

Alabama Board of Court Reporting (ABCR)

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The Difference Between the Licensure Board (ABCR) and the Association (ACRA)

What is the purpose of the Licensure Board (ABCR) and what is the difference between the ABCR and the Association (ACRA)? This is a common question and sometimes the two organizations are thought to be the same entity, creating confusion and misconceptions.

Let's start with the purpose of ABCR. Our purpose is very clearly defined by State law: "**To establish and maintain a standard of competency for individuals engaged in the practice of court reporting and for the protection of the public, in general, and for the litigants whose rights to personal freedom and property are affected by the competency of court reporters.**" (Section 34-8B-1). Other goals and objectives may not supersede public protection. A licensure board carries out this purpose by ensuring that the public is served by establishing minimum standards of proficiency in the regulated profession. When one serves on a regulatory board, the focus shifts from professional advocacy to the protection of the public. The state statute is the mandate for the ABCR to follow in all its actions and requirements for licensing and regulation of court reporters in Alabama (this statute is found in its' entirety on the ABCR web site at <http://www.abcr.alabama.gov/PDF/2016/Law.4.2016.pdf>).

In contrast, the Alabama Court Reporter's Association (ACRA) is the professional advocate for the court reporter industry. The IRS and Alabama Secretary of State registers associations as not-for-profit organizations and it has voluntary membership from the court reporter profession.

Although our purposes are different, one the consumer advocate and one the professions advocate, it benefits the state as a whole as our two organizations find ways to work together creating confidence in court reporting services in Alabama. This in turn accomplishes both professional advocacy and consumer protection. This is the ideal we strive for at ABCR while still maintaining each individual organizations purpose and role.