

# **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

## **Founding Organization Agreement**

### **Register of Professional Archaeologists and the Archaeological Institute of America**

**THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT** (“MOA”) is entered into by and between the **Archaeological Institute of America** (“AIA”), a nonprofit corporation tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and the **REGISTER OF PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS** (“Register”), a nonprofit corporation tax exempt under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Register and the AIA shall be referred to separately as the “Party” and collectively as the “Parties.”

This Agreement, effective on February 5, 2026, (“Effective Date”) is between the Parties and outlines their mutual expectations and benefits of reciprocity.

### **Register of Professional Archaeologists**

The Register is incorporated in the state of Illinois. It is a non-profit organization filed as a 501c(6) with the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS), incorporated in 1998. Its bylaws are available at: [https://rpanet.org/resources/Documents/RPA\\_Bylaws.pdf](https://rpanet.org/resources/Documents/RPA_Bylaws.pdf).

Mission and Objectives: The Register is a community of professional archaeologists whose mission is to establish and adhere to standards and ethics that represent and adapt to the dynamic field of archaeology and to provide a resource for entities who rely on professional archaeology services. The purpose of the Register is to advance professionalism in archaeology by:

- Identifying archaeology as a profession and qualified archaeologists as professionals;
- Designating qualified archaeologists or other individuals in the archaeological community of the Register according to their appropriate category (Registrants);
- Establishing and encouraging high standards in the training of archaeologists;
- Establishing a published Code of Conduct for Registrants (Code) and Standards of Research Performance (Standards);
- Administering grievances against Registrants to address questions of compliance with the Code and Standards; and
- Engaging in any and all lawful activities incidental to the foregoing purposes, except as otherwise restricted herein.

Structure: The Register is composed of individual members to whom the Register answers through the election of a Board of Directors. The primary income source of the Register is from annual dues paid by these members. The Board consists of directors, four of whom are allocated to the Founding Organizations (SAA, AIA, SHA, and AAA). Other Board members include the President, President-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, Registrar, and Grievance Coordinator. The Executive Director is an

employee of the Register. The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Register and for the implementation of directives set by the Board. The Register operates the Grievance Council, the Registration Council, and maintains the following Standing Committees: Ethics, Nominating, Outreach, and Professional Development. The Register may create other committees for specific purposes, in line with its Bylaws.

## **The Archaeological Institute of America**

The Archaeological Institute of America is legally domiciled in the state of Massachusetts. It is a non-profit organization filed as a 501c(3) with the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Its regulations and bylaws are available at: <https://www.archaeological.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/AIA-Regulations-rev.-2023.pdf>

**Mission and Objectives:** The AIA [an educational not-for-profit organization] “promotes archaeological inquiry and public understanding of the material record of the human past to foster an appreciation of diverse cultures and our shared humanity. The AIA supports archaeologists, their research and its dissemination, and the ethical practice of archaeology. The AIA educates people of all ages about the significance of archaeological discovery and advocates for the preservation of the world’s archaeological heritage “. The vision statement of the of the AIA (<https://www.archaeological.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Vision-Statement.pdf>) details its commitment to:

- Preserve, protect, and interpret the precious record of the human past by employing the highest ethical, professional, and intellectual standards
- Explore and understand the dynamics of past human cultures and environments through the material record
- Strengthen support for the work of practicing archaeologists and the sharing of their findings
- Seek an ever richer understanding of the human past through the integration of multi-disciplinary perspectives
- Embrace a collaborative and inclusive view of archaeology worldwide that recognizes the interest of practicing archaeologists, avocational members, and generally curious minds
- Inspire audiences to engage in learning more about the past to better understand the present, and in support of a more informed future

**Structure:** The Archaeological Institute of America is composed of supporting members, professional members, retired professional and contingent faculty members, graduate student members, undergraduate and below student members, military and K-12 educator members, and lifetime members. The government of the Institute is vested in the Council, the Governing Board, and Executive Committee. All persons who serve on the government must be members. The officers of the Institute are the President, First Vice-President, the Vice-President for Cultural Heritage, the Vice-President for Outreach and Education, the Vice-President for Societies, a Treasurer, a Secretary and subordinate officers appointed by the President. The Executive Director of the Institute serves as Secretary.

The Council of the Archaeological Institute of America manages, preserves and protects the property of the Institute and has full power to manage and conduct its affairs. According to the regulations of the Archaeological Institute of America, “The Council of the Institute...shall consist of the *ex officio* members listed in Section 2 of the Act of Incorporation, approved by the President of

the United States on May 26, 1906. These include the president, the honorary presidents, the vice presidents, the treasurer, the secretary of the Institute and the editor-in chief and business manager of its journal, the presidents of affiliated societies and the chairmen of the managing committees of any American Schools founded by the Archaeological Institute of America in foreign countries for classical or archaeological studies and research [including those now affiliated with the voluntary association known as the Archaeological Institute of America]] the remaining members of the Governing Board, the Legal Counsel of the Institute, one delegate for each fifty Members-at-Large to be appointed by the President prior to the Annual Meeting to represent the Members-at-Large, and those delegates designated annually by the members of the Institute in affiliated Societies as hereinafter provided.”

The Governing Board of the Archaeological Institute of America consists of the President, the First Vice-President, four Vice-Presidents, the immediate past President, the Treasurer, and the Executive Director as Secretary of the Institute (each ex officio with voting privileges), and not fewer than twenty-four and not more than thirty Trustees who shall be elected by the Council.

The Executive Committee of the Archaeological Institute of America is able to exercise power and authority of the Governing Board between meetings of the Governing Board. The Executive Committee has 12 (twelve) members: the President, First Vice-President, Vice-President for Cultural Heritage, Vice-President for Research and Academic Affairs, Vice-President for Outreach and Education, Vice-President for Societies, Treasurer, Executive Director (all of whom shall serve ex officio with voting privileges), and four Trustees, at least one of whom must be an Academic Trustee. These Trustees will be appointed to the Executive Committee by the President on an annual basis.

### **Mutual Responsibilities**

1. The Parties shall promote cross-membership in the other’s organization.
2. The Parties shall cross market each other and identify one another as a “Partner”.
3. The Parties shall provide timely information to each other about events and programs that can be posted on the Parties’ events calendar.
4. The Parties shall not speak for or on behalf of the other.
5. The Parties shall not provide legal representation for the other.

### **Founding Organization Responsibilities**

1. The AIA shall provide the Register exhibit and/or promotional space at its annual meeting.
2. The AIA shall provide the Register one (1) complimentary annual meeting registration.
3. The AIA shall allow the Register to attend the public portion of the AIA’s board meetings.
4. The AIA shall appoint an individual to serve on the RPA Board of Directors. The appointed individual needs to understand the importance of their fiduciary responsibilities to the RPA (care, obedience, and loyalty), their role as a liaison between the Register and the AIA Board, and the obligation that person has of abiding by the Register’s Bylaws.
5. The AIA shall contribute Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000) annually to the Register to support the Register’s mission as one of its Founding Organizations.
6. The AIA shall foster awareness of the Register’s Code and Standards through education.

### **The Register’s Responsibilities**

1. The Register shall provide a discounted annual fee to Registrants who are members of both the Register and the AIA.
2. The Register shall invoice the AIA no later than June 15 of each year for a \$2,000 Annual Contribution.
3. The Register shall collaborate on the development and delivery of training opportunities of mutual benefit to the AIA and the RPA.
4. The Register shall, upon request from the AIA President OR Vice-President of Research and Academic Affairs, review any matter referred to the Register by AIA pursuant to the Register's Grievance Process for investigation into potential violations of RPA's Code of Conduct. Only AIA's professional and student membership categories are subject to the Code of Conduct.

## **AIA Interpretation of RPA Code of Conduct**

*The AIA interprets RPA Code of Conduct with the following specific criteria.*

The Register of Professional Archaeologists ("RPA") agrees to enforce its Code of Conduct against members of the Archaeological Institute of America ("AIA") (regardless of whether they are also RPA members), subject to the following understandings and declarations, which apply only to those AIA members who are not also RPA members. RPA is free to enforce its Code of Conduct against any RPA member, even if they are also AIA members, as RPA understands and interprets the provisions of its Code of Conduct. The RPA is an international organization, and its code of conduct was crafted to ensure archaeologists comply with the laws that govern them in the situation where they work.

AIA understandings and declarations:

1. All references to "Applicable Law" are explicitly understood to refer solely to archaeological and heritage-related laws.

Explanation: AIA members work in a wide range of international and transnational settings in which behaviors may be required or prohibited but where compliance would be considered ethically and morally problematic by its members or prohibited by US law. While AIA acknowledges that members are subject to laws in sovereign states and territories, it does not necessarily consider violations of laws unrelated to archaeology or heritage to necessarily constitute violations of a code of conduct or professional standards in and of themselves.

AIA further understands that some terms, concepts and legal statuses may be construed differently outside of the US. For example, ownership of land or the understanding of who properly represents or constitutes descendant communities may be less straightforward than in the US. In such cases, AIA members are expected to exercise reasonable care in applying these principles based on their best understanding of how they apply in the specific context in which they work.

2. The AIA views the following provisions of the RPA Code to mean the following in cases where an issue arises with respect to an AIA professional member who is not also an RPA member.

*RPA Code Section 1.1: You shall understand and comply with all Applicable Laws, including, but not limited to, ensuring all necessary government permits and necessary permissions from landowners have been acquired for all projects in which you participate.*

RPA Code Section 1.1: Per this section, the RPA is required to do their due diligence to ensure they are not trespassing on private property without permission, regardless of where they work. The AIA understands this section to require that archeologists understand and comply with all Applicable Law and secure all necessary rights and permissions; it is not understood to apply to instances of complex or contested claims of ownership of lands or territories.

*RPA 2.2 You shall report knowledge of violations of the Code by a Registrant to the Grievance Coordinator.*

*RPA 2.5 You shall not obstruct a Grievance investigation against any Registrant. If you are under investigation by the Register's Grievance Procedures, you shall cooperate with the investigation.*

Sections 2.2 and 2.5: In these sections, AIA understands the term “Registrant” to include AIA professional members.

*RPA 2.11 You shall not knowingly be involved in the recovery or excavation of archaeological resources or human remains for commercial exploitation, as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Further, you shall not knowingly be employed by or contract with an individual or entity that recovers or excavates archaeological resources or human remains for commercial exploitation. You shall not allow the use of your name or support for any recovery or excavating of archaeological resources or human remains for commercial exploitation.*

Section 2.11: The AIA understands this section with the limiting phrase “as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” deleted.

*RPA 2.12: You shall not engage in the buying or selling of archaeological resources or provide an appraisal or identification of archaeological collections to someone who has the intention of engaging in commercial exploitation, either through the black market, commercial auction houses, private collectors, or other means.*

Section 2.12: The AIA understands this section to mean the following:

AIA members shall refuse to participate in the trade in undocumented antiquities and refrain from activities that give assistance, directly or indirectly, to that trade, and to the valuation of such artifacts through authentication, acquisition, appraisal, publication, or exhibition. Exceptions to the prohibition on valuation and authentication are made for purposes of assisting law enforcement, including in prosecution and assessment of civil penalties, and where a publication or exhibition has the purpose of illustrating and educating about the problems of looting and theft of and trade in antiquities.

AIA further understands this section to allow appropriate trade in documented objects on behalf of a museum or other public institution and to allow appraisal or identification for insurance purposes and for purposes of loans.

Documented antiquities are those that are documented as belonging to a public or private collection before November 14, 1970, when the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export or Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, or for which proof of permitted excavation or a valid export license (or similar authorization) is available, if the object was not documented before that date.

*RPA 3.3: You shall strive to include descendant communities, stakeholders, and the interested public as an integral part of any dissemination plan for archaeological research or project, as appropriate and where permissible. You shall consult or collaborate with descendent or indigenous communities and stakeholders for input and knowledge where applicable and appropriate and unless directed otherwise by an agency of competent jurisdiction that is undertaking its own government-to-government consultation.*

Section 3.3: AIA understands this section to provide general guidance and expects archaeologists to consult with a range of appropriate stakeholders as appropriate.

*RPA 3.5: You shall ensure the availability of adequate and competent staff, necessary support facilities, and funding for curatorial facilities that meet the requirements of this Code and the scale and complexity of each project.*

Section 3.5: AIA understands this section as guidance subject to the Applicable Law of the country in which an archaeologist is working and relevant permit requirements. AIA recognizes that in some instances the archaeologist does not have final authority over these decisions; in such cases reasonable care should be exercised.

*RPA 3.8: You shall ensure all records are intelligible to other archaeologists and if terms lacking a common, consistent meaning within the field are used, then they should be clearly defined.*

Section 3.8: AIA understands this section to require reasonable efforts to avoid idiosyncratic terms and that records be kept in an appropriate and accessible language, and not as a broader requirement that records be kept in multiple languages except as required by Applicable Law of the country where the archaeologist is working or by permit.

*RPA 3.16 In the event that the research is conducted on private lands without agency jurisdiction, you shall work with the owner of private land for permission to conduct an archaeological project and to establish the outcome of any material remains recovered and associated records made. Effort should be made to educate the landowner about the benefits of having the collection curated in a permanent curation facility and, if successful, budget for its curation.*

Section 3.16: AIA understands this section to refer primarily to work in the United States and that in international settings rightsholders to archaeological objects may be different. Claims to land ownership may be complex. This section is therefore interpreted as requiring archaeologists to secure appropriate permissions for access to sites and appropriate disposition of archaeological collections subject to Applicable Law of the country where the archaeologist is working or as required by permit.

*RPA 3.19 You shall deposit the digital records of archaeological investigations, with appropriate raw and metadata, in an institution that can responsibly curate and make them available in a way that appropriately controls access to restricted or sensitive information. The institution must meet guidelines for current best practices, such as, but not limited to, those established by the Core Trust Seal (<https://www.coretrustseal.org>), or in the Guide to Good Practice published by the Archaeology Data Service and Digital Antiquity (<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/help-guidance/guides-to-good-practice/>), or the Center for Digital Archaeology, or best practices within the region. You shall ensure there is information made available about where the Archaeological Collections and digital data are stored so all parts of the collection are known.*

Section 3.19: AIA understands this section to require that digital records must be stored in appropriate repositories meeting requisite standards for permanence and accessibility as allowed by Applicable Law of the country where the archaeologist is working. Otherwise, AIA views Section 3.19 as aspirational.

*RPA 3.21 You shall produce a scholarly or technical report within ten (10) years of completion of a project (or a period specified by the educational institution or agency of competent jurisdiction) or yield one's right of primacy with respect to publication of the data. If you prefer or determine that you will not publish your project results, you shall make your data accessible to other archaeologists for analysis and publication. If you cannot complete a final report within that timeframe for circumstances outside of your control (such as a funding freeze, unusually large and ongoing projects, and other extenuating circumstances) interim or preliminary reports may be acceptable if they are made widely available and are clearly marked as such.*

Section 3.21: AIA understands this section as requiring a good-faith effort to publish results in a timely manner. AIA recognizes both that some very large, multi-decade projects may require correspondingly longer periods of time for “final” reports, that complex, collaborative projects involving multiple specialists may require varying, staggered timelines, and that rights of primacy of publication are not forfeited as long as good faith efforts are made to disseminate results in a timely manner.

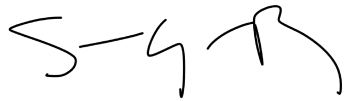
*RPA 3.22 You shall remain qualified and proficient in archaeology by staying informed and knowledgeable about developments in your area of specialization, including undertaking appropriate continuing education as appropriate, and when required by the Register.*

Section 3.22: AIA reserves the right to determine proficiency and currency for its members, as well as any requirements regarding Continuing Education.

3. AIA reserves the right to amend its Code of Professional Standards and to continue to publicize it on its website, as it chooses.

## **Renewal and Termination**

1. This Agreement is an annual agreement that automatically renews on January 1 of each calendar year, unless terminated by either of the Parties in writing at least 90 days prior to the end of any term.
2. Either of the Parties may propose an amendment or edits to this Agreement, at least 180 days prior to the end of any term.



February 5th, 2026

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Sara Ayers-Rigsby, President  
Register of Professional Archaeologists

Date



February 5th, 2026

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Brian I. Daniels, President  
Archaeological Institute of America

Date