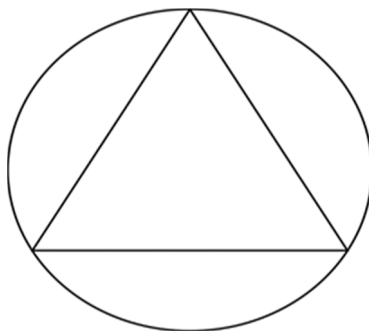


# **Southwest Ohio General Service Area 56 GSR School Workbook**

**The GSR "...may be the most important job in AA. By choosing its most qualified man or woman as GSR, a group helps secure its own future – and the future of AA as a whole."**

*-Bill W. On General Service and the GSR*



## **GSR Preamble**

**We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of AA. We realize the ultimate authority in AA is a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they may reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship. Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen to others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our groups as a whole.**

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Most general service areas follow the geographical division of a state or province. Due to the size or population, some states are divided into two or more Areas. The map below shows the 93 General Service Conference areas in the US and Canada.



From the 93 general service areas, the 93 Delegates and 25 Trustees and 15 AAWS and Grapevine and GSO staffers attend the annual General Service Conference held in New York, NY.

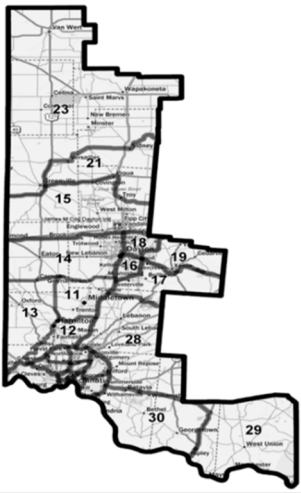
**Ohio General Service Areas**

Area 53 is Central and Southeast Ohio. Area 54 is Northeast Ohio. Area 55 is Northwest Ohio. Area 56 is Southwest Ohio. The map below shows the four general services areas in Ohio.



**Boundaries of Area 56 are detailed in the Area 56 Handbook along with details of the District boundaries.**

**The map below is of Southwest Ohio General Service Area 56.**



**Questions**

1. How many areas are there in Ohio?
2. How many districts are in our Area?
3. What is my district number?

**A.A. Group ... Where it all Begins (pamphlet P-16)**

*Tradition Four*: “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”

Concept One: “The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”

**What Trusted Servants (Officers) Do We Need?**

It takes member participation to ensure that group service work is done. Most of us agree that A.A. ought never to be “organized.”

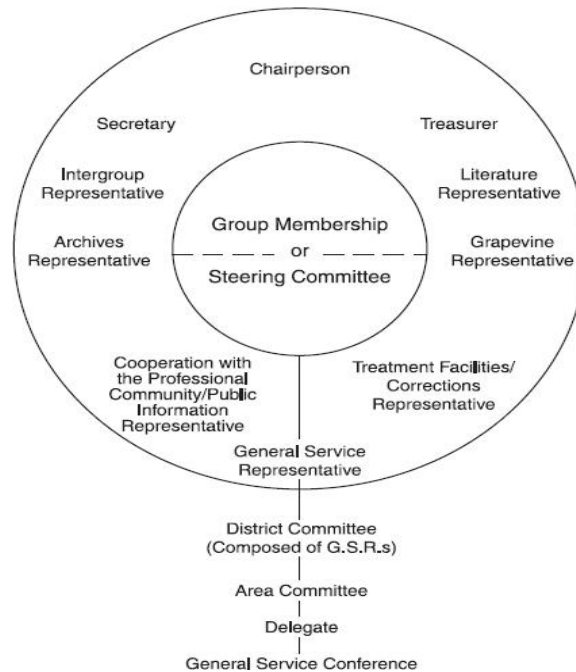
Actually, the “long form of *Tradition Nine* states, “least possible organization,” which is different than “no organization” or “chaos.”

Without endangering our commitment to preserve our spiritual and democratic Fellowship, we can “create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve” as stated in *Tradition Nine*.

In AA groups, trusted servants are sometimes called “officers” and usually are chosen by the group for a limited term or service. “Our leaders are trusted servants, they do not govern” is the second part of *Tradition Two*.

The diagram below shows the possible trusted servants that might exist in an A.A. Home Group.

### Service Structure Inside the A.A. Group



### Questions

1. What trusted servants does my home group have?
2. What additional trusted servants does my home group need?
3. Is there a difference between a meeting and a group?
4. What is the "principle of rotation" and why is it important?

## Is Your Group Linked to A.A. as a Whole?

Most groups in the United States and Canada choose to be linked to A.A. as a whole by listing the group with the General Service Office (G.S.O.), as well as with the Area's Assembly, District and local central/Intergroup office.

Groups listed with GSO have either General Service Representatives (G.S.R.'s), or "group contacts," who act as channels for two-way information and shared experience. Once a group is listed with GSO, the group information is shared with the Area Assembly via the delegate. Group information may be first received by the Area, which then shares the information the GSO. What's the point? Each group linked to local general service structure is automatically a part of the "group conscience" of AA in Canada and the U.S. through their GSR's participation in district meetings and Area Assembly. Each GSR communicates his or her group's "conscience: on important matters of policy considered by the district and Area Assembly. During the Annual General Service Conference, the Area's groups are represented by the elected delegate. Groups in our listings are included in the *confidential* domestic directories (2) published annually, which provide contact information for traveling AA members.

New groups listed with the General Service Office are assigned an identifying service number (ID), receive a "Group Handbook" (through their GSR or group contact), and are included in mailings sent to all listed AA groups.

For instance, groups receive our bimonthly newsletter *Box 4-5-9* that keeps them informed on policies being considered by the Conference, change to AA literature, and when and where their Regional Forum will be held (Forums are weekend gatherings where current experience is shared). Additionally, GSR's or group contacts for listed groups receive registration details for each International Convention, held every five (5) years.

How to participate in services provided by GSO to AA groups: It is vital to furnish simple information to GSO through the *Alcoholics Anonymous New Group Form*. To notify GSO when group information changes, i.e. the group contact or GSR moves or resigns, and a new GSR or contact is elected; or, when there is a change in the group's location or meetings day(s) and time, please use the *Alcoholics Anonymous Group Information Change Form*. Group changes should also be given to the Area Registrar/Secretary, and to the District Committee Member (DCM).

A New Group: When a new group forms, the members usually take time to decide on the name of the new group, elect trusted servants, plan the time and format of the meeting(s) and obtain AA literature from the nearby central/Intergroup office.

Your District: Regardless of how new group information is received; the DCM will make contact and welcome the group to "general service."

Whether a group is "new" or has existed for years, the DCM is the primary contact through the GSR or group contact. Group representatives attend district meetings where they are kept up-to-date on AA activities and topics of interest. GSR's attending district meetings are an excellent resource for addressing group problems and concerns. In matters affecting AA as a whole, a group's "conscience" is communicated to the Area Assembly by their GSR.

If you do not know how to contact your group's DCM, ask the Area 56 Registrar or the Group Services Chairperson. (SMF-104)

### **Benefits of your Group being listed and "Linked to AA as a Whole":**

- Your Group is listed in Eastern US Directory and becomes part of the group conscience of AA in the US/Canada
- Your Group has a voice in AA as a whole
- Being connected to thousands of groups across your Area and the country
- Never be bored again, there is always something happening
- Get the benefit of shared experience, strength and hope from others in service to the AA Fellowship
- Receive Box 459 every other month from GSO

**Purpose of Area 56 GSR School** is to assist Group GSRs in becoming comfortable and effective in service to their home groups by learning how to:

- Keep your group information up to date
- Give reports at your home group and area assemblies
- Participate at district meetings and area assemblies
- Who to contact for answers to any service questions
- Use AA literature as an effective tool
- Share suggestions and concerns at your home group and at service meetings
- Area 56 holds GSR school prior to Area Assemblies to learn from and share general service experiences

**Materials used in Area 56 GSR School** (AAWS is Alcoholics Anonymous Word Services):

- Area 56 GSR School Workbook
- Area 56 Handbook
- Alcoholics Anonymous Group Information Change Form
- AAWS pamphlet - *General Service Representative* {P-19}
- AAWS pamphlet - *Your District Committee Member* (P-12)
- AAWS pamphlet- *Circles of Love and Service* (P-45)

**What does the GSR do?**

- Guardian of the Traditions – knows where to find answers.
- Gives regular reports to the group regarding your District, Area 56 and GSO in NY.
- Shares information from GSO, such as Box 459, literature price lists, etc.
- Explains issues to be voted on, and find out how the group wants you to vote on matters of importance to all of AA.
- Is the group contact for the area committee and GSO for AA directories, etc.
- Insures your group is offering all the sobriety tools available, including conference-approved pamphlets and books.
- Seventh Tradition – works with your group treasurer to develop contribution plans.
- Is familiar with The AA Service Manual (BM-31), Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Twelve concepts, Circles of Love and Service P-45, The AA Group (P-16) pamphlet.
- Supplies the DCM and Area 56 Registrar with up to date group information.
- Writes down questions and comments from group members and brings that information to District Meetings and Area Assembly meetings

**QUESTIONS:**

- Where and how do I as a GSR get and share up to date information?
- Where do I find a copy of the Group Change form and who do I submit it to?
- What happens if I mail this form to GSO in New York?
- What information is listed in the A.A. "Directory?"
- How do I find out when and where Area and my District meetings are held?

**Suggestions for GSR Participation at District Meeting (District Meetings are held monthly)**

- Bring up for discussion issues or concerns from your group.
- Give group contributions to district treasurer and get a receipt.
- Participate in planning district meetings.
- Host district meetings.
- Take information back to your group – nobody else will.
- Bring a notebook and a planning calendar.
- Bring Group Change form.
- Know what your DCM's responsibilities are.

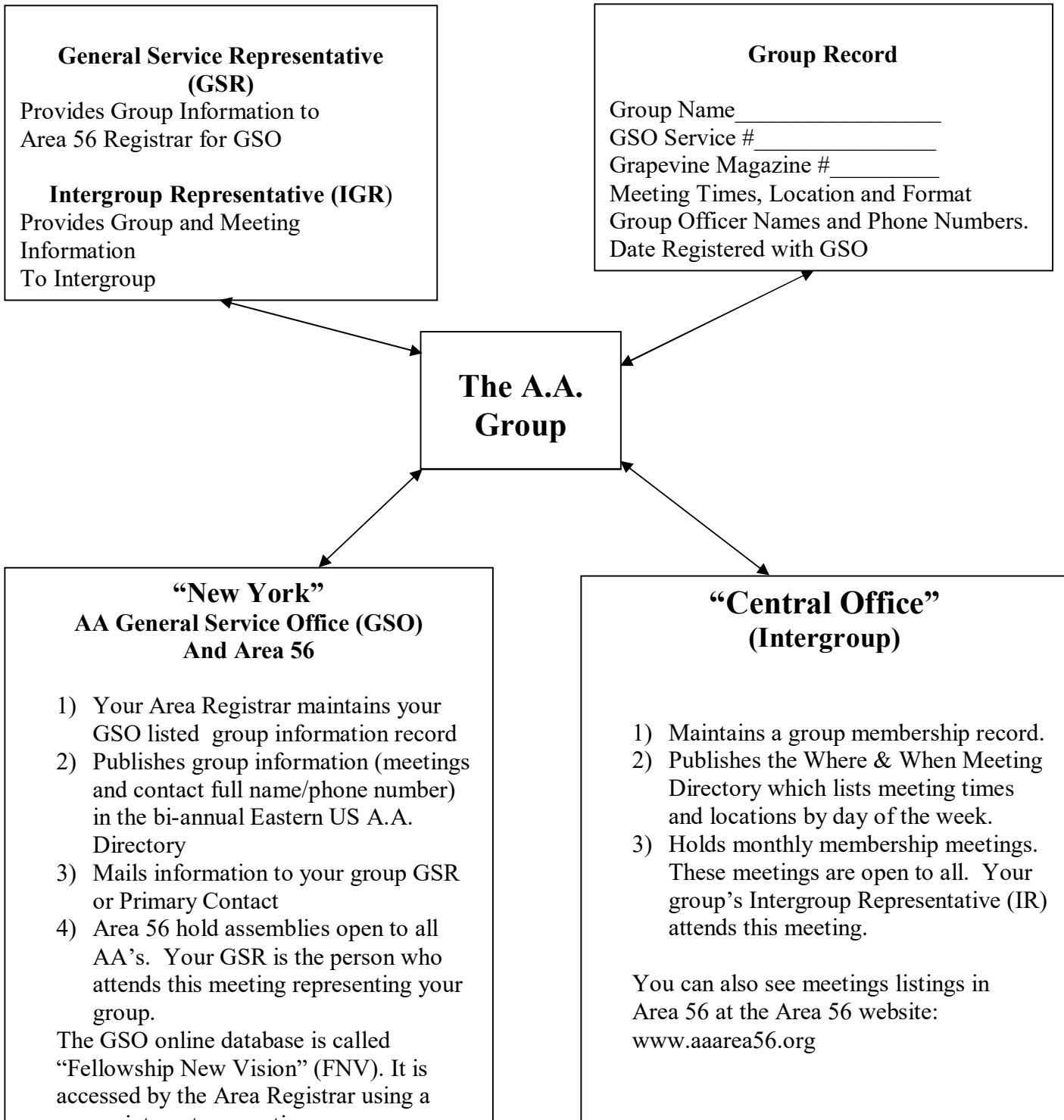


- Call DCM to put items on agenda for district meetings.

**Suggestions for GSR at Area Assemblies (Area Assemblies are held three times a year)**

- Update Group information with Area 56 Registrar.
- Vote on issues affecting A.A. and who has a Vote
- Elect area officers.
- Obtain event flyers, Area 56 Treasurer Reports, and Area 56 Minutes.
- Bring notebook and calendar so that correct information and dates of future events gets back to your group.
- Bring group conscience to assemblies.
- Understand the Right of Decision, Right of Participation and Right of Appeal (*P-8 The Twelve Concepts for World Service*)

**GROUP RECORD KEEPING**



**General Service Representative (GSR)**  
 Provides Group Information to Area 56 Registrar for GSO

**Intergroup Representative (IGR)**  
 Provides Group and Meeting Information To Intergroup

**Group Record**

Group Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 GSO Service # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grapevine Magazine # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting Times, Location and Format  
 Group Officer Names and Phone Numbers.  
 Date Registered with GSO

**The A.A. Group**

**“New York” AA General Service Office (GSO) And Area 56**

- 1) Your Area Registrar maintains your GSO listed group information record
- 2) Publishes group information (meetings and contact full name/phone number) in the bi-annual Eastern US A.A. Directory
- 3) Mails information to your group GSR or Primary Contact
- 4) Area 56 hold assemblies open to all AA’s. Your GSR is the person who attends this meeting representing your group.

The GSO online database is called “Fellowship New Vision” (FNV). It is accessed by the Area Registrar using a

**“Central Office” (Intergroup)**

- 1) Maintains a group membership record.
- 2) Publishes the Where & When Meeting Directory which lists meeting times and locations by day of the week.
- 3) Holds monthly membership meetings. These meetings are open to all. Your group’s Intergroup Representative (IR) attends this meeting.

You can also see meetings listings in Area 56 at the Area 56 website:  
[www.aaarea56.org](http://www.aaarea56.org)

## Questions I want to get answered:

- **What I will share at my next Home Group meeting:**  
An example: The Grapevine Magazine needs groups and individuals to subscribe.
- **What is an Informed Group Conscience? How does a group form a group conscience?**

**Tradition Two:** “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.” P-16, p34

“Not always understood, group conscience as expressed in Tradition Two is a powerful spiritual concept that makes it possible for people of diverse backgrounds and temperament to rise above personal ambition and unite in a common purpose; to stay sober and extend the hand of A.A. to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

“Box 459” – Vol. 35, No. 1 February/March 1989

## **There are two ways for a group to form an informed group conscience:**

- 1) The competitive way permits the person with the loudest voice to push his ideas across, take a vote and come up with a ‘majority’ decision. This is not an informed group conscience.
- 2) In the cooperative way, group members come together in mutual trust to arrive at a group decision, not one individual’s personal triumph.
  - Substantial unanimity: “... is achieved by the group members through sharing of full information, individual points of view and the practice of A.A. principles.” P-16, pg. 28
  - The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.
  - This reminds us that Concept One states “The final responsibility for A.A. World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.” BM-31, pg. 6. No one person or group should make our decisions for us, no matter how persuasive they may be.

## **Suggested Steps to Achieving an Informed Group Conscience**

- 1) **GATHER KNOWLEDGE:** The GSR or other chairperson of the group informs himself/herself about the topic to be discussed. Then:
- 2) **PRESENT TOPIC/ISSUE:** Present the information on the topic to the home group. Give enough background material so all participants are informed on both sides of the topic. The GSR/Chairperson should be as unbiased as possible about the topic.
- 3) **SHARING:** Ask each member to share in turn, being sure to allow all to share once before anyone shares a second time. Remember, this is not a general discussion meeting. It is a method of arriving at unanimity on a specific subject. Remember to carefully listen to any minority opinions.
- 4) **CONCENSUS:** Continue the process until substantial group unanimity is achieved. This is usually considered 2/3 of the participants. More than one sharing session may be needed. Remember, you are striving for a group conscience, not a “popular vote.” Be patient and practice A.A. principles as the process continues.
- 5) **RECAP:** Once a group conscience is achieved, present a summary of the conscience to the group as a whole including minority opinion. The group conscience and any minority opinion is then passed on to the appropriate person(s), be it the Delegate, Area Committee, or District.

## **My Plan of Actions**

As you grow in your GSR responsibility, your scope of the Fellowship will broaden, you will make many friends, and your sense of gratitude will deepen. While all this might be new and confusing, stay with us and give us the opportunity to help you understand. You might be surprised to find that you will enjoy general service and feel that you are truly a part of the whole. It is an important and different kind of Twelfth-Step work.

### **Things I want to get my hands on:**

- GSR Kit from GSO – this will be mailed to you
- The AA Service Manual – included in the GSR Kit from GSO
- Area 56 Service Handbook which contains Area Guidelines
- Group Service Representative Handbook
- Group Contribution envelopes for GSO contributions and Self Support pamphlet- Where money and Spirituality Mix (F-3)

### **People I want to meet as soon as possible:**

- My Area Delegate
- My Area Chairperson
- My Area Registrar
- My District Committee Member

### **Meetings I will attend in the next 3 months:**

- District meeting
- Area assembly
- A service committee meeting

### **Websites I want to visit:**

Area 56 website ([www.aaarea56.org](http://www.aaarea56.org))

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

Cincinnati website ([www.aacincinnati.org](http://www.aacincinnati.org))

Dayton website ([www.aadaytononline.org](http://www.aadaytononline.org))

District 11 website ([www.aad11a56.org](http://www.aad11a56.org))

District 12/13 website ([www.aadistrict12and13.org](http://www.aadistrict12and13.org))

District 23 website ([www.aaohio-triarea.org](http://www.aaohio-triarea.org))

District 28 website ([www.aad28a56.org](http://www.aad28a56.org))

**SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS TO AA SERVICE ENTITIES:**  
(From the pamphlet "Self-support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix". Pg. 12)

If you have **no** Intergroup/Central Office, distribution of funds for three (3) service entities:

- 40% to district
- 30% to Area 56
- 30% to GSO

If you **do have** an Intergroup / Central Office, distribution of funds for four (4) service entities:

- 10% to district
- 10% to Area 56
- 30% to GSO
- 50% to Intergroup or Central Office

**WHERE TO SEND GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS:**

When sending contributions: *never send cash*. On the check or money order list the Group name, GSO assigned ID number, your name, your address, and a daytime phone number. If sending a check there may be a wait for the AAWS processing time and for the check to clear the bank or institution.

Credit card contributions are accepted online by AAWS by going to [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) VISA or MASTERCARD are accepted, as well as your mailed in **contributions to GSO at the address below**.

Addresses:

- DISTRICT 11, PO Box 1726, Middletown, OH 45044
- DISTRICTS 12 & 13, PO Box 1163, Hamilton, OH 45012
- DISTRICT 21, PO Box 925, Troy, OH 45373
- DISTRICT 23, PO Box 64, Celina, OH 45822-0064
- DISTRICT 28, PO Box 426, Loveland, OH 45140-9998
- SOUTHWEST OHIO AREA 56, PO Box 684, Dayton, OH 45401-0684
- GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE, Grand Central Station, PO Box 459, New York, NY 10163
- CINCINNATI CENTRAL OFFICE, 2245 Gilbert Ave Suite 304, Cincinnati, OH 45206
- DAYTON CENTRAL OFFICE, 120 W Second St., Suite 211, Dayton, OH 45402

When sending contributions to AA service entities please include an email address to which an acknowledgement of receipt may be sent. By furnishing an Email address reduces handling and postage costs. If no email address is provided both Area 56 and AAWS (GSO) send thank you letters to acknowledge contributions. Your group can see a record of contributions to GSO on the "Delegates Quarterly List of Contributions to GSO" which is broken down by district and group number. Area 56 lists contributions quarterly and annually by group ID number order on the Area Treasurer's records. The treasurer's records are available at each Area 56 Assembly. Each Intergroup lists group contributions each month in their respective newsletters.

## How to Order AA Conference Approved Literature

The fastest and most simple means of purchasing literature for your group or district is to buy from one of the Intergroup Central Offices. AAWS prefers this method for small quantities as it enables AAWS to concentrate on large bulk orders. This, in turn, helps hold down costs to the entire fellowship. Occasionally, an item may be out of stock at the Central Office. This may make ordering from AAWS necessary. When ordering from AAWS please remember that stock is consumed in the order printed. Revised editions are sent after the previous stock is depleted.

### Intergroup Central Office Locations

- Cincinnati Intergroup  
2245 Gilbert Ave Suite 304,  
Cincinnati OH 45206  
(513) 351-0422
- Dayton Intergroup 211 Hulman Building  
120 W. Second Street  
Dayton, Ohio 45402  
(937) 222-2211

### AA World Services

The fastest way to order from AAWS is at <https://b2c.aaws.org/> either using a credit card or debit card.

- A.A. World Services, Inc.  
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163  
Website: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) • Email: [orders@aa.org](mailto:orders@aa.org) • Telephone: (212) 870-3400

In all cases always have your Group ID number available when ordering from AAWS. If using a check to pay for the order there may be a lengthy wait for that check to be processed at AAWS and cleared by your bank or institution.

- P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

Or call:

- (212) 870-3312 Phone
- (800) 437-3584 Fax

For FAQs: <https://b2c.aaws.org/>

## Brief Parliamentary Procedure Guide

When recognized by the Area Chairperson:

- While standing at the microphone; state your name, your service title and the name of the group you represent.
- Speak as clearly and as briefly as possible. Your remarks must be pertinent to the business at hand or items you wish to bring to the floor.
- The chairperson is not required to recognize a frivolous motion.

You want to:	You say:	Second Required?	Debatable?	Vote
Adjourn	I move we adjourn	Yes	No	Majority
Table a matter	I move we table this matter	Yes	No	Majority
Have further study of a matter	I move we refer this to a committee	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended to read...	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce a matter of business	I move that ...	Yes	Yes	Majority
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move we take from the table ...	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider an item already disposed of (Maker must have been on the prevailing side on the original motion)	I move we reconsider the vote on our action relative to ...	Yes	Yes, if original motion was debatable	Majority
Delay action indefinitely	I move to postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider an item out of its scheduled order	I move we suspend the rules and consider ...	Yes	No	2/3
End discussion or debate of a matter	I move the previous question ...	Yes	No	2/3
Register a complaint, Object to procedure	Point of privilege, Point of order	No	No	No Vote – Chair Decides
Request information	Point of information	No	No	No Vote

### The Minority Opinion

In Alcoholics Anonymous, once a vote has been taken on a motion, the minority parties ALWAYS have the opportunity to speak from the floor. If someone in the majority (the winning side) would like to change their vote after the minority has spoken, it becomes a motion to reconsider which needs to have a second. It is then open to further discussion (if the original motion was open to discussion) before a new vote on the original motion is taken. It is not amendable and requires the same type of vote (majority or 2/3s) as the original motion.

## Questions

1. At what meetings are parliamentary procedures used?
2. What is the difference between a majority vote and a “2/3” vote?
3. Why are “minority opinions” important?
4. When is “substantial unanimity” important?

## Small Glossary

**AAWS.** Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., one of the two operating corporations of the General Service Board; oversees the operations of the General Service Office and serves as the publishing company for conference-approved and service literature.

**Area.** An area is a geographical division within a state or province. A Delegate to the General Service Conference is elected from an area assembly. Normally there is one area to a state or province, except in heavily AA-populated places, where there may be two, three, or more areas in a state or province. Some areas include portions of more than one state or province. Ohio is comprised of four Areas: Area 53, Area 54, Area 55 and Area 56.

**Conference-approved literature, videos, and films.** Pamphlets, books, videos, and films, produced under the auspices of various Conference committees that have reviewed and recommended to the Conference for its approval, and which have been approved by the Conference.

**District Committee Member (DCM).** Also known as a District Chair. An experienced GSR elected by other GSRs to represent the groups of their district in DCM committee meetings and to coordinate service activities in the district.

**Delegate.** The man or woman elected every other year to represent the area at the annual Conference meeting in New York and to bring back the results of that meeting to the area.

**District.** A division within the Area, represented by GSRs and District Committee Members: Area 56 in Southwest Ohio currently has 30 districts.

**General Service Conference.** The annual meetings of Conference Delegates, Trustees and General Service Office staff each April in New York. The General Service Conference is a method by which AA’s collective group conscience can be heard.

**Grapevine.** The A.A. Grapevine, the international monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. The AA Grapevine, Inc. is one of the two operating corporations of the General Service Board and is responsible for Grapevine operations and finances.

**General Service Office (GSO).** The entity which provides services to groups in the U.S. and Canada and publishes A.A. literature.

**Region.** A group of states from which a regional Trustee is chosen. Area 56 is in the East-Central Region. It consists of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

**Trustee.** A member of the General Service Board. Of the 21 Trustees, 14 are alcoholic (Class B), and seven are non-alcoholic (Class A).

Handbook revised 5/15/2010, 10/17/2010, 03/20/2011, 02/01/2012, 11/20/2016