AFCC eNEWS





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ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

Improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict



January 2020 VOL. 15 No. 1

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President's Message

Matthew Sullivan, AFCC President

Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment. It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos. ~ George W. Bush

AFCC members work on behalf of children and families to build peace in their relationships in contexts that often pull them toward uncivil engagement. The clients we work with engage in uncivil conduct as they move through challenging divorce transitions and often expect that we will condone or even facilitate such conduct in our professional roles. **Read more**.

AFCC 57th Annual Conference

When a Child Rejects a Parent: Are We Part of the Problem or the Solution?

May 27-30, 2020 New Orleans Marriott

Registration is Open!

The wait is over! **Register now** for the AFCC 57th Annual Conference. Members save \$30 if they register by March 2, 2020. **Read the conference brochure** for

AFCC 57th Annual Conference



View the **conference brochure** for details on 100+ sessions, travel, registration, and more!

Thank you to our conference sponsors!

Diamond Sponsors:





more information.

Reserve Your Room Today

Reserve your room at the New Orleans Marriott! AFCC conference attendees receive a special rate of \$199 per night for single/double occupancy. **Reserve online** or call 1-888-771-4429 and request the AFCC rate.

Scholarships Are Available!

Thanks to the generosity of **donors to the AFCC Scholarship Fund**, AFCC will offer over 30 scholarships for the conference. Each scholarship includes a preconference institute, conference registration, a certificate of attendance, and more! **Apply now**.

Donate to the Silent Auction!

The AFCC Silent Auction will take place on Friday, May 29, 2020. Auction proceeds help fund AFCC projects and initiatives. To donate an item to the Silent Auction, contact AFCC's Communications Coordinator Gina Wentling at gwentling@afccnet.org or 608-664-3750.

Exhibit Space Available!

The Exhibit Forum provides an opportunity to speak with over 1,000 family law professionals about your products and services. **Read the prospectus** and contact Gina Wentling at **gwentling@afccnet.org** or 608-664-3750 to sign up.

Ask the Experts

How Family Law Professionals Can Help Prevent Gun Violence

Hon. Mark A. Juhas and Julia F. Weber

Gun violence impacts individuals and families around the world; however, the United States has an exceptionally high rate of firearms violence and the most privatelyowned guns of any comparable country. While many gun owners properly store and handle their firearms, too many families have experienced the horrific consequences associated with gun violence. As **Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence** notes, "over 1.2 million Americans have been shot in the past decade, millions more have witnessed gun violence, and hundreds of millions—almost every American—will know at least one victim of gun violence in their lifetime." **Read more**.

Training Programs on Parenting Coordination and Child Development

Loyola University Chicago

Parenting Coordination: Essential Tools for Conflict Resolution

Mindy Mitnick, EdM, MA March 2-3, 2020

This program will describe the fundamentals of parenting coordination (PC), including the principles and functions

Platinum Sponsors:





AFCC Training Programs



AFCC Chapter Conferences

Arizona Chapter Annual Conference January 24-26, 2020 Sedona, Arizona

California Chapter Annual Conference February 7-9, 2020 San Francisco, California

Alberta Chapter Annual Conference March 5-6, 2020 Edmonton, Alberta

Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference March 6-7, 2020 New Orleans, Louisiana

Missouri Chapter Spring Conference of the PC role, the knowledge base for being an effective PC, and ethical guidelines. Participants will learn how to help clients utilize the parent coordination process and how to effectively write recommendations or decisions.

Understanding Child Development and Family Dynamics: It's a Brave New World

Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, MSL March 4-5, 2020

How do we do our best family law-related practice if we don't understand child and family development in terms of current issues, research, and practice relevant to separation and divorce? This training program is for mental health, legal, and educational professionals who work with children and families and want an update on what affects development—positively and negatively and what they can do to tip the needle towards increased co-parenting and positive child development.

Register now!

AFCC Scholarship Fund

You've been waiting with baited breath: **Did AFCC reach its 2019 scholarship fundraising goal of \$25,000?** Though we got close (almost \$20,000), we did not reach the goal. If you donated in 2019, thank you! Your contribution directly funds scholarships to worthy recipients who could not otherwise afford to attend an AFCC conference.

If you have not donated yet, there's still time! We suggest donating one billable hour. (If you don't bill your time, consider one hour of salary or equivalent.) If you can contribute more, that would be appreciated too!

All donors will be recognized in onsite signage at the AFCC 57th Annual Conference in New Orleans and on the AFCC Scholarship Fund page as a contributor.

Donate now!

April 2-3, 2020 Saint Louis, Missouri

Ohio Chapter Annual Conference

April 7, 2020 Columbus, Ohio

Washington Chapter

Annual Conference April 24, 2020 Seattle, Washington

Australian Chapter

Annual Conference July 16-18, 2020 Brisbane, Queensland

Florida Chapter Annual Conference September 23-25, 2020 Orlando, Florida

Resource of the Month

The Modern Family Court Judge: Knowledge, Qualities & Skills for Success



Nominate a Colleague for an AFCC Award

AFCC awards acknowledge many important contributions made by individuals and organizations to enhance the lives of children and families involved in family courts. Your nominations help recognize these accomplishments.

Nominations for the following awards, to be presented at the AFCC Annual Conference in New Orleans, will be accepted online through March 9, 2020:

- John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award recognizes outstanding contributions and/or achievements by AFCC members
- Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award, sponsored by the Oregon Family Institute, recognizes outstanding research in the field of family and divorce
- Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award recognizes innovation in court-

connected or court-related programs created by AFCC members

Submit a nomination online, see past recipients, learn more about the awards and criteria.

AFCC Awards

AFCC Webinar Corner

Current Issues in Relocation Matters, Including International Relocation

Mindy Mitnick, EdM, MA February 11, 2020 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US

Registration closes on Monday, February 10, 2020 at 9:00am Eastern Time.

Many judges, attorneys, and child custody evaluators consider relocation cases to be troublesome, largely because the choices are limited and difficult for children. This webinar will focus on the



relevant legal and psychological literature to help you guide your work, focusing on critical and relevant facts, risk and protective factors, and provide constructive arguments or well-constructed recommendations to the court in these difficult and challenging cases.

Registration

Members: \$15 Non-Members: \$50 **Certificate of Attendance** Members: \$15 Non-Members: \$20

Attendees may purchase a certificate of attendance along with their registration. No refunds or credits will be issued if you are unable to attend the webinar.

Webinars will be archived as a member benefit, for personal use only. These can be found in the Member Center on our website. If you are not currently a member, join when you register to get \$10 off your first annual membership as well as webinar registration at the member price.

Register today!

Stay tuned for March's webinar:

Opposing the Self-Represented Litigant in Family Court with Annette Burns March 19, 2020 | Registration opens February 19, 2020

AFCC Is Hiring!

AFCC is hiring a program director located at its offices in Madison, Wisconsin. The successful candidate will develop AFCC educational programs, work closely with AFCC Chapters, oversee continuing education, communications, staff special projects and committees, and serve as a resource to nearly 5,500 amazing AFCC members! **Read job description and application information**.

Considerations in Implementing Court ODR Systems

AFCC member Douglas Van Epps, Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution of the Michigan Supreme Court, and his colleagues recently published Considerations in Implementing Court ODR Systems. As more court functions move online, the office created these considerations to help courts as they determine how to incorporate ODR in family law cases. **Read the considerations**.

Video: Overview of Eldercaring Coordination

A new video that explains eldercaring coordination, a conflict resolution process for families in conflict, is now available. The video is the product of an educational grant from the American Arbitration Association International Dispute Resolution Foundation, in collaboration with the ACR Elder Justice Initiative on Eldercaring Coordination. Contact Linda Fieldstone, Sue Bronson, or Judge Michelle Morley for more information. View the video now!

Chapter News

Karen Rosenthal, JD, was re-elected to serve as co-president of the New York chapter of AFCC. Ms. Rosenthal has concentrated her legal career on matrimonial law for 31 years. She has been selected to Super Lawyers, The Best Lawyers in America, Top Women Attorneys in Metro New York, New York's Top Attorneys, Who's Who As a Professional of the Year (2015-2016) and is AV preeminent rated by Martindale- Hubbell. She is regularly appointed by the court to represent children in high conflict custody matters. She has lectured on various legal topics to the legal community. She is a past co-president of the AFCC New York Chapter, New York Chapter Board Member of



the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America, and is on the Executive Committee of UJA's Women's Executive Circle. Congratulations, Karen!

Sherill Sigalow, PhD, a licensed clinical psychologist in New York state, now serves as the AFCC New York Chapter copresident. She is currently in full-time private practice in Manhattan where she specializes in forensic evaluations, consultation and supervision, parent coordination, and mediation. Her practice includes conducting psychotherapy with adults and couples, and providing parenting support and training to divorced and divorcing parents. Prior to going into full-time private practice, Dr. Sigalow was the Clinic Director and Chief Psychologist at Manhattan Family Court Mental Health Services for nearly 18 years, where she performed and supervised forensic evaluations across a wide range of Family Court related



cases, trained and supervised the Family Court mental health services clinicians, and acted as a liaison between Mental Health Services and the Court. She is a member of the American Psychological Association, the American Psychology-Law Society (Division 41, APA), and AFCC. Congratulations, Sherill!

Member News

Hon. Thomas Trent Lewis (Ret.), former president of the AFCC Cailfornia Chapter, joins Signature Resolution as a mediator, arbitrator, and judicial referee after nearly 14 years on the Los Angeles Superior Court. He specializes in resolving family law disputes. For the past three years, Judge Lewis served as the supervising judge for the Los Angeles County Family Law Division where he oversaw the operations of nearly 70 family law departments in the county. From 2014 to 2016,

he served in a long cause family law trial department in Los Angeles; he was Assistant Supervising Judge of the Family Law Division from 2011 to 2014. Judge Lewis served in a regular family law department from 2006 until 2014. Congratulations, Thom!



Do you have a notable achievement to share? Email Gina Wentling with your story and a professional head shot (JPEG or PNG preferred), if you have one, to be featured in next month's Member News!

Where in the World is AFCC?

Wear your AFCC hats on vacation or in your own backyard! Post your picture in an AFCC hat on social media using #AFCChats #whereintheworldisAFCC. Email your photo to afcc@afccnet.org with a subject line "AFCC hats."



AFCC members Philip Stahl and daughter Rebecca Stahl Mitnick and her snow cat put the "family" in family law.





AFCC Vice President Mindy enjoy the Minnesota winter.

AFCC member Andrea Himel wore her AFCC hat in Costa Rica!

AFCC eNEWS

The AFCC eNEWS is the monthly e-newsletter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. The eNEWS provides up-to-date information for professionals including practice tips, case law and research updates, international news, and the latest initiatives in family law and conflict resolution. The AFCC eNEWS is free and you do not need to be a member of AFCC to subscribe. Subscribe here.

AFCC members are free to share eNEWS content.

EDITOR: Leslye Hunter

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Gina Wentling







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President's Message

Matthew Sullivan, AFCC President

Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment. It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos. -- **George W. Bush**

AFCC members work on behalf of children and families to build peace in their relationships in contexts that often pull them toward uncivil engagement. The clients we work with engage in uncivil conduct as they move through challenging divorce transitions and often expect that we will condone or even facilitate such conduct in our professional roles. The more litigious traditional court processes, necessitating motions that take extreme positions and hearings that result in "awards" to the parent that prevails, further reinforce incivility. Increasingly, the larger social context barrages us with disrespectful



behavior between strangers, family members, and pervasively in the political discourse. The staggering advertising profits of social media are supported by algorithms and marketing strategies that maximize "hits" on sites using psychologically based strategies that fuel fear and rage. They have been proven to be quite effective for this industry, which takes no accountability for the corrosive impact on us. For more on this, read this sobering article about social media's unchecked and frightening experiment on our world.

No wonder most family justice professionals struggle daily in their work with cynicism, divisiveness, chaos, and, ultimately, burnout. Research on the topic of incivility has found that mental and physical health, worker <u>productivity</u> and employee retention, customer relations, and so forth all greatly suffer when work and social environments are uncivil (see: <u>Is Civility Dead in America</u> by Tom Plante).

One of AFCC's organizational values is collaboration and respect among professionals and disciplines. Central to supporting that value is making a determined choice to build a community of trust, respect, and compassion in the activities of our organization – in interactions and presentations at AFCC conferences, in the scholarly writings published in the *Family Court Review*, and in our practices as family justice professionals. Regardless of differences in views, the professional advocacy roles that may exacerbate those differences and the emotional intensity generated by issues such as intimate partner violence, child abuse, and parental alienation, AFCC members strive to engage in their professional roles in a civil manner. Modeling civility in our work may be the most potent intervention for our clients, who have often lost their civility, much to the detriment of their coparenting relationship and ultimately their children.

I urge you to recommit to practicing civility in our personal and professional lives to build a healthy countercultural movement that can contribute to our local and global impact as peacemakers in this new year and new decade.





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Ask the Experts: How Family Law Professionals Can Help Prevent Gun Violence

Hon. Mark A. Juhas and Julia F. Weber, Esq, MSW

Gun violence impacts individuals and families around the world; however, the United States has an exceptionally high rate of firearms violence and the most privately-owned guns of any comparable country. While many gun owners properly store and handle their firearms, too many families have experienced the horrific consequences associated with gun violence. As <u>Giffords Law Center to</u> <u>Prevent Gun Violence</u> notes, "over 1.2 million Americans have been shot in the past decade, millions more have witnessed gun violence, and hundreds of millions—almost every American—will know at least one victim of gun violence in their lifetime."

Firearms violence comes in various forms; as a result, prevention efforts also need to be carefully considered and strategically applied to have the greatest impact. Suicide accounts for the majority of firearms deaths (61%) and is one of the top four violence-related injury deaths for ages 10 and up as of 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The presence of firearms in relationships in which domestic violence is being perpetrated accounts for another significant number of injuries and deaths in the US with at least 600 women each year being shot to death by intimate partners, according to the Giffords Law Center. Abused women are five times more likely to be killed by the person abusing them if the abuser has a firearm. Of all women murdered with a gun in the US, half are killed by their partners. Non-fatal injury and threats are also substantial: nearly one million women alive today report being shot or shot at by an intimate partner and 4.5 million women report that an intimate partner threatened them using a gun. The National Domestic Violence Hotline has reported an uptick in calls they receive that include reports of threats related to firearms.

We also know that young people are being injured and losing their lives at alarming rates: the majority of unintentional shooting deaths involve people under 24 who are most often shot by someone else, usually someone their own age. While many gun owners are responsible and use gun safes, at least 4.6 million children live in homes where guns are unlocked and loaded, putting them and other young people at increased risk. According to the Giffords Law Center, three million American children are directly exposed to gun violence each year—and gun violence is now the second-leading cause of death among children overall and the number one cause of death among African-American children.

We are increasingly learning about the consequences of exposure to trauma and stress associated with community gun violence and domestic violence. It is critical that family law professionals who work every day with parents and young people recognize the public health risks associated with gun violence and learn ways we can help raise awareness and work to prevent injury and lethal outcomes. While we provide some information here, we will be presenting in greater detail at our

workshop at the AFCC Conference in New Orleans entitled *The Role of Family Law Professionals in Preventing Gun Violence.*

For now, here are five tips to assist attorneys, mental health practitioners, judicial officers, and others with prevention efforts:

- 1. **Provide information** to clients and litigants about the risks associated with keeping firearms in the home. As is true with other forms of violence, some families may not be familiar with the potential risks of suicide or injury or death in domestic violence situations associated with firearms. For those families dealing with issues related to dementia, Alzheimer's, or mental health issues, access to firearms may also be of concern. By providing information during intake, orientation sessions, or through posters and brochures available in waiting areas, and throughout the process, we can help raise awareness so that families can make safe decisions about maintaining, storing, or removing firearms.
- 2. **Routinely screen** for domestic violence, suicide risks, and firearms ownership or access. Clients and litigants may make passing references to concerns about their children or other family members being depressed or harming themselves or others. By asking screening questions such as, "Do you feel comfortable telling me whether there are firearms in your home?" or, "Are your firearms safely stored to prevent your children or others from accessing them?" you may be able to provide more relevant information and help with safety planning or referrals to appropriate agencies.
- 3. Make referrals for families to get more information in a variety of ways—in person, on your website, and through brochures people can pick up without having to disclose information they may be hesitant to share. In the US, information might include the number and URL for the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE; www.thehotline.org) where people can receive assistance in over 100 languages and through their online chat feature. Similarly, the National Suicide Lifeline is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-273-8255 or https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/. Other countries also provide similar resources locally or nationally. People working for these organizations are trained to assist with safety planning and can help with information about storing, transferring, or otherwise limiting access to firearms during a personal or familiar crisis. A new pocket-sized brochure for families in California, *How to Get Help When Someone May Hurt Themselves or Others*, is available in English and Spanish through Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (contact jweber@giffords.org).
- 4. Become familiar with the laws in your jurisdiction addressing gun ownership and storage, prohibitions, and relinquishment procedures. Some people may be prohibited under state or federal law from owning or purchasing firearms but may not have complied with an existing order or otherwise surrendered or transferred the firearm. Others may have recently become prohibited as a result of a criminal case, admission to a mental health facility, or a civil domestic violence restraining order, for example, and may have questions about where and how guns should be surrendered or relinquished. Not doing so can expose litigants to additional criminal consequences and put family members and the broader community at risk.
- 5. Finally, if your jurisdiction is one that has recently enacted an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) or, in California, a Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) law, or is considering enacting this legislation, **learn about how this newer approach to removing firearms** in some communities may be a helpful tool. Sometimes referred to as "red-flag laws," these statutes are designed to address situations where an individual may be at risk of harming themselves or others if they have access to firearms. Unlike domestic violence and other civil restraining orders, ERPOs are narrowly focused on removing firearms and in some cases, ammunition, for a limited period of

time (usually up to one year) during a critical period until that crisis has passed. Remedies are generally limited to removing firearms and/or preventing purchase of firearms so protections for other forms of violence (for example, hitting, stalking, etc.) are not as accessible as provided for in criminal, domestic violence, or civil harassment proceedings. However, ERPOs and GVROs show enormous promise for reducing suicide and preventing domestic violence and mass shootings.

We look forward to talking more with our professional community about this important issue and to seeing you all in New Orleans in May.

Judge Mark A. Juhas and Julia Weber will present a workshop, The Role of Family Law Professionals in Preventing Gun Violence, at the AFCC 57th Annual Conference in New Orleans, May 27-30, 2020.

Judge Mark A. Juhas sits in a general family law assignment on the Los Angeles Superior Court and has done so since November 2002. He is the current Chair of the California Commission on Access to Justice. Further, he is a member of several committees for the Los Angeles Superior Court including immediate past chair of the Access and Fairness committee. For the Judicial Council he is currently on the California Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) Governing Committee and the Co-chair of the Family and Juvenile Advisory Committee; he was a member of the Elkins Family Law Task Force, Elkins Family Law Implementation Task Force, and Self-Represented Litigant Task Force. He recently received a lifetime achievement award from the Family Law Section of the State Bar and a Distinguished Service Award from the Judicial Council.



He regularly teaches for, among others, the Los Angeles Superior Court's education program, CJER, the Los Angeles County Bar Association, and Southwestern Law School.

Julia Weber joined Giffords Law Center in 2018 as a fellow focused on <u>gun violence restraining order implementation efforts</u>. Prior to joining Giffords Law Center, Julia worked for over 17 years with the Judicial Council of California's Center for Families, Children & the Courts, where she served as co-counsel to the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee and supervised the Access to Justice Unit.

Julia attended Washington University School of Law and the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, where she obtained her combined degrees in law and social work. She is a trained mediator and a member of the California Bar. Julia also serves as an expert witness and is an adjunct professor at Golden Gate School of Law, where she teaches domestic violence law.



PROGRAM DIRECTOR ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS Madison, Wisconsin

The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) seeks a full-time program director at its office in Madison, Wisconsin. AFCC is an interdisciplinary and international nonprofit membership association of professionals who work in the family law, mental health, and dispute resolution arena. There are approximately 5,500 AFCC members in more than 30 countries, with the majority of members in the United States. The program director will work with and report to the executive director on development and execution of a variety of association programs that implement the AFCC mission of improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAPTER SUPPORT

Responsible for guiding and supporting AFCC's 22 chapters, including (1) maintaining strong connections between chapter leaders and members, and the international association; (2) guiding the development of new chapters; (3) conducting biennial chapter leadership institutes; (4) facilitating chapter planning retreats; (5) ongoing support and communication with chapter leadership; (6) supporting and overseeing chapter core activities such as newsletters, conferences and website development; and (7) staff support to AFCC Chapter Committee and AFCC Chapter Council.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Work with the executive director and corresponding committees to develop and execute programming for 2-3 conferences, 12 webinars and four training programs annually. Develop and implement online or hybrid training programs. Responsibilities will include but not be limited to: identifying subject matter, drafting program material, recruiting and supporting program faculty, managing schedules, working with partner organizations, overseeing the proposal review process, and participating in program evaluation.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Provide staff support for AFCC special projects, which include policy think tanks, professional practice guidelines and model standards, publications, user guides, and other projects as assigned.

COMMUNICATIONS

Collaborate with communications coordinator to develop and disseminate monthly *AFCC eNEWS*, and oversee content for website, weekly member updates, and social media. Writing, editing, and proofreading for reports and special projects.

CONTINUING EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Working closely with the AFCC Continuing Education Committee, manage all aspects of continuing education program, including AFCC sponsorship of continuing education for psychologists through the American Psychological Association, continuing legal education, and other CE programs for mental health, dispute resolution, judicial, and other professionals.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Identify and execute strategies for membership development and retention.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required (post-graduate degree preferred)
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Proficient in the use of technology
- Strong organizational and project management skills
- Outstanding editing and proofreading skills
- Ability to combine vision and attention to detail
- Demonstrated ability to strategically plan and execute programs
- Innovative and creative thinker
- Demonstrated ability to work with volunteer leadership (which may involve responding to emails in the evening and on weekends)
- Experience facilitating meetings and retreats preferred
- Experience in family law/dispute resolution/mental health field strongly preferred
- Fundraising and grant writing experience preferred
- Ability to develop relationships with people/organizations with different perspectives

AFCC's six-person staff manages an association of nearly 5,500 members. AFCC hosts numerous conferences, training programs and webinars each year, and publishes a monthly e-newsletter and a quarterly research and academic journal, which is based at Hofstra Law School. AFCC members are our customers; assisting them is job one. Everyone from our executive director to our program assistant answers the phone, fielding questions ranging from registration and membership to substantive questions about our professional journal. This is not a remote or work-from-home opportunity.

The successful candidate will assume a leadership role and will also not mind making their own copies and answering phones when necessary. Periodic travel required. Valid passport is necessary for periodic programs in Canada.

AFCC offers:

- \$90,000-100,000 salary, depending on experience and qualifications
- Excellent benefits, including health, dental, disability insurance
- Paid vacation, sick leave, personal time, and paid holidays
- Casual office dress code
- Office with a window
- Summer flex scheduling

To apply for this position, please submit a cover letter, resume, and short writing sample to psalem@afccnet.org

AFCC is an equal opportunity employer. Please note that nothing in this job posting or description should be construed as an offer or guarantee of employment.