

STARS WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

STARS (Self-Directed Tax-Advantaged Retirement System) established its first Internet Website Policy in 2015.

JPA Website Policy

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Policy is to establish regulations for the development, operation, and administration of the JPA websites and to ensure that the JPA websites remain non-public forums subject to the JPA's exclusive use and control. The purposes of the JPA websites are as follows:
 - a. To provide a convenient and information-rich resource for interested viewers and other public agencies to assess the JPA.
 - b. To provide information and resources which contribute to efficient and effective local government.
 - c. To employ the latest technology designed to improve customer service and communication relating to issues of interest within the JPA.
 - d. To contribute to the improvement of JPA services.
 - e. To establish and strengthen long-term partnerships between the JPA and individuals and entities in the public sector.
2. **Policy.** The JPA shall operate and maintain the JPA websites as provided for in this Policy.
3. **Definitions.** The following definitions shall apply to this Policy:
 - a. JPA websites mean the official JPA websites available at www.RGS.ca.gov, www.LGS.ca.gov, www.MSAjpa.org and www.STARSCa.org, and any additional domain name(s) that the JPA or other agencies or programs acquire for official JPA use.
 - b. "Cookies" means files on the user's computer that enable a website to recognize the user on subsequent visits and possibly track the user's Internet use between visits.
 - c. "External Website" means a website maintained by a third party, and not by the JPA.
 - d. "External Link" is a hyperlink from a JPA website to a website maintained by a third party.
 - e. "Security Measures" means practices for the protection of physical configuration and environment, software, information-handling processes, and user practices.
4. **Non-Public Forum Status.** The JPA websites are non-public forums. While the JPA encourages the public to use the JPA websites to access information and resources, the JPA expressly reserves the right to impose certain restrictions on the use of its websites. The JPA websites are reserved for the exclusive control of the JPA for the purposes of one-way communication to users of the JPA websites. The JPA websites shall not be used to facilitate a general debate or the free exchange of ideas.
5. **Authority of JPA Executive Director.** The JPA Executive Director or his or her designee shall have the authority and responsibility for the implementation of this Policy.

The JPA Executive Director may also make interpretations on issues that are not clearly articulated or not included in this Policy. This Policy will be posted on the JPA websites for review by the public at any time. Questions or comments regarding any subjects or issues addressed in this Policy may be directed to:

STARS

Attn: Executive Director

PO Box 1350

Carmel Valley, CA 93924

e-mail: info@RGS.ca.gov

6. **Privacy.** The JPA is sensitive to the privacy interests of the users of the JPA websites and believes that the protection of those interests is an important responsibility. The JPA's goal in collecting personal information online is to provide the user with the most personalized and effective service possible. By understanding the user's needs and preferences, the JPA may provide users with improved service. The JPA strives to protect online personal information in the same manner that the JPA protects citizen and business information obtained through other means. The following information explains the policy regarding any personal information supplied when using the JPA websites.
 - a. On certain occasions, the JPA websites may request a user's email address for purposes of correspondence or for JPA business. The JPA shall not share email addresses with anyone outside the JPA, nor disclose user information to any third party, except as required by applicable laws, including the Public Records Act and discovery in a civil law suit.
 - b. The JPA may use the personal data provided through the JPA websites to send information about JPA services and upcoming activities. However, the JPA will neither sell nor knowingly provide personal information for any other direct mail activities, except as required by applicable laws, including the Public Records Act and discovery in a civil law suit.
 - c. The JPA shall not guarantee, nor does it represent, that such comments, suggestions or questions submitted by email to the JPA or to JPA officials or employees will remain private or confidential. Similar to mailed or delivered comments, comments received via e-mail may become subject to public disclosure under the California Public Records Act and/or part of the discovery procedure in a civil lawsuit.
 - d. During the course of a credit card transaction through the JPA websites, the information is transmitted to a third party processor via a secure connection. The JPA and its subcontractors use firewalls and other security technology to minimize the risk of unauthorized access. To complete the credit card transaction(s), information about transaction(s) are submitted to the relevant financial institution. The JPA will not share this information with any other third party unless required to do so by applicable laws, including the Public Records Act and discovery in a civil law suit. If the JPA determines that it must make the information available, the JPA Executive Director or his or her designees will make a reasonable attempt to notify the affected parties by email that the JPA has been ordered to provide the information.
 - e. The JPA will not intentionally release any information about the collection of

Internet Protocol (IP) addresses to any third party except as required by applicable law. The JPA websites may archive web server log files in order to create aggregate statistical reports, detect errors at the Website, and for security reasons. If the JPA were to maintain web log files, such files shall be deleted according to a regular schedule to be established by JPA Administration.

- f. Aggregate reports may be generated about visitors to the JPA websites. These reports do not contain any personally identifiable information.
 - g. The JPA does not use persistent reoccurring Cookies, nor share unauthorized information with other third party entities.
7. **Security.** The JPA websites apply security measures to protect the loss, misuse and alteration of the information under their control. From time to time, security measures may be upgraded or otherwise modified to meet changing needs. While the JPA endeavors to keep secure all information it receives via the JPA websites, the JPA cannot guarantee the security of the information.
8. **External Links.** The JPA has a legitimate interest in limiting persons or organizations that might be linked to the JPA websites. The JPA may exercise discretion to ensure that the links to the JPA websites are consistent with the purpose of the JPA websites, as set forth in Section 1. Neither the JPA websites nor the External Links listed on the JPA websites constitute a forum for expressive activity by members of the public.
- a. Each proposed External Link on the JPA websites shall be reviewed to determine its relevance and appropriateness to the purpose of the JPA websites. The JPA Executive Director or his or her designee shall review the merits of the proposed External Link based upon the criteria set forth below. The JPA Executive Director or his or her designee shall also determine whether the External Link serves the purpose of the JPA websites, as set forth in Section 1. A proposal for an External Link will not be denied based on the viewpoint espoused by the individual or entity.
 - b. When the below criteria do not provide clear guidance, the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee reserves the right to make a decision based on the general intent of the criteria outlined below and what he or she believes is in the best interest of the JPA.
 - c. The JPA shall use the following criteria in considering proposals for External Links from the JPA websites:
 - i. Sponsored by governmental and public educational institutions.
 - ii. Sponsored by organizations partnering with the JPA to meet the strategic or operational goals.
 - iii. Sponsored by private organizations which provide government-related information and/or services in a way that is not available on an official government website, as set forth in Subsection (e).
 - iv. Sponsored by professional associations affiliated with local government (such as League of California Cities, International City Management Association, American Planning Association, California Society of Municipal Finance Officers, etc.).
 - v. Sponsored by private or public entities that service JPA employees.
 - d. The JPA websites will not provide External Links to websites that:

- i. Promote or exhibit hate, bias, discrimination, pornography, libelous or otherwise defamatory content.
 - ii. Have a primary purpose of furthering the agenda of a political organization or a candidate running for office, or defeating any candidate for elective office.
 - iii. Consist of personal home pages operated by individuals.
 - e. The JPA may provide External Links to certain private commercial sites that maintain and display government-related information which fulfills the purposes of the JPA websites as set forth in Section 1, and which is not generally available through a governmental agency due to the cost of compiling, maintaining and/or displaying such information. To support the cost of compilation and maintenance of this information, these private commercial sites may include advertising or promotional material in the information display. Accordingly, External Links to such sites which contain this information, but also display commercial advertising or promotional material, may be included within the JPA websites when the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee has made a good faith determination that:
 - i. The JPA's independent replication of the information targeted for linkage is infeasible due to financial or other considerations;
 - ii. No non-commercial site provides the information targeted for linkage; and,
 - iii. The information targeted for linkage greatly enhances the usefulness of the JPA websites and services it provides.
 - f. The JPA reserves the right to determine how and where External Links will appear on the JPA websites.
9. ***Application for External Link.*** To request the addition of an External Link to the JPA websites, the applicant shall send to the JPA Executive Director the relevant URL address, website description and purpose, brief statement as to how the proposed website fulfills the purpose of the JPA websites as set forth in Section 1.
10. ***Disclaimer of External Links and External Websites.*** The information posted on the JPA websites includes hypertext External Links to information created and maintained by other public and/or private organizations. The JPA provides these links solely for the user's information and convenience.
 - a. When the user selects an External Link to an External Website, the user leaves the JPA websites and is subject to the privacy and security policies of the owners/sponsors of the External Website.
 - b. The JPA does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of information contained on an External Website accessed through the JPA websites by External Link.
 - c. The JPA does not endorse or recommend any third party website, product, service, view, or opinion, unless otherwise noted.
 - d. The JPA does not authorize the use of copyrighted materials contained on External Websites.
 - e. The JPA is not responsible for transmissions from External Websites.
11. ***Final Decision.*** The decision to post or not post content and/or links on the JPA websites resides solely with the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee. The decision of the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee is final and binding. Under

no circumstances will individuals or entities be entitled to compensation or damages in the event that the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee directs the JPA to include or exclude External content or links.

12. **Links to JPA Websites.** Advance permission to link to the JPA websites is not necessary. However, the party linking to the JPA websites should be aware that its subpages may change at any time without notice. Individuals and entities linking to the JPA websites shall not capture pages within frames, present the JPA websites content as its own, or otherwise misrepresent the JPA websites content or misinform users about the origin or ownership of its content. Any link to the JPA websites should be a full forward link that passes the user's browser to the JPA websites unencumbered. The web browser's back button should return the user to the originating site if the user wishes to back out.
13. **Posting of Events.** Information regarding events may be posted on the JPA websites, so long as the posting of such information is consistent with the purpose of the JPA websites, as set forth in Section 1, and meets the criteria for External Links, as set forth in Section 8. While the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee may consider suggestions of events to post on the JPA websites, the decision of the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee is final and binding.
14. **Accessibility.** The JPA websites are intended to be accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for reasonable accommodations relating to equal access to communication, or other issues relating to JPA Website accessibility, should be directed to:

STARS

Attn: Executive Director

PO Box 1350

Carmel Valley, CA 93924

[Email: info@RGS.ca.gov](mailto:info@RGS.ca.gov)

15. **No Warranty or Representation.** The web server(s) are maintained to provide public access to JPA information via the Internet. The web services and the content of its web servers and databases are updated on a continual basis. While the JPA attempts to maintain the JPA website information as accurate and timely, the JPA does not warrant or make representations or endorsements as to the quality, content, accuracy, or completeness of the information, text, graphics, hyperlinks, and other items contained on its server or any other server. Materials on JPA websites have been compiled from a variety of sources, and are subject to change without notice from the JPA as a result of updates and corrections.
16. **Service Marks, Trademarks and Copyright.** To the extent allowed by the Public Records Act and otherwise legally permissible, commercial use of web materials is prohibited without the written permission of the JPA. All logos, service marks and trademarks mentioned herein are the property of their respective owners. The JPA retains copyright on the JPA logo, all text, graphic images, and other content, unless otherwise noted. No person or entity may use the JPA logo without approval of the JPA Executive Director. No person or entity shall engage in any of the following conduct without written permission from the JPA Executive Director or his or her designee: a) modify and/or use the text, images or other JPA websites' content from a web server, b) distribute the JPA's web content, and c) "mirror" the JPA's information on a non-JPA server.

17. **Notice to the JPA.** Communications through JPA websites, by e-mail or otherwise, shall in no way be deemed to constitute legal notice to the JPAs or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agents, or representatives, with respect to any existing or potential claim or cause of action against the JPA or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agents, or representatives. No communication through the JPA websites shall be deemed to constitute legal or official notice for any purpose.
18. **Errors, Omissions, Warranty, Damages.** The JPA is neither responsible nor liable for any viruses or other contamination of a user's system due to access of the JPA websites, nor for any delays, inaccuracies, errors or omissions arising out of the user's access of the JPA websites or with respect to the material contained on the JPA websites, including without limitation, any material posted on the JPA websites. The JPA websites and all materials contained on it are distributed "as is" without warranties of any kind, either express or implied, including without limitation, warranties of title or implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. The JPA is not responsible for any special, indirect, incidental or consequential damages that may arise from the use of, or the inability to use, the JPA websites and/or the materials contained on the JPA websites, whether the materials contained on JPA websites are provided by the JPA or a third party.
19. **Indemnification.** To the extent permitted by applicable law, by using JPA websites, the user agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the JPAs, their agencies, officers, employees, representatives, and agents from and against all claims and expenses, including attorney's fees, arising out of the user's use of the JPA websites or materials and information contained on the JPA websites.

Social Media Policy

1. **Purpose.** This Policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the JPA of Social Media as a means of conveying information about the JPA and its events and activities.
 - a. The JPA has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the JPA through the use of Social Media.
 - b. For purposes of this policy, the terms "Social Media" and "Social Media Sites" are understood to be content created by individuals, organizations and/or entities, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of Social Media include Facebook, blogs, My Space, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, and Flickr. For purposes of this Policy, "comments" include information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on Social Media Sites.
2. **General Policy.** The establishment and use by the JPA of JPA Social Media sites are subject to approval by the JPA Executive Director or his/her designees. Use of Social Media shall be administered by JPA Administrative staff and any designated coordinator, as described in this Policy. In approving the use of a JPA Social Media site, the JPA Administrative staff shall establish guidelines for the use of the site, including but not limited to the following information:
 - a. The purpose of the site, which may include the dissemination of general information about the JPA or the dissemination of information regarding a specific JPA Service, Program, Activity, Event or Project.

- b. JPA Administration will be directly responsible for monitoring of, and creation of content on, the site.
 - i. JPA Social Media Sites should make clear that they are maintained by STARS and that they follow this Social Media Policy.
 - ii. To the extent possible, the use of Social Media will link back to the website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with or utilize the services of the JPA.
 - iii. The JPA website at <http://www.starsca.org/> will remain the primary and predominant Internet presence.
 - iv. This Policy may be revised at any time.
3. **Comment Policy.** As a public entity, the JPA must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
 - a. The intended purpose behind establishing a Social Media presence is to disseminate information about the JPA.
 - b. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the JPA Administrative staff:

Social Media Sites Relating to the JPA in General or specific JPA functions:

 - a) Comments not related to the business of the JPA, including random or unintelligible comments;
 - b) Violent or pornographic content and/or language;
 - c) Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or national origin;
 - d) Content which threatens or defames any person or organization;
 - e) Content that is hateful or incites violence;
 - f) Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
 - g) Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
 - h) Encouragement of illegal activity;
 - i) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - j) Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.
 - c. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the JPA Administrative staff for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
 - i. A comment posted by a member of the public on the Social Media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the JPA, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the JPA.
 - ii. The JPA reserves the right to deny access to the Social Media site for any individual who violates this Policy, at anytime and without prior notice.
 - iii. The JPA shall monitor the respective site for comments requesting responses from the JPA and for comments in violation of this policy.

- iv. When a JPA employee comments or responds to a comment in his/her capacity as a JPA employee, said comments or responses shall be made only from an official account established by the JPA for such purposes. No JPA employee making comments or responses in his or her capacity as a JPA employee shall share personal information about himself or herself, or other JPA employees.

4. ***Use of Social Media Sites to Disseminate Information Regarding a Specific JPA Service, Program, Activity, Event or Project.*** In addition to the general provisions of this Policy, the following provisions shall apply to the JPA's use of Social Media to establish an internet presence relating to a particular JPA Service, Activity, Event, Program or Project:

- a. A JPA-designated coordinator will monitor content on JPA Service, Activity, Event, Program or Project-specific Social Media sites to ensure adherence to this Policy.
- b. The JPA-designated coordinator will advise the Administrative staff of any concerns regarding content or comments. The Administrative staff will advise the JPA-designated coordinator whether or not the content or comment should be removed.
- c. The JPA reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the JPA's coordinator for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available. The JPA shall follow any applicable requirements of the JPA's document retention policy for retaining content.
- d. The JPA's content requirements must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
- e. The Social Media pages shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
- f. Comments on topics or issues not relating to the JPA Service, Activity, Event, Program or Project that is the subject of a particular Social Media page maybe removed.
- g. Employees representing the JPA on the respective Social Media page must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the JPA and in accordance with all JPA policies.