

ALASKA ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Operations Handbook

Processes, expectations, and policies for everyone involved in AKEW.

About This Document

This handbook covers how AKEW operates: roles, decision-making processes, brand usage, data practices, and expectations for everyone involved. It applies to all participants, including City Leads, City Co-Leads, Vertical Leads, event hosts, sponsors, partners, speakers, and volunteers.

Operational guidance specific to City Leads (outreach tracking, sponsorship processes, conflict of interest expectations, and the planning timeline) is provided in the separate City Lead Guide.

How AKEW Is Organized

Statewide Co-Chairs

AKEW is coordinated by two Statewide Co-Chairs who serve in equal standing:

Pascual J Reig-Munoz and **Norma M Lucero**

Both serve on a volunteer basis with zero compensation. The Co-Chairs set the statewide calendar, review sponsorships and partnerships, manage the AKEW brand, allocate resources across regions, and ensure the initiative stays mission-driven. Either Co-Chair may act independently on behalf of AKEW.

City Leads and City Co-Leads

City Leads coordinate AKEW activity in designated regions. When a city or region benefits from shared leadership, additional City Co-Leads are appointed. Co-Leads operate as equals: they collaborate on outreach, events, and coordination within their shared territory.

Anyone interested can apply by contacting contact@akew.org or by nomination from an existing Lead. Appointments are based on the applicant's skills, networks, and familiarity with the local entrepreneurship ecosystem, the current needs of the area, and past performance. If disagreements between Co-Leads cannot be resolved directly, they are escalated to the Co-Chairs for resolution.

Vertical Leads

Vertical Leads focus on specific topics that cut across regions (e.g., social entrepreneurship, youth and education, access to capital). Like City Leads, they may have Co-Leads. Vertical Leads coordinate with the statewide team to ensure their focus area is represented across the calendar.

How Decisions Are Made

Events and Partnerships

City Leads propose events and partnerships for their regions. The Co-Chairs review proposals to confirm mission alignment and coordinate across the statewide calendar. Events and partnerships should be confirmed with the Co-Chairs before being publicly announced or finalized. The goal is to say yes to everything that serves the community.

Sponsorships and Fund Allocation

All sponsorship funds are pooled statewide and allocated based on need across all participating communities. This ensures that smaller or more remote regions benefit from statewide fundraising. City Leads play a direct role in securing local sponsors but do not collect or hold funds directly. All financial transactions are processed through AKEW's 501(c)(3) nonprofit fiscal sponsor.

Sponsorship process:

1. City Lead identifies a potential sponsor and conducts preliminary outreach
2. City Lead reports the opportunity to the Co-Chairs before making commitments
3. Co-Chair confirms the sponsorship and any benefits promised
4. Sponsor contributes through the fiscal sponsor; funds are allocated statewide

Brand and Communications

AKEW's name, logo, and messaging are managed centrally to keep the initiative's identity consistent. City Leads and partners are encouraged to promote AKEW through their own channels using the shared brand assets available through the Media Kit at akew.org. Official AKEW social media accounts, email lists, and web properties are managed by the Co-Chairs or individuals they have designated.

When posting about AKEW from personal accounts, participants should distinguish personal opinions from official AKEW positions. When in doubt about messaging, check with the Co-Chairs before publishing.

Expectations for All Participants

Financial Transparency

No individual handles AKEW cash directly. All financial transactions go through the fiscal sponsor. Sponsorship commitments, in-kind contributions, and fund allocation decisions are documented and available to the organizing team.

Neither Co-Chair receives any salary, stipend, or financial benefit from AKEW. The Co-Chairs, or businesses they are affiliated with, may contribute to AKEW as sponsors or in-kind donors on the same terms as any other contributor.

Handling Confidential Information

Participants who have access to sponsor details, contact databases, financial information, or internal planning materials are expected to treat that information as confidential. It should only be used for AKEW purposes and should not be shared outside the organizing team.

When someone's involvement with AKEW ends, they should return or delete AKEW data in their possession (contact lists, tracking sheets, planning documents) within 48 hours and remove AKEW references from social media profiles and email signatures.

Brand Usage

The AKEW name and brand should only be used in connection with approved AKEW activities. Brand assets (logo, colors, templates) should not be altered or combined with other logos. When someone's involvement ends, use of the AKEW name and brand stops too.

Materials Created for AKEW

Materials, content, and resources created specifically for AKEW (event graphics, outreach templates, presentations) belong to the initiative and remain available for future use. Participants retain rights to their pre-existing work and general skills.

Government, public-sector, and nonprofit exemption. Employees of government agencies, public-sector organizations, and nonprofit entities who participate in AKEW as part of their official duties retain rights per their employer's existing policies. Materials created independently outside that scope are still considered AKEW materials.

Expenses

Participation in AKEW is voluntary and generally at the individual's own expense. If a situation arises where expense reimbursement makes sense (e.g., printing costs for a rural community event), confirm the amount and terms with a Co-Chair in writing before spending. Only pre-approved expenses are eligible for reimbursement.

Departures and Transitions

When a City Lead or other organizer steps down or transitions out, the main priorities are:

- Transfer in-progress contacts and responsibilities to the remaining team or a successor
- Return or delete AKEW data within 48 hours
- Remove AKEW references from personal profiles within 24 hours

City Lead appointments are reviewed on an ongoing basis. If a change is needed, the Co-Chairs will discuss it directly with the Lead. Removing one Co-Lead from a shared territory does not affect the other Co-Lead(s).

Resolving Disagreements

Most disagreements within the AKEW team can and should be resolved through direct conversation. When that does not work, the Co-Chairs are available to mediate. The general approach:

1. Talk directly with the other person first
2. If unresolved, bring it to the Co-Chairs at contact@akew.org
3. While a disagreement is being worked out, pause the disputed action

AKEW operates under the laws of the State of Alaska. In the unlikely event that a formal dispute arises, the courts of Anchorage, Alaska have jurisdiction.

Updates to This Handbook

These policies may be updated as AKEW evolves. Updated versions will be posted at akew.org and shared with the organizing team. Participants are encouraged to check periodically for updates.

The Volunteer Nature of AKEW

AKEW is a volunteer initiative. Participation does not create an employment relationship, independent contractor agreement, or any other legally binding arrangement. Everyone involved is here because they want to be, and that is what makes it work.

Neither the Co-Chairs nor any other AKEW participant assumes personal legal or financial responsibility for the actions or obligations of other participants. Each person and organization is responsible for their own conduct.

Contact

Questions about anything in this handbook:

Email: contact@akew.org

Website: akew.org