members-at-Large. Any individual voting member of the TAER O&M Division Nine shall be eligible to serve in any office. No two offices may be held concurrently by the same person.**
5. **Elections.** The office of Division Chair shall be filled by succession of the Chair-Elect. In the event that the office of the Chair-Elect becomes vacant there shall be allowed an additional office of Chair to be added to the ballot. The membership of the Division shall elect a Chair-Elect, a Secretary-Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and two Members-at-Large. The election of Chair-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and the two Members-at-Large shall occur only once every two years and election shall be held in even-numbered years, in conjunction with the statewide TAER conference. Elections shall be by ballot as provided for the Elections section of the Policies and Procedures.
6. **Term of Office.** The term of office for officers shall be two years. The Secretary, Newsletter

Editor and Members-at-Large shall be eligible for re-election, not to exceed two (2) consecutive terms. Terms of the officers shall commence with their election in conjunction with the Statewide TAER conferences.

7. **Vacancies.** In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair, the Chair-Elect shall serve the remainder of the term as Acting Chair and, upon completion of said term, shall assume the office of Chair in normal order. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair-Elect, there shall be no replacement until the election of officers at which time there shall be elected a Chair and a Chair-Elect. In the event of a vacancy in both the offices of Chair and Chair-Elect, another officer selected by the Executive Committee shall assume and perform the duties of Chair until the election. In the event of a vacancy in the offices of Secretary, Newsletter Editor or Member-at-Large the Executive Committee may appoint a replacement from its own body or the general membership for the remainder of the term.
8. All powers of management shall be exercised by the Executive Committee. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for business. Members are additionally responsible for aiding in the smooth transition of newly elected officers.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Chair

1. Shall serve on the TAER Board of Directors.
2. Shall serve as chair of the Executive Committee and facilitate the required action of that committee.
3. Shall plan and preside at all regularly scheduled meetings.
4. Shall appoint all committee chairs and serve as an ex-officio member to all committees.
5. Shall see that all vacancies on the Executive Committee are filled by nominating an individual to be voted on by the remaining Executive Committee members. A majority vote shall constitute the position being filled.
6. Shall submit an annual report at each regularly scheduled meeting of TAER O&M Division members.

Chair-elect

1. Shall succeed the Division Chair.
2. Shall serve as an assistant to the Division Chair.
3. Shall serve as Acting Chair at meetings in the absence of the Chair.
4. Shall perform selected duties as directed by the Chair.
5. Shall be responsible for assisting the Chair in planning for regularly scheduled meetings.

Secretary

1. Shall serve as a member of the executive committee.
2. Shall record the minutes and keep proceedings of each meeting and prepare for timely publication in the newsletter.
3. Shall maintain a record of incoming and outgoing correspondence.
4. Shall notify the general membership of the next meeting scheduled at least 30 days prior to next meeting.

5. Shall be responsible for notifying the general membership of the slate of nominees composed by the Nominating Committee at least 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting at which elections are to be held.
6. Shall oversee the preparation, distribution, and counting of all ballots for the TAER O&M Division Nine with the exception of the election ballot.
7. Shall keep records of membership, activities, and submit annual report of the same.
8. Shall transmit a copy of the division records to the successor in a prompt and complete fashion.

Newsletter Editor

1. Shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee.
2. Be responsible for publishing a quarterly newsletter to be distributed to newsletter subscribers.
3. Shall perform selected duties as directed by the Chair.

Members-at-Large

1. Shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee.
2. Shall perform selected duties as directed by the Chair.

DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee

1. Shall be comprised of the four (4) elected officers: Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and the two (2) Members-at-Large.
2. Shall be chaired by the Chair of Division Nine.
3. Shall hold regularly scheduled meetings at least quarterly. The Executive Committee shall exercise, by majority vote, all powers of management of the TAER O&M Division Nine. Votes may take place via e-mail or teleconference. Abstentions, proxy votes and absentee votes are permissible.
4. Shall call special Executive Committee meetings as needed.
5. Shall approve, by majority vote, any single non-budget expenditure exceeding \$500 to be submitted to the TAER Treasurer for payment.
6. Shall approve, by majority vote, the use and wording of all ballots.

The Nominating Committee

1. Shall be comprised of the Chair-elect and two (2) active members appointed by the Chair.
2. Shall submit nominations for succeeding Secretary-Treasurer, Chair-Elect, Newsletter Editor, and 2 Members-At-Large by nominating individuals for the offices and coordinating the ballots.
3. Shall publish a request via the quarterly newsletter for names to be placed in nomination for offices.
4. Shall determine the willingness of prospective candidates to serve if they should be elected to office.
5. Shall prepare a slate consisting of two or more candidates for each office as stipulated in

the Policies and Procedures.

6. Shall assist the Chair in conducting the election of officers at the appropriate annual meeting.

The Awards Committee

1. Shall solicit nominations for the O&M Division awards:
 - a. The TAER O&M Best Practice Award
 - i. The O&M Best Practices award is given to an individual or group of individuals who demonstrate exemplary standards in professionalism, has effective communication, is creative in teaching skills, and plays an integrative role in teaming with other professionals and family members.
 - b. Bob Bryant/ Bill Bryan O&M Leadership Award
 - i. The Bob Bryant and Bill Bryan Award is given to an individual (an O&M specialist or layperson) who has had an enduring impact on the field of O&M in the state of Texas. This award is in honor of Bill Bryan and Bob Bryant who demonstrated leadership through the development of professionals to serve blind and visually impaired individuals in Texas and continued to serve the field in a variety of positions. The recipient should be a person who has unceasingly served the O&M field in many capacities, i.e. as a TAER officer, committee member, SWOMA organizer, researcher/author, conference presenter, promoter of better O&M services for students/consumers, advocate for O&M professionalism and growth, etc.
 - c. The Mike Shirley O&M Student Award
 - i. The Mike Shirley O&M Student Award is presented to an O&M student/consumer who has shown unusual determination and courage as he/she endeavored to learn and maintain the skills needed to be an independent traveler to the highest degree possible.
2. Shall include committee members from a wide variety of geographical areas and professional perspectives. Committee members who are nominated for an O&M Division award shall either withdraw from the committee or ask not to be considered for the award.
3. Shall respect confidentiality of the nominations as well as confidentiality of any discussion of nominees leading to the selection of recipients.
4. Shall encourage nominations when nominations are not forthcoming, but committee members shall not themselves write any letters of nomination or support.
5. Shall select award recipients for the nominations received through a committee vote following a discussion and review of the letters of nominations and support.
6. Shall participate in planning and facilitation of the awards ceremony.
7. Shall procure a plaque or other award for award recipients.

The Public Relations Committee

1. Make available to the public:
 - a. Information about the profession of Orientation and Mobility.
 - b. Information regarding the role of Orientation and Mobility to the education and rehabilitation process of people who are blind and visually impaired.
 - c. Materials to assist the membership in providing this information in their local area.
 - d. Make available to the membership information about legislation affecting the profession of Orientation and Mobility.

By-Laws Committee

1. Maintain a current set of bylaws by presenting for consideration amendments and revisions necessary for the continued development of Division Nine.
2. Establish and maintain correct operating procedures for the standing committees and the Executive Committee which will define the areas of activity and duties of the committees and their chairpersons.
3. The reprinting of the entire bylaws shall be completed **every four (4) years**. Corrected addendum sheets shall be printed during the ensuing years, if needed.

Ad Hoc Committees

1. The Division Chair, in response to membership requests or to meet the needs of the Division, may appoint ad hoc committees.
2. These committees are created to perform a specific task and are dissolved when the task is completed and the final report is given.
3. Joint committees may be established with other TAER Divisions or with other organizations to address issues of mutual concern.

MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meetings. The Executive Committee shall meet as needed to conduct business of the TAER O&M Division Nine. The Executive Committee shall provide for business meetings which shall normally be held in conjunction with the statewide conference of TAER.

Annual Business Meetings. The purpose of the business meetings shall be to conduct the business of the group with the free participation of all individual members.

Special meetings. Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the Executive Committee, or the Executive Committee shall entertain a request from any member or group of members for a special meeting of the group. In the latter case, the Executive Committee may, after determining the appropriateness of such a meeting, schedule a date.

Quorum. No business of the O&M Division shall take place without a quorum present. A quorum for an Executive Committee meeting shall be constituted by the presence of a majority of the currently occupied seats on the Executive Committee. A quorum for a Division business meetings and special meetings shall be constituted by the presence of one tenth (1/10) of Division members.

Parliamentary Procedure. The O&M Division shall be governed in all of its meetings by parliamentary law as contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised. Upon opening of membership meetings, the Chair shall announce the name of the person who has agreed to serve as parliamentarian.

Non-discrimination. The Division shall make every reasonable effort to schedule and hold its meetings and conferences in a location where all members can freely participate and be fully accommodate without discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ELECTIONS

Nomination and Election Procedures

- 1.** In the even numbered years, the voting membership of the O&M Division shall elect a Chair-Elect, a Treasurer, a Secretary, District Directors, succeeding Nominating Committee, and in the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair-Elect, a new Chair. Each position shall be a two-year term. The Chair is succeeded by the Chair-Elect and becomes the Past Chair.
- 2.** Publish a call for nominations no later than **60 days**, in even numbered years in a publication that reaches the entire Division membership.
- 3.** Nominate at least one individual (preferably two individuals) for each office for the upcoming election and procure letters of acceptance from those individuals.
- 4.** Effort should be made to locate broad geographic and work-related representation, working with current officers and District Directors.
- 5.** Prepare a ballot with the names of all nominees and a short biographical sketch of each no later than **30 days**, in even numbered years.
- 6.** The candidate receiving the plurality of votes (the most) cast for each elective position shall become the holder of the position at the final business meeting of the O&M Division held at the TAER state conference in the even numbered years.
- 7.** In the event of a tie vote in the election for any office, lot shall thereon decide the election. Lot refers to a randomly drawing from the names of tied candidates by the Nominations Committee chair, witnessed by another Division Member.

AWARDS

Nomination Procedures

1. Timely announcement soliciting nominations shall include the names of all the committee members.
2. Nominations and letters of support shall be made by members of the O&M Division with a letter of up to two pages in length. The number of letters submitted shall not influence the decision one way or the other.
3. The committee chair shall:
 - a. Send notification to those who submit letters of nomination or support to let them know the letters were received.
 - b. Be certain that all appropriate papers for nominations are in and criteria are met for each nominee.
 - c. Inform individuals of the committee's decision in the following order:
 - i. persons who nominated those not selected
 - ii. nominees who were not selected (unless those who nominated them don't wish them to know they were nominated, in which case they will not be informed)
 - iii. nominees who were selected to receive awards and those who nominated them
4. Send the nomination and support letters to the nominees, unless there is objection from those who nominated them.
5. Procure plaques or another type or award for each award recipient. If a plaque is presented, it should include, as a minimum, the name of the O&M Division, the name of the award, the name of the award recipient, and the date.

6. Organize, together with the Chair of the Program Committee, the presentation of awards and a reception for the award recipients at the TAER Awards Luncheon at the TAER State Conference. If desired, a booklet may be produced, within approved budgetary amount, to distribute at the awards presentation. People who nominated the award recipients may be asked to present the award or to suggest who will present the award.
7. Destroy remaining letters of nomination and records regarding the selection of the award recipients.
8. Send a record of the wording of the plaques to the succeeding committee chair.

Past Recipients of the TAER O&M Best Practice Award

1997 Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind
1998
1999 Vance Lankford
2000 Marjie Wood
2001
2002
2003 Gene Healy
2004 Cindy Haughn
2005 Carolina Martinez
2006 Christy Householter
2007 Beverly Jackson
2008 Edward Mullen
2009 Susan Waltrip
2010 Emily Leeper
2011 Diane Barnes
2012 Ruth Ann Marsh
2013 Burnsteen "Bernie" Smith, TSBVI

Past Recipients of the Bob Bryant/Bill Bryan Leadership Award

2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013 Ann Phillips, Tyler Lighthouse for the Blind

Past Recipients of the Mike Shirley O&M Student Award

2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013 Maria Baquerizo, Garland ISD

APPENDICES

TAER O&M DIVISION NOMINATION FOR OFFICE

Name:

Position Nominated for:

Are you a member of AER O&M Division?

Email:

Phone:

Agency:

Years of Experience:

Background Information:

Goals for the Position you seek:

TAER O&M DIVISION AWARD NOMINATION

The TAER O&M Best Practice Award

The O&M Best Practices award is given to an individual or group of individuals who demonstrate exemplary standards in professionalism, has effective communication, is creative in teaching skills, and plays an integral role in teaming with other professionals and family members.

Bob Bryant/Bill Bryan O&M Leadership Award

The Bob Bryant and Bill Bryan Leadership Award is given to an individual (an O&M specialist or layperson) who has had an enduring impact on the field of O&M in the state of Texas. This award is in honor of Bill Bryan and Bob Bryant who demonstrated leadership through the development of professionals to serve blind and visually impaired individuals in Texas and continued to serve the field in a variety of positions. The recipient should be a person who has unceasingly served the O&M field in many capacities, i.e. as a TAER officer, committee member, SWOMA organizer, researcher/author, conference presenter, promoter of better O&M services for students/consumers, advocate for O&M professionalism and growth, etc.

The Mike Shirley O&M Student Award

The Mike Shirley O&M Student Award is presented to an O&M student/consumer who has shown unusual determination and courage as he/she endeavored to learn and maintain the skills needed to be an independent traveler to the highest degree possible.

Nominee's Name:

Agency:

Address:

Phone Number:

Name of Award:

Reasons Nominee is deserving:

Contact Information for you:

Name:

Email:

Phone:

O&M Division Timeline

Even Numbered Years

- **March/April** (at TAER Meeting)
 - Board Meeting
 - Election of New Officers
 - Service Pins awarded to members
 - O&M Awards awarded
- **June**
 - Board Meeting
 - Set tentative topics and begin search for speakers for odd numbered year of TAER
 - Create committees
 - Newsletter sent out
- **September**
 - Board Meeting
 - Begin to finalize speakers
 - Discuss O&M dinner options
 - Newsletter sent out
- **December**
 - Board Meeting
 - Call for award nominations
 - Finalize O&M dinner details
 - Newsletter sent out
- **February**
 - Board Meeting
 - Wrap up details on TAER presentations and work assignments
 - Distribute any information that will be voted on during TAER general business meeting at TAER

Odd Numbered Years

- **March/April** (at TAER Meeting)
 - Board Meeting
 - Service Pins awarded to members
 - O&M Awards awarded
- **June**
 - Board Meeting
 - Set tentative topics and begin search for speakers for odd numbered year of TAER
 - Create committees
 - Newsletter sent out
- **September**
 - Board Meeting
 - Begin to finalize speakers
 - Call for award nominations
 - Call for board nominations

- Discuss O&M dinner options
 - Newsletter sent out
- **December**
 - Board Meeting
 - Finalize O&M dinner details
 - Distribute board nominations to membership
 - Newsletter sent out
- **February**
 - Board Meeting
 - Wrap up details on TAER presentations and work assignments
 - Distribute slate of officers to general membership
 - Distribute any information that will be voted on during TAER general business meeting at TAER