

BRANCH ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUMMARY OF 11/8/2024 MEETING

Gentlemen:

The following is provided for you records and reference. Please feel free to share it with your respective branches.

The first meeting of the Branch Advisory Council (“BAC”) took place on November 8, 2024. After introductions, the BAC addressed the following topic:

Discussion of the status of branch filings of Form 20 and what State SIR should do to ensure branches timely comply with their reporting obligations including consequences for non-compliance.

Rich began the meeting inquiring about the date and time we should have regularly scheduled meetings. He explained that he selected the second Friday of the month because that would least interfere with Branch meetings. Everyone appeared agreeable with that date. Rich inquired about the start time for the meeting and learned that one member has a Branch function Friday afternoon. To accommodate his schedule, it was agreed that the meeting will begin at 1 pm. Rich advised that he intended the meetings to last only approximately one hour and that they will not exceed 1 ½ hours in length. Accordingly, the schedule for future meetings is as follows:

Date: Second Friday of the month

Time: 1 pm

Zoom Information: Use this link to join the Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94269180206?pwd=f3ZE4b4nroeW1xoBRoOwpmOgfVURJw.1>

If required: the Meeting ID is: 942 6918 0206. and the Passcode: 488269

You can also dial in on 1 669 900 6833

Rich summarized the guidelines that apply to all sessions of the BAC. See, below.

Rich introduced the topic for the meeting by describing the difficulty that State has in obtaining the Form 20 information which is needed by State to complete mandatory regulatory filings (both CA filings and Federal filings). To show the magnitude of the problem confront State, he showed the following report current as of the day before:

	E	F	G	H
1				
		Report as of	11/7/2024	
2		No. of Branches	82	
3		Form 20 submitted*	59	72.0%
4		Form 20 overdue	23	28.0%
5				
6				
7		* Submitted with at least one entry		
8		** Could have multiple submissions;		
9		date of latest submission recorded		
10				

Rich summarized that State spends hours and hours of unnecessary time trying to get branches to provide the required form (a form that is due August 31 and thereafter as branch leadership roles change). Even with the repeated follow-up, as shown above, Branches are not complying with their obligation. He opened the meeting for discussion.

Comments made by various members of the BAC were as follows:

- **Lack of Awareness:** Some attendees were unaware of the form or the requirement to submit it. While there has been extensive training on this topic, State should improve training of new Big SIRs, emphasizing the importance of the Form 20, the due date, and the submission process. See below for a summary of the discussion relative to why Form 20 matters to SIR. Lee recommended that all members review the Schedule of Operations.
- **Unclear Due Date:** One attendee pointed out that the form site did not clearly indicate the due date, only the last revision date.
- **Communication:** Explore ways to improve communication effectiveness, including exploring alternative methods to email and ensuring that key information is circulated to all branch members.
- **Lack of Confirmation:** Some attendees did not receive confirmation after submitting the form online.
- **Confusion Regarding Responsibility:** There was confusion regarding which branch officer was responsible for submitting the form, with some suggesting it should be the Big SIR's responsibility.
- **Lack of Understanding of the Form's Importance:** Some branches did not understand why the information was needed and therefore did not prioritize completing the form.
- **Communication Issues:** Some attendees expressed concerns about the effectiveness of communication from state to the branches, suggesting that emails were not being opened or that more direct outreach was needed.
- **Outreach and Support:** Area Representatives should continue to offer support and guidance to branches, emphasizing their role as consultants rather than policemen.
- **Database Issues:** The current dual database system was cited as a contributing factor to delays in updating information.
- **Varying Levels of Compliance:** It was noted that some branches consistently submit forms promptly, while others are consistently late or non-compliant.

After the foregoing, Rich again raised the question of what procedure State should have for dealing with those branches that fail or refuse to comply with the filing requirement. The suggestion was made that those complying with the requirement could be recognized, suggesting implicitly that those not complying would become known to the branches. Another suggestion was that fines could be considered by State and imposed on those branches that do not timely file the forms.

After 1 ½ hours, Rich closed the meeting.

BRANCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

- 1. When you wish to speak, electronically raise your hand and you will be called on in order.**
- 2. Do not interrupt a speaker who is talking.**
- 3. Be respectful of others:**
 - a. NO personal attacks.**
 - b. Listen to the speaker's point of view.**
 - c. Do not make emotional arguments. Ideas are not validated by emotion.**
 - d. Limit and streamline your comments to ensure everyone has a chance to express their comments. DO NOT MONOPOLIZE the BAC's limited time.**
- 4. Everyone's view and perspective is equally important. Any one of us may have the key idea/suggestion to advance SIR.**
- 5. Listen and be open to consideration of a different point of view.**
- 6. Share information from the BAC meeting with your branch.**
- 7. Rich and Lee reserve the right to cut-off or silence speakers who do not follow these guidelines. If that occurs, it is not personal to the speaker but simply the enforcement of these guidelines. It is not anticipated that this will occur.**
- 8. You may share email comments relevant to the topic being discussed to Rich (rich.carlston@icloud.com) and Lee (lel4355@yahoo.com) either before or after the meeting.**

Why Form 20 Matters for SIR

Discussions at the Branch Advisory Council on November 8 highlighted several key reasons why timely submission of Form 20 from branches is crucial for the smooth operation and legal standing of SIR as a whole.

1. Roster Accuracy and Member Communication: Form 20 provides the state with updated contact information for key branch officers. This ensures the accuracy of the SIR roster, which is essential for effective communication, event planning, and the distribution of important information from the state level to individual branches and members.

2. Legal Compliance and Good Standing: SIR, as a non-profit organization, is required to file specific forms with the state, including information about its branch officers. Failure to submit accurate and up-to-date information through Form 20 could jeopardize the organization's legal standing, potentially leading to penalties or even the revocation of its charter.

3. Tax Purposes and Financial Integrity: SIR likely benefits from certain tax exemptions as a non-profit serving seniors. Accurate record-keeping, including the timely submission of Form 20, is essential to demonstrate compliance with tax regulations and maintain the organization's financial integrity.

4. Efficient Use of Volunteer Time: Presentations revealed a significant strain on state-level volunteers who dedicate considerable time to tracking down missing Form 20 submissions. Streamlining this process would free up volunteer resources for other critical tasks, enhancing the overall efficiency of SIR operations.

5. Smooth Branch Operations and Support: By providing the necessary information through Form 20, branches ensure they can receive proper support from the state level, including access to resources, training, and communication updates. This contributes to more effective branch management and a more cohesive organization overall.

6. Maintaining a Positive Organizational Culture: While not explicitly stated, the emphasis on collaboration and communication suggests that timely Form 20 submission contributes to a more positive and efficient organizational culture within SIR. When branches fulfill their reporting obligations, it fosters a sense of shared responsibility and trust between the state and local levels, ultimately benefiting all members.