



## Position Description for Presiding Clerk of the Corporation and Board of Directors

### Introduction

The Presiding Clerk of the AFSC Board of Directors and Corporation provides spiritual and organizational leadership. The Clerk works closely with the General Secretary to facilitate discernment of the way forward in both programmatic and governance dimensions. The Clerk embodies and promotes the Quaker identity of the organization and nurtures the expression of Quaker values and spirit-led decision-making practices. To accomplish these leadership roles, the Clerk listens deeply and respectfully to members of the wider AFSC community, supports trust and mutual accountability, and calls staff and governance groups to fulfill the vision and mission of this “precious instrument.”

### Duties

1. **Supports Spirit-led Decision Making:** The Clerk presides during meetings of the Corporation, Board of Directors and Board Executive Committee (BEC), maintains a spirit of worshipful waiting, and listens for and articulates the emerging sense of the meeting.
2. **Leads Agenda Planning and Follow Through:** The Clerk, with the help of the Board officers, the Board Executive Committee, the General Secretary and Executive Board Secretary, sets agendas for Board, BEC and Corporation meetings, ensures follow up to implement decisions, and assigns responsibility for further action.
3. **Sets Priorities and Forward Direction:** The Clerk facilitates an annual process of setting priorities for Board action and guides the collective discernment of a forward path for the organization, in alignment with the strategic plan.
4. **Coordinates with the General Secretary:** The Clerk meets regularly with the General Secretary to discuss governance business, to identify emerging issues, and to develop shared approaches.
5. **Offers Guidance through Tensions and Conflict:** The Clerk serves as a sounding board and as a voice for reconciliation and cohesive community, particularly among governance bodies. The Clerk encourages use of the organization’s Dispute Resolution Procedures.
6. **Demonstrates Accountable Leadership:** The Clerk receives feedback on the Clerk’s own performance at least annually and participates in a full performance evaluation every three years. The Clerk supports the performance evaluations of the General Secretary and the Board.
7. **Monitors Governance Bodies:** The Clerk tracks the functioning of all committees and working groups, and, in cooperation with the Governance Committee and the BEC, intervenes as necessary to ensure their effectiveness.
8. **Acts as a Spokesperson:** In coordination with the General Secretary, the Clerk acts as a spokesperson for AFSC on issues of policy and shares responsibility for public speaking opportunities and engagements, which may include fundraising.

**Support for the Presiding Clerk:** Ensuring that governance operates well is a group effort; the Clerk is not expected to carry the full weight alone. The Clerk is directly supported by an active Assistant Clerk and Executive Board Secretary, as well as other members of the Board Executive Committee and other members of the Board who are prepared to take on tasks. All AFSC-related travel expenses are covered. Other forms of compensation may be considered within the bounds of nonprofit practices.

## **Qualifications**

1. Membership and currently active in the life of the Religious Society of Friends.
2. A record of gifted clerking of decision-making bodies and ability to maintain a spirit of worship during deliberations. Able to discern and express the sense of the meeting. Skilled in encouraging participation of those less expressive or whose voices are often not heard.
3. Commitment to the mission of the American Friends Service Committee. Experience serving on the AFSC Board and/or other nonprofit boards preferred. Significant experience with and understanding of AFSC governance functions and programs desirable. Familiarity with peace and justice work in the United States and internationally preferred.
4. Personal commitment to diversity, and inclusion as witness to the Quaker beliefs in equality, peace and justice for all people. Experience working with a wide range of people from diverse racial, cultural, economic, and other backgrounds, especially the groups included in the AFSC Diversity & Equity policies.
5. Ability to manage tension and disagreement. Excellent listening skills and ability to respond well to staff and governance volunteer concerns.
6. Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively in person, in writing and orally. Able to speak knowledgeably about AFSC programs and positions.
7. Understanding of management processes; ability to delegate tasks to others and to seek assistance appropriately.
8. Ability to make this a primary volunteer commitment. Time to meet with the General Secretary, to attend committee meetings, frequently on weekends and in the evenings. Available to undertake occasional travel both in the United States and abroad.
9. Familiarity with the various branches of Quakerism, other Quaker organizations in the United States and abroad. Supportive of approaches to achieving mutually beneficial relationships with the Religious Society of Friends.

## **Terms of Service and Nomination**

The Presiding Clerk serves for a maximum of two three-year terms, beginning with the Board meeting following the annual Corporation meeting. The Standing Nominating Committee is usually asked to bring forward names of people to serve on an ad hoc search committee for Board approval. The search committee guides the process of recruitment of potential candidates and brings forward a Clerk nominee for Board approval.

**Approved by the Board on June 20, 2020.**