

Service Structure Ad-Hoc Committee Report

The Service Structure Ad-Hoc Committee was formed by this Area in August of 2011 to develop a plan and structure for migrating the Area to the new service structure model that is currently under development by the Service Structure sub-committee of the NA World Service Conference. This mandate came as the result of an Area Inventory conducted in August.

In that inventory, we found that many of the issues that our Area faced were the same issues that had been brought to World by the fellowship that led to the development of this project –

“For years we have heard about the same challenges in local NA communities: ineffective communication, insufficient resources, frustrated trusted servants, and a poor atmosphere of recovery in our service meetings.

Results from two recent Issue Discussion Topics, Infrastructure and Our Service System, expressed these same struggles and the same goal—to better align our practices with our principles. Of course, for some of us the system we have is working, but for others it is not.

The proposals described in this report are offered in the hopes that they will improve service delivery throughout the system regardless of how well any particular body is or isn't working. The Service System Project, adopted at the 2008 World Service Conference as a four-year project and renewed at WSC 2010, was proposed as a way to begin to solve some of our problems. This report suggests some specific ideas for changes that could improve our ability to work together to carry the message and achieve our vision.” - *“Service System Proposal Report” for Discussion @ WSC 2012*

Out of this committee came the decision to separate the Area Service Committee meeting in to two components, the Group Service Unit and the Local Service Unit, which was done at the October ASC meeting. This change has appeared to be popular with those participating in service at the Area Level, and has led to good discussions among GSR's on issues affecting the groups and streamlined the business meeting portion of the ASC. However, we were operating without established guidelines and uncertainty as to how to proceed from that point. The ASC requested, and received, permission from the groups of the Area to temporarily suspend the current Area guidelines with the stipulation that new guidelines would be produced by the February ASC meeting for review and approval more clearly defining the service structure and its responsibilities.

The Ad-Hoc committee met weekly since the January ASC to develop these new guidelines and are presenting them to the Area today. A lot of work has gone into this effort, and I would like to thank all of those who participated; Sally B., Curtis C., Richard F., Deanna J., Mary O., David P. and Lisa T.

While we struggled at first to define how the new structure would look, we were pleased to find that the World Committee had made more progress in a proposed structure which was contained in the Service System Proposal report for the WSC. With this guidance, we were able to work out the last details and come up with a viable plan.

The new service structure defined in the proposed guidelines maintains a separate LSU and GSU organization. While the current guidelines have a single GSU, we anticipate that they will be changed in the future as members become familiar with the structure to allow for smaller community based GSU's as described in the service structure report. We believe that we are better served waiting at least six months for any changes of this nature; however, to give us time to adapt to the change and to see what works and what doesn't.

The GSU body will select two delegates from its members to represent its interests at the LSU level and to ensure that the other elected representatives are maintaining a responsibility to the groups that they serve.

The LSU structure actually has two components. The Local Service Board, or LSB, is the body that performs the day to day and month to month business of the Area. The Service Board is elected by the groups of the Area annually and is accountable to the groups. In addition to the elected trusted servant positions, the two delegates from the GSU are also board members. The LSB will continue to meet monthly and will conduct business using consensus based decision making. While GSR's are not required to attend the LSB meetings, all members of the Area are encouraged to participate and shall have an equal voice in the decision making process.

The LSB receives its direction and develops its strategic plan for the annual planning cycle through the annual assembly. This will be an annual planning conference held in March which all groups of the Area should participate in to determine the budget, services and projects for the upcoming year. Subsequent conferences each quarter will be used to report back to the groups how we are progressing against the plan and to seek guidance on priority changes or changes to the plan as needed.

Sub-Committee chairs will be replaced by Service coordinators accountable for providing the services the Area has asked for. Some of these services will continue to be provided by the traditional sub-committee structure, while others may find that they are best served meeting more informally by work groups on task specific assignments. We will leave this for the Service coordinators and the members providing these services to best decide.

Some may ask, why are you fixing what isn't broken. But most of you who have asked that question no longer participate in service to the Area because of the 'circus', 'you've served your time' or because of the drama. That, my friends, does not describe something that isn't broken. We on the committee are excited about the possibilities of changing the nature of service to the Area to one in which everyone can find their niche without having to take on the whole beast known as Area Service. We ask the groups of the Area to support these guidelines, give it a try for a year, and then let's see what worked and what didn't. Most of all, we ask all of you to participate in the new process, especially with the first annual conference to be held in March should these guidelines be approved.

Yours in service,

Gilbert S.