

DISTRICT 37

SERVICE GUIDELINES

REVISED AND ACCEPTED

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## PREFACE: PURPOSE OF SERVICE GUIDELINES

- District 37 strives to adhere to the Principles, Traditions, and Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous and follows the suggestions for a District Committee as outlined in the A.A. Service Manual. The purpose of these service guidelines is to provide an orientation for general service work in the District. They outline practices and procedures that have proven effective for District operations.
- No action by a prior District Committee is binding on an incoming panel. Each newly elected DCM may make recommendations for the incoming committee's consideration. This manual, then, is for use as a guide; a reference and a resource for what has worked in the past. It is subject to change as new and, perhaps, better ways of carrying the message are revealed through our ongoing collective experience.

## SECTION I: OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- The purpose of the District Committee is to facilitate communication between the Groups, the District, the Area, and the General Service Office (GSO) by means of the General Service Conference. The Committee also promotes and contributes to the well-being and growth of the District. It encourages fellowship and provides a forum for discussion of group problems and experiences, always keeping the AA Traditions in mind. We are responsible for encouraging a spirit of unity, service, and fellowship within our Groups and the District.

### THE GROUP

- The communication process starts with the group, which lets its group conscience — for or against change, approval, or disapproval of a proposed action — be known to its elected general service representative (G.S.R.). The G.S.R. (see Section II: GSR) makes sure the group's wishes are heard and fully considered at the district and area levels, and that they are part of the delegate's thinking at the Conference.

### THE DISTRICT

- These groups are combined into Districts. District 37 is comprised of the AA groups in the Lehigh and Northampton counties that are located on the east side of the Lehigh River.
- The District Committee is made up of the District Officers and the General Service Representatives (GSRs) of each group. The committee meeting serves as forum for the voice of the group to be heard in many ways (see Section V Paragraph 3: meeting agenda).

### THE AREA

- District 37 is part of Area 59 encompassing Eastern Pennsylvania.

- Group communication with Area 59 is through the DCM who is elected by the GSRs to serve on the Area Committee.

## ABE INTERGROUP

- Allentown Bethlehem Easton (ABE) Intergroup is a collective representation of meetings in the Lehigh Valley incorporating Districts 37 and 57.
- The District 37 Committee and the ABE Intergroup have different functions: Intergroup provides local services to “carry the message” of recovery to the alcoholic, while the District Committee maintains the communication link between the groups and GSO by means of the General Service Conference. Our hope is that these two separate, but vital, service structures will co-exist in mutual cooperation and harmony to the benefit of the Fellowship.

## SECTION II: GSR

### ROLE

- The GSR is the link between the group and “A.A. as a whole.” This link becomes a channel through which news, information, opinions, and ideas can flow back and forth. The GSR gives the group a voice in the affairs of the Fellowship.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- These qualifications are only suggestions. Tradition 4 states: “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.” As such qualifications are subject to individual group conscience.
- Experience of the Fellowship suggests that the most effective GSRs:
  - Maintain open-mindedness
  - Have at least two years of continuous sobriety
  - Have the time to regularly attend district meetings and area assemblies and the group’s business meetings
  - Have a working familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and A.A. recovery
  - Have an email address or other easy way of maintaining contact with group members
- GSRs typically serve a term of two years in the spirit of rotation.

### DUTIES

#### DISTRICT LEVEL DUTIES

- Participates in monthly district meeting and reports back to their group.
- Serves on a district subcommittee as needed.
- Keeps the district informed about group changes.
- Participates in the election of District Officers.
- Informs the District Committee of group problems and experiences.

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## AREA LEVEL DUTIES

- Attends yearly Area Convention/Assembly.
  - Most groups choose to financially support GSR travel for service commitments.
  - Groups should keep in mind that an individual's finances should not be a barrier to service.
- Votes in the election of Area 59 officers (Even Year Conventions).
- GSRs are encouraged to attend other Area functions whenever possible, especially The Pre-Conference Sharing Session and the Mini-Assembly.
  - This allows GSRs to experience how the Conference structure works and meet the Area Officers and other DCMs.
  - It is beneficial to meet the Officers and DCMs because these are the people that the GSRs will probably be voting for come election time.

## ELECTIONS OF GSR

- It is suggested that the Groups in District 37 hold elections for GSRs in the last quarter of even years.
  - This will allow the experienced GSR to help the newer GSRs, and to provide for a more orderly transition at the January meeting of the new incoming panel.

## ALTERNATE GSR (AGSR)

- Groups are also encouraged to elect AGSRs and to have them attend District meetings.
- Experienced AGSRs can provide group continuity in the absence of the GSR.
- An AGSR may serve the GSR role in the absence of the GSR, however if the GSR is in attendance, the AGSR will not have the right to vote or participate in discussion.

## SECTION III DISTRICT OFFICERS

### DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER (DCM)

- **The DCM** is an essential link between the group's GSR and the Area's Delegate to the General Service Conference. As leader of the District Committee, the DCM is exposed to the group conscience of that district. As a member of the Area Committee, they are able to pass on their thinking to the Area Delegate and the Area Committee.

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### DISTRICT LEVEL DUTIES:

- Chairs the monthly district meetings.
- Keeps the District informed of current issues in the service structure of AA (DCM Report).
- Invites guest speakers for educational purposes, when appropriate.
- Coordinates service activities in the district.
- Oversees the formation of subcommittees and may appoint members and advise them.

- May appoint or recommend members for Special Servant positions.
- Visits groups regularly.

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#### AREA LEVEL DUTIES:

- Participates in the Area 59 quarterly meetings and submits a written District report.
- Carries the collective group conscience of the AA groups in the district to the Area Committee.
- Participates in an Area Subcommittee as determined by the Area Delegate.
- Attends other Area Activities such as the DCM Orientation, the Pre-Conference Sharing Session, Area Day, NERAASA, NERF, Mini Assemblies, and the Area Convention/Assembly.
- Votes in the election of Area 59 officers (Even Year Conventions).

#### ALTERNATE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER (ADCM)

- **The ADCM** serves as a backup for the DCM. If the DCM resigns or for any reason is unable to serve, the ADCM assumes the role of DCM.

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#### DISTRICT LEVEL DUTIES:

- Attends monthly district meeting.
- Attends monthly Intergroup meetings and serves as the liaison for the District.
- Gives monthly report of intergroup activities to the Committee. (ACDM Report)
- Advises subcommittees as assigned.
- Is encouraged to assist, participate, and share in the DCM's responsibilities, attending district and Area functions whenever possible.
- Attends yearly Area Convention/Assembly.

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#### AREA LEVEL DUTIES:

- Attends Area Meetings with the DCM, if possible.
- An ADCM may serve the DCM role in the absence of the DCM.
- Encouraged to attend other Area Activities such as the DCM Orientation, the Pre-Conference Sharing Session, Area Day, NERAASA, NERF, Mini Assemblies, and the Area Convention/Assembly.

#### DISTRICT SECRETARY

- **The Secretary** can add great vitality and drive to an Area Committee. Aids in sharing information among the GSR, Officers, and correspondence outside the district.

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#### DISTRICT LEVEL DUTIES:

- Attends monthly district meetings and calls roll.
- Records the meeting minutes.
- Distributes meeting minutes to members via email or regular mail.
- Maintains and updates confidential list of the current GSRs.
- Advises subcommittees as assigned.
- Submits updated group information to the appropriate Area Committee Member.

- Liaison between the website/webservant and district.

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#### AREA LEVEL DUTIES:

- Sends all district meeting minutes to the Area Panel.
- Attends yearly Area Convention/Assembly.
- Encouraged to attend Area functions whenever possible, especially The Pre-Conference Sharing Session and the Mini-Assembly. This allows them to experience how the Conference structure works and meet the Area Officers and other DCMs.

#### DISTRICT TREASURER

- **The Treasurer** should be a responsible individual who can keep well maintained and up to date financial records.

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#### DISTRICT LEVEL DUTIES:

- Attends monthly district meeting and gives financial report.  
(Oral and written)
- Collects, records and reports group contributions.
- Maintains the District bank accounts, both physical and electronic, and pays District expenses.
- Advises subcommittees as assigned.
- Conforms to the Treasurer's Guidelines for procedural bookkeeping.

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#### AREA LEVEL DUTIES:

- Attends yearly Area Convention/Assembly.
- Encouraged to attend Area functions whenever possible, especially the Pre-Conference Sharing Session and the Mini-Assembly. This allows them to experience how the Conference structure works and meet the Area Officers and other DCMs.

### SECTION IV ELECTION OF DISTRICT OFFICERS

- District Officers are elected at the October meeting of the even numbered years.
- The order of election is DCM, ADCM, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- The term of office is two years.
- Current GSRs, or group representatives, who are present, are eligible to vote so that each group gets one vote.
- Current District Officers are also eligible to vote.

#### QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIRED VOTE

- All nominees should have been a GSR (either past or present), or have held a District Office.
- The outgoing DCM may not stand for office.
- The DCM and ADCM are elected by a minimum of a two-thirds majority vote.



- It is suggested that nominees for DCM and ADCM have at least 4-5 years of sobriety and have the time and energy to serve the district well.
- The Secretary and Treasurer are elected by a simple majority.
  - It is suggested that the nominees have at least three years of sobriety.
- The election procedure is modeled after the **Third Legacy Procedure** and is as follows:
  - Call for nominees: The eligible District Officers and GSRs present will be polled as to whether or not they choose to “decline” or “accept” becoming a nominee for the District position. Polling is done by the DCM or their designee. It should be someone who is not eligible to run for an office.
  - Written ballots/virtual polls are then cast even if only one person stands. All votes are counted by a teller/virtual host. If a candidate receives a two-third majority vote (DCM and ADCM) or a simple majority vote (Secretary and Treasurer), they are elected.
  - If the required majority is not achieved after the first ballot, a second ballot is taken.
  - After the second ballot, (assuming no candidate receives the necessary majority on the first ballot), any candidate having less than one-fifth of the vote is automatically withdrawn, except that the top two candidates remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain.)
  - After the third ballot, candidates with less than one-third of the total vote are automatically withdrawn, except that the top two candidates remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain.) A fourth ballot is conducted.
  - After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has the required majority, the DCM asks for a motion, second, and majority of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot. (If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and we go to the “hat” immediately. In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain. If not, the candidate with the smallest total is dropped. If the motion carries, a fifth and final ballot will be conducted.)
  - If no election occurs by this time, the DCM announces the choice will be made by lot (from the hat).
  - Lots are then drawn by the teller, and the first one “out of the hat” becomes the new officer.
- The new DCM and ADCM will take their seats at the Area 59 meeting in December and the District 37 meeting in January. The Secretary and Treasurer take their seats at the January District meeting.

- If a District Officer resigns from an elected position, the DCM has the option to either elect or appoint a replacement for that office, with the 2/3 approval of the GSRs for ADCM and simple majority for Treasurer and Secretary.

#### REMOVAL OF STANDING OFFICERS

- Officers serve at the discretion of the GSRs.
- If it is deemed necessary, the GSRs should agree on the method of replacement to be used with 2/3 majority support.

#### SECTION V DISTRICT 37 MEETINGS

- District 37 meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. See district website for location. [www.pad37.com](http://www.pad37.com)
- All members of the AA fellowship are welcome to attend the monthly District meeting. However, only committee members may participate in the discussion during the meeting.

#### MEETING AGENDA

- Chairperson opens meeting
- Statement of Purpose
- Declaration of Unity
- Roll Call by Secretary
- Discussion of the Tradition of the Month (Year 1)
- Discussion of the Concept of the Month (Year 2)
- Speaker, if present
- Secretary Report - Approval of prior District meeting minutes, any corrections noted.
- Treasurer's Report
- ADCM Report
- DCM Report
- Group experience and/or situations
- Subcommittee and Special Servant Reports
- Old Business
- New Business
- Announcements
- Anniversaries
- Close Meeting

#### VOTING MEMBERS

- Voting at District Meetings is limited to one vote per group present, whether by the group's GSR, AGSR, or designated representative. District Officers also have one vote each.

- All important decisions in the district are reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity. (2/3 present majority vote.) Business needing the GSRs approval is carried by the GSR to his or her group where a sense of the group conscience is taken, and its consensus is presented at the following District Meeting.

#### SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY

- The District conscience is the collective conscience of the District membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by District members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of AA principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.
- On sensitive issues, the Committee works slowly – discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective views emerge. Placing principles before personalities, the Committee is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed Committee arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a “yes” or “no” count – precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the District conscience. The term “informed conscience” implies that all pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the Committee votes.

#### CONCEPT III: THE RIGHT OF DECISION

- AA principles have been devised to continuously balance the right relation between the ultimate authority of the groups and delegated responsibility of the GSR. It should be the traditional right of the District Committee to decide which problems they will dispose of themselves, and upon which matters they will report, consult, or ask specific directions.
- Our entire AA Program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust AA, and we trust each other. Therefore, we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The “Right of Decision” that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence.
- Regarding those issues in which the groups will be consulted, it is suggested that GSRs come to the District Meetings informed of their group’s conscience with the intention of doing what is best for the District and AA (as a whole). There may be times when the GSR will hear additional information during a discussion that may affect the way they vote.

#### LIMITS ON DISCUSSION TIME AT A SINGLE MEETING

- Any discussion item shall be limited to no more than 15 minutes during a single meeting. Each separate GSR will be allowed up to 2 minutes to present their viewpoint. If the topic will exceed 15 minutes of discussion, the topic will be tabled until the next scheduled meeting. The Secretary will monitor the duration. The DCM should summarize the primary points. The pertinent comments will be included in the minutes for the next meeting.

### SUBCOMMITTEE SYSTEM

- Subcommittees are created by, and are responsible to, the District Committee.
  - They do not set policy or decide issues, but they may make recommendations to the District Committee.
  - Each Panel will decide which subcommittees will be formed.
  - The subcommittees will consist of GSRs and Chairpersons who may volunteer, be elected, or be appointed.
  - They should meet regularly to progress their goals and report monthly progress to the district committee.
- The subcommittee Chairperson can propose a non-GSR AA Member to be a volunteer subcommittee member with the approval of the subcommittee membership. The volunteer member will have voting rights within the subcommittee only.

### EXAMPLES OF SUBCOMMITTEES WITHIN DISTRICT 37

#### FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE:

- Responsible for the completion of a budget, emphasizing anticipated Committee expenses for the upcoming year and to be submitted for an acceptance vote at the December meeting.
- The subcommittee will also reassess the prudent reserve amount, if deemed appropriate.
- Tasked with assessing the overall finances of the district with emphasis on responsibility to the groups.

#### STRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE:

- This committee is responsible for the ongoing review of the District Service Guidelines, making recommendations for change if needed.
- Works in collaboration with web servant to evaluate website guidelines.
- Works in collaboration with the Treasurer to evaluate the finance guidelines.
- Proposed changes to guidelines will be made final upon District Committee approval.

#### VISITATION SUBCOMMITTEE:

- Tasked with visiting groups in an effort to reach those currently inactive in the District and provide education about the role and benefits of having an active GSR.
- This subcommittee can also be instrumental in verifying if specific meetings are still being held.

#### WORKSHOP SUBCOMMITTEE:

- Coordinates all aspects of District workshops.
- Workshops can be independently run or done in conjunction with other Districts or Intergroup.

- This subcommittee encourages participation in Area activities by emphasizing topics related to service and incorporating area representatives when possible.

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#### HISTORY AND ARCHIVES SUBCOMMITTEE:

- Encourages fellow GSRs to collect ongoing updates on group histories.
- They maintain and document the history of the District.

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#### COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (C.P.C.) SUBCOMMITTEE:

- Seeks to create mutual understanding and cooperation between the Fellowship and those professional groups and individuals who may be concerned with alcoholism and the still suffering alcoholic.

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#### GRAPEVINE SUBCOMMITTEE:

- Encourages the use of Grapevine Literature within the district.
- Shares the needs of The Grapevine for stories and submission to foster a greater District involvement.

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#### SPECIAL SERVANTS

- Special servant positions may be created at anytime with full consent of the committee
- The DCM has the option to either elect or appoint special servants, with simple majority approval of the Committee.

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#### HISTORIAN

- Acts as advisor to the History and Archives Sub-committee.
- Responsible for storing and/or maintaining a safe storage location for all archives materials.
- Responsible for being a contact person for archive additions, updates and inquiries.
- Responsible to physically provide archive material to district or intergroup as the requests are made and approved.

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#### WEBSERVANT

- Keeps and maintains all passwords for District 37 email and internet accounts.
- Routinely uploads District information to website.
- Provides recommendations for the procurement of any technology and/or technological capabilities.
- See Website Guidelines for further responsibilities.

INCOME

- Funding for the District Committee is provided by voluntary contributions from the AA groups and members it serves in District 37.
- The address to mail contributions is:

District 37

PO Box 90274

Allentown PA 18109

- Digital contributions can be made through the District Website

<https://www.pad37aa.org/contribute>

- Platform used for digital contributions must be re-evaluated for cost effectiveness with every new panel.

EXPENSES

- Reimbursement for legitimate expenses by District Officers is allowed to permit anyone, regardless of financial status, to run for office without concern for money.

GUIDELINES FOR REIMBURSEMENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

AREA MEETINGS (QUARTERLY):

- DCM (or alternate) will be reimbursed for mileage and tolls.

AREA FUNCTIONS, AS "REQUIRED" BY THE AREA COMMITTEE:

- DCM will be reimbursed for mileage and tolls.
- The DCM will announce these functions at the beginning of each year.

ANNUAL AREA CONVENTION/ASSEMBLY:

- All Officers will be reimbursed for registration fees, accommodations and included meals, and mileage/tolls.

MINI ASSEMBLIES:

- DCM (or alternate) will be reimbursed for registration fees, mileage, and tolls to attend one Mini Assembly.

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#### NERAASA (YEARLY):

- DCM may be reimbursed for registration fees, accommodations and included meals, and mileage/tolls if it is within the budget.

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#### NERF (EVERY OTHER YEAR):

- DCM may be reimbursed for registration fees, accommodations and included meals, and mileage/tolls if it is within the budget.

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#### ROUTINE BUSINESS EXPENSES:

- All officers may be reimbursed for postage, copying and/or printing expenses.
- Any expenses not listed above can only be reimbursed with full committee consent.
- The district committee must be notified by The Treasurer of all payments made from District funds in a timely manner, typically the next business meeting after reimbursement.
- Expenses for digital contributions should be recorded and reported to the District Committee monthly.
- Mileage will be reimbursed at the current rate set by the IRS.

**Anyone attending any other function is considered to be doing so as a contribution to service and self-improvement, without expectation of compensation.**

#### PRUDENT RESERVE

- The District will maintain a prudent reserve of \$1500.00.
- The Finance committee should recommend changes to the prudent reserve to reflect budgetary needs.

#### BUDGET SURPLUS

- A surplus of funds is considered to be all funds held above the prudent reserve.
- Any surplus should be dispersed at the end of each year, in a timely manner, as decided by the full committee.
- The finance committee may make recommendations for disbursement of surplus funds.