

Board of Trustees Requirements



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Who are the Board of Trustees?

Alfalfa Electric Cooperative is governed by a member-elected board of trustees. These trustees meet regularly to approve actions, set policies and procedures, delegate authority, set guidelines for the co-op's management, and to direct the members' voice in the cooperative's operations. AEC's board is comprised of eight trustees, a co-op member from each of the cooperatives eight districts. Trustees serve three-year terms on the board. Interested candidates must file for consideration within the allotted time frame (filing dates are published in the January edition of the Hotlines). Once filed, candidates must meet the below requirements, attend their district meeting, and be elected by a quorum of their district peers.

What does it take to be an AEC Trustee?

AEC trustees have many responsibilities and commitments, the most important being trustworthy fiduciary stewards of fellow member-owners' dollars in ensuring the cooperative's rates, budgets, policies, procedures, and the overall direction of the cooperative. Trustees recognize that the primary objective of AEC is to provide the safe delivery of highly reliable, reasonably priced electric power to its members. Trustees are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies honesty and integrity in their role as trustees of Alfalfa Electric Cooperative.

Board Meetings and Other AEC Business Meetings

The first and foremost commitment of a trustee is to attend and participate in the official monthly board meeting, typically held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. at the AEC headquarters. In addition to the time required to physically attend the board meeting — typically about four hours — the trustee can expect to spend 2-4 hours reviewing the information (agendas, minutes, financials, monthly reports, etc.) prior to attending the meeting.

Associated Entity and Related Business Entity Meetings

Like most electric cooperatives, AEC has ownership interests in many associated entities in the form of cooperative membership and wholly-owned subsidiaries. These organizations have meetings throughout the year that require some trustees (sometimes all trustees) to attend and represent AEC. Examples of these organizations are:

- Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) - AEC's Oklahoma Statewide Association
- Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC) - AEC's Kansas Statewide Association
- Western Farmers Electric Cooperative - AEC's generation and transmission (G&T) provider.
- National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) - AEC's National Cooperative Association

Annual Meetings

All trustees are expected to attend the AEC Annual Meeting each year, usually held in Cherokee, OK on a Friday evening in April.

Education and Training

Most trustees do not walk in the door with the expertise needed to responsibly represent the member-owners of AEC. Therefore, the trustees are expected to become educated on the business of running an electric cooperative through training classes and by attending industry meetings and conferences, all provided by AEC. A trustee can expect to spend approximately 10-14 days a year traveling (both in Oklahoma and out-of-state) to attend these classes, meetings, and conferences. To that end, each trustee is encouraged to become certified under the Board Management Program of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). To achieve this certification, trustees are encouraged to obtain the Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate within their first three (3) year term on the board and the Board Leadership Certificate in an additional three (3) years. Completing these credentials expresses to members the dedication their trustees have to serving them to the best of their abilities. Along with the formal training, conferences, and meetings, trustees are also expected to keep up-to-date by periodically reading/reviewing industry-related material.

Responsive to the Members

The final expectation of a trustee is to be a source of information and cooperative access to the member-owners. Constituents often ask trustees questions or request assistance regarding electric rates, outages, the electric industry, community involvement, fuel mix and renewables, energy efficiency, and economic development programs with which the co-op is involved. The trustee is expected to be knowledgeable and helpful to resolve any interaction the member has with AEC.

What AEC's By-Laws say in reference to the Board of Trustees

To become and remain a trustee, an individual must meet the following requirements per AEC By-Laws (Article IV, Section 2):

1. Be an active member of Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, currently receiving electrical service at their primary residence. The member must also be a bonafide resident of the district they seek to represent.
2. Not, in any way employed by, or financially interested in, any enterprise competing with AEC, or any business selling electrical energy, or any business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures, or supplies to the Members of the Cooperative.
3. Not be an incumbent of, or a candidate for, an elected public office in connection with which a salary or compensation in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per year is paid.
4. Not have served seven (7) consecutive terms as a trustee without a one-term layout.
5. Not have a spouse who has served as a Trustee for the immediate preceding term.
6. Not be a close relative of an incumbent Trustee or any employee of AEC within the third degree of blood or marriage.
7. At the beginning of the term to which they seek election, be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
8. Not be a convicted felon.

Time Commitment and Compensation

Time commitments range from monthly board meetings, committee meetings, education and training, member communications, and more. AEC By-Laws prohibit trustees from receiving a salary for their services. Instead, the By-Laws allow the trustees to be compensated by receiving a fixed sum for each day (Per Diem) spent performing an act on behalf of AEC. Trustees are also eligible to receive the same insurance benefits offered to employees.

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Steps to Becoming an AEC Board Trustee:

Step 1: Check the January issue of the Co-op Hotlines for the official notice of board filing

Any member desiring to run for the office of Trustee from the district of his/her residence must file a written Notice of Candidacy on a form provided by the cooperative during a filing period each February inside AEC's headquarters in Cherokee, per AEC By-Laws. Only members filing Notice of Candidacy and Intention to Stand for Election during the published time period shall be eligible for election at his/her District Meeting. No nominations from the floor can be accepted.

Step 2: Attend the District Meeting

All eligible candidates must attend the District Meeting to stand for election. A quorum — a minimum of 5 percent of the district's membership — must be present in order for an election to take place. AEC's legal counsel verifies a quorum has or has not been met.

Step 3: Become an Elected Trustee

The Credentials and Election Committee shall certify the person elected as Trustee by the district. The newly appointed or elected trustees are sworn in to a three-year term at the April board meeting.