



Investment Policy Statement

OPEB Master Trust

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L/CERA

Investment Policy Statement

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About LACERA

The Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (“LACERA”) administers a defined benefit retirement plan (the “Fund”) and has been appointed as the Investment Manager for the Los Angeles County’s, LACERA’s, and Los Angeles County Superior Court’s Other Post-Employment Benefit Trusts (“Trust[s]”), which are the participating employers under the LACERA Master Trust (“OPEB Trust”).

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established LACERA by ordinance in 1937. LACERA has operated since 1938, and today, serves over 170,000 active and retired members.

LACERA’s mission is to “produce, protect, and provide the promised benefits to our members.” LACERA aims to fulfill its mission through prudent investment and conservation of plan assets, in accordance with its Investment Beliefs and in consideration of actuarial analysis.

LACERA’s Board of Investments (the “Board”) is responsible for establishing LACERA’s investment policy and objectives, as well as exercising oversight of the investment management for both the Fund and the OPEB Trust.

The County of Los Angeles (“County”) established the OPEB Trust for the purpose of pre-funding the Retiree Healthcare Benefits Program (“OPEB Program”). The OPEB Trust serves as a funding tool for the participating employers to hold and invest assets used to pay OPEB Program benefits, such as medical, dental and vision.

In 2012, the County Board of Supervisors approved entering into a Trust and Investment Services Agreement with the LACERA Board to serve as trustee and investment manager for two participating employers: Los Angeles County and LACERA. In 2016, the governing body of the Los Angeles Superior Court approved a similar agreement, and the Board of Supervisors in turn approved amending the County agreement to include the Superior Court as a third participant in a pooled investment structure through the OPEB Master Trust Declaration.

LACERA MISSION STATEMENT

We Produce, Protect, and Provide
the Promised Benefits
to our Members

Statement of Purpose

The OPEB Trust Investment Policy Statement (the “IPS”) defines the framework by which LACERA manages the assets of the OPEB Trust in order to fulfill its mission. The document provides the primary guidance for OPEB Trust investment activities by outlining the philosophy and structure of the OPEB Trust investment program, describing the general process by which assets are managed, and defining the key roles and responsibilities for the investment program.

The IPS is in furtherance of the OPEB Trust’s purpose to permit the co-investing and commingling the assets of the participating Trusts for investments purposes. The ultimate purpose of the investment program is to fund and pay benefits under the OPEB Program.

Legal Authority

Article 8.6 of the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937, as amended (California Government Code Sections 31694 - 31694.5) ("CERL") provides authority to governing bodies of the County and Superior Court to establish a Trust to fund an OPEB Program and for the Board of Investments to be appointed and serve as Trustee, investment manager and/or third-party administrator for such Trust. The County and Court Trust agreements were established pursuant to this legal authority and approved by the Board of Investments. LACERA, in turn, used its authority to create the Master Trust to facilitate the investment of the County, Court, and LACERA funds set aside for the OPEB Program. Under the OPEB Trust Declaration, the Board of Investments has "sole and exclusive authority, control over and responsibility for directing the investment and management of" OPEB Trust assets. The Board of Investments is a fiduciary in performing its responsibilities as Trustees. The Trust documents provide for the Board of Investments to adopt investment policies and asset allocation formula as the Board sees fit in the performance of its duties to fulfill the purpose of the Trusts.

LACERA's governing statutes create a legal framework within which this IPS must be interpreted and implemented by the Board in approaching its decisions. Under the OPEB Trust Declaration, the Board is independent and has sole and exclusive legal responsibility over investment of OPEB Trust assets, including the establishment of the investment policy and asset allocation.

A. Fiduciary Duty

The Board and its Trustees are fiduciaries under the Trust documents and applicable by law, making decisions for the benefit of the Trusts as a whole without other concerns or outside influence. All Trustees, whether they are elected, appointed, or ex officio, have the same fiduciary duty under the law. This fiduciary duty has two components:

- i. **Duty of Loyalty.** Under the duty of loyalty, Trustees have the sole and exclusive responsibility to administer the OPEB Trust in the interest of and for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to the participating employers' participants in the OPEB Program and their beneficiaries. In making every decision, the Board must act according to a three-pronged legal formula that balances the interests of OPEB Trust stakeholders: (1) solely in the interest of providing OPEB Program benefits to Program participants and beneficiaries, (2) to minimize employer contributions necessary to fund the OPEB Program, and (3) to defray the expenses of administering the OPEB Trust. The Board's duty to participants and their beneficiaries takes precedence over any other duty.
- ii. **Duty of Prudence.** Trustees must discharge their duties with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence that a prudent fiduciary familiar with the matters and the circumstances of each particular decision would use in the conduct of a similar enterprise with like aims. The Board must diversify OPEB Trust investments so as to minimize risk of loss and maximize the rate of return, unless under the circumstances it is clearly prudent not to do so. The Board may invest or delegate the authority to invest OPEB Trust assets through the purchase, holding, or sale of any form or type of investment, financial instrument, or financial transaction when prudent in the informed opinion of the Board.
- iii. In order to exercise its fiduciary duties, the Board has the responsibility to stay informed and affirmatively conduct oversight of the OPEB Trust investment program, including receiving, reviewing, and engaging on investment performance and compliance information and reports.

B. Ethics and Code of Conflicts

The Board and LACERA staff must refrain from personal activity that could conflict with the proper management of the OPEB Trust investment program, or that could impair their ability to make decisions in compliance with fiduciary duty. Further details are defined in LACERA's Code of Ethical Conduct, Conflict of Interest Code, the Political Reform Act, Fair Political Practices Commission regulations, and other applicable law.

C. Process

Because the Board is a governing body of a public agency, the Board and its Trustees must conduct business according to the State of California Ralph M. Brown Act, which provides that Board meetings, deliberations, and actions must be public unless subject to a specific closed session exception. The Board may go into closed session to discuss the purchase and sale of particular, specific OPEB Trust investments under the Brown Act.

Investment Policy

I. Investment Philosophy and Strategy

A. Objectives of the Investment Program

LACERA follows a carefully planned and executed strategic investment program in order to:

- i. **Produce** the promised benefits for OPEB Trust participants and beneficiaries by achieving the OPEB Trust assumed rate of return on a total return basis over the long-term, consistent with LACERA's mission;
- ii. **Protect** the promised benefits on behalf of OPEB Trust participants and beneficiaries by mitigating investment risks through diversification and other means, consistent with LACERA's mission; and
- iii. **Provide** the promised benefits for OPEB Trust participants and beneficiaries, in part by ensuring adequate liquidity, consistent with LACERA's mission.

B. Investment Beliefs

The Board has adopted the following investment beliefs ("Investment Beliefs") to describe its core beliefs and underlying assumptions about how capital markets operate. Collectively, the Investment Beliefs provide a framework to guide LACERA's investment decisions in a manner consistent with the Fund's nature as an institutional investor with a long-term investment horizon in order to achieve the Fund's objectives defined above.

i. Strategic Asset Allocation

Long-term strategic asset allocation will be the primary determinant of OPEB Trust risk/return outcomes.

- a. It is important that LACERA be forward-looking, as its investment horizon spans decades, if not indefinitely, into the future.
- b. Strategic asset allocation has a greater effect on return variability than asset class investment structure or manager selection.
- c. Strategic asset allocation is a critical source of investment diversification to optimize growth and mitigate risk across the total Fund.
- d. Strategic asset allocation must carefully consider plan liabilities, actuarial assumptions, and capital market assumptions.
- e. Rebalancing the portfolio is a key aspect of prudent long-term strategic asset allocation policy.

ii. Market Dynamics

Capital market efficiencies inform LACERA's strategic asset allocation and portfolio construction.

- a. The efficiency of financial markets may vary by market segment, geographic region, geopolitical regimes, and across public versus private markets.

- b. Market transparency, the regulatory environment, behavioral finance factors, and investment time horizons may influence and shape market efficiency.
- c. LACERA's investment processes should be adequately nimble to prudently capture attractive investment opportunities.

iii. Return

Risk and return are expected to be positively correlated over long-term periods. Returns can be enhanced through active strategies, illiquid investments, and leverage; however, such strategies need to be balanced with LACERA's risk tolerances, portfolio objectives, and liquidity needs.

- a. Active strategies will be used when they are expected to add value net-of-fees while adjusting for risk.
- b. The total capital allocated to illiquid strategies must be kept at a prudent level.
- c. Liquid assets serve a critical role to fund benefit payments and rebalance the portfolio.

iv. Risk

Risk is a broad term used to capture the concept of uncertainty. No single metric adequately conveys risk. LACERA will evaluate risk holistically, incorporating quantitative measures and qualitative assessments in managing its portfolio. Monitoring and managing risk is a key focus for LACERA. Risk that is not expected to be rewarded over the long-term, or mitigated through diversification, will be minimized.

Risks confronted by LACERA include, but are not limited to:

- a. Investment Risks (macroeconomic, volatility, leverage, illiquidity, geography, currency, political, credit, environmental, social, and governance); and
- b. Operational Risks (valuation, counterparty, benchmarking, business continuity, talent management, cybersecurity, reputational, fraud, regulatory, and conflicts of interest).

v. Governance

Strong governance is critical for LACERA to achieve its investment objectives. Strategic direction-setting by the Board, prudent delegation of day-to-day portfolio management, and effective organizational controls and oversight are important components of strong governance.

vi. Stewardship

LACERA recognizes that environmental, social, and corporate governance factors (ESG) may present financial risks and opportunities for the Fund. LACERA seeks to identify, evaluate, and manage financially relevant ESG factors in its investment process—including portfolio construction, investment due diligence, and stewardship strategies—to safeguard and enhance Fund performance.

vii. Terms

Investment outcomes are determined by risk, returns, and costs. All three must be managed, and each mandate should be structured with the best possible terms available across the total Fund to enhance future outcomes.

- a. The breadth of LACERA's presence in financial markets is an asset to influence terms and fees.
- b. Consideration of net-of-fees returns is an integral part of a successful long-term investment strategy.
- c. Costs, fees, and terms should be actively monitored and negotiated to the greatest extent possible.

viii. Productivity

People and resources matter. Constructive talent management, efficient operations and procedures, and a commitment to ongoing education and improvement are essential to optimizing LACERA's investment performance.

- a. Human Capital: Trustees and staff are vital to executing LACERA's investment program. LACERA must cultivate a talented and collaborative workforce that is inclusive of diverse perspectives and backgrounds and demonstrates a steadfast commitment to high ethical conduct.
- b. Education: In an increasingly complex and dynamic investment universe, continued education on investment concepts and investment strategies within that universe is fundamental for long-term success.
- c. Operations: Strong operational processes and sufficient resources can maximize efficiency, mitigate risks, and optimize investment performance.

C. Strategic Asset Allocation

LACERA fundamentally believes long-term strategic asset allocation will be the primary determinant of risk/ return outcomes, and therefore establishes a strategic asset allocation to meet its mission and investment objectives.

The OPEB Trust strategic asset allocation categorizes capital outlays into four groups, defined by the function each allocation is intended to serve in the portfolio: (1) Growth, (2) Credit, (3) Real Assets and Inflation Hedges, and (4) Risk Reduction and Mitigation. The functional categories include various asset classes that represent the risk/return characteristics of each area.

LACERA expects the four functional categories to diversify the OPEB Trust and optimize upside growth while mitigating downside risk. The asset allocation determines what proportion of the OPEB Trust are allocated to each functional category and underlying asset class, including target weights and allowable ranges as a percentage of the OPEB Trust.

In order to determine the OPEB Trust strategic asset allocation, LACERA conducts a comprehensive asset allocation study every three to five years, or at the Board's request. The asset allocation study considers a number of factors, such as:

- A projection of actuarial assets, liabilities, benefits payments, contributions, and the actuarial rate of return for the OPEB Trust, as well as its current and projected funded status.
- Historical results and expected long-term capital market risk, return, and correlation forecasts.

- An assessment of future economic conditions, including inflation and interest rate levels.
- Various risk/return scenarios.
- OPEB Trust liquidity requirements.

Approved asset allocation and benchmarks for the OPEB Trust are detailed in the tables of the Appendix.

D. Overview of Strategic Asset Allocation

LACERA groups asset classes into the following functional categories:

i. Growth

- a. Role in the portfolio: The role of assets in this category is to be the primary driver of long-term total returns for the OPEB Trust.
- b. Asset Classes: Global Equity and Private Equity.
- c. Investment Approach: Growth assets generally represent equity or equity-like interests in current and future income streams. Growth assets include public and private market strategies that include both liquid and illiquid investments. The OPEB Trust utilizes passive strategies in relatively efficient segments of the market for global equity and employs active strategies in relatively less efficient market segments including private equity.
- d. Risk Factors: Growth assets are primarily equity ownership positions that tend to perform well in times of positive economic growth. They are highly sensitive to economic conditions and are subject to potential loss in value based on a number of factors. For example, growth assets may be sensitive to inflation and generally perform poorly in times of high and unexpected inflation. To a lesser extent, growth assets may be sensitive to interest rates due to the use of leverage in certain strategies as well as the relationship between interest rates and the discount rates used to price securities.

ii. Credit

- a. Role in the portfolio: LACERA expects assets categorized as Credit to produce current income and moderate long-term total returns. Credit has more moderate levels of risk than assets categorized as Growth, and, accordingly, provides incremental diversification to the OPEB Trust.
- b. Asset Classes: Credit.
- c. Investment Approach: Credit assets are generally fixed claims on assets or income streams of an issuer (e.g., government, corporation, asset-backed securities). The category is composed of certain fixed income, real estate, and private debt investments. Investment strategies within this category may have a specific mandate or be multi-strategy. The investment strategies may be liquid, illiquid, or a combination of both, depending on the nature and terms of the specific investment vehicle. The OPEB Trust employs passive strategies for the more efficient segments of the credit market and may employ active strategies in certain segments that are relatively less efficient.
- d. Risk Factors: The primary risk for owners of Credit assets is the failure of the borrower to make timely payments of interest and principal. There are three elements of credit risk: the risk of

default, the risk of a credit downgrade, and spread risk, which is the risk that investors may demand greater compensation for bearing the first two types of risk. Bonds with credit risk offer a yield premium over government bonds to compensate investors for the additional risk. Bonds with greater credit risk (i.e., bonds with lower credit ratings) are typically less liquid than higher quality bonds.

iii. Real Assets and Inflation Hedges

- a. Role in the portfolio: LACERA expects assets in this category to provide income as well as a hedge against inflation, while diversifying the OPEB Trust due to the assumed low correlation of returns between these assets and other asset classes.
- b. Asset classes: Private Real Estate, Natural Resources, Private Infrastructure, and Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (“TIPS”).
- c. Investment Approach: Real Assets generally include physical assets, such as real estate and infrastructure, or securities whose value is derived from a physical asset, such as commodities or natural resources. Assets in this category may be invested in both public and private investments and may be liquid or illiquid, as well as passively or actively managed.
- d. Risk Factors: Real Assets and Inflation Hedges are sensitive to inflation. The primary risk for owners of real assets/inflation hedges is that they fail to provide a hedge against long-term changes in inflation. A secondary risk is loss of principal. The value of real estate and natural resources assets may fall, particularly during an economic downturn, but also due to idiosyncratic aspects of each asset. Diversification may offset asset-specific risk. Foreign assets are also subject to currency movements against the U.S. dollar. TIPS are exposed to liquidity risk, as they tend to be less liquid than nominally U.S. Treasuries, particularly during a market environment in which there is a flight to safety.

iv. Risk Reduction and Mitigation

- a. Role in the portfolio: LACERA expects assets in this category to provide moderate amounts of current income by generating a modest level of return while also reducing risks for the OPEB Trust, in part by preserving capital in the event of a downturn in equity markets. LACERA anticipates that assets in this category will have a low level of volatility and a low correlation to Growth assets, thereby providing downside protection. In the event of a market correction, these assets could also provide a source of liquidity for benefit payments.
- b. Asset classes: Investment Grade Bonds, Long-Term Government Bonds, and Cash.
- c. Investment Approach: The category is composed of investment grade bonds, long-term government bonds, and cash. Cash is the least volatile asset class, as well as the most liquid; the flexibility it provides during periods of market decline helps to mitigate risk. Investment grade bonds comprise a mix of U.S. Treasuries, corporate debt, and other bonds of high quality, typically rated “BBB” or above by rating agencies. High quality bonds would be expected to protect the OPEB Trust by retaining or increasing their value during a market correction.
- d. Risk Factors: The primary risk factor for Risk Reduction and Mitigation Assets is that they will fail to provide the anticipated level of protection during market downturns. Assets in this category are also subject to additional risks. For example, investment grade bonds are sensitive

to fluctuations in interest rates and have some risk of default. Cash can include short-term instruments and vehicles where there is a low probability of loss of principal.

v. Overlays and Hedges

- a. Role in the portfolio: The category consists of overlays and hedges as a distinct functional category. LACERA expects exposures in this group to assist in adhering to OPEB Trust policy allocation targets, meeting asset class-specific objectives, and managing portfolio risk.
- b. Asset classes: Total Fund and all BOI approved asset classes may be utilized or subject to overlays and hedging strategies.
- c. Investment Approach: The category is composed of derivatives and synthetic replication investment vehicles that emulate the Trust's physical assets, holdings, foreign currency, or market exposures via overlay and hedging programs. The separation of these mandates into one category allows for increased ability to monitor exposures across the Trust and enhances the ability to evaluate performance, attribution, portfolio impacts, and risk drivers across individual asset categories and the total Fund.
- d. Risk Factors: The primary risk factors for Overlays and Hedges are exposure mismatch and benchmarking. Best efforts will be made to replicate the Trust's underlying exposures and risk; however, there may be instances when the vehicles used will not mirror a given asset, causing an exposure mismatch. Another consideration is benchmarking. Benchmarking overlay and hedging programs is challenging as positions are often resized more frequently than underlying physical exposures, and mandates may be used to achieve multiple objectives or be a temporary portfolio construction tool.

E. Performance Objectives

The OPEB Trust's long-term performance objective is to generate risk-adjusted returns that meet or exceed its defined actuarial target as well as its policy benchmark, net-of-fees, over the OPEB Trust designated investment time horizon. The OPEB Trust's policy benchmarks at the total OPEB Trust level, the functional category level, and the asset class level can be found in the Appendix.

F. Rebalancing

LACERA considers rebalancing the OPEB Trust a key aspect of prudent long-term portfolio management. LACERA rebalances the OPEB Trust portfolio in accordance with established guidelines and procedures to adhere to its approved strategic asset allocation, consistent with the OPEB Trust stated Investment Beliefs. The approved ranges for each functional asset category and underlying asset class are defined in the Appendix.

G. Responsible Stewardship and Beneficial Ownership Rights

In pursuing its investment program, and as part of mitigating risks associated with the OPEB Trust investments, LACERA seeks to manage its investments in a manner that promotes and safeguards the economic interests of its participants, consistent with LACERA's mission. LACERA prudently exercises its rights as an investor to support policies and practices at companies in which LACERA invests, as well as public policies governing financial markets, that are consistent with the OPEB Trust's economic interests. In doing so, LACERA aims to promote sustainable, long-term value on behalf of its participants

and enhance LACERA's ability to fulfill its mission. LACERA has therefore adopted Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles (see Attachments). Beneficial ownership rights pertaining to the OPEB Trust investments, including, but not limited to proxy voting where LACERA has retained voting authority, are managed in accordance with LACERA's Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles.

H. Integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Factors

LACERA recognizes that environmental, social, and governance factors may influence the risk-return profile and financial performance of investments. Financially material ESG factors may vary by industry, geographic exposure, business strategy, investment time horizon, and other variables. LACERA endeavors to identify, assess, and manage relevant ESG factors in its market research, portfolio construction, and throughout its investment process in furtherance of its mission and fiduciary duties. Careful consideration of ESG factors throughout LACERA's investment process aims to generate sustainable investment returns. LACERA assesses and monitors all investment partners on their capacity and skill in evaluating ESG risks and opportunities in a compelling manner to enhance LACERA's risk-adjusted returns.

I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

LACERA values diversity, equity, and inclusion, and believes that effectively accessing and managing diverse talent leads to improved outcomes. LACERA considers diversity broadly, inclusive of—but not limited to—professional backgrounds, age, experience, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability status, military service, ethnicity, national origin, and culture. LACERA expects external asset managers and other third-party providers to respect and reflect LACERA's value of diversity, equity, and inclusion. LACERA's ongoing monitoring of third-party service providers incorporates an assessment of vendors' commitment to, adherence with, and track record of accessing and retaining diverse workforces in an inclusive and equitable manner.

II. Investment Process

The following sections articulate the general parameters and processes by which LACERA executes its investment strategy, in accordance with its fiduciary duties.

A. Structure Review

After an asset allocation study apportions capital across categories, LACERA conducts a Structure Review to address how to implement each asset category. A Structure Review establishes the framework for each asset category by addressing its role and expected risk profile within a total Fund context. The Structure Review evaluates the objectives, portfolio composition, related strategic initiatives, and how the portfolio may evolve in the near to medium term. These reviews are presented to the Board for its approval no less frequently than the comprehensive asset allocation study conducted for the OPEB Trust, or at the Board's request. To assist the Board and staff in carrying out their duties, Structure Reviews provide guidelines, including, but not limited to, Board-approved benchmarks, subcategory target allocation ranges, geographic market target allocation ranges, and any pertinent parameters on asset manager diversification relevant to the asset category.

B. Investment Management

i. Investment Agreements

Board-approved investment recommendations are subject to negotiation and execution of an agreement that, in the judgment of LACERA's Chief Investment Officer and Chief Counsel, includes all terms necessary to provide adequate protection for the OPEB Trust's interests under the circumstances of the transaction, including but not limited to an appropriate standard of care on the part of the investment manager.

ii. Selection and Monitoring

LACERA may utilize internal resources or externally managed portfolios implemented by asset management firms and service providers to effectuate the OPEB Trust investment program. In determining whether to use internal or external resources to implement a specific investment mandate, strategy, or investment-related service, LACERA takes into consideration numerous factors, including, but not limited to, return expectations, associated risks, compliance requirements, and expenses related to the specific strategy or service.

LACERA has adopted formal procedures to guide the selection, appointment, and monitoring of external managers and service providers. LACERA expects any external party that manages assets on behalf of the OPEB Trust to serve as a fiduciary.

iii. Costs

LACERA considers the costs and expenses related to executing its investment program to be a crucial component of its fiduciary duty and an important element in determining its strategic asset allocation. In all aspects and functions of its investment program, LACERA seeks to actively identify, assess, and monitor expenses. LACERA expects that the economic terms and conditions by which any external party is compensated for investment-related services should promote an alignment

of interests between the OPEB Trust and the external party in fulfilling LACERA's mission and investment objectives. Accordingly, LACERA diligently attends to and negotiates the economic terms of investment services rendered to the OPEB Trust.

C. Liquidity Management and Other Investment Functions

The following sections provide the general guiding principles and parameters for certain components of LACERA's investment process, including liquidity management, the use of derivative instruments, securities lending, and certain prohibited transactions.

i. Liquidity and Cash Management

Effective cash management is integral to LACERA's investment process. LACERA strives to maintain appropriate levels of liquidity—i.e., the ability to convert investments into cash—in order to meet immediate or short-term obligations and liabilities, such as satisfying a request by a participating employer to fund OPEB Program participant benefits, meeting capital calls, and rebalancing the portfolio per the strategic asset allocation. LACERA manages liquidity by monitoring the aggregate liquidity and liquidity risk exposures of the OPEB Trust.

ii. Derivatives Management

LACERA may employ derivative instruments to hedge or gain exposure to certain investments. A derivative is a financial instrument that derives its value from an underlying asset which represents direct ownership of a security or a direct obligation of an issuer. Derivatives may be exchange-traded or traded over the counter (OTC). LACERA expects that any use of derivatives by external managers must adhere to LACERA's policies and investment guidelines.

iii. Prohibited Transactions

LACERA prohibits the following transactions unless stated otherwise in the investment management agreement:

- a. "Prohibited transactions" as defined under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).
- b. Transactions that involve a broker acting as a "principal," where such broker is also the investment manager (or an entity related to the investment manager) who is making the transaction.
- c. Any or all applicable investment activities forbidden by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or other applicable governing bodies.
- d. Any acts or omissions that violate state and local laws regarding conflicts of interest and disclosures.

LACERA does not lever the OPEB Trust investment portfolio as a whole. However, leverage is implicit in many investment strategies. LACERA expects that any use of leverage by external managers must adhere to LACERA's established policies and investment guidelines.

III. Risk Management

LACERA manages risk by establishing and adhering to investment guidelines, pursuing multiple approaches to diversification (such as asset class, geography, liquidity profile, currency, and degree of active management), and conducting regular measurement and analytical exercises. LACERA assumes certain risks to achieve sufficient returns to meet the OPEB Trust's financial obligations and investment objectives. Investment risks pertain to the prospect of a permanent loss of capital or of not meeting objectives within the designated timeframe. LACERA seeks to mitigate the impact of a drawdown to the OPEB Trust in order to accomplish its investment objectives, reduce volatility, and avoid increased contributions to the OPEB Trust from the participating employers.

A. Philosophy and Objectives

LACERA considers risk multi-faceted and, therefore, views risk from multiple perspectives. Risk may vary and evolve over time, across sectors or geographic exposures, and depends on the nature and terms of the investment vehicle that LACERA deploys to implement OPEB Trust investment strategies. Risk may be systematic (i.e., present across the market) or unsystematic (i.e., specific to a particular investment strategy). A risk may pertain to and potentially impact the OPEB Trust, a functional asset category, or individual underlying asset classes.

LACERA seeks to diligently identify, assess, and monitor relevant investment risks throughout the investment process, from determining its strategic asset allocation to ongoing evaluation and monitoring of OPEB Trust performance. This helps to ensure that risks assumed by the OPEB Trust are intentional and adequately compensated.

B. Approach

The OPEB Trust strategic asset allocation attempts to position the OPEB Trust to capture growth while mitigating large drawdowns. LACERA's investment strategy is designed to take intentional risk, called active risk, in order to achieve commensurate investment results. LACERA may define expectations for active return earned per unit of active risk taken for various investment strategies and portfolios.

LACERA seeks to identify and acknowledge the sources and types of risk inherent in each investment strategy. However, LACERA also recognizes that even sophisticated risk measurement techniques may not detect certain risks, including extreme events, in advance. Accordingly, risk models may only provide limited predictive qualities. LACERA endeavors to test and challenge investment strategies and assumptions prior to a capital outlay as well as for ongoing monitoring.

LACERA measures investment risk using multiple metrics on both an absolute and relative basis at all relevant levels (i.e., total OPEB Trust, functional asset categories, and underlying asset classes). LACERA also strives to employ stress testing, scenario analyses, and broader financial and economic analyses to understand current and potential risks related to its investment strategy and decisions. LACERA selects appropriate benchmarks to assess and determine whether investment risks taken by the OPEB Trust are appropriate in order to achieve expected investment returns.

LACERA may establish a risk budget to set active risk targets for each functional asset category and underlying asset classes. LACERA aims to minimize unintended risk caused by asset allocation drift or other factors.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

LACERA has established the following roles and responsibilities to implement its investment program, all of which must be performed under the terms of the Trust documents and the Board's fiduciary duty as defined above. The duties explained below apply to the Board, staff, and various external parties who collectively oversee and administer the functions necessary for LACERA to accomplish its investment objectives.

The overview outlined below is further complemented by the following documents: *Board of Investments Charter*, *Board of Investments Regulations*, and the Board's Funding Policy, among other policies adopted by the Board.

A. Board of Investments

i. Board

Under Trust Agreements entered into by the Board of Investments with the County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Superior Court pursuant to California Government Code Sections 31694-31694.5 of the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL), the Board is a fiduciary with respect to the OPEB Trust, with exclusive responsibility and authority for its investment and management. The Board's fiduciary duty includes the obligation to:

1. Discharge their duties solely in the interest of, and for the exclusive purpose of, providing benefits to Participants under the OPEB Program, minimizing Employer contributions necessary to fund the OPEB Program, and defraying reasonable expenses of the Trust;
2. Discharge their duties with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing that a prudent person acting in like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims and in accordance with the terms of the Trust; and
3. Diversify the investments of the Trust so as to minimize the risk of loss and to maximize the rate of return, unless under the circumstances it is clearly not prudent to do so.

Specific responsibilities over the OPEB Program, including, but not limited to, the responsibilities for actuarial studies and assumption setting, are overseen by the Board of Retirement and considered by the Board of Investments when making investment-related decisions and managing the Trust. In fulfillment of its exclusive fiduciary duty, the Board performs the following roles:

- Approves LACERA's Investment Policy Statement, including establishing the Investment Beliefs that frame it, to guide implementation of the Trust's investment program.
- Approves a strategic asset allocation for the Trust, including, but not limited to, investment allocations, and benchmark targets within defined asset categories.
- Approves Structure Reviews for each defined asset category of the Trust's strategic asset allocation, including, but not limited to, establishing the following: investment allocations within defined investible categories; target allocations and ranges; benchmarks by which to measure and monitor performance; and other portfolio guidelines.
- Actively reviews, monitors, and questions the investment and administration of the portfolio, requests such information as may be necessary to perform its responsibilities, and responds

to issues relative to the portfolio and its administration as may periodically arise.

- Performs additional investment and management functions, as defined in the Trust Agreements and Board policies and direction, and as necessary to perform its responsibilities under the Trust Agreements.

The Board is vested under the Trust Agreements, consistent with CERL with the authority to delegate certain responsibilities, including the authority to invest, when prudent in the informed opinion of the Board. The Board exercises oversight of all aspects of the investment program. In the exercise of this authority, the Board:

- Selects, approves, and reviews investment consultants, actuaries, and fiduciary counsel (consistent with LACERA's Policy on Fiduciary Counsel) to provide research, analysis, and recommendations to assist the Board in making prudent and informed decisions in line with its fiduciary duties.
- The Board delegates to the Chief Investment Officer ("CIO") the authority to select, fund, and terminate asset managers consistent with fulfilling the provisions and guidelines as approved by the Board and defined in this IPS, the strategic asset allocation, Asset Class Structure Reviews, and other Board approved policies.

The Board has the affirmative responsibility to oversee the investment and management of the OPEB Trust in compliance with this IPS, other Board policies and directives, and all applicable federal and state laws and regulations concerning the OPEB Trust created under CERL. The Board has the duty to stay informed, including requesting, receiving, and reviewing information, and to monitor and make inquiries based on that information to assist in its responsibility of conducting oversight of the investment program. To that end, the Board receives and has the duty to receive and review annual and quarterly reports of Trust performance (including asset categories and asset managers), as well as investment risks and compliance to prudently inform the Board's oversight. The Board may request staff and investment consultants to inform and make recommendations on any matters pertinent to LACERA's investment operations. The Board may also delegate specific authorities to the CIO, as further outlined in the IPS.

ii. **Committees**

To assist the Board in carrying out its duties, the Board may establish one or more committees ("Committee"). A Committee makes recommendations to the Board on investment actions related to its area of focus. A Committee may request staff and investment consultants to inform and make recommendations to it on matters pertinent to the OPEB Trust investment program.

B. Staff

LACERA staff implements Board-approved policies in adherence to fiduciary duties, LACERA's Code of Ethical Conduct, and the LACERA Conflict of Interest Code. Staff are charged with the responsibility of providing the Board with information to assist Trustees in exercising their roles and responsibilities and fulfilling their fiduciary duties.

i. **Chief Executive Officer**

The Board and LACERA'S Board of Retirement jointly appoint the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO").

The CEO is responsible for planning, organizing, and administering the operations of LACERA under policy guidance and direction from the Board and the Board of Retirement. The CEO exercises administrative oversight of the CIO, excluding investment decisions delegated to the CIO. The Board provides input to the CEO in the CEO's oversight of the CIO.

ii. Chief Investment Officer and Investment Staff

The CIO and investment staff manage the portfolio according to the Board's policies, advise and inform the Board about investments, assist with development and review of investment policies and procedures, oversee operational aspects of the OPEB Trust, report on the progress of the OPEB Trust in meeting its investment objectives, make any appropriate recommendations, and monitor and report to the Board on the performance of the OPEB Trust relative to the appropriate benchmarks. The Board has delegated the following responsibilities directly to the CIO:

- Conduct searches for external asset managers in line with LACERA's Board-approved Procurement Policy to provide investment services.
- Approve the selection and termination of external asset managers, with the concurrence of relevant Board-approved investment consultants for the asset class, to implement Board approved strategic asset allocation and asset category Structure Review investment guidelines. The CIO also has authority to approve temporary variances from asset-level program and investment manager guidelines.
- Approve co-investments, secondary transactions, re-ups, and advisory board seats in adherence with Board-approved strategic asset allocations and asset category Structure Review investment guidelines.
- Approve, or delegate authority to sign, all investment-related contracts and agreements necessary to implement Board-approved strategic asset allocations and Structure Reviews that, in line with the Board-approved Procurement Policy and in the judgment of the CIO and Chief Counsel, provide adequate protection for LACERA's interests, including an appropriate standard of care on the part of each manager.
- Approve rebalancing the Fund in order to raise cash for benefit payments, adjust investment exposures, or pay operational expenses while adhering to investment policy targets outlined within Board-approved strategic asset allocations and asset category Structure Review investment guidelines.
- Approve actions as outlined in the Board-approved Procurement Policy.
- Approve limiting or freezing manager trading activity. Such actions are reported to the Board as reasonably practical and no later than the next scheduled meeting of the Board.
- Approve actions not otherwise specifically delegated, in concurrence with the CEO and the Chair of the Board, when deemed necessary in the best interest of the Fund and when there is not enough time to take the action to the full Board. Such actions are reported as reasonably practical to the full Board, and no later than the next scheduled meeting of the Board.
- Oversee an annual self-evaluation process for internal investment committees.

The CIO is authorized and directed to interact with and communicate directly with the Board regarding all investment-related matters. The internal investment staff reports to the CIO, who in

turn reports to the CEO, with input of the Board. The CEO does not have any authority over any and all investment decisions that are delegated to the CIO.

LACERA's Board-approved Crisis Plan provides guidance in the event that the CIO is not available to implement delegated authorities.

iii. Chief Counsel and Legal Staff

The Office of Chief Counsel and legal staff (Legal Counsel) are primarily responsible for legal issues concerning the investment program and advise the Board, CEO, CIO, and staff on investment-related legal matters. Legal Counsel advises the Board in performing its fiduciary responsibility. In addition to reliance upon internal resources for such matters, and on fiduciary counsel, the Chief Counsel or designee within the Legal Office may retain other external legal counsel, when deemed necessary and appropriate, to advise staff, negotiate and prepare contracts on investment-related matters and individual transactions, and provide other investment legal advice to protect LACERA's interests.

C. Third Party Service Providers

LACERA may engage external service providers, as described below, to implement the OPEB Trust investment program. All service providers, unless otherwise not applicable, are expected to serve as fiduciaries to the OPEB Trust in fulfilling their contracted services. Third party service providers must refrain from gift-giving or other efforts that may jeopardize the impartiality, or appearance thereof, of LACERA's Board and staff.

i. Investment Consultants

An investment consultant works for the Board in the oversight and implementation of investment objectives. In meeting the Board's objectives, investment consultants may work with staff and investment managers. The Board's general investment consultant provides advice and recommendations to the Board or Committee regarding OPEB Trust strategic objectives, risks, oversight, and implementation of investment objectives. Investment consultants, both general and specialized, provide advice and recommendations regarding strategic asset allocation, portfolio implementation, and oversight of the OPEB Trust to the Board, CIO, and staff. Investment consultants provide analysis, advice, and recommendations to staff on asset manager selection and monitoring. Investment consultants report to the Board or the Committee, as directed, and serve as an independent resource accountable to the Board. Investment consultants have a fiduciary duty to LACERA and must report economic interests and conflicts in accordance with California law and LACERA policy, including the Code of Ethical Conduct and filing of Form 700s.

ii. Custodian Bank

The Custodian Bank ("Bank") serves as a fiduciary in the safekeeping of OPEB Trust assets. The Bank is responsible for maintaining the OPEB Trust's official accounting book of record, including the ongoing pricing and valuation of all assets, collection of income generated by those assets, any corporate action notification, and performance calculation. The Bank cooperates with and provides assistance to staff and investment managers in the reconciliation process. LACERA may opt to designate other duties to the Bank as stipulated in the professional services agreement.

LACERA's investment office works with LACERA's accounting division to manage the custodial relationship.

iii. Investment Managers

Investment managers, subject to the terms and conditions of this IPS, and applicable laws and regulations, serve LACERA through contracts that specify investment guidelines, administrative requirements, responsibilities, investment fees, and performance expectations for management of each mandate. Investment managers provide reporting for the OPEB Trust to LACERA on the performance of specific investment mandates in adherence to established guidelines and agreements. Staff and consultants synthesize investment managers' performance for presentation to the Board in accordance with established performance monitoring and oversight procedures. Investment managers should accept a fiduciary duty to LACERA, must report economic interests and conflicts in accordance with California law and LACERA policy, including the Code of Ethical Conduct and filing of Form 700s, and enforce their own diversity, ethics, and sexual harassment policies.

iv. Other Third-Party Service Providers

Additional third-party service providers may be retained, subject to the terms and conditions of LACERA's established policies and procedures, in order to perform other duties to assist in the administration of the OPEB Trust.

D. Participating Employers

The Participating Employers, the County, the Court, and LACERA, have those roles and responsibilities set forth in the County and Court Trust agreements and the Master Trust Declaration, including the right to determine contributions made. The Participating Employers have given the fiduciary responsibility over investments and disbursements to the Board of Investments, according to the terms set forth in the Trust documents.

V. Policy Review

The Board reviews the Investment Policy Statement upon approval of any new strategic asset allocation, or at the discretion of the Board.

Appendix

Investment Tables

Table 1: Approved Asset Allocation

Asset Class	Target Allocation (%)	Allocation Range +/- (%)	Target Allocation (1/2 step) 7/1/2024
Growth	45	+/-10	45
Global Equity	40	+/-10	40
Private Equity	5	+/-5	5
Credit	16	+/-5	17
Real Assets and Inflation Hedges	13	+/-4	16.5
Real Estate	5	+/-3	6.5
Natural Resources	2	+/-2	2
Infrastructure	2	+/-2	2
TIPS	4	+/-4	5
Risk Reduction and Mitigation	26	+/-9	21.5
Investment Grade Bonds	19	+/-7	14.5
Long-term Government Bonds	5	+/-5	5
Cash	2	+/-2	2
Overlays and Hedges	0		0
Cash Overlay	0		0
Currency Hedge	0		0
TOTAL FUND	100		100

Table 2: Benchmark Table

Asset Class	Benchmark
Growth	Custom Blend
Global Equity	MSCI ACWI IMI Net
Private Equity	MSCI ACWI IMI + 200 bps (3-Month lagged)
Credit	Custom Blend: 70% Credit Suisse Leveraged Loans: 30% Bloomberg US Corporate High Yield + 100 bps (1 Month lagged)
Real Assets and Inflation Hedges	Custom Blend
Real Estate	NFI ODCE (3-Month lagged)
Natural Resources	S&P Global Natural Resources TR
Infrastructure	Dow Jones Brookfield Global Composite Infrastructure TR (3-Month lagged)
TIPS	Bloomberg US TIPS (0-5 yrs)
Risk Reduction and Mitigation	Custom Blend
Investment Grade Bonds	Bloomberg US Aggregate TR
Long-term Government Bonds	Bloomberg US Long Treasury Bond
Cash	FTSE 3-Month US Treasury Bill
TOTAL FUND	Custom Blended Policy Benchmark

Policy History

Restated November 8, 2018

Revised December 11, 2019

Revised August 11, 2021

Revised December 14, 2022

Revised November 8, 2023

Revised January 20, 2024

List of Attachments

Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles

Responsible Contractor Policy

Emerging Manager Policy

Placement Agent Policy

Private Equity Privatization Policy

Procurement Policy for Investment-Related Services

Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles



MAY 2023

Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles

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About LACERA

The Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (“LACERA”) administers defined benefit retirement plans and other post-employment benefits for employees of Los Angeles County and certain other districts.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established LACERA in 1937 under the terms of California’s County Employees Retirement Law. LACERA is governed by the California Constitution (Article XVI, Section 17), the California County Employees Retirement Act of 1937, and the California Public Employees’ Pension Reform Act of 2013. Today, LACERA serves over 160,000 active and retired members.

LACERA MISSION STATEMENT

We Produce, Protect, and Provide
the Promised Benefits
to our Members

LACERA’s mission is to “produce, protect, and provide the promised benefits to our members.” LACERA aims to fulfill its mission through prudent investment and conservation of plan assets, in accordance with the *Investment Beliefs* that frame its *Investment Policy Statement* and in consideration of actuarial analysis.

LACERA’s Board of Investments is responsible for establishing LACERA’s investment policy and objectives, as well as exercising oversight of the investment management of the fund.

Statement of Purpose

LACERA seeks to responsibly steward its investments in a manner that promotes and safeguards the economic interests of LACERA and its members, consistent with LACERA's mission to "produce, protect, and provide the promised benefits." LACERA believes that robust investor rights, strong corporate governance practices and policies at the firms in which it invests, and sound public policies governing financial markets help generate long-term economic performance. LACERA prudently exercises its rights as an investor to support corporate governance practices and financial market policies that promote sustainable, long-term value and enhance LACERA's ability to fulfill its mission.

The fundamental objective of LACERA's *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles* (the "Principles") is to safeguard and promote the economic interests of the trust. The *Principles* identify LACERA's core principles of corporate governance and the key stewardship strategies LACERA pursues to advance them. They are intended to further the *Investment Beliefs* that frame LACERA's *Investment Policy Statement* by articulating LACERA's view on sound governance and broader environmental, social, and governance (also known as "ESG") issues.

LACERA seeks to exercise the legal rights it has as an investor and to steward its assets by applying these *Principles*. The *Principles* guide LACERA's proxy votes, engagements with policymakers and portfolio companies, and collaboration with other institutional investors when it shares common objectives (such as actively participating in investor associations). The *Principles* help inform LACERA's investment process, including the evaluation and monitoring of portfolio investments, consistent with the rights and legal obligations of each asset. And the *Principles* outline the legal authority, roles, and responsibilities guiding LACERA's application of the *Principles* and initiatives.

In advocating practices in line with these *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*, LACERA aims to maximize the long-term value of plan holdings.

Legal Authority

The LACERA Board of Investments has “the sole and exclusive fiduciary responsibility over the assets of” the system, as provided by the California Constitution (Article XVI, Section 17(a)). LACERA exercises its legal rights on corporate governance matters in furtherance of its fiduciary duty under Article XVI, Section 17 of the California Constitution, the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL), and other governing laws, regulations, and case authority. The Board’s fiduciary duty has two components:

A. Duty of Loyalty

Under the duty of loyalty, Board members have the sole and exclusive responsibility to administer the system in a manner that will assure prompt delivery of benefits and related services to the participants and their beneficiaries. (Article XVI, Section 17(a).) Board members shall discharge their duties with respect to the system solely in the interest of, and for the exclusive purposes of providing benefits to, participants and their beneficiaries, minimizing employer contributions thereto, and defraying reasonable expenses of administering the system. (CERL Section 31595(a).) The Board’s duty to participants and their beneficiaries shall take precedence over any other duty. (Article XVI, Section 17(b).)

B. Duty of Prudence

Under the duty of prudence, Board members shall discharge their duties with respect to the system with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing that a prudent person acting in a like capacity and familiar with these matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims. (Article XVI, Section 17(c); CERL Section 31595(b).) “[T]he Board may, in its discretion, invest or delegate the authority to invest, the assets of the fund through the purchase, holding, or sale of any form or type of investment, financial instrument, or financial transaction when prudent in the informed opinion of the Board.” (CERL Section 31595.) Further, the Board “[s]hall diversify the investments of the system so as to minimize risk of loss and to maximize the rate of return, unless under the circumstances it is clearly prudent not to do so.” (CERL Section 31595(c).)

The fiduciary obligations of prudence and loyalty to plan participants and beneficiaries compel and guide LACERA’s corporate governance activities and consideration of financially material environmental, social, and governance factors in its investment process. LACERA’s fiduciary duties extend to, but are not limited to, prudently managing its proxy votes, vigilantly monitoring and diligently mitigating risks to the value of its investments, and judiciously determining action in order to assist in the effective administration of the fund and promote the interest of members and their beneficiaries.

Stewardship Strategies

LACERA's corporate governance and stewardship efforts may include the following strategies:

A. Proxy Voting

Proxy votes are plan assets, have value, and should be managed in a manner consistent with fiduciary duty and LACERA's interest in long-term value. LACERA exercises its voting rights for the exclusive benefit of LACERA's members and votes proxies in accordance with its *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*.

LACERA seeks to vote all proxies for which it has proxy voting authority. LACERA coordinates with its custodian bank and investment service vendors to maximize its opportunities to responsibly cast proxy votes in line with its fiduciary duty, while recognizing that administrative requirements and practices in certain local markets may affect LACERA's ability to cast proxy votes, such as delayed notification of proxies subsequent to vote deadlines and required powers of attorney in subcustodial chains. At meetings that require share blocking, LACERA evaluates the economic value of casting a proxy vote compared to the risk of limiting trading in the designated security and may opt to refrain from voting in order to preserve LACERA's ability to act in its best economic interests.

LACERA participates in securities lending to earn incremental income, per LACERA's *Securities Lending Program Policy*. In securities lending, the legal rights accorded those shares, including proxy voting, are transferred to the borrower of the securities during the period that the securities are on loan. As a result, LACERA forfeits its right to vote proxies on loaned securities unless those shares have been recalled from the borrower no later than the share's record date.

B. Corporate Engagement

LACERA advocates its *Investment Beliefs, Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*, and mission through dialogue and engagement strategies with portfolio companies and external asset managers, which may include exercising legal rights associated with LACERA's investments, such as sponsoring shareowner resolutions.

C. Public Policy

LACERA represents its interests to policymakers, such as legislators, regulatory agencies, and standards setting agencies, in line with its *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*.

D. Investor Collaboration

LACERA collaborates with other public pension funds, asset owners and asset managers, both informally and formally through investor associations such as the Council of Institutional Investors, in order to enhance LACERA's ability to achieve its objectives and advance its *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*.

Principles

The *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles* are organized into five sections. Each section addresses common corporate governance, proxy voting, and broader environmental, social, and governance (“ESG”) issues relevant to LACERA’s investment portfolio and investment partners. The five sections address issues pertaining to boards of directors, investor rights and capital structure, executive compensation and incentives, performance reporting, and environmental and social factors.

The *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles* are guided by five core concepts that collectively provide a framework by which LACERA aims to promote sustainable investment returns and responsible stewardship of fund assets:

Accountability: Governance structures and practices should be designed to promote accountability to the investors who provide the firm with capital. This extends to both board directors overseeing portfolio companies on investors’ behalf, and external managers entrusted with LACERA’s capital. Accountability helps to ensure that investments are managed in the best interests of investors.

Integrity: Integrity and trust are the cornerstone of financial markets and essential for economic stability. Core investor rights and protections are crucial to promoting integrity in financial markets.

Aligned Interests: Compensation and incentives should align the interests of the managers of capital and the investors who provide capital. This extends to senior executives at portfolio companies and external asset managers managing capital on LACERA’s behalf.

Transparency: Firms should provide investors with clear, comprehensive, and timely disclosures about fundamental elements of the firm’s business, financial activities, and performance.

Prudence: Firms should prudently identify, assess, and manage environmental and social factors that may impact the firm’s ability to generate sustainable economic value.

Fiduciary duty guides LACERA’s *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*. LACERA recognizes that sound governance balances the rights of investors providing a firm with capital with the role and responsibility of portfolio company boards to direct and manage the firm.

LACERA recognizes that the application of the Principles may vary depending on the specific terms, constraints, and nature of LACERA’s investments in different asset classes. In public markets where LACERA retains voting authority to vote in line with these *Principles*, LACERA evaluates the financial impact of each issue presented on corporate proxies and votes proxies for the exclusive benefit of plan participants and beneficiaries in all instances. LACERA may oppose overly prescriptive or unduly burdensome measures proposed on corporate proxies, or resolutions that may otherwise restrict a firm’s board of directors from acting in the best economic interests of investors.

LACERA also recognizes that the laws, regulations, and customs guiding corporate governance practices vary by market. LACERA seeks to apply its *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles* in a universal and consistent manner, while observing and taking into consideration — as applicable and appropriate — local laws, regulations, and customs.

I. Directors

The board of directors drives the strategic direction and oversight of the firm and its management. LACERA relies upon the directors of portfolio companies to exercise effective oversight and ensure that the firm is managed in the best interests of investors. Directors should understand the firm's long-term business strategy as well as risks that may impact the firm's value, and demonstrate a record of sound stewardship and performance. LACERA advocates policies and practices that encourage directors to be accountable to investors. Accountability ensures that a firm's operations and reporting are managed in the best interests of investors.

A. Independent Oversight

1. **Board Independence:** At least two-thirds of the board should be composed of independent directors in order to oversee management on behalf of investors, promote accountability to investors, and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

An independent director is defined as someone who has no material affiliation to the company, its chief executive officer, chairperson, or other executive officers, other than the board seat.

Materiality is defined as any financial, personal, or other relationship that a reasonable person might conclude could potentially influence one's objectivity in a manner that would have a meaningful impact on the individual's ability to satisfy requisite fiduciary standards on behalf of investors. Directors may not be considered independent if they, or a family member, are or have been an employee of the company (or a subsidiary or affiliate thereof) in the last five years; have a 20 percent or greater economic interest in the company; are or have been part of an interlocking director relationship with the CEO; receive direct payments for professional services unrelated to their service as a director in excess of \$10,000 per year; or engage in any related party transaction in excess of \$10,000 per year.

2. **Board Leadership:** The board should be chaired by an independent director.
3. **Board Committees:** Each board should establish an audit committee, a nominating and governance committee, and a compensation committee, each composed exclusively of independent directors.

Deference generally should be afforded to boards in determining appropriate oversight structures, such as the establishment and role of additional board committees. LACERA may support proposals to appoint an additional board committee in limited circumstances where a firm's performance, oversight structures, and peer comparisons demonstrate that inadequate board consideration and focus has been accorded to a compelling issue related to firm value.

LACERA may oppose or withhold support from non-independent board nominees or key board leadership positions where the board or key committees lack adequate independence.

B. Board Quality and Composition

1. **Composition:** The board should be composed of highly talented individuals who are best positioned to oversee the company's strategy for creating and sustaining value. Boards should give consideration

to ensuring that directors collectively possess a diverse set of relevant skills, competencies, and attributes to exercise oversight on investors' behalf, including expertise, geographic familiarity, and professional backgrounds relevant to the company's strategic objectives. The board should strive for a suitable mix of tenures to ensure both institutional familiarity and fresh perspectives on the board, as a firm's market environment and business strategies evolve.

The board should establish and disclose policies and processes for ensuring that it identifies and nominates suitable directors from a wide pool of candidates relevant to its business strategy, inclusive of including, but not limited to, diverse gender, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, and disability status. A diverse and inclusive board is better positioned to effectively deliberate and oversee business strategy in investors' interests.

Firms should disclose how the board defines and reflects a relevant and diverse mix of skills and backgrounds in its composition. In assessing board composition, LACERA generally expects to see a compelling link between requisite skill sets and a firm's corporate strategy and a credible track record of inclusivity, consistent with the diverse attributes and backgrounds defined above.

2. **Board Size:** The board should define and disclose in governance documents an appropriate size or range of directors that ensures the board is composed of adequately diverse viewpoints and experience to effectively oversee the firm's business strategy, while not being so large as to diminish the board's operational effectiveness. Modifications to governing documents defining board size and structure should be submitted for investor approval and not be proposed for the purpose of impeding a change in firm control.
3. **Excessive Commitments:** Directors should have adequate time to dedicate to their board service, fulfill their responsibilities, and represent investors' interests. Accordingly, directors and companies should generally limit board service to no more than three public company boards for each director, absent a clearly disclosed and compelling rationale. In consideration of the time demands on chief executive officers, they should generally not serve on more than two public boards (including any directorship of the company where they concurrently serve as CEO).
4. **Tenure and Age Restrictions:** LACERA does not support arbitrary restrictions on director qualifications, such as tenure limits or mandatory retirement ages . Such limitations may impede a firm from benefiting from the expertise of an otherwise highly qualified director.

C. Director Selection and Elections

1. **Annual Elections:** Each director should be elected annually. Directors should not be elected by classes, or to "staggered" terms.
2. **Vote Standard for Director Elections:** Director nominees in uncontested elections should be elected by a majority of votes cast. In contested director elections, a plurality of votes should determine the election.
3. **Universal Proxy Card:** In the event of a contested director election, investors should have the right to select and vote for individual director nominees on a consolidated, or "universal," proxy ballot, regardless of whether the director nominee is put forward by management or a dissident investor.

4. **Cumulative Voting:** LACERA supports cumulative voting in director elections, in compliance with California Government Code Section 6900.¹
5. **Proxy Access:** Long-term investors who have held a significant ownership interest for a reasonable amount of time should have the right to nominate alternative directors for consideration on a firm's proxy, otherwise known as "proxy access." Proxy access procedures should have sound safeguards in place to ensure an orderly nominating process and prevent proxy access from being used to effectuate a change in control.
6. **Ability to Remove Directors:** Investors should have the right to remove directors with or without cause, in order to allow investors to take action when a director is not serving investors' best interests.

D. Board Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Governance Guidance:** The board should develop, adopt, disclose, and periodically review clearly defined governance guidelines that govern the board's operations.
2. **Resources:** The board should have adequate resources and access to information to enable it to execute its responsibilities and duties. Directors should be provided information in advance of meetings. Directors should have full access to senior management and information concerning the firm's operations. Directors should be familiar with a firm's operations independent of the chief executive officer and senior management. Directors should have the authority and adequate budget to hire outside experts, if necessary.
3. **Independent Proceedings:** Directors should work with the chief executive officer to establish board agendas. Independent directors should meet at least annually without management or non-independent directors' participation.
4. **Board Communication and Engagement:** Firms should establish reasonable policies that permit effective communication between investors and directors regarding business strategy and corporate governance matters.
5. **Management Succession Planning:** The board should conduct a regular evaluation of the chief executive officer and plan for business continuity, including establishing and disclosing a succession plan for the chief executive officer and key senior executives
6. **Board Self-Evaluation and Refreshment:** Boards should adopt and disclose a process for regular, rigorous, and earnest self-assessment and evaluation. The evaluation process should be conducted under the direction of independent directors and ensure candor, confidentiality, trust, and effective interaction among directors. Board self-evaluation should be tailored to meet the firm's and board's strategic objectives and requirements. In order to promote long-term planning aligned with business needs, the board's self-evaluation process should assess the board's size and operational

¹ Section 6900. Cumulative Voting. "Government Body." Whenever any government body is a shareholder of any corporation, and a resolution is before the shareholders which will permit or authorize cumulative voting for directors, such government body shall vote its shares to permit or authorize cumulative voting. As used in this section, the term "government body" means the state, and any office, department, division, bureau, board, commission or agency thereof, and all counties, cities, districts, public authorities, public agencies and other political subdivisions or public corporations in the state.

effectiveness, identify emerging business risks and relevant skills gaps among its composition, and prudently anticipate and proactively plan for board vacancies and refreshment. It should appraise the alignment and adequacy of director education and development, as well as the delineation of management and board powers, while positioning the board to efficaciously exercise oversight in investors' interests.

7. **Charitable and Political Contributions:** Corporate charitable contributions may accrue direct and indirect benefits to a firm and its investors, including goodwill in communities in which it operates and favorable tax treatment. Charitable contributions should not be directed, eliminated, or otherwise restricted by investors.

The board should monitor, assess, and approve all charitable and political contributions (including trade association contributions) made by the firm. Political and charitable contributions should be consistent with the interests of the firm and its investors. The board should clearly define and approve the terms and conditions by which corporate assets may be provided to charitable and political activities, including developing and publicly disclosing guidelines for the approval of such contributions. The board should disclose on an annual basis the amounts and recipients of all monetary and non-monetary contributions made by the firm during the previous fiscal year, including any expenditures earmarked for political or charitable activities that were provided to or through a third party.

8. **Indemnification:** Directors may be provided reasonable and limited protections, including indemnification and limited personal liability for damages resulting from violating duty of care, where the director is found to have acted in good faith and in a manner the director believed to be in the best interests of the firm. Reasonable limitations may ensure the board is positioned to recruit qualified directors.

E. Board Performance and Effectiveness

1. **Performance Evaluation:** The board's performance, and that of individual directors, should be assessed within the context of the board's suitability for and track record of serving and protecting investors' interests. LACERA may withhold support or oppose individual directors, members of a board committee, or the entire board where the track record demonstrates directors' failure to serve investors' best interests. Director and board performance is evaluated in consideration of the following factors:

- 1.1. **Stewardship and Risk Oversight:** Directors should demonstrate a sound track record of stewardship and risk oversight, including avoiding any material failures of governance, risk oversight, or fiduciary responsibilities at the company. Risk is broadly understood to encompass financial, reputational, and operational risks relevant to a firm's ability to generate sustainable financial returns. Material risks may include, but are not limited to, internal controls related to legal compliance, cyber security, and data privacy, as well as broader risks addressed throughout these *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*, such as risks associated with accounting practices, climate change, and human capital management.

- 1.2. **Effective Oversight of Management:** Directors should conduct effective oversight of management, including avoiding any failure to replace management as appropriate.

- 1.3. Attendance:** Each director should attend at least 75 percent of scheduled board meetings each year, including attendance at assigned committees, absent a compelling, clearly disclosed justification.
 - 1.4. Board Service:** Directors' track records and performance on other boards may be considered in evaluating director nominees. In particular, a director's failure to effectively exercise oversight on other boards or any egregious actions that raise substantial doubt about the director's ability to fulfill a director's obligations and serve the best interests of investors may prompt opposition to the director's nomination.
 - 1.5. Ethics:** Directors should demonstrate the utmost integrity and be free of any criminal wrongdoing, breaches of fiduciary responsibilities, or questionable transactions with conflicts of interest.
 - 1.6. Transparency in Reporting:** Financial reports and material disclosures should be published in a satisfactorily diligent and timely manner.
 - 1.7. Investor Responsiveness:** Directors should demonstrate accountability and responsiveness to investors. Directors should not unilaterally amend a firm's governing documents in a manner that materially diminishes investor rights or otherwise adversely impacts investors without seeking investor approval. Directors should not adopt a poison pill or make a material change to an existing poison pill without submitting the plan for investor approval within the following 12 months. Directors should take reasonable steps to implement resolutions approved within the previous 12 months by a majority of investors, within the confines of legal and regulatory constraints. Directors should respond to tender offers where a majority of shares have been tendered. There should be no record of abuse against minority investor interests.
- 2. Committee Performance:** Each committee should demonstrably fulfill its core duties and the specific responsibilities outlined in its committee charter. LACERA may oppose the committee chair or incumbent directors who have served on committees that have failed to perform their duties in investors' best interests. In cases where governance provisions, such as staggered board elections, impede LACERA from holding designated directors accountable, LACERA may oppose board leadership or other incumbent directors.

Audit Committee members should ensure that non-audit fees are not excessive, no adverse opinion has been rendered on the company's audited financial statements, and the firm has not entered into an inappropriate indemnification agreement that limits legal recourse against the external auditor.

Nominating and Governance Committee members should establish sound governance practices, reasonable and timely responsiveness to investors on governance concerns, and effective board nomination, evaluation, and refreshment practices.

Compensation Committee members should demonstrate a clear and proven track record of aligning executive pay with the firm's strategic objectives and performance, refrain from permitting problematic pay practices, ensure clear disclosures of all key components of pay plan design and practices, and exhibit reasonable and timely responsiveness to investors.

- 3. Contested Director Elections:** In assessing director nominees in contested elections, LACERA may consider all relevant factors to identify and support the nominees best suited to enhance sustainable firm value and serve investors' economic interests. Consideration may be given to the long-term financial performance of the firm, its governance profile, and management's track record; nominees' proposed strategies for value creation; the qualifications and suitability of director nominees, including their alignment with LACERA's governance principles; and the dissidents' ownership stake and history of generating sustainable returns at other firms.

LACERA may support requests to reimburse dissident nominees for reasonable, incurred expenses when dissident nominees have presented a compelling case and support for their nomination is warranted.

II. Investor Rights and Capital Structure

Integrity and trust are the cornerstones of capital markets and essential for economic stability. Core investor rights ensure fair and equitable treatment of investors and help instill investor confidence, thereby facilitating capital formation and economic stability.

LACERA supports core rights and protections at portfolio companies and within financial market policies in order to safeguard its investments and foster a stable investment climate within the broader financial markets in which it invests. Financial rules and regulations should promote fair, orderly, and competitive markets and provide for investor protections. Investor rights extend to key decisions that may fundamentally impact or modify a firm's capital structure, such as share issuances, restructuring, and mergers and acquisitions.

A. Investor Rights

1. **Rights Proportionate to Economic Interest:** Investors should have voting rights proportionate to their economic interests. Multiclass ownership structures may entrench certain investors and management, insulating them from acting in the interests of all investors. LACERA therefore supports the principle of "one share, one vote."
2. **Voting Requirements and Procedures:** Investors should have the right to act on fundamental corporate matters by a simple majority of votes cast. Fundamental matters may include, but are not limited to, amending a firm's governing documents (such as its charter or bylaws) and effecting corporate transactions, such as a merger or acquisition.
 - 2.1 **Simple Majority Voting:** Companies should not adopt supermajority voting requirements except when such provisions may protect outside or minority investors from unilateral action being taken by an entity (or entities) with controlling interest or significant insider ownership.
 - 2.2 **Voting Procedures:** Voting and tabulation of matters put before investors by proxy or otherwise should be guided by transparent procedures, consistent application of rules, and fairness for all eligible voters. Votes should be counted by an independent tabulator and kept confidential. Voting results should be promptly disclosed once tabulation has been finalized.
 - 2.3 **Bundled Voting:** Investors should be able to review and cast votes on unrelated matters as separate and distinct ballot items. Disparate matters should not be presented for investor consideration as a "bundled" voting item. LACERA may oppose bundled proposals that combine supportable voting items with matters that LACERA opposes.
 - 2.4 **Broker Non-Votes:** Uninstructed broker votes and abstentions should be counted for quorum purposes only.

3. Annual Meetings

- 3.1 **Quorum Requirements:** Quorum requirements should promote that a broad range of investors are represented at meetings. Quorum requirements should not be unduly low, in either absolute terms or relative to the economic interest of a controlling investor or significant investor, in order to protect investors from unrepresentative action being conducted.

- 3.2 Technology:** Investors should have the right to attend an annual meeting of a firm in person. Any use of technology, such as audiocasts or webcasts, should expand and enhance, and not restrict or otherwise impede, investors' ability to participate in an annual meeting, and should afford opportunities for meeting participation equal to those afforded investors attending the meeting in person.
- 3.3 Resolutions:** Investors with a reasonable ownership interest in a firm should have the right to put forward a resolution for investors' consideration and vote at the firm's annual meeting.
- 3.4 Advance Notice Requirements:** Investors should be able to submit items for formal consideration at an annual meeting, such as proposals or director nominees, as close to the meeting date as reasonably possible and within the broadest timeframe possible, recognizing the need to allow sufficient notice for company, regulatory, and investor review.
- 3.5 Transaction of Other Business:** LACERA generally opposes requests for advance approval by proxy of undisclosed business items that may come before an investor meeting for consideration.
- 4. Special Meetings:** Investors should be able to call a special meeting to take action on certain matters that may occur between regularly scheduled annual meetings. The right to call a special meeting should require aggregating a minimum of 10 percent ownership interest and be subject to reasonable terms and conditions.
- 5. Action by Written Consent:** Investors should have the right to act by written consent on key governance matters under reasonable terms and conditions.
- 6. Access to Research:** Investors should have access to competitive, timely, and independent market, investment, and proxy research services of their choosing. Market regulation should support and not impede a competitive market of service providers.
- 7. Ownership Disclosure:** Significant ownership interests above 5 percent should be disclosed.
- 8. Incorporation:** A firm's country or state of incorporation may significantly impact the firm's financial health, competitive position, governance profile, and the legal rights afforded to investors, as defined by the jurisdiction of incorporation. When selecting a jurisdiction for incorporation (such as in relation to a merger or acquisition or a proposed reincorporation), firms should give due consideration to competitively positioning the firm for financial success while also ensuring sound governance practices and strong legal rights and protections for investors. LACERA may oppose proposals for reincorporation where the business and financial rationale for reincorporation do not outweigh the detrimental impact of a reincorporation on investor rights and governance provisions.
- 9. Litigation Rights:** Robust and viable litigation rights enable investors to protect firm value, deter misconduct, and seek recourse in the event of egregious corporate malfeasance or fraud. Corporations should not curtail or otherwise diminish investors' prospective legal recourse through governance provisions, such as exclusive forum designations for legal disputes, mandatory arbitration clauses, or "fee-shifting" provisions by which an investor who unsuccessfully brings legal action must bear the entirety of the corporation's legal costs.

B. Capital Structure

Finding the optimal mix of equity, long-term debt, and short-term financing is critical to driving economic returns. A firm's capital structure should support the generation of long-term, sustainable returns. The board should determine and drive a firm's capital structure, in coordination with senior management. Capital structure should coordinate and balance multiple factors, including the firm's business profile, strategy, and opportunities for growth; access to and cost of capital; and capital distributions such as the firm's dividend policy.

Investors should be able to vote on matters that may fundamentally modify or impact a firm's capital structure, such as common share issuances, and mergers and acquisitions.

1. Share Issuances and Authorizations: Share issuances enable firms to raise funds for financing purposes.

1.1 Authorization of Common Shares Issuance: Requests to authorize capital or approve share issuances should specify the quantity of shares for which approval is sought. Requests should be evaluated upon careful consideration of the individual details and merits of each request and according to LACERA's economic interests. Firms should present a compelling purpose for the share issuance, demonstrate a track record of responsibly using authorized shares in investors' interests, and provide for rights and restrictions attached to proposed equity that are aligned with investors' interests. In evaluating requests, the availability of preemptive rights and any risks of authorizing the share issuance, including the dilutive impact of the request, may also be considered. Capital authorization terms should not facilitate an anti-takeover device or otherwise adversely impact investors' interests.

1.2 Preemptive Rights: Preemptive rights provide current investors the right to maintain a proportionate interest in a firm by exercising a right to purchase shares proportionate to what they already own in any new issuances of equity. Requests to create or abolish preemptive rights should consider the size of the firm, the characteristics of its investor base, and the liquidity of its equity to ensure that preemptive rights may be pragmatically exercised and do not impose an onerous restriction on capital raising.

1.3 Preferred Shares Authorization: Preferred shares, which provide distinct features such as fixed dividend payments or seniority of claims relative to common shares, may be supportable when the purpose of such issuance is in connection with a proposed transaction appearing on the same ballot that merits support. Otherwise, requests for authorization are evaluated in consideration of the request's stated purpose, the firm's past use of authorized preferred shares, and an assessment of the risk of authorizing the share issuance, including the dilutive impact of the request, and should not create or increase shares that carry superior voting rights to common shares. Any conversion rights should define reasonable conversion ratios and not result in excessive dilution of common shares.

1.4 Blank Check Preferred Shares: Firms generally should not create classes of shares providing the board with broad discretion to define voting, conversion, dividend distribution, and other rights, absent a compelling rationale and clearly stated restrictions in line with investors'

interests. The voting rights of unissued shares should be presented for investor approval and not be subject to board discretion.

1.5 Blank Check Preferred Share Placements: Investor approval should be required for the placement of preferred shares with any person or group for other than general corporate purposes to enable investor review of the business purpose, prospective impact on dilution and voting positions, and any adverse impact on existing investors.

1.6 Reverse Stock Split: Reverse stock splits, by which multiple shares are exchanged for a lesser amount to increase share price, generally should be accompanied by a proportionate reduction in authorized shares.

2. Debt Issuance and Borrowing Powers: Debt issuances and restructuring, amendments to a firm's aggregate limit on the board's ability to borrow money, and other debt-related items should serve a compelling and clearly articulated business purpose, be in line with and supportive of generating sustainable and viable financial returns, and take into reasonable consideration any detrimental impact on existing investors. LACERA evaluates debt-related proposals upon careful consideration of the individual terms and merits of the request.

3. Capital Allocation and Income Distributions: A firm should allocate capital, including distribution of income through dividends or share repurchases, in a disciplined and balanced manner that supports the generation of long-term value.

3.1 Allocation of Income: Firms should provide adequate justification when seeking investor approval for the allocation of income when the payout ratio appears unbalanced or unsustainable (either inordinately low, such as below 30 percent, or excessive, given the firm's financial position).

3.2 Stock (Scrip) Dividend Policy: Firms may provide investors the option to receive dividend payments in the form of common equity in lieu of cash. Such provisions enable a firm to retain cash and may strengthen the position and commitment of long-term investors. In all circumstances, firms should provide a cash option, absent a compelling justification that such an option may be harmful to investors.

3.3 Share Repurchase Programs: Open market share repurchase plans should enable investors to participate on equal terms and support balanced and disciplined capital allocation. Requests to authorize share repurchases should have a defined and limited duration, incorporate clear and reasonable terms and conditions, and generally not exceed 10 percent for market repurchases within any single authority, absent a compelling rationale in line with investors' interests and market practice.

4. Mergers, Acquisitions, and Other Corporate Restructuring: Mergers and corporate restructuring (including spin-offs, leveraged buyouts, and reorganizations) have major financial implications for investors.

- 4.1 Evaluation:** LACERA carefully examines all relevant facts and circumstances of each proposal to determine whether the proposal, in its entirety, is in LACERA's best interests. Assessment of each proposed transaction takes into account multiple factors. The valuation should be reasonable. Market reaction may be considered. The strategic rationale and expected benefits should be sensible, with any projected synergies or financial impact reasonably achievable. Management should have a favorable track record of successful integration of acquisitions or business combinations. The negotiation and deal process should be fair and equitable. There should be no conflicts of interest, such as factors enabling insiders to disproportionately benefit from the proposed transaction. The resulting entity should observe sound corporate governance practices. The risks of not completing the transaction or corporate restructuring may be considered. Sufficient information should be provided to enable investors to make an informed decision.
- 4.2 Appraisal Rights:** Investors should be afforded appraisal rights by which they may seek a judicial review of the terms of certain corporate transactions in order to determine fair market value.
- 5. Anti-Takeover Measures:** Investors should be afforded the reasonable opportunity to deliberate and decide on the merits of takeover bids and acquisitions. Practices and provisions, including corporate bylaws, charters, laws, and statutes, that may impede or deter a corporate transaction that is otherwise in investors' interests, may take a variety of forms and generally should be submitted for investor review and approval.
- 5.1 Poison Pills:** The board should not enact or amend a poison pill without investor approval. LACERA generally supports the redemption of existing poison pills, except in unique circumstances where a carefully designed, short-term plan may enable a firm to negotiate more favorable terms with a potential bidder. Such plans should require a minimum 20 percent ownership threshold to trigger, provide for limited and reasonable duration, exclude provisions by which only continuing directors may remove the pill, and otherwise provide adequate investor protections so that the plan will not unduly impede a bid that is otherwise in investors' interests.
- 5.2 Net Operating Loss (NOL) Protective Amendments:** Protective amendments with the stated purpose of preserving a company's net operating losses for a tax benefit, such as under the terms of Section 382 of the Internal Revenue Code, should balance the anticipated benefit to investors of preserving the tax value and the risk of potential abuse of such provisions as an anti-takeover measure. Because NOL protective amendments may serve as a poison pill, the board should submit related items for investor review and approval. Such provisions should only be used under limited, clearly justified circumstances and include adequate protections, such as an appropriate ownership threshold and clearly defined and reasonable duration limits.
- 5.3 Greenmail:** Greenmail, by which a firm repurchases shares of a potential acquirer at an above-market price to deter a takeover, should be prohibited.
- 5.4 Other Anti-Takeover Measures:** LACERA generally opposes provisions that impose onerous restrictions or impediments on prospectively beneficial takeover bids, taking into account the specific terms and circumstances of such provisions to determine the provision's alignment with

LACERA's economic interests. LACERA supports firms opting out of related anti-takeover laws and statutes, where legally permitted.

Fair price provisions that require an investor seeking to purchase control of a firm to pay a defined fair price should not impose onerous requirements that may deter a competitive bid from being considered by investors.

Firms should opt out of control share acquisition statutes that void the voting rights of an investor surpassing certain ownership thresholds; control share cash-out provisions requiring an investor above a specified ownership threshold to purchase shares from remaining investors at the highest acquiring price if remaining investors exercise their right to sell their shares; and freeze-out provisions requiring an investor who meets a defined ownership threshold to wait a specified period of time before gaining control of the firm.

Disgorgement provisions, by which an investor who acquires ownership interest above a specified threshold must pay the firm any profits realized from the sale of the firm's equity purchased within a defined time period prior to exceeding the defined ownership threshold, should be avoided.

Firms should not provide designated investors (such as the government of a related, formerly state- owned enterprise) "golden shares" that provide for exceptional veto power or voting rights regarding specific corporate proposals.

- 6. Related-Party Transactions:** Investors should have the right to approve significant related-party transactions. Investor approval helps to protect investors against self-dealing. Firms should provide clear information regarding such transactions — including all fees, a compelling rationale for the service or services provided, and the assessment of independent directors and an independent financial advisor of the transactions — in order to permit an informed assessment of prospective conflicts of interest.

III. Compensation and Incentives

Compensation and incentives should align the interests of senior executives and investors. Executive compensation and incentives serve a critical role in recruiting, motivating, and retaining talent. Pay plan design, structure, and goals should be fundamentally derived from and relevant to a firm's core business objectives and collectively promote sustainable value creation. Accordingly, pay and incentives should incentivize and reward executives for the achievement of outstanding performance, while encompassing prudent risk mitigation and taking care to avoid excessive risks that may be detrimental to the firm's long-term financial returns.

Boards should determine core components of executive pay design, including target pay levels and incentives. Boards oversee compensation paid to senior executives, award bonuses, and establish incentive plans that may include equity and performance-based grants and awards. The board may also review and approve supplemental compensation plans for firm employees, including employee equity and retirement plans.

Firms should provide investors with transparent, clear, and comprehensive disclosure of senior executives' total compensation package. This includes disclosure of salary, short and long-term incentive compensation, and all benefits and perquisites. Selected performance metrics and targets upon which compensation is contingent should be provided in a plain and clear format.

A. Advisory Vote on Executive Compensation

Executive compensation design and practices should be submitted for investor review and non-binding approval on an annual basis (also known as "say on pay"). Advisory votes should consider the firm's pay design and practices as a whole, taking into account the alignment of executive pay with long-term firm performance, the absence of significant problematic pay practices and excessive risk in targets and reward incentives, and the clarity of the firm's pay disclosures.

B. Compensation Plan Design

Executive compensation and practices should link pay to firm performance. Compensation should be commensurate with the firm's long-term performance, appropriately aligned with firms with which the firm competes for executive talent (such as industry peers and firms of comparable size and profile), and properly consider the firm's long-term outlook for generating sustainable returns.

1. **Performance Criteria:** Incentive compensation should incorporate clearly defined, rigorous, and disclosed performance criteria upon which incentive pay is contingent. Performance metrics, targets, and hurdles should be consistent with and promote the firm's strategy for generating sustainable value, including key financial and operating objectives, and effective management of relevant business risks.
2. **Peer Benchmarking:** Peer groups used to benchmark compensation should be clearly disclosed and relevant to the firm's business profile and size.
3. **Compensation Consultants:** Compensation consultants providing strategy, design, and implementation services related to executive compensation to the board's compensation committees should be at the exclusive hire and service of the committee, unquestionably independent, and clearly disclosed.

- 4. Equity Ownership, Retention, and Holding Requirements:** Equity ownership among senior executives may strengthen the alignment of interests between executives and investors and promote prudent risk mitigation, and should be encouraged. Equity ownership guidelines providing that executives should maintain reasonable equity in the firm, requirements for executives to retain a meaningful portion of equity acquired through compensation plans, and equity grant holding requirements should strike an appropriate balance to promote equity ownership while avoiding overly restrictive or onerous provisions that may undermine talent motivation and retention to the detriment of investors' interests.
- 5. Prearranged Trading Plans:** Prearranged trading plans, as provided under Securities and Exchange Commission Rule 10b5-1, define parameters for executives' predetermined securities transactions in advance of an executive becoming aware of material non-public information regarding the firm's securities and are intended to mitigate the risks of insider trading. The adoption, amendment, or termination of prearranged trading plans for senior executives should be governed by the board, promptly disclosed, and provide for timely disclosure of transactions made pursuant to the plan's provisions.
- 6. Hedging and Speculative Transactions:** Senior executives should be prohibited from engaging in derivative or speculative transactions involving equity of the firm, including hedging, holding equity in a margin account, or pledging equity as collateral for a loan.
- 7. Internal Pay Disparity:** Executive compensation should be considered in the context of how a firm compensates its employees, including in relation to industry peers. Firms should disclose the ratio of the chief executive officer's total pay to that of the average firm employee.
- 8. Restrictions:** Executive pay should not be subject to arbitrary restrictions or limitations on the magnitude or form of compensation, such as linking executive pay to average employee compensation. Arbitrary limits and restrictions may undermine a firm's ability to attract and retain competent talent and create a competitive disadvantage for the firm.
- 9. Recoupment Policies:** Firms should adopt and disclose rigorous policies defining the terms and conditions by which incentive compensation may be recouped, in order to align pay with performance, promote accurate financial reporting, and deter misconduct. Robust clawback policies should enable the board to review and recoup senior executive incentive compensation in the event that compensation was calculated using inaccurate financial reports, or in the event of fraud or misconduct. Application of the recoupment policy should be reasonably disclosed.
- 10. Perquisites:** Firms should refrain from providing executives with extraordinary or excessive perquisites that are not linked to firm performance, incongruent with prevailing best practices, and unjustified to adequately attract and retain executive talent. Corporate assets should not be unduly expended on personal expenses that are unrelated to an executive's employment and that extend beyond those widely offered to a firm's employees. Firms should avoid, or otherwise adequately and cogently justify, paying an executive's personal income tax obligations (including excise tax gross-up's), personal use of corporate aircraft, and extensive personal and home security payments.

C. Equity Plans

Equity plans should motivate plan participants to focus on long-term firm value and returns, encourage equity ownership, and advance the principle of aligning employee interests with those of investors.

Firms should submit equity plans for investor approval. Equity plans should be reviewed taking into account plan features, impact on equity dilution, and prospects to align pay with performance.

1. **Performance-Based:** Equity plans should define robust and appropriate performance requirements by which equity may be granted that are aligned with and justifiable by the firm's business strategy and strategic objectives. Such provisions may include terms and performance criteria permitting a plan to qualify for favorable tax treatment.
2. **Track Record:** The firm should demonstrate a history of responsibly linking equity awards to performance and avoiding grants of excessive awards.
3. **Impact:** The total cost and potential dilution of the plan should be reasonable.
4. **Repricing:** Equity granted under the terms of the plan, such as share options and stock appreciation rights, should not be repriced without investor approval, as repricing may sever the link between pay and performance. Requests to reprice underwater options should clearly define and compellingly justify the rationale and intent, timing, defined participants, and terms, such as a value-for-value exchange, exercise price, and vesting requirements.

D. Employee Equity Programs

1. **Employee Stock Purchase Plans:** Employee stock purchase plans encourage firm employees to acquire an ownership stake in the firms for which they work by providing employees the right to purchase the firm's equity at a set price within a certain period of time. Employee stock purchase plans should define reasonable terms, such as designating exercise prices at no lower than 85 percent of fair market value, fixing a justifiable offering period, and limiting voting power dilution to less than 10 percent.
2. **Employee Stock Ownership Plans:** Employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) enable employees to accumulate firm equity. ESOPs should balance encouraging employee equity ownership while avoiding harm to existing investors. Shares allocated to ESOPs should not be excessive (generally no more than 5 percent of outstanding shares).

E. Severance and Retirement Arrangements

Severance payments to executives in the event of an employment termination, separation, or change in firm control should be justifiable by the executive's performance, serve the long-term interests of the firm and its investors, and not be excessive.

1. **Parachutes:** Firms should submit for investor approval arrangements to provide executives with extraordinary severance payments in certain circumstances, such as a change in firm control. Extraordinary payments may be assessed in relation to market and peer practice and should not exceed payments greater than three times base salary and bonus. Severance payments should not

be so attractive as to influence merger agreements that may not be in the best interests of investors and should have triggering mechanisms beyond the control of senior executives. Any payments in the event of a change in control should be “double triggered,” i.e., contingent upon both an actual change in control and an employment separation related to the change-in-control event. Unvested equity should not accelerate upon the change in control. Payments should not trigger, and firms should not commit to paying, executives’ excise taxes (“gross ups”). A change in control should not be contingent upon investor approval of executives’ severance payments.

2. **Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans:** Retirement plans that provide extraordinary retirement benefits exclusive to executives should be presented for investor approval and avoid excessive payouts, such as excluding all incentive or bonus pay from covered compensation calculations.
3. **Golden Coffins:** Firms should refrain from providing extraordinary compensation upon an executive’s death. Firms should submit for investor approval agreements and policies that oblige the firm to make payments or awards following the death of a senior executive, including unearned salary or bonuses, accelerated vesting or continuation in force of unvested equity grants, and other extraordinary payments or awards.

F. Director Compensation

Firms should disclose the philosophy and process used for determining compensation paid to directors serving on the board and the value of all elements of director compensation.

1. **Structure and Design of Director Compensation:** Directors may be compensated in both cash and equity. Fees and compensation paid to directors should be appropriate relevant to market norms, the firm’s industry, and its financial performance. Equity should not constitute the entirety of director compensation, as this may undermine directors’ incentive to monitor and exercise oversight of long-term risks to firm value.
2. **Equity Ownership:** Equity ownership by directors promotes the alignment of directors’ interests with those of investors. Firms should adopt and disclose equity ownership guidelines to encourage directors to acquire and hold a meaningful amount of equity in the firm. Equity ownership should not, however, be a qualification for board service, as such restrictions may impede otherwise highly qualified individuals from serving as directors.
3. **Retirement Benefits:** Retirement benefits for director service are improper, as such benefits may impede objectivity and sever the alignment of interest between directors and investors.

IV. Performance Reporting

Financial markets work most efficiently when investors have timely, reliable, and comparable information about material aspects of a firm's performance. Transparency of a firm's key financial and operating performance is critical for investors to assess the firm's financial viability and prospects. Independent verification of a firm's financial disclosures promotes investor confidence.

LACERA supports clear and comprehensive disclosure of relevant financial and operating performance indicators (including environmental, social, and governance matters) that may provide valuable information for investors to assess a firm's prospects for delivering sustainable value.

A. Financial Reports

Financial statements and auditor reports are essential in evaluating a firm's performance. Financial reports should present clear, reliable, and comprehensive data and information. A firm's overall performance reporting framework should conform with, and place primary prominence on, established accounting standards. Additional reporting measures that do not adhere to generally accepted accounting principles (either GAAP or International Financial Reporting Standards/ IFRS, depending on the reporting market) should be clearly explained and justified, and should supplement, as opposed to replace or otherwise obfuscate, performance reporting that is consistent with established accounting standards.

When presenting financial reports for investor review, there should be no unresolved concerns about the accounts presented or audit procedures, inadequate disclosures, or unresponsiveness regarding investor or regulatory questions on specific items.

B. Fiscal Term

Firms should define an appropriate fiscal term. The fiscal term should not be altered for the purpose of postponing an annual meeting.

C. Auditors

Firms should ensure independent, high-quality, and timely provision of audited financial statements by a clearly disclosed external auditing firm.

1. Ratification: Auditors should be clearly disclosed and presented to investors for ratification. LACERA takes into consideration the following factors when evaluating auditor ratification:

1.1. Independence: The external auditor should be objective and free of conflicts of interest in providing auditing services. Accordingly, non-audit fees paid to an external auditor should not be excessive. Specifically, non-audit fees should not exceed the total of audit and audit-related (such as permissible tax) fees, and the auditing firm should have no financial interest or association with the company.

- 1.2. Quality:** There should be no question as to the accuracy of the external auditor's opinion, the financial report's indication of the company's financial position, and the accurate application of established accounting standards. There should be no aggressive accounting practices or significant audit-related issues at the company, such as a history of restated financial results or material weaknesses in internal controls.
- 1.3. Timeliness:** There should be no unjustified delays in the publication of audited financial statements.
- 2. Rotation:** Requests to rotate auditors should be evaluated in consideration of the audit firm's tenure, any proposed length of rotation, the presence of significant audit-related issues at the company, the extent to which the company periodically assesses audit pricing and quality, and the robustness of the audit committee's functions, such as the presence of financial experts and how often the committee meets.
- 3. Indemnification:** To avoid any impairment of the external auditor's objectivity and independence, companies should not enter into engagement letters that indemnify or otherwise limit the external auditor's liability.

V. Environmental and Social Factors

Environmental and social factors — such as management of human capital, access to natural resources, and environmental risks — may shape and impact a firm's ability to generate and sustain value. Firms should identify and prudently manage social and environmental factors relevant to the firm's business strategy, industry, and geographic markets. Social and environmental factors may present opportunities to drive value or risks to a firm's strategic objectives.

Firms should ensure diligent board oversight and provide reasonable disclosures of relevant environmental and social factors and how they are managed. Reporting enables investors to make informed investment decisions when evaluating companies and the long-term viability and sustainability of their business practices.

In addition to identifying, evaluating, and mitigating the risks presented by social and environmental factors, firms should carefully consider the impact of their business activities. Promotion, adoption, and effective implementation of guidelines for the responsible conduct of business and business relationships are consistent with the fiduciary responsibility of protecting long-term investment interests.

A. Social Factors

- 1. Human Capital Management:** Effective management of human capital — including the development, incentives, and retention of the firm's workforce — is key to accomplishing a firm's strategic objectives. Companies should identify, ensure board oversight, and disclose information about significant human capital value drivers that are related to the firm's ability to create and protect firm value. Central to effective human capital management is the assurance of equal employment opportunity, including non-bias in compensation and employment terms, and a workplace free of harassment in all forms.
- 2. Human Rights Risk:** Firms should mitigate the risks of human rights abuses in global operations and supply chains by adopting robust human rights policies and ensuring effective internal controls to monitor compliance with stated human rights standards.

B. Environmental Factors

- 1. Natural Resource Stewardship:** Firms should give consideration to efficient, sustainable use and stewardship of natural resources, such as energy and water, to enhance operational efficiency and safeguard firm value from the risks of resource scarcity.
- 2. Environmental Risk:** Firms should ensure reasonable oversight mechanisms and mitigation of environmental risks, such as hazardous waste disposal and pollution, to mitigate prospective legal, regulatory, and operational risks to firm value.
- 3. Climate Risk:** Climate change may present financial, operational, and regulatory risks to a firm's ability to generate sustainable value, as well as to the broader economy. Firms should assess and disclose material climate-related risks and sufficient, non-proprietary information to enable investors to prudently and adequately evaluate the prospective impact of climate risk on firm value.

Responsibilities and Delegations

A. The Board of Investments:

- (i.) Approves and promulgates policies addressing environmental, social, and governance issues, such as corporate governance and proxy voting matters and including but not limited to the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles, as recommended by the Corporate Governance Committee of the Board.
- (ii.) Receives periodic reports concerning the program's progress and priorities from the Corporate Governance Committee.
- (iii.) Approves LACERA representatives for nomination to governing bodies of the corporate governance associations to which LACERA is affiliated, as recommended by the Corporate Governance Committee.
- (iv.) Approves procedures to comply with legislated or other mandated divestment or investment exclusions, such as LACERA's Guidelines for Evaluating ESG-Related Divestments (Appendix), as developed and recommended by the Corporate Governance Committee.

B. The Corporate Governance Committee of the Board of Investments:

- (i.) Recommends the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles and other items concerning environmental, social, and governance matters to the Board of Investments for consideration and approval.
- (ii.) Exercises oversight and monitoring of the corporate governance program, including reviewing program priorities and progress.
- (iii.) Reviews reports regarding proxy voting results and trends and develops recommendations for Board approval for any policy recommendations, as appropriate.
- (iv.) Reviews and ensures alignment of strategic initiatives with the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles.
- (v.) Provides periodic reports on the program to the Board of Investments.
- (vi.) Delegates authority to the Committee Chair to determine LACERA's action on time-sensitive, investment- or financial market-related legislative or regulatory matters that are not adequately addressed in the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles or joint investor engagements affiliated with investor associations to which LACERA has formally affiliated.
- (vii.) Recommends for Board of Investment approval, LACERA representatives for nomination to governing bodies of the corporate governance associations to which LACERA is affiliated. In event the Committee is not scheduled to meet or lacks adequate time to recommend a nomination to the Board prior to a formal deadline, the Committee delegates authority to the Committee Chair to recommend consideration of the nomination by the Board.

- (viii.) Recommends for Board of Investment approval, time-permitting, LACERA's votes in support or opposition of candidates listed on a formal member ballot and nominated to a governing board of an investor association to which LACERA has formally affiliated. In event the Committee is not scheduled to meet or lacks adequate time to agendize under the Brown Act an informed recommendation to the Board for vote determinations prior to a formal deadline, the Committee delegates authority to the Committee Chair to recommend consideration by the Board, time-permitting, of the votes in support or opposition of board candidates. In time-sensitive circumstances where vote deadlines do not permit such vote considerations by the Committee or the Board, the Committee delegates authority to the Committee Chair to consult with staff per Section V(C)(vi.) below on votes.

C. Staff

- (i.) Develops and recommends Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles and related policies for review and consideration by the Corporate Governance Committee.
- (ii.) Executes proxy votes in adherence to the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles. Staff consults with and seeks the input of the Chief Investment Officer and Chief Counsel, when applicable, to apply the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles, and the spirit thereof, to unique or new proxy voting items in their best judgment and interpretation of the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles. Staff recalls shares of loaned securities when doing so is in LACERA's economic interests, such as at portfolio companies where LACERA has sponsored a shareowner proposal.
- (iii.) Communicates and represents the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles in dialogues and communication with portfolio companies, external asset managers and investment partners, other investors and stakeholders, related conferences, and other interested parties.
- (iv.) Presents any strategic plans for engagement to the Corporate Governance Committee, per the Committee's review and oversight, to promote alignment with Board-approved Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles. In the event of time-sensitive strategic initiatives, staff consults with the Chair of the Committee, who determines action or recommends consideration of the matter by the Committee or Board, time-permitting.
- (v.) Represents the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles in written communication to legislators and regulatory agencies, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Investment Officer, and Chief Counsel. Staff may participate in joint investor written communications that are organized as part of formal investor associations to which LACERA has formally affiliated. In event that a time-sensitive, investment- or financial market policy-related legislative or regulatory matter arises that is not adequately considered by the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles or being addressed by an investor association to which LACERA is affiliated, staff consults with the Chair of the Committee, who determines whether to approve action or recommend consideration of the matter by the Board, time-permitting.

- (vi.) Represents LACERA and its Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles at investor associations, including managing membership surveys, business meeting votes (other than selecting which candidates to a governing board to support or oppose), and other operational interactions, in adherence to the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles and the spirit thereof, in its best judgment and interpretation. In event that a time-sensitive vote arises on a unique item or an issue that is not adequately considered by the Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles, as well as for governance- related investor associations' formal business meeting ballot items pertaining to support or opposition of candidates to a governing board, and time constraints prohibit such items from being presented to the Committee or Board for consideration, staff may determine a vote in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

Policy Review and Reaffirmation

LACERA reviews and reaffirms this Policy at least every three years in order to ensure its alignment with LACERA's mission and objectives and in light of evolving market practices on corporate governance; environmental, social, and governance ("ESG"); and responsible investment matters.

APPENDIX: Guidelines for Evaluating Prospective ESG-Related Divestments

As stated in LACERA's Investment Beliefs, "LACERA operates in a global financial marketplace, and as such, LACERA believes that in order to diversify its risk broadly, it is vital that LACERA possess a global perspective. Diversification across different risk factors is necessary for risk reduction."

As a diversified, global investor, LACERA may periodically review its public markets investment exposures to certain issues arising from environmental, social, or governance concerns. It is generally the preference of LACERA, in order to promote diversification and minimize risk, to engage rather than divest investment holdings concerning risks to long-term value. However, in order to address prospective divestment issues and identify LACERA's exposure to exogenous risks related to environmental, social, or governance issues and not addressed elsewhere in the Investment Policy Statement, the following formal process has been adopted:

1. The issue will be directed to Committee for further direction to Staff.
2. If the Committee decides to review the issue, Staff will assess the potential economic and reputational impact of the issue on LACERA.
 - a. Does the issue violate LACERA's *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles*?
 - b. Determine criteria for identification of investment(s).
 - c. Preliminary identification of the investment.
 - d. Preliminary estimate on size of the investment.
 - e. Seriousness of the issue/violation and whether it impacts the economics of the investment(s).
 - f. Consultation with LACERA's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Investment Officer, and legal counsel.
3. Staff will report its findings on the potential economic and reputational impact of the issue on LACERA to the Committee.
4. The Committee may forward the issue and potential economic and reputational impact on LACERA to the Board of Investments (Board) for further direction.
5. If the Board directs staff to continue the analysis, staff will calculate the anticipated resources involved in analyzing the issue including, but not limited to:
 - a. Estimate of staff hours required for research and analysis.
 - b. Estimate of the resource impact on current staff initiatives and projects (for example the delay in an RFP search).
 - c. Estimate of cost to obtain information (e.g.: company list) from external service provider.
6. Staff will report back to the Committee with its resource requirements analysis.
7. Committee may make recommendation to the Board to pursue additional analysis.

8. Upon receiving direction from the Board, Staff will contract with external data provider to identify investment(s) impacted by the issue.
9. Staff will identify investment exposures within the separate accounts of the public markets asset classes (equities, fixed income and commodities).
10. Staff will contact external investment managers to solicit feedback from portfolio managers on reasoning for the investment and potential return and risk trade-off of economic substitution.
11. Staff will present findings to the Board and any recommendation(s) as necessary. If further action is warranted, such as engagement with companies, staff's report to the Board will include the following:
 - a. An estimate of additional staff hours needed to execute engagement.
 - b. An estimate of the impact of diverting resources from current staff initiatives and projects (for example the delay in an RFP search).
 - c. Cost of retaining external resources (3rd party consultant) to assist in the engagement process.
 - d. Feedback from portfolio managers on their investment in the company.
 - e. Discussion of criteria and terms for company engagement.
12. If further action, such as engagement, is recommended and approved by the Board, staff will seek to engage with companies on the issue. Letters will be written to the company's executive management and their boards requesting responses within 60 days.
13. If company response is determined to be insufficient, staff will assess the need to place the company on an economic substitution list² and present recommendation(s) to the Board for approval. Included in the recommendation(s) will be the following:
 - a. Updated company exposure within separate accounts of public markets asset classes.
 - b. Annual cost to procure company list.
 - c. Criteria by which company will be removed from the economic substitution list.
14. Staff will continuously monitor company status relative to criteria for removal from the economic substitution list. Once criteria have been met, staff will recommend removal of the company to the Board.
15. Staff will provide an economic substitution list update to the Board annually which will include the following:
 - a. All companies currently on the list.
 - b. Issue for which the company was placed on the list.
 - c. Investment exposure within separate accounts of public markets asset classes.
 - d. Current status of mitigating factors.

² Companies on the list will be covered by the following investment guideline policy language: "Investment managers should refrain from purchasing securities on the economic substitution list when the same investment goals concerning risk, return, and diversification can be achieved through the purchase of another security."

Document History

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Responsible Contractor Policy

I. Purpose and Objective

The Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association's (LACERA) investment philosophy and strategy recognize that careful consideration of financially relevant environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors in the Fund's investment process may protect and enhance LACERA's risk-adjusted returns, as stated in the Fund's *Investment Policy Statement*. LACERA's *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Principles* (Stewardship Principles) articulate LACERA's position on key corporate governance and broader ESG factors that may impact the financial performance of LACERA's portfolio holdings including, but not limited to:

- Effective legal and regulatory compliance
- Constructive human capital practices
- Inclusive and equitable management of diverse talent
- Robust adherence to human rights standards
- Prudent natural resource stewardship
- Careful mitigation of environmental risks and liabilities

LACERA seeks to steward its assets throughout its investment portfolio in a manner that promotes adherence to its Stewardship Principles in furtherance of its mission, "to produce, protect, and provide the promised benefits." LACERA encourages investment managers who manage capital on its behalf to enact effective and practical measures in their investment processes and portfolio management that exemplify adherence to the principles referenced above.

In furtherance of its Investment Policy Statement and Stewardship Principles, LACERA has adopted this *Responsible Contractor Policy* (Policy) to guide investment managers who manage real estate, infrastructure, and other real assets investments on behalf of LACERA to select construction and operation services contractors that demonstrate practices in line with LACERA's Stewardship Principles. LACERA expects investment managers to ensure effective practices and internal controls are in place to select responsible contractors based upon their demonstrated ability to provide high quality services as evidenced by experience, skill, reputation, responsiveness, fees, dependability, record of compliance with applicable laws, regulations and statutes, and payment of fair compensation and benefits to employees.

By promoting responsible contracting, LACERA seeks to prudently optimize financial performance while mitigating investment risks—including, but not limited to, compliance, legal, operational, and reputational liabilities—that may be presented when business entities fail to meet responsible contracting standards.

II. Legal Authority and Fiduciary Duty

The LACERA Board of Investments has "the sole and exclusive fiduciary responsibility over the assets of" the system, as provided by the California Constitution (Article XVI, Section 17(a)). LACERA exercises its legal rights in defining responsible contracting provisions in furtherance of its fiduciary duty under Article XVI, Section 17 of the California Constitution, the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL), and other governing laws, regulations, and case authority.

The Policy is guided in all aspects by LACERA's fiduciary duties, including loyalty, care, skill, prudence, and diligence, which require evaluation of expected investment returns and risk of loss.

LACERA's assets are diligently and prudently invested and managed in accordance with the Fund's fiduciary duties in the sole interest of plan participants and their beneficiaries, and for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to its participants and their beneficiaries. LACERA seeks to have its real assets investments managed and operated in a manner that is expected to prudently maximize the rate of return, while minimizing the risk of loss. LACERA's duties, and the duties of its investment managers, to LACERA's participants and their beneficiaries take precedence over any other duty.

III. Policy Application at Real Assets Investments

LACERA promotes prudent, responsible contracting provisions for construction and operation services throughout its real assets investments. All investment managers who have been selected to manage LACERA's capital in real estate, infrastructure, and natural resources mandates should have in place effective policies, procedures, and internal controls to ensure that contracting practices result in the selection of responsible contractors that reflect the responsible contracting provisions outlined in this Policy.

LACERA recognizes that its control and influence on external investment managers varies by the degree of ownership it maintains in investment funds managed on its behalf by external investment managers. Accordingly, LACERA has defined the application of the terms and provisions of this Policy as follows:

A. Controlled Investments: Where LACERA owns more than a 50 percent equity position either directly or indirectly in a real estate, infrastructure, natural resources, or other real assets investment fund or partnership ("Controlled Investments"), LACERA requires the investment manager to use their best efforts to comply with the responsible contractor terms and provisions defined within this Policy when soliciting and selecting contractors and subcontractors for construction and operation services.

At Controlled Investments, LACERA expects investment managers to apply this Policy to all contracts valued at \$100,000 or more. Contract value refers to the total project work to be contracted for, with desegregation by trade or task. Desegregation designed to evade the requirements of this Policy is not permitted.

B. Non-Controlled Investments: Where LACERA does not have greater than 50 percent equity ownership and/or control of a real estate, infrastructure, natural resources, or other real assets investment fund or partnership ("Non-Controlled Investments"), LACERA *strongly encourages* its investment managers to comply with the spirit and practice of responsible contracting, including—but not limited to—adhering to the terms of this Policy and defining responsible contracting terms and policies of their own.

For the avoidance of any confusion, while LACERA encourages all real assets firms to practice responsible contracting, the specific terms and requirements of this Policy do not apply to other real assets exposures in LACERA's portfolio, including—but not limited to—publicly-listed REIT's, mezzanine debt, hybrid debt, investments acquired through a secondaries fund acquisition transaction, and indirect, specialty, and mortgage investments lacking equity features, and their respective investment managers.

IV. Key Provisions of Responsible Contracting

A “Responsible Contractor,” as used in this Policy, is a contractor or subcontractor who: (1) has the appropriate experience, skill, reputation, employee relations, responsiveness, fees, and dependability to perform the required work, and (2) provides workers fair compensation and fair benefits for the required work as evidenced by factors including—but not limited to—payroll and employee records, policies, and practices.

Responsible contracting practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Fair Wages and Benefits:** In determining fair wages and fair benefits concerning a specific contract in a specific market, items that may be considered include—but are not limited to—local wage practices, prevailing wages, and labor market conditions. This Policy does not mandate a specific wage level or benefits, but instead recognizes and considers that local market practices may vary across LACERA’s investment exposures. How investment managers and their respective contractors evaluate what constitutes “fair wages” and “fair benefits” should be informed by relevant market factors that include the nature and location of the project, comparable job or trade classifications, and the scope and complexity of services provided. “Fair benefits” may include—but are not limited to—employer-supported family health care coverage, pension benefits, employee safety training, and apprenticeship training programs.
- B. Legal Compliance:** All contractors should demonstrate a compelling track record of compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances, including (but not limited to) those related to insurance, withholding taxes, minimum wage, health and safety, and environmental matters. Responsible Contractors exclude any contractor who has been debarred—or whose principal has been debarred—by a municipal, state, or federal government. Responsible Contractors also respect the right of all workers to freedom of association in the workplace, as protected under local, state, and federal law, and as recognized by the United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) core labor standards.
- C. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** As outlined in LACERA’s *Investment Policy Statement*, LACERA values diversity, equity, and inclusion, and believes that effectively accessing and managing diverse talent leads to improved outcomes. LACERA considers diversity broadly, inclusive of—but not limited to—professional backgrounds, age, experience, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability status, military service, ethnicity, national origin, and culture. LACERA expects real assets investment managers to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination in contracting provisions for construction and operation services. Effective assurance of equal opportunity and non-discrimination includes effective policies and practices to prohibit and deter retaliation against any individual or entity who reports incidents of prospective non-compliance.
- D. Competitive Bidding:** Investment managers should ensure that all requests for proposals and invitations to bid applicable contracts covered by this Policy are made in accordance with the terms of this Policy. LACERA encourages adequate advance notice of bidding opportunities to promote competitive bidding, as practical and appropriate. Investment managers and their associated property managers and contractors should use reasonable methods to provide adequate notice to potential contractors of bidding opportunities for contracted services. Adequate notification may include, but is not limited to, maintaining lists of eligible, qualified Responsible Contractors for inclusion in the bidding process.

- E. Neutrality:** Where there is a legitimate attempt by a labor organization to organize workers employed in contracted construction, maintenance, operation, and services, LACERA encourages investment managers, property managers, and contractors to maintain a position of neutrality. To remain “neutral” means not taking any action or making any statement that will directly or indirectly state or imply any support for or opposition to the selection by employees of a collective bargaining agent, or preference or opposition to any particular union as a bargaining agent.

For the avoidance of any confusion, nothing in this Policy obligates or prohibits an investment manager, property or asset manager, or contractor from entering into project labor agreements, labor peace or other lawful agreements with a labor organization seeking to represent or that currently represents workers, or take actions to address violations of applicable law.

It is also not the intent of this Policy to call for any involvement by investment managers, property or asset managers, or contractors in resolving any jurisdiction disputes that may arise between or among building trades and other labor organizations and unions.

V. Policy Implementation

- A. Notification:** All current and prospective real assets investment managers shall be provided a copy of this Policy (both at Controlled Investments and Non-Controlled Investments).
- B. Contracts and Contract Renewals:** All contracts and contract renewals at Controlled Investments entered into after the effective date of this Policy shall incorporate expectations of adherence to all applicable provisions of this Policy.
- C. Investment Manager Administration and Reporting:** All investment managers of Controlled Investments are expected to communicate the terms and provisions of this Policy to property and asset managers and ensure effective practices are in place to implement them. Investment managers of Controlled Investments are further expected to collect, provide, and retain adequate data documenting their compliance with this Policy on no less than an annual basis in reporting to LACERA in a format acceptable to and approved by LACERA. Effective monitoring and enforcement by investment managers includes reasonable investigation of allegations of non-compliance with the terms and provisions of the Policy, as well as cooperative and timely communication with LACERA regarding the status of any such investigations.

Investment managers of Non-Controlled Investments are encouraged to report to LACERA on the administration, monitoring, and compliance with the responsible contracting provisions and terms stated above and any responsible contracting policies or provisions of their own, as well as to be responsive to any inquiries from LACERA related to the same.

- D. LACERA Monitoring:** LACERA actively monitors all external investment managers, including those managing Controlled Investments and Non-Controlled Investments. All investment managers should demonstrate a compelling track record of adhering to responsible contracting practices. Any investment decisions to renew, increase, or decrease allocations may be informed, in part, by the investment managers track record of adherence to responsible contracting practices.

LACERA's regular review of Controlled Investments includes an assessment of the investment manager's track record in adhering to the terms and provisions of this Policy. LACERA reviews reports from investment managers of Controlled Investments regarding implementation and compliance with the terms and provisions of this Policy and furnishes reports, including an annual publicly-available report on investment manager compliance with the Policy, as part of LACERA's overall compliance reporting practices to the Board of Investments for its oversight.

LACERA's review of all investment managers (both Controlled Investments and Non-Controlled Investments) focuses on the overall pattern of conduct and compliance and not particularly a single incident, depending on the severity and impact of incidents of non-compliance.

Document History

Revised and restated July 13, 2022

Revised November 19, 2014

Reviewed November 20, 2013

Revised November 13, 2012

Adopted December 11, 2002



Emerging Manager Policy

FEBRUARY 2020

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I. Introduction

LACERA's mission is to "Produce, Protect, and Provide the Promised Benefit" for all its members. In order to achieve this mission, LACERA has developed various policies to guide its investments. These policies are governed by the California constitution and by various statutes, and embedded within the regulations are fundamental concepts of loyalty and prudence. The duty of loyalty means that Board members and staff must act in the sole interest of LACERA's members and beneficiaries; the duty of prudence requires that we discharge our responsibilities with skill, care, and diligence—and that we diversify the portfolio in order to minimize the risk of loss and maximize the expected rate of return.

The Emerging Manager Policy ("Policy") furthers the investment beliefs, philosophy, and strategies outlined in LACERA's Investment Policy Statement ("IPS"), adheres in all respects to the Code of Ethical Conduct and the Conflict of Interest Code, and complies with all applicable governing regulations.

LACERA values diversity and inclusion. These values permeate the entire LACERA portfolio and extend beyond the emerging manager program. As stated in the IPS, LACERA believes that effectively accessing and managing diverse talent—inclusive of varied backgrounds, age, experience, race, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, and culture—leads to improved outcomes. LACERA expects all its external asset managers and third party providers to respect LACERA's values of diversity and inclusion and to reflect them in their own organizations.

II. Purpose and Objective

The objective of LACERA's Emerging Manager Policy is to enhance the total Fund's risk-adjusted return. The Policy seeks a proper balance between the potential for higher returns available to select emerging managers, and the higher risks—both investment-related and operational—associated with less established firms.

The Policy provides LACERA an opportunity to invest in promising investment management organizations early in their development. Investing with managers that have fewer clients, smaller assets, or a short track record may provide LACERA access to investment strategies that larger, more established managers might overlook. Smaller investment management firms may generate attractive performance, net-of-fees, because of increased market flexibility associated with smaller asset bases. In addition, first- or second-time funds may outperform later funds in private markets. Furthermore, investing early in the lifecycle of select emerging managers may carry benefits that include lower fees (founder's terms), future capacity rights, and preferred economics such as a share of future revenues.

Counterbalancing the attractive returns from investing with emerging managers is a greater return dispersion and the possibility of greater investment and operational risk—particularly in areas such as compliance, portfolio administration, cybersecurity, business continuity, and succession planning.

Emerging managers are highly motivated to perform well for early investors because doing so can be crucial to their firm's growth. As a result, institutional investors such as LACERA may have a greater alignment of interests with emerging managers than with more established ones.

III. Emerging Manager Definition

Emerging investment managers are independent firms that have less substantial assets under management or may lack a long-term investment performance record. LACERA is interested in emerging managers that have strong alignment of interest with their investors and expects principals of the firm to hold a substantial majority of the ownership interest of the company. Specific requirements for assets under management (“AUM”) and length of track record are tailored for each asset class and updated for each mandate to take into account the composition of the manager universe prevailing at the time a search is conducted.

Emerging managers are held to the same high performance standards that apply to all of LACERA’s external managers. In addition, LACERA conducts an ongoing assessment of all external managers’ commitment to, adherence with, and track record of accessing and retaining diverse and inclusive workforces. Emerging managers may include, but are not limited to, investment managers that are owned by individuals of diverse backgrounds that have traditionally been underrepresented in the financial services industry. More broadly, all else equal, LACERA prefers firms that are committed to and have established a demonstrated track record of diversity and inclusion throughout the firm’s workforce, inclusive of investment professionals.

IV. Structure

LACERA may hire emerging managers either directly or by employing a fund-of-funds manager skilled at sourcing emerging managers. Either type of mandate must adhere to LACERA’s defined procurement procedures and requires approval by the Board of Investments. Investment strategies managed by emerging managers must be suitable for LACERA’s portfolio and fit within the approved strategic asset allocation and asset class structure, as well as the portfolio’s risk and liquidity constraints.

For each asset class, LACERA conducts periodic structure reviews that incorporate specific criteria and recommended allocation ranges for emerging managers (see “Attachment” for current BOI-approved ranges). The structure reviews take into consideration the opportunities and risks of the asset class and are conducted in consultation with LACERA’s applicable investment consultants. The implementation of any emerging manager program must advance the principles, objectives, and initiatives established within the asset class structure review.

V. Graduation

Selected emerging managers will be reviewed in accordance with their respective asset class policies to determine if they continue to meet the requirements of the emerging manager program or if they qualify for graduation from emerging status. Graduation recommendations will be included in the biennial asset class structure reviews.

VI. Monitoring and Reporting

LACERA staff will monitor the emerging managers on an ongoing basis and report annually to the Board on potential issues, performance, and significant developments.

Attachment

Emerging Manager Allocation Ranges¹

	Target	Range
Global Equity	-	0-10%
Private Equity	-	0-10%
Credit	15%	10-20%
Real Assets & Inflation Hedges	10%	0-15%
Core/Non-Core Real Estate	10%	0-15%
Hedge Funds	15%	10-20%

Document History

Revised September 2024
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 Revised July 8, 2009
 Revised March 11, 2009
 Revised September 13, 2006
 Adopted June 13, 2001

¹The allocation ranges shown are the most recent numbers approved by the BOI.



Placement Agent Policy

NOVEMBER 2014

Investment managers in both the public and private markets use placement agents to help them raise capital. The purpose of this Policy is to bring transparency to placement agent activity in connection with LACERA's investments and to help ensure that all investment decisions are made solely on their merits and in a manner consistent with the fiduciary duties of LACERA's Board of Investments (the "Board").

Prior to LACERA investing with any External Manager¹, investment staff shall obtain a written representation from the External Manager, in a form acceptable to the Legal Office, stating that the External Manager has not used a Placement Agent² in connection with LACERA's investment (and that a Placement Agent will not receive compensation from the External Manager if LACERA invests in the investment), or if the External Manager has used a Placement Agent (or if a Placement Agent will receive compensation from the External Manager if LACERA invests in the investment), it will disclose the following in writing, on a form prepared by staff:

- The name of the Placement Agent and the relationship between the External Manager and the Placement Agent
- A resume for each officer, partner, or principal of the Placement Agent detailing the individual's education, professional designations, regulatory licenses, and investment and work experience
- A description of any and all compensation of any kind provided, or agreed to be provided, to the Placement Agent
- A description of the services to be performed by the Placement Agent
- Representation that the fee is the sole obligation of the External Manager and not of LACERA, the Investment Vehicle, the Investment Fund, or any investor(s) in the Investment Vehicle or in the Investment Fund
- The name(s) of current or former LACERA board members, employees, or consultants or member(s) of the immediate family of any such individuals that are either employed or receiving compensation of any kind provided, or agreed to be provided, directly or indirectly from the Placement Agent
- The name(s) of any current or former LACERA Board members, employees, or consultants who suggested the retention of the Placement Agent
- A statement whether the Placement Agent, or any of its affiliates, are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission or the Financial Industry Regulatory Association or any similar state regulatory agency, or any similar regulatory agency in a country other than the United States, and the details of that registration or explanation as to why no registration is required
- A statement whether the Placement Agent, or any of its affiliates, is registered (or is required to be registered as of a date certain) as a lobbyist with any state or national government

Any External Manager or Placement Agent that violates the Policy shall not solicit new investments from LACERA for five years after the violation was committed. However, this prohibition may be reduced by a majority vote of the Board at a public session upon a showing of good cause.

Document History

Reviewed November 19, 2014

Revised November 9, 2011

Effective retroactively to October 9, 2011

¹As defined in California Government Code section 7513.8, "External Manager" means either of the following: (1) a Person who is seeking to be, or is, retained by a board or an Investment Vehicle to manage a portfolio of securities or other assets for compensation; or (2) a Person who manages an Investment Fund and who offers or sells, or has offered or sold, an ownership interest in the Investment Fund to a board or an Investment Vehicle. (All code section references are to the Government Code, unless otherwise noted.)

As defined in section 7513.8, "Person" means an individual, corporation, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability company, or association, either domestic or foreign.

As defined in section 7513.8, "Investment Vehicle" means a corporation, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability company, association, or other entity, either domestic or foreign, managed by an External Manager in which a board is the majority investor and that is organized in order to invest with, or retain the investment management services of, other External Managers.

As defined in section 7513.8, "Investment Fund" means a private equity fund, public equity fund, venture capital fund, hedge fund, fixed income fund, real estate fund, infrastructure fund, or similar pooled investment entity that is, or holds itself out as being, engaged primarily, or proposes to engage primarily, in the business of investing, reinvesting, owning, holding, or trading securities or other assets. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, an investment company that is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. Sec. 80a-1 et seq.) and that makes a public offering of its securities is not an Investment Fund.

²As defined in section 7513.8, "Placement Agent" means any Person directly or indirectly hired, engaged, or retained by, or serving for the benefit of or on behalf of, an External Manager or an Investment Fund managed by an External Manager, and who acts or has acted for compensation as a finder, solicitor, marketer, consultant, broker, or other intermediary in connection with the offer or sale to a board or an Investment Vehicle either of the following: in the case of an External Manager as defined in subpart (1) of the definition of an External Manager, the investment management services of the External Manager; in the case of an External Manager as defined in subpart (2) of the definition of an External Manager, an ownership interest in an Investment Fund managed by the External Manager. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, an individual who is an employee, officer, director, equityholder, partner, member, or trustee of an External Manager and who spends one-third or more of his or her time during a calendar year managing the securities or assets owned, controlled, invested, or held by the External Manager is not a Placement Agent.

PRIVATE EQUITY PRIVATIZATION POLICY

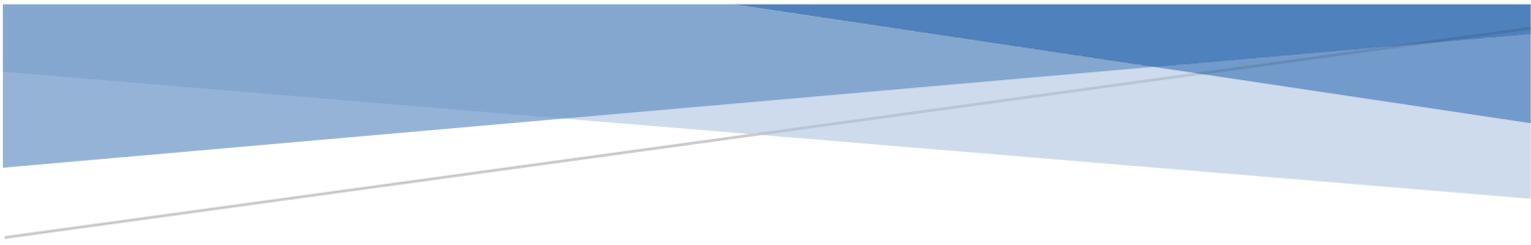
LACERA does not aim to promote privatization of public jobs through its private equity investment program. It is highly unlikely that LACERA private equity investments would be in domestic partnerships or similar pooled investment vehicles ("partnerships") that are dependent on privatization strategies.

When performing due diligence prior to making the initial investment in a domestic partnership, staff and/or Consultant, as applicable, will use their reasonable efforts to ascertain:

- (1) Whether the partnership's current investment strategy includes the privatization of jobs held by LACERA members.
- (2) Whether previous partnerships operated by the general partners, if any, have invested in companies dependent upon privatization of jobs held by LACERA members.

Staff and/or Consultant will seek guidance from the Board of Investments before investing in a domestic partnership if the due diligence establishes a positive answer to either (1) or (2) above.

Adopted on May 21, 2003.



U.C. CERVA

INVESTMENT-RELATED SERVICES PROCUREMENT POLICY (IRSP)

**Board of Investments
September 11, 2024**

Investment-Related Services Procurement Policy (IRSP)

Authorizing Manager: Jonathan Grabel, Chief Investment Officer

Original Issue Date: November 20, 2019 Revised Effective Date: September 11, 2024

Mandatory Review: Every three years or as needed

Approval Level: Board of Investment (“Board” or “Trustees”)

I. Purpose

LACERA’s Investment-Related Services Procurement Policy (the “Procurement Policy or the “Policy”) sets forth the guidelines by which LACERA procures investment-related services for the defined benefit retirement plan and Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust, including the County, Court, and Master Trusts (“OPEB”) (collectively referred to as the “Funds”).

II. Scope

Investment-related services covered by this Procurement Policy include investment management, general and asset category consulting, and specialized services that support investment functions, such as custodians, legal services, and implementation providers.

III. Procurement Principles

To fulfill its mission, the Board has adopted an Investment Policy Statement (“IPS”), which defines the framework by which LACERA manages the Funds’ assets. As part of the IPS, the Board’s investment beliefs provide a framework to guide LACERA’s investment decisions in a manner consistent with an institutional investor with a long-term investment horizon.

This Policy adheres to the following principles, consistent with the IPS, investment beliefs, and other Board-approved guiding documents:

- **Fiduciary Duty.** The Board and its Trustees are fiduciaries to members and their beneficiaries. Procurement decisions are made for the exclusive benefit of providing benefits to members and their beneficiaries without other concerns or outside influence and with the same care, skill, prudence, and diligence that a prudent public pension trustee with experience would use. LACERA staff provides support in the performance of fiduciary duty.
- **Impartial.** Procurements will be made free from any actual or potential conflict of interest and be conducted in an impartial manner. The Board, the Trustees, and LACERA employees must refrain from personal activity that, actually or potentially, could conflict with the proper management of the investment program, or could impair their ability to make decisions in compliance with fiduciary duty and in compliance with LACERA’s Code

of Ethical Conduct, Conflict of Interest Code, the Political Reform Act, Fair Political Practices Commission regulations, and other applicable law.

- **Transparent.** Procurements will be conducted and reported to the Board as described in this Policy. Records of procurements will be subject to public disclosure unless subject to a specific exception pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- **Timely.** All procurement activities will prioritize efficiency and timeliness.
- **Aligned with Strategic Asset Allocation and Initiatives.** Procurements will consider LACERA's Board-approved strategic asset allocation, structure reviews, and initiatives.
- **Risk Aware.** LACERA identifies, assesses, and monitors relevant investment and operational risks throughout the procurement process.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.** LACERA values diversity and inclusion and believes that effectively accessing and managing diverse talent leads to improved outcomes.
- **Environmental, Social and Governance.** LACERA considers financially-relevant environmental, social, and governance factors in its investment program.

IV. **Legal Authority**

This Procurement Policy is issued under the plenary authority and exclusive fiduciary responsibility granted to the Board for investment and management of the pension fund in the California Constitution and County Employees Retirement Law of 1937, as amended, commonly referred to as CERL. This Policy is also issued under the Board's fiduciary authority for investment and management of the OPEB Trust under CERL and the Trust and Investment Services Agreements for the County, as amended, and Court OPEB Trusts and the OPEB Master Trust Declaration.

V. **Definitions**

Whenever the following words appear in this Policy, they will be construed to have the following meaning:

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| Active Management: | Refers to investment managers whose investment strategy and process allow them to make investments that attempt to exceed their benchmarks. |
| Consultant: | An individual or firm that provides consulting services to LACERA. |
| Custody Services (Custodian): | Refers to a service provider who provides safekeeping and management of financial assets on behalf of LACERA. These services are generally provided by financial institutions that have the necessary infrastructure and expertise to protect and manage assets, which may range from stocks and bonds to cash, real estate and other types of investments. |

Evaluation Criteria:	Evaluation criteria are the specific standards used to assess request for proposal submissions and determine the most qualified service provider.
Evaluation Team:	Means the group of individuals that have been assigned responsibility to review the search respondents relative to the criteria set forth in the search as well as to each other, as appropriate in the context of a request for proposal. The Evaluation Team will include LACERA employees as appropriate and possibly a third-party advisor.
Illiquid Investments:	Consists of securities or other assets that cannot easily be sold or exchanged for cash within a short period of time. These investments can include private equity, private credit, private real assets (including real estate), and hedge fund strategy products. These assets are intended to provide the portfolio with higher risk-adjusted returns and/or enhanced diversification. They are not intended to be a source of short-term liquidity.
Liquid Investments:	Means securities and other assets that can be converted into cash quickly without material impact on fair value and where there is typically a transactional price available on a daily basis. These assets can include global equities, investment-grade bonds, publicly traded real estate and real assets, and overlays implemented via exchange-traded instruments.
Minimum Qualifications:	Describes the baseline set of knowledge, skills, experience and/or capabilities that a service provider must possess to provide reasonable assurance that the required service will be performed successfully.
Passive Management:	Refers to investment managers whose investment strategy and process are designed to replicate a benchmark.
Scope of Services:	A detailed description of the specific services required from a service provider to fulfill the service needs as outlined in a request for proposal. It encompasses the deliverables, performance expectations, and any specific requirements or limitations.
Selection Authority:	Refers to the group or individual with authority to select the service provider that will be retained. This may be the Board, the Evaluation Team, the CIO, Chief Legal Counsel, or some combination of the above.

Service Provider: An individual, business, or governmental entity that has a contract to provide services to LACERA.

VI. Procurement Policy

The Procurement Policy supplements LACERA’s IPS and is designed to comply with and follow all guidance included within the IPS. To the extent a conflict exists between the IPS and the Procurement Policy, the IPS shall prevail.

A. Applicable Policies

This Policy relates to investment-related procurement services described in section II, scope and falls within Board-approved policies. For other types of LACERA procurement, please refer to the applicable Board-approved policies and procedures.

B. Procurement Methods

LACERA is committed to procuring services that meet the Funds’ investment needs while maintaining its fiduciary responsibilities and preventing actual or potential conflicts of interest. As such, LACERA utilizes a principles-based approach that ensures value for LACERA’s members and stakeholders while upholding the highest ethical standards.

Request for Proposal (“RFP”)

A public solicitation method whose instructions and requirements are posted on LACERA’s website, inviting qualified bidders to compete for an investment-related service. Before issuing the RFP, LACERA establishes key details to ensure a fair and efficient selection process.

Non-RFP

A non-RFP procurement offers greater flexibility than a formal RFP process. This approach is preferred for investment-related services that do not align with a structured RFP. However, even with a non-RFP approach, the CIO ensures procurements follow relevant Board-approved policies, including the Investment Policy Statement, asset category structure reviews, and investment guidelines.

Type of Service Being Procured and Selection Authority

1. Investment Management Services

Investment management services include Active Management strategies for Liquid and Illiquid Investments and Passive Management strategies for Liquid Investments. The CIO may initiate an RFP to select or retain a Service Provider for investment management services and has discretion on which procurement methodology to utilize (i.e. RFP or non-RFP).

Any selection of a Service Provider of investment management services covered by this Policy will be reported to the Board subsequent to the selection.

2. Other Investment-Related Services

Numerous specialized investment-related Service Providers that do not directly manage investment assets are used to support LACERA's investment activities.

The selection process utilized for other investment-related services varies depending on the type of service provided. For Custodians and general/asset category Consultants serving the Funds, the selection process requires a Board-approved RFP. For all other investment-related services, except for legal services, the Chief Investment Officer is authorized to select or retain the Service Provider without a formal RFP for procurements for ongoing services or that align with established guidelines.

Any selection of other investment-related services covered by this Policy will be reported to the Board subsequent to the procurement.

a.) Custody Services

LACERA engages service providers to act as custodians to safeguard its assets. Custody Services can encompass settlement, safekeeping, and reporting of LACERA's cash and investments.

b.) General and Asset Category Consulting Services

The Board's general investment consultant provides advice and recommendations regarding LACERA's strategic objectives, risks, oversight, and portfolio implementation. The Board may also engage asset category consultants to provide more specialized expertise and knowledge for certain asset categories.

c.) Implementation Providers

LACERA leverages a network of specialized Service Providers to augment its internal capabilities across a spectrum of investment functions, encompassing analytics providers, tax consultants, and market data providers. These Service Providers are crucial in executing Board-approved initiatives and investment operations.

d.) Miscellaneous Purchases

Procurements for other investment-related services that are not addressed in section B, subsection 2, and costing less than \$500,000, per transaction or assignment, are considered miscellaneous purchases. The signing authority for these purchases is the CIO or the CIO's authorized designee.

e.) Legal Services

The Chief Legal Counsel (“CLC”) may initiate an RFP to select or retain outside counsel to assist on investment-related matters on specific asset categories. The CLC also has the authority, without the need to conduct an RFP, to retain specialized counsel and other legal support services when necessary to complete a transaction or fulfill a Board-approved initiative. Additionally, the CLC may retain litigation counsel when necessary to protect LACERA’s interests with respect to investment-related matters. Selection of counsel for securities litigation and monitoring is governed by the Board’s Securities Litigation Policy.

Any selection of legal counsel covered by this Policy will be reported to the Board no later than the meeting of the Board immediately following the selection.

f.) Board Approval

Board approval is required for the procurement of other investment-related services, except for those included in the annual budget or not addressed in section B, subsection 2.

C. RFP Process Overview

While the following outlines a typical RFP process, the dynamic nature of the marketplace for investment-related services may necessitate adjustments from what is described below. By maintaining flexibility while adhering to core principles, LACERA aims to procure investment-related services efficiently and effectively, meeting the evolving needs of the organization.

1. Establishing and Posting an RFP

LACERA promotes a fair and transparent procurement through a structured RFP process. Before launching an RFP, key parameters such as Scope of Services, Minimum Qualifications, search timing, structure of the Evaluation Team, Evaluation Criteria, and Selection Authority are established.

Once launched, all RFPs and essential information regarding the search are publicly posted on LACERA’s website.

2. The Evaluation Team

LACERA's RFP process utilizes a dedicated Evaluation Team (“Team”) to assess proposals. This Team evaluates written responses, conducts interviews, performs due diligence, and ultimately recommends the best candidate for LACERA’s needs. The Team also works closely with the LACERA’s legal division (the “Legal Office”) to consider proposed modifications to a standard agreement to ensure legal compliance with any changes. After a comprehensive review, the Team assigns final scores and recommends the most qualified respondent(s) to the Selection Authority.

3. Quiet Period

LACERA enforces a quiet period during the selection process to ensure fairness, efficiency, and diligence. This period restricts communication between LACERA’s Trustees, employees, and potential Service Providers, except as required to support existing business obligations. It begins after a solicitation is issued and lasts until a final decision is made or the selection process is terminated. The initiation, continuation, and conclusion of the quiet period are all publicly announced to prevent accidental violations.

D. Legal Review

A written contract will be negotiated with firms selected in all procurement processes, which will include all the negotiated terms, conditions, the Scope of Services, and any other requirements outlined in the solicitation documents. The Evaluation Team, in collaboration with the assigned legal counsel, must ensure the contract satisfies the objectives of the service and LACERA and contains reasonable termination provisions. The Legal Office must review and approve all contracts.

Contract Terms

Service contracts have varying contract lives depending on the type.

Contract Terms	
Type of Service	Duration
Custody Services	Up to 10 years with one 5-year extension upon Board approval or two 1-year extensions at the CIO’s discretion, with Board notification
General and Asset Category Consultants	Up to 5 years with two 1-year extensions, with Board notification
All Other Contracts	Varies depending on the nature of the service. The CIO must approve the extension