

**Area 27
Louisiana
Area Guidelines**

GENERAL

Prologue

Structure

Scheduling

Floor Procedures

Voting

Service Sponsors

Inter-District Group Transfers

PROLOGUE

This is the Area 27 [Louisiana] Area Guidelines Manual. It is to be used in conjunction with the AA Service Manual, good sponsorship, and our collective experience, strength, and hope to enable and enhance the efforts of those AAs who make up our Area Assembly, Area Committee, and Area Service Committees in carrying the message of AA, through service to the districts and groups of Louisiana, to alcoholics who still suffer.

There are no ruling bodies in Alcoholics Anonymous, only trusted servants. Thus, the guidance set forth in this manual for the Area Assembly and Area Committee simply consolidate in one place the suggested procedures accepted by the Louisiana Area Assembly membership at the time of this edition. These procedures are, to the best of our knowledge and ability, completely compatible with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, and the Service Manual of Alcoholics Anonymous. Subsequent Area Assemblies may decide to change or amend the procedures set forth herein. We would hope, however, that any change will be the result of an informed group decision in the true spirit of AA Recovery, Unity, and Service.

As is customary in AA, the contents are not directive so much as suggested approaches to our mission which have been pounded out over time on the anvils of our own experience. In some cases, that experience may approach the level of personal preference. In others, procedures may be based on or at the direction of previous Area Assemblies. And in still others, we may be involved in a process that undertakes to comply with state or federal laws. Because this is AA, no one has to take on any of this alone. We have a long line of people who have served in these positions over the years who can give guidance in the tough spots. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Unlike the AA Service Manual which is reprinted in book form every year, this Area Guidelines Manual is web-based and is not intended for general printing. Access will be through the area website, and any hard copy required can be copied from the site. General dissemination is prohibited, and the material is copyrighted to the Louisiana Area Assembly, Inc., 2009.

Updates to this Guidelines Manual may be initiated through the Alternate Chair by anyone having primary responsibility for the section being updated. Any procedural or structural amendments shall be approved by majority vote of the Area Assembly. Other less critical changes to aid readability and understanding may be made by the Alternate Chair. Suggestions for such updates may be made by any AA member through the Area Committee or person responsible for the various sections. Publishing/updating will be done by the Alternate Chair through the webmaster/webchair. Current updates will be available on the primary server contracted by the Website Committee, with backups on the backup server and the Website Chair's computer.

Until this Guidelines Manual is completely developed, it may often serve merely to point out areas that need to be included but aren't. Please forward any suggestions to alt.chair@aa-louisiana.org.

STRUCTURE

The Louisiana Area Assembly is made up of elected officers, Service Committee Chairs, past delegates, District Committee Members [DCMs], and group General Service Representatives [GSRs]. It contains the Area Committee which is composed of all these except the GSRs. It currently meets four times each year at an Assembly site voted on by the Assembly to host for the following two years. Scholarship monies to assist DCMs in attendance at Area Assembly are made available only when the request has been made and accompanied by a letter from the District requesting funds.

Currently, the election of new officers to serve for two-year terms is held in conjunction with the August Assembly in even years. Committee Chairs are selected by the incoming Chair and ratified by the Assembly in November of even years. Terms for officers and committee chairs start on 1 January of odd years. Scheduling and terms of service are set up to provide ample time for job transfers, plus allow economical scheduling of the new Delegate and Alternate Delegate to attend the Southeast Regional Forum in late November or early December of even years. Overall election scheduling is determined by the General Service Conference which sets Area 27 delegates to serve on odd-numbered panels [e.g., the Panel 57 Delegate serves in 2007 and 2008 at the General Service Conference].

The Assembly officers are:

Delegate	Alternate Delegate
Chair	Alternate Chair
Secretary	Treasurer

The Assembly officers' support positions are:

Registrar	Hotel Coordinator	Literature Coordinator
-----------	-------------------	------------------------

The Standing Service Committee Chairs are:

Archives	Budget & Finance
Cooperation with the Professional Community [CPC]	Corrections
Grapevine	Public Information [PI]
State Convention	Treatment
Website	

The Assembly also forms *ad hoc* committees from time to time to investigate subjects and propose actions to the Assembly. Two that are routinely called into existence are the *ad hoc* Committee on Redistricting and the *ad hoc* Committee on Bids.

Assembly business is routinely conducted at the quarterly Area Assembly meeting. Committee work, workshops, reports, and presentations are normally conducted on Saturday. Reports and the general business meeting are on Sunday. Other work, depending on the function involved, is carried on between assembly meetings. To gain an appreciation of the scope and effort required for any committee or position, see the job descriptions included in this Area Guidelines Manual.

SCHEDULING

STRATEGIC

The Assembly is currently scheduled four times each year, generally once each quarter. The Pre-Conference Assembly is to be scheduled at any assembly prior to the General Service Conference (Procedures for the Pre-Conference Assembly are with the Alt Delegate).

TACTICAL

Area Assemblies are scheduled to occur on a Saturday and Sunday. Saturday is designed to provide time for orientation, the Area Committee, service committees, workshops, presentations, and other formal and informal discussions. Sunday is generally half a day and provides time for some presentations, officers' reports, the general business meeting, and the Agenda Committee. The setting of the schedule for Area Assembly is the responsibility of the Area Officers, with major changes to be approved by the Area Committee, in order to allow the Officers to manage housekeeping items.

Within the general layout for the weekend schedule, there are several constraints that drive individual events:

- Orientations are scheduled first so newcomers can get enough information to function for the rest of the weekend.
- Since District and city service efforts often combine some committee work, PI and CPC should be scheduled in separate time slots to enable participation in both. The same logic applies to Treatment and Corrections Committees.
- Budget and Finance is scheduled last so that other committee chairs can bring any financial problems discovered during the course of the day to the committee for immediate attention and possible inclusion in the following day's business meeting.
- The Agenda Committee is the last event of the weekend so that all other business has transpired before it meets. That allows inputs based on the totality of the Assembly's business for the weekend. In addition, much of what is presented to the Agenda Committee is generated from the business meeting that immediately precedes it.

Here are some hints of what to bring to the assembly and what to pick up to bring back from the assembly.

First Quarter Assembly:

- Bring names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses for any new GSRs and DCMs in your district. The data will be input to the Registrar's database for the assembly. If you don't know your group's GSO number, pick it up from the Registrar at registration.
- Expect to bring back the approved assembly financial statement for the previous year and the approved budget for the current year.

Second Quarter Assembly:

- Update any changes to the Registrar's database.

Third Quarter Assembly:

- Update any changes to the Registrar's database.
- Even years: Come prepared to participate in the assembly election of officers for the following two years. If you plan to stand for one of the positions, at a minimum read the applicable job description in the AA Service Manual and in this Area Guidelines Manual.
- Odd Years: Be prepared to present your bid package for any future assembly activity your group or district wants to host. (Bid questions often used are with the Alt chair), e.g., assembly location, state convention.
- Expect to bring back a copy of the General Service Conference Report. It will be distributed through the DCM at the assembly.

Fourth Quarter Assembly:

- Update any changes to the Registrar's database.
- Odd years: Come prepared to take part in the assembly inventory (Area Chairperson has copy of the questions often used at past inventories).
- Even years: Prior to the assembly, contact the new Assembly Chair if you are interested in serving as a committee chair or in a support position for the next two years.

FLOOR PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended as a guide to conducting business on the floor of the assembly.

WHO IS ELLIGIBLE TO VOTE?

Area GSRs and DCMs, Area Officers (including Registrar & Hotel Coordinator), Delegates, Past Delegates, and Standing Service Committee Chairpersons are full voting members of the Louisiana Area Assembly. Alternates attending in place of an absent primary member are also voting members during their period of primary service.

ORDER OF BUSINESS OF THE AREA SERVICE MEETING

The order of business of the area business meeting is determined by the Agenda Committee at the agenda planning meeting of each assembly. The business meeting format is usually as follows:

- Opening by Area Chairman
- Officers Reports
- Committee Reports
- Budgetary Motions
- Old Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

PLACING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Any AA member in Area 27 may place an item on the agenda (herein after "Sponsor") by presenting it in written form to the Agenda Committee. Alternatively, it may be presented to a member of the area committee who may submit it. All motions that involve the expenditure of money should be submitted to the Budget & Finance Committee prior to being introduced on the floor at the business meeting. Items concerning or involving a standing service committee should be submitted through that committee for presentation to the agenda committee. Prioritization of agenda items is done by the Area Committee at the agenda meeting immediately following the business meeting. All agenda items that come up after or between assemblies should be submitted to the area chair and must be included in the Agenda Item discussion meeting, in order to be included in the Sunday Morning business meeting.

A Sponsor must attend the Saturday Agenda Discussion Meeting to present the agenda item or the agenda item will be tabled until the next Assembly. If the Sponsor is absent at the following Saturday Agenda Discussion Meeting, the agenda item will be withdrawn from consideration.

SECONDS TO MOTIONS

Any voting member of the assembly may second a motion by saying, "Second." A second to a motion does not necessarily mean the member supports the motion, just that the member wants it to be considered and discussed.

WITHDRAWAL & AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

A motion may be withdrawn by the member sponsoring the motion at any time prior to a vote. Amendments to a motion must be related to the motion. After a motion has been stated by the chair, any voting member may offer an amendment, but it must be seconded and passed by a majority vote. The chair then restates the amended motion and business proceeds. The procedure for voting on the motion as amended is to vote on the amendment first, then on the motion as amended. If the amendment fails, the original motion is then reopened for discussion and subsequent action.

DEBATE & DECORUM

Debate is any spoken comment and discussion on the merits of a pending motion. When a motion is made and seconded, it must be stated by the chair before any debate. Any member wishing to speak in debate must come to the microphone and wait until no other member is speaking. Comments are limited to three minutes and are timed by the alternate chair. No member shall speak twice on a motion until all other members who desire to speak to the motion have had an opportunity to speak. If at any time the chair is required to state a point of order or otherwise speak within the privileges of the chair, then the member speaking should defer to the chair. Such an interruption will not count toward the member's time to speak to the motion.

CALL THE QUESTION

A motion to close debate, commonly referred to as "calling the question," must be made in order at the microphone. This motion can be used only to close debate, not to prohibit debate, and is considered "out of order" if made before debate has begun. The call-the-question motion

requires a second, is not debatable, and requires a two-thirds vote to end debate. If passed, the motion on the floor is voted on. This motion yields to the motion to "lay on the table."

POSTPONE THE MOTION

A motion to postpone is to remove the present motion from consideration and entrust it to the care of the secretary until the next area assembly. It requires a second, is undebatable, unamendable, and requires a majority vote. A motion to postpone may be made at any time prior to the vote on the main motion. The motion to postpone is normally made to allow some action directed by the Assembly Chair or taken on by the motion's sponsor that will clarify or resolve the status of the agenda item for a more informed action by the assembly. The postponed motion will be considered at the next assembly, and will be automatically included in that assembly's agenda by the Secretary.

LAY ON THE TABLE

A motion to "lay on the table" or table is to remove the present motion from consideration and entrust it to the care of the secretary until its consideration is resumed at the next area assembly. It requires a second, is undebatable, unamendable, and requires a majority vote. A motion to table may be made at any time prior to the vote on the main motion. The tabled motion may be considered at the next assembly by a member making a motion to "take the tabled motion off the table." Such a motion requires a second, is undebatable, unamendable, and requires a majority vote. If a motion is not taken from the table at the next assembly after it was tabled, it expires upon adjournment of that assembly.

POINT OF ORDER

A point of order is an assertion that a procedure is being violated and a request that correct procedure be enforced by the chair. It takes precedence over any pending motion out of which it arises. It is in order when another has the floor even if it is necessary to interrupt a speaker. It does not require a second and is not debatable or amendable. It is decided by the chair, subject to appeal. To make a point of order, a member rises and says, "Point of Order." The chair asks the member to state his point, and the member does so, being as specific as possible without entering into debate or asking a question. The chair then rules on the point of order.

An appeal of the decision of the chair is permitted by a member announcing, "I appeal the decision of the chair." If the appeal is seconded, the chair then defines the issue involved, explains the reasons for his decision, and says, "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" An appeal is debatable, but no member may speak more than once in debate, and the chair may defend his decision once again at the end of the debate. A majority vote sustains the chair's decision.

VOTING

MATTERS OF POLICY -- SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY

All matters of policy require substantial unanimity, that is, a two-thirds majority. Any actions, including amendments, that affect a matter of policy, or motions that might result in a matter of policy, also require a two-thirds majority. A quorum shall be the number of voting members present at the time a vote is taken. Because the number of members present in the hall

during Assembly varies from time to time, the phrase "two-thirds vote" or "majority vote" is taken to mean that quantity of the voting members present at that time.

MINORITY VOICE

Full discussion of a proposal should take place *before* the vote. Premature actions (e.g., amending motions early in discussion or hastily calling the question) can divert attention from the subject at hand, thus confusing and/or delaying assembly business. Everyone is entitled to, and should express, their opinion. However, if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to go to the mike and say it again. Remember, too, that saving minority opinions until after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, is another time-waster, for it can force the assembly to reconsider a question that might have been decided the first time around if it had been thoroughly examined from all sides.

After voting on a matter of policy, the losing side will always be given an opportunity to re-present their position. Then the Chair will ask if anyone who voted in the majority would like to change their vote. If so, a Motion to Reconsider must be made by a member who voted with the winning side, but it can be seconded by anyone. [If a main motion receives a majority vote, but fails to pass for lack of a two-thirds vote, the majority may re-speak to their position, and the Motion to Reconsider must be made by someone who voted against the motion.]

A simple majority is required to reconsider. No action may be reconsidered twice. If the majority votes to reconsider, full debate, pro and con, is resumed. (Members are urged to limit discussion to new considerations of the question under debate.)

ELECTIONS -- THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE

AA's Third Legacy Procedure has traditionally been used for electing area officers and is outlined in the AA Service Manual. Election assemblies are held in August of even-numbered years. To be eligible to vote at an election assembly, GSRs must provide a letter from their home group stating that they are representing their group. All other members of the Assembly are eligible to vote. A quorum shall be the number of voting members present at the time a vote is taken.

All members of the area committee are automatically nominated for all positions if they are eligible to serve. The nomination may be declined by the member during the roll call prior to the election for each office. Persons not currently members of the area committee may be nominated from the floor by a voting member of the assembly.

The Assembly may remove the Delegate, Alternate Delegate, or any assembly officer from office for just cause including, but not limited to, the breaking of the sobriety date. Such removal from office shall be by a 2/3 majority vote of the assembly done by secret ballot. When the office has no alternate, the Area Assembly shall conduct elections for the unexpired term of the office vacated, in accordance with these guidelines. For the offices of Delegate and Chairperson, their alternates shall assume the office vacated and an election for the office of the alternate shall be held.

In the event the office of the Alternate Delegate, Alternate Chairperson, Secretary, or Treasurer becomes vacant at a time prior to an Area Assembly, the Area Committee may, at its next meeting, select an interim officer to carry on the duties of the office until an election can be held at the next scheduled Area Assembly. In the event the Area Committee is not scheduled to meet within an amount of time considered reasonable by the Chairperson, and which would result in serious disruption of the function of the Area, the Chairperson may appoint an interim officer to serve until the next scheduled Area Committee Meeting or Area Assembly.

WHO MAY VOTE

Assembly Business Meeting	All members of the Area Assembly
Area Committee	All members of the Area Committee
Agenda Committee	Area Committee members
Other Committees	Any member attending a committee meeting may vote on committee matters

SERVICE SPONSORS

Many people find that, as they get into service work, they need someone with different skills from their recovery sponsor to help them in the service world. In such cases, while keeping their recovery sponsor, they find a service sponsor to aid them in their new endeavors.

A service sponsor is normally someone you have noticed who seems to navigate through the occasional chaos of district, assembly, or other service committee events in a way that you want to emulate. You get one the same way you get a recovery sponsor; you ask them. Of course, just like with your recovery sponsor, you may now be along for the ride of your life! You may get nudged into things you never ever thought of doing before. But if you are ready to go into service to be of service and not because of ego, you will find another third of our AA program opening up before you that is as much of a miracle as the recovery portion.

INTER-DISTRICT GROUP TRANSFERS

From time to time, groups wish to transfer out of the district they are in to another district. Although the area assembly often has an ad hoc committee on redistricting, such transfers are not usually managed or adjudicated by the assembly.

In general, group transfers are handled under the 4th Tradition: "With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted." The essential process is full discussion and disclosure with all parties involved.

Thus, as a general guide for such transfers, a group should determine that its informed group conscience is to make a transfer. Next, because of the possible impacts on both districts involved, the proposed transfer should be brought before both districts' business meetings for discussion. Ideally, substantial unanimity should be the result.

Having achieved substantial agreement with all parties concerned, the group should prepare a letter to the Area Assembly Chair stating all the facts in the matter. At this point, the

Area Assembly can update its maps and databases to reflect the transfer and forward the change in district to GSO for inclusion in their database.