

## **The General Service Office**

"...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*, page S73

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

Staff members on assignments help with group problems by sharing accumulated A.A. experience through extensive correspondence, phone calls, the A.A. Web site and by traveling, upon invitation, to A.A. events, and in keeping with Conference Advisory Actions will refer local matters to area delegates. Most staff members are assigned to handle correspondence from a specific geographic area. Equal services are provided in Spanish and French, whenever possible.

#### **Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.)**

- Supervises and provides the following:
  - Welcome letter to newly listed Area C.P.C. Committee Chairs; C.P.C. Kit to Area C.P.C. Chairs; C.P.C. Workbooks to District/Other Chairs.
  - C.P.C. Literature Discount Package Order Form and C.P.C.-related service material.
- Coordinates the following:
  - A.A. exhibit at national conferences for professionals; refers local conference invitations to local committees.
  - *About A.A.* bulletin for professionals.
  - Every three years, hosts the Annual Day of Sharing with Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters and National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (N.C.A.D.D.).
  - Works closely with Publications Department and corresponding trustees' committee, coordinates literature and videos that fall under the purview of this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference-approved literature.
- Provides periodic mailings (activity update reports) about 3-4 times a year to C.P.C. chairs.
- Responds to requests from C.P.C. committees for shared experience.
- Meets monthly with medical students of Cornell University Medical Center who visit G.S.O., and provides information about A.A.
- As liaison representative, attends national meetings of the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (N.I.A.A.A.) and Recovery Month planning meetings.
- Provides A.A. information in response to inquiries from professionals, and refers to local committees whenever appropriate.
- As secretary to trustees' and General Service Conference Committees on C.P.C., prepares agenda, background and minutes/report; sends highlights of trustees' committee following each board meeting to General Service Conference committee.

- Maintains assignment documentation/history on C.P.C.
- Liaison to other Twelve Step Fellowships, such as Al-Anon, N.A., O.A., G.A., etc.
- Contact point for 'special international contacts,' such as International Pilots & Aviation Industry Professionals ("Birds of a Feather"), International Doctors in A.A., International Lawyers in A.A., I.C.Y.P.A.A., etc.

### Corrections

- Supervises and provides the following:
  - Welcome letter to newly listed Area/District/Other Corrections/H&I/BTG Committee Chairs; Corrections Kit to Area Corrections Chairs; Corrections Workbook to District/Other Chairs.
  - Corrections Literature Discount Package Order Form and Corrections-related service material.
  - Distributes the video "Carrying the Message Behind These Walls."
- Provides periodic mailings (activity update reports) about 3-4 times a year to Corrections/H&I/BTG chairs.
- Responds to requests from Corrections committees for shared experience and contacts.
- Coordinates the following:
  - Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) for members in correctional facilities.
  - Forwards prerelease contact requests to local corrections committees.
  - Quarterly *Sharing From Behind the Walls* publication for inmates.
  - Every other year, sends informational letter to wardens and corrections professionals in U.S./Canada.
  - Working closely with Publications Department and corresponding trustees' committee, coordinates literature and videos that fall under the purview of this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference-approved literature.
- Responds to letters from inmates.
- Communicates the need for outside C.C.S. letter writers.
- Provides limited complimentary A.A. literature to inmates, upon request.
- Provides A.A. information in response to inquiries from corrections professionals, and refers to local committees, whenever appropriate.
- As secretary to the trustees' and General Service Conference Committees on Corrections, prepares agenda, background and minutes/report; sends highlights of trustees' committee following each board meeting to the General Service Conference Committee.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on Corrections.

### Public Information (P.I.)

- Supervises and provides the following:
  - Welcome letter to newly listed Area/District/Other P.I. Committee Chairs; P.I. Kit to Area P.I. Chairs; P.I. Workbook to District/Other Chairs.
  - P.I. Literature Discount Packages Order Form and P.I.-related service material.
- Coordinates the following:
  - Annual Anonymity Letter to Media.
  - Triennial A.A. Membership Survey.

- Press Releases and Public Service Announcements for TV and Radio.
- P.I. activities at International Convention.
- Works closely with Publications Department and corresponding trustees' committee, coordinates literature and P.S.A.s (Public Service Announcements) that fall under the purview of this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference-approved literature.
- Responds to requests from P.I. committees for shared experience.
- Provides P.S.A. distribution lists to area P.I. committees.
- Refers invitations for A.A. informational presentations at schools/educational institutions to local committees.
- Refers invitations to local health/community fairs to local P.I. committees and provides limited quantities of A.A. literature for this purpose and upon request.
- Provides periodic mailings (activity update reports) about 3-4 times a year to P.I. chairs.
- Provides accurate and consistent information about A.A. in response to inquiries from media/researchers/students and refers to local committees whenever appropriate.
- Forwards anonymity breaks at the level of public media to area delegates; clarifies misinformation about A.A. in print whenever appropriate and on a case-by-base basis.
- As secretary to the trustees' and General Service Conference Committees on P.I., prepares agenda, background, minutes/report; sends highlights of trustees' committee following each board meeting to the General Service Conference Committee.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on P.I.

#### Treatment Facilities (T.F.)/Loners/Internationalists/Remote Communities

- Supervises and provides the following:
  - Welcome letter to newly listed Area/District/Other T.F. Committee Chairs; T.F. Kit to Area T.F. Chairs; T.F. Workbook to District/Other Chairs.
  - T.F. Literature Discount Package Order Form and T.F. related service material.
  - Distributes the video "Hope."
  - Working closely with Publications Department and corresponding trustees' committee, coordinates literature and videos that fall under the purview of this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference-approved literature.
- Provides periodic mailings (activity update reports) about 3-4 times a year to T.F./H&I/BTG chairs.
- Responds to requests from T.F./H&I/BTG committees for shared experience and contacts.
- Responds to letters from clients or patients in treatment centers and refers to local committees whenever appropriate.
- Responds to inquiries from treatment professionals, provides A.A. information and literature, and refers to local committee whenever appropriate.
- As secretary to the trustees' and General Service Conference Committees on Treatment Facilities, prepares agenda, background, minutes/report; sends highlights of trustees' committee following each board meeting to General Service Conference Committee.

- Coordinates the following for Loners/Internationalists:
  - Bimonthly *Loners-Internationalist Meeting (LIM)* bulletin (a meeting-by-mail).
  - Provides complimentary literature, including the Loners/Internationalists/Homers Directory and *Box 4-5-9* subscription.
- Responds to letters from Loners/Internationalists/Homers/Port Contacts/Loner Sponsors; provides contact information for members in military upon request.
- Provides shared experience on working with remote communities.
- Provides assistance to the chairs of the pre-Conference Remote Communities Meeting and sets up meeting prior to the General Service Conference (GSC).
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on T.F./Loner/Remote Communities.

### Literature

- Supervises and provides the following:
  - Welcome letter and informational packet on A.A. literature for newly listed Area/District/Other Literature Committee Chairs.
- Coordinates the following:
  - Recovery Conference-approved A.A. Literature.
  - Bimonthly *Box 4-5-9* publication for the Fellowship.
  - A.A. literature display package for conventions/conference/roundups.
  - Works closely with Publications Department and corresponding trustees' committee, coordinates recovery literature that falls under the purview of this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference-approved literature.
- Provides periodic mailings (activity update reports) about two times a year to Literature chairs.
- As secretary to the trustees' and GSC Committees on Literature, prepares agenda, background and minutes/report; sends highlights of trustees' committee following each board meeting to GSC Committee.
- Responds to requests from Literature committees for shared experience.
- Responds to inquiries about A.A. Conference-approved literature when appropriate.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on Literature.

### Group Services

- Supervises and provides the following:
  - D.C.M. and G.S.R. kits for newly listed D.C.M. and G.S.R.s
  - A.A. Group Handbook for newly listed groups.
  - Information/literature packages for starting new groups.
  - Service Material (SM) and SM lists, upon request.
  - New Group Forms; Change of Group Information Forms; new Central/Intergroup Office Forms.
- As member of Intergroup/Central Office Seminar Policy Committee and liaison to local offices, participates at the Annual Central/Intergroup Seminar; provides quarterly mailings (activity update reports) to Central/Intergroup Offices.
- Responds to requests from local offices for shared experience and from local Web site committees.
- As secretary to General Service Conference Committee on Report and Charter, prepares agenda, background and minutes/report.

- Coordinates G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site; A.A. Directories and Central/Intergroup lists; supervises revisions and updates to *The A.A. Service Manual* and A.A. Guidelines.
- Distributes circulating folder of local office bulletins/newsletters for staff review.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on Web site, Central/Intergroup Office, Report and Charter, Service Material and Web site.

#### Conference:

- Coordinates the annual General Service Conference (GSC) including G.S.O. Conference Planning Meetings and Delegate Chairpersons Orientation in January.
- Supervises the following material for Conference members:
  - GSC Communications Kit and Conference-related documents, forms, etc.
  - GSC Manual.
  - GSC Final Report.
  - GSC Informational Mailings/Communications.
  - GSC Background Material, CD and Hardcopy.
  - Early-Bird Box 4-5-9 and Conference issue.
  - Advisory Actions and Additional Committee Consideration Lists.
- Seeks suggestions from areas for GSC theme, presentation and workshop topics and agenda items.
- Responds to requests from area delegates for shared experience and Conference-related inquiries where appropriate.
- Distributes circulating folder of area and district bulletins/newsletters for staff review.
- As secretary to the trustees' GSC Committee and Conference Agenda Committee, prepares agenda, background, and minutes/report; sends highlights of trustees' committee following each board meeting to GSC Committee.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on General Service Conference.

#### Regional Forums

- Coordinates Regional Forum that includes:
  - Negotiating Hotel Contract (costs, rooms, set-up, equipment, personnel, etc.).
  - Scheduling participants.
  - Working with Host Committee.
  - Mass mailing to all groups and trusted servants in region.
  - Translations as needed.
- Supervises the following material for Forums:
  - Registration Forms/Flyers.
  - Early-Bird Forum Newsletter.
  - Agenda and Program.
  - Evaluation Forms and Summary.
  - Final Report.
  - Translation Equipment as needed.
  - Forum-related Service Material.
  - On-site Forum Displays.
  - On-site A.A. Conference-approved Literature and Service Material.
  - Forum information for G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site.

- Responds to Forum-related inquiries.
- As co-secretary to the trustees' and General Service Conference International Convention/Regional Forums Committees, prepares agenda, background, and minutes/report.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on Regional Forums.

### International

- Responds to inquiries from members, groups, committees outside U.S./Canada; refers to country 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; refers to nearest G.S.O. when appropriate.
- Responds to inquiries from professionals overseas where no service office exists.
- Upon request, provides contacts for members relocating/traveling overseas.
- Supervises the International Directory.
- Provides A.A. literature upon request where no local offices exist and there are limited resources.
- Maintains communication with country G.S.O.'s/Service Offices and responds to requests for shared experience.
- Coordinates the World Service Meeting (WSM) held every other year including G.S.O. planning meetings.
- Supervises the following material for WSM members:
  - WSM Informational Mailings/Communications.
  - WSM Manual.
  - WSM Final Report.
- Provides pertinent information on translations of A.A. literature and assists with new translations by providing copyright/reprint guidelines.
- Upon invitation, travels overseas to service events, conventions, zonal meetings, etc.; meets with professionals as arranged by local A.A.s.
- Distributes circulating folder of country G.S.O. bulletins/newsletters for staff review.
- As secretary to the trustees' International Committee, prepares agenda, background, and minutes/report.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on International.

### International Convention

- Coordinates programming, finances, and Convention facilities.
- Provides Convention information through mailings, Box 4-5-9, G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site and AA Grapevine.
- Works with local A.A. committee to provide Host Committee for this event.
- As co-secretary to the trustees' and GSC International Convention/Regional Forums Committees, prepares agenda, background, and minutes/report.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on International Convention.

### Nominating/Special Needs

- Provides information on board vacancies that includes announcements, resume forms, guidelines and procedure information.
- As secretary to the trustees' Nominating Committee and GSC Committee on Trustees, prepares agenda, background, and minutes/report.

- Supervises and provides the following:
  - Welcome letters and Special Needs packet to newly listed Area/District/Other Special Needs Committee Chairs; provides Special Needs Packet.
- Coordinates Special Needs-related service material.
- Responds to inquiries pertaining to special needs from members, groups, committees and provides shared experience.
- Provides special needs formatted literature when appropriate.
- Responds to inquires from professionals working with special needs population.
- Communicates with alcoholics with special needs regarding suitability of current literature formats.
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on Nominating and Special Needs.

### Archives

- 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.
- Supervises and provides the following:
  - Archives Workbook.
  - Archives Guidelines.
  - "The A.A. Archives" pamphlet.
  - Distributes video "Markings on the Journey."
- 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 and wallet cards; and other give-a-ways.
- Maintains and updates content for the Archives portal on Web site.
- 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.
- Writes and distributes *Markings*, the Archives newsletter.
- Collects copies of all materials printed or produced by AAWS and the Grapevine, as well as copies of all board minutes, committee reports, and other significant permanent records.
- Preserves all historical and current permanent records of AAWS and the 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.

- As secretary to the trustees' and GSC Committees on Archives, prepares agenda, background and minutes/report; sends highlights of trustees' committee following each board meeting to GSC Committee.

#### Finance/Contributions

- Receives and acknowledges all contributions from A.A. groups and members.
- Provides self-support packets upon request and supervises service material such as group contribution envelopes and birthday envelopes.
- Responds to all inquiries pertaining to group contribution records, account balances, and A.A. finances where appropriate.
- Sets up and supervises annual budgets and in general maintain accurate financial records.
- Chief Financial Officer (C.F.O.): As secretary to the A.A.W.S. Finance committee, trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee and GSC Committee on Finance, prepares agenda, background, minutes and reports.
- Handles reprint requests for A.A. copyrighted material.
- Responds to inquiries pertaining to bequests.

#### Records

- Maintains data base of group and service position records, which includes mailing lists.
- Supervises annual Group Records update.
- Provides FNV (Fellowship New Vision) program and instructions for area registrars or area trusted servant responsible for area group records.
- Processes all updates to records including new group information, trusted servants, etc.

#### Publications

- Edits, designs and publishes all A.A. Conference-approved literature, video, audio and special needs items in three languages: English, Spanish and French.
- Creates catalogs and order forms.
- Maintains Inventory control.
- Processes all literature orders.
- Handles 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.
- 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.*
  - *Markings.*
  - *About A.A.*
  - *Sharing From Behind the Walls.*
  - *Loners and International Members (LIM) newsletter.*
  - *International Convention souvenirs.*

- Sends publication updates to local offices, Conference members on new literature, pricing changes, etc.
- Manages day-to-day Web site upkeep and design.
- Publications Director and Managing Editor Act as editorial and publishing consultants to the Trustees and Conference Literature Committees.
- Publications Director acts as publishing consultant to the A.A.W.S. Board of Directors; provides Publications Reports to A.A.W.S.

Other

- Gives office tours, upon request, to visitors.
- Provides visitor welcome packets.
- Provides informational packets containing some A.A. literature in response to general inquiries for general information about A.A.
- Sets up annual visit/tour for GSC delegate visitors and guests during Conference week.
- Sets up large group visits and provides welcome/presentation meeting with refreshments (Coffee, etc.).
- Provides local A.A. office information to anyone looking for A.A. meetings; provides group contact information to A.A. members where no local office exists for Twelfth Step purposes and when appropriate.
- Arranges board meetings, housing and meal forms, mailings for the quarterly meetings, minutes, dashboard, etc.
- Provides services to the AA Grapevine Office.