



# National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics

## **What is the National Association of Welfare Research and Statistics?**

The National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS) is a non-profit association whose purpose is to promote the exchange of ideas on how research and statistical analysis can contribute to the development and administration of effective human services programs.

## **Who is the membership of NAWRS?**

The membership of NAWRS includes representatives from federal, state, and local government, from universities, and from for-profit and non-profit organizations. NAWRS represents the full spectrum of human services programs. NAWRS membership is open to all persons interested in public human services programs.

## **What are the benefits of being a member?**

NAWRS sponsors an Annual Conference for the discussion of research, statistics, evaluation, public policy and reporting issues. The NAWRS Conference promotes the exchange of ideas on the collection, analysis, presentation, and application of data in the field of human services. The Conference provides a forum to:

- learn about the experiences of other agencies that have implemented and evaluated human services programs;
- exchange ideas on the collection, analysis, presentation, and application of data;
- gain knowledge about state of the art research methodologies and technologies;
- confer with nationally known researchers from both the university and private sectors;
- establish and renew professional relationships;
- bring national exposure and recognition of a state's human services programs and accomplishments in the areas of research and evaluation; and,
- keep abreast of the latest issues and policies affecting human services programs.

## **How is the organization run?**

The Organization's governing structure is the Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of two representatives from each of the ten federal regions. Board membership is limited to employees of state and local government agencies. Each year during the Annual Conference, Board members are elected at the regional caucus. The caucus is comprised of Conference attendees who are also employees of state and local government agencies. Board members serve a two-year term of office.

### **What are the responsibilities of Board members?**

Board members make planning, administrative and business decisions for the Organization. Members contribute to the planning and operation of each Annual Conference. They participate in planning the program, identifying workshops, and selecting speakers and presenters. The NAWRS Board also addresses issues of importance to research and has several sub-committees. Board members are expected to participate as sub-committee members. The NAWRS sub-committees are:

- By-laws - keeping the organization functional;
- Sponsorship - exploring supplemental ways to generate funds beyond Conference fees;
- Internet - investigating the best uses of technology in support of NAWRS activities, such as web page development;
- Strategic Planning and Finance - projecting the NAWRS vision and ensuring financial controls;
- Membership – maximizing participation at the Annual Conference and providing a slate for Board elections; and,
- Awards – nominating persons to receive recognition for extraordinary achievements in aiding NAWRS as an organization and furthering its goals.

### **What are the benefits of being a Board member?**

The benefits of being a Board member include:

- close and direct contact with other research and evaluation professionals across the country; and,
- state representation in Annual Conference planning activities in order to ensure that topics of particular interest to one's state are presented at the Conference.

### **What is the commitment NAWRS asks of Board members and their states?**

There are four Board meetings per year:

Winter (usually held in December and convened by conference call);

Spring (usually held in March, also by conference call); and,

Pre- and Post-Annual Conference (usually in July, August, or September), with one Board meeting on the Saturday before and one Board meeting on the Wednesday after the Conference.

Attendance is expected at all four Board meetings. Members can be removed from the Board if they do not attend a minimum of 50% of the non-Conference (Winter and Spring) Board meetings during each year and a minimum of 50% of the Conference Board meetings.

The costs to the states are minimal. Since the Spring and Winter Board meetings are held via conference call, there is little time away from the office. Two of the Board meetings are scheduled around the Annual Conference, so there is really no additional travel cost above that of attending the Conference.

### **How can states support NAWRS?**

NAWRS is an all-volunteer organization. NAWRS does not charge fees for membership. Only with support from the states can NAWRS continue to put on the Annual Conference and provide opportunities for professional development for staff engaged in research, data analysis, policy development and evaluation. States can support NAWRS by encouraging state personnel to serve on the Board of Directors, sending staff to the Annual Conference, and by volunteering to host the Annual Conference.