

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous

STRATEGIC PLAN

November 2019

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 processes to achieve these goals.

One of the challenges is finding new opportunities to extend the hand of A.A. to the still-suffering alcoholic. There are a number of processes and actions which can be undertaken by the GSB, A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS), AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV), the General Service Office (GSO) and the Fellowship to improve our efforts in this area. The first section below ("Reaching Out the Hand of A.A.") discusses goals and processes to be considered.

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

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 processes in this area.

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 Statement of the GSB

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 – sharing experience 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 strives to help all who suffer from alcoholism by providing the materials which support the Fellowship in fulfilling the Fifth Tradition by connecting with others, providing materials, engaging diverse populations, utilizing current and 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, religion, language, 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 traditional means of communication, such as 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 GSB will model inclusivity and acceptance by assisting the Fellowship in carrying the message and encouraging the spirit of the Third Tradition throughout A.A.

- **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, its services, and its composition with an eye toward 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 underserved populations as part of doing service.
- **P1.6:** The GSB will restructure forums to include sharing on the Third Tradition, emphasizing the inclusive nature of this Tradition.
- **P1.7:** The GSB will encourage more GSO/Grapevine/La Viña sharing on the broad and inviting door created by the Third Tradition, including in *Box 4-5-9, About A.A.* and other media.
- **P1.8:** The GSB will continue to reach out to Fellowship events that are not necessarily connected to General Service.

Goal 2: The GSB will foster improved relations with professionals.

- **P2.1:** The GSB and the GSO will continue focused 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 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 and licensing boards that wish to incorporate information 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. printed material and other media platforms for targeted audiences.

- **P2.6:** The GSB will create new and revise current informational and educational material for professionals and professional associations.

Goal 3: The GSB will seek to improve the effectiveness of its communication to remain relevant and connected to those it serves.

- **P3.1:** The GSB will continue to support meetings amongst itself, its trustees' committees, AAWS and AAGV to improve internal communication and to improve the effectiveness of the GSB, its trustees' committees, AAWS and AAGV in fulfilling their mandate to help the still-suffering alcoholic.
- **P3.2:** The GSB will develop policies and procedures to utilize new media technologies (social and others) by AAWS and AAGV that are in line with the Traditions and allow raised awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous. They should also provide us with the most effective methods of communication with all who may benefit from A.A.'s message.
- **P3.3:** GSO and GV/LV, with the support of the general manager and the Grapevine publisher, will optimize A.A.'s online and social media presence to ensure that A.A. stays relevant as a solution to alcoholism in today's society. The GSB will request the Trustees' PI committee and corporate boards make this a top priority.
- **P3.4:** The GSB, AAWS, and AAGV will utilize the results of a comprehensive communications inventory to analyze current communication methods and implement improvements and efficiencies throughout the entire organization, including changes aimed at improving the effectiveness of our print, digital, event and media resources.
- **P3.5:** The GSB will request that AAWS and AAGV increase the production of in-house videos and the use of videos for informational topics and to convey our message by the telling of stories on available technologies.
- **P3.6:** Trustees and nontrustee directors will be encouraged to participate in local service events and non-service related events such as conventions and roundups and be encouraged to accept invitations and participate in those and other events given by or having benefit, directly or indirectly, to the Fellowship. Active participation may include speaking, conducting a workshop, staffing a booth or any other opportunity to actively carry the message. Groups will be reminded of the availability and contact information of trustees and nontrustee directors in their locality, Area or Region for speaker/informational or other defined purposes. That reminder will periodically be sent in response to communications from groups, general service representatives, and others.

- **P3.7:** Initiate communication with members and groups not currently participating in General Service, through the International Convention, the Meeting Guide App, and other methods as appropriate.

Goal 4: Identify new places and audiences to bring the A.A. message of hope.

- **P4.1:** The GSB will develop a plan to embrace more direct contact with other countries in order to increase meaningful two-way shared experience, will explore ways to strengthen our relationships with other service structures and ways to make the World Service Meeting more efficient and effective.
- **P4.2:** The GSB will request management and staff to analyze and suggest to GSB a list of potential events that trustees and nontrustee directors might attend. This should include identifying and contacting leadership of professional organizations, with the goal of educating professionals and professional organizations on the mission and vision of A.A.

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 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 to show them how AAWS and AAGV interact and impact the lives of individual members and groups.

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.

In terms of wider communications, there are voices both in and outside 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 Eleven and Twelve.

List of Goals and Processes

Goal 5: Internal communication among the GSB, AAWS Board and AAGV Board will be optimized.

- **P5.1:** The GSB will explore alternative meeting cycles, methods and schedules to ensure efficient use of resources including financial, staffing, vendors, and others, and to utilize the best means for projects and ideas to be carried out.
- **P5.2:** 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.
- **P5.3:** The GSB will study the current size and composition of the GSB and each of the boards of the operating corporations, including their rotations, to determine if they are the most effective for our mission.

Goal 6: The GSB will act as a role model in promoting the critical importance of our Traditions, including anonymity as discussed in the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.

- **P6.1:** The trustees will continue to discuss and inventory their own actions regarding anonymity with respect to both the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.
- **P6.2:** 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 7: Sustain the financial viability of the GSB and the operating corporations.

- **P7.1:** The GSB will continue to communicate about the Seventh Tradition through relating facts and sharing stories, and explore ways to communicate the Seventh Tradition to A.A. members who are not active participants in General Service.
- **P7.2:** The GSB will continue to communicate the availability of online contributions – one-time and recurring.
- **P7.3:** The GSB will continue to emphasize the importance of self-support in the Fellowship for both Grapevine and the services provided through AAWS. This will include re-emphasizing Gratitude Month, AAGV's Carry the Message Project and other self-support initiatives.
- **P7.4:** The GSB will always monitor cost containment efforts made by AAWS and AAGV.

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 trustee 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 of 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, all Trustee Committees, AAGV, GSO & AAWS
		P1.2	Trustees Conference
		P1.3	AAWS
		P1.4	Trustees CPC/T.A. Committee & Trustees Nominating Committee
		P1.5	Trustee Conference Committee & Trustee CPC/T.A. Committee
		P1.6	Trustees IC/RF Committee
		P1.7	AAWS & AAGV and GM/GSO
		P1.8	GSB
	Goal 2	P2.1	Trustees CPC/T.A. Committee AAGV
		P2.2	Trustees Conference Committee & Trustees CPC/T.A. Committee
		P2.3	Trustees CPC/T.A. Committee, Trustees PI Committee, Trustees Corrections Committee
		P2.4	GM/GSO
		P2.5	All trustees Committees
		P2.6	Trustees CPC/T.A. Committee, Trustees PI Committee, Trustees Corrections Committee
	Goal 3	P3.1	GSB, AAWS and AAGV
		P3.2	AAWS, AAGV, Trustees PI Committee
		P3.3	GSB, AAWS, AAGV, Trustees PI Committee
		P3.4	GSB, AAWS, AAGV
		P3.5	GSB, AAWS, AAGV, GM/GSO
		P3.6	AAWS, AAGV, Trustees PI Committee
		P3.7	GSB, AAWS, AAGV
	Goal 4	P4.1	Trustees International Committee
		P4.2	GM/GSO, EEP, Trustees CPC/T.A. Committee
	Goal 5	P5.1	GSB, AAWS, AAGV
		P5.2	GSB, AAWS, AAGV, GM/GSO, EEP
		P5.3	Trustees Nominating Committee
	Goal 6	P6.1	GSB, AAWS, AAGV, Orientation Subcommittee.
		P6.2	Trustees IC/RF, Trustees Conference Committee
	Goal 7	P7.1	Trustees Finance Committee
		P7.2	Trustees Finance Committee, AAWS
		P7.3	Trustees Finance Committee, AAWS, AAGV
		P7.4	GSB