



The AMO[®] Handbook

Your guide to earning the IREM[®]
Accredited Management Organization[®]
accreditation.



Accurate through December 31, 2024



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IREM® Headquarters Contacts

The staff at IREM Headquarters in Chicago are ready to answer any questions you may have about the AMO program and how to maximize the benefits of being an AMO.

IREM Headquarters

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AMO: The mark of distinction among real estate management companies

The AMO® – ACCREDITED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION® -- accreditation is the premier recognition of excellence given to real estate management firms. It is a mark of distinction based on achievement of industry standards and use of best practices that define real estate management firms and have meaning to their clients and the assets they manage – a clear demonstration to owners, investors, and clients that their properties are in the best possible hands. Commitment to the professional pillars of ethics, education, and experience ensure the reputation of the AMO mark and each company's stature as an AMO Firm.

Companies that have earned the AMO accreditation are entitled to an array of benefits and services. In exchange, they are asked to fulfill ongoing requirements in order to maintain the integrity and prestige of the AMO accreditation. This handbook is a guide to both the benefits and services made available to AMO Firms, as well as the ongoing requirements imposed upon them.

AMO benefits and services

Property owners, investors, and clients around the world are seeking recognized professionals who work to the highest standards – the kind of recognition that AMO accreditation represents. AMO Firms enjoy these benefits:

- **Competitive advantage** in a marketplace seeking to maximize investment opportunities and minimize risk.
- **Professional stature** resulting from independent validation by IREM of compliance with professional standards and practices.
- **Differentiation** as a management company that helps your firm stand apart.
- **Industry knowledge** that comes from being connected to IREM and its vast library of real estate management and business resources.
- **An engaged network** that offers AMO Firms instant access to fellow professionals locally, nationally, internationally, and virtually – all eager to exchange best practices and ideas with fellow colleagues.

AMO crime insurance. Through the AMO Crime Insurance Program offered by Scarbrough, Medlin & Associates, Inc., AMO firms can obtain the AMO-required insurance coverages at competitive rates. For more information, call Rodney Medlin at Scarbrough, Medlin & Associates at (800)-929-2446.

AMO Next-Gen CPM Leaders. AMO firms have been singled out for an exclusive opportunity – the chance to send their best and brightest young professionals (40 years of age and under) through the CPM program for a fraction of the cost, with added benefits, and as part of a cohort of peers. The low one-time fee to participate is \$5,800 which covers all tuition, fees, and dues for two years while the CPM program is completed. Full details on the eligibility requirements and commitments can be found on [IREM's website](#).

AMO Insider. This electronic newsletter is sent to the Executive CPM of each AMO Firm every month – an update of news and events affecting AMO companies and an announcement of new firms that enter the AMO program.

Best Practices: Real Estate Management Service. The framework for the requirements to acquire and maintain the AMO accreditation comes from IREM's Best Practices: Real Estate Management Service. All CPM® members have access to [download this document](#).

IREM Certified Sustainable Property Certification. As an AMO firm, sustainability is not just about environmental soundness. It's also about the asset performance that results from quality property management. The Certified Sustainable Property Certification is an achievable, cost-effective recognition that assesses sustainability performance in five categories: energy, water, health, recycling, and purchasing. What's more, it applies to all asset classes – office buildings, retail properties, and multifamily properties. Obtaining this recognition will demonstrate quality, responsible management to clients; provide a platform for training staff on sustainability and resource efficiency; and creates an opportunity to market the certified property to tenants and the broader marketplace. AMO firms receive a 60% discount to apply for the certification for their properties.

Job board listings. AMOs can take advantage of a special discount on job postings on [IREM's national job board](#) – the only job board exclusively for real estate management. AMOs also receive internship postings or free. For more information, call 888-491-8833 or email, employersupport@naylor.com.

Legislative and regulatory representation. Know that your firm's and your clients' best interests are represented in the legislative halls of the nation and keep on top of the latest developments concerning [legislation affecting real estate management](#) – in your state and at the national level.

Listing in IREM's online AMO Directory. The visibility of AMO Firms is raised through their listings on IREM's online AMO Directory, easily accessible to property owners, investors, and clients. The online [AMO Directory](#) is available 24/7 and can be searched in multiple ways: by company name; by city, state or province, or country; by property type; and by services provided.

Member pricing for all employees on IREM education. Promote your employees' professional development. All employees of an AMO can attend IREM courses at the member rate – a savings of 20% off the regular tuition. This applies to both classroom and online courses, and to both courses and ongoing professional development opportunities.

Private in-house classroom and online IREM education. Let IREM become your training partner by incorporating IREM education into your corporate professional development program. Whether employees are taking the courses to earn an IREM certification or simply to enhance knowledge and experience, they can benefit from private in-house classroom training led by practitioner-instructors or from robust online courses that permit them to learn at their own pace. For more information, contact irempartners@irem.org.

Promotion of AMO. Firms can extend their reach by displaying their AMO certificates and AMO Code of Professional Ethics in their offices, including them in their business proposals, and promoting that "this property is managed by an AMO" at all managed properties. Download the latest [IREM AMO and credential logos](#) for promotional use.

Maintaining the AMO Accreditation

To ensure that firms meet the high standards of the AMO program, the standards of those companies that hold the accreditation are verified on a periodic basis.

AMO Dues and Updates

Every firm must pay annual AMO dues or jeopardize losing its AMO status. Dues are calculated by AMO HQ fee, number of branch offices on firm's record, and reaccreditation fee if applicable.

Executive CPM in Charge

Every AMO firm is required to have a CPM Member directing and supervising their real estate management activities at all times. This CPM is designated as the firm's "Executive CPM" and is the main contact for all communications about the firm's AMO status. The office out of which this Executive CPM works will be identified as the "AMO Headquarters" unless IREM is otherwise advised.

If the Executive CPM leaves the firm or there is a change for any reason, this must be reported to IREM and a new Executive CPM must be identified. From the departure date of the prior Executive CPM, the firm has:

- Six months to replace the Executive CPM
- One year for the replacement Executive CPM to complete the education requirements

To qualify as an Executive CPM for an AMO Firm, a CPM Member must have authority and/or responsibility for these two functions:

- 1) Delivery of the firm's real estate management services.
- 2) Developing the firm's real estate management policies and procedures.

The CPM Member must also have authority and/or responsibility for at least four of the following six functions:

- 1) Hiring and firing real estate managers.
- 2) Establishing the firm's goals and objectives.
- 3) Determining the services offered by the firm.
- 4) Negotiating management agreements with clients.
- 5) Binding management agreements with clients.
- 6) Training and supervising real estate managers.

Note: If the firm is structured in such a way that there is not a single individual responsible for all real estate management activities, additional information may be requested such as the percentage of management activities supervised by one or more CPM Members and the number of CPM Members and CPM Candidates in the firm. In these special cases, additional requirements may be imposed upon the firm.

The CPM who qualifies as the Executive CPM must successfully complete two AMO education requirements:

Education Requirement 1: successfully completed one of the following:

- BDM603: Leading a Successful Property Management Company
- Offered prior to 2017: BDM601: Growth Strategies for Real Estate Management Companies, and HRS603: Today's Leadership Challenges
- Offered prior to 1997: Course 701: Managing the Management Company

Education Requirement 2: successfully completed one of the following:

- ETH800: Ethics for the Real Estate Manager
- ETH001: Real Estate Management Ethics Online

Ethical Practices and the IREM Codes

AMO Firms subscribe to a Code of Professional Ethics that governs their business practices. Every AMO is obligated to abide by the AMO Code of Professional Ethics (AMO Code), which is strictly enforced by IREM, as well as by the IREM Code of Professional Ethics. The AMO Code regulates such vital areas as duties and relationships with clients, the public, and others in the industry. The AMO Code of Professional Ethics is included at the end of this Handbook.

The Executive CPM is held responsible not only for his or her own ethical conduct, but also for the conduct of all those employed by the firm in a real estate management capacity. This includes informing and training employees about the AMO Code and assuring all are in compliance.

Complaints may be filed against an AMO Firm by anyone – other IREM Members, clients, tenants, vendors, the public, etc. – if there is reasonable cause to believe the AMO Code and/or the IREM Code of Professional Ethics may have been violated. Ultimately, a firm's accreditation may be terminated, suspended or the firm may receive a letter of censure for violating the Code. For more information about IREM's ethics process, visit www.irem.org/ethics.

To protect the integrity of the AMO Code, it is all IREM Members' responsibility to notify IREM Headquarters if they become aware of unethical conduct by an AMO Firm, an AMO Firm's employees, or any other member of IREM.

Branch Offices

The AMO accreditation extends beyond its headquarters office to all branch offices that provide real estate management services. A branch office exists wherever these criteria are met:

- Real estate management is performed out of the office.
- The office is an extension of and under the control or supervision of the AMO Headquarters.
- The work performed there benefits the management firm, not exclusively a specific property.
- There is at least one full-time employee of the company at the office who can be contacted for business.
- The phone is listed and answered in the company name.

Branch offices may be added or removed throughout the year by reporting to IREM HQ. There is an additional fee of \$110 per branch.

Insurance Coverages

The AMO insurance requirement is aimed at ensuring that clients' assets are protected. Every AMO firm must maintain the following crime insurance coverages:

1. A fidelity bond (employee dishonesty) covering all management employees, officers, and owners of the firm in an amount equal to at least 10% of the firm's gross monthly collections, with a minimum required value of \$10,000 and a maximum required value of \$500,000. The deductible may not exceed \$5,000 or 5% of the bond, whichever is greater.
2. Depositor's forgery and alterations insurance in the minimum amount of \$25,000. The deductible may not exceed \$5,000 or 5% of the insurance amount, whichever is greater.

In addition, these guidelines must be met:

- The bonding carrier is rated by A.M. Best or Standard and Poors as at least B+.
- The policy utilized is written on a loss-sustained form or a discovery form that allows for discovery a minimum of 60 days and a maximum of 12 months after termination of the policy.
- The policy does not include endorsements requiring prosecution and conviction against perpetrators.
- Verification that the deductibles do not exceed \$5,000 or 5%.

Through the AMO Crime Insurance Program offered by Scarbrough, Medlin & Associates, Inc., AMO Firms can obtain these insurance coverages at competitive rates. For more information, call Rodney Medlin at Scarbrough, Medlin & Associates at (800)-929-2446.

Standards and Functions

AMO accreditation identifies firms that provide the professional and ethical delivery of real estate management services. Derived from IREM's Best Practices: Real Estate Management Service, these standards provide a reasonable framework for the professional delivery of real estate management services and thus are embedded in the AMO accreditation criteria.

Standards for Firm Operations

The company:

- 1) Was established and conducts its business activities in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- 2) Has established and enforces written policies and procedures for firm operations.
- 3) Maintains firm, property, and client records in accordance with regulatory, contractual, and company guidelines.
- 4) Has established, maintains, and updates as needed an accounting system that complies with accepted accounting procedures, firm operations, and client obligations.
- 5) Was established with and adheres to internal financial controls for the handling of firm and client funds and does not commingle funds of multiple clients or client funds with firm funds.

Standards for Servicing Clients

The company:

- 1) Has a written management agreement, as mutually agreed upon between the firm and its clients, that establishes business relationships.
- 2) Develops and implements leasing policies and procedures for properties managed in accordance with regulatory, contractual, and firm guidelines.
- 3) Fully discloses to the clients acceptance of any rebates, fees, commissions, discounts, or other benefits, monetary or otherwise.

Functions for Firm Operations, Servicing Clients, and Managing Properties

The firm must perform at least 18 of these 28 functions:

- 1) Develops and executes an emergency preparedness and response plan.
- 2) Provides professional development, training, and/or credentialing of employees.
- 3) Establishes written job descriptions that accurately define employee responsibilities.
- 4) Prepares and monitors an annual budget.
- 5) Develops, maintains, updates, and communicates a strategic plan.
- 6) Participates and supports employee involvement in industry organizations and/or community groups.
- 7) Develops and maintains a client customer service plan.
- 8) Develops and maintains a written leasing plan.
- 9) Prepares a management plan.
- 10) Establishes and enforces written operating policies and procedures.
- 11) Recommends and assists in implementing capital improvements.
- 12) Establishes and follows procedure for reporting loss claims and potential loss claims.
- 13) Establishes and executes, if needed, an emergency preparedness and response plan.
- 14) Establishes security policies and procedures.
- 15) Maintains emergency and life safety equipment.
- 16) Establishes and maintains an environmental and health safety management program.
- 17) Develops and implements a written marketing plan.
- 18) Establishes rental rates.
- 19) Provides adequate staffing.
- 20) Develops, maintains, and enforces general safety guidelines and awareness to protect tenant/resident safety.
- 21) Establishes a customer service plan for tenants/residents.
- 22) Develops and adheres to written policies and procedures on tenant/resident selection in accordance with regulatory, contractual, and firm guidelines.
- 23) Monitors that tenants/residents comply with lease terms, including rent collections.
- 24) Prepares annual operating budgets.
- 25) Assesses, develops, and implements plans for preventative and routine maintenance.
- 26) Requires contractors providing goods or services to meet minimum insurance requirements.

- 27) Receives, deposits, and accounts for all incoming funds accurately and protects the client's funds against all foreseeable contingencies, depositing such funds in an escrow, trust, or agency account with an insured financial institution.
- 28) Disburses and accounts for outgoing funds and payables accurately.

Reaccreditation

To guarantee the continual integrity of the AMO program and to ensure that all AMO firms remain in compliance with its obligations, each firm must reaccredit every three years.

Reaccreditation safeguards the investing community and attests to your business stability and fiscal responsibility.

When it is time for your firm to reaccredit, you will receive notice from IREM Headquarters. The following materials will be requested for reaccreditation:

- A completed Reaccreditation Application, which verifies that the firm maintains a qualifying Executive CPM and that all other criteria are met,
- A certificate of insurance and confirmation from your insurance agent that your firm meets the minimum insurance levels and guidelines.
- Information about any changes that may have occurred since the firm was accredited or its last reaccreditation.
- The reaccreditation fee.

Firm Changes: Name, Ownership, Executive CPM

If, at any time, the firm changes its name, ownership, or Executive CPM, IREM Headquarters must be immediately notified and a Firm Change Application submitted. If a substantial change in the firm's management methods, procedures for managing properties, policies, services, or executive personnel occur at the same time, the firm's AMO status will be subjected to in- depth review and may be in jeopardy. The AMO Firm Change Application is available for download at www.irem.org/changeamo.

Executive CPM Changes

If the Executive CPM leaves the firm or assumes another position, a replacement Executive CPM must be identified and fulfill the Executive CPM criteria to avoid losing AMO status. From the date of the Executive CPM Member's departure, the firm has:

- Six months (180 days) to replace the Executive CPM
- One year for the new Executive CPM to complete AMO education requirements.

Name Changes

When the firm was newly accredited as an AMO, the accreditation was for the firm name as provided on the application. If, at any time, the firm changes its name, the change must be reported via a Firm Change Application. The firm may promote itself under its new name as holding the AMO accreditation until such time as formal action is taken, provided that the firm

advises the Institute prior to, or immediately following, the date the change in name becomes effective.

Ownership Changes

When the firm was newly accredited as an AMO, the accreditation was for the firm's ownership structure as provided on the application. If, at any time, the firm undergoes an ownership change, a Firm Change Application should be completed to report the change and enable a confirmation of ongoing business stability.

IREM defines an "ownership change" as a change in one or more of the individuals or entities that either own or control the firm. During any three-year period, the firm's status as an AMO will not be affected if the firm undergoes a single ownership change or cumulative ownership change of less than 50%.

If, however, more than 50% of the ownership changes either at one time or cumulatively over three years, the firm will also need to complete a Reaccreditation Application and will be subject to meeting the reaccreditation requirements in effect at the time. The firm may be eligible to continue as an AMO if the change was due to one of the following reasons:

- It was acquired by a firm which itself has been in business for at least three years; or
- A devise, an interfamily sale, or employee participation in a buyout where more than 50% of the new ownership is held by an employee or employees who have been in executive positions with the firm for at least three years.

In addition, irrespective of the percentage of ownership change, there must have been no substantial changes in the characteristics that make the firm a unique organization, including but not limited to: the firm's name, the management personnel, Executive CPM, policies and procedures, methods and techniques, scope of services provided, location, accounting systems, and management agreements and provisions contained therein. IREM shall use its discretion in evaluating individual cases and determining if substantial changes have occurred.

Guidelines and standards for using IREM marks

To maintain the strong image and branding of the AMO credential, and all IREM's credentials, AMO firms are asked to use the trademarks consistently, frequently, and accurately. As an AMO Firm, your responsibility is threefold: (1) to properly use the marks; (2) to inform the public of the meaning of the marks; and (3) to notify IREM® of any unauthorized or improper use of the marks in your area.

AMO® and ACCREDITED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION® are federally registered marks of IREM®. These marks indicate to the public a unique service and standard of quality and identify a real estate management firm as one that has demonstrated a required level of competence based on experience, knowledge, and a commitment to ethical practices. Only those firms who hold current active AMO® status are permitted to use the AMO® marks.

IREM initiated a rebrand in 2018, which included updates to program-specific logos. This means that the logos for IREM's credentials, including the AMO accreditation, have been refreshed and modernized in alignment with the evolved IREM brand. As part of this rebrand initiative, all AMO companies are asked to replace the old AMO circle logo with the new version wherever it is used: on business cards, in email signatures, on brochures, on your website, and anywhere else you currently use the logo to promote the company's AMO status.



To reinforce the brand, AMO firms are urged to update the AMO logo as soon as possible – understanding that if the reprinting of updated materials involves a significant cost, this can wait until reprinting/reordering is necessary.

When using the AMO logo, always use the original files provided by IREM Headquarters, available for download at www.irem.org/MemberLogos. Only active, accredited AMO firms may use the AMO logo in connection with their company names.

For the sake of brand consistency, all accredited companies are asked to use the acronym with the registered mark – AMO® – when promoting their firms and the credential. If the full accreditation name must be spelled out in text for explanation, such as for a presentation or publication, it should always be listed in ALL CAPS in parenthesis after the acronym: AMO® (Accredited Management Organization®). Only do this on the first usage, then revert to the acronym only.

Also, do not abbreviate, punctuate, pluralize, make possessive or in any way distort the marks (e.g. A.M.O., Accred. Mgmt. Org., AMOs, AMO's), or use them in a way that implies that an individual is an AMO® firm, such as "John Doe, AMO." Here is the correct terminology:

AMO® Firm

AMO® Headquarters

AMO® Member Firm

AMO® branch office

AMO® accreditation

CPM® Member

CPM® Candidate

ARM® Member

ACoM® Member

AMO Code of Professional Ethics

Introduction

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to establish and maintain public confidence in the honesty, integrity, professionalism, and ability of the professional real estate management organization. The Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM®) and its Members intend that this Code and performance pursuant to its provisions will be beneficial to the general public and will contribute to the continued development of a mutually beneficial relationship among ACCREDITED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (AMO®) Member Firms (AMO® Firms), and other Members, national and international professional real estate associations and organizations, clients, employers and the public.

The Institute of Real Estate Management, as the professional society of real estate management, seeks to work closely with all other segments of the real estate industry to protect and enhance the interests of the public. To this end, AMO® firms of the Institute have adopted and, as a condition of membership, subscribe to the AMO® Code of Professional Ethics and the IREM® Code of Professional Ethics.

AMO® Firm Pledge

To advance professional real estate management through the mutual efforts of AMO® Firms of the Institute of Real Estate Management and by any other proper means available.

To maintain the highest moral and ethical standards consistent with the objectives and higher purpose of the Institute.

To comply with the principles and declarations of the Institute of Real Estate Management as set forth in its Bylaws, Statement of Policies, the AMO® Code of Professional Ethics and the IREM® Code of Professional Ethics.

To acknowledge the ethical principles as set forth in the International Ethics Standards established by the International Ethics Standards Coalition of which the Institute is a member.

Article 1. Services to Client

In accordance with the management agreement, an AMO® Firm shall make, or cause to be made, regular physical inspections of the clients' properties and shall keep its clients informed as to the condition of the properties. An AMO® Firm shall competently manage the properties of its clients with due regard for the rights, responsibilities and benefits of the tenants, residents and others lawfully on the property. An AMO® Firm shall not engage in any conduct that is in conscious disregard for the safety and health of those persons lawfully on the premises of the client's property.

Article 2. Contractual Duties

An AMO® Firm shall perform its contractual duties and maintain company, property, and client records in accordance with all applicable regulatory guidelines, contractual obligations, client objectives and company policies. It shall not act beyond its contractual scope of authority as an agent without documented client approval.

Article 3. Accounting

An AMO® Firm shall establish and adhere to sound internal financial controls for handling all company funds and client funds. It shall maintain, and update as needed, an accounting system that complies with accepted accounting procedures, client directives and obligations, applicable laws and regulations and supports company operations.

Article 4. Reporting

Pursuant to the terms of the management agreement, an AMO® Firm shall use reasonable efforts to provide accurate, auditable financial and business records and documentation concerning each asset managed for the client, which records shall be available for inspection by the client at all reasonable times. An AMO® Firm shall furnish to the client, at mutually agreed upon intervals, regular reports concerning the client's assets under management. An AMO® Firm shall not exaggerate, misrepresent, or conceal material facts concerning the client's assets or any related transactions.

Article 5. Fiduciary Responsibility

An AMO® Firm shall at all times serve as a fiduciary for the client and shall not commingle personal or company funds with the funds of a client or use one client's funds for the benefit of another client, but shall keep the client's funds in a fiduciary account in an insured financial institution or as otherwise directed in writing by the client. An AMO® Firm shall at all times exert due diligence for the maintenance and protection of the client's funds against all reasonably foreseeable contingencies and losses.

Article 6. Relations with Other Organizations in the Profession

An AMO® Firm shall not make, authorize, or otherwise encourage any false or misleading comments concerning the practices of Members of the Institute of Real Estate Management and other real estate management professionals. An AMO® Firm shall truthfully represent material facts in their professional activities. An AMO® Firm shall not exaggerate or misrepresent the services offered as compared with the services offered by other real estate management companies. Nothing in this Code, however, shall restrict legal and reasonable business competition by and among real estate management companies.

Article 7. Conflict of Interest

An AMO® Firm shall not represent personal or business interests divergent from or conflicting with those of the client and shall not accept, directly or indirectly, any material rebates, gifts, fees,

commissions, discounts, or other benefits, monetary or otherwise, which could reasonably be seen as a conflict with the interests of the client, employer, or firm, and which are not disclosed to the client.

Article 8. Disclosure

An AMO® Firm shall not disclose to a third party any confidential or proprietary information without the client's prior written consent except when disclosure is required or compelled by applicable laws and regulations.

Article 9. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

An AMO® Firm shall be established in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. An AMO® Firm and its employees shall at all times conduct business activities with knowledge of and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Article 10. Equal Opportunity

An AMO® Firm shall not deny equal employment opportunity or equal professional services to any person for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or handicap and shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding equal opportunity.

Article 11. Enforcement

The interpretation of compliance with this Code is the responsibility of the ethics boards of the Institute of Real Estate Management. Any violation by an AMO® Firm of the obligations of this Code and any disciplinary action for violation of any portion of this Code shall be determined and carried out in accordance with and pursuant to the terms of the Bylaws and Statement of Policies of the Institute of Real Estate Management. The result of such disciplinary action shall be final and binding upon the affected AMO® Firm and without recourse to the Institute, its officers, Governing Councillors, Members, employees, or agents.

AMO Code of Professional Ethics Effective January 1, 2023