

What is an AA District?

An Alcoholics Anonymous District is a cluster of (2-20) Groups within an Area, which have chosen to share together, supporting one another, and working closely and cooperatively to carry the AA message more effectively: to do 12th Step Service Work. Usually there is a common bond between the groups such as a shared geographical location, a common minority language or a community-based newspaper.

The District is part of the AA General Service Structure. Service is a means through which Members can pass on the AA message and support the AA Fellowship as a whole. Service work helps the alcoholic stay sober, and helps develop personal confidence and skills. This then enables the Member to serve the Fellowship with increasing understanding. AA Service is not accurately described as 'getting into AA politics'.

What is a GSR?

In a District, the Groups each have a right to elect a General Service Representative (GSR). The GSR acts as a communications link between the Group Conscience meetings of the Home Group, and the District meeting. An alternate GSR may also be elected, to stand in when the GSR can't make it to a District meeting. District meetings are attended by all the local GSRs.

Elections are for 2-year terms, usually by simple written ballot. The Third Legacy Procedure can be used for complex elections (see AA Service Manual).

Qualities desirable for GSRs include 2-3 years' sobriety, a track record in other service (eg Group officer, CSO Rep., PI Committee member), and awareness of the significance of AA Traditions.

As Bill W. said, "The strength of our whole AA structure starts with the Group and with the General Service Representative (GSR) the Group elects. I cannot emphasise too strongly the GSR's importance".

There is so much to be done in AA that we cannot afford to duplicate effort; neither can we afford Groups to go separate ways - unity is an essential feature of all our operations. Whatever the situation, the key words are 'cooperation not duplication'.

What do GSRs Do?

Most GSR activities involve communication and linkage. They have important roles inside and outside the Home Group.

GSRs act as mail contacts for the Groups at National Office of AA, for their DCM, and for Area Committee. They keep National Office up-to-date on Group office bearers, meetings etc., and fill out the annual group information card for the National Office Directory and website. National Office sends them AA Around Australia to share with their Group. They familiarise themselves with Conference Approved Literature, act as resource persons for explaining the Traditions, and ensure that their Groups are kept informed about available literature and its content.

GSRs may assist other office bearers with Group management, financial planning or 7th Tradition Donation Plans (60:30: 10 etc).

GSRs connect their Groups with District and Area service activities, ensuring that Members are informed and given opportunities to be involved. See AA Service Manual & AA Guidelines G-03 'The General Service Representative' for further details.

GSRs attend both District and Area Committee meetings.

Why have Districts?

Experience has shown that the answer to growth rests in setting up more Districts rather than more Areas. Small numbers of Groups with convenient regular meetings, make it possible for more personal contact and knowledge of the locality than would be possible with larger areas.

AA has a unique, 'bottom-up' leadership and decision-making structure, known as 'servant leadership'. The 'leaders' in AA are 'trusted servants', not bosses. They lead by example: by 'walking the talk' and by their commitment. The whole AA service structure is ultimately and directly devoted to reaching out the hand of AA, offering a healing fellowship to alcoholics everywhere. The District meets the Groups' need to be informed about AA and Conference issues, in order for the AA democratic process to take place, enabling the Groups to make the decisions.

What do Districts do?

- . Provide a two-way communication link through the DCM, between Groups and the Area Delegate and the Area Committee
- . Provide a forum where Groups can come together to share their experiences, solve problems, organise Public Information activities and work together in unity to carry the AA message.
- . Cooperate with and support their Area and Region in fund raising, Forums, meetings and other activities.
- . Set up and support AA meetings in Treatment & Correctional facilities.

Further roles and tasks of Districts vary considerably according to local needs. Differences may include geographic location, size of District and Area, numbers of Groups and Members doing service, and whether there is a local CSO (Area or Central Service Office) or 12th Step facility.

- . Where there is little or no CSO activity, or in cooperation with CSO, District functions may include setting up answering services, providing local meeting lists and other 12th Step work, and PI (Public Information) work. PI work in Australia is now mostly and increasingly, done by Districts.
- . The District may form subcommittees, and a fully-functioning District will usually elect a Secretary, Treasurer, Public Information Coordinator, Treatment & Correctional Facilities Coordinator, Central Service Office Liaison Coordinator. Other positions can be created as necessary.

When do Districts meet?

The District meetings are held at regular times as decided by the Group Conscience: usually monthly, sometimes bi-monthly or quarterly, and preferably in a place accessible to all the Groups involved.

Who goes to District Meetings?

District meetings are an open forum where all AA members can participate or observe. But only the General Service Representatives or Alternate General Service Representatives and elected office-bearers can vote [one vote per Group].

How are District Meetings run?

District meetings are usually chaired by the District Committee Member (DCM: see below), following agreed meeting procedures, and using AA principles as guidelines [12 Steps, 12 Traditions, 12 Concepts, Three Legacies: Unity, Service & Recovery].

How are Districts funded?

- . By variations on the Group Donation Plan (eg 60:30: 10, 50:30: 10: 10).
- . By distribution from Area funds where the old 60:30: 10 plan is followed.
- . By local fund raising according to Group conscience.
- . By Groups sending an agreed amount (eg \$5) with their GSR to each District meeting. This ensures a steady flow of seeding money to get projects off the ground and avoids frequent requests for emergency funds.

How does the District fit in with other AA Service Structures?

The Districts are communication links in the General Service Structure between Groups through their General Service Representatives and District Committee Members, to the Area. The Area Delegate, being fully informed by this process, represents the Groups at the annual Australian General Service Conference. The same process in reverse allows the groups to be fully informed as to Conference actions.

To reinforce these links, GSRs are also asked to attend Area Assemblies, along with the DCMs.

To assist the first steps into the Service Structure, new GSRs can be given a General Service Representative kit. which could include a map of the District, Area and Region, and relevant literature (from CSOs), for example: Group Handbook, AA Fact File (good on AA structure), pamphlets

on Home Group, General Service Representative, The AA District, Your DCM, National Office, Group Donation Plans to Support the AA Service Structure (formerly 60:30: 10 Plan). The AA Service Manual (from National Office or CSOs), also has sections on GSR, District, DCM, Area and Guidelines, which can be bought separately, and should be consulted for a better understanding of the finer points about these positions.

What is a District Committee Member?

The District Committee Member (DCM) is the District's representative on Area Committee. The DCM and an alternate are elected by simple majority or Third Legacy procedure for two years. The DCM chairs the District meetings.

DCMs maintain a vital, active 2-way link between the Groups and Districts, with Area and Conference. They also provide an opportunity for communication, learning and exchange through awareness of the Fellowship as a whole, and its structure, including Region, Board, National Office, Asia-Oceania and World Services.

Who makes a good DCM?

District Committee Members are usually experienced General Service Reps. The DCM's Home Group should elect another GSR to represent the Group if their GSR is elected DCM, as a double load has been found by experience to be too demanding.

Sobriety of four - five years, a reliable commitment to leadership and responsibility, and the time and energy to serve the Groups and District well, are recommended.

For more detail see the Australian AA Service Manual.

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Unity - Service -Recovery

Group

GENERAL SERVICE
REPRESENTATIVE

District

DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

Area

AREA DELEGATE

General Service Conference

Alcoholics Anonymous