

***“This is
Alcoholics
Anonymous...
May we help you?”***

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Bill W. helped write an Intergroup pamphlet, which was published by the Intergroup Committee of New Jersey in March 1949. On the back page of the pamphlet, Bill wrote:

"Every A.A. member wants every alcoholic in the world to have the chance that he has had. Every A.A. member wants unity for our movement. Every A.A. member wants the good opinion of medicine, religion and the general public. We know we must have these things or the new man may never get his chance."

"The Intergroup associations are the best insurance we can have that our life lines to the hundreds of thousands yet to come will never break or tangle. Let us always be generous. Let us warmly support Intergroup."

A.A co-founder Bill W., 1949

Dr Bob was not only a supporter of the Intergroup/Central Office concept, he was an active participant in the Akron Central Committee. In "Dr Bob and the Good Old Timers," his involvement was discussed in some detail by Dan K., an early Akron A.A.

"Doc used to play an important part in the Central Committee. That was the steering committee for the office. We'd meet the first Monday of every month and he always attended. There'd be a member from each group. During the meetings, sometimes, the words would fly like you were in a barroom." During one meeting Dr Bob stood up, hushed the crowd and said: "Gentlemen, please. We're still members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Let's carry the principles of A.A. into these business meetings. You are servants of your group(s), here to take the ideas formulated by the committee. Let one man talk at a time, and let us conduct this business meeting as a service to the Lord and a service to our fellow members of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Are Intergroups & Central Offices a part of Alcoholics Anonymous?

Traditionally, general service committees and intergroups/central offices have performed different functions. Central offices provide local services; general service committees maintain the link between the A.A. groups and the A.A. General Service Board by means of the Conference. So these two separate but vital service structures coexist in many areas in mutual cooperation and harmony.

At the time the Conference was started, there were already well-established central offices in several large cities, providing services for local A.A. groups and members. Today, there are many more central offices throughout the U.S. and Canada, supported by the A.A. groups in the communities they serve. Each group elects a representative to attend central office meetings.

These offices provide such services as:

- 1.Receiving, arranging, and following up Twelfth Step calls.
- 2.Answering inquiries about A.A.
- 3.Establishing local public information committees
- 4.Maintaining information about local hospitals and recovery facilities for alcoholics.
- 5.Publishing local A.A. meeting lists.
- 6.Providing a newsletter.
- 7.Ordering, selling, and distributing A.A. Conference-approved literature.

In contrast, the Conference structure is the method through which all A.A. groups in an area can provide the most effective communication within the area and between the groups and the General Service Board and G.S.O. on matters of policy that affect A.A. as a whole. These include policy on: Conference-approved literature, A.A. public information, A.A. cooperation with the professional community, A.A. activity in treatment and correctional facilities, A.A. finances, the A.A. Grapevine, and the election of trustees to the General Service Board.

Many areas find that a liaison between the central office/intergroup and the area committee is very helpful in maintaining good relations and communication. In some areas the liaison has a vote at the assembly; in others, a voice but no vote.

More information on working together is available through G.S.O. and in the pamphlets "The A.A. Group" and "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix," as well as in the Guidelines on Intergroups/Central Offices.

Reprinted from The AA Service Manual 2006-2007, pp S38-S39.

What is an Intergroup (Central Office)?

How Does It Function?

Your intergroup, or central office, is often where the still-suffering alcoholic first calls or shows up for A.A. help.

Although local intergroups operate independently of A.A.'s worldwide service structure, they are a vital part of the Fellowship. In most areas, any group that so wishes can belong to the local intergroup, which is supported by contributions from its member groups. These contributions are purely voluntary.

In areas where it may not be practical to open a service office as such, groups sometimes set up joint committees for their Twelfth-Step efforts and activities, and use a carefully briefed central telephone answering service to take calls. Due to workload, a local service system of this type seems to work better if it is handled separately from the work of the area general service committee.

Most intergroups function with only one or two paid workers (some have none) and so rely heavily on A.A. volunteers for help. Many A.A.s have found that serving at intergroup-answering calls from alcoholics and doing what else needs to be done-greatly enriches their sobriety and broadens their circle of friends.

What Does an Intergroup (Central Office)

Do? An Intergroup or Central office is a vital A.A. service office that represents a partnership among groups in a community - just as A.A. groups themselves are a partnership of individuals. These offices are established to carry out common functions that are best handled by a centralized office, and it is usually maintained, supervised, and supported by these groups for their common interest. The office exists to aid the groups in carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Methods and goals vary from one area to another, but generally the intergroup or central office responsibility is to:

1. Respond to phone or walk-in requests for help from alcoholics and, when appropriate, arrange for A.A. volunteers (listed with the office) to meet with and accompany them to an A.A. meeting.
2. Maintain A.A. listings in local phone directories, handle phone and mail inquiries, and route them to local groups, thus distributing Twelfth-Step work on a geographical basis so that newcomers are assured of help.

3. Distribute up-to-date meeting lists.
4. Stock and sell A.A. literature.
5. Serve as a communications center for participating groups - often issuing regular newsletters or bulletins to keep groups informed about one another.
6. Arrange systems for groups to exchange speakers.
7. Coordinate the efforts of intergroup committees.
8. Sometimes provide information on treatment facilities, hospitals and halfway houses.
9. Through PI and CPC committees, handle requests for information about A.A. from local news media, arrange local radio or TV programs about A.A., and furnish speakers for schools and non-A.A. organizations.
10. Cooperate with local, district and area committees. (Some intergroups elect members to serve as area liaisons and welcome their participation in intergroup meetings.)
11. Maintain communication and cooperation-but not affiliation-with the community and helping professionals in the field of alcoholism.

Reprinted from The AA Group pamphlet, revised 2005, pp 35-36.

7th Tradition Financial Contributions

"When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat, we give a token that we are grateful for our blessing and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with those who still suffer." Bill W.

The seventh Tradition states, "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." For support, our Central Service Office relies on the contributions of its groups and individual members so the work of carrying the message can continue. Groups contribute monthly to the Central Office while individual members may contribute up to \$3000 yearly through the birthday plan, individual contributions and in memoriam. Support of your group demonstrates gratitude for sobriety and a willingness to share with the alcoholic who still suffers.

Individual and Group Participation will help us "Carry the Message"

Intergroup/Central Office depends upon the local members and groups for the necessary support to carry out its responsibilities. This support comes in the form of volunteer help and financial contributions. Our efficiency and the continuation of services offered are related to the level of support from the groups.

✓**Visit Central Office** - Drop in. Introduce yourself. Have a cup of coffee. Chat with the phone volunteer or staff member. This is the "heart line," that first contact for newcomers; the point of new beginnings and directions; the information center for people in the fellowship.

✓**Volunteer at Central Service Office** - help by answering our hotline phones.

✓**12 Step Volunteer** - sign up to be available to call suffering alcoholics who wish to get sober.

✓**Communicate with Central Office** - With your help, Central Office maintains current information about meeting locations, times and special events.

✓**Central Office Rep** - represent your group at the monthly CSO business meeting.

✓**Central Office Committees** - Newsletter mailing, Phone, Outreach, Special Events and Relocation...

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.