

About IARU

The International Amateur Radio Union was founded in 1925. Ever since, it has served as Amateur Radio's voice at international frequency allocation conferences. <https://www.iaru.org/>

The IARU is a worldwide federation of national Amateur Radio associations (usually referred to as member societies). The IARU consists of over 160 member societies representing virtually every country with a resident population of radio amateurs. In addition to the worldwide organization, member societies are also members of their respective regional IARU organizations corresponding to the three ITU Radio Regions. The regional organizations are essentially autonomous; each has its own Constitution. The ARRL is a member of both Region 2 and Region 3 because our regular operating territory encompasses portions of both regions.

The IARU Constitution imposes no direct financial obligations on member societies. However, the regional organizations have their own dues structures, and member societies are required to meet their obligations to the regions. If a member society fails to meet its obligation the region can request that its rights be suspended.

IARU membership is limited to one national association per country. In some countries, there are multiple national associations of radio amateurs, in which case only one is a member of the IARU. IARU policy is to encourage the member society to accept responsibility for representing the interests of all radio amateurs in its country, not just its members. In that spirit, Region 2 dues are calculated based on the number of radio amateurs in a country, not based on the number of members the member society has.

The ultimate authority of the IARU is its member societies and is expressed through mail balloting on proposals made by the Constitution. Each member of society has one vote. The affairs of the IARU are administered by an Administrative Council (AC) consisting of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and two representatives from each of the three regional organizations. The ultimate authority of the regional organizations is the triennial conference, usually held in September or October, where the member societies gather in person to elect their own officers and executive committees, set dues, and transact other regional business. In recent years it has been the pattern for the AC to meet for two or three days immediately following a regional conference. The regional conferences follow a staggered schedule; i.e., Region 1 last met in 2023 and will next meet in 2026, Region 3 will meet in 2024, and Region 2 in 2025.

How well the IARU performs its primary function of representing Amateur Radio at international frequency allocation conferences have a tremendous impact on the radio amateurs of the United States. Strong support of the IARU has always been a cornerstone of ARRL policy. Since its founding in 1925, the administrative functions of the IARU have been performed by the ARRL. Ever since the most recent major Constitutional revision, in 1984, the ARRL has served as the IARU International Secretariat (IS), as the IS, the ARRL is obliged to cover the essential costs of IARU administration. In exchange, the ARRL has the right to designate the IARU Secretary and to nominate the President and Vice President in consultation with the AC. The

member societies vote to ratify the nomination of the President and Vice President to five-year terms.

Because the IARU should engage in activities beyond those minimally required by the Constitution, the AC has established as IARU policy (which has been agreed to by the three regional organizations) that each region shall contribute 10% of its operating budget toward the worldwide expenses of the IARU. The regional contributions cover approximately one-fourth of the budget of the IARU, not including salaries, benefits, and overhead. The typical annual budget for the International Secretariat, not including salaries, benefits, professional fees, and office overhead expenses such as electricity, telephone, heat, and water, is on the order of \$100,000, most of which is required for the travel of IARU representatives to meetings of the ITU, of IARU officers to meetings of the AC and the regional organizations, and of IARU instructors to courses in Amateur Radio Administration conducted for telecommunications administrators from developing countries.

The ARRL's dues obligation to IARU Region 2 is approximately \$38,000. per year, calculated (as of 2018) based on \$.07 per licensed amateur. As a member of Region 3, we voluntarily pay \$500 per year, a nominal amount that is somewhat more than we would owe if our dues were calculated on the usual basis.

The IARU faces many challenges in the coming years, probably the most important of which is the need for more regular involvement in the ITU as that organization grapples with the rapidly accelerating pace of change in the world's telecommunications environment. World Radiocommunications Conferences (WRCs) are now held every four or five years. As a consequence, the IARU is in a continual posture of preparing for WRCs by attending important meetings of ITU study groups and working parties that analyze WRC agenda items and suggest methods of satisfying or resolving the agenda items on the WRC agenda. Technology is moving ahead faster than the deliberate pace of international organizations can keep up, but even this considerable challenge is less significant than the worldwide trend toward the privatization of telecommunications services and in some cases, of telecommunications administrations themselves. Private corporations are gaining a greater voice in the daily work of the ITU, and we must work harder if we are to be heard amongst the chorus of multi-billion-dollar industry representatives.