

G.S.R. (General Service Representative)

May be the most important job in A.A.!

“By choosing its most qualified person as G.S.R., a group helps secure its own future – and the future of A.A. as a whole.”

As General Service Representative: You transmit ideas and opinions, as well as facts. Through you, the group conscience becomes a part of “the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.” Without a GSR, your group’s opinion on what happens within A.A. worldwide is lost. The collective group experiences and difficulties are not able to be shared with the rest of our worldwide fellowship.

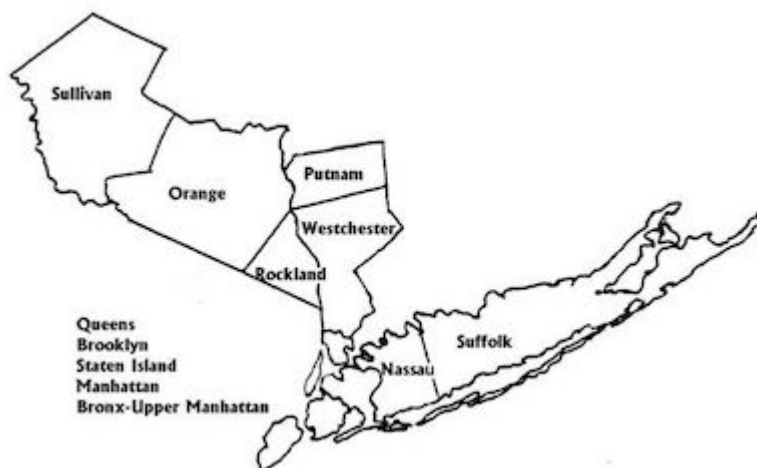
Every year, A.A.’s group-elected Delegates meet to discuss and vote on changes to A.A. literature and A.A. policy. Without a GSR, the group does not get a chance to be informed about what changes are being discussed, and your unique group perspective is unable to be heard. Because you were willing to say ‘yes’ to A.A. and showed up here today, you get to serve as a vital link in connecting one alcoholic with another, and helping to ensure that A.A. will continue to stay and serve the alcoholics who are not yet even born.

Where Are We and Why Am I Here? Welcome to Area 49! We are glad you are here, and we are happy to see you. We are one “delegate area” out of 93 delegate areas in the U.S. and Canada. Together, the areas help to make up the total “General Service Conference.” Each area is located in a specific geographic location and is responsible to help serve the region in which it sits.

Area 49 (SENY) is responsible to help serve all of South Eastern New York. We reach as far northwest as Sullivan County and as far east as Montauk. The map below shows what Area 49 covers. Geographically, we cover the 5 boroughs of New York, the 7 surrounding counties and the Hispanic non-geographic district.

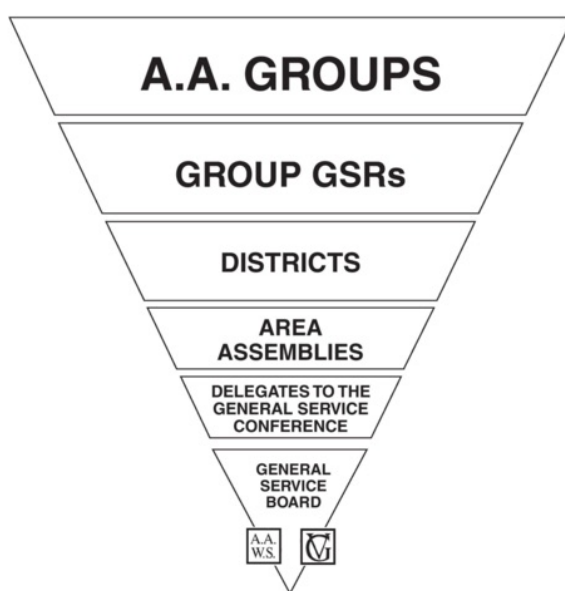
The area assembly meeting addresses a variety of issues, from General Service Conference business to area problems and solutions and financial affairs. Area sharing sessions, public information programs, workshop and video programs help keep A.A. strong, and help increase participation in the service structure. The main purpose of the Area is to be one level in the service structure where information between A.A. World Services, the A.A. Grapevine and the Worldwide Fellowship of A.A. is transmitted.

General Service Structure



As a GSR, you are part of the General Service Structure. You are responsible to your group's conscience and what they feel is best for A.A. You can vote against what your group feels is best, if there is new information presented to you that you feel if they knew they would change their vote, or if you believe that voting for or against really was not in the best interest of A.A. If done, the group you were asked to serve certainly has a right to ask why you felt it was best to go against the group conscience. As a member of the group and serving as its GSR, you are on the top of the service structure and those below, such as DCMs and Delegates, are responsible to listen to you!

The chart below illustrates A.A.'s "upside down triangle." The real power and say in A.A. resides within the groups, and those entities lower in the triangle serve the groups by faithfully acting on the ideas and opinions expressed through the group conscience.



Districts:

Within most counties there are districts. Each district is responsible to help and represent the A.A. groups. If a district has an elected DCM (District Committee Member) and meets together (typically once a month), the group is referred to as active. If a district does not have a DCM or meet together as a district, the district is considered inactive and sometimes referred to as "dark" or a "dark district." If your group is located in an active district, notify the chair and they will work to get you connected to find out more about district activities

Inter-Groups:

Within Area 49, we have 8 long standing Inter-groups (Brooklyn, Orange, Nassau, New York, Queens, Rockland, Suffolk, and Sullivan). Sometimes also referred to as central offices or central committees. While some aspects of these inter-groups may sound similar to Area Assembly, the purpose of Area versus Inter-groups are different. As mentioned earlier, the primary purpose of an Area Assembly is to obtain and help carry out the collective group

conscience of A.A. as a whole. This is why many of the activities of an Area body will center around transferring information, discussion, days of sharing/learning, focusing on election of a delegate, as well as pre- and post- “conference reports.”

Traditionally, general service committees and inter-groups/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.

These central offices/Inter-Groups will maintain services such 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.

I am a new GSR, what do I need to know now?

- **Get a Service Sponsor** – It is suggested that if your current sponsor does not have experience with general service, that you get a service sponsor.
- **Make sure your group has an Alternate GSR.**
- **Bring Copies of “The Link” to your Group.**
- **Familiarize yourself with the A.A. Service Manual, the 12 Concepts for World Service, and our 12 Traditions, and read the pamphlet The A.A. Group.**
- **Attend all of your County General Service Assembly Meetings.**

A typical report from the County Meeting to your group:

- **Something about GSO** (AA as a whole).
- **Something about SENY** – listen to the officers reports, may be something about one of the standing committees (Corrections, Public Information, etc.).
- **Something that you think your home group would be interested in.**
- **Something from an article in the Link.**

Attend all of the Assemblies - Remember, each time you raise your hand to vote, you are voting on behalf of your group and your vote goes all the way to the Conference.

- SENY (Area 49s) Typical Assembly Format.
 - 8:30 a.m. Registration
 - 8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Morning Workshops
 - 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Assembly Business Meeting
 - 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch & Fellowship
 - 1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Afternoon Assembly Session

SENY's (Area 49) Typical Calendar & Annual Events:

January/ February: First Area Assembly of the New Year. After an election year, new area officers are welcomed.

February: North East Regional A.A. Service Assembly (NERAASA) a weekend meeting of 18 delegate areas in the northeastern region of the U.S. to get together over the upcoming conference agenda items. Panel presentations take place throughout the weekend discussing various topics pertinent to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. While NERAASA is not a mandatory event it is highly recommended that anyone who is able to go does.

March: The Delegate's Questionnaire - For one week every April, the 93 Area Delegates from across the U.S. & Canada gather for the General Service Conference to make decisions which will affect us all. Our Delegate John W. wants input from as many groups as possible. As delegate he creates a questionnaire on several Conference agenda items for groups to review, fill out, and send back to him. Each group's General Service Representative (GSR) is responsible for bringing this to their group and sharing the outcome with the Delegate. This is your group's chance to participate in the fellowship-wide decision-making of A.A.! Ask yourself: do I consider my group important enough to have our voice heard.

The Delegate's Day of Sharing - is when the background material related to each agenda item will be presented. Every GSR & Alternate should participate. Without his context being brought back, your group's responses to the questionnaire won't be nearly as well informed. Plus it's super interesting!

The SENY Convention - An exciting program of workshops on service, recovery and unity is planned at an Area Hotel. The hotel offers extensive space for meetings, fellowship, hospitality, entertainment and fun. Register: aaseny.org or contact chairperson at <mailto:convention@aaseny.org>.

April – Pre-Conference Assembly - What does "Pre-Conference" mean? This Assembly is held two weeks prior to the General Service Conference. The eight questions on the Delegate's Questionnaire represent agenda items at the Conference. Our Delegate wants to know the conscience of the groups in our area in advance.

Why is this Assembly so important for GSRs to attend? You will have the opportunity to voice your group's conscience on the Questionnaire directly to the Delegate! This is also the last opportunity to submit a completed questionnaire.

June – Post-Conference Assembly

August – New York State Informational Workshop August - Comprised of all 4 areas within NY State, to share about committee work and try to gain better unity amongst the 4 areas.

September – Assembly

November – Assembly

Voting at Area Business Meetings – “Modified” Robert’s Rules of Order:

As a GSR in a group in Area 49 you get to vote here! And your voice is heard, just as much as the person with 20 plus years experience in general service.

In A.A. we use what’s referred to as modified Robert’s Rules of Order. We use them to help conduct the flow of a meeting where voting takes place and help to establish a process to make sure that each voice can be heard. Certain terms you may hear are “I would like to make a motion to...” “Second”; “Point of Order” “Point of Information” “Call the Question”: “motion to Table”; “Motion to close.”.

We refer to them as ‘Modified’ in A.A. as we do not use them as strictly as the full version. A.A. General Service takes great care in making sure every voice is heard and that we reach decisions by “substantial unanimity” where in almost all cases a vote passes by a minimum of 2/3rds of eligible voters. This is so we can never slowly become divided into two sizable parties, neither feeling they are getting what they want. We also take care to listen to “minority opinion.” This means that whoever was not in the ‘prevailing’ or winning vote has the opportunity to speak again as to why they were for or against a motion.

Suggested Meeting Guidelines for SENY Assembly Meetings Guidelines:

1. **The running of AA business meetings is guided by the principles outlined in AAs Three Legacies –**
Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts for World Service. Among those principles:
 - a. We are reminded to act with humility in the greater interest of the area and AA as a whole (Traditions 1 and 12), and with faith (Tradition 2).
 - b. We are reminded why we are here (Tradition 5).
2. **When our by-laws provide insufficient guidance, we fall back on Robert’s Rules where consistent with our by-laws and principles.**
3. **Who is a SENY assembly member?**
 - a. All elected officers, appointed standing committee chairs, past delegates.
 - b. All DCMCs, DCMs, GSRs and their alternates.
 - c. Interested AA members are welcome and encouraged to attend our assembly meetings; however they do not have a vote.
4. **Basic ideas**
 - a. **Common courtesy and common sense** - Principles before personalities (Tradition 12); everyone wants to be heard.
 - i. Wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking.
 - ii. Keep your sharing brief (suggested not more than 2 minutes) and to the question.
 - iii. There is no need to restate a point already made.
 - iv. Let others be heard once before seeking to be heard a second time on a question.
 - b. **Motions need to be seconded to be considered;** the chair facilitates the discussion. Motions may be amended. Amendments are themselves motions and are handled before the main motion to which they pertain. Compound motions/amendments tend to be confusing, and often confound the discussion.
 - c. **Motion to table or postpone-** Further discussion and decision on a question may be

deferred. To table means to set the question aside until a motion to take it up again is passed. To postpone means to set the question aside until a specified later assembly meeting. A motion to take up a postponed question is not needed. The postponed question becomes “old business.”

- d. **Votes**- Decisions are reached by majority vote (either 2/3 or a simple majority) while allowing for minority opinion. Policy decisions are reached by 2/3 majority, substantial unanimity. Most procedural questions can be decided by a simple majority. Officers, standing committee chairs, past delegates, DCMCs, DCMs and GSRs may vote. Alternates vote only in the absence of their principal. Although the Area Chair may participate in discussions and vote, he/she generally remains impartial during discussions. Exceptions may include: (1) a vote to break a tied vote, and (2) a wish to participate in the discussion, in which case the Area Chair may ask a fellow officer (except the Area Treasurer) to chair that segment of the assembly meeting.
 - e. **Minority opinion** invites additional new sharing on an already decided question from the minority side only. It is not a reopening of discussion. On hearing the minority opinion, if any member who voted with the majority decides to change his/her vote, he/she may offer a motion to **reconsider** the question. (Such a motion must come from the majority.) If seconded, it requires a simple majority to carry. If carried, the question is reopened to discussion and vote.
 - f. A **point of order** calls a presumed procedural error to the chair’s attention. The chair accepts or rejects the point subject to appeal to the assembly meeting.
5. A **point of information** asks for information on a question. It does not offer information on a question. Information on a question is offered in the usual course of discussion.

How to Register - <http://www.aaseny.org/update-form>. Complete the registration form. This will register you in the Area (SENY), your county, and with GSO.

You can also stop by the registration table at the Assembly and they can register you there. When GSO is notified they will send you the New GSR Kit. This will include your A.A. Service Manual and many handouts and pamphlets to assist you in your new position.

Alphabet Soup: A Glossary of Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms

AAWS— Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (Inc.)— A corporation of the General Service Board overseeing the operations of the General Service Office and serving as the publishing company for Conference-approved and service literature

ASN – Accessibility/Special Needs – Broadly, a term applied to those who may have more than the usual barriers to accessing the AA message or meetings. The term is also applied to the extra efforts made within the fellowship to recognize and to counter those barriers

Assembly – The gathering of all area GSRs with the area committee for the purpose of sharing information, discussing service topics, and making decisions

Area – A geographical division entitled to elect a delegate to represent it at the General Service Conference, also assuming some responsibility for AA service activity in its geographical division

Box 4-5-9 – Periodic newsletter of the General Service Office (GSO). It is sent out to all registered group and service group representatives and is also available by subscription

Bridging the Gap - Programs coordinated under AA's CR and TF committees providing support to AAS making the transition from AA in prison or jail (CF) or inpatient setting (TF) to AA in the open community

Corrections - A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to incarcerated alcoholics and/or with working cooperatively with correctional professionals toward that end

Class A Trustee— Non-alcoholic trustee elected by the General Service Board to serve on AA's General Service Board and standing trustee committees, usually drawn from the ranks of professionals who believe in the AA recovery program

Class B Trustee— AA member trustee elected either regionally (Regional Trustee), nationally (Trustee at Large for the United States or Canada) or from among current or past non-trustee directors at AAWS or The AA Grapevine (General Service Trustee)

CNY— Central New York— Area 47 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State

Committee – The gathering of area, district, county, standing committee chairs, elected officers and past delegates. These members are charged with handling day-to-day service activities for the area subject to the approval of the area assembly.

CPC— Cooperation with the Professional Community— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message through working with professionals who may work with alcoholics

DCM— District Committee Member— The chairperson of local district committee, the district's voice in area committee and assembly meetings

DCMC— District Committee Member Chair— The chairperson of the local county committee/assembly, the county's voice in area committee and assembly meetings

District— Several groups in a local community meet together to form a district committee as the next service level between the home groups and the county and area

FNV-Fellowship New Vision – The AAWS/GS) Records Department's group database

General Service Board— The service entity with responsibility for custodial oversight for all AA service activities through AAWS, Inc., the AA Grapevine, Inc. and the trustees' committees

GSC— General Service Conference— The service body representative of the membership which is “the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA,” (from, The AA Service Manual, p. S95), the guiding conscience of the fellowship, also the annual meeting in New York City of that service body

GSO— General Service Office— The business office of AA in the US and Canada located in New York City

GSR— General Service Representative— An AA group’s representative and link with the rest of AA, the voice of its group conscience

Grapevine— The periodic journal of AA, “Our Meeting in Print,” also a service committee concerned with carrying the AA message through the publication of the two periodicals, the Grapevine and La Viña

Group Conscience – The group conscience is a majority of well-informed members with a conscious awareness that a loving God may express Himself in a minority voice. Each question must be well debated and every member and group have an equal opportunity to express their experience and opinion on a subject so that a real sense of the group may be known

HMB— Hudson-Mohawk-Berkshire— Area 48 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State

Link, The – SENY’s periodic newsletter. The Spanish edition is El Enlace

La Viña— The Spanish language edition of AA’s periodic journal

NERAASA— Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly— The Northeast Region’s annual weekend gathering to discuss General Service Conference-related and other topics touching AA’s Three Legacies

NERD— Northeast Regional Convention— The Northeast Region’s annual convention NERD— Northeast Regional Delegate(s)— Any past or present delegate from the Northeast Region, also the annual meeting of that group of members

NERF— Northeast Regional Forum— A biennial regional weekend sharing and informational session designed to help the General Service Board, AAWS, the Grapevine Corporate Board, the Grapevine Staff, and the General Service Office Staff stay in touch with members in the region

Northeast Region— Our region in the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of eight regions (six in the US and two in Canada), including the 18 areas in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts (2), New Hampshire, New Jersey (2), New York (4), Pennsylvania (2), Rhode Island and Vermont

NYSIW— New York State Informational Workshop— An annual service weekend sponsored by the four areas in NY State supporting discussion and the sharing of experience of the fellowship’s main service committees

PI— Public Information— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to the public often working with the media

SENY— South Eastern New York (Committee and Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous)— Area 49 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State, our area

TF— Treatment Facilities— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to alcoholics in institutions and/or working cooperatively with treatment professionals toward that end

WNY— Western New York— Area 50 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State