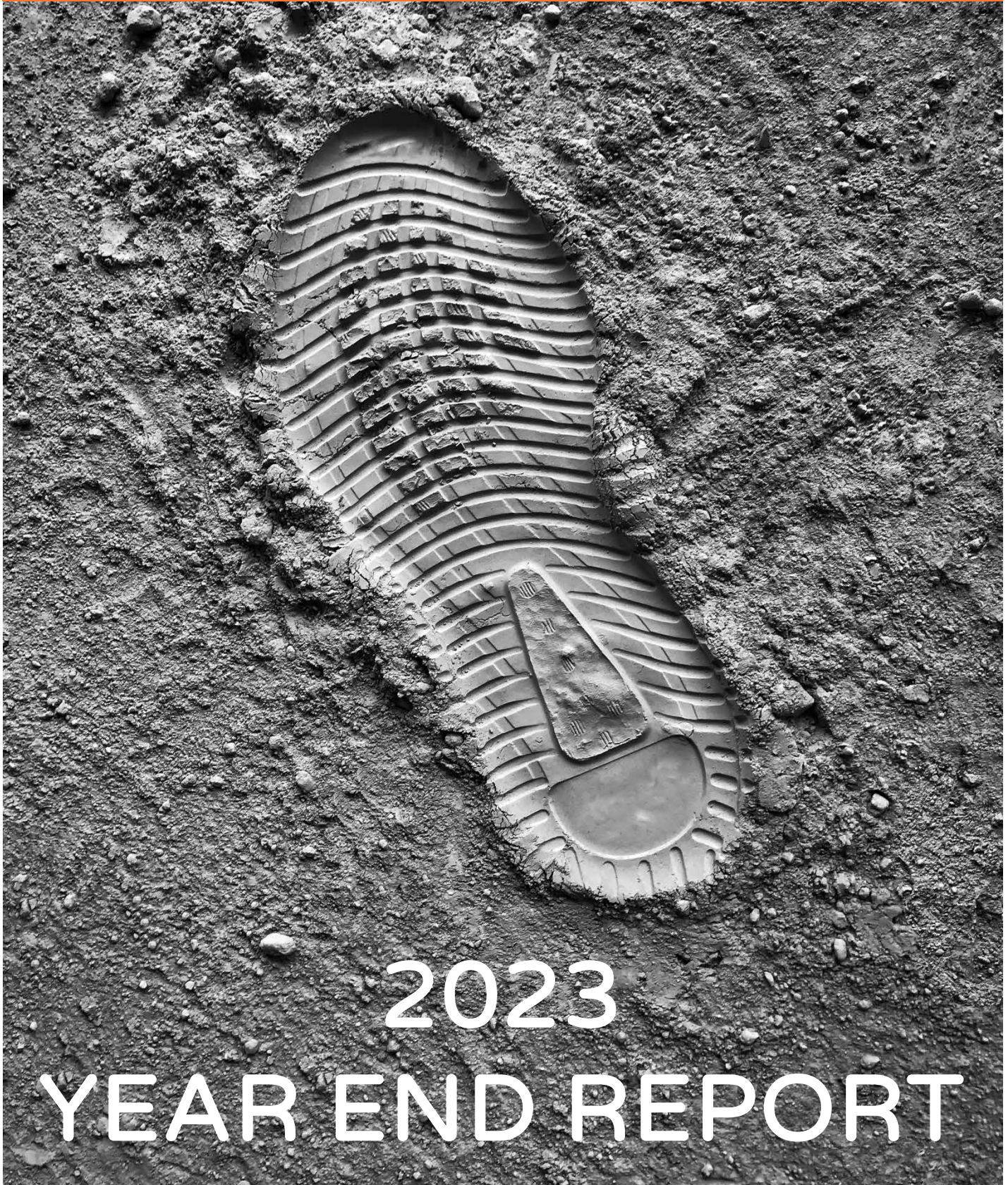
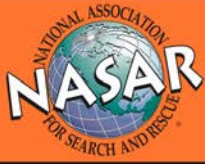




SAR ACADEMY



2023
YEAR END REPORT



SAR ACADEMY

2023 YEAR END REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

President of the Board Message

Executive Director Message

Board of Directors 2023

7 Strategic Initiatives

Financial Status

System Upgrades

Education / Certification Programs

Advocacy Updates

Conferences / Outreach



SAR ACADEMY

INTRODUCTION

NASAR is an international higher education organization offering SAR and Wilderness Emergency Care classes and certifications. NASAR is also a well-respected publisher and advocate for all SAR responders since 1973.

This is the year-end report for calendar year 2023. We hope it answers questions you may have, builds your confidence in our direction and intrigues you enough to ask even more questions.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD MESSAGE – Mikki Hastings

Each year in January, as Board President, I take time to seriously reflect the previous years performance. Of course I consider the budget but more than that, I consider how we have performed for the membership and the search community in general. Have we done everything we could do to further our mission and be the most effective/ efficient advocates for you we possible could be? This year has been a very busy year meeting those goals. Considering the membership as well as how to grow was at the top of every discussion. Our biggest projects this year addressed many of our membership's need. I am really proud of our accomplishments this year and I hope you are too.

We built a new website. The website allows different levels of membership discounts to show in the bookstore and provided a better tracking of education inside the members profile. It provides a forum for responder discussion boards. It can provide easy and timely access to board minutes and our contact information. The website turned out very professional. It was and still is a huge undertaking and most of the heavy work fell on Chris but was a project worth taking on.

Another very important project we were involved with this year was working with The Missing and Murder Indigenous Woman's projects. NASAR instructor Molly Gibbs, Chris and Myself had many meetings through out the year with various tribes who were looking for solutions to their extremely high numbers of missing and murdered within their communities. This is an ongoing project for us.



SAR ACADEMY

We have been able to provide educational and support tools but this is a long road. It has been a honor working with them this year. We will keep supporting their efforts any way we can.

You can best serve your communities when you understand a little more about their needs. Not all of us have the same needs even though we may have the similar situations. This year we recognized this and attended training on cultural awareness. This training provided us with the awareness to look beyond our own culture and traditions to the culture of the groups we are assisting. Having the awareness that we do have significant differences in thought, approach and action can help us be better advocate.

A final project that we initiate this year was the replenishment of the canine fund. Way back in 2003, the entire canine fund was redirected to other operational needs. We have always had the desire to do what is right for the canine community. This year we moved \$20,000 to this account. We will continue to move funds into this account as our finances allow addressing it annually. It will take us some time to replenish the account but the ball is rolling. This Board is in complete agreement that we want to right any past wrongs and more forward with professionalism and integrity.

In this next year, we will set priorities and move forward with the same goals we have had in the past years, to provide quality education while supporting and advocating for our search and rescue community.

As always, Thank you for everything you do for others!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE – Chris Boyer

NASAR continues to be critical to the SAR and first responder community. There is no other international non-profit that focuses on the development and presentation of SAR responder education and certification like NASAR does. Without NASAR, responders would not have quality publications like the *Fundamentals of SAR* textbook, courses like SAR Initial Actions, or nationally recognized canine certifications. Our model is to respect the jurisdictional, geographical,



SAR ACADEMY

environmental, and political differences by providing flexible programs and building local instructors and lead evaluators. We also honor the primarily volunteer nature of SAR by keeping the quality of our materials high and the costs low. NASAR is proud of its continued support to the international SAR responder community since 1973.

2023 was my 10th year as your Executive Director. This is an extraordinarily humbling position. I speak with dedicated SAR volunteers and agency responders daily. They tell me about the efforts and sacrifices they make to serve their communities, the lives they touch, their disappointment in the shortcomings of the industry. I can hear the pride and dedication in their voices when they tell me about successful searches, and I can hear the frustration when local volunteer and agency politics make it harder to volunteer and serve their community. Honoring your service and that of other responders drives me day to day in making NASAR everything you need it to be.

Thanks for your stewardship in SAR and your community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023

The NASAR Board of Directors is comprised of 7 directors elected by the membership, from the membership, to serve the membership in 3 year terms, with a maximum of 3 contiguous terms. The Directors receive no compensation for their efforts on behalf of the Association. Directors serve as volunteer stewards and still must pay for and keep their own active membership.

Mikki Hastings (AR) – President

Mikki is in her 7th year of service as Director and has been elected by the Board to the position of President the past 3 years. Mikki's current term ends 12/31/2025. Mikki will term out at the end of 2025 and will need to wait 1 year before running for the Board again.

Jason Tartalone (PA) – Secretary



SAR ACADEMY

Jason is in his 5th year of service as a Director and has been elected by the Board to the position of Secretary the past 3 years. Jason's term ends 12/31/2025.

“I would like to say that 2023 was an exceptionally busy and fulfilling year for NASAR (National Association for Search and Rescue). Our team's dedication and hard work were evident in our numerous successful missions, showcasing our commitment to excellence in search and rescue training and with the rollout of our updated website! The highlight of the year for me was the successful execution of SARCON (Search and Rescue Conference), which brought together professionals and volunteers from across the nation, fostering an environment of learning, collaboration, and shared experiences. As we step into 2024, I am filled with anticipation and excitement for the continued growth of our organization. I am particularly enthusiastic about hosting SARCON 2024, where we aim to elevate our discussions, training, and networking opportunities to new heights, further strengthening our community and enhancing our capabilities in search and rescue operations.”

Rob Brewer (WA) – Treasurer

Rob previously served on the Board from 2009 to 2016. Rob is in his 2nd year of service as a Director and has been elected by the Board to the position of Treasurer the past 2 years. Rob's term ends 12/31/2024.

“What a fantastic year for our association! The initiatives we undertook this year meant a heavy workload for our staff, but we are hopeful you will all gain some value from the new website and the integration with our association management tools running the back-end. There is still much work to be done, but I can already see how well the new systems are working. The NASAR SAR Conference this year was our second virtual conference and we took a big step forward in how we deliver it to our members. I'm very excited for our 2024 conference as we continue to get better at delivering world-class instruction in this format!



SAR ACADEMY

Thank you to our instructors and lead evaluators for all you do in delivering our courses and certification exams all across the country. Helping SAR members grow their skills is what this is all about and I'm very thankful and proud of the work you all do."

Craig Spieker (OH) – Director At Large

Craig completed his 6th year as a Director and his term ends 12/31/2024.

"I am proud and humbled to have been elected for my third and final term to represent the search and rescue community as a NASAR Director. We have worked very hard to improve on SAR education and make the best decisions possible to bring only the best to you, the SAR professionals, whether volunteer, part-time or full-time. I look forward to working alongside the other Directors in 2024."

Dallas Lane (AZ) – Director At Large

Dallas completed his 6th year as Director, was re-elected and his new term ends 12/31/2027.

Rob Davis (OH) – Director At Large

Rob completed his 2nd year as Director and his term ends 12/31/2024.

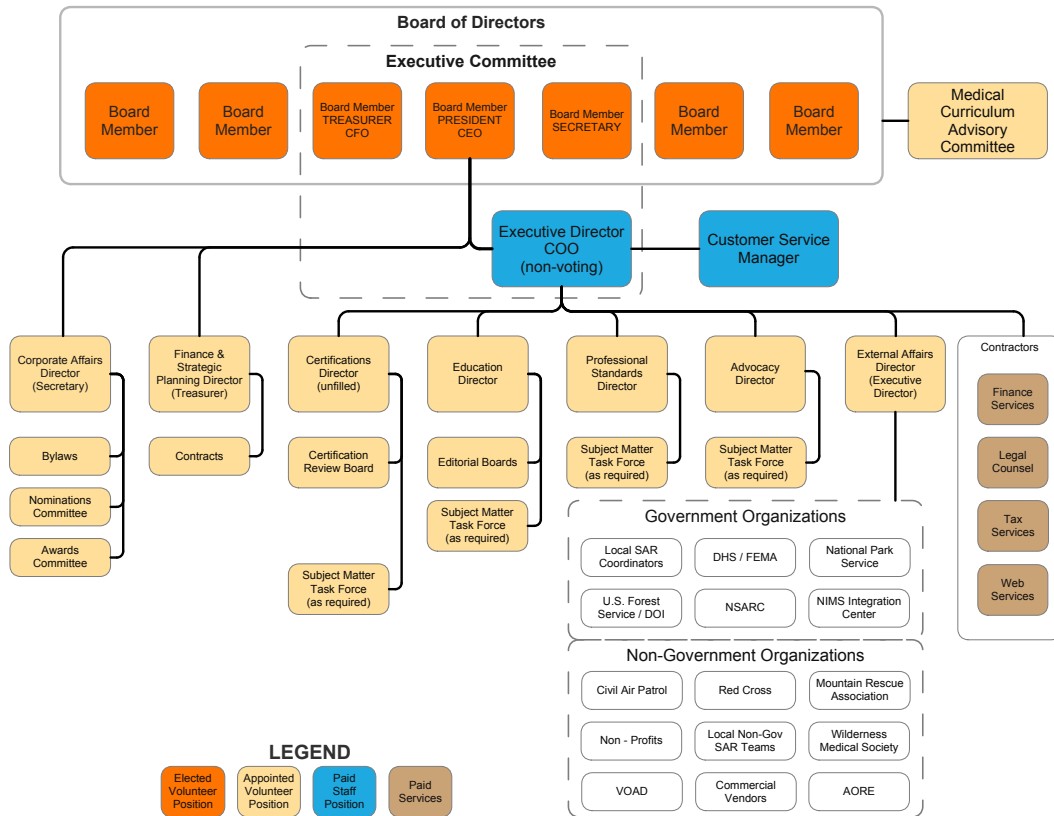
"It has been my pleasure to complete my second year as a Director on the NASAR Board of Directors. It was a very exciting year as we made some exciting steps to move the organization forward. As the lone K9 handler on the board, I began reviewing NASAR's canine SAR standards to see where we stand in meeting FEMA and ASTM standards. I look forward to continuing that work in the coming year. It was also exciting to be part of the process to upgrade the organization's software systems which was a huge need. It has been a pleasure working with such a talented and devoted group of directors and officers who are leading NASAR in a positive direction."



SAR ACADEMY

Stephen Lewis (TN) – Director At Large

Stephen completed his 3rd year as a Director and his term ended 12/31/2023.



Board Meetings

The Board meetings are governed by the Virginia Corporate Code, Association By-Laws and are conducted using Roberts Rules of Order. The Board meets twice a year in-person and quarterly via videoconference. Board meetings are open to the membership. Members requiring an accommodation to attend should contact the Executive Director to make arrangements.

Meeting agendas are published by the Secretary 2 weeks prior to the meetings, and draft minutes are typically published within a few days of the meeting. Minutes are made available to the membership on the Association website within a few days of completion.



SAR ACADEMY

Bylaws Update

In 2023 the Board updated the Association Bylaws. It had been 5 years since the last significant update and the President and Executive Director thought it was important to review the Bylaws with a view to the next 5 years. The updated Association Bylaws are available to members on the NASAR website for review and download.

Election

Every September we hold the annual Directors election with one-third of the Board positions up for election each year. The election is run by a third-party contractor called AssociationVoting that specializes in association services. This assures a fair and completely anonymous election for the Association. This years election saw 2 Director positions with 11 candidates. This was the highest number of interested candidates we have had during an election in over 10 years. Incumbent Dallas Lane (AZ) was re-elected and Craig McVeay (NV) was elected to a 3 year term ending 12/31/2027.

7 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Board has adopted and focuses on 7 strategic initiatives. Every project NASAR takes on fits into one or more of the initiatives.

- Every SAR Responder a Member – Build Membership Growth
This strategy sounds pretty self-explanatory, but there is a lot to talk about. In order for NASAR to survive, membership growth is essential, and for us to succeed in increasing the professionalism of SAR in the world, we need to expand the SAR responders using our materials. To do this we have identified three major initiatives:
 - Incentive Members
 - Show Up And Sell / Recruit / Present At Conferences
 - Build Programs To Increase Value To Members
- One Place for Everyone – Create & Engage the Entire SAR Community (Virtually and Physically)
NASAR wants to be the “go to” for SAR. Not just nationally, but internationally as well. In order to be the “go to” we have to provide you with some value for coming and a place for us to



SAR ACADEMY

share. We also need to reach out to you and make you knowledgeable about what we have to offer, and how that is of value to you. This initiative is about building the foundation for us to share, inform, encourage and build rapport.

- This is a Volunteer Career Not a Hobby – Develop a Professional Environment

SAR is one of the few emergency services professions that are staffed almost completely by volunteers. SAR is also a complex job that is made up of many perishable skills. If you treat it like a hobby that you can pick up and drop at your whim, then you will eventually get burned (and take your team, the missing person and their families with you). Perishable skills require constant training and recertification, and that is part of what defines SAR as a professional volunteer career. We intend to help you keep your perishable skills fresh so that each community, including yours and mine are serviced by professional SAR Volunteers, not weekend hobbyists.

- Members Deserve the Best – Increase Quality Education / Certification Offerings

SAR volunteer responders go out in the middle of the night, in the rain and the cold, and take calculated risks to assist those that cannot help themselves. For that you deserve the best of what we can offer. The best courses, certifications, instructors, evaluators, tools, textbooks, the best everything.

- Every Dollar Counts – Develop Efficient Virtual Infrastructure
In order to keep prices down, we need to use our dollars as effectively and efficiently as possible. We are an international organization, and the more money we save in expenses we get to invest in projects, education, advocacy and publishing to help you.

- We Need to be Here Forever – Increase Financial Stability
The existence of NASAR is important for many reasons. For some teams, we are the only reason they can conduct training. There are very few teams out there that can produce textbooks or other products that meet the ASTM standards all on their own (and do it within their current financial position). We are one of



SAR ACADEMY

very few SAR education/certification providers, the only one that uses ASTM, and the only one that is international.

- The Future is Built on Today – Lay the Foundation for the Next 10 Years

NASAR historically has struggled with its priorities because there was no practical future vision for where it wanted to be in 3 to 10 years. The worst part was since there was no plan, no one could be held accountable for our future, ergo no future. We have an annual workplan that is tied to the budget, a 3 year financial outlook, and a 10-year vision. These basic plans form the foundation for the future of NASAR and our influence of SAR in general. The Executive Director is your representative that is accountable for making all our plans a reality.

FINANCIAL STATUS

The Board is extremely conscious of our financial sensitivity and survival. The Executive Director, Board of Directors and the association management firm receive monthly copies of every bank and vendor statement, deposit, charge, and financial transaction. This is not just important for complete transparency; it requires nine sets of eyes and brain matter to assess how NASAR is doing against budget and goals and cash flow. This process of transparency and review has enabled NASAR to carefully grow over the past 10 years turning around more than 10 previous years of decline.

NASAR has been a 501©3 since 1985. The Internal Revenue Service prefers that non-profits use the accrual accounting methodology which we do. The annual form 990 is posted to the website and provided to GuideStar.

2023 Budget

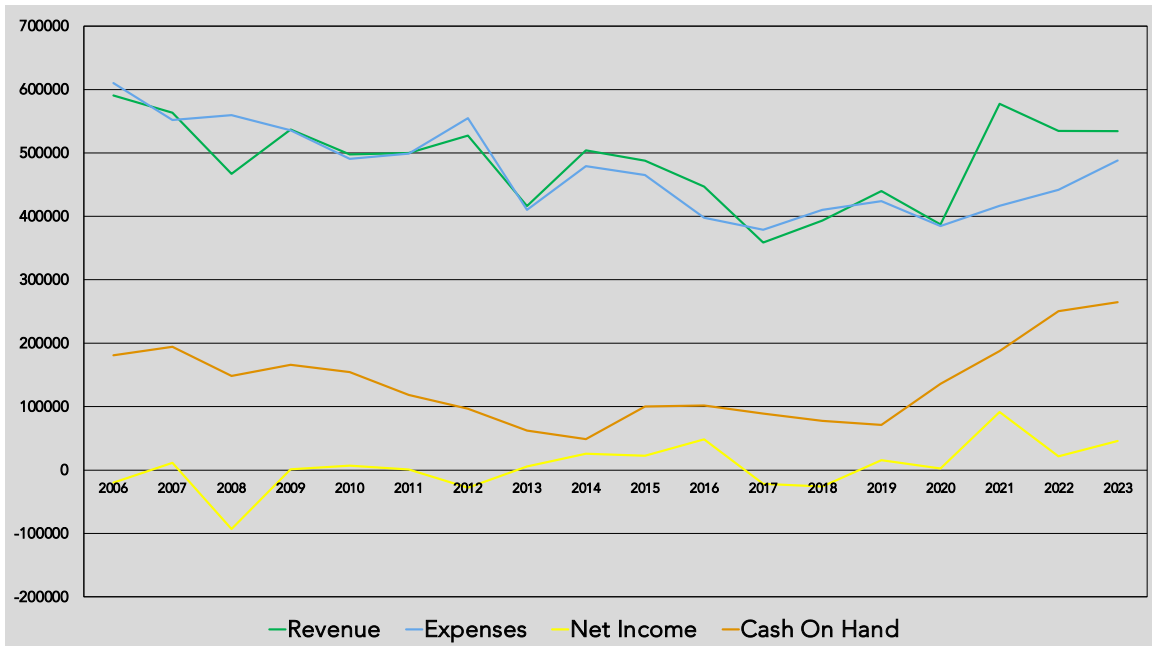
We began 2023 with a plan and flat and balanced budget that included a gross profit of \$434,042 and \$433,783 in expenses. Our cash on hand was \$242,817. That plan lasted until our year was upended with the required replacement of the Association Management Software. We had to shuffle most project priorities



SAR ACADEMY

and focus on the software replacement. We ended the year with a gross profit of \$534,351 (almost \$100,00 over budget) and \$488,163 (\$55,000 over budget) in expenses. Our cash on hand was \$264,868. Here are a few items to take note of in the graph below:

- The Board has a goal of developing a reserve fund that covers 1 year of expenses to protect the Association during austere times. This year we continued to increase our cash flow and place more funds in the bank to secure the Association future. We are currently in a better, but not perfect cash position than we have been in the past 30 years (this is the orange line).
- The Board closely monitors our expenses (the blue line), and our revenue (the green line). Our goal every year is to keep expenses controlled and grow our revenue to maximize our net income (the yellow line).

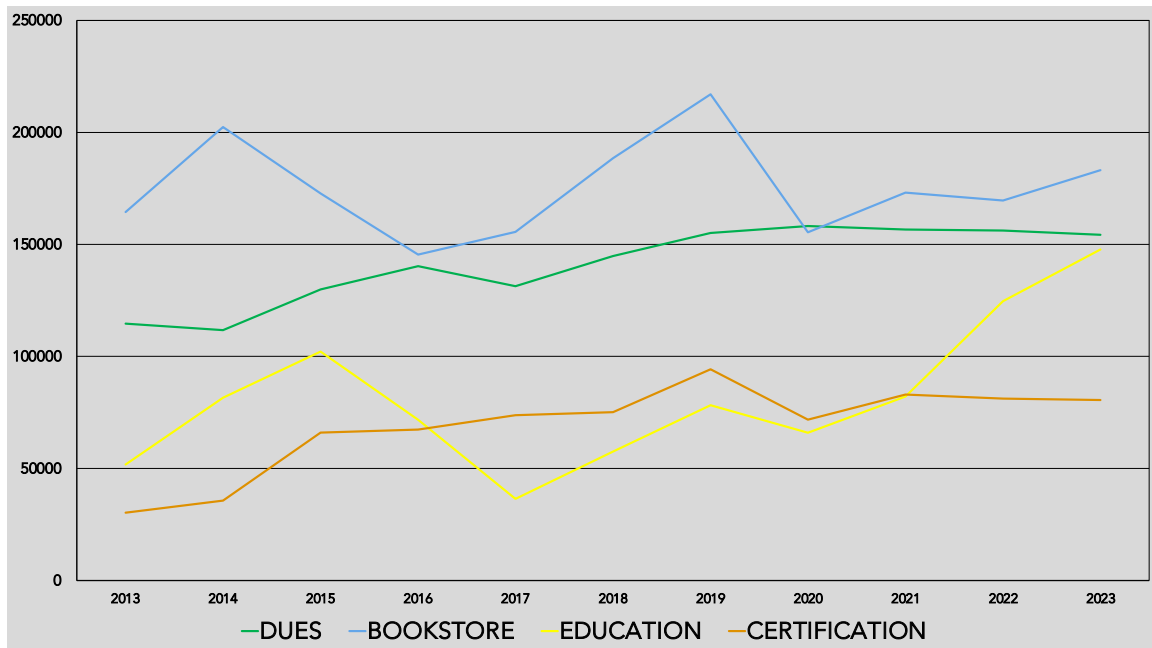


Our revenue is divided into four core areas; dues, bookstore, education and certification. Here are a few items to take note of from the graph below:



SAR ACADEMY

- Our dues revenue (the green line) has flattened the past 4 years after a previous 6 year of slow growth.
- Our certification revenue (the orange line) has also flattened the past few years.
- Our education revenue (the yellow line) typically drives our bookstore revenue (the blue line). This year's education growth sprinted ahead of the bookstore.



2024 Financial Review

In 2024 we are contracting with a 3rd party accounting/tax firm to conduct a financial review of our accounts, processes, investments, and budgeting. Financial reviews are less expensive than audits and should be adequate for our financial size and complexity. This review will be available to the Board and members once completed.

SYSTEM UPGRADES

Association Management Software

In early 2023 NASAR was notified that its legacy association management software was going to be retired in 2024. This was an unexpected turn of events and was not originally budgeted for 2023. We quickly researched several programs and their



SAR ACADEMY

ability to integrate with our learning management system (aka SAR.ACADEMY), and their pricing models. We eventually settled on YourMembership (YM) by Community Brands. YM does not integrate with our LMS, however it has benefits and a pricing model that works better for NASAR.

Over the course of several months, staff had to maintain the old system and at the same time design, test, and transition all our data to the new system. The new system includes:

- New dynamic website design, with every page rewritten from scratch, and all new photos
- New online store structure with updated photos and rewritten description for every product
- Specific members only area and a specific instructor/lead evaluator area
- New member profile area with ability for members to print a transcript of their certifications
- Member profile area includes instructor/lead evaluator status
- Publicly available instructor/lead evaluator contact list
- New cost saving online member reminder and renewal process
- New member community Forums for exchanging information and ideas

Learning Management Software Update

We have selected a new learning management software system that integrates with YM, called FreeStone. During 2024 we will be transferring all our online education (i.e. The SAR ACADEMY) from Thinkific to FreeStone. This will streamline purchasing and certification tracking. This is a short paragraph that represents a lot of work to be done.

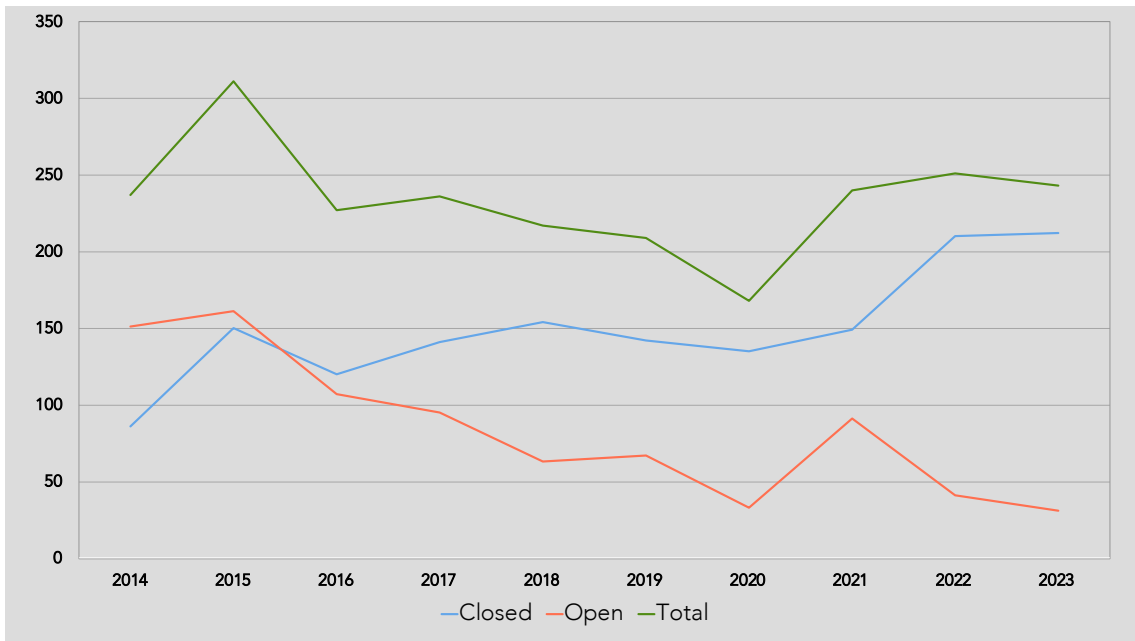
EDUCATION / CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Overview



SAR ACADEMY

2023 saw an active year for both education and certification programs, although in-person offerings are slightly down from 2022. We continue to see a trend where agencies and organizations are holding more closed courses and examinations (the blue line) and hosting fewer public opportunities (the red line). Overall, we continue to surpass total pre-covid opportunities (the green line).



The trend of fewer public courses and exams is anticipated to negatively affect small and geographically isolated teams. NASAR continues to help small teams build internal instructors and lead evaluators where possible and develop as much online content for the SAR ACADEMY as reasonable.

Every year we build and authenticate instructors and lead evaluators worldwide as part of our model to develop self-sufficient SAR teams. Every instructor and lead evaluator we build is an investment of our valuable time. Responders that are resume building have no return benefit to the Association or their local team, they are increasing their own value at your expense.



SAR ACADEMY

The table below shows that we have several hundred instructors/lead evaluators every year. Typically, between half and 2/3rds of them present during any one year. Using 2023 as an example, we had 301 instructors/lead evaluators and only 196 of them presented. Driving this point home, the 19 instructors/lead evaluators that present 5 times or more during a year are responsible for more than 1/3 of our courses and certifications. Those 19 members are the backbone of our education and certification business.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total # of Instructors and Lead Evaluators	942	461	478	730	487	xxx	582	635	301
Total # of Instructors and Lead Evaluators That Presented	109	112	115	175	216	145	170	198	196
Total # of Instructors and Lead Evaluators That Presented > 1	50	47	58	63	83	71	94	90	76
Total # of Instructors and Lead Evaluators That Presented >=3	31	25	24	28	42	31	53	48	47
Total # of Instructors and Lead Evaluators That Presented >=5	11	7	7	13	17	12	18	19	19

ADVOCACY UPDATES

NASAR believes that part of its mission is to advocate for all SAR responders (not just members) as well as missing persons, their families, and the public. This year we worked on four major advocacy projects.

State SAR Program Model

In 2023 we published a model program for state level agencies to use as a tool in developing their SAR programs. The model includes 5 core areas that NASAR believes are critical to a SAR programs success:

- Legislated Authority and Responsibility for SAR
- Legislated Standard of Care for SAR Response
- Volunteer SAR Responder Protections
- Formal Mutual Aid System



SAR ACADEMY

- State SAR Coordinator

The five core elements work like this. The State will not want to provide volunteer protections to unorganized groups that do not follow standards or comply with AHJ policies. To solve this, the state needs to enact legislated authority and responsibility for SAR and adopt legislated standards for SAR response. This ensures the volunteer protections protect qualified and responsible individuals and only qualified individuals are responding to agency requests. A formal mutual aid system and the legislated authority eliminate competitiveness and reward collaboration between agencies and organizations. The State SAR Coordinator position is the champion, gatekeeper, and coordinates the mutual aid system. Without formal mutual aid or legislated authority, you get competition. Without a standard of care, you fail at mutual aid and suffer from a lack of volunteer protections. Without volunteer protections, you have a hard time enforcing the standard of care.

We have published the complete State SAR Program Model on our website for public view and downloading. Please share it widely.

CISA Emergency Management Sector

Since 2021 NASAR has represented SAR responders and emergency management on the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency. We advocate for non-profit and volunteer responders as well as agency responders. This past year we began focusing on the potential advantages of artificial intelligence (AI) in SAR and emergency management, as well as the use for nefarious or illegal purposes. You might wonder what that has to do with SAR, and that's a great question. We see AI as a potential tool for helping to profile missing persons, predict missing person behavior and make other core processes quicker and more accurate. On the negative side, AI has potential to assist persons disappear off the grid, find best practices for hiding bodies, or predict law enforcement actions.



SAR ACADEMY

Hug-A-Tree

A few years ago the Board decided that Hug-A-Tree (HAT) was so important that we should publish it openly and stop charging for the education materials. We supported the translation of HAT into French, Spanish, Kiwi, Dutch, and several indigenous languages. We have recently reconnected with Jacquie Beveridge and are working with her to update the history and background surrounding HAT.

Murdered and Missing Indigenous Persons – MMIP

This year we have spent dedicated time and resources addressing SAR for indigenous persons. We hosted a booth at the Amber Alert in Indian Country Conference and partnered with a Oklahoma MMIP group to staff it and provide their publications. We are currently working with MMIP groups from a number of indigenous nations to provide customized SAR responder, SAR management and preventative SAR education and certification for their residents and first responders.

Update to PLB Position Paper

Our original position paper on Position Locator Beacons (PLB) was published over 10 years ago. We updated it to include Satellite Emergency Notification Devices (SEND) and increased our message regarding relying on technology in the wilderness.

CONFERENCES / OUTREACH

Every year NASAR attends conferences where we provide sponsorship, keynote speakers, courses and certifications. We also partner with education, community and faith based organizations to assist them in building SAR responders and response teams.

The Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference (MUPC)

Since 2015 we have co-sponsored the MUPC conference. Our goal has been to expand the focus of the MUPC to include SAR, mass fatality response, mass rescue operations and cold case searches. This year we were in Orlando, FL. Maybe you visited



SAR ACADEMY

our booth or attended one of the many splendid and brilliant presentations. MUPC will return to Las Vegas, NV April 16-18, 2024.

Amber Alert in Indian Country

In 2023 we staffed booth at the Amber Alert in Indian Country conference. We did this in cooperation with a MMIP advocacy group from Oklahoma.

2023 NASAR Virtual Conference

NASAR held its 2nd virtual conference this year. We look forward to continued growth and more exceptional presenters in 2024.

Winter Park HS NJROTC

NASAR has been assisting the Winter Park High School NJROTC program in the development of its emergency services certification program. We have built FUNSAR and WEC instructors and SARTECH II lead evaluators on the school staff and are working with them to expand the program within the State of Florida.

FireShow West

Since 2023 we have provided instructors and staffed a booth at the FireShow West in Reno as part of our outreach to the west and to fire services.

