

# Your **A.A.** General Service Office



This is A.A. General Service  
Conference-approved literature

## How GSO Began

In the late 1930s, a small office in Newark, NJ, staffed by co-founder Bill W. and a secretary, was enough to maintain contact among the first 100 A.A. members. Soon, the fast-spreading Fellowship needed a real world service office, and "headquarters" was shifted to New York City, with moves from Vesey Street to Lexington Avenue to East 44th Street and to East 45th as membership grew into the hundreds of thousands. From 1970 to 1992 GSO was located at 468 Park Avenue South.

## GSO Today



In 1992, GSO moved to 475 Riverside Drive, where both A.A. World Services and Grapevine personnel are now housed on the same floor. For the present membership of over two million, an all-A.A. staff offers the services outlined in this pamphlet. A.A. and non-A.A. employees handle finances; prepare letters and bulletins; note group records, literature orders and contributions; ship material your way; and file incoming letters to add to the rich storehouse of A.A. experience at your GSO.

## Archives

"When did A.A. start in my area?" "Why was the word 'honest' dropped from the Preamble?" Such questions are answered daily by the staff of the A.A. archives, a GSO service born in 1973. Its projects include: digitiz-



ing long-accumulated records; retaping valuable tapes; collecting oral history tapes from early members; gathering local material from individuals and groups; and helping researchers inside and outside A.A.

## **Literature**

Where does the Big Book come from? The other A.A. books? The pamphlets in your group's literature rack? The work of A.A. World Services, Inc., the Fellowship's publishing company, goes on at GSO Translations of A.A. literature are also available here.

## **Loners and Internationalists**

No meetings nearby? An A.A. in that situation may ask to be listed at GSO as a Lone Member. Letters arrive from fellow Loners and other A.A.s (often listed as Loner Sponsors). If the A.A. is a seafarer, the A.A. Internationalists extend a welcome via GSO *Loners-Internationalists Meeting*, an A.A. meeting by mail or email for those who cannot attend regular meetings. It is prepared by GSO and mailed bimonthly to participants. Housebound A.A.s, known as Homers, are also members of the *LIM* Group.

## **Public Information**

If you find the A.A. message being carried on TV, radio or Internet or in a national publication, chances are that GSO helped to supply information. The staff member on the PI desk provides A.A. facts for the media, answers thousands of inquiries yearly from the general public, and is in touch with local PI committees and contacts. From GSO, they can order aids like the PI Kit and Workbook, Guidelines and PSAs.

## **Cooperation with the Professional Community**

These days, more and more professionals, agencies, industrial programs, and professional associations are interested in helping the alcoholic. To make sure they're aware of the long-range help offered by A.A., GSO prepares information (such as the newsletter for professionals, *About A.A.*) and on request sends the Professional Exhibits to their national conferences. This GSO desk is also an information exchange point for the increasing number of local CPC committees.

## **Corrections**

This assignment extends the hand of A.A. to those in correctional settings who are unable to call a sponsor or otherwise participate in the Fellowship of A.A., which

we on the “outside” take for granted. The staff member on this assignment also coordinates the Corrections Correspondence Service and prerelease contacts.

### **Treatment Facilities**

The aim of this assignment is to assist the work of A.A. members on local treatment facilities committees who carry the A.A. message to alcoholics in treatment facilities and to convey means and methods of bridging the gap for prospective A.A. members from treatment to A.A. groups.

### **International Conventions**

Beginning at Cleveland in 1950, when A.A. was 15 years old, these Conventions have since brought members from around the world together at five-year intervals in joyful celebration of A.A.’s anniversaries. Close to the time of each Convention, information is relayed to the Fellowship through *Box 4-5-9* articles.

### **General Correspondence and Service Material**

“Let’s write to GSO” Queries are answered with A.A. shared experience. All staff members handle general correspondence from specific regions — rotating to others regularly, just as they do in their service assignments (which also involve correspondence). Letters are answered in the language they are received.

### **Group Services**

Useful ideas and information are relayed in service material such as the Guidelines, tapes, films, the Group Handbook, and *Box 4-5-9*, the quarterly bulletin in English, French and Spanish. The A.A. Group Handbook, *Box 4-5-9* and pamphlets are sent to new groups free of







charge. Most service material is translated into French and Spanish.

### **International and World Service Meeting**

As Bill W. foresaw, GSO has become “the senior service center” among many in worldwide A.A. This office maintains contact with other general service offices and literature distribution centers, no matter where or in what language. The World Service Meeting (WSM), started in 1969 and now biennial, is held alternately in New York and an overseas country. The staff member handles correspondence with members and groups in countries without a structure, works with the Publishing Department on translations of A.A. literature, coordinates the WSM and is responsible for the *World Service Meeting Report*.

### **General Service Conference**

Months before each annual Conference, the staff member assigned to the Conference begins sending information and questionnaires to the delegates, who send back answers, queries, and agenda suggestions. GSO arranges the meeting site, delegates’ housing, record-keeping and other details; sums up proceedings in *Box 4-5-9*; and covers them fully in the *Final Conference Report*. Delegates and area committee members also receive the *Quarterly Report*, on activities of the General Service Board. All year, GSO is the communications center for the U.S.-Canada service structure.

### **A.A. Regional and Local Forums**

Started in 1975, Regional Forums are weekend A.A. events held four times a year — each in a region of the U.S. or Canada that has extended an invitation. Representatives of the General Service Board and GSO and GV staffs participate in each Forum with A.A. mem-

bers living or visiting in the region. The purpose of the meetings is to provide better communication among all levels of service for the region concerned. Planning and coordination, in conjunction with regional trustees and delegates, are handled at GSO Local Forums, a scaled-down version of Regional Forums, organized on the local level with help from GSO, have been instituted to provide a Forum experience on a timely basis to meet cultural, accessibility and population needs in A.A. communities who for any reason are unable to attend regular Regional Forums.

### **Accessibilities/Remote Communities**

The focus of this assignment is on reaching the alcoholic who may experience barriers to accessing the A.A. message, whether those be mental, physical, geographic, cultural, or other factors. The staff member on this assignment aims to ensure the availability of A.A. literature in braille, large-print and American Sign Language (ASL) video formats, as well as to provide resources for members carrying the message to remote communities, elder-care facilities and homebound A.A.s.

### **GSO's A.A. Website**

With over 14 million visitors a year, GSO's A.A. website offers vital information in English, French and Spanish. The site is designed to focus on providing information and help to people concerned about a drinking problem; people looking for an A.A. meeting; and people looking for information about A.A., including the public, professionals dealing with alcoholic clients or patients, and members of the media. Visitors can view A.A. literature online; books, pamphlets and service material from GSO are available to read for no charge online. There are also links to the AAWS online store to purchase literature and to online resources to purchase e-books.

### **AA Grapevine, Inc.**

AA Grapevine, the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, includes magazines, a website and other published items. Articles, art and photographs, which reflect the growth of A.A. over the years, are not paid for, but contributed by members in free sharing of experience and thought, as in an A.A. meeting. You do not have to be a professional writer or artist to contribute to AA Grapevine and La Viña, A.A.'s Spanish-language magazine. All submissions are welcomed and acknowledged.

Manuscripts are always read by A.A. members on the editorial staff. Published material is protected by copyright, held by AA Grapevine, Inc. — a corporation entirely separate from A.A. World Services, Inc.

For editorial submissions or to subscribe to the magazines, please contact AA Grapevine, Inc., 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115; or visit the website at [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org).

## What Can You Do for GSO?

**1. Share your experience with GSO** Your letters on the challenges that groups and members face today can help other A.A.s carry our message.

**2. Keep GSO informed.** Only you can make sure that directories and files contain up-to-date information on groups, meetings, committees, intergroups and central offices.

**3. Remember Tradition Seven.** All of A.A. — GSO as well as your group — is committed to self-support. Popular plans for contributions to GSO are: Birthday Plan (on an A.A.'s anniversary, \$1.00 for each year); monthly or quarterly contributions by groups; and recurring contributions that can be made online. Most to be desired is participation by *every* group — no matter what the amount.

**4. Let newcomers know about their General Service Office.**

**5. Come to see GSO.** You'll be warmly welcomed, given a full tour, and introduced to staff members, department heads, and GSO's office neighbors, the Grapevine folks. Staff trips and correspondence keep GSO forever close to hometown A.A. — but it's a special delight to meet you here at *your* General Service Office. Tours are also given in Spanish and French.

**6. Visit our A.A. website.** You can visit our website at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org). You will find general information about A.A., as well as service information.

**7. What can you do for GSO?** In keeping with A.A.'s long-standing principle of self-support, many groups and members not only contribute to local services, but also contribute to GSO to help sustain the vital services provided.

## 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.

### I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that: **I am responsible.**

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