General Service Representative (GSR) Manual

San Diego Imperial Area Assembly (SDIAA) – Area 08

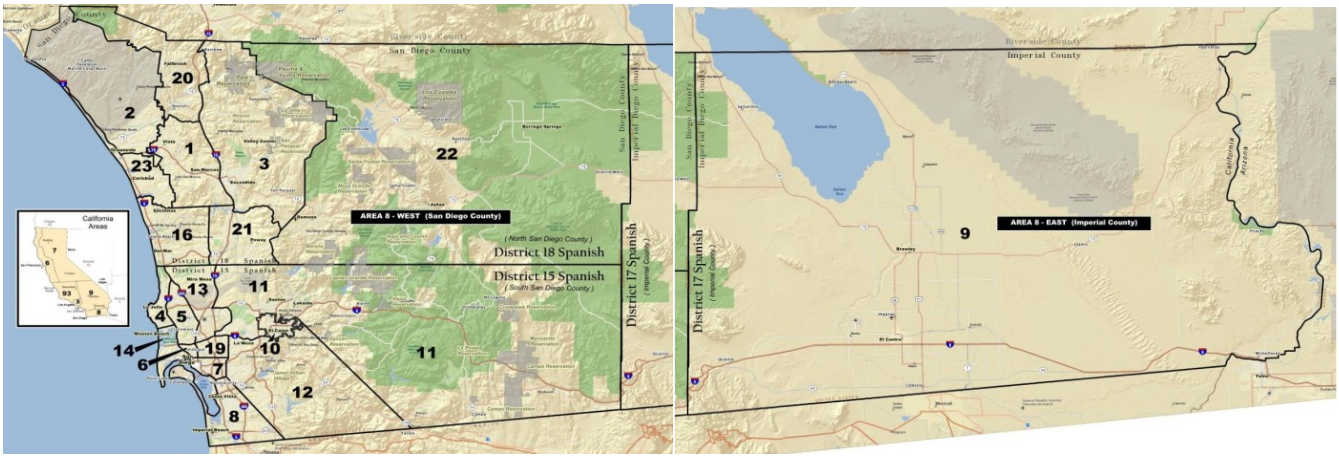
How to Use This Booklet

This booklet is meant to be a supplement to the *A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service* (The Service Manual). All GSRs should read this Manual and familiarize themselves with its contents. The first chapter, "The Group and It's General Service Representative", is only 6 pages, introduces the Home Group, and goes into significant detail about the essential role of the GSR within the General Service Structure.

Start with the AA Group pamphlet, the GSR pamphlet, and the A.A. Service Manual. Then read about the General Service Conference (GSC) – also in the A.A. Service Manual, and the Twelve Concepts in the short form. Once you have read that material and this supplemental booklet, you should have a working knowledge of General Service.

Don't stop reading though! One chapter at a time, read the entire service Manual and the essays on the Twelve Concepts in their long form. Just like the steps and our sobriety, one step at a time is all that is suggested; steady, continuing progress. There are times where you may feel lost or uncertain. Don't worry, most of us have felt this way during our General Service journeys. We support each other and learn together through our shared experience!

SDIAA…. Your Home Area



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Welcome to General Service

Welcome to one of the most rewarding forms of Service Work. As an elected General Service Representative (GSR), you now represent the collective voice of your AA Group. You will carry the Group Conscience to your District and to the Area Assembly. The Delegate, in turn, carries the collective voice of San Diego-Imperial Area (SDIAA) to the A.A General Service Conference (GSC) held in New York each April.

Area 08 GSR Responsibilities

- ✓ Attend five area assemblies a year
- ✓ Attend your district meeting once a month
- ✓ Attend an area Standing Committee of your choice once a month (See page 6 of this manual)

General Service Representative Preamble[1]

We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference, and the world of A.A..

We realize the ultimate authority in A.A. is a loving God as He may express himself in our Group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they can reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this Group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship.

Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our groups as a whole.

District Meetings

The District meeting is where GSRs will get much of the information to take back to their Groups, especially during the preparations for the GSC. Most Districts meet once a month and all GSRs should attend their District meeting.

The District Committee Member (DCM) chairs the meeting and will report back from the Area Committee meeting. (See Area Committee section). The DCM or District Registrar will assist in registering with the General Service Office (GSO) in New York. Once complete, GSO will then mail a GSR Kit to the GSR's registered address. These can be expected to arrive within 3 to 6 months.

[1]Box 459, August/September 1989

SDIAA is currently divided into 23 Districts by language and geography. There are three Spanish-speaking (linguistic) Districts which geographically overlap the 20 English-speaking Districts. The SDIAA Structure and Guidelines contains maps and physical descriptions of the Districts.

San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly (SDIAA)

SDIAA is General Service Area 08 and covers San Diego and Imperial Counties. There are six Areas in California and we are part of the Pacific Region of nine western states. There is a map of the Regions in the Service Manual in the chapter on the General Service Board.

Area Committee Meetings

The Area Officers, Standing Committee Chairs, DCMs, Webservant & Archivist, attend Area Committee meetings, which is held on the third Thursday of each month. This meeting, which functions as a steering committee for the Area, communicates information and planning for the Area Assemblies. At the Area Committee meetings, only the Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Officers, Alternate Area Officers, Standing Committee Chairs (or their alternates),–DCMs (or their alternates), Webservant, and Archivist have a vote. GSRs are welcome to attend. Area Assemblies as well as Area Committee meetings are open to any A.A. member.

Area Assembly

Currently, SDIAA holds five Assemblies a year. While all A.A. members are encouraged to attend and become familiar with the issues discussed at the Area Assemblies, only General Service Representatives (GSR), DCM, Standing Committee Chairs, Area Officers, Alternate Officers, and Chairpersons of Inter groups are voting members. The main activities at Assemblies are centered on supporting the Delegate to the General Service Conference and workshops. The GSRs and DCMs are vital voting members and collectively form a majority of the voting members and therefore need to make every effort to attend. All SDIAA matters that either have an effect on the Area's finances or a direct impact on the Groups, whether raised on the floor of the Assembly or coming out of the Area Committee process, are presented and ratified, discussed, revised or rejected by the Assembly. The GSRs and DCMs become informed about local and world-wide A.A. issues at these Assemblies and discuss issues with others who are in a good position to have experience and information to share. In this way the Assemblies meet the purpose of strengthening and unifying A.A. as a whole in carrying the message in the best way possible for the Area. Participation by the GSR and DCM are the key links in the vital chain of a two-way communication between Group members and the larger structure of A.A..

Orientation Assembly

January – This Assembly provides for acclimating the new GSRs and DCMs, and Area Officers to their new positions. Local Area Business is also conducted at this assembly.

Delegate's Pre Conference Assembly

April – GSRs need to be ready to share an Informed Group Conscience and to vote on topics which will be discussed at the next General Service Conference in New York. However, there may be topics that have come up recently, that the delegate will ask for a "Sense of the Assembly" this is an informal vote used to clarify the position of the assembly members on a particular aspect of an agenda item. Our Delegate then brings the Area group conscience on the agenda topics to the General Service Conference.

Delegate's Post Conference Assembly

May – This Assembly is devoted to the Delegate sharing his or her experience at the General Service Conference and the resulting actions of the Conference which affect our Area and A.A. worldwide.

Big Day Assembly (*Even Years*)

September – This Assembly is devoted entirely to Local Area Business. The following year's proposed Area budget is presented to the body at this assembly, then brought back to the Groups for discussion and approval.

Election Assembly (*Odd Years*)

September – This Assembly is held to elect the Area Officers for the next GSC Panel in SDIAA. These officers serve a two-year term starting the following January-, and their responsibilities are detailed within the SDIAA Structure and Guidelines. The elections are conducted using the Third Legacy Procedure, which can be found in the Appendices the A.A. Service Manual. The officer positions elected at this Assembly are as follows:

- Delegate
- Alternate Delegate
- Chair (and Alternate)
- Secretary (and Alternate)
- Treasurer (and Alternate)
- Registrar (and Alternate)

Budget Assembly

November – The following year's proposed Area Budget is discussed, debated, and voted on at this Assembly. Floor motions on budget revisions may be presented as well. Once the budget is approved, other Area business may take place.

GSR School/Orientation

This takes place prior to the start of each Area Assembly. It is designed to provide GSRs more insight into their service position role, increase understanding of the General Service Structure, and provide a forum outside of District meetings and Area Assemblies to ask questions in a less formal environment. Each school/orientation curriculum is geared towards business and other subject matter that will be covered in that day's Assembly. GSRs will also be provided with their own physical copy of the A.A. Service Manual in English or Spanish.

Service Sponsorship

A.A. "service" is anything that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer. Much the way A.A. sponsors share their experience in recovery with their sponsees, a "service sponsor" can be defined as an alcoholic who, having made progress in recovery as well as participated in service, shares this experience with another alcoholic starting their own journey in service. Service sponsors are usually knowledgeable in A.A. history and principles and have a background in the service structure.

Standing Committees of the Area Assembly

Standing Committees are permanent service committees of the Area structure and are primarily composed of GSRs and DCMs. It is very important to note that ANY member of Alcoholics Anonymous can serve on an Area Standing Committee, regardless of them being involved as a GSR or DCM. The committees are designed to assist local members and groups to perform Twelfth Step work that otherwise may be too cumbersome or complex for them to handle. These services CANNOT be provided without the voluntary contribution of individual A.A. members. The SDIAA Structure and Guidelines details of each Standing Committee's compositions, guidelines, purpose, and responsibilities. SDIAA currently consists of the following 14 Standing Committees:

- Accessibilites
- Archives
- Armed Services
- Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.)
- Finance

- Grapevine/La Vina
- Hospitals & Institutions – San Diego (SDIAIC)
- Hospitals & Institutions – North County (NCAIC)
- Information Technology (IT)
- Literature
- Newsletter
- Policy
- Translation
- Young People in A.A. Coordinating Committee (YPAACC)

Other Entities Serving A.A.

SDIAA cooperates closely with local A.A. service entities, such as Intergroups, in San Diego & Imperial Counties. Intergroups are how A.A. in San Diego meets many of its local needs, such as meeting directories and 24-hour phone answering. Intergroups are often referred to as "Central Office." Local Intergroups include the following:

- San Diego Intergroup
- North County Intergroup
- East County Intergroup (*Inactive*)
- Imperial Valley A.A.
- Oficina Central Hispana (SD Hispanic Intergroup)
- Oficina Intergrupal Hispana del Condado Norte de San Diego (NC Hispanic Intergroup)

Area Assembly Structure & Guidelines

The Area Assembly Structure and Guidelines (AAS&G) provides a description of the purpose of the San Diego/Imperial Area Assembly, defines the structure of the officers and standing committees that service its organization, describes the work duties of its acting members, committees and officers, and lists the guidelines by which it conducts its business. The AAS&G also presents the manner in which financial decisions are made for the San Diego/Imperial Area as a whole. The election procedures are also defined within the AAS&G.

General Service Conference

While the General Service Conference operates all year round, the annual meeting, usually held in April, is the culmination of the year's activities, the time when the collective group conscience of U.S./ Canada A.A. comes together to take actions that will guide the groups in the years that follow.

General Service Conference Agenda Items

The Service Manual, in the chapter "The Annual Conference Meeting," explains the process that the GSC Agenda Items go through. The Conference considers matters of policy for A.A. as a whole, and there are tried-and-true procedures for placing an item on the agenda in the most effective way possible. For suggestions that do not concern overall policy, there are procedures to ensure they are routed to the most appropriate part of the service structure. Any A.A. member can submit a Proposed Agenda Item (PAI) to be considered for the following year's GSC. PAI's must be submitted by the annual deadline on the approved form through the Area Delegate.

General Service Conference Timeline

February

The Delegate will begin filtering information through the DCMs to start informing the GSRs on the conference agenda items for the GSC. GSRs can start presenting items to the Groups to begin acquiring an Informed Group Conscience. (See "The A.A. Group" pamphlet.)

March

The Delegate will present a list of agenda items with background material. These are items that the Delegate needs an Informed Group Conscience about. Pre Conference Workshops are held to answer questions or clarify background information on Conference Agenda items for Area Assembly members.

April

The Delegate's Pre Conference Assembly serves the sole purpose of the GSRs informing the Delegate of the Groups' conscience within the Area. The Delegate then brings this conscience with them to the GSC and uses it to guide their discussion and actions at the Conference.

May

The Delegate's Post Conference Assembly completes the circle. This is when you will be informed about what actions were taken by the General Service Conference.

June-January

The Delegate reports the GSC results to individual Districts and Groups. They continue to meet periodically with the other Delegates & Trustee of their Region, and the Delegates of their assigned Conference Committee (Ch. 7-A.A. Service Manual). The members of the Area discuss, propose, and submit agenda items for the following year's GSC.

Foundational Principles of Area Service

Right of Decision

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision." Covered in Concept III.

Right of Participation

At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge. Covered in Concept IV.

Right of Appeal

Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration. Covered in Concept V.

Putting It All Together

Service sponsorship and mentoring are a part of being a GSR. As you grow in service, try to set an example of good service work. Service work is fun and personally rewarding, but only by becoming active in your service work will you find the fun. Every GSR should attend all Area Assemblies, District meetings and be on one Committee. Because there are a number of co-commitments to being the GSR, it is suggested that you do not have any other service commitment.

- Be prepared for the Area Assemblies and ask other GSRs and the DCM what to expect.
- Attend the new GSR School/Orientation that is held an hour before the Assembly.
- Try to get plenty of lead-time to obtain a Group Conscience from your Group. Short and well-planned presentations that are to the point will help you present A.A. information and gather a consensus from your Group – either in your business meetings or during the regular meeting.
- Find out your Group service number.
- Help your Group select and use a pie chart for contributions.
- A service sponsor can be helpful or get the phone numbers of experienced service workers for questions and problem solving.

- Each GSR should have the support of an Alternate GSR, who is available to attend District Meetings or Assemblies in their place if needed
- Attend the Area Assemblies with other GSRs and your DCM. Together we can handle the commitment easier than alone.

SDIAA Committee Contact List

The Area Roster, or Area contact list, is managed and published monthly by the Area Registrar and displays all of the positions that serve the Area. The name and contact information of each individual serving in that position is also listed. To obtain a copy of the most current list, please provide your email address to the Area's Secretary when you attend the Area Assembly. You can also request a copy from your DCM.

The GSR Inventory

1. Am I, as GSR, keeping my Group informed?
2. Am I making regular announcements and reports about District meetings, Committee work, Assemblies, other functions and issues?
3. Am I working well and frequently with the other officers in my Group? (Alt. GSR, Secretary, Treasurer)
4. Am I helping budget our Group's finances with the 50-30-10-10 or a similar plan?
5. Do I have a working knowledge of the Traditions?
   Of the Concepts?
6. Am I turning to the DCM, District Committees, or District Officers for answers to situations that may arise?
7. Am I best representing the Group's conscience – not my own?
8. Am I regularly attending District meetings and my own home Group business meeting?
9. Am I enthusiastic about my service responsibilities?
10. Am I familiar with the A.A. Service Manual?
11. If I am deficient with any of the above, how can the District (or Area) help in improving the situation?

Monthly Things to Do

____ Attend District Meeting
____ Attend Assigned Committee Meeting
____ Report to Group about District Meeting

Informed Group Conscience Guidelines

- Before you start the discussion, put the process of voting on poster board or thoroughly explain it to the group.
- Ask for a motion.
- Allow time for discussion. (You may want to limit it to three pro's, three con's, but the goal is for an Informed Group Conscience.)
- Call for a vote. The vote should result in substantial unanimity (all or almost all-in agreement, usually two-thirds).
- After the vote. Ask if anyone that voted in the minority would like to speak to the opposition – stating why they voted as they did. *Note*: Someone that voted in the majority can call for a re-vote if they have been swayed by the minority position.
- Vote on whether to re-vote. If a majority votes to re-vote, a second vote on the issue is taken – giving time for any further discussion.
- If time does not allow, or unanimity is not reached: Announce that the issue will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting and consider bringing someone with more information on the issue to speak at the next meeting.

Area 08 Website

www.Area8AA.org - The Area 08 website is a valuable informatonal resource for GSRs. Information available on the website includes:

- Area Event Calendar
- Area Officer, Standing Committee, and District pages that include contact info, meeting days / times / locations, and related documents / archives
- Links to the web pages of other local service entities outside of the General Service Structure
- Resources for upcoming & past ACMs and Area Assemblies
- Area 08 Structure & Guidelines
- Other forms related to Area function, finances, etc.

GSR Workbook Survival Pack

Every GSR needs the following resources and forms:
____ The GSR pamphlet (included with the GSR info package from GSO)
____ The A.A. Group pamphlet
____ A.A. Service Manual with Twelve Concepts for World Service (especially Ch. 2)
____ SDIAA Structure and Guidelines
____ Area Newsletter
____ Box 459
____ A.A. Western Regional AAWS Directory

Suggested Format for a GSR Report

- My name is _____, I am an alcoholic and I am your GSR for this Group. This is my monthly report on the actions and activities within the General Service structure, which includes the General Service Office in New York, the Pacific Region, San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly and our local District.

- Everyone is invited to attend any District and Area Assembly meeting. The next monthly District meeting will be held on _____, at _____, time _____. Our District meetings are usually held on _____.

- We need a Group Conscience on the following issue:
  _____
  _____

- The Groups have been asked to:
  _____
  _____

- You may be interested in the following upcoming events associated with General Service:
  _____
  _____

- The following action has been taken at the District/Area level:
  _____
  _____

- Thanks to the contributions from the Seventh Tradition, the District is operating with a current balance of $_____; and the Area Assembly with a current balance of $_____.

- Please see me after the meeting if you need information or if you have any questions regarding my report. Thank you for allowing me to be of service to this Group.