

Area 48 District 16

Service Handbook

Structure and Guidelines

Alcoholics Anonymous, our fellowship, has been given the Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity, and Service. These District 16 Guidelines cover how the Legacy of Service is implemented and carried out within this District. These guidelines have only one purpose -- to provide a clear and concise reference for those people who are involved in District 16 service. The AA Service Manual outlines, in a general way, the duties and responsibilities of those serving within a District. These District 16 guidelines are not to replace or override the information set forth in the Service Manual, but are to be used along with and as a supplement to the Manual. The following guidelines are designed to be more specific in delineating the responsibilities and duties of those serving in the District and to cover other policies and procedures specific to District 16.

District 16 shall be guided continually by the General warranties contained in Concept XII of the Twelve Concepts, namely that the District shall observe the spirit of the AA Traditions, taking great care that the District never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that no District member ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible by substantial unanimity; that no District action be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that it shall never perform any acts of government; and that it always remain democratic in thought and action.

Our District

District 16 was formed out of District 7, along with District 15. These three Districts cover Ulster County, NY. As AA members of Ulster County live and attend meetings in all three Districts, we form a cluster and co-operate as closely as possible in coordinating our efforts to help the alcoholic who still suffers. However, each District is independent and autonomous.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

Any Sober Member of Alcoholics Anonymous may participate in the Service Work of District 16.

District 16 is guided by the A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service.

The District meeting is held monthly, traditionally on the third Tuesday of the month at 7PM, at the Reservoir UMC Church on Route 28 in Shokan.

Attendance at the District Meeting includes all District Officers, Committee Chairs, and General Service Representatives. Any interested member of AA is also welcome to attend although they have no vote and will be heard at the discretion of the DCM. The purpose of the District meeting is to provide a forum for the interchange of ideas and information among the groups represented, the Area, and the General Services Organization, and to conduct the proper business of District 16.

All AA Groups & Meetings in our District are encouraged to participate in all District activities and to have their GSR at all District Meetings.

In November of every odd numbered year District 16 will hold Elections for Officers. If more than one person is interested in a position- the spirit of rotation will be one of our considerations. The Elected Officers of the District are: The DCM, the Alternate DCM, the Secretary, the Alternate Secretary, the Treasurer and the Alternate Treasurer. All Committee Chairs and alternates to the Committee Chairs are appointed by and serve at the discretion of the DCM.

The District 16 Committee consists of current DCM, Alternate DCM, District 16 Officers, Committee Chairs, and GSRs. The purpose of the District 16 Committee, (From the Service Manual Chapter V), is "To maintain the health of the Conference Structure and further growth and harmony in our beloved fellowship." The District 16 DCM presides over the District 16 Committee meetings.

Officers & District Committee Chairs will submit monthly Reports at each District Meeting, or if unable to attend, submit written reports prior to the Meeting as part of their Accountability to those who have entrusted them with their Responsibilities.

Attendance at District Meetings is a part of the responsibilities of every GSR, Elected Officer, and Committee Chair. In the event of an inability to attend, prior notification is expected and the attendance of an Alternate is expected. Should any Elected Officer or Committee Chair miss three consecutive District Meetings without arranging for an Alternate or sending in a report prior to the meetings, that person will be considered to have resigned.

GSRs

All AA Groups & Meetings in our District are encouraged to send a GSR, and to have an alternate GSR. GSR Accountability & Sobriety Requirements are up to the Group they represent. While GSRs are not required to serve on Committees they always welcome and encouraged to do so. District 16 is committed to helping GSRs with their service needs – to carry effectively the news from each Group to the Area and to GSO, and to bring the news from the GSO and Area back to the Groups.

Elected Officers

DCM

The DCM is the link between the group GSRs and the Area service structure including the Area Delegate to the General Service Conference. The DCM has a vote in all District Meetings.

The qualifications for a DCM are: A background in AA service work including service as a GSR as suggested in the Service Manual; Four -Five years sobriety; the time, energy, and desire to serve the District well. The DCM should be: Familiar with information contained in the AA Service Manual and other AA literature that pertains to this position; preparing the agenda for each District Meeting and disseminating it to the District Committee in advance of the Meetings; the chair of the District Meeting; reporting regularly to the GSR's all information received from the Area and GSO; assisting and encouraging new GSR's to become familiar with their duties and responsibilities; visiting groups within the District and also encouraging groups that are not represented to elect a GSR and to become active in the District service structure; a voting member of the Area Committee; able and willing to serve on a Standing Committee of the Area Assembly; working closely with the Alternate DCM on all activities in the District and Area, and delegating some duties and responsibilities to the Alternate DCM; serving a two-year term; one of the cosigners on all District bank accounts.

Alt-DCM

The Alternate DCM should assist, participate, and share in the responsibilities of the DCM, as well as fill in at meetings that the DCM is unable to attend. The qualifications for an Alt-DCM are the same as for a DCM. An Alt-DCM may be a currently serving GSR. It is the tradition of District 16 that the Alternate DCM be elected DCM after his or her two-years service as Alt-DCM.

Secretary

The qualifications for District Secretary are: suggested minimum of two (2) years of sobriety with a background in AA service; the ability to keep clear and accurate records; the time, energy, and desire to serve the District well. The Secretary: will take the minutes at each District meeting; emails minutes as soon as possible to District Officers, Committee Chairs and GSRs and makes copies available at the next District meeting; may carry the District's DCM vote to Area functions when both the DCM and the Alternate are unable to attend; has a voice and a vote at all District meetings. The Secretary also maintains the records of all Groups within District 16 including Group Name, Group Number, date of founding, locations and times of meetings, types of meetings, GSR name, address and contact information, Alt-GSR name, address and contact information; coordinates with District 16 DCM, Webmaster for District 16, Records Chair for Area 48 and Webmaster for Area 48 to ensure that all information on District 16 meetings that is posted on various websites and meeting lists is accurate.

Treasurer

The qualifications for Treasurer are: suggested minimum of two years sobriety; a responsible person with good record-keeping ability and a source of income; a background in service at the Group or District level; the time and energy to do the job well. The Treasurer: maintains a clear and accurate financial record of all District income and disbursements; attends District meetings; prepares a written monthly financial report of income and disbursements and account balances, and provides copies to be distributed at District meetings; submits a financial report each month with sufficient copies to distribute to each group; collects and disburses all District funds; establishes a checking account requiring two signatures to withdraw or transfer funds with a bank of his/her choice and keeps record of all transactions; keeps a file of the past 2 years of treasurer's reports and makes them available upon request; chairs all District Budget meetings, should any become necessary; may carry the District DCM vote to Area functions when both the DCM and the Alternate are unable to attend; is one of the cosigners on all District bank accounts; has a voice and a vote at all District meetings.

COMMITTEES

Committees are directly responsible and accountable for the service work with which they have been entrusted. Any sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous may be a Member of a District 16 Committee.

No minimum length of Sobriety is required. Chairs of District 16 Committees do not need to be GSRs or Alternate GSRs. Committee Chairs are appointed by the DCM and continue in their service until they either rotate out of it or until the DCM appoints a new Chair. All Committee Chairs have a voice and a vote at each District Meeting.

District 16 currently has the following Committees in place:

1. Answering Service
2. Functions
3. Cooperation with the Professional Community
4. Public Information
5. Corrections
6. Literature/Grapevine (La Viña)
7. Special Needs
8. Treatment
9. Web/Newsletter
10. Bridging the Gap

Additional committees may be set up on either an ongoing or ad hoc basis. The current committees may be merged or closed if circumstances warrant.

Committees should consistently strive for effective ways to carry the message by both new initiatives and through following up on service work in place.

All Committee Chairpersons should have an involved Alternate if possible. The Chairpersons or their Alternates are expected to submit a monthly Report either in person at, or to the DCM or Alternate DCM in advance of, each monthly District Meeting. All Committee Chairs are also urged to know their counter-parts in other Districts in the Area, coordinate with them when possible, and attend Area events.

In addition to this general outline, the following guidelines also apply to specific Committee Chairs:

Answering Service: Establishes, develops and maintains an updated Twelfth Step Database; coordinates requests between callers and Twelfth Step Volunteers; Coordinates with Districts 7 and 15 to maintain an ongoing, 24-hour telephone Help line for our cluster Districts, whether staffed by AA members or hired professionals; works with District 16 Treasurer and with our cluster Districts to ensure prompt and accurate payment of District 16's share of all costs related to the Answering Service; monitors costs to ensure maximum benefit of service to AA members both potential and identified.

Functions: Coordinates district functions such as those currently sponsored by the District, (the end of summer picnic, the Spiritual Breakfast, the Gratitude Luncheon, New Years Alco-thon), and Area Events when rotation assigns them to District 16, and any future events as determined by the District. This includes, arranging facility rentals and contracts, working with the Treasurer to obtain needed deposits, estimating budgets for each event and maintaining records of all expenditures, assuring that the events are brought in within budget, setting up sub-committees as needed to arrange for shopping, set up and clean up. The Functions Chair should also monitor other events within the Area and more broadly within AA as a whole to recommend good, timely event opportunities for the District.

Cooperation with the Professional Community: Provides contact and information to doctors, nurses, members of the clergy, lawyers, social workers, union leaders, and business managers; provides speakers, films, literature, and other information to members of the professional community as needed; in coordination with the Literature/Grapevine Chair, provides and maintains literature and Grapevines as needed in professional offices and work places; provides invitations to professional people to attend open AA meetings in the District.

Public Information: Provides information to all local newspapers and periodicals; makes Public Service Announcements available to local radio and television stations; provides contact with local educational facilities with speakers, film, literature, and other information available; helps organize and set up meetings at school facilities as needed.

Corrections: Provides contact and information to all jails, correction facilities, and detention centers located in the District and in coordination with Districts 7 and 15, in our cluster Districts; helps organize and set up AA meetings in correctional facilities as needed, being responsible for seeing that meetings are within the Traditions and that meetings needs are being met; provides Speakers, films, and literature to correctional facilities as needed; in coordination with the Literature/Grapevine Chair, provides and maintains literature and Grapevines as needed in the correctional facilities.

Literature/Grapevine (La Viña): Keeps a stock of catalogs for Conference-approved literature; maintains an ample supply of current General Service Conference-approved pamphlets, books and audiovisual material; sets up this material for viewing and sale at functions, including: workshops, conferences, conventions, roundups and other District events; orders literature for district activities as needed; becomes familiar with the general contents of all literature, in order to provide information to inquirers; works with other Committee Chairs to aid in their activities; provides information to all groups in the District about the International Monthly Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous known as The Grapevine; sets up a Grapevine/La Viña display at all District functions.

Special Needs: Explores, develops, and offers alternatives so the AA message is accessible to those who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, wheelchair users and others with physical disabilities, homebound or chronically ill, developmentally disabled or sober late in life; establishes, develops and maintains an updated Database of those willing to bring meetings to the home bound; acts as a clearinghouse for information to share the accumulated experience and knowledge in the Special Needs arena; raise the awareness of Special Needs throughout the meetings in District 16.

Treatment: Provides contact information to hospital in-patient and outpatient programs within the District and in coordination with District 7 and District 16, in our linked Districts; provides contact and information to all local mental health facilities and rehabilitation programs; provides assistance in organizing and setting up AA meetings in treatment and/or medical facilities as needed, being responsible for seeing that meetings are keeping within the Traditions and that meeting needs are being met; in coordination with the Literature/Grapevine Chair, provides and maintains literature and Grapevines as needed in local medical and treatment facilities.

Webmaster/Newsletter: responsible for managing and maintaining the district email addresses, the district web site, and other aspects of computer, network and electronic communications technologies that may be adopted over time by District 16 and its committees; establishes, develops and maintains guidelines for the District 16 website postings, newsletter content, and email usage; coordinates activities with the Area 48 Webmaster; ensures that material posted on the District 16 website and in the District 16 newsletter is fully AA related.

Bridging the Gap: Establishes, develops and maintains an updated Bridging the Gap Volunteer Database; works closely with District Treatment and Corrections Chairpersons on methods for receiving bridge requests from new members; coordinates requested bridges between new members and Bridging the Gap Volunteers; provides information to hospital and institutional facilities located within the District and our linked Districts explaining what Bridging the Gap is and how it works.

Voting and Elections

While membership in District 16, Area 48, of Alcoholics Anonymous is open to all persons who have a desire to stop drinking, voting at District 16 business meetings is limited to:

Group GSRs or Alternate GSRs, so that each AA group within District 16 has one (1) vote;
Elected Officers of District 16, namely the District Committee Member (DCM), the Alternate District Committee Member, the Treasurer, and the Secretary, (Alternates to the Treasurer or Secretary vote in that capacity only when the Treasurer or Secretary, respectively, is absent), District 16 Committee Chairpersons; ; Past District Committee Member of District 16, such that each former DCM from the District is afforded one vote.

In the event that the same person qualifies to vote under two or more of the above provisions he or she shall be afforded one (1) vote only. In the event that a GSR or a DCM qualifies to vote in another capacity, their duly elected alternate may vote in their place.

District Elections are held at the regularly scheduled meeting in November in every odd numbered year. In the event that more than one person is running for a given position the spirit of rotation will be given consideration.

The outgoing DCM will Chair the election meeting, although in the absence of the DCM a Past DCM should serve as Chair.

The following shall be full voting members of the District at the election: All District 16 GSRs, Committee Chairs and elected officers, or in their absence their Alternates, and all Past DCMs. In the event that the same person qualifies to vote under two or more of the above provisions he or she shall be afforded one (1) vote only.