

Strategic Plan 2022-2025

AEMA



Dear Friends:

The Athletic Equipment Managers Association (AEMA) was created by equipment managers, for equipment managers. It has a rich history of advancing the equipment management profession: National conventions, workshops, certification, and continuing education are all foundational functions to help advance, promote, and educate on behalf of athletic equipment managers. At the same time, the world of athletics and equipment management is always evolving; the field of equipment management has changed dramatically since the AEMA was created.

The dynamics of our ever-changing profession obligate us to ensure that the AEMA's work – and the ways in which the AEMA conducts such work – continue evolving to meet athletic equipment manager needs of today and tomorrow.

Understanding the responsibility and opportunity presented by an era of new leadership at the AEMA – and embracing a legacy with roots stretching back to the first meeting of equipment managers in 1973 – the AEMA's board and staff will spend 2022 engaged in reflection, exploration, and aspiration to inform the development of a new strategic plan. Through interviews, focus groups and surveys, we will engage diverse voices to provide feedback and insights on the strengths, needs, and opportunities both within our region and our organization.

As I affirmed at the outset of the strategic planning process, I remain steadfast in three core commitments: strengthening the AEMA, supporting the AEMA community and growing the voice of all persons who work in the profession of athletic equipment management.

For those who have long histories with the AEMA, I trust you will find much that is familiar in these pages. Our core DNA is very much the same but expressed more boldly and with specific intention and relevance for the world in which we all live today. For those who are less familiar with the AEMA – or who have historically known only one part of our work like certification – I hope these pages will illuminate a more cohesive and integrated picture of our multi-faceted work.

The challenges the AEMA faces are known and not insurmountable. As such, we are removing many of the internal obstacles that have confined our growth and are instead organizing our efforts in pursuit of three important and ambitious impact goals that recognize the complex and ever-changing nature of athletics.

We will lean into the unique roles afforded to us as a community of athletic equipment managers: I strive for the AEMA to be a catalyst to grow and strengthen the profession and to take advantage of the opportunity we have to support and leverage policy and advocacy work in pursuit of our mission.

This strategic plan represents our shift from acting as an inward-looking organization to an outward-facing organization. Ensuring that we create ongoing opportunities for learning, community engagement, and formal recognition of the AEMA to continue to shape our future work is of critical importance.

The key elements of this plan are refreshed Mission, Vision and Values statements that clarify our role and aspirations in serving our community and goals and strategies to guide our work, accompanied by the rationale behind our priorities.

With the publication of this report, we end our strategic planning journey and begin an important new phase for the organization. We are eager to shift our focus now towards setting the necessary pieces in place as we animate the ideas spelled out in our plan. Thank you for your ongoing support as AEMA enters an exciting new chapter.

Meli Resendiz, President AEMA, E.M., C.



Overview

In the AEMA strategic plan, we will dedicate ourselves to achieving the following:

Three impact goals

1. Increasing resources and revenues dedicated to strengthening the AEMA
2. Grow our membership
3. Advance and promote the AEMA

Four Organizational Goals

1. Strengthen our internal structure
2. Build an innovative and engaging educational program
3. Fostering an inclusive and engaged membership
4. National recognition of Certification

We will lean into the unique roles afforded to us as the sole professional association for athletic equipment managers: our ability to support our members and be a catalyst to grow the AEMA and our resources, dedicated to strengthening the profession, and the opportunity to support and leverage policy and advocacy work in pursuit of our mission. In addition to the impact goals above, the plan also includes four organizational goals that will position us to implement the work.

Additionally, our refreshed by-laws, policies, and procedures further clarify and support our mission and vision in serving our members:

Purpose: The purpose of the Athletic Equipment Managers Association (AEMA) is to promote, advance, and improve the equipment managers profession in all its many phases. Our goal is to work as a group to bring about equipment improvements for the greater safety of all participants in sports and recreation. Members of the AEMA enjoy the opportunity to meet fellow equipment managers at conventions, share ideas, and learn more efficient techniques to help improve their workplace.

Mission: We strive for the advancement, encouragement, and improvement of the profession for the greater safety of participants in all sports, while creating professional growth through research, education, innovation, commitment, and advancement for all members.

Vision: A thriving association strengthened by its members

Values: Education, innovation, justice, equity, diversity & inclusion, empathy, generosity, transformation through collaboration, and community



Strategic Plan 2022-2025: Impact Goals and Strategic Objectives

Driven by our refreshed mission, vision and values and informed by the data gathered during our strategic planning process, we will undertake an ambitious body of work over the next few years to meet our goals. We are committed to supporting critical change in the AEMA by advancing the following three external impact goals:

GOAL 1 Increase resources dedicated to furthering the mission of the AEMA

Objectives:

- Strengthen vendor relationships and expand our ability to attract and retain vendors.
- Continue to pursue collaborative funding opportunities to align and leverage resources.
- Offer advising capacity to attract and retain vendors by using annual surveys for feedback
- Increase fees for membership and convention

Rationale for Goal 1 and objectives:

As the AEMA seeks to grow and evolve, longstanding challenges are intensified, and member needs outpace existing resources. The AEMA's fiscal picture has been anemic and has lacked growth; though we must note the challenges we have faced such as the COVID pandemic, budget cuts in athletics, and vendor cuts as well. Opportunities to grow will need to be addressed immediately for our current fiscal picture and the viability as an organization in the future.

GOAL 2 Grow our membership.

Objectives:

- Reanimate the membership committee to increase membership across all levels
- Actively pursue growth at the high-school level
- Actively pursue growth at the professional level
- Actively pursue growth at all collegiate levels
- Provide funding for each district to enable fellowship at each National Convention
- Increase membership benefits and/or communicate benefits

Rationale for Goal 2 and objectives:

We have untapped potential to expand, diversify, and more deeply engage with working professionals to grow our organization. Our lack of growth exacerbates the longstanding fiscal challenges we face. At the root of these challenges is the reality that the benefits of certification have not been fully realized. The AEMA will solidify our purpose as being a meaningful organization for our members. We have working professionals across a broad spectrum in athletics and will grow our membership in areas where we are currently deficient in.

GOAL 3 Advance and promote the AEMA.

Objectives:

- Advocate for policies that encourage local, state and/or national organizations to move towards the recognition of certification
- Expand and enhance certification development opportunities
- Selectively join and actively message the AEMA's engagement in goal-aligned coalitions and alliances
- Create and communicate the value of certification
- Work towards recognition and partnerships with other athletic affiliates

Rationale for Goal 3 and objectives:

We will seek to create policies and programs that will advance and support our members and professionals working in athletic equipment management. Through active communication and transparency, we will continue to promote the athletic equipment manager career field to university officials, athletic departments, and goal-aligned organizations.



Strategic Plan 2022-2025: Organizational Goals and Strategic Objectives

Driven by our refreshed mission, vision and values and informed by the data gathered during this year, we will undertake an ambitious body of work over the next few years. We are committed to supporting change in the AEMA by advancing the following four internal organizational goals:

GOAL 1 Strengthen our Internal Structure

Objectives:

- Update and adopt new by-laws and policies and procedures
- Strengthen, expand, and empower all AEMA Committees
- Annual performance reviews for all employees

Rationale for Goal 1 and objectives:

To pursue any of our external goals, we need to have our house in order. Updates to our by-laws, policies, and procedures is crucial to meet the needs of our organization. Much of the work of the AEMA flows from our committees. We need to ensure that they have all the resources they need to carry out their work. We also need to ensure that we are using our resources effectively, so providing feedback to our employees is important to demonstrate our commitment to sound business practices.

GOAL 2 Build an innovative and engaging educational program.

Objectives:

- Develop flexible educational opportunities that are responsive to needs of our members
- Encourage a dynamic and inclusive educational program
- Support community-building and membership engagement activities relevant to our mission and vision

Rationale for Goal 2 and objectives:

Bring value and engagement to our members with new and relevant education that is responsive to our members. Current topics included alongside bread-and-butter issues that should always be a part of our educational programming and illicit programming topics from membership

GOAL 3 Fostering an inclusive and engaged membership.

Objectives:

- Develop approaches to engage diverse members; diversity not limited to race, religion, etc., but also level of employment
- Invest in opportunities to serve for younger members
- Encourage fellowship across member populations

Rationale for Goal 3 and objectives:

The AEMA future is tied to an engaged membership; transformation is only achieved with participation. We hope to offer many more opportunities to serve the AEMA

GOAL 4 Work Towards National Recognition of Certification.

Objectives:

- Earn board certification
- Have a certified equipment manager in every equipment room, across of all levels
- Direct advocacy; present at goal-aligned organization national conventions

Rationale for Goal 4 and objectives:

The number one priority of the AEMA will be to bring value to certification. The first step is an internal goal: communicating to our members its importance. The second step will be one of our external goals: recognition by a governing body; translating into cascading effects not only for the AEMA, but also each person working in athletic equipment management.



2020 Transition Plans

Pursuing our three impact goals will require a reorientation of our work and ongoing organizational learning. Much of this change will be iterative and unfold over the life of this strategic plan, as we increase capacity to grow and deepen our support of members, modernize our systems and operations, and expand our communications reach. Our talented and dedicated staff are excited to align their roles with the pursuit of our strategic goals and priorities.

In our work, 2023 will be a year of transition from the AEMA's longstanding traditional focus. Our approach to what we emphasize and work towards will be grounded in our strategic plan. Moving forward, the AEMA aligns with our three impact goals, with funds dedicated to advancing growth, education, and professional development, while also fostering an inclusive and engaged membership.

We will develop strategies and practices, strengthen committee structures, evaluate measures in pursuit of these goals. Our new framework will launch throughout 2023. Until fully realized, our programs will be exclusively proactive, meaning we will focus on continual improvement.

We are intentionally calling this year "transitional" to minimize disruption for members and vendors. We are not closing doors to the historic areas, rather we are creating new pathways to a more engaged, synergized community. With new opportunities, support for current members, and future equipment managers, we will create a new organization ready to face any obstacles.



Conclusion

AEMA's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan is grounded in our historic commitment to enhancing the quality of life of the athletic equipment managers, while explicitly recognizing areas of improvement. Without addressing the barriers that constrain our growth, disparities in athletic equipment management are likely to grow as our athletics becomes more prosperous for some, but certainly not all. Our updated mission, vision, values and new goals commit us to using state-of-the-art tools and supporting a wider range of approaches. Our new strategies involve strengthening relationships with vital community partners to more effectively learn from, partner with and robustly support the AEMA

While confident that we are drawing on a half-a-century of promising work, we also appreciate that we must build new institutional muscle if we are to succeed in making the changes we seek. We are grateful for the vital input we have received from so many stakeholders throughout our strategic planning inquiry, and we look forward to enhancing our community engagement practices as we move forward and continue to learn, test new approaches, adapt and evolve.

We have developed this strategic plan with the expectation that the AEMA will remain dynamic for some time. Our ability to be maximally effective and responsive in the coming years requires us to be mindful of pressing needs, balancing the desire to chart a steady course while remaining flexible and responsive in real time. We will demonstrate continued listening, learning and adaptability in our approach, while remaining committed to active leadership and partnership in order to advance the AEMA.

Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to the numerous stakeholders who helped hone our vision and develop this strategic plan over the course of 2022. Their thoughtful, engaged, and dedicated work made this plan possible.

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Special thanks to:

Sam Trusner, E.M., C. National Office Manager

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