

## SERVICES PROVIDED BY G.S.O./A.A.W.S.

### **The General Service Office (G.S.O.)**

“It serves as a clearinghouse and exchange point for the wealth of A.A. experience accumulated over the years, coordinates a wide array of activities and services, and oversees the publication, all translations of, and distribution of A.A. Conference-approved literature and service materials.”

–*The A.A. Service Manual, 2018 – 2020*, page S81

The wide variety of services provided by your General Service Office have a primary purpose: to help support the work of carrying the message of A.A. From creating service material for committees to publishing and distributing affordable literature in over 110 languages, and from providing the professional community and general public with information about A.A. to coordinating events like Regional Forums, the World Service Meeting and the annual General Service Conference, the focus is on helping the alcoholic who still suffers.

### **SERVICES PROVIDED BY STAFF MEMBER ASSIGNMENTS**

Twelve G.S.O. Staff Member Assignments are filled by a rotating group of professionals who are also members of the A.A. Fellowship. With the help of Staff Assistants, Staff Members provide services specific to their Staff Member Assignment, or Desk.

Collectively, Staff Members respond to over 90,000 email inquiries and over 15,000 phone calls each year. The majority of inquiries are in English, but Staff Members regularly answer inquiries in French and Spanish as well. They provide accumulated A.A. experience on a wide variety of matters including: how a home group might approach a group problem; whom a member might contact about local service opportunities; which literature resources can support an informed group conscience; and what the Fellowship is sharing with the office on a variety of current topics.

Additionally, Staff Members support local District, Area and Intergroup/Central Office Committee Chairs related to their specific assignment desk. Support is provided through correspondence and by making available materials such as committee service kits, workbooks, and periodic updates along with access to videos, service material, and other resources.

Working as secretaries to Board and Conference Committees related to their assignment desk is another way G.S.O. Staff Members serve the A.A. Fellowship.

## **ACCESSIBILITIES/REMOTE COMMUNITIES**

- Supports development of accessibilities-related literature including in formats that enable greater accessibility to the A.A. message.
- Provides shared experience on working with Remote Communities, including the military.
- Coordinates the *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)* which is a confidential bimonthly bulletin that is circulated among Loners, Homers, Internationalists, Port Contacts, and Loner Sponsors.
- Supports local committees working with the elder community.

## **CONFERENCE**

- Coordinates the annual General Service Conference (GSC), the closest thing there is to a collective group conscience for the U.S. and Canada, including:
  - Produces and distributes GSC Communications Kit and Manual.
  - Facilitates GSC Background Material translation and distribution process.
  - Develops annual Conference Final Report in hard copy and anonymity-protected electronic versions.
  - Leads Conference evaluation process for consistent improvement.
  - Maintains year-round communication with delegates and other Conference members; coordinates Delegate Chair Orientation.
  - Seeks suggestions from areas for GSC theme, presentations, and workshop topics.
  - Responds to all Conference-related inquiries and requests from area delegates for shared experience.

## **COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (C.P.C.)/TREATMENT**

- Supports local C.P.C. committees and Treatment committees throughout the U.S. and Canada.
- Provides C.P.C. and Treatment service material including special discount packages for literature.
- Coordinates A.A. exhibits at national conferences for professionals, and refers local conference invitations to local committees.
- Researches and helps produce *About A.A.* bulletin for professionals.
- Acts as liaison to National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (N.I.A.A.A.).
- Provides A.A. information in response to inquiries from professionals, and refers them to local committees whenever appropriate.
- Responds to letters from clients or patients in treatment centers, and refers them to local committees whenever appropriate.

## **CORRECTIONS**

- Supports Corrections committees throughout the U.S. and Canada.
- Coordinates Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.), enabling thousands of incarcerated alcoholics to correspond with A.A. members on the outside.
- Responds to about 5,000 letters from inmates every year, sending information about A.A. and complimentary A.A. literature upon request.
- Handles requests for pre-release contacts with local committees.

- Edits and distributes *Sharing from Behind the Walls*, a quarterly newsletter composed of sharing collected from inmates.
- Responds to inquiries from corrections professionals, providing literature and videos when appropriate, and connecting them with local committees.

## **GROUP SERVICES**

- Provides complimentary service kits for newly listed D.C.M.s and G.S.R.s.
- Provides complimentary A.A. Group Handbook for newly listed groups.
- Updates shared experience in A.A. Guidelines and Service Material.
- Coordinates A.A. *Service Manual* updates per Conference Advisory Actions.
- Acts as Intergroup/Central Office Liaison to foster communication and cooperation.
  - Participates in Annual Intergroup/Central Office Seminar,
  - Responds to requests for shared experience from Intergroup offices.
- Liaison to other Twelve Step fellowships, such as Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and more.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- Responds to inquiries from members, groups and committees outside the U.S./Canada, and refers them to local G.S.O./Service Office where one exists.
- Provides shared experience on starting new A.A. groups in countries where A.A. is getting started, and refers to nearest G.S.O. when appropriate.
- Responds to inquiries from professionals overseas where no service office exists.
- Provides contacts for members relocating/traveling overseas, upon request.
- Oversees International A.A. Directory.
- Provides A.A. literature upon request where no local offices exist and there are limited resources.
- Maintains communication with foreign G.S.O.s and Service Offices and responds to requests for shared experience.
- Coordinates World Service Meeting (WSM), held every other year.
- Upon invitation, travels overseas to service events, conventions, zonal meetings, etc.; meets with professionals as arranged by local A.A.s.

## **INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**

- Plans and produces an event every five years that draws approximately 50,000 members from about 80 different countries.
- Coordinates programming, finances and Convention facilities, and works with local A.A. committee to provide a Host Committee for the event.

## **LITERATURE**

- Supports local Literature committees throughout the U.S. and Canada.
- Supports development and updates of Conference-approved literature, primarily recovery-focused items.
- Administers calendar of event information and content ideas to support the publication of *Box 459* (News and Notes from G.S.O.).
- Provides literature display packages to committees and other A.A. entities.
- Responds to inquiries about A.A. Conference-approved literature.

## **NOMINATING**

- Announces board vacancies widely to encourage a diverse, talented, and accomplished pool of applicants.
- Coordinates the process of choosing new servant-leaders for the board, providing information, forms, guidelines and procedures.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION (P.I.)**

- Supports local P.I. Committees throughout the U.S. and Canada.
- Provides accurate information and clarifies misinformation when appropriate about A.A. in response to inquiries from media, referring them to local committees when appropriate.
- Distributes Annual Anonymity Letter to media and forwards anonymity breaks at the level of public media to area delegates.
- Refers invitations for A.A. informational booths/presentations at health fairs, schools and educational institutions to local committees.
- Provides accurate information about A.A. to researchers and students.
- Coordinates production of PSAs for TV, radio, and digital platforms such as the A.A.W.S. YouTube Channel.

## **REGIONAL FORUMS**

Regional Forums are regional weekend sharing and information gatherings that offer A.A. members opportunities to interact with board members and G.S.O. staff, receive complimentary service literature, and learn more about general service. Generally, four Forums are held each year.

- Coordinates Regional Forums, including:
  - Coordinating flyers, announcements and notifications of upcoming Forums
  - Assuring translation services are available as needed
  - Facilitating on-site Forum displays of literature and service material
  - Coordinating of agenda, workshops and presentations
  - Working collaboratively with each Host Committee
  - Continuing the evaluation process for consistent improvement
- Responds to all Forum-related inquiries.
- Assists Local Forum and Special Forum committees upon request.

## **STAFF COORDINATOR**

- Coordinates General Service Board correspondence and legal documents.
- Responds to invitations for staff to participate in A.A. service events.
- Responds to inquiries from attorneys, executors or members related to bequests/wills.

## **SERVICES PROVIDED BY G.S.O. DEPARTMENTS**

### **ARCHIVES**

- Supports local Archives committees throughout the U.S. and Canada.
- Maintains G.S.O. Archives in accordance with accepted practices and standards characteristic of the industry.

- Responds to requests for research and information from the Fellowship, G.S.O. staff, A.A. service workers, trustees and directors, and other external researchers as to various aspects of A.A. history.
- Provides information about group and area histories.
- Provides assistance to area and district archivists regarding collection and preservation.
- Produces and distributes, upon request, historical photograph sets and photographs of our co-founders (A.A. members only); copies of pre-publication manuscripts of the first edition of the Big Book; bookmarks, wallet cards and other complimentary items.
- Maintains and updates content for the Archives portal on G.S.O.'s A.A. website.
- Maintains rotating exhibits of interest, as well as a library and other items of interest, for visitors touring G.S.O.
- Upon request, coordinates scheduling and shipping of a traveling exhibit for area events.
- Collects copies of all materials printed or produced by A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine, as well as copies of all board minutes, committee reports and other significant permanent records.
- Preserves all historical and current permanent records of A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine, through digitization, preservation photocopying, and other archival preservation techniques.
- Collects oral history interviews from early members.
- Processes, organizes and catalogs all historical and current permanent records so they will be accessible and searchable.
- Manages storage and inventory of inactive records stored off-site.
- Provides the following upon request:
  - Archives Workbook
  - A.A. Guidelines on Archives
  - "The A.A. Archives" pamphlet
  - The video "Markings on the Journey"

## **COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

- Supervises G.S.O.'s A.A. website at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), the Meeting Guide app, YouTube channel, new website design and development and Google Non-Profit products.
- Responds to inquiries/suggestions for changes related to G.S.O.'s A.A. communication technology.
- Shares collected experience with local website committees upon request.

## **FINANCE/CONTRIBUTIONS**

- Communicates financial data to the Fellowship.
- Sets up and supervises annual budgets; and maintains accurate financial records.
- Receives and acknowledges all contributions from A.A. groups and members.
- Provides self-support packets, group contribution envelopes and birthday envelopes on request.

## **OPERATIONS**

- Maintains database of group and service position records and mailing lists.
- Supervises annual group records update.
- Manages Fellowship Connection and instructions for area registrars or area trusted servants responsible for area group records.
- Processes all updates of records including new group information, trusted servants and local offices.

## **PUBLISHING**

- Edits, designs, publishes and distributes all A.A. Conference-approved literature, video, audio and accessibility items in English, Spanish and French.
- Creates catalog and order forms, updating them based on member feedback.
- Processes all literature orders and customer inquiries regarding orders.
- Maintains small in-house shipping department.
- Manages outsourced warehousing and shipping companies.
- Oversees translations/licensing of A.A. World Services-copyrighted material.
- Conducts research and development for new publications and new formats.
- Publishes the following:
  - *Box 4-5-9.*
  - *G.S.O. Quarterly Report*
  - A.A. Directories and Lists of Domestic and International offices
  - *About A.A.*
  - *Sharing from Behind the Walls*
  - *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)*
  - International Convention souvenir books
- Sends publication updates to local offices and General Service Conference members on new literature, pricing changes, etc.
- Handles reprint requests/permissions for use of A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted material.

## **OTHER SERVICES G.S.O. PROVIDES**

Your G.S.O. welcomes visitors to the office.\* Tours are offered upon request and large group visits can be arranged to include a short presentation and refreshments. We can also provide local A.A. office information to anyone looking for A.A. meetings, and group contact information for Twelfth Step purposes where no local office exists.

The services provided by G.S.O. are financed by the voluntary contributions of A.A. groups and members. G.S.O. services are regularly evaluated and updated based upon the ongoing needs of the Fellowship, improvements in technology, and available resources. Feel free to contact the office if these services and any others may be helpful to efforts for carrying A.A.'s message of recovery from alcoholism.

## **GRAPEVINE/LA VIÑA**

Also housed at G.S.O. but operated wholly independently from A.A.W.S., Grapevine is the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous in print, digital and audio. Often referred to as our "meeting in print," Grapevine communicates the experience, strength, and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current A.A. experience with

recovery, unity, and service. La Viña is often referred to as “our meeting in print” for Spanish-speaking members of A.A. and contains stories, interviews and articles written in Spanish, as well as some writings translated from Grapevine.\*\*

\*While currently closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, your G.S.O. looks forward to resuming its tradition of welcoming visitors to the office once it is safe to do so. For further information, please call (212) 870-3400. We thank you for your patience.

\*\*Unlike G.S.O., which receives group contributions to support group services, Grapevine does not accept contributions from the Fellowship. Grapevine is supported entirely through sales of the magazine and related items. La Viña is produced by AA Grapevine, Inc. and is supported as a service to the Fellowship by the General Fund of the General Service Board.

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