

## **SERVICES PROVIDED BY GSO/AAWS**

### **The General Service Office (GSO)**

“It performs many functions that groups, districts, areas and intergroup/central offices cannot easily handle, serving as a clearinghouse and exchange point for the wealth of A.A. experience accumulated over the years, coordinating a wide array of activities and services, and overseeing the publication, translation and distribution of A.A. Conference-approved literature and service materials.”

–*The A.A. Service Manual, 2026 – 2028*, page 86

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 GSO 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 Offices 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 GSO Staff Members serve the A.A. Fellowship.

## **ACCESSIBILITIES/TREATMENT/REMOTE COMMUNITIES**

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

## **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 (CPC)/TREATMENT**

- Serves as the GSO contact for Professionals who have alcoholic clients
- Supports local CPC committees throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Provides CPC 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., a bulletin for professionals
- Acts as liaison to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- Responds to inquiries from a wide array of professionals and future professionals, providing them with A.A. resources and referring them to local committees whenever appropriate

## **CORRECTIONS**

- Supports Corrections committees throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Coordinates Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS), enabling thousands of incarcerated alcoholics to correspond with A.A. members on the outside
- Responds to about 5,000 letters from persons in custody 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 triannual newsletter composed of sharing collected from persons in custody
- 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 DCMs and GSRs
- Provides complimentary A.A. Group Handbook for newly listed groups
- Coordinates the annual service kit list update for all GSO Service Desks
- Coordinates updates of shared experience in A.A. Guidelines and Service Material
- Coordinates the biennial A.A. Service Manual updates per Conference approval
- Acts as Intergroup/Central Office liaison to foster communication and cooperation with AAWS
- Participates in Annual Intergroup/Central Office Seminar
- Responds to requests for shared experience from Intergroup offices
- Acts as liaison to other Twelve Step fellowships, such as AI-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and more
- Responds to inquiries about topics that affect the participation of groups and districts in the general service structure

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- Responds to inquiries from members, groups, and committees outside the U.S./Canada, and refers them to local GSO/Service Offices where one exists
- Provides shared experience on starting new A.A. groups in countries where A.A. is getting started and refers to nearest GSO when appropriate
- Responds to inquiries from professionals overseas where no service office exists
- Provides international contacts upon request, for members relocating/traveling
- Provides A.A. literature upon request where no local offices exist and there are limited resources through "The International Literature Fund"
- Maintains communication with International GSOs and Service Offices and responds to requests for shared experience
- Coordinates World Service Meeting (WSM), held every other year

## **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 4-5-9* (News and Notes from GSO).
- 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 (PI)**

- Supports local PI 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 AAWS 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 GSO Staff, receive complimentary service literature, and learn more about general service. Generally, four Regional Forums are held each year. The coordinator on this desk:

- Coordinates Regional Forums, which are regional weekend sharing events
- Sends flyers, announcements and notifications of upcoming Forums
- Assures translation services are available as needed
- Facilitates on-site Forum displays of literature and service material
- Coordinating of agenda, workshops and presentations
- Works collaboratively with each Host Committee
- Continues 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 (GSB) correspondence and legal documents
- Coordinates the GSB Quarterly Report
- Serves as a non-trustee director on the A.A. World Services Board
- Serves as assistant secretary to the GSB meeting
- A “senior” Staff member who helps train newer Staff members, facilitates weekly Staff meetings and the monthly GSO in-house Steps Traditions Concepts (1728) meeting
- Responds to invitations for staff to participate in A.A. service events

## **SERVICES PROVIDED BY GSO DEPARTMENTS OPERATIONS**

This department maintains the database of group and service position records and mailing lists, manages Fellowship Connection, and supervises annual group record updates. It provides instructions for area registrars or area trusted servants responsible for area group records. It also processes all updates of records including new group information, trusted servants and local offices.

## **FINANCE/ACCOUNTING**

This department is responsible for paying GSO's bills and managing the accounts receivable, accounts payable and contributions departments. The Finance department works with the independent auditors to prepare financial statements and reports for the Board and participates in the financial planning for the International Convention.

## **TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

The Technology Services team is responsible for the technical infrastructure (i.e., the network, servers, computers and printers) and information security, as well as supporting business applications at GSO. This team provides project management expertise and governance to technology projects for the organization.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

Contributions are processed at GSO in this department. They handle incoming contributions received by mail for all of the U.S. and Canada, as well as online and anniversary contributions received from groups and individual members.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Human Resources department manages various employment-related areas including recruiting and hiring, payroll, performance and training, as well as compensation and compliance with federal and state regulations for all employees of GSO. They also coordinate wellness programs and employee recognition events.

## **COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

Oversees the ongoing development and operation of digital platforms and initiatives — with the goal to reach members and the suffering alcoholic where they are — and to communicate effectively with other key audiences, including the professional community.

These digital platforms include:

- aa.org, our official website
- the Meeting Guide app
- social media channels, which currently include YouTube and LinkedIn
- the GSO podcast
- analytics for digital platforms

Additionally, Communication Services:

- Manages production and distribution of the *Box 4-5-9* newsletter to the Fellowship
- Coordinates mass communication distribution to the Fellowship and across digital platforms
- Collaborates with the Public Information Staff Assignment and other Staff desks on a wide range of public-facing initiatives

- Works with the General Manager on communications to the Fellowship
- Regularly collaborates with other departments to support projects and initiatives that serve the evolving needs of the Fellowship

### **MEETINGS, EVENTS AND TRAVEL SERVICES (METS)**

This team coordinates travel and accommodations for trustees, nontrustee directors, appointed committee members, staff and other personnel at GSO. This group also serves as GSO's event planners, organizing and assisting at major GSO-managed events, especially the General Service Conference, Regional Forums and the World Service Meeting.

### **LANGUAGE SERVICES**

This department handles the large number of requests for document translation and interpretation services that arise daily across all the departments of the office and the organization. These translations cover Literature and Publishing-related materials, Conference (background, reports and other documents), administration, Staff service desk coordinators, member services, archives and other departments and boards.

### **LEGAL, LICENSING AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

This department provides routine monitoring and protection of AAWS, Inc. copyrights and trademarks, meeting the steady stream of Intellectual Property requests for granting permission to reprint copyrighted material in formats ranging from print, eBook, audiobook and video in more than 111 languages across more than 100 countries. The department coordinates with local GSBs, translation committees, and local contacts, and provides administrative oversight for trademarks, logos, domain names, and potential infringement.

### **MAIL AND SHIPPING**

This department processes all incoming and outgoing mail, functions as one of A.A.'s three warehouses, and is responsible for assisting staff members in assembling packages of literature for the Fellowship. This department handles both AAWS and Grapevine/La Viña inventory.

### **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”

## **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
- Manages outsourced warehousing and shipping companies
- Conducts research and development for new publications and new formats

Publishes the following:

- GSO Quarterly Report
- 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.

## **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.

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.

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)