

**ASSOCIATION OF ALTERNATIVE NEWSMEDIA**  
**CODE OF CONDUCT AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

*Approved by AAN Board of Directors, February 28, 2022*

**Objective**

The Association of Alternative Newsmedia (“AAN”) is committed to providing a professional environment that is free from harassment and discrimination in which all individuals, including members, employees, contractors and volunteers, are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to be in a professional atmosphere free from unlawful harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

This policy applies to members, employees, and volunteers of AAN, which would include, but not be limited to officers, directors, members of committees, speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, members, attendees, volunteers, contractors and employees. It applies to complaints of harassment or other conduct involving the treatment of AAN staff by members, employees, and volunteers of AAN as well conduct that involves members, employees, and volunteers of AAN at or in connection with all AAN events, including but not limited to board, committee, conferences, and all other AAN programs, online forums, events, and activities, whether in person, via telephone, video, online, or otherwise (collectively, “AAN events”).

AAN is committed to providing a safe and productive environment free of discrimination, hostility, harassment, and retaliation based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, physical appearance, body size, or any other characteristic protected by law.

AAN has a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and is committed to enforcing this policy vigorously, consistently, and objectively at and in connection with all AAN events.

**Equal Opportunity**

It is AAN’s policy to ensure equal opportunity without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, physical appearance, body size or any other characteristic protected by law. AAN prohibits all such discrimination and harassment and will address all allegations in a swift and fair manner.

**Harassment Defined**

Harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic is strictly prohibited. Harassment includes verbal, written, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual on the basis of any of the above listed protected factors and that: (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, including in the AAN workplace; (2) has the

purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's performance or ability to participate in AAN events; or (3) otherwise affects an individual's ability to participate in AAN events.

Harassing conduct includes but is not limited to epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; and denigrating jokes; and offensive texts, emails, or other messages.

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature, whether on a one-time basis or in a continuous series of incidents that might reasonably be expected to offend or embarrass an individual. Sexual harassment also includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical unwelcome conduct.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

As a professional organization, AAN is committed to diversity, equity, professional treatment of ideas, and respectful treatment of all members, employees, and volunteers at or in connection with all AAN events and in the AAN offices. AAN seeks to provide a professional atmosphere in which diverse participants may learn, network, and otherwise participate in an environment of mutual respect. Conduct that is prohibited includes but is not limited to:

- Harassment or intimidation based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, physical appearance, body size, or any other characteristic protected by law
- Sexual harassment or intimidation, including unwelcome sexual attention, stalking, or unsolicited physical contact
- Harassment, intimidation, or coercion based upon a position as a board member, employee, or any position of influence
- Abusive, lewd, or threatening conduct
- Bullying, harassment, or unprofessional conduct toward members, employees, volunteers, or other participants at AAN events or in the AAN workplace
- Physical violence or threats of violence
- Sexually charged communications or conduct

### **Reporting Acts of Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation**

AAN encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have been the victim of such conduct should report their concerns to the AAN President, and/or to any AAN officer or staff person. AAN encourages individuals to advise the offender that his or her conduct is unwelcome and to request that it be discontinued, if they feel comfortable so doing. Anonymous reports will be accepted and acted on, but AAN encourages non-anonymous reporting wherever possible.

An individual making a complaint may be asked to put the complaint in writing promptly after reporting unwanted conduct.

In the event that an individual feels that his or her physical safety is in jeopardy, AAN encourages the individual to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency immediately.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved as well as witnesses to the conduct.

AAN will maintain confidentiality to the extent consistent with appropriate investigation and corrective action.

If it is determined that an individual has engaged in prohibited conduct, the AAN Board of Directors, or the appropriate committee or staff designee, shall determine the appropriate action to be taken, which may include, but is not limited to:

- Private reprimand
- Expulsion from the AAN event without warning or refund
- Implementation of conditions upon attendance at future AAN events
- Removal of the individual as a board member or other volunteer leadership position
- Temporary or permanent ban on holding AAN leadership positions
- Temporary or permanent restriction from attendance at or participation in future AAN events
- Temporary or permanent ban on contacting AAN staff and/or volunteer leaders
- Suspension from or revocation participation in AAN, pursuant to and consistent with the AAN Bylaws

### **False Reporting**

Knowingly making a false accusation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, or knowingly providing false information in the course of an investigation of a report, may be grounds for appropriate disciplinary action. A complaint made in good faith, even if found to be unsubstantiated, will not be considered a false accusation.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation and is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly addressed.

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