Area 59 Forum
October 11, 2020

A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future:
To place our common welfare first;
to keep our fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives
and the lives of those to come.

Reading:

Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die. (AA Service Manual, page S1)

Area 59 Forum Program

1:00 PM	Welcome and Objectives	Steve S - Alt-Delegate/Chairperson
1:10 PM	"The Upside Down Triangle and an explanation of the General Service Structure and how they work. The General Service Conference Process -- the Idea, Agenda Item, PCSS and the Conference itself. "	Caroline N - Delegate
1:35 PM	What is an INFORMED Group Conscience?	Pete B - Officer-at-Large/Registrar
2:00 PM	What is a GSR and how do they keep their group informed on the Traditions?	Sue M - Treasurer
2:25 PM	Break	
2:35 PM	How do the Districts cooperate with their Intergroups?	Steve S - Alt-Delegate/Chairperson
3:00 PM	How can we make General Service work more appealing and less overwhelming to members?	Curt C – Secretary
3:25 PM	Open Mic	Curt C - Secretary
3:55 PM	Close	Steve S - Alt-Delegate/Chairperson

Area Contacts

https://area59aa.org/area-officers

Delegate Delegate@area59aa.org

Alternate Delegate Alt-Delegate@area59aa.org

Chairperson Chairperson@area59aa.org

Secretary Secretary@area59aa.org

Treasurer Treasurer@area59aa.org

Officer-At-Large Officer-At-Large@area59aa.org

https://area59aa.org/area-committees

Archives Archives@area59aa.org

Cooperation with the Professional Community cpc@area59aa.org

Corrections corrections@area59aa.org

Finance Finance@Area59aa.org

Grapevine Grapevine@Area59aa.org

Ad Hoc Literature Literature@area59aa.org

Public Information PublicInfo@Area59aa.org

Structure Structure@Area59aa.org

Treatment/Accessibilities TF@Area59aa.org

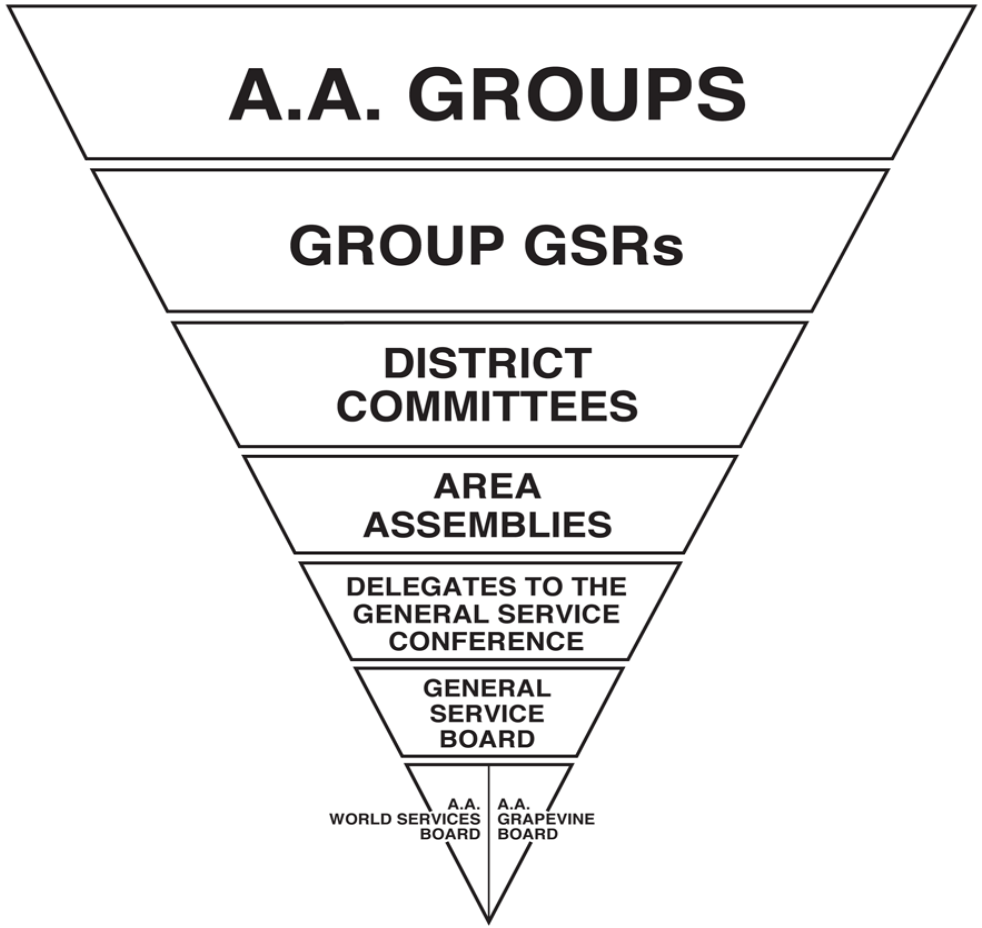
Area Forum, October 11, 2020

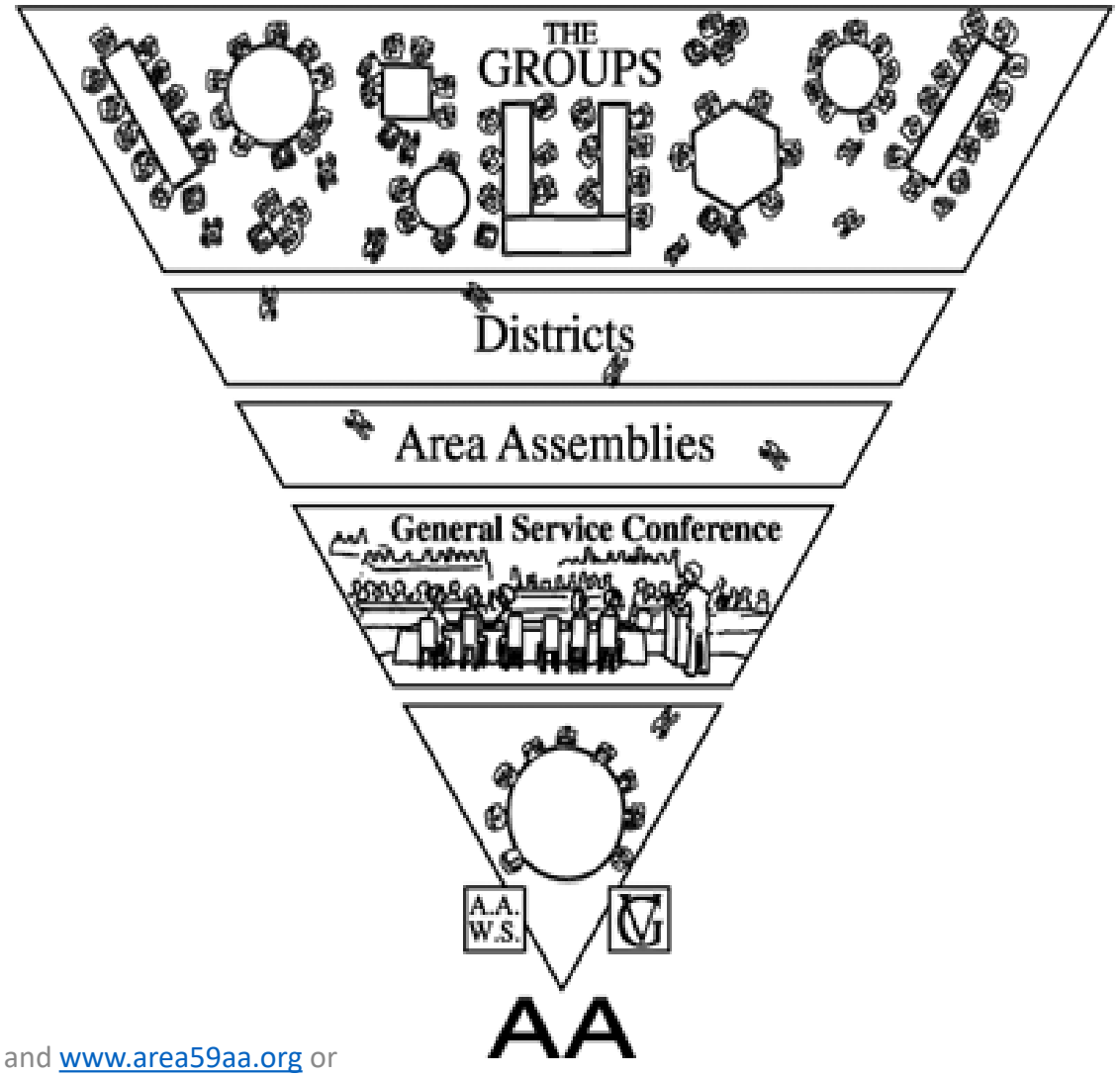
The Upside Down Triangle and an explanation of the General Service Structure and how they work

The General Service Conference Process the Idea, Agenda Item, PCSS and the Conference itself

Caroline N., Area Delegate

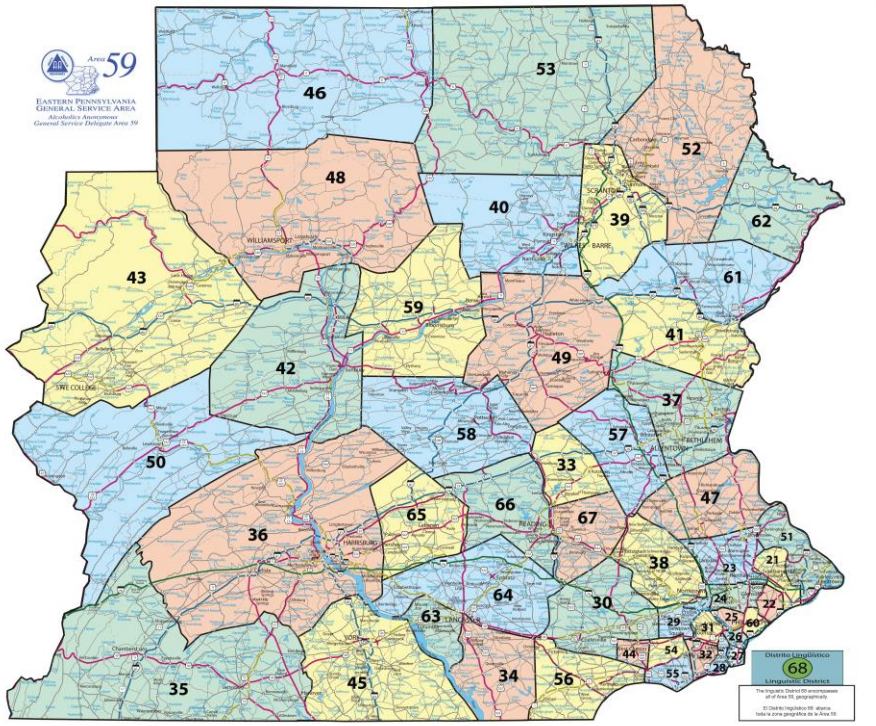
STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE
(U.S. and Canada)





Please visit www.aa.org and www.area59aa.org or email delegate@area59aa.org for more information

Area 59
EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
GENERAL SERVICE ASSEMBLY
www.area59aa.org



- +/- 40,000 Members
- 1,600 Groups
- 48 Districts
- Less than half our groups contribute to GSO
- All active groups have a GSR or Primary Contact to communicate with GSO, but
- Less than half our groups send GSRs to the annual EPGSA in November

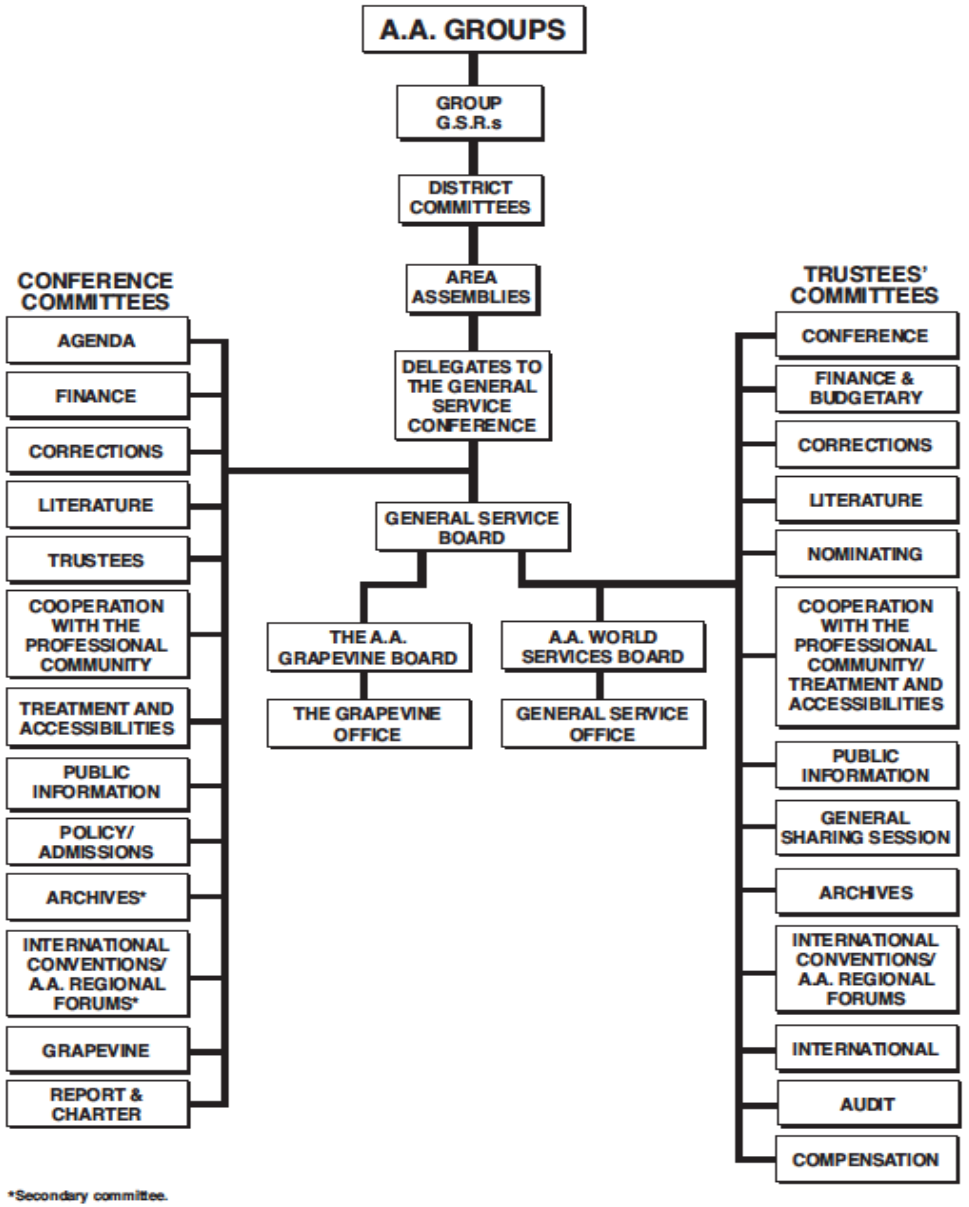
Please visit www.aa.org and www.area59aa.org or email delegate@area59aa.org for more information

AREA MAP OF US AND CANADA

This map represents a general outline of Areas.

Please visit www.aa.org and www.area59aa.org or email delegate@area59aa.org for more information

The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



*Secondary committee.

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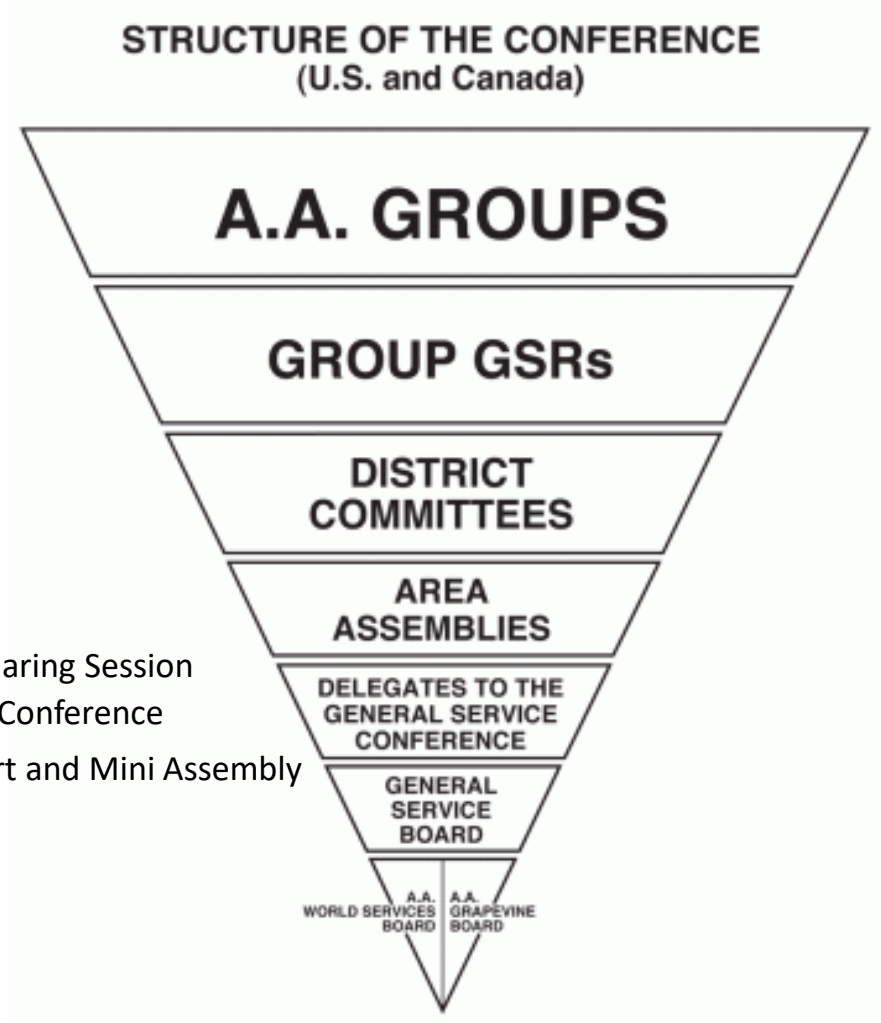


Home Group Business Meeting

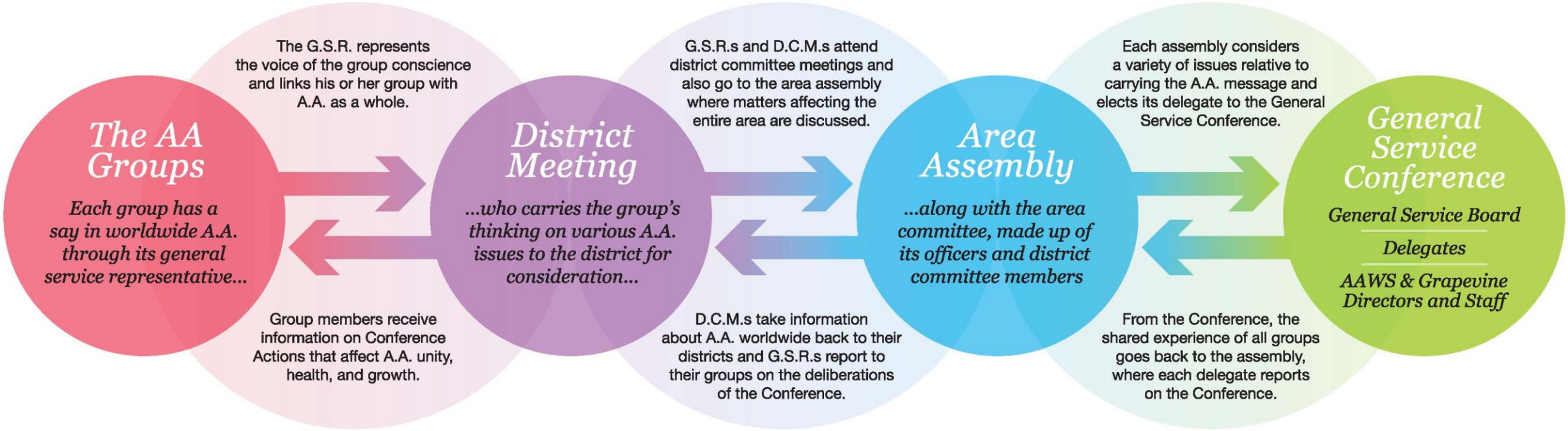
District Meeting

Area Quarterly Meetings +
EPGSA in November

Pre-Conference Sharing Session
General Service Conference
Delegate's Conference Report and Mini Assembly

Board Meetings

Please visit www.aa.org and www.area59aa.org or
email delegate@area59aa.org for more information



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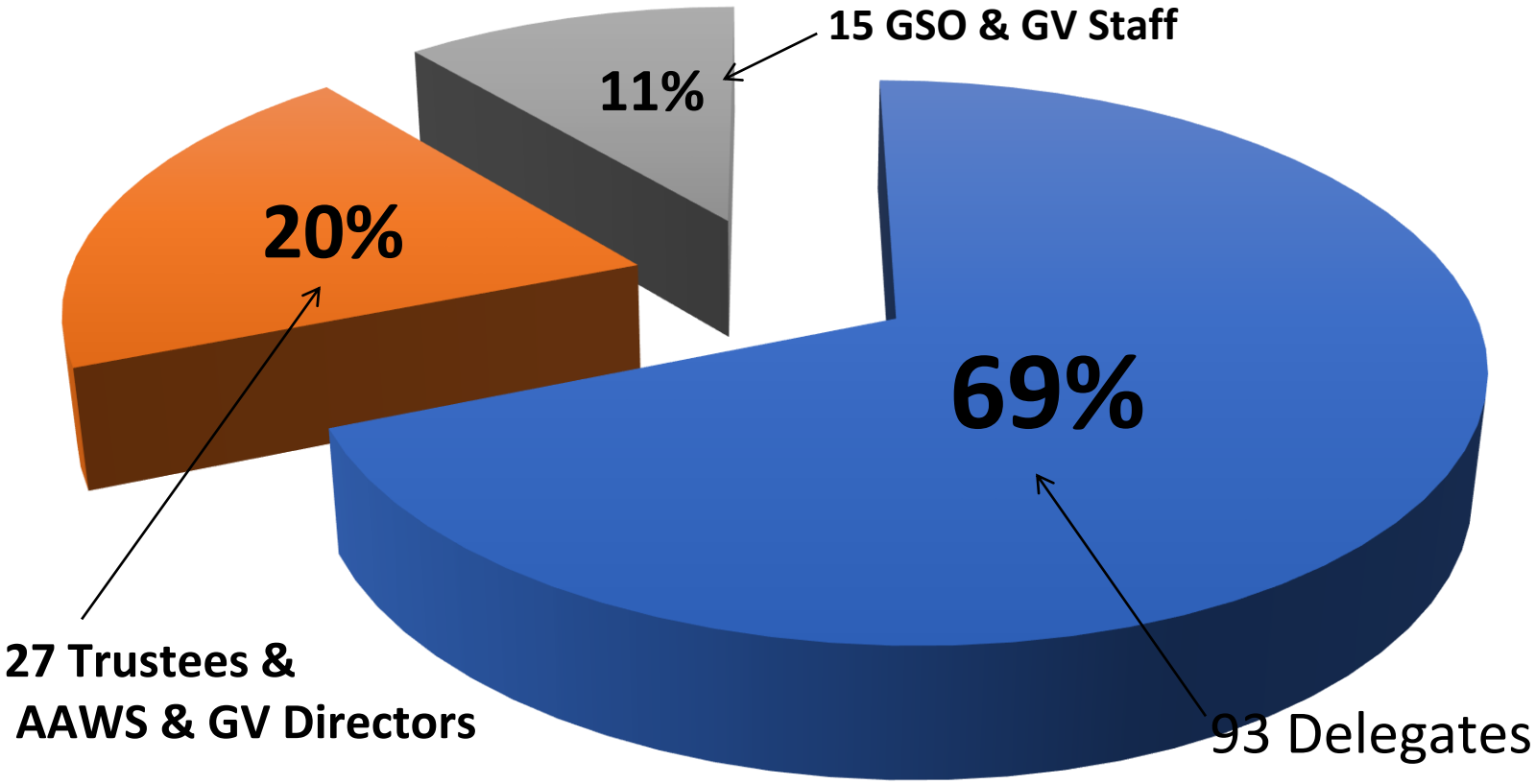


Who Makes Up the Conference?

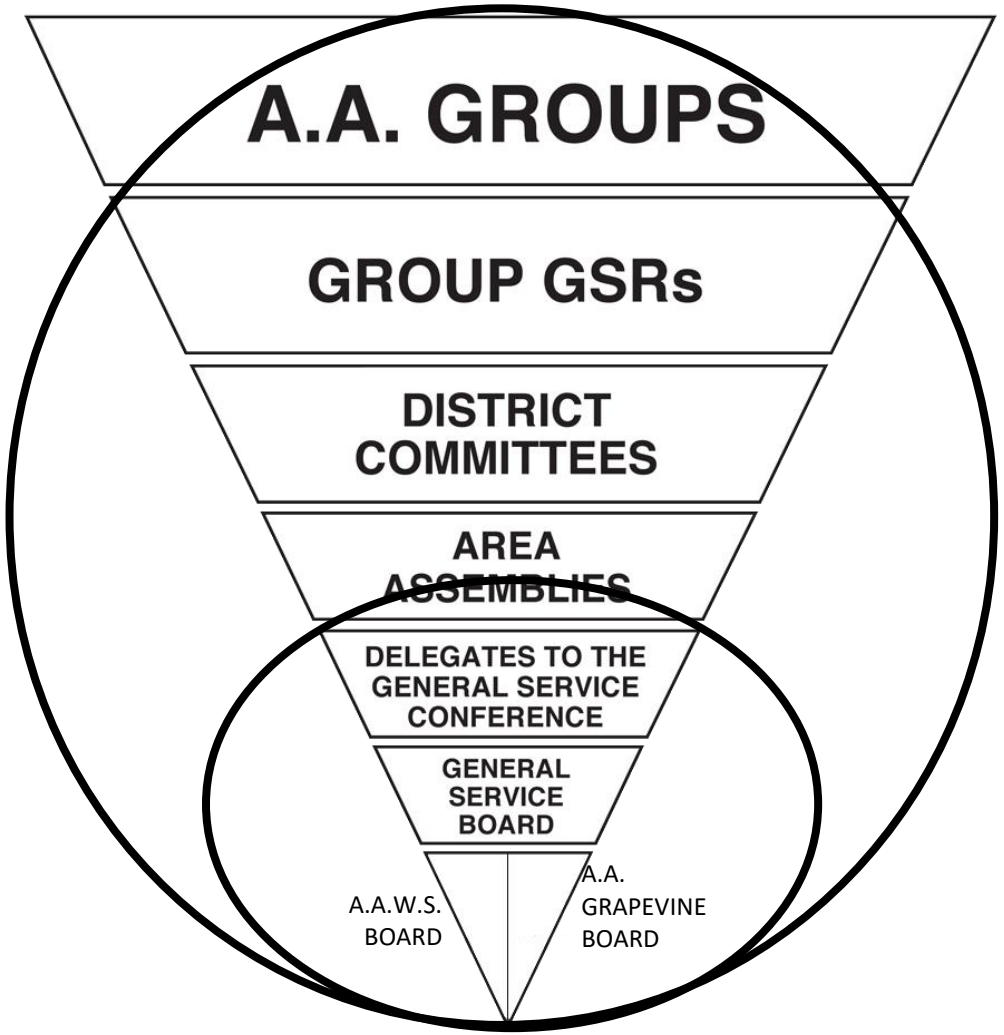
135 Total Voting Members of the 70th G.S.C.

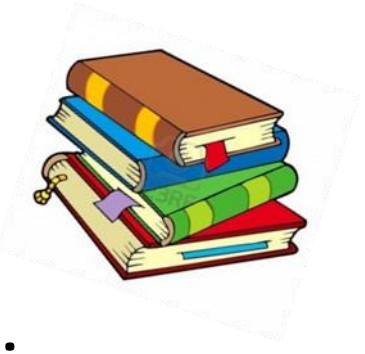
Please visit www.aa.org and www.area59aa.org or
email delegate@area59aa.org for more information

Structure of the Conference

(U.S. and Canada)

Ideas
$

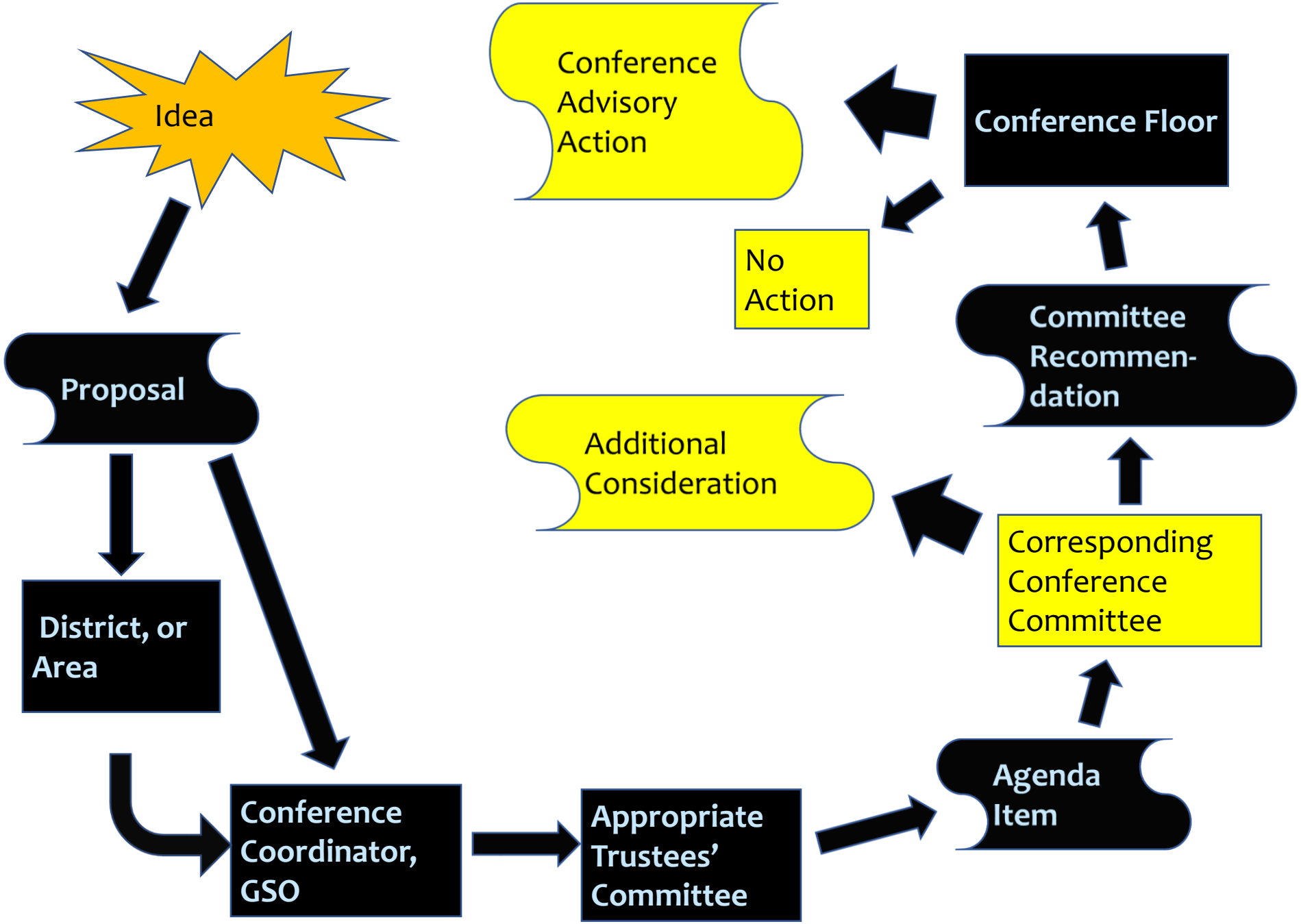




Services

Please visit www.aa.org and www.area59aa.org or email delegate@area59aa.org for more information

EVOLUTION OF A CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTION



Informed Group Conscience

- **A.A. Meetings**
  - A gathering of A.A.'s at a specified time and place

- **A.A. Groups**
  - Long form of tradition 3
  - Exist outside the walls of the meeting room
  - Members have frequent contact with one another and participate in service work together.

Tradition 2

- For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our **group conscience**. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

…Sorry Cartman

Do we need a group decision?

Informed Group Conscience

- Substantial Unanimity
- Sharing of full information
- Individual points of view
- Practice of A.A. principles
- Who's a member?

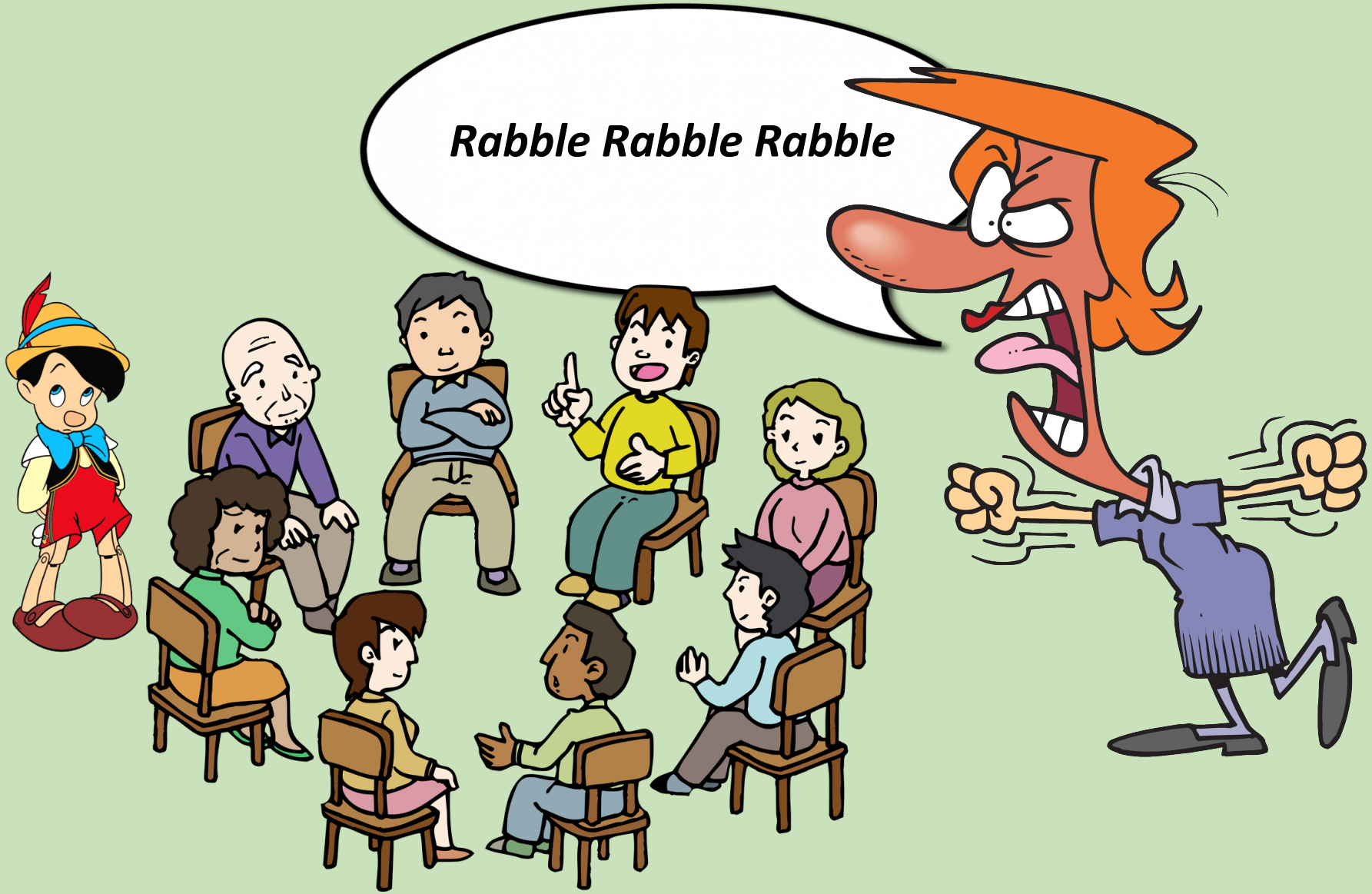
Sharing of full information

- Announce a few weeks ahead of the vote
- Supply all pertinent information
- Encourage voting members to pray, talk and consider both sides

Individual points of view

- Listen – Open mindedness
- Equality- everyone's voice is important
- Unity- What is best for the group?

Substantial what now?



Substantial Unanimity

- Avoid open discussion when possible, instead suggest that the chairperson call on one person at a time.
- 2/3rds must agree for vote to prevail
- Preserves unity
- Minority should be carefully considered.

Unity makes for a happy group

- I’m alright if I don’t get my way because it’s not about me (not always immediately)
- Once a vote has been taken, the vote has been taken
- One ultimate authority, our leaders are but trusted servants
- Rotation of leadership positions

Sources

- The A.A. Group pamphlet

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-16_theaagroup.pdf

- Excerpts of a talk given by Ottis D. Area 57

http://area35.org/archive/files/InformedGroupConscience.pdf

- A.A. Comes of Age

https://onlineliterature.aa.org/A.A.-Comes-of-Age

- The A.A. Service Manual

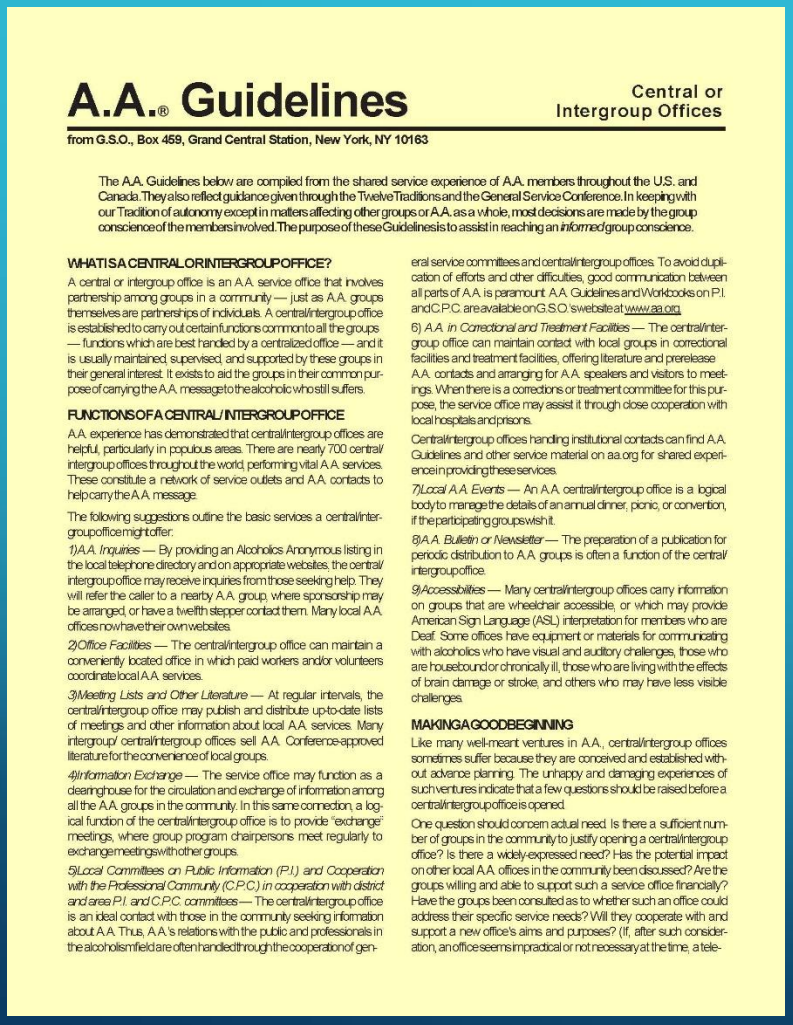
https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/en_bm-31.pdf

Area 59 Forum
October 11, 2020

HOW DO THE DISTRICTS COOPERATE WITH THEIR INTERGROUPS?

Steve S, Area 59, Alt-Del/Chair
alt-delegate@area59aa.org

What Does an Intergroup do?



A.A.® Guidelines

Central or Intergroup Offices

from G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

The A.A. Guidelines below are compiled from the shared service experience of A.A. members throughout the U.S. and Canada. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference. In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an *informed* group conscience.

WHAT IS A CENTRAL OR INTERGROUP OFFICE?

A central or intergroup office is an A.A. service office that involves partnership among groups in a community — just as A.A. groups themselves are partnerships of individuals. A central/intergroup office is established to carry out certain functions common to all the groups — functions which are best handled by a centralized office — and it is usually maintained, supervised, and supported by these groups in their general interest. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

FUNCTIONS OF A CENTRAL/INTERGROUP OFFICE

A.A. experience has demonstrated that central/intergroup offices are helpful, particularly in populous areas. There are nearly 700 central/intergroup offices throughout the world, performing vital A.A. services. These constitute a network of service outlets and A.A. contacts to help carry the A.A. message.

The following suggestions outline the basic services a central/intergroup office might offer:

1) A.A. Inquiries — By providing an Alcoholics Anonymous listing in the local telephone directory and on appropriate websites, the central/intergroup office may receive inquiries from those seeking help. They will refer the caller to a nearby A.A. group, where sponsorship may be arranged, or have a twelfth stepper contact them. Many local A.A. offices now have their own websites.

2) Office Facilities — The central/intergroup office can maintain a conveniently located office in which paid workers and/or volunteers coordinate local A.A. services.

3) Meeting Lists and Other Literature — At regular intervals, the central/intergroup office may publish and distribute up-to-date lists of meetings and other information about local A.A. services. Many intergroup/ central/intergroup offices sell A.A. Conference-approved literature for the convenience of local groups.

4) Information Exchange — The service office may function as a clearinghouse for the circulation and exchange of information among all the A.A. groups in the community. In this same connection, a logical function of the central/intergroup office is to provide "exchange" meetings, where group program chairpersons meet regularly to exchange meetings with other groups.

5) Local Committees on Public Information (P.I.) and Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) in cooperation with district and area P.I. and C.P.C. committees — The central/intergroup office is an ideal contact with those in the community seeking information about A.A. Thus, A.A.'s relations with the public and professionals in the alcoholism field are often handled through the cooperation of general service committees and central/intergroup offices. To avoid duplication of efforts and other difficulties, good communication between all parts of A.A. is paramount. A.A. Guidelines and Workbooks on P.I. and C.P.C. are available on G.S.O.'s website at www.aa.org.

6) A.A. in Correctional and Treatment Facilities — The central/intergroup office can maintain contact with local groups in correctional facilities and treatment facilities, offering literature and prerelease A.A. contacts and arranging for A.A. speakers and visitors to meetings. When there is a corrections or treatment committee for this purpose, the service office may assist it through close cooperation with local hospitals and prisons.

Central/intergroup offices handling institutional contacts can find A.A. Guidelines and other service material on aa.org for shared experience in providing these services.

7) Local A.A. Events — An A.A. central/intergroup office is a logical body to manage the details of an annual dinner, picnic, or convention, if the participating groups wish it.

8) A.A. Bulletin or Newsletter — The preparation of a publication for periodic distribution to A.A. groups is often a function of the central/intergroup office.

9) Accessibilities — Many central/intergroup offices carry information on groups that are wheelchair accessible, or which may provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for members who are Deaf. Some offices have equipment or materials for communicating with alcoholics who have visual and auditory challenges, those who are housebound or chronically ill, those who are living with the effects of brain damage or stroke, and others who may have less visible challenges.

MAKING A GOOD BEGINNING

Like many well-meant ventures in A.A., central/intergroup offices sometimes suffer because they are conceived and established without advance planning. The unhappy and damaging experiences of such ventures indicate that a few questions should be raised before a central/intergroup office is opened.

One question should concern actual need. Is there a sufficient number of groups in the community to justify opening a central/intergroup office? Is there a widely-expressed need? Has the potential impact on other local A.A. offices in the community been discussed? Are the groups willing and able to support such a service office financially? Have the groups been consulted as to whether such an office could address their specific service needs? Will they cooperate with and support a new office's aims and purposes? (If, after such consideration, an office seems impractical or not necessary at the time, a tele-

WHAT IS A CENTRAL OR INTERGROUP OFFICE?

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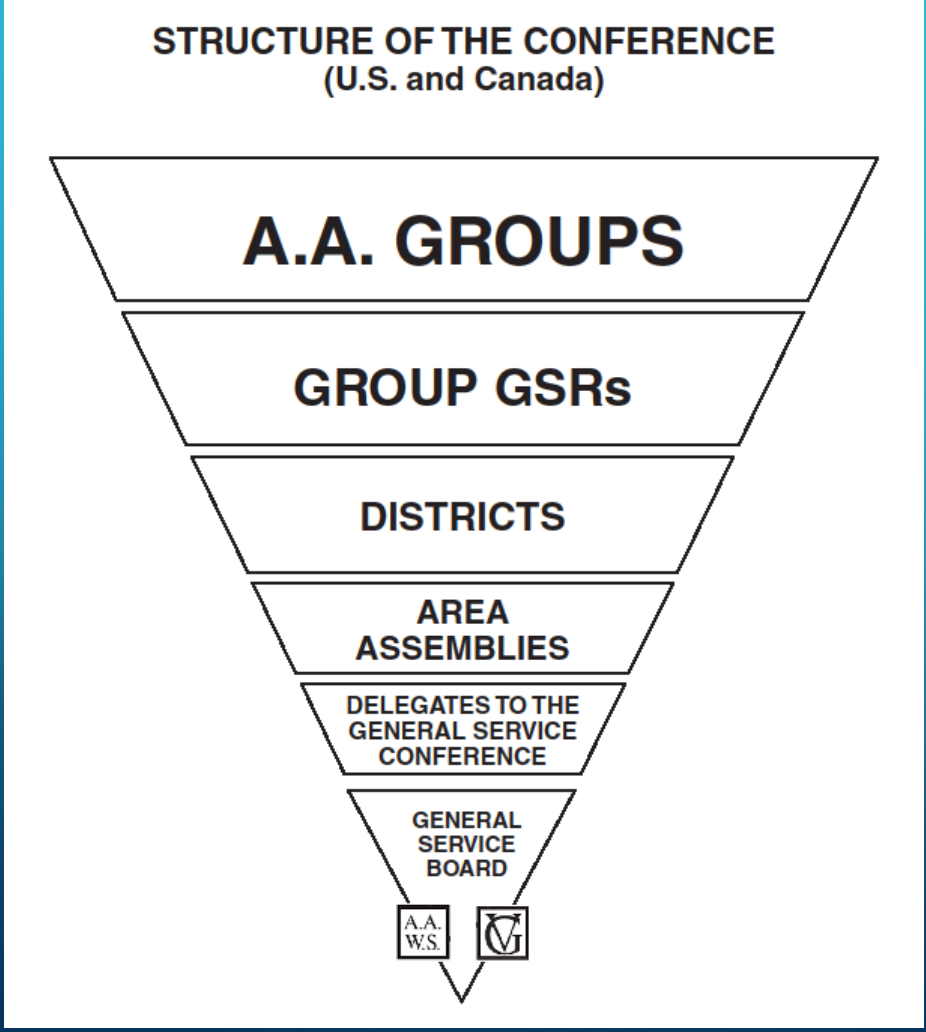
There are 16 AA Guidelines. They are our collective experience on what has worked best in the past.

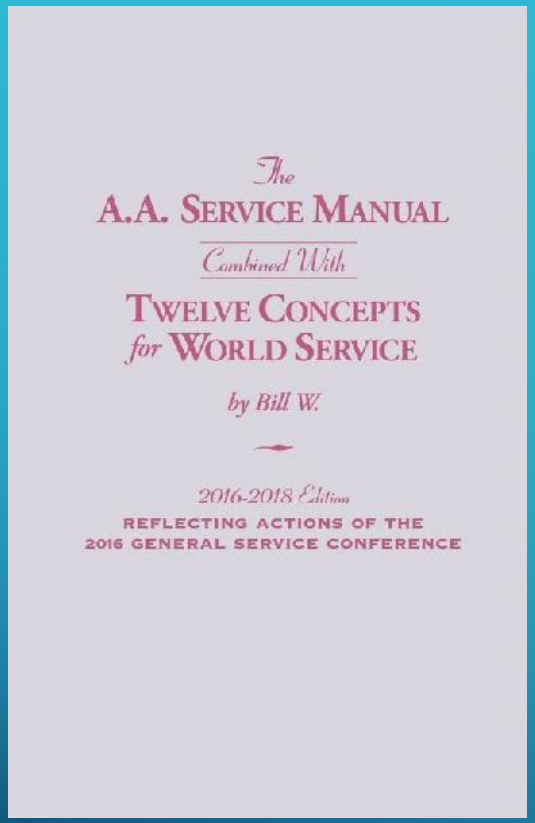
Districts are part of the General Service Structure



The first concern of AA members should be with problem drinkers the movement is still unable to reach. (Bill W, 1965 International Convention)

Structure of the Conference

What does General Service do?



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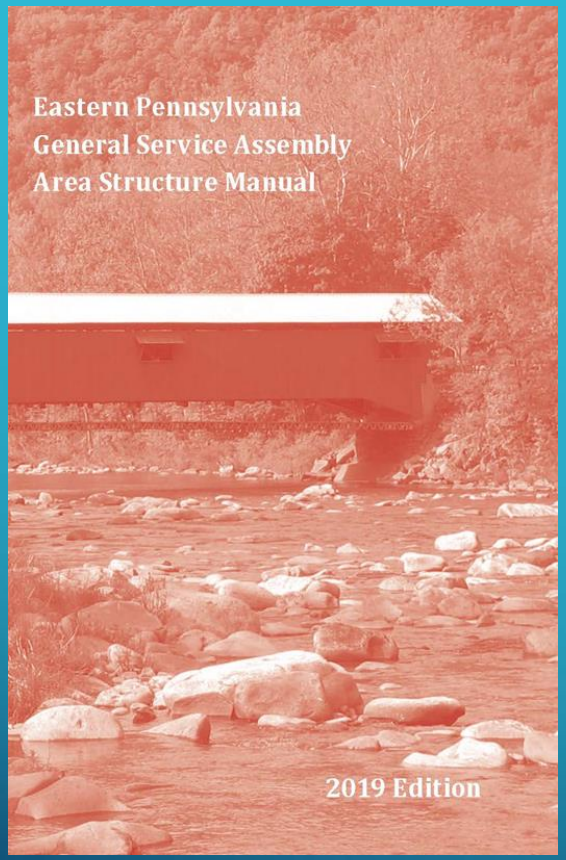
The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc., and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities. (AA Service Manual, page S2)

Area 59 Structure Manual



Area Committees and local Intergroups/ Central Offices traditionally have had different functions. The Area committee maintains the link between the AA groups and the AA General Service Board by means of the General Service Conference. Intergroups and central offices provide local AA services. These separate, but vital, service structures co-exist in Eastern Pennsylvania in mutual cooperation and harmony to the benefit of the entire Fellowship. (Area 59 Structure Manual, page 24)

How is General Service Different Than Intergroup?

Intergroup is 12th Step work done by groups. The Intergroup can do more things than could be done as individual groups. The Traditions have a phrase "except as it affects AA as a whole". The General Service Conference deals with things that affect AA as a whole. The message that we are carrying is defined by the Conference. They approve all of the literature and make sure that what our literature says is the message that we are carrying.

General Service makes more 12th Step work possible.

The GSR

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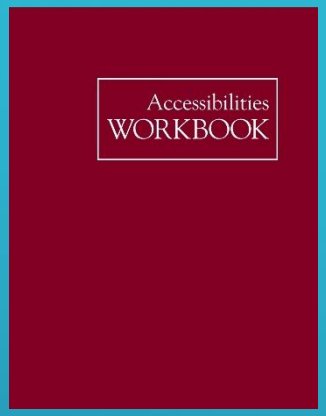
The makings of a good G.S.R.

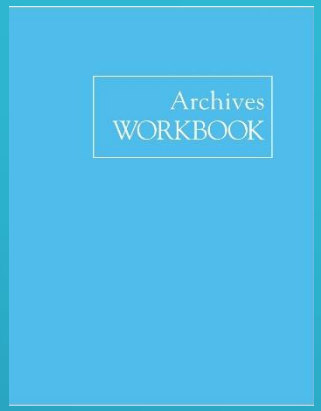
Two or three years' sobriety is generally the required minimum. Active membership in a home group — yours — is also important, and your G.S.R. should hold no other offices in any group.

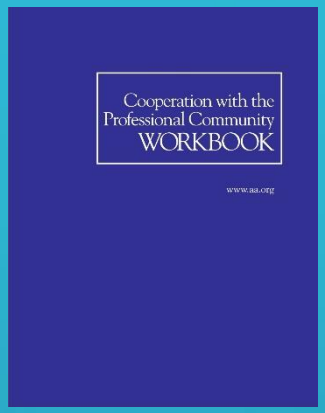
Prior A.A. service experience provides a long head start for a G.S.R.'s success. Consider former group officers and members who have shouldered responsibility at your intergroup or central office or on special committees.

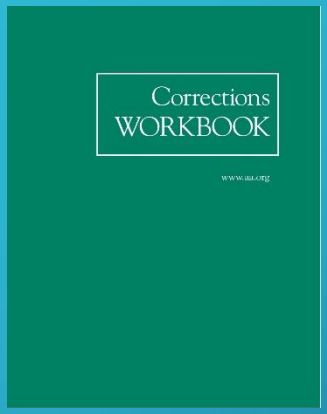
Does your group include people who already have a keen interest in the Twelve Traditions and the service structure? (If so, you're in luck!). (GSR Pamphlet, page 5)

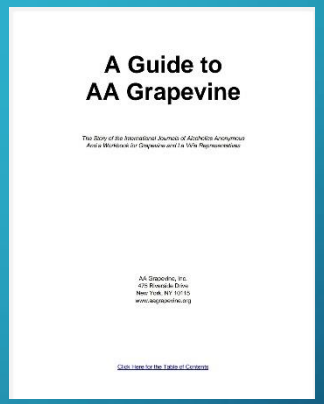
Workbooks give Intergroups tools to do 12th Step work within AA Tradition.

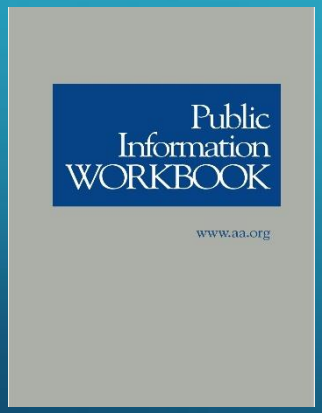


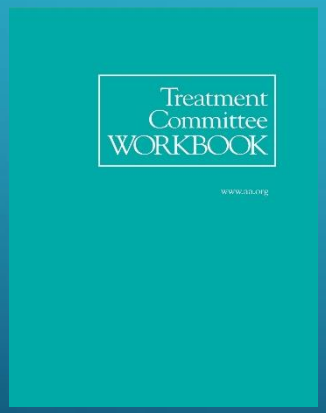








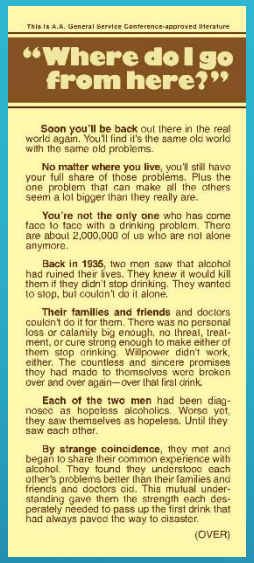


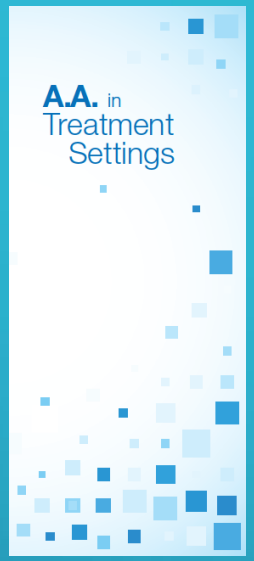


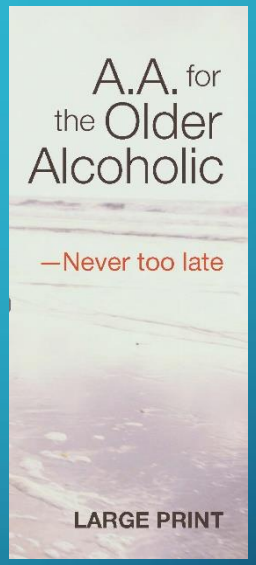
AA workbooks come from the practical experience of AA members in various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the 12 Traditions and the General Service Conference.

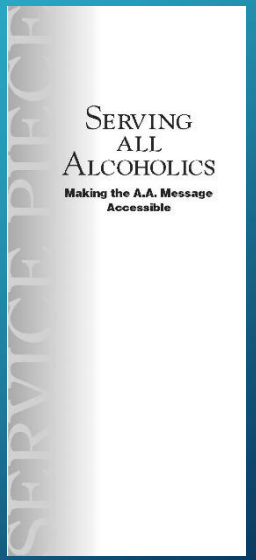
Accessibilities - Archives - CPC - Corrections - Grapevine - PI - Treatment

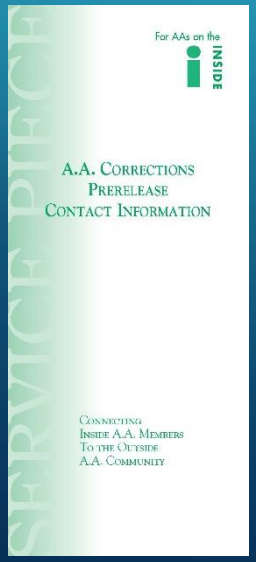
Pamphlets also give Intergroups tools to do 12th Step work within AA Tradition.











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AA pamphlets are another source of our collective experience that may be used to make better 12th Step work possible.

Service Material

CONTENTS OF PUBLIC INFORMATION KIT

www.aa.org/pikit

List of Kit Contents (this page)	(F-65W)
WORKBOOK: PI Workbook	(M-27 I)
A.A. GUIDELINES:	
Cooperating with Court, D.W.I. and Similar Programs	(MG-05)
Public Information	(MG-07)
For A.A. Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field	(MG-10)
Cooperation with the Professional Community	(MG-11)
Accessibility for All Alcoholics	(MG-16)
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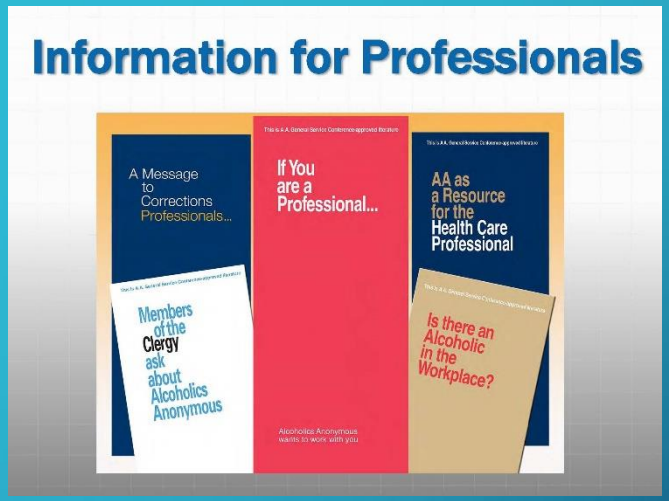
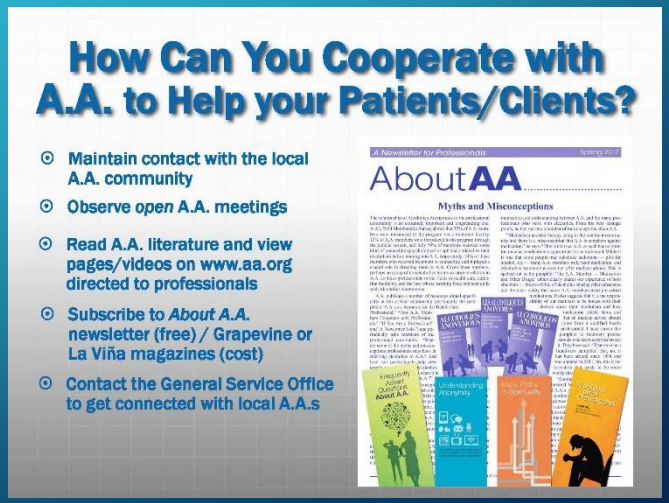
SERVICE MATERIAL:	
Information on Alcoholics Anonymous	(F-2)
Anonymity Card	(F-20)
Estimates of Groups and Members	(SMF-53)
A.A. Fact Sheet	(SMF-94)
Frequently Asked Questions About A.A. Websites	(SMF-101)
Anonymity Online	(SMF-197)
PAMPHLETS:	
A.A. At a Glance	(F-1)
Where Do I Go From Here?	(F-4)
A Message to Teenagers	(F-9)
A.A. Fact File	(M-24)
A.A. for the Older Alcoholic – Never Too Late	(P-22)
Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous	(P-25)
How A.A. Members Cooperate with Professionals	(P-29)
Alcoholics Anonymous in your Community	(P-31)
Problems Other Than Alcohol	(P-35)
Too Young?	(P-37)
Speaking at non-A.A. meetings	(P-40)
A Member's Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous	(P-41)
A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous	(P-42)
Understanding Anonymity	(P-47)
A.A. Membership Survey	(P-48)
PUBLICATIONS:	
Current *Box 4-5-9*	(F-36)
CATALOGS/ORDER FORMS:	
Literature Catalog (includes A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine material)	(F-10)
Special literature packages are for sale to PI committees and contacts only.*	
OTHER:	
Anonymity Letter to the Media	(F-21)
Flyer for A.A. Membership Survey Display*	(F-93)
Suggestions for Working with your Local Radio and TV Stations*	(M-271 A)
Radio and Television Public Service Announcement Scripts*	(M-271 D, M-271 I)
History & Actions: Trustees' Committee on Public Information*	(F-86)
History & Highlights of Actions: General Service Conference Committee on Public Information*	(F-87)
AA GRAPEVINE RESOURCES:	
Available through the AA Grapevine website at www.aagrapevine.org/resources	
AA Grapevine Magazine*	(F-41)
AA Grapevine Today/La Viña Hoy (one page flyer)*	(F-188)

* Item is not available on our website. Please contact the Public Information desk if you have questions about this item.

Rev.12/17 F-65W

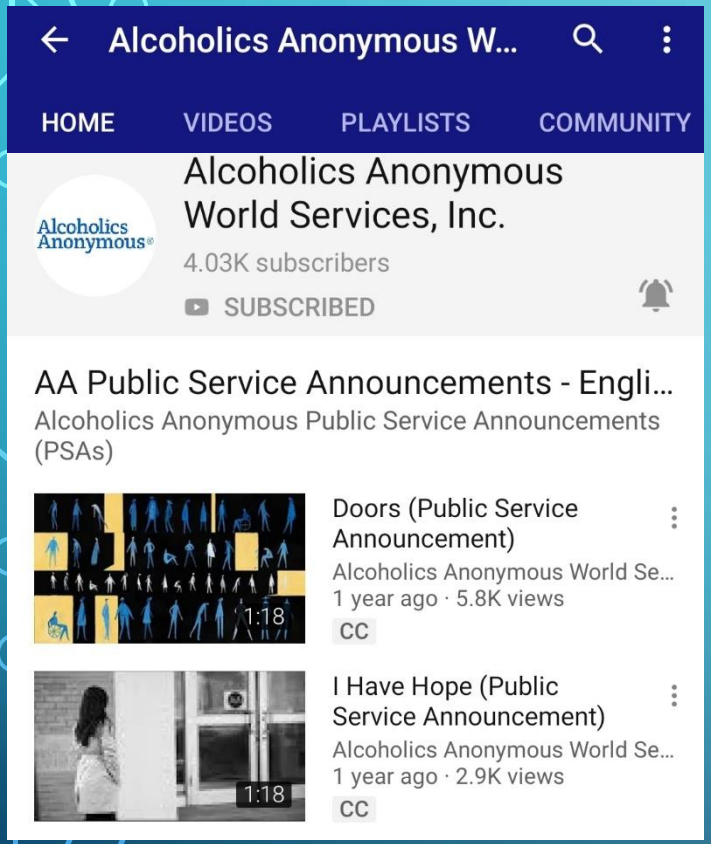




Contents of Public Information Kit

Cooperation with the Professional Community Presentation

AAWS YouTube Channel



AAWS has a YouTube Channel with Public Service Announcements and other videos

[AAWS YouTube Channel]

[AAWS YouTube Information]

[Videos and Audios on aa.org]

[Grapevine YouTube Channel]

THANK YOU!

Q & A