

YOUR A.A. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

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Alcoholics Anonymous
World Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 459
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New York, NY 10163

www.aa.org

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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.

How G.S.O. Began

In the late 1930s, a small office in Newark, N.J., 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 G.S.O. was located at 468 Park Avenue South.

G.S.O. Today

In 1992, G.S.O. moved to 475 Riverside Drive, where both A.A. World Services and Grapevine personnel are housed on two floors. For the present membership of over two million, an all-A.A. staff offers the services outlined in this folder. A.A. and non-A.A. employees handle finances; type 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 G.S.O.

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 G.S.O. service born in 1973. Its projects include: digitizing long-accumulated records; retaping valuable tapes; collecting oral history tapes from early members; gathering local material from individuals and groups; 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 G.S.O. Translations of A.A. literature are also available here. The staff member on the literature assignment serves as secretary of the trustees’ and Conference Literature Committees (as other staff members do on the committees appropriate to their jobs).

Loners and Internationalists

No meetings nearby? An A.A. in that situation may ask to be listed at G.S.O. as a Lone Member. Letters arrive from fellow Loners and other A.A.s (often listed as Loner Sponsors). If the lonesome A.A. is a seafarer, the A.A. Internationalists extend a welcome via G.S.O. *Loners-Internationalists Meeting*, an A.A. meeting by mail for those who cannot attend regular meetings, is prepared by G.S.O. 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 a network TV or radio program or in a national publication, chances are that G.S.O. helped to supply information. The staff member on the P.I. desk provides A.A. facts for the media, answers thousands of inquiries yearly from the general public, and is in touch with local P.I. committees and contacts. From G.S.O., they can order aids like the P.I. Kit and Workbook, Guidelines, and TV or radio spots.

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., G.S.O. prepares information (such as the newsletter for professionals, *About A.A.*) and, on their request, sends the Professional Exhibit to their national conferences. This G.S.O. desk is also an information exchange point for the increasing number of local C.P.C. committees.

Corrections

This assignment extends the hand of A.A. to those who are unable to walk to a meeting, 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 G.S.O.” Because thousands of other groups or members did, queries can be answered with A.A. shared experience. All staff members handle general correspondence from specific areas—rotating to others regularly, just as they do in their service assignments (which also involve correspondence). All U.S./Canada correspondence in Spanish or French, no matter what the assignment, is translated into English and then answered in Spanish or French.

Group Services

Useful ideas and information are relayed in service material such as the A.A. Directories, the Guidelines, tapes, films, the Group Handbook, and *Box 4-5-9*, the bimonthly 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, G.S.O. has become “the senior service center” among many in worldwide A.A. This “oldtimer” office maintains contact with other general service offices and literature distribution centers, no matter where or in what language. The World Service Meeting (started in 1969 and now biennial) is held alternately in New York City and an overseas country. The staff member handles correspondence with members and groups in countries without a structure, works with the Publications 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. G.S.O. 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, G.S.O. is the communications center for the U.S.-Canada service structure.

A.A. Regional and Local Forums

Started in 1975, these weekend A.A. Forums are 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 G.S.O. and GV staffs participate in each Forum with A.A. members 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 G.S.O. Local Forums, a scaled down version of Regional Forums, organized on the local level with help from G.S.O., 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.

The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

As it has since 1944, the A.A. Grapevine serves as the monthly magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous. Articles, drawings 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 at an A.A. meeting. You do not have to be a professional writer or artist to contribute to the A.A. 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 the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.—a corporation entirely separate from A.A. World Services, Inc.

For editorial submissions, or to subscribe to the magazines, please contact the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115; or visit the Web site at www.aagrapevine.org.

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

2. Keep G.S.O. 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. — G.S.O. as well as your group — is committed to self-support. Popular plans for contributions to G.S.O. are: Birthday Plan — on an A.A.'s anniversary, \$1.00 for each year; monthly or quarterly contributions by groups. 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 G.S.O.

You'll be warmly welcomed, given a full tour, and introduced to staff members, department heads, and G.S.O.'s office neighbors, the Grapevine folks. Staff trips and correspondence keep G.S.O. 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. Web site

You can visit our Web site at www.aa.org. You will find general information about A.A., as well as service information.