

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

General Service Board
of Alcoholics Anonymous

STRATEGIC PLAN

Approved February 1, 2016

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Introduction

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (GSB) is concerned with all matters affecting the Fellowship's primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

In the process of strategic planning and assessment, the GSB has examined a number of challenges and opportunities facing the GSB and the Fellowship. These are factors affecting the outward reach of A.A. to still-suffering alcoholics, the relation of the GSB to the Fellowship and the overall fiscal health of the organization. To address these challenges and opportunities the GSB has developed goals and possible processes to achieve these goals.

One of the challenges is a lack of growth in the Fellowship in recent years that indicates we have an opportunity do to a better job of reaching out the hand of A.A. There are a number of processes that might be undertaken by the GSB, A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS) and AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV) staff, and the Fellowship to improve our efforts in this area. The first section below discusses goals and possible processes in this area.

The GSB strives to be responsive to the Fellowship and have good communication throughout our service structure. The second section discusses goals and possible processes to improve the relations and communications of the GSB.

Another challenge is a decline in literature sales and subscriptions which may result in financial challenges. This requires long-term fiscal planning. The third section addresses goals and possible processes in this area but it should be noted that there is a related and ongoing feasibility study underway that will also address many of these issues.

Finally, some of the goals described in this plan are aspirational for the Fellowship. We realize that the General Service Board has but one part to play. The goals can only be achieved by the combined efforts of the GSB, the operating corporations, the General Service Conference (GSC) and the Fellowship. The GSB strives to be responsive to the Fellowship through the GSC. The GSB will seek to engage the Conference in moving forward with elements of this Strategic Plan. Any of the items described below that require General Service Conference approval prior to implementation will be explored by the Trustees' committees and forwarded to the appropriate GSC committee in the usual manner.

Mission, Vision, Action

Mission

Our mission is to serve the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Vision

We provide clear and effective leadership to the Fellowship. We are directly responsible and responsive to the Fellowship through the General Service Conference. We are concerned with all matters affecting the Fellowship's primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Action

In all of our deliberations and decisions, we shall be guided by and uphold the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

- Acting as the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance.
- Serving as custodians of the two affiliate corporations (A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc.) making sure the best possible communication and unity exist among them, the General Service Office and the General Service Board.
- Overseeing and adjusting, when needed, a sound, wide-reaching public relations policy that is inclusive of all who may be of help in raising awareness of the Fellowship's existence to all who may benefit from it.
- Communicating with and maintaining relationships with general service structures throughout the world – providing support to help ensure the growth and welfare of the Fellowship worldwide.
- Acting as guardians of A.A.'s Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

Key Strategic Priorities

Section 1: Reaching Out the Hand of A.A.

Overarching Goal:

The General Service Board reaches out to all who suffer from alcoholism by connecting with others; engaging diverse populations; utilizing current, relevant media; and supporting unity within the worldwide A.A. movement.

Description of Purpose

Our focus is on helping to widen the doors of A.A. so that all alcoholics who want to stop drinking can have a chance to find sobriety in A.A. We recognize that inclusivity goes beyond ethnicity and age. It includes gender, relation, linguistics, and any factor that may place a person in the majority or minority.

One effective way to attract more people to A.A. is to enhance our cooperation with professionals. Enhancing our efforts in this area can help us to be more inclusive and it is an area where all A.A. members can help.

We will need to extend our thinking beyond the telephone and traditional mail, and also consider how access may vary across diverse populations. Examining the platforms that we use to carry the message and exploring new ones are critical to addressing issues of reaching the suffering alcoholic and to reaching out to communities in our Areas that are underrepresented in A.A.

List of Goals and Processes

Goal 1: The A.A. Fellowship will become more inclusive and accepting, and thereby A.A. will experience an increase in membership as more people are introduced to recovery.

- **P1.1:** The GSB will bring an inclusivity focus to all aspects of our services. The GSB will suggest each service committee and the two affiliate boards will first undertake an inventory of its materials and services with an eye towards inclusion and acceptance.
- **P1.2:** The GSB will contact Area delegates to identify underrepresented sectors of the A.A. population in their Areas.

- **P1.3:** The GSB will suggest to AAWS that it make electronic versions of select foreign language pamphlets available on aa.org and allow them to be made available on Area websites (or linked from).
- **P1.4:** The GSB will pursue relationships with professionals who work with ethnic/cultural groups that are underrepresented in A.A. as a proportion of population and will encourage the Fellowship to do likewise.
- **P1.5:** The GSB will suggest to the General Service Conference that they utilize Conference time to focus on how the fellowship can engage in sustained outreach with diverse populations as part of doing service.

Goal 2: The General Service Board and the Fellowship have improved relations with professionals: We are friendly with our friends.

- **P2.1:** The GSB and the GSO will undertake a year of increased Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) efforts, including use of resources to send trustees to more professional events on behalf of the GSB, as well as utilizing *Grapevine* and *La Viña* (GV/LV) in this effort.
- **P2.2:** The GSB will suggest to the General Service Conference that a year of focused effort on improving relations with professionals be undertaken with Areas developing new CPC efforts and sharing on what works in their Area with the CPC desk at GSO.
- **P2.3:** The GSB will begin a conversation with basic professional degree programs/accrediting bodies to incorporate info on A.A. into basic education and look at possible inclusion in continuing professional education.
- **P2.4:** The GSB will develop a speaker bureau of friends of A.A. for professionals – both Class A and Class B trustees, present and past.
- **P2.5:** The GSB will review A.A. literature for targeted audiences.

Goal 3: Alcoholics Anonymous: Relevant and connected in today's society.

- **P3.1:** The GSB will undertake a collaborative effort among the trustees' committees of Public Information (PI), CPC/Treatment-Accessibilities, Corrections and International as well as GV/LV to ensure the current PI Comprehensive Media Plan achieves as wide a reach as possible. Methods for regular joint meetings of these committees will be developed to ensure maximum effectiveness of the plan and that all segments of those who may

benefit from A.A.'s existence are reached. This could include restructuring of the GSB weekends.

- **P3.2:** The GSB will develop policies to utilize new media technologies (social and others) by AAWS and AAGV that are in line with the Traditions and allow for the maximization of raising awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous. They should also provide us with methods of communication with all who may benefit from A.A.'s existence.
- **P3.3:** Conduct a media and communications organization-wide audit, including a thorough listing of dates, frequencies, audiences and descriptive platforms utilized, including all outgoing and incoming correspondence.
- **P3.4:** The GSO and GV/LV, with the encouragement of the general manager and executive editor/publisher, will take greater advantage of A.A.'s online and social media presence to insure that A.A. stays relevant in today's society as "one" of the available solutions to alcoholism. The GSB will request the Trustees' PI committee and corporate boards to make this a top priority.
- **P3.5:** The GSB will encourage the AAGV and AAWS boards to explore a common web platform.

Goal 4: Alcoholics Anonymous: A unified worldwide movement.

- **P4.1:** The GSB will develop a plan to embrace more direct sponsorship of other countries.
- **P4.2:** The GSB will explore ways to strengthen our relationships with other service structures and ways to make the World Service Meeting more efficient and effective.

Goal 5: Create new and revise current informational and educational material for professionals and professional associations.

- **P5.1:** The GSB will request committees to develop material that is consistent with the Traditions, including print and video, and how to deliver to targeted audiences.

Goal 6: Identify new places and audiences to bring the A.A. message of hope.

- **P6.1:** The GSB will request management and staff to analyze staffing and responsibilities, and suggest to GSB a list of potential events that a trustee or

non-trustee director might attend. This should include identifying and contacting leadership of professional organizations.

Goal 7: Increase A.A. visibility on contemporary technologies.

- **P7.1:** The GSB will request that AAWS reactivate the YouTube channel for PSAs and expand the use of PSAs on Hulu and other streaming services.
- **P7.2:** The GSB will request that AAWS and AAGV increase the production of in-house videos and use of videos for telling stories, as well as for informational topics.
- **P7.3:** The GSB will encourage the exploration of the use of new media (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn, SMS) to reach out more broadly.

Goal 8: Infuse the spirit of the Third Tradition throughout A.A.

- **P8.1:** The GSB will restructure forums to include sharing on the Third Tradition, emphasizing the inclusive nature of this Tradition.
- **P8.2:** The GSB will encourage more GSO/GV/LV sharing on the broad and inviting door created by the Third Tradition, including in *Box 4-5-9* and *About A.A.*
- **P8.3:** The GSB will send a message to all groups emphasizing the importance of inclusion in A.A. of all who suffer from alcoholism.

Section 2: Improving Relations and Communications

Overarching Goal:

The General Service Board practices and encourages timely and transparent communication among all levels of the service structure and the Fellowship, within our Traditions.

Description of Purpose

For most individual A.A. members, their A.A. experience is limited to their local group. Some have either no knowledge, very little knowledge, or misconceptions about GSO, AAGV and GSB. Thus, improvements are needed in the communications within the organized service structure to engage individual

members and groups so as to show them how AAWS and AAGV interact and impact the individual members' and groups' lives.

The makeup of each of the corporate boards is not inclusive of all trustees and directors therefore leaving many with a lack of knowledge of current projects and functions of each. Previous improvements to our process have resulted in more effective relations but more can be done to improve our internal communications.

There are voices both in and out of A.A. suggesting that anonymity is an outdated principle that promotes the stigma associated with alcoholism. As guardians of the Traditions, it is essential for the General Service Board to communicate effectively the importance of anonymity as discussed in both Traditions 11 and 12.

List of Goals and Processes

Goal 9: The GSB, AAWS and AAGV will be better connected to the Fellowship.

- **P9.1:** Trustees and non-trustee directors should be encouraged to participate in local service events and non-service related events such as conventions and roundups and be encouraged to accept invitations to those and other events given by or having benefit, directly or indirectly, to the Fellowship. Remind groups of the availability and contact information of trustees and non-trustee directors in their locality, Area or Region for speaker/informational or other defined purposes. That reminder should periodically be sent in responses to communications from groups, general service representatives, and others.

Goal 10: The GSB, AAWS and AAGV increase the reach and effectiveness of all our current communications.

- **P10.1:** The GSB, AAWS, and AAGV will utilize the results of a comprehensive communications audit (see P3.3) to analyze current communication methods and the relative effectiveness of each of those methods.
- **P10.2:** Based on the findings of the communications audit, the GSB will implement improvements and efficiencies throughout the entire organization. The results will better define and enlarge our audiences, while improving the effectiveness of our print, digital, event and media resources, by incorporating improved communications into the ongoing operations of the corporate organizations, including each of its programs and services.

- **P10.3:** The GSB will establish a clear methodology for ongoing evaluations of the effectiveness of communications.

Goal 11: Internal communication among the GSB, AAWS Board and AAGV Board will be optimized.

- **P11.1:** The GSB will explore alternative meeting cycles and schedules for the GSB. The goals of the process are to ensure efficient use of resources; financial, staffing, vendors, and other resources, and to utilize the best means for projects and ideas to be carried out.
- **P11.2:** The GSB will develop a permanent process utilizing optimum communication methods allowing for all trustees, directors and staff to share full details of current projects and functions. A first step would be to share minutes of committee meetings (not just board minutes) between all three boards.
- **P11.3:** The GSB will study the current makeup of each of the boards of the operating corporations and their rotations to determine if the current makeup and rotations are the most effective for our mission.
- **P11.4:** The GSB will examine the current size and composition of the GSB and its committees to determine if they are the most effective for our mission.

Goal 12: The GSB acts as a role model in promoting the critical importance of our Traditions; including anonymity as discussed in the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.

- **P12.1:** The trustees will continue to discuss and inventory their own actions regarding anonymity with respect to both the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.
- **P12.2:** The GSB will share with the Fellowship the importance of anonymity as discussed in both the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions through Regional Forums, the General Service Conference and all other available methods.

Section 3: Fiscal Planning

Overarching Goal:

The General Service Board sustains the financial integrity of its services.

Description of Purpose

One of the core functions of the General Service Board is to act as principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance in order to ensure that services can be provided to the Fellowship, now and in the future. Sound financial planning should always be one of our goals.

List of Goals

Goal 13: Sustain the financial viability of the GSB and the operating corporations.

- **P13.1:** Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee will create a policy regarding self-supporting budgets that encourages the corporate boards to keep expenses below the total amount of expected revenue.
- **P13.2:** The GSB will more effectively communicate the Seventh Tradition through relating facts and sharing stories.
- **P13.3:** The GSB will more effectively communicate the availability of online contributions – one-time and recurring.
- **P13.4:** The GSB will re-emphasize Gratitude Month (November) and AAGV's Carry The Message Project (NOTE: for purchase of Gift Subscription Certificates for those in need). This could include sending out an annual letter to all groups as listed in FNV.

Goal 14: Increase the percentage of groups that participate in General Service

- **P14.1:** The GSB will suggest that AAWS consider the possibility of changing the current GSO practice of listing only groups and add an option for listing meetings as well.
- **P14.2:** The GSB will explore ways to communicate the Seventh Tradition to A.A. members who are not active participants in General Service.

Goal 15: Sound financial planning for the future of the GSB and the operating corporations.

- **P15.1:** The GSB will continue and complete the Feasibility Study.
- **P15.2:** The GSB will recommend actions that are indicated by the outcomes of the Feasibility Study.

Next Steps

Many of these processes will need to be further explored, refined and reviewed prior to implementation. The table on the following page represents an initial overview of the boards and trustees' committees that will undertake this effort for each process. These boards and committees will be asked to develop metrics for the implementation of each process.

Any of these items that require General Service Conference approval prior to implementation will be explored by the Trustees' committees and forwarded to the appropriate GSC committee in the usual manner.

The General Service Board will review and update the progress on the plan on a regular basis. In order to have an impact this strategic plan must be followed up with action and assessment.

Finally, strategic planning is an ongoing effort. This Strategic Plan represents the current goals and processes that the General Service Board has developed to help further its mission. The GSB welcomes input from the GSC and the Fellowship on what additional goals and processes should be considered, now and in the future.

Section	Goal	Action	Who: Boards and Trustees' Committees
Reaching Out	Goal 1	P1.1	GSB
		P1.2	GSB, all committees and operating corporations' boards
		P1.3	GSB
		P1.4	GSB & AAWS
		P1.5	GSB
	Goal 2	P2.1	GSB & CPC
		P2.2	CPC
		P2.3	GSB
		P2.4	GSB
		P2.5	GSB & CPC
	Goal 3	P3.1	GSB
		P3.2	GSB & PI
		P3.3	GSB
		P3.4	PI, AAWS, & AAGV
		P3.5	AAGV & AAWS
	Goal 4	P4.1	International
		P4.2	International
	Goal 5	P5.1	GSB, PI, & CPC
	Goal 6	P6.1	GSB & AAWS
	Goal 7	P7.1	PI
		P7.2	PI, AAGV, AAWS
		P7.3	PI
	Goal 8	P8.1	GSB & Regional Forums
		P8.2	AAWS & AAGV
		P8.3	GSB & AAWS
Improving Relations and Communications	Goal 9	P9.1	GSB, AAWS, & AAGV
	Goal 10	P10.1	GSB, AAWS, & AAGV
		P10.2	GSB, AAWS, & AAGV
		P10.3	GSB, AAWS, & AAGV
	Goal 11	P11.1	GSB
		P11.2	GSB
		P11.3	GSB & Nominating
		P11.4	GSB
	Goal 12	P12.1	GSB
		P12.2	GSB
Fiscal Planning	Goal 13	P13.1	Finance
		P13.2	GSB, Finance, AAWS, & AAGV
		P13.3	GSB, Finance, AAWS, & AAGV
		P13.4	GSB, Finance, AAWS, & AAGV
	Goal 14	P14.1	AAWS
		P14.2	GSB, Finance, & AAWS
	Goal 15	P15.1	GSB
		P15.2	GSB