

NERC | Northeast Recycling Council

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Welcome to the NERC Board of Directors

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Brief History

The Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. (NERC) was established by the Council of State Governments - Eastern Regional Conference (CSG-ERC) in 1987 to:

- Address the growing concern about the millions of tons of municipal solid waste generated and disposed annually in the northeast.
- Garner support for the diversion of recyclable materials from disposal.
- Assist with market development for the diverted recyclables through regional collaboration and policy consistency.

NERC was an affiliate Member of CSG-ERC until 2000, at which time NERC became an independent non-profit 501(c)(3). NERC's purpose is to conduct research on and educate the public about the environmental and economic benefits of recycling and source reduction in the northeast. NERC's Member states are Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Recycling and source reduction include re-use, re-manufacture, composting, and any other activity that decreases the amount and toxicity of material in the solid waste stream. As an independent organization NERC has focus on its core issues and represents its mission on a regional and national stage. NERC's independence allows for private sector involvement through Advisory Memberships and multi-stakeholder dialogue on a variety of issues.

Mission

To advance an environmentally sustainable economy by promoting source and toxicity reduction, recycling, and the purchasing of environmentally preferable products and services.

NERC seeks to fulfill its mission through the following vision:

- Leverage the strengths and resources of its State and Advisory Members through collaboration and information exchange.
- Be a voice for the common interests of the 10 northeast states.
- Develop and maintain relationships, dialogues, and strategic alliances with stakeholders.
- Provide a forum for communication, strategic planning, and the exchange of information.
- Provide a non-partisan voice on materials management issues.

What it means to be a Member of the Board of Directors

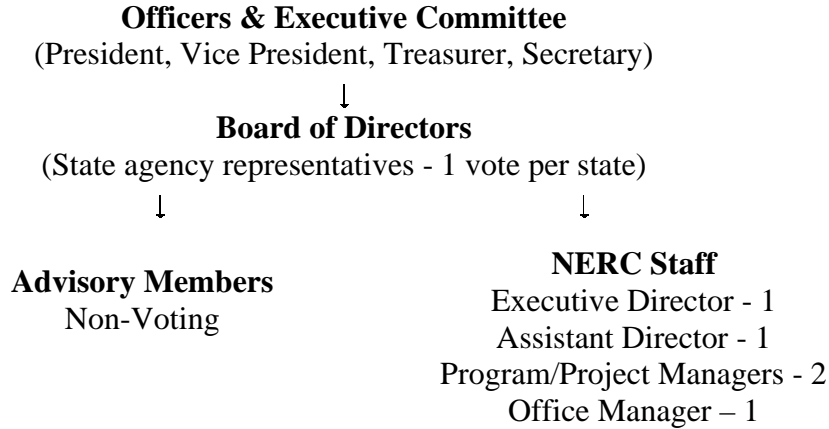
As a non-profit organization, one of the roles of the Board of Directors is to set direction and policy that furthers NERC's mission. NERC's structure, as established by its bylaws, is unusual. Members of the Board are appointed by state agencies. Those state agencies pay Membership dues to NERC. Occasionally, Board Members may feel an inclination to drive NERC in a direction that reflects the goals, priorities, or needs of the Board Member's employing agency. But, as a Board Member your principal responsibility is to further NERC's mission and agenda. At times, this may lead to conflict, but inevitably the Board works together to resolve these conflicts and recognizes their responsibility to NERC's mission and goals.

General Responsibilities of Board Members

1. Respond to requests/emails from staff in a timely fashion.
2. Be a champion for NERC – as an organization, for its projects, and for its position in the region-by informing others about NERC and its upcoming events.
3. Encourage/challenge others in your state to participate in NERC by keeping your state informed about NERC and its accomplishments.
4. Attend Board Meetings, NERC Conferences, and NERC Workshops, and help identify conference sponsors and exhibitors.
5. Help NERC make connections that can enhance its position, reputation and provide opportunities for projects.
6. Keep NERC abreast of relevant developments in your state or agency.

How NERC Operates

Organizational Chart



The Executive Committee (ExCom) is elected annually, with the terms running for one year beginning on July 1. The sole exception is the position of Secretary which is held by the Executive Director and is a non-elected position.

The ExCom is responsible for general administrative oversight of the management of NERC and has responsibility for all decisions and projects assigned to it by the NERC Board of Directors. The ExCom may act in lieu of the full Board of Directors between meetings, including decisions or actions that it determines do not require a full discussion or vote of the Board. As a Board Member you may expect to be asked to serve on the ExCom at some point during your tenure on the Board.

The Executive Director is the Chief Executive Officer of and Secretary to NERC. The Director manages NERC's day-to-day affairs, subject to the policies established by and general supervision of the ExCom. The Executive Director has full responsibility to recruit, appoint, manage, and terminate staff. The Director administers all planning and institutional development activities and is the principal representative and spokesperson of the organization. The Director is pro-active in identifying issues, opportunities, and challenges for the organization and in developing policies and responses to those matters to be considered by the Board of Directors.

Funding

There are currently three primary sources of funding for NERC: grants/contracts ~ 60%, dues (State and Advisory Member) ~ 30%, Conferences/Workshops ~ 7%. Of the dues, State Member's dues represent approximately 75% of the total dues collected. NERC has developed a cash reserve and is fortunate to have that on which it has had to occasionally rely to maintain a balanced budget. Recent budget impacts include a number of factors. The most significant of these are:

- States have not been paying the full amount of expected dues. There is currently a shortfall of approximately 1/3 of the scheduled dues, or \$50,000.
- Decreased federal grant opportunities resulting in increased competition.

In order to sustain the basic operations of the organization, so called ‘overhead’ —staffing for administration and finance, fundraising, program development and implementation, office space, and the basic services (detailed below)—NERC needs non-grant revenues totaling approximately \$200,000/year.

Board Members are asked to:

- Provide letters of support for funding proposals in a timely fashion.
- Actively seek opportunities for financial support for NERC.
- Recommend opportunities for projects for NERC.
- Advocate the benefits of NERC Membership to your agency and potential Advisory Members.

Basic Services Provided or Managed by NERC

- Information source and clearinghouse for the public, press, federal and state agencies, non-profits, businesses, and the public on recycling and source reduction issues
- Monthly Email Bulletin
- Environmental Benefits Calculator
- EPPnet (Environmentally Preferable Purchasing listserv)
- Reuse Marketplace
- State Electronics Challenge
- NERC Website maintenance and development
- State, regional, and national initiatives that support NERC’s mission and enhance its reputation
- Conferences and Board Meetings

As Board Members, you are asked to provide Email Bulletin articles monthly about your state.

How Decisions are Made about Funding Opportunities

NERC relies on grants to develop and deliver programs that support its mission as well as to fund the organization. A major responsibility of the Executive Director is maintaining and securing NERC’s financial integrity. The Director regularly seeks grant opportunities that support the organizational mission and Board priorities, serve multiple NERC states, provide a valuable end-product, and suit the expertise of staff and the organization. Most often, these opportunities are through federal grant programs. The Board is regularly asked to provide ideas for projects, both for specific grant programs and more general projects, so that the Executive Director can be looking for funding opportunities to be matched with the ideas. Occasionally there are state grants and contracts available, and foundation funding is increasingly being examined and pursued, along with fee for service arrangements that may be provided by NERC.

Often funding opportunities arise for which no project idea is already identified. When a funding opportunity arises, NERC staff review its criteria and priorities, and using its knowledge of the Board and organizational priorities, develops ideas that fit the funding opportunity. In most cases grant programs have geographic or demographic boundaries that limit the states in which the project can be offered; meaning not every state will be eligible to participate in every project. The Board Member for each eligible state is contacted before a proposal is developed and asked

if they would like their state to be included. If the eligible state agrees, the Board Member is asked to provide a letter of support expressing their commitment to the project. Without these letters received in a timely fashion, the state cannot be included in the proposal. After weighing all relevant factors, the decision about which opportunities to finally pursue rests with the Executive Director.

Board Meetings

There are two physical Board Meetings every year—spring and fall. Board Members are expected to participate in all meetings of the Board. The fall meeting is the Annual Meeting of the Board. In addition, when circumstances permit, there is a longer summer planning meeting. In recent years, due to state budgetary constraints, a Board Meeting in the form of a conference call has taken the place of the in-person summer meeting. In addition, Board Meetings by conference call are occasionally called by the Executive Committee when time sensitive decisions or discussion are necessary.

As a Board Member you are expected to attend, be prepared for, and actively participate in all Board Meetings, as well as review and vote on minutes. You are also expected to participate in the bi-monthly regional update conference calls.

Voting

In addition to votes taken as part of Board Meetings, emailed-based votes are called from time-to-time. These include voting on minutes, adopting the annual Operating Plan, and other votes that may be suited to this format. Most often votes by email are held after a discussion of an issue has taken place by conference call.

In Conclusion

Finally, thank you for agreeing to serve on the NERC Board of Directors. Over its 20 year history, NERC has been fortunate to have reaped the benefits of scores of committed, engaged, and thoughtful Board Members. It is the dedication of its Members and Directors that has sustained NERC and helped it keep its place of relevance in the recycling community.