

VIII.

**PUBLIC
INFORMATION**

AGENDA

Conference Committee on Public Information

Monday, April 20, 2020 – 9 a.m. - Noon

Room: Elm

Chairperson: Michelle G.

Secretary: Racy J.

Conference Committee Members

Panel 69

Michelle G.

Tina P.

Shirley P.

Kirk S.

Curt W.

Panel 70

Linda B.

Jim F.

Rich H.

Shane S.

- ◆ Discussion and acceptance of trustees' committee report.

- A. Review 2019 annual reports from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org.
- B. Discuss a progress report on the A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide app.
- C. Review the 2019 trustees' Public Information Committee progress report on the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account.
- D. Review the 2019 trustees' Public Information Committee progress report on the use of Google AdWords/Grants to carry the A.A. message.
- E. Discuss a request to adjust all A.A.W.S. video titles for search engine optimization (SEO).
- F. Review a report regarding the 2020 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan.

NOTE: 1989 Conference Advisory Action

Each Conference Committee carefully consider their agenda items and strive to make their recommendations for Advisory Actions to the Conference at the policy level. To be more financially responsible, when a Conference Committee recommendation involves a substantial expenditure of money, an estimate of cost and its impact on the budget be part of that recommendation.

G. Review a draft plan to create video shorts based on A.A. pamphlets.

H. Public Service Announcements (PSAs):

1. Review the 2019 Report on the “Relevance and Usefulness of Video Public Service Announcements.”
2. Review the distribution and tracking information for the video PSA “Changes.”
3. Review a report regarding the new financial reporting system for PSA media valuations.
4. Review a progress report on the development of two PSAs.

I. Discuss a request “to create a new form of communication” to address anonymity on social media.

J. Consider a request to develop a plan to create an A.A. podcast.

K. Review “A.A. Triennial Membership Survey” report.

L. Review contents of P.I. Kit and Workbook.

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM A: Review 2019 annual reports from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org.

Background notes:

At their January 30, 2020 meeting, the A.A.W.S. Board approved forwarding to the trustees' Public Information Committee the following reports:

1. *2019 Fourth Quarter Website Analytics report;*
2. *2019 Website Visitors Activity Report;*
3. *2019 Fourth Quarter Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities;*
4. *2019 Annual Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities*

From the February 2020 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the reports from both corporate boards regarding their respective websites and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information the 2019 Annual Report on A.A.W.S. Board Oversight of G.S.O.'s A.A. website and the Report from Grapevine Board on Oversight of the Grapevine/La Viña website.

Background:

1. 2019 Annual Report of G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities and Visitors Activity
2. 2019 Annual Report of AA Grapevine Website Activities

Note: *Noting that website analytics are fluid and ongoing, the most recent website reports will be provided to the Conference Committee on Public Information at their meeting.*

Date: January 30, 2020
To: Trustees' Committee on Public Information
From: A.A.W.S. Board
Re: **2019 Annual Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities**

History

The 2004 General Service Conference recommended that:

- a) The A.A.W.S. Board should continue to manage the Website through its Services* Committee.
- b) Any correspondence, requests for changes or requests for reports on the Website would continue to be responded to by the A.A.W.S. Board.
- c) The A.A.W.S. Board would be responsible for preparing a quarterly report to the trustees' Public Information Committee for their review. The report would include the following information:
 - Changes to the Website
 - Updates on Website activity
 - A summary of requests or correspondence from the Fellowship regarding the Website and a summary of actions taken by the A.A.W.S. Board in response to those requests or correspondence.
- d) The A.A.W.S. Board would prepare an annual report for the trustees' P.I. Committee summarizing all Website quarterly report information. The report along with any additional comments from the trustees' Committee would be forwarded to the Conference P.I. Committee for their consideration.

Process

The A.A.W.S. Technology/Communication/Services Committee reviews reports from the Intra-Office Website Committee (I.O.W.C.) on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website and forwards suggested changes to www.aa.org to the A.A.W.S. Board when appropriate. All changes or deletions, if approved, are implemented in English, French and Spanish.

***Note:** The A.A.W.S. Board changed the name of the Services Committee to the Technology/Communication/Services (TCS) Committee at their March 14, 2014 meeting.

Additions or Changes to G.S.O.'s A.A. Website

In addition to the routine process of correcting errors on the site and posting new or revised material published by G.S.O., the following changes were made:

Added

- Added P-31, "A.A. in Your Community" to the Information for Professionals page.
- Added the pamphlet P-86, "The God Word"
- Added the PSA, "Changes"
- Added the International Convention 2020 logos and invitation video to aa.org.
- Added 2020 International Convention logos, FAQ page, video flyer and downloads
- Mini Catalog
- 25th World Service Meeting Final Report
- Added Archives Checklist
- Link to Meeting Guide Information page added to aa.org homepage
- Meeting Guide Information page added
- Privacy Policy added to aa.org
- Added information on Meeting Guide to aa.org
- Added Regional Forums and the Grapevine board meetings to the AAWS calendar
- Added call for stories to update "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic" in the What's New section of aa.org
- Added Meeting Guide FAQ to aa.org
- Added audio PSAs to download page
- Added Big Book Fourth Edition ASL Press Release video
- Added 12x12 ASL Press Release video
- Added 12x12 ASL video
- Added Big Book Fourth Edition ASL video
- Added announcement of the termination of GSO onsite literature sales
- Implemented Placeholder language for items temporarily removed from the website while under review

Revised/Corrected/ Updated Pages

- Revised G.S.O. information page link navigation
- Updated AA.org exit disclaimer language
- Website Comp, Scope and procedure updated
- Updated Privacy Policy

What's New

- AAWS and Grapevine Non-trustee Directors Announcements
- The addition of the Non-trustee vacancy announcement
- Added ACM search announcement
- Added Archives Checklist
- Added announcement for Meeting Guide

- Added Twelve Concepts for World Service in audio format
- Added Quarterly Reports from GSO
- Added About AA
- GSO System Update announced
- Added the new publication Our Great Responsibility to the What's new section
- Added Alcoholics in a new ASL translation
- Added 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in a new ASL translation

A.A.W.S. Board and Technology/Communication/Services Committee Activity

G.S.O.'s A.A. Website

2018 Website Visitors Activity Report: The A.A.W.S. Board approved and forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information the 2018 Fourth Quarter and 2018 Annual General Service Office Website Activity Reports. The A.A.W.S. Board approved and forwarded the 2019 First, Second and Third Quarterly Reports on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities to the trustees' Public Information (P.I.) Committee.

2018 Website Analytics Report: The A.A.W.S. Board approved and forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information the 2018 Fourth Quarter and 2018 Annual General Service Office Website Analytics Reports. The A.A.W.S. Board approved and forwarded the 2019 First, Second and Third Quarterly Reports on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Analytics to the trustees' Public Information (P.I.) Committee.

Website Design progress report: A verbal report was provided by the Communication Services coordinator that summarized the website and app progress since the last TCS meeting in January. It was reported that Denton's is still in negotiations with Blue Fountain to create a PSA and SOW for the front end development of the new website. The website consultant and multi-media manager are currently working on website intercept capabilities on aa.org for volunteer user testing of visitors to the site.

Review of Website Committee Composition, Scope and Procedure: The TCS Committee reviewed the Website Committee Composition, Scope and Procedure and suggested that the Website Committee consider the impact of the future Communications Department on the configuration of the WC and the Composition, Scope and Procedure and bring back for further discussion in July.

Website and App Design and Development progress report: A written and verbal report was provided by the Communication Services coordinator that summarized the website design and app progress since the last TCS meeting in March. The report focused on the website design progress highlighted with the kickoff in May, strategy overview meeting in June, ongoing content reorganization and site map revisions.

Website Design progress report: A written report was provided in addition to a verbal update highlighting progress on the website design including sitemap, wireframes, initial designs, templates and draft homepage; the website intercept scope, project plan and approval by attorneys.

Website Design and App progress report: A written report was provided to the committee. The meeting finder component on aa.org was the source of a robust discussion. This discussion included the meeting finder relationship to the Delta project, strategic planning and communication distribution. The meeting finder component on aa.org will become a standing item on TCS until resolved. Meeting finder was approved by the general manager to be included in the initial design work but no decision has been made at this time to continue to move forward with the meeting finder component on aa.org.

Meeting Guide FAQ: The TCS Committee recommended to the A.A.W.S. Board that the Meeting Guide app Frequently Asked Questions be approved and implemented.

2019 Requests Regarding G.S.O.'s A.A. Website

Approximately 431 emails were received through the online Website Feedback Form between November 12, 2018 and December 16, 2019 covering 394 days. G.S.O.'s Website Committee reviewed this feedback, as well as comments on the website from other sources. 8 people requested Twelfth-Step help; 39 either requested help finding a meeting or commented on difficulty finding a meeting through the site; 54 commented on website function and questions; 49 responded to technical errors; 18 Daily Reflections request; 25 customer service; 64 contribution questions and 1 eBook questions. Additional requests went to Grapevine, Service Committees and junk mail. Each Website Feedback Form email was forwarded to the appropriate person or department in the office.

Request to add past issues of About AA: The committee approved a request from the Fellowship to add additional past issues of *About AA* to aa.org.

Request to add Archives checklist: The committee approved the addition of the Archives Checklist to aa.org.

YouTube progress report: in addition to reviewing the YouTube progress report the committee has been asked to remove the PSA, My World, from aa.org. Discussed archival options for discontinued videos and audio clips on YouTube.

Request to add 12 Concepts Audio: Currently there is no placement designation for audio of this type on the website. Until addressed in the redesign it will be added to the audio/video and What's New sections on aa.org.

Add MeetingGuide.org to aa.org: Request to add the information currently on meetingguide.org as a section to aa.org. The committee would like to see an edited version of the Meeting Guide information page that includes explanatory language before the information is posted.

Audio to video project and additional suggested videos: The committee reviewed the draft audio to video sample created by our Digital Media Manager in August and October and suggested that the concept was good but more modern and inclusive graphics should be used. Digital Media Manager will continue to research more modern and diverse images.

SEO Improvement Plan: The committee reviewed the SEO plan for aa.org and suggested that the Communication Services assistant research professional implementation. The Digital Media Manager requested that SEO item be removed since these are technical improvements that must be done for aa.org search. The suggestion from Website Committee to consider a consultant is retained in the website design planning document. The Communication Services secretary will report on progress.

Presentation of Privacy Policies: The committee approved the Privacy Policy recommendations of the legal team as it was presented for aa.org. The recommendations from the lawyers are as follows:

- Main website privacy policy should be separated from “Terms of Use” and have its own link on the footer.
- The main privacy policy and the app privacy policy should have similar URL naming conventions (EX: aa.org/privacy_policy_web and aa.org/privacy_policy_app) – *Provided verbally by Dentons*

PSA audio to video project progress: The Digital Media Manager presented an updated draft of an audio PSA with photo and live transcript designed for our YouTube channel. The committee objected to the full faces of the people in the photo and the lack of diversity across the board. The manager was asked to create a mock meeting photo and/or to investigate stock photos to illustrate diverse people in an AA meeting.

Review item added to aa.org: The chair reported the inclusion of a call for stories to update "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic" in the What's New section of aa.org. A worksheet was signed by management to expedite the process.

Discuss aa.org calendar: There were only four committee members in attendance therefore the issue of adding Regional Forums and the Grapevine board meetings to the AAWS calendar had to be approved by polling. The poll results were 6 for, 0 against.

Request to add audio PSAs to download page: The committee was given a status report that the audio PSA download page is in final stage of completion. It was agreed that this function would be very helpful to local Public Information committees.

Add audio PSAs to download page: The committee unanimously approved adding audio PSAs to the download page.

Add Meeting Guide FAQ to aa.org: There were only four committee members in attendance at the committee meeting therefore the issue of forwarding the FAQ for Meeting Guide to the Technology/Communication/Services committee had to be approved by polling. The poll results were 6 for, 0 against.

Review of items removed and added to aa.org: Committee reviewed the removal of the Lord's prayer from FAQs on aa.org and the addition of the Big Book Fourth Edition ASL Press Release video on homepage.

Clarify language on read Big Book and 12x12 page: Committee approves changing language as indicated on agenda item pending review by Publishing.

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M E M O R A N D U M

Date: January 30, 2020

To: A.A.W.S. Technology/Communication/Services Committee

From: Clement Cann, Communications Services Coordinator

Re: **2019 G.S.O. A.A. Website Visitors Activity**

G.S.O.'s A.A. website www.aa.org received 1,449,637 total visits in December 2019 with an average of 46,762 total daily visits.* The December 2019 daily average represents an 19 percent increase in web traffic from the same month in 2018.

2018				2019			
Month	Total Visits	Days	Average	Month	Total Visits	Days	Average
January	1,231,442	31	39,724	January	1,396,201	31	45,039
February	1,149,733	28	41,062	February	1,268,957	28	45,320
March	1,301,048	31	41,969	March	1,406,421	31	45,368
April	1,286,699	30	42,890	April	1,403,091	30	46,770
May	1,278,504	31	41,242	May	1,436,357	31	46,334
June	1,267,066	30	42,236	June	1,418,084	30	47,269
July	1,301,043	31	41,969	July	1,490,795	31	48,090
August	1,357,550	31	43,792	August	1,274,114	31	41,100
September	1,258,800	30	41,960	September**	1,368,630	30	45,621
October	1,334,595	31	43,051	October	1,157,864	31	37,350
November	1,268,114	30	42,270	November	1,429,383	30	47,646
December	1,219,867	31	39,351	December	1,449,637	31	46,762

2018 YR Total: 15,254,461 (365 days)

2019 YR Total: 16,499,534 (365 days)

2018 YR Average Daily: 41,793

2019 YR Average Daily: 45,204

* Visits refer to each time any user visits the A.A. website, whether new or returning. Note: These visit totals do not include users with untraceable addresses or with cookies disabled.

** September 2019 – Due to an issue with analytics collection, September 5 to 13 were estimated. The estimate was based on the 11% increase in traffic from the 2015 International Convention registration (September 2014). Assuming an 11% increase from August 2019, September 2019 had an estimated visitor total of 1,368,630.



To: Racy J., Public Information
From: Janet Bryan*, Director of Operations
Re: Grapevine/La Viña Website
Date: January 23, 2020
aagrapevine.org

- AAGV migrated the content, images, audios, and documents needed to the new site map.
- The launch for the new D8 GV's website is scheduled for January 31, 2020.
- AAGV has created the feature pages and links for the new website and entered the content manually for each page. There are 58 pages and six web forms already created on the D8 website.
- AAGV, in coordination with vendor, is working on migrating to the high-performance host Pantheon.
- After the website launch, AAGV will continue working on migrating the content for the 2018 and 2019 GV issues and its audio. AAGV, in coordination with the LV team and vendor, will work on creating the site map for the new D8 LV website.
- Vendor is working on developing the brand new LV Archive page and D8 website.

*Non- alcoholic

Audience Overview (4th Quarter)

Description	AAGRAPEVINE.ORG			ARCHIVE (da.aagrapevine.org)			GRAPEVINE STORE			LA VINA STORE		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
Visits	51,153	48,560	50,698	438	423	501	2,612	2,063	2,444	0	299	616
Unique Visitor	33,175	31,154	32,488	149	136	187	2,097	1,694	1,993	0	213	436
Page views	125,320	119,235	119,583	1,631	1,494	1,756	7,942	7,353	8,295	0	1,879	4,390
Average pg views per visit	2.45	2.46	2.36	3.72	3.53	3.5	3.04	3.56	3.39	0	6.28	7.13

* Source: GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Projects

AUDIO STORIES COLLECTED
To Date **01/06/2020** 343

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS AS OF 01/06/2020

Daily Quote	47,437	* Source: CONSTANT CONTACT
Weekly Stories	10,569	
Monthly News	65,876	
Quarterly AA Grapevine and Your Group	72,337	
La Cita Semanal Con La Viña	1,694	
Noticias desde de La Viña	1,399	

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM B: Discuss a progress report on the A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide app.

Background notes:

From the February 1, 2020 report of trustees' Committee report of Public Information:

The committee reviewed the G.S.O. Communications Services Department progress report on the A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Public Information Committee a progress report on the A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide app.

Background:

1. G.S.O. Communication Services Department progress report and analytics on the A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide app.
2. A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide Information available on www.aa.org.
 - ENG - https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/meeting-guide
 - FR - https://www.aa.org/pages/fr_FR/meeting-guide
 - SP - https://www.aa.org/pages/es_ES/meeting-guide

G.S.O. Communications Services Department Meeting Guide App Progress Report

Progress:

- Launched in August 2019
 - Announcements: What's New on aa.org, In-app News, Grapevine, Article in Box 4-5-9
- Customer Support Emails: Total of 1761 from 4/2019 to 1/2020
 - Top 3 categories: App Feature Request/Feedback (370), Add/Update Local Entity (244), and Meeting Coverage (193)
- For monthly active users, refer to 2019 Q4 app analytics (attached)
 - Usage steadily increasing
 - Meetings and Meeting Details top accessed, Favorites and Quote also popular
- Information pages added to aa.org - https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/meeting-guide
- Support website available for participating entities and those who may want to participate: <https://meetingguide.aa.org/>

Next steps:

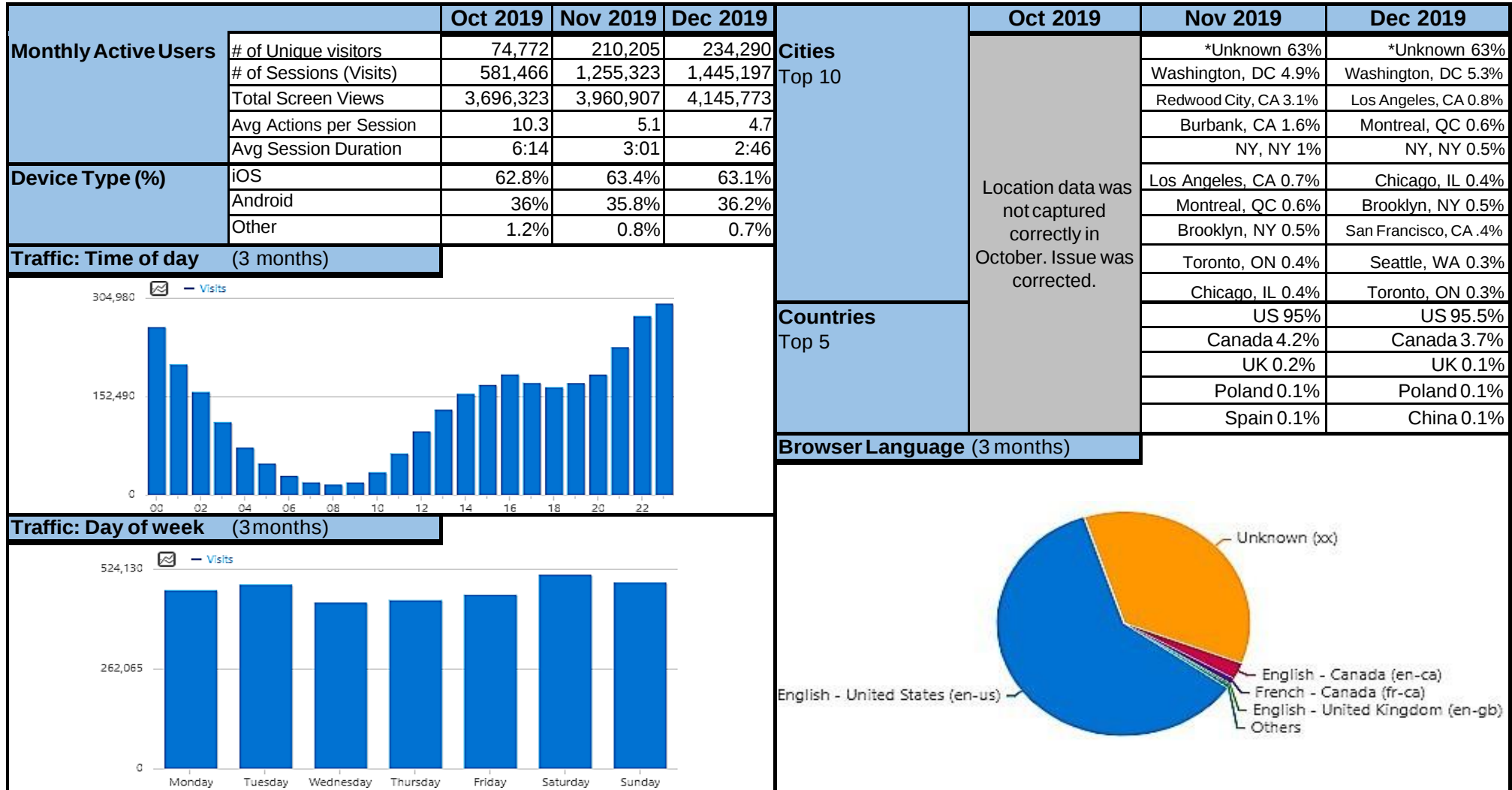
1. Finalize guidance videos for app
 - Post on YouTube and include links on aa.org FAQ page
2. Finalize Policies and Guidelines:
 - In app news guidelines
 - General app policies and guidelines
 - Who is listed in the app and how.
 - Where MG app links out to for meeting list.
 - When we do/don't reassign meeting information.
 - When we provide tech assistance and when we don't. Who the entity can reach out to instead.
 - Branding policy – Trademarks, links, terminology – Include style guide.
3. Discussion of internationalization and additional translations.
4. Create schedule for regular updates and development
5. Continue gathering feedback and preparing for future updates

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

ANALYTICS FOR MEETING GUIDE: VISITORS
Q4 2019: OCTOBER - DECEMBER

Average Daily Sessions, December 2019: 46619

Average Daily Sessions Q4 2019: 35674



*Our current analytics are pulling city data from the basic, free Geolocation database. When we upgrade and install the rest of Matomo's features we should see more accurate information. That upgrade/update will happen in conjunction with the relaunch of aa.org.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

**ANALYTICS FOR MEETING GUIDE: BEHAVIOR
Q4 2019: OCTOBER - DECEMBER**

	Action taken	Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019		Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019
Meetings Screen		1,356,163	1,454,669	1,524,912	Keyword search Top 15	39758	39842	41193
Meeting Detail Screen		1,303,624	1,415,182	1,472,329		Aa (213)	Na (243)	Na (260)
	Get directions	302,573	327,875	342,633		Na (207)	Aa (239)	Aa (253)
	Add to favorites	58,507	59,276	60,626		Alanon (201)	Alanon (206)	Alanon (241)
	Add to calendar	24,876	25,612	27,162		AA (193)	Women (191)	AA (220)
	Text meeting info	18,103	19,455	20,604		Women (171)	AA (181)	Women (200)
	View webpage	6,461	6,813	7,398		NA (156)	NA (162)	Al anon (182)
	Email meeting info	2,599	2,643	2,801		Lgbt (153)	Al anon (150)	Lgbt (151)
Favorites Screen		87,832	90,911	93,055		Al anon (124)	Young (142)	Young (141)
Meeting Filter Screen		416,814	445,206	463,775		Young (124)	Gay (131)	NA (140)
	Change Day	321,935	348,321	362,953		Gay (111)	Young people (117)	Young people (128)
	Change Time	56,501	58,882	58,329		Womens (97)	Lgbt (108)	Speaker (121)
	Change Type	52,066	54,381	54,029		Young people (84)	Saturday (106)	Sunday (114)
Contact Screen		60,211	60,604	63,349		Speaker (83)	Sunday (102)	Womens (105)
	A.A. Near Me	4,386	4,493	4,810		Open (82)	Speaker (93)	Gay (99)
	Click update	4,566	4,205	4,468		Sunday (81)	Open (91)	Open (91)
	Click purchase	4,215	4,233	4,247	News Screen	60,226	60,647	63,247
	Click suggestion	1,376	1,203	1,181	Quote Screen	89,974	102,030	109,294
	Click Privacy Policy	667	749	684		Change date	4,069	5,568
Local Organizations (From all screens)					Click purchase	1,666	1,760	1,828
	View website	4,584	4,877	5,240	Outlinks: Total	35,665	37,431	36,419
	Click call	3,015	3,494	4,230		Click to local	77.4%	79.8%
	Email meeting info	3,543	3,618	3,776		Click to G.S.O.	22.6%	20.2%
	Click directions	331	312	318				

Key:	Screen views
	Action taken

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM C: Review the 2019 trustees' Public Information Committee progress report on the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account

Background notes:

2017 Conference Advisory Action:

That A.A. World Services, Inc. create a Google for Nonprofits account, with use of the account limited to the YouTube Nonprofit Program and with a guarantee that comments not be shown on A.A.W.S. YouTube pages. The committee requests that a report including information from website analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information.

2018 Conference Advisory Action:

That a progress report including website analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.

From the January 26, 2019 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

In response to a 2018 Advisory Action, the committee discussed the request that "a progress report including website analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information." The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee a progress report on the A.A.W.S. YouTube Account.

2019 Conference Advisory Action:

A progress report on the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube channel be brought back to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information.

From the February 1, 2020 report of trustees' Committee report of Public Information:

In response to a 2019 Advisory Action, the committee discussed the request that a report on the "usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information." The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information a progress report on the A.A.W.S. YouTube Account.

Background:

1. G.S.O. Communication Services Department Progress Report
2. P.I. ACM, A.A.W.S. YouTube PowerPoint Report

Note: Analytics provided in these reports were gathered with information as of January 2020. More current information will be made available to the P.I. Conference committee in April. Through an ongoing process more A.A.W.S. video content is being published to the A.A.W.S. YouTube account and as a result, traffic/stats may increase. Analytics are fluid and can be expected to change over time.

**Communication Services Department YouTube Progress Report
(Submitted January 30, 2020)**

- There are 48 A.A.W.S. videos posted to YouTube (16 videos, each in English, Spanish and French.)
 - “My World” (3ESF) is set to private - pending Archival playlist discussion by Trustees Committee on Public Information
- The following A.A.W.S. videos are not yet posted to YouTube:
 - Corrections videos “A.A. in Correctional Facilities” (3 ESF), “Carrying the Message Behind these Walls” (3 ESF) and “A New Freedom” 15- and 3-minute cuts (6 ESF). ASL Big Book videos (78 ESF), ASL 12x12 videos (81 ESF). These are pending addition of approved video intros and outros.
 - “Young and Sober in A.A.: From Drinking to Recovery” (3 ESF), revised “A.A. for All Alcoholics” (3 ESF). Waiting on completed files from Publishing.
 - ASL press releases (6 ESF), “A.A. International Convention 2020: Flag ceremony clips from past conventions” (3 ESF). No requests received to post on YouTube.
 - In total, there are 165 completed videos not yet prepared for YouTube. The Communications Services Department is engaging a vendor who will add the YouTube intros and outros to the backlog. In the future, this task will be performed in house, as videos are completed.
- Optimized video descriptions – All optimized video descriptions and translations for current videos have been received from Publishing. Working on preparing descriptions for all new videos.
- Optimized video names for PSAs (approved by Conference) have been implemented on YouTube and aa.org
 - Optimized video names for all other videos are being drafted.
 - A proposed agenda item has been submitted to the 2020 Conference to update the titles of remaining Conference Approved videos.
- All pending YouTube content copyright claims have been successfully disputed except for 1 in each language on “My World”. Has no effect since the video is private. Will dispute if the video is ever set back to public.
- To comply with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), all videos on our channel have been marked as “No, it’s not made for kids”. All YouTube videos are now required to specify yes or no.
 - For more information on COPPA as it relates to YouTube:
<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9528076>

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

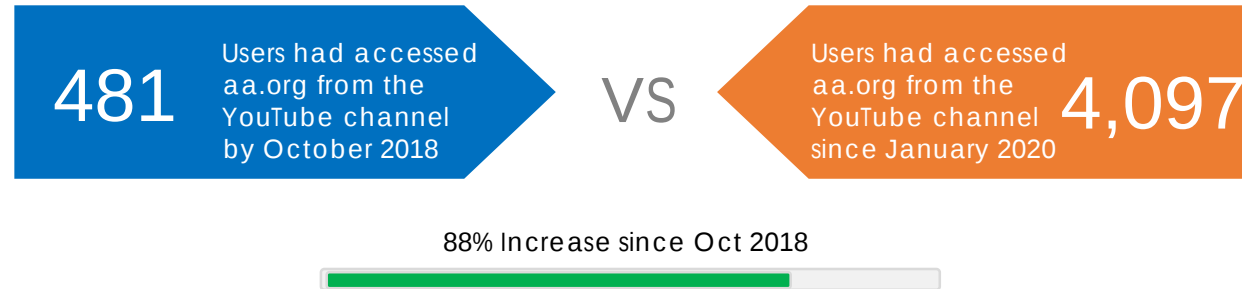
- A.A.W.S. Technology/Communication/Services Committee will review the policy for posting videos on YouTube in their January 2020 meeting. This will become an annual review.
- As of December 2019, we have over 4,200 subscribers and average monthly video views of between 2,000 and 4,000.

YOUTUBE STATISTICS

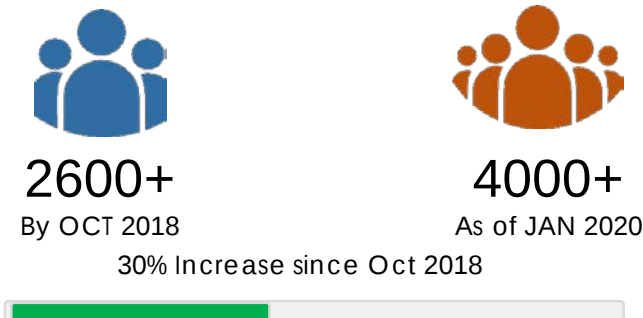


Alcoholics Anonymous®

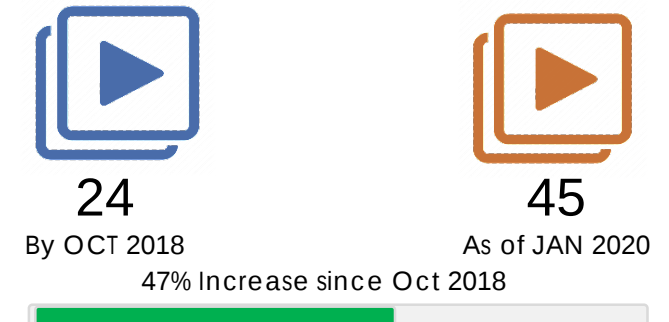
Channel Visitors



Subscribers



Videos



*Original statistics indicate usage from channel inception to October 2018. Updated statistics indicate usage from October 2018 to present

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VIDEOS & PLAYLISTS

ALL VIDEO TITLES

- A.A. Video for Legal/Corrections Professionals
- On the Beach
- Get Ready (2020 International Convention
- Changes
- A Group of People Just Like Me
- Young People's Animation Video
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- 25 and Under
- Hope
- A New Freedom
- Why Anonymous?
- A.A. Video for Employment/Human Resources Professionals
- Tengo Esperanza
- A.A. Video for Healthcare Professionals
- Doors

*Note that each video includes a Spanish and French equivalent translation



3 Videos have been added Since October 2018

NEW VIDEO TITLES

- A.A. Video for Legal/Corrections Professionals
- On the Beach
- Get Ready! 2020 International Convention video



171 Videos to be posted pending intros and outros

VIDEO DETAILS

- Each video contains a description (using relevant keywords as suggested by Trustees' PI Committee ACMs as well as general keyword research). Each video also includes an option for captions and subtitling. Comments are disabled for videos.
- Each video contains an end screen that notes that videos appearing before or after may not be associated with A.A.
- Communication Services is currently in the process of adding more videos including relevant descriptions as outlined in AAWS report.



5 There are 5 playlists on the channel:

PLAYLIST TITLES

- There are 5 playlists on the channel (each playlist is also replicated in French and Spanish):
- All A.A. Videos (English) - 15 videos
 - Toutes les vidéos des AA (Français) - 15 videos
 - Todos los videos de A.A. (Español) - 15 videos
 - AA Videos for Professionals(English) -3 videos
 - Videos des AA pour les professionnels (Français) -3 videos
 - Videos de A.A. para Profesionales (Español) - 3 videos
 - What is A.A.? (English) - 2 videos
 - Que sont les AA ? (Français) - 2 videos
 - ¿Qué es A.A.? (Español) - 2 videos
 - Videos for Young People (English) - 5 videos
 - Videos para jovenes (Spanish) - 5 videos
 - Vidéos de jeunes (French) - 5 videos
 - A.A. Public Service Announcements (English) - 2 videos
 - AA Anuncios de Servicio Público (Español)- 2 videos
 - AA Messages d'Internet Publique (Français) - 2 videos

*Original statistics indicate usage from channel inception to October 2018. Updated statistics indicate usage from October 2018 to present

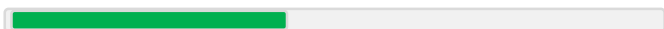
Subscribers



2600+

By OCT 2018

30% Increase since Oct 2018



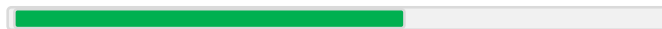
Watch Time



24k+

Since Inception

61% Increase in the watch time



Channel Views



18k+

Since Inception

62% Increase in the Channel Views



47.5k+

As of JAN 2020

**Doors (now titled Sobriety in
AA: Opening Doors to a Life Without
Drinking)**

3.2K views

Currently 3.9K

9% increase

In the watch time

My World

1.9K views

Currently 2.4K

21% increase

In the watch time

**I Have Hope (now titled Since Getting AA Video for Healthcare
Sober I Have Hope)**

1.7K views

Currently 1.9K

11% increase

In the watch time

1.7K views

Currently 1.9K

11% increase

In the watch time

**AA Video for Employment/
Human Resource Professionals**

2K views

Currently 916

118% decrease

In the watch time

Alcoholics
Anonymous®



Alcoholics Anonymous

The YouTube page header includes links to:

<https://www.aa.org/>

https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/aaws-gso-youtube-channel-information

https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-aaws-gso-youtube-channel

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EXTERNAL TRAFFIC

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

By Social Media (referrers)



17.5%
35%
50% increase



20.4%
12.0%
7% increase



6.6%
28.8%
77% increase



5.2%
4.7%
82% increase



3.8%
2.6%
88% increase

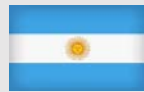
By Country



United States
39.4%
40.9%
4% increase



Mexico
2.4%
8.3%
71% increase



Argentina
2.6%
1.8%
44% decrease



Canada
2.1%
1.6%
31% decrease



Colombia
2.4%
1.5%
60% decrease

By Subscription



71.8% of viewers are not subscribed to channel
78.6% of viewers are not subscribed to channel
(8% increase in non-subscribed viewers)

28.2% are subscribers
20.9% are subscribers
35% decrease in subscribe



87.5%
Vs. 90.7%
4% Increase
MALE



12.5%
Vs. 9.3%
37% decrease
FEMALE

TOP SEARCH

October 2018

TERMS

January 2020

- alcoholics Anonymous
- alcoholicos anonimos
- I have hope
- tengo esperanza
- alcoholics anonymous

- alcoholics anonymous
- Alcoolique anonyme
- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting
- Alcoholic anonymous
- alcoholicos



AGE

25-34 years	6%	5.1%
35-44 years	16.9%	17.7%
45-54 years	32.5%	37.3%
55-64 years	35.4%	35.2%
65+ years	9.2%	7.3%

(20% decrease in 25-34 year old viewers)
(2% increase in 35-44 year old viewers)
(10% increase in 45-54 year old viewers)
(no change)
(26% decrease in 65+ aged viewers)

*Original statistics indicate usage from channel inception to October 2018. Updated statistics indicate usage from October 2018 to present

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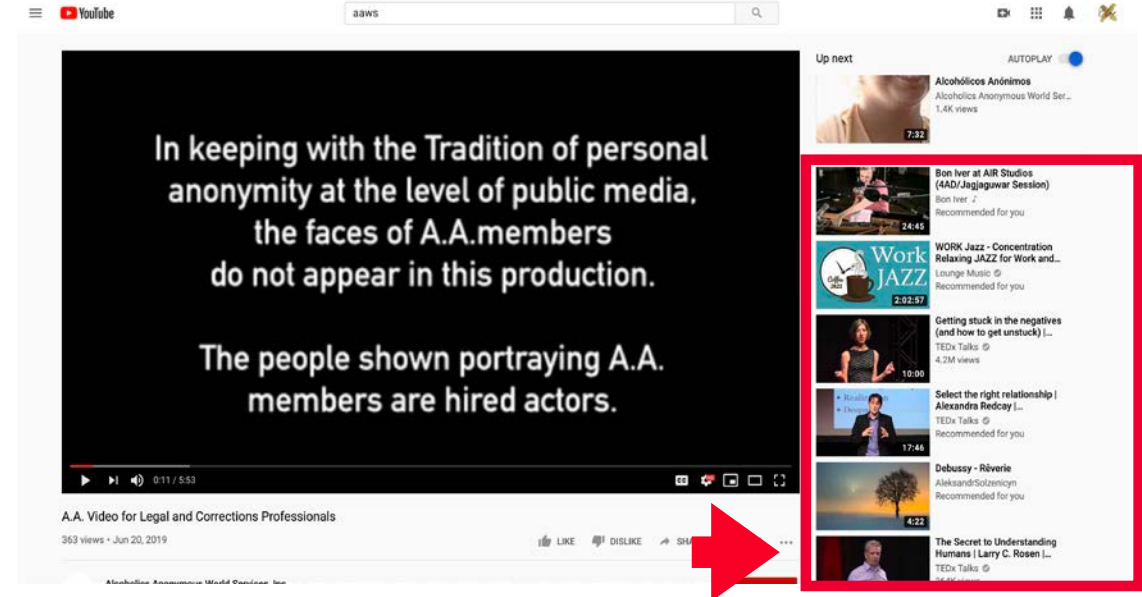
Alcoholics Anonymous®



The goals of YouTube's search and discovery system are twofold: help viewers find the videos they want to watch, and maximize long-term viewer engagement and suitability. YouTube tries to match each viewer to the videos they are most likely to watch and enjoy.

Youtube pays attention to attention to things like:

- what viewers watch
- what viewers don't watch
- how much time they spend watching
- likes and dislikes
- 'not interested' feedback



This viewer enjoys indie rock, classical and jazz music and might be motivated by TED Talks. Youtube determines what might interest her by past YouTube searches as well as responses to videos watched.

Source:

<https://creatoracademy.youtube.com/page/lesson/discovery#strategies-zippy-link-4>

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So how does YouTube figure out what other videos I may want to watch?



Suggested Videos are a personalized collection of videos that an individual viewer may be interested in watching next, based on prior activity. Studies of YouTube consumption have shown that viewers tend to watch a lot more when they get recommendations from a variety of channels, and suggested videos do just that. Suggested Videos are ranked to maximize engagement for the viewer. Signals that contribute to these recommendations include:

- Videos that viewers watch along with the current video, or videos that are topically related. They could be videos from the same channel, or from a different channel.
- Videos from a viewer's past watch history.

Suggested Videos are shown to viewers on the right side of the watch page under 'Up next', below the video on the mobile app, and as the next video in autoplay.

Much like Google AdSense, which allows advertisers to place ads into blogs and websites, the ads that appear on one individual's unique visit to a site might differ from another viewer's experience, dependent on what that person has recently viewed or searched for. For example, if you have just searched for coffee tables in the past day or two, an ad for coffee tables might show up when visiting your favorite website. But another person who has recently looked at websites for waterskis will be more likely to see an ad for new waterskis on the exact same website. The same is true for YouTube, the recommendations are personalized and uniquely based on the elements described above. AAWS cannot control suggested videos but we do add a disclaimer at the end of each video as well as attempt to optimize our YouTube analytics so that suggested videos are appropriate and relevant, but much like a television PSA, we have no real control over what ad, commercial or suggested video appears after our video.

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 70th General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM D: Review the 2019 trustees' Public Information Committee progress report on the use of Google AdWords/Grants to carry the A.A. message.

Background Notes:

2016 Conference Advisory Action:

A proposal for implementing a Google-for-Non-Profits account for carrying the message of A.A. to the public be developed and brought back to the 2017 Conference Committee on Public Information for review.

2017 Public Information Conference Advisory Action:

A.A. World Services, Inc. create a Google for Nonprofits account, with use of the account limited to the YouTube Nonprofit Program and with a guarantee that comments not be shown on A.A.W.S. YouTube pages. The committee requested that a report including information from website analytics and the usefulness and effectiveness of the A.A.W.S. YouTube account be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information.

Additional Committee Consideration of the 2017 Conference Committee on Public Information:

After reviewing the trustees' Committee on Public Information's report on a Google Implementation Plan the committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Public Information continue to research the feasibility of A.A.W.S. using Google AdWords and Google Grants and bring a report to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information.

Additional Committee Consideration of the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the 2017 trustees' Public Information Committee Report on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants to carry the A.A. message and requested that the trustees' Committee on Public Information continue to develop information on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants including information on the cost of a full year's implementation and that a progress report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information. implementing a six-month trial and the cost of a full

year's implementation and that a progress report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.

January 26, 2019 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

In response to the Additional Committee Consideration of the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information to "provide a progress report on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants including information on the cost of implementing a six-month trial and the cost of a full year's implementation" the committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee a report which includes information requested by the 2018 Conference Public Information Committee.

69th General Service Conference 2019 P.I. background note provided on Cover Sheet Item G:

Note: From the trustees' Committee on Public Information Appointed Committee Members (ACMs)...

Estimated costs are presented in Item G.1. The P.I. trustees' committee was asked by the Conference Committee on Public Information to give 6 months and 1-year trial. However, this report presents a range of pricing that illustrates the minimum that Google is suggesting we do monthly; based on the keywords and geographic territories. You can simply total it however, it is suggested that the committee review the monthly budget given and then establish a cap of spending. This is because you can budget for \$18,000 per month = \$108,000 for 6 months however, it will not 'spend' this way. It will go up and down over the months starting lower and building. We also suggest an additional 1k to 2K over time, added to each month.

2019 Conference Advisory Actions:

- A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. apply for "LegitScript" certification to qualify for Google Ad Words/Grants.
- A.A. World Services, Inc. apply for Google AdWords/Grants, for the purpose of providing information about A.A. to the public.
- A.A. World Services, Inc. implement Google AdWords/Grants for the purpose of providing information about A.A. to the public and that a report be brought back to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

From the November 2, 2019 trustees' Committee on Public Information report:

In keeping with the 2019 Advisory Action the committee noted the Communication Services report that the LegitScript application process is in its final stage.

The committee also discussed additional sharing provided by the Public Information staff secretary regarding Google AdWords/Grants. The committee noted that there is no current action by G.S.O. to apply for Google AdWords/Grants until further research is conducted. The committee agreed that additional discussion and research is needed as it relates to Google AdWords/Grants. The committee asked that additional findings be included in the report that is to be provided to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information and looks forward to a review of the draft report at the February 2020 meeting.

Staff Note: The trustees' Public Information committee and A.A.W.S. T.C.S. Committee met by Conference call January 9, 2020 to discuss next actions.

After further discussion G.S.O., has been directed to carry out the 2019 P.I. Advisory Actions to apply and implement Google AdWords/Grants in-kind donated services of ad space (worth \$10,000 of donated *media value* which is available to all non-profits.)

From the February 2, 2020 trustees' Committee on Finance report:

The Public information committee has asked the T.F.C. to look at background regarding an Advisory Action to apply for Google Grants and how it would be reported on our financial statements. There is a question on how in-kind contributions need to be reported on the balance sheet. We have historically accepted in-kind donations for TV PSAs but will continue looking into the best ways to report this information to the Fellowship.

A subcommittee of Tom A., Leslie B., Mark E., Carolyn W. and Sibi Thomas, our auditor, was appointed by the Chair to discuss further in-kind contributions and how they are reported. The chair has suggested our auditors provide information on how we must report the in-kind service to give further information to the Conference.

From the February 1, 2020 trustees' Committee on Public Information report:

The committee discussed the 2019 Advisory Action that A.A.W.S. Inc. apply for Google AdWords/Grants for the purpose of providing information about A.A. to the public. The committee also discussed the 2019 Advisory Action that A.A.W.S., Inc. implement Google AdWords/Grants for the purpose of providing information about A.A. to the public and that a report

be brought back to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information. Following their discussion, the committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information a report on Google AdWords/Google Grants.

2004 International Conventions Advisory Action:

“The General Service Conference support the General Service Board Policy as amended on November 2, 2003, which reads:

“Whenever a discount or subsidy is that which would be offered to any other organization of similar size requiring a purchased service or product of similar character and magnitude, for example, convention rates at hotels, it may be accepted. Whenever a discount or subsidy is partly or in total offered because we are Alcoholics Anonymous, it must be declined.”

Note: The original board policy text contained the letters “i.e.” which were replaced with the words “for example.” The General Service Board amended the policy because “for example” more accurately reflected the intention of the 1989 trustees’ Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums. The 1999 General Service Conference supported the Board’s 1989 policy through an Advisory Action.

The committee noted the Additional Consideration of the 1999 Conference Committee on Finance which reads:

“The committee unanimously recognizes that the acceptance of discounts or subsidies in the form of cash causes discomfort to some members of our Fellowship. The committee suggests that any future negotiations regarding International Convention discounts or subsidies be carried out with this in mind.”

Background:

1. Communication Services Department Google AdWords/Grants Progress Report
2. Google Ads Implementation Plan
3. Google Ads Language

Note: Any post January updates will be provided to the Conference Committee on Public Information at their meeting.

G.S.O. Communication Services Dept. Google Ads/LegitScript Progress Report

We opened a blank Google Ads account in February of 2018.

- This was done to access the customer service representatives at Google Ads while we gathered information to fulfil the Conference request. They could not answer questions until we had an account number.
- It had a username and password. No ads were input until January 2020. There has been no other activity in this account.

As of November 8, 2019, A.A.W.S. is certified by LegitScript.

We have an implementation plan and ad language prepared. Both have been reviewed and okayed by the PI ACMs and PI Coordinator.

- A.A.W.S. Technology/Communication/Services Committee will review the implementation plan and ad language in their January 2020 meeting.

On January 9, 2020, Trustees Public Information and A.A.W.S. TCS Committee met by phone. The General Manager of G.S.O. and members of the Communications Department were also in attendance.

- It was confirmed by the General Manager that we would move forward to implement Google Ads/Grant to comply with the Advisory Action of the 2019 General Service Conference.

Having received approval to move forward, the 2 required ad campaigns (with 3 ads each) were input into the back end of Google Ads.

- Google needs to be able to access the ads on the back end to make sure they adhere to the requirements and restrictions of the Grant program.

As of January 15, 2020, we submitted the ads and received a response from Google related to the Ad Grants pre-qualification survey which is required to claim the Grant. There were some necessary adjustments to be made in our settings.

As of February 3, 2020, we have worked with one of the PI ACMs to review and refine the ads on the back end of Google Ads before resubmission to Google Ads/Grants. Adjustments were made to follow current industry best practices and make final language changes. Campaigns will be resubmitted to Google this week (February 3).

###

Google Ads Implementation Plan

The purpose of this project is to give A.A. an additional outlet to provide accurate information to the still suffering alcoholic and the public about Alcoholics Anonymous and how to contact us.

Project charter

1. Discuss, update and get approval from management

LegitScript

1. Gather information to apply to LegitScript
 - a. Get answers from LegitScript to clear up any questions we have
2. Complete LegitScript application
3. Add renewal date to calendar (in case we decide not to renew)

Google Ads

1. Purpose & goal of each ad group/ad.

We will start by focusing on only two (2) ad groups in English. This will allow us to streamline our efforts and refine messages/keywords for two (2) audiences while we evaluate the usefulness of Google Ads as a Public Information tool. Discuss expansion to other audiences after the 2020 Conference has reviewed the results from 2019 and made a decision to move forward, or not.

- **Ad Group 1: Those that have, or know someone who may have, a drinking problem.**
- **Ad Group 2: Those looking for meeting information**

Ad language: For each, include H1 (Main message up to 30 characters), H2 (incentive to click up to 30 characters), URL/display URL (can mask display for clarity), Description (what will be seen on the page, up to 80 characters)

Extensions – additional information we can include

- Call out extension - Small non-clickable snippets, up to 25 characters
 - i. https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/7301149?hl=en&visit_id=637019971822158289-3801437731&rd=1
- Sitelink extensions - Additional pages on the website that might be useful to that audience, up to 25 characters
 - i. <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/2375416?hl=en>
- Structured Snippets
 - i. <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6280012?hl=en>

We aren't recommending use of the following extensions. They are useful for information specifically about the General Service Office, not about A.A. in general.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

- Location extension – Would be based on office location. Makes it look like A.A. is only in NY.
 - Call extension - This information could confuse viewers since we don't have a 24-hour number and encourage people to call locally.
 - Opening hours extension – Office hours would suggest A.A. is only available when G.S.O. is open.
2. Do additional research in Google Keywords planner and Broad Match Modifier.
 - a. Utilize single keywords exemption list (Google Grant) <https://support.google.com/grants/answer/7587473?hl=en>
 - b. Set up a Negative keywords list.
 - c. Look into keywords, key performance indicators (KPIs), goals and ads from other nonprofits. (Long term planning)
 3. Create at least 2 ad groups with 2-4 ads each
 - a. Select "Search Network only" for placement (keeps us off 3rd party sites)
 - b. Required to geolocate - Select only US and Canada
 - c. Best practice - Use 5-20 keywords per ad group
 4. Set up Google Ads tracking in Matomo
 - a. Add UTM codes to Ad URLs. Can only be done *after* ads are set up. <https://matomo.org/blog/2017/12/track-google-adwords-campaigns-piwik/>
 5. Apply for Google Ad Grant - ***Must have campaign set up prior to application***
 - a. Review Ad Grants Compliance Guide <https://support.google.com/grants/answer/9042207>
 - b. https://support.google.com/grants/topic/3500132?hl=en&ref_topic=3500091
 6. Execute, monitor and refine
 - a. Launch the ads
 - b. Check analytics weekly to optimize/refine grant spending. Watch the following key performance indicators (KPIs)
 - i. Impressions (how many times the ad was seen)
 - ii. What messages provide most traffic (does most relatable=most effective?)
 - iii. Most/least trafficked hours/days
 - iv. Most/least used keywords
 - c. Create quarterly report (broken down monthly)
 7. Keep a time log for active time on the project
 - a. This responds to specific questions of employee cost from the Conference Committee on Public Information.
 - b. Log started as of 6/20/2019. We estimated 85 hours spent prior to Conference 2019.

Notes:

- Include keywords in the copy and the backend.
- Don't use Google Ads Express – there is less functionality and we would not get as much data on the backend to analyze.

Google Ads Language

Ad Group 1: Have, or know someone who may have, a drinking problem	H1 Main message up to 30 characters	H2 Incentive to click up to 30 characters	URL Page on aa.org that relates to the intention of the ad	Description A description of what will be seen on the page up to 80 characters	H1 Count	H2 Count	Description Count
1	Can't stop drinking ?	Maybe A.A. can help you.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/is-aa-for-you	Information about the program of Alcoholics Anonymous	20	24	53
2	Is drinking causing problems?	Maybe A.A. can help.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/what-is-aa	A brief look at the program of Alcoholics Anonymous .			
3	Want to stop drinking ?	See if A.A. is right for you.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/is-aa-for-you	Information about the program of Alcoholics Anonymous .	22	29	54
4	Is alcohol becoming a problem?	Maybe A.A. can help.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/what-is-aa	A brief look at the program of Alcoholics Anonymous .	30	20	52
5	Drinking Problem ?	A.A. may be a solution.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/is-aa-for-you	Information about the program of Alcoholics Anonymous	18	23	53
6	Drinking Problem ? Need Help?	A.A. may be a solution.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/is-aa-for-you	Information about the program of Alcoholics Anonymous	28	23	53
7	Is alcohol causing problems ?	A.A. might be a solution.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/what-is-aa	A brief look at the program of Alcoholics Anonymous .	28	25	52
8	Want to stop drinking ?	See if A.A. is right for you	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/is-aa-for-you		22	28	0
9	Need help to quit drinking ?	See if A.A. is right for you	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/is-aa-for-you-twelve-questions-only-you-can-answer		27	28	0
10	Drinking too much ?	Learn how A.A. Works			19	20	0
11	Problem with alcohol ?	A.A. may help you stay sober .			21	29	0
12	Problems with alcohol ?	A.A. may help you stay sober .			22	29	0
13	Is alcohol a problem for you?	Maybe A.A. can help.			29	20	0
Ad Group 2: Looking for meeting information	H1 Main message up to 30 characters	H2 Incentive to click up to 30 characters	URL Page on aa.org that relates to the intention of the ad	Description A description of what will be seen on the page up to 80 characters	H1 Count	H2 Count	Description Count
1	Looking for an A.A. meeting ?	Contact A.A. near you.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources	A list of local A.A. entities by state and province.	28	22	52
2	Looking for an A.A. meeting ?	Meeting Guide can help.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/meeting-guide	Learn about the app that puts A.A. meeting information in the palm of your hand.	28	23	80
3	Find an A.A. Meeting near you?	Meeting Guide can help.	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/meeting-guide	Learn about the app that puts A.A. meeting information in the palm of your hand.	30	23	80
4	Want to contact A.A. near you?	Try the Meeting Guide app	https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources	A list of local A.A. entities by state and province.	30	25	52

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

General	AA, A.A., AAWS, A.A.W.S, AA Meetings, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Alcoholic, Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholism, Alcoholism help, Am I alcoholic, Anonymity, Anonymous, Drinking out of control, Drinking problem, Drinking too much, Excessive drinking, Get sober, Getting sober, Give up alcohol, Give Up Drinking, Help with drinking problem, How do i quit drinking, How do i stop drinking, How do i stop drinking on my own, How do i stop drinking so much, How do you stop drinking, How to quit drinking, Meetings, Problem with alcohol, Quit drinking, Recovery, Recovery from alcoholism, Signs of alcoholism, Sober, Sobriety, Stay sober, Staying sober, Stop drinking
Ancillary	12 Steps, 12 Traditions, Big Book, carry the message, central office, Conference-approved, DCM, D.C.M., Daily Reflections, design for living, desperation, District Committee Member, fellowship, friend of Bill, friend of Bob, GSO, G.S.O., GSR, G.S.R., General Service Office, General Service Representative, Grapevine, Happy Destiny, Higher Power, home group, Hope, intergroup, keep coming back, language of the heart, moral inventory, One day at a time, preamble, primary purpose, resentments, serenity prayer, share my story, shared experience, sober living, Sponsor, Sponsorship, step 4, step four, step 5, step five, Symptoms of alcoholism, tell my story, the promises, there is a solution, Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, voices of recovery, work the steps
App	app, meeting information, aa meetings, AA meeting list, Daily Reflections, A.A. Member, Meeting Guide, Find AA meetings

Add long tail keywords for each ad after research on Google Ads Keyword Planning tool

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM E: Discuss a request to adjust all A.A.W.S video titles for search engine optimization (SEO).

Background notes:

From the 2020 Conference Advisory Action:

All current video PSA titles be updated for search optimization purposes.

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee considered a request to update all remaining Conference-approved video titles for search engine optimization. The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information a request to update all remaining Conference-approved video titles for search engine optimization.

Background:

1. Communication Services Department memo request
2. Audios/Videos page (www.aa.org)

Memo

Date: December 12, 2019
To: Racy J., secretary, trustees' Public Information Committee
CC: Carole B., chair trustees' Public Information Committee and Patrick C.,
Conference Coordinator
From: Clement C., Communication Services Senior Manager
Re: Proposed Conference Agenda item: Request to update remaining video titles for Search
Engine Optimization.

This is a request for the General Service Office Communications Department to update all remaining Conference approved video titles for search engine optimization. The aim of this request is 3-fold:

- Create new titles that are more descriptive of the content in the video and that identify the video as A.A. content.
- Make our video naming conventions consistent.
- Make our content easier to find by search engines.

The intention is to preserve the original titles, when possible. Some titles would only need a title prefix to match the new style. For example, "A New Freedom" could be updated with a simple title prefix to become "Sobriety in A.A.: A New Freedom". However, videos with vague titles like "Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous" or "Alcoholics Anonymous" would need additional adjustment to match the new style, include search keywords, and be more descriptive.

At the 2019 Conference, there was an Advisory Action recommended by the Public Information Committee:

"All current video PSA titles be updated for search optimization purposes."

For your reference, below are the old and new titles of the video PSAs. The text in Blue is the original title and anything in red is a search keyword.

Changes → **Sobriety in A.A.: We made changes to stop drinking**

Doors → **Sobriety in A.A.: Opening doors to a life without drinking**

Tengo Esperanza (I Have Hope) → **Sobriety in A.A.: Since getting sober, I have hope**

There is no action needed related to new videos. Moving forward, all new videos will have optimized titles before they are published and distributed.

###

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM F: Review a report regarding the 2020 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan.

Background notes:

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed a list of items and activities of the CMP subcommittee. The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Public Information Committee a report on the progress on the development of a Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan.

The committee asked that a "Comprehensive Media Plan" subcommittee be formed at the August 2020 meeting to execute the continued development of the CMP action plan. The committee also reviewed the CMP subcommittee report on exploring PSA distribution on digital and social media platforms. The committee asked that this item continue to be discussed at the August 2020 meeting.

The committee reviewed the CMP subcommittee report on the development of Public Information service cards and a new Young People Video Project flyer. The committee asked that the staff secretary work with the Communications Department to implement the development of these service pieces.

Background:

1. Progress report on the development of a P.I. Comprehensive Media Plan.

The logo for Alcoholics Anonymous, featuring a large blue circle with a smaller blue circle inside it. The text "Alcoholics Anonymous" is written in a blue, serif font across the middle of the large circle.

Alcoholics
Anonymous®

Report on the Development of the 2020 P.I. Comprehensive Media Plan

A Brief History...

From Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan as approved in January

2012

- I. Goal
Increase awareness of what A.A. is and what A.A. can and cannot do, in ways that are measurable and undergo regular review and revision, as appropriate, so that any alcoholic in need can find A.A.
- II. Target Audiences
 - Individuals concerned about their drinking – all age, gender, cultural and ethnic segments.
 - Professionals who might interact with alcoholics – healthcare, legal/correctional, clergy, human resources, EAP, etc.
 - Media professionals
 - General Public
 - A.A. members involved in Public Information service.
- III. Message
“If alcohol is a problem for you, contact A.A. It works.”

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From the October 31, 2016 meeting of the General Service Board:

The General Service Board approved the following statement to replace the previous text of item #5 under Procedure, in the trustees' Public Information Committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure:

5. Ongoing development and annual review of a comprehensive media plan for Alcoholics Anonymous guided by the goal, target audience and message in the most recent Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan. Such efforts should rely on experts in public relations and related fields within the Fellowship whenever possible and may reach outside the Fellowship when needed

Process

Each year the trustees' Public Information Committee will update this document regarding suggested items for action in the upcoming calendar year, and items for consideration in the following year. The trustees' P.I. Committee shares information about the plan and seeks input from A.A.W.S., A.A.G.V., and the Conference P.I. committee as needed.

Content

- The plan must be actionable and, where possible, measurable;
- Materials must be user-friendly (i.e. to non-media professionals);
- Materials must lend themselves to easy transference for rotating committee and staff members.

2020 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan Progress Report

*Submitted by the trustees' Committee on Public Information
to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information*

Focus:

This year's report on the update of the Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan (PICMP) focused on responding to the General Service Board's Communications Audit. Action items specific to P.I., from the GSB Strategic Plan (updated July 2018).

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Activities:

Per the P.I. 2019 Advisory Actions:

- Implementation of Google AdWords/Grants
- A.A.W.S. YouTube Channel maintenance and progress report

Items also discussed by the TCPI 2020 Comprehensive Media Plan Subcommittee
--

- | |
|--|
| • Discuss Comp Media Plan architecture |
| • Discuss Audio PSAs |
| • Development of two video PSAs (2019 Advisory Action) |
| • Develop a plan to produce video shorts based on current A.A. pamphlets that provide information about A.A. to the public. (2019 Advisory Action) |
| • Discuss updating aa.org Web Banners |
| • Discuss possible online PSA distribution |
| • Discuss a new draft Young People Video Project flyer |
| • Discuss the development of a series of P.I. postcard service pieces / local P.I. banner jpeg |
| • Identify efforts that may overlap with other committees/departments |

2020 Development of a Comprehensive Media Plan

ACM Report on the development of a new CMP Architecture to include multi G.S.O. Departments, Service Desks, and GV Communications Review:

We established an architecture that is in line with common business practices but considers AA's unique characteristics. It includes but is not limited to:

1. Summary and Introduction
2. Situation Analysis/Audit
3. Target Markets
4. Creative and "Branding"
5. Marketing Objectives
 - a. Print
 - b. Video
 - c. Digital

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6. Strategies
 - a. Website
 - b. Media
 - c. Public Relations
 - d. Digital
7. Recommendations
8. Budgets
9. Tracking and Evaluation

Reference documents will be tied to the core plan and utilized for history and analysis including all historical action items. Also, to include new best practices, reference materials and sources. Cross communication as outlined will support a better understanding and bridge gaps in tactical implementation and provide a more comprehensive view of all assets and measurement of effectiveness in all mediums and goals.

Subcommittee work included breaking down sections of the document to fill in a details review and plot a course for communications efforts as well as action items and ongoing projects. Prior to conference we will be working diligently to fill in the blanks. ACM's have begun work and we will have a call prior to conference to adjust the timeline for other members of the committee to contribute.

At February's board meeting we had to establish a new structure for how members contribute to make the process more efficient. Next call with support a better understanding of a timeline to complete the first version of the documents.

- Comprehensive review of P.I. literature for targeted audiences and to support local committee efforts.
- Create new and revise current informational and educational material for professionals and professional associations.
- Develop policies to utilize new media technologies (social and others) by AAWS and AAGV that are guided by A.A. 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.
- GSO and GV/LV, with the support of the general manager and executive publisher, will optimize of A.A.'s online and social media presence to ensure that A.A. stays relevant in today's society as a solution to alcoholism. The GSB has requested that the Trustees' PI committee and corporate boards to make this a top priority.

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- Explore to 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. (In keeping with the 2015 P.I. Advisory Action related to video)
- An inventory of P.I. materials and services with an eye towards diversity and inclusion.
- Begin a conversation with basic professional degree programs who wish to incorporate information on A.A.

Action items - completed:

This section lists the items related to the Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan that have been completed or forwarded to another committee or Board for further action.

1. GSO Publishing to update “Anonymity Card” (F-20)

2. Press Releases –

- *Our Great Responsibility Book*
- *ASL Alcoholics Anonymous Book*
- *ASL Twelve Steps Twelve Traditions*
- *Young & Sober in A.A.: From Drinking to Recovery video*

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM G: Review a draft plan to create video shorts based on A.A. pamphlets.

Background notes:

2015 Conference Advisory Action

In light of the potential for continuing to improve the relevance and usefulness of the aa.org website on a timely basis, the A.A.W.S. Board be authorized to produce and post audio/video service material on the aa.org website provided the following conditions are met:

- Audio/video service material produced via this process provides information already available on aa.org;
- Proposed audio/video service material is for posting on aa.org only (audio/video items produced for distribution beyond the aa.org website will continue to require Conference review and approval);
- Proposed audio/video service material is reviewed for content by an appropriate trustees' committee prior to posting - with the prerogative to request input from the appropriate Conference committee prior to forwarding to the A.A.W.S. Board;
- Proposed audio/video service material is reviewed and approved for posting by the A.A.W.S. Board – with the prerogative to request input from the appropriate Conference committee prior to posting.

2019 Conference Advisory Action:

That the trustees' Committee on Public Information develop a plan to produce video shorts based on current A.A. pamphlets that provide information about A.A. to the public and that a report be brought back to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information.

From the February 2, 2020 report of the trustees' committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the 2019 Advisory Action that the trustees' Public Information Committee develop a plan to produce video shorts based on current A.A. pamphlets that provide information about A.A. to the public and that a report be brought back to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information. The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Public Information

Committee a draft plan to create video shorts based on A.A. literature.

Background:

1. G.S.O. Production draft plan for short video content
2. Draft Example Text and Story Board – pamphlet to video
3. PDFs of pamphlets “A Brief Guide to A.A.”, “Is A.A. for You?”, “A Message to Teenagers” (www.aa.org)

G.S.O. Production Draft Plan

Project Plan A:

Titles: A Brief Guide to A. A.

Is A.A. For You?

Pamphlets can be viewed on www.aa.org

A Message to Teenagers

We will be converting selected A.A. pamphlets and creating video shorts from the text. As part of the process a freelance copywriter will be part of the process.

They will edit and finesse the text also known as “copy”. The copywriter when excerpting the text will also set the timing for the video short. The length of the video can be anywhere between 1 -3:50 mins in length. The length of the video can vary, it all depends on the content of the pamphlet. Both titles in this scenario are similar to produce. The difference between both boards is that each frame has more content than the other an additional voice characters can be introduced per paragraph.

Storyboard/Assets

Each video will undergo a storyboard treatment where the creatives idea will be organized into a logical narrative. All storyboard should include frame number name of the video, date and, in most cases, page numbers.

The assets for these storyboard samples were created in house. All asset creation and development will take time to complete as they will be designed per frame. If original frames are not produced, other references, such as still photos and screen shots of pamphlets, can be inserted.

Post-Production/Visual Affects:

The titles on the video can be edited in Adobe After Effects. This software in post-production, allows for you to compose digital visual effects and motion graphics. We have the ability to add movement to the title and add colorization to set a creative motion and tone.

Talent: A voice-over talent male- female - non binary can be selected through the audio production company as part of the pre-production planning.

Music Selection and Purchases:

It is recommended that music selects can be chosen as part of hand off of assets. Stock music can be purchased through a web site that caters to stock music for industrial and broadcast video production. It is recommended that popular music from well-known music artists should not be used. Purchased stock music provides all licensing documentation, leaving you free and clear of all legal ramifications that can come with using popular music.

GIF Creation:

Graphics Interchange Format aka GIF's is an animated image that is relatively easy to produce. Although no sound is required, it is important to create designs that are text free with images that look and feel as though they rotate at a rapid speed. GIF's are useful for communicating emotions and creative concepts.

Project Plan B:

Title: A Message to Teenagers

For this storyboard, the concept would be illustrated drawings, visually representing the message of the pamphlet through basic sketches.

This animation process, although a more straightforward approach, comes with stages of development that require an approval processes for each phase. The written text of the pamphlet will accompany the frame to describe the storyline.

For this concept, the use of a narrator and stock music would be necessary in order to take us through the questions each storyboard frames represents.

Illustration Project Costs:

In general illustrators tend to price their services in two different fashions, hourly and project based. Similar to the graphic videos in Project Plan A, talent selection, audio records and stock music also play a part in the costs associated to an animation video project.

Public Information Staff Note:

Editorial changes from pamphlet to screen:

Pamphlet text is very dense and may not transfer in its entirety to screen. Therefore *excerpted text* works best for video and GIFs. Minor editorial revisions may also be needed. Examples include: degenderize text, change "It is" to "it's", remove formal words like "Thus", add a new contact A.A. section as final screen image to include the way people search for local A.A., including Meeting Guide app.

The three pamphlets were selected to keep in the spirit of developing video content of alcoholics sharing "talking" with fellow alcoholics who may be seeking help with a drinking problem

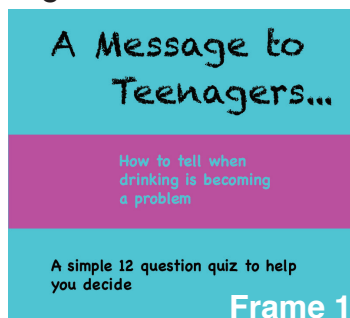
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A.A. World Services Production Sample Estimates		
<i>Sample Ball Park Estimate</i>	Prepared by GSO Digital Production Manager	
Production Co.	Approved by	
John Marshall Media Audio Freelance Editor		
Project Title:	1/27/20	
Cost for: 1 Graphic Board		
Budget Date	1/27/20	
Video Production Editing Project Plan A		
Description		
Video Editor 3 - 8 hour days @\$75	\$	
Revisions 2 rounds	\$	
Grand Total	\$3,000	
Video Production Animation Project Plan B		
Description		
Illustration- Sketches, Colorization, Final Drafts	\$8,000	
Video Editor 5 - 8 hour days @\$75		
Revisions 6 - 4 Hour days @\$75	\$	
John Marshal Media Audio Production Project Plan A		
Description		
1 Talent; Casting; Voice Selects	\$	
Record/Digital Audio Services	\$	
Stock Music	\$	
Audio Productions Costs	\$3,265	
Grand Total		
John Marshal Media Audio Production Project Plan B		
Description		
1 Talent; Casting; Voice Selects Est. @ 5 hours	\$	
Recording Digital Audio Services	\$	
Stock Music	\$	
Audio Productions Costs	\$3,265	
Grand Total		
Summary		
* Audio production costs are ballpark; Video costs do not include asset development and the creation of design files. If the editor was to produce assets for edits, The editors hourly rate would apply.		
Hourly rate for editor would be negotiable. All cost are considered ballpark		
All vendors will be triple bidded.		

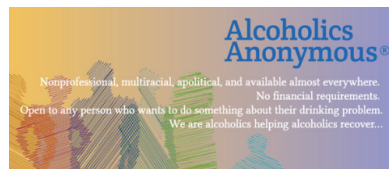
A Message to
Teenagers 1/27/2020

Storyboards

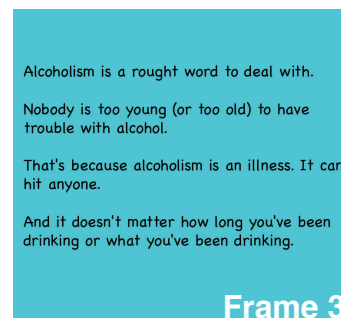
P.I.
Item G
Doc. 2



Frame 1



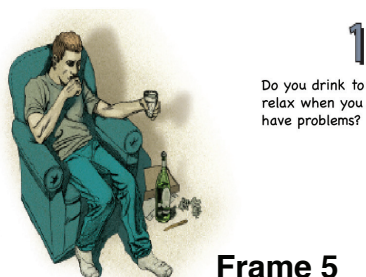
Frame 2



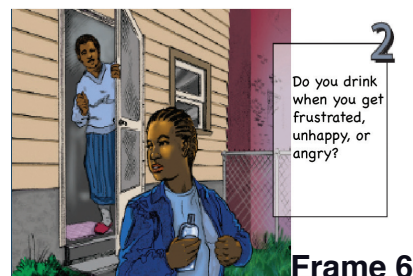
Frame 3



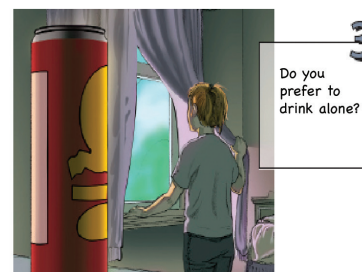
Frame 4



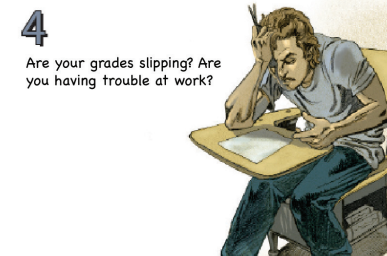
Frame 5



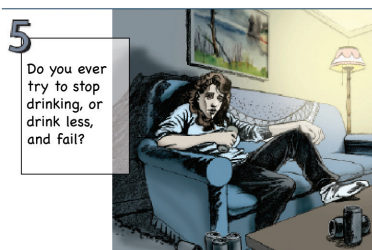
Frame 6



Frame 7



Frame 8



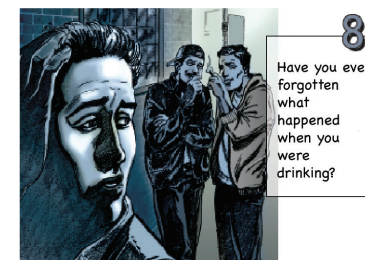
Frame 9



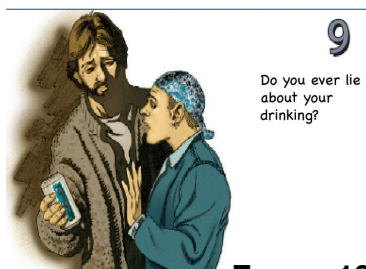
Frame 10



Frame 11



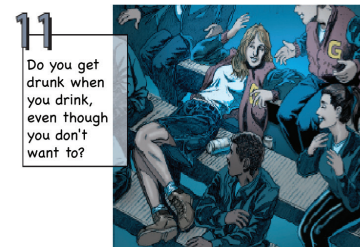
Frame 12



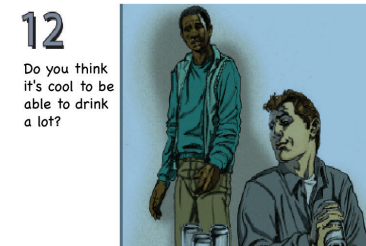
Frame 13



Frame 14



Frame 15



Frame 16

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 70th General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

A Message to Teenagers
1/27/2020

If you answered yes to any one of these questions, maybe it's time you took a serious look at what drinking might be doing to you.

And, if you do need help or if you'd just like to talk to someone about your drinking, contact us.

Frame 17

For more information about Alcoholics Anonymous or to find A.A. near you visit www.aa.org or download the Meeting Guide app.



Frame 18

What is Alcoholism?

As A.A. sees it, alcoholism is an illness. Alcoholics cannot control their drinking, because they are ill in their bodies and in their minds (or emotions), A.A. believes. If they do not stop drinking, their alcoholism almost always gets worse and worse.

Frame 1

Both the American Medical Association and the British Medical Association also have said that alcoholism is an illness.

Frame 2

What are the Symptoms?

Not all alcoholics have the same symptoms, but many - at different stages in the illness - show these signs ...

Frame 3

- o ... "just one more" at the end of a party
- o Get drunk when not planning to
- o Trying to control drinking by changing types of liquor
- o Going on the wagon, or taking pledges
- o Sneak drinks; lie about their drinking; hide bottles; drink at work (or in school)

Frame 4

- o Drinking alone
- o Blackouts (cannot remember the next day what one said or did the night before)
- o Drinking in the morning, to relieve severe hangovers
- o Guilty feelings and fears
- o Fail to eat and become malnourished-get cirrhosis of the liver
- o Shake violently, hallucinate, or have convulsions when withdrawn from liquor.

Frame 5

- o Drinking alone
- o Blackouts (cannot remember the next day what one said or did the night before)
- o Drinking in the morning, to relieve severe hangovers
- o Guilty feelings and fears
- o Fail to eat and become malnourished-get cirrhosis of the liver
- o Shake violently, hallucinate, or have convulsions when withdrawn from liquor.

Frame 6

Who belongs to A.A.?

Like other illnesses, alcoholism affects all sorts of people. People in A.A. are of all races and nationalities, all religions and no religion at all. They are rich, poor and of average income. They work at all occupations, as lawyers and stay-at-home parents, young people and students, teachers and truck drivers, waitresses and members of the clergy.

Frame 7

What Does it Cost to belong to A.A.?

Newcomers do not pay any fees for membership. And members don't pay dues.

Frame 8

How can you find out more about A.A.?

For more information about Alcoholics Anonymous or to find A.A. near you visit www.aa.org, or download the Meeting Guide app.



Frame 9

Is A.A. for You?

Frame 1

Only you can decide whether you want to give A.A. a try -whether you think it can help you.

Frame 2

We came to A.A. because we finally gave up trying to control our drinking. We hated to admit that we could never drink safely.

Frame 3

We decided to try to face up to what alcohol had done to us. We found out that many people suffered from the same feelings of guilt and loneliness and hopelessness that we did. We found out the we had these feelings because we had the disease of alcoholism.

Frame 4

We found out that many people suffered from the same feelings of guilt and loneliness and hopelessness that we did. We found out that we had these feelings because we had the disease .. of alcoholism .

Frame 5

Here are some of the questions we tried to answer honestly.
See how you do...

Frame 6

Have you ever decided to stop drinking for a week or so, but only lasted for a couple of days?
Most of us in A.A. made all kinds of promises to ourselves and to our

Frame 7

Do you wish people would mind their own business about your drinking - stop telling you what to do? ...
Yeah, we get it.

Frame 8

Have you ever switched from one kind of drink to another in the hope that this would keep you from getting drunk?
Yeah, you name it, we tried it. But if we drank anything with alcohol in it, we usually got drunk eventually.

Frame 9

Have you had problems connected with drinking during the past year?

Has your drinking caused trouble at home?

Have you missed days of work or school because of drinking?

Frame 10

Do you have "blackouts"?
A "blackout" is when we have been drinking hours or days that we cannot remember. When we came to A.A., we found out that this is a pretty sure sign of alcoholic drinking.

Frame 11

Have you ever felt that your life would be better if you did not drink?
Many of us started to drink because drinking made life seem better, at least for a while. By the time we got into A.A., we felt trapped. We were drinking to live and living to drink.

Frame 12

We were sick and tired of being sick and tired.

Frame 13

Is A.A. for You?

Only you can decide whether you think A.A. is for you.

But we can show you how we are learning to live without drinking "one day at a time."

We'll show you how we stopped drinking... if you want us to.

Frame 14

For more information about Alcoholics Anonymous or to find A.A. near you visit www.aa.org, or download the Meeting Guide app.

Frame 15

For more information about Alcoholics Anonymous or to find A.A. near you visit www.aa.org, or download the Meeting Guide app.



Frame 16

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM H: Public Service Announcements (PSAs):

1. Review the 2019 Report on the “Relevance and Usefulness of Video Public Service Announcements.”
-

Background notes:

2008 Advisory Actions:

The Conference Committee on Public Information annually review current television public service announcements for relevance and usefulness, retiring a PSA only when it is no longer relevant and/or useful to the Fellowship.

The Conference Committee on Public Information annually assess the need for a new television public service announcement.

2019 Advisory Action

That the video PSA “My World” be discontinued.

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the CMP subcommittee report that the current audio and video PSAs remain useful. The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Public Information Committee the 2019 report on the Relevance and Usefulness of Video PSAs. The committee also noted that the audio PSAs “Contact A.A.” section are in process to be updated to reflect the current ways that people search for A.A. The committee asked that this information be included in the report.

Note: Annually, the trustees’ Committee on Public Information reviews PSAs as a standing item and forwards their suggestions if any action may be needed to the Conference Committee on Public Information. The trustees’ Committee on Public Information found the three Conference-approved video PSAs relevant and useful.

Note: In keeping with a 2019 Advisory Action the following PSA titles were updated for search engine optimization.

- Sobriety in A.A.: Since getting sober, I have hope (PSA)
- Sobriety in A.A.: Opening doors to a life without drinking (PSA)
- Sobriety in A.A.: We made changes to stop drinking (PSA)

Background:

1. Video/Audio PSAs can be viewed on the Public Information Committee page.

- ENG - https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/public-information-committees
- FR - https://www.aa.org/pages/fr_FR/public-information-committees
- SP - https://www.aa.org/pages/es_ES/public-information-committees

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM H: Public Service Announcements (PSAs):

2. Review the distribution and tracking information for the video PSA “Changes.”
-

Background notes:

2002 Advisory Action (**Staff Note:** *This was the first Advisory Action to professionally distribute, track, and evaluate PSAs. This has become the practice when a new PSA is produced, with Conference-approval.*)

In addition to the work of local committees, the newly produced television public service announcement (PSA) be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$30,000, and that information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2003 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

2018 Advisory Action:

That in addition to the work of local committees, the video PSA, “Changes” be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$42,000 and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

2019 P.I. Committee Consideration:

The committee reviewed and accepted the information on centralized distribution, tracking and evaluation of the public service announcement “Changes

The February 2, 2020 report of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the PSA tracking and distribution report of “Sobriety in A.A.: We made *changes* to stop drinking.” The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information the PSA tracking and Distribution report.

Staff Note: *Per a 2019 Advisory Action the PSA “Changes” is now titled “Sobriety in A.A.: We Made Changes to Stop Drinking.” The title was updated for search engine optimization purposes to include key words that people use when searching the internet for help with a drinking problem.*

Background:

1. Email correspondence from tracking and distribution vendor *Connect 360*
2. The most recent reports on the Connect 360 extranet site:
<http://reportcenter.c360m.com/>

Username: AA2019

Password: connect

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From: [Shaliza Thomas*](#) (*Non-alcoholic)
To: [Publicinfo](#); _____
Cc: _____
Subject: Alcoholics Anonymous TV PSA Distributions - Final Results Update
Date: Friday, January 17, 2020 4:54:01 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[AA Reports - FINAL.zip](#)

P.I.
Item H.2
Doc. 1

Dear Racy,

Attached please find final results for the Alcoholics Anonymous TV PSA distributions. Overall, the PSAs performed very well as stations aired the campaigns frequently.

The U.S. English campaign received support on both national/regional networks as well as on local stations nationwide, including in top markets such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas, Washington, DC and more. The U.S. Spanish PSA also garnered strong results with airings occurring in top Hispanic markets throughout the country, including New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, Houston, Phoenix and others. Additional details on the U.S. campaigns' performances are outlined in the attached PSA Highlights Reports and results reports.

As a wrap up to your U.S. TV PSA campaigns, I'm also including our C360 Insight Reports. As the name suggests, these reports are designed to provide key insights into the campaigns' performances on a number of levels. The reports include various graphics along with placement highlights. These summarize usage by market / DMA ranks, state and daypart airings. Also included are impressions and media value by DMA which help to demonstrate how results fared throughout the various media market tiers.

The Canadian TV PSA distribution concluded with a total of 7,780 airings, 154,994,881 impressions and \$998,360 in donated media value. During the campaign, the English and French PSAs aired on a number of networks including CBC News Network, CTV Two, MTV, Gusto, Discovery, Bravo and others as well as on many local stations throughout the country, including in the cities of Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver, Quebec City, Calgary, Toronto, Edmonton and more. The English spots aired 5,549 times while the French spots aired 2,231 times.

Combined, the A.A. U.S. and Canadian TV PSAs aired a total of 71,278 times with 584,893,597 impressions and \$21,011,517 in donated media value.

Best,
Shaliza

Shaliza Thomas*
Senior Campaign Specialist
Connect360 Multimedia
[___@c360m.com](#)

www.c360m.com

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2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM H: Public Service Announcements (PSAs):

3. Review a report regarding the new financial reporting system for PSA media valuations.

Background notes:

*2002 Advisory Action (**Staff Note:** This was the first Advisory Action to professionally distribute, track, and evaluate PSAs. This has become the practice when a new PSA is produced, with Conference-approval.)*

In addition to the work of local committees, the newly produced television public service announcement (PSA) be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$30,000, and that information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2003 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

2018 Advisory Action:

That in addition to the work of local committees, the video PSA, “Changes” be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$42,000 and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2019 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

2019 P.I. Committee Consideration:

The committee reviewed and accepted the information on centralized distribution, tracking and evaluation of the public service announcement “Changes.”

The February 2, 2020 report of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the PSA tracking and distribution report of “Sobriety in A.A.: We made *changes* to stop drinking.” The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information the PSA tracking and Distribution report.

The February 2, 2020 report of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed the PSA tracking and distribution report of “Sobriety in A.A.: We made *changes* to stop drinking.” The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information the PSA tracking and Distribution report.

Staff Note: Per a 2019 Advisory Action the PSA “Changes” is now titled “Sobriety in A.A.: We Made Changes to Stop Drinking.”

From the February 2, 2020 trustees’ Committee on Finance report:

The Public information committee has asked the T.F.C. to look at background regarding an Advisory Action to apply for Google Grants and how it would be reported on our financial statements. There is a question on how in-kind contributions need to be reported on the balance sheet. We have historically accepted in-kind donations for TV PSAs but will continue looking into the best ways to report this information to the Fellowship.

A subcommittee of Tom A., Leslie B., Mark E., Carolyn W. and Sibi Thomas*, our auditor, was appointed by the Chair to discuss further in-kind contributions and how they are reported. The chair has suggested our auditors provide information on how we must report the in-kind service to give further information to the Conference.

*Non-alcoholic

Background:

1. *Connect 360 Media* valuation of Gift-in-kind PSA placement media value.



P.I.
Item H.3
Doc. 1

Steven Edelman CPA * (*Non-alcoholic)
President

Member, American Institute of CPAs
Member, New York State Society of CPAs

January 22, 2020

Ms. Racy J. [REDACTED]
Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
475 Riverside Drive, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10115

Dear Racy,

I am pleased to provide you with this 12-month valuation of Gift-in-Kind donations your organization received during its fiscal year ended December 31, 2019. Whenever a broadcast station or Out-Of-Home media company runs a Public Service Announcement for free, it has made a non-cash Gifts-in-Kind donation to the nonprofit organization. This letter is to help your Accounting department properly record these donations on your organization's financial statements. It supplements the information you received in your monthly reports.

The dollar value you received is shown in the box below. It was calculated in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; the regulations that govern Not-for-Profit financial reporting. Please give this letter, the enclosed Valuation Summaries, Description of the Valuation Process, and enclosed *CPA Journal* article to your Controller or Chief Financial Officer.

Please feel free to contact me, if you have any questions. My phone number is [REDACTED] and email address is [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Steven Edelman*

Donated PSA Media Valuation

Name of Organization:	Alcoholics Anonymous
Reporting Period:	January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019
Gift-in-Kind Valuation: Broadcast:	\$20,843,307
Out-Of- Home:	\$0
Total:	\$20,843,307

Connect360 Multimedia – 170 Old County Road; Mineola, NY 11501 – [REDACTED]

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Connect360's PSA Media Valuation Process

As a CPA and President of Connect360, I have a special interest in making sure our Gift-In-Kind (GIK) valuations for donated broadcast airtime is done in full compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), Financial Accounting Board (FASB) guidance, and the AICPA's *Audit and Accounting Guide for Not-for-Profit Entities*. Sections 5.152-5.163 of the Guide, issued by the AICPA's Financial Executive Reporting Committee (FinREC) in March 2015, defined Public Service Announcements (PSAs) as a "contributed asset" donated to a not-for profit (NFP) to help communicate its message or mission. As such, it must be reported as revenue in NFP financial statements, subject to the "Fair Value Measurement and Disclosure" requirements of FASB ASC Topic 820.

Public Service Announcements are noncash transactions created when a broadcast station airs a PSA for free. As such, even a single airing creates a reportable event according to FASB ASC 820. In most cases, this also creates a program-related expense, since advertising airtime is defined as a "sellable asset" used in fulfilling an organization's mission. What typically happens is each airing in a PSA campaign, which can be made up of hundreds to thousands of airings, must be valued individually. This is done as part of Connect360's valuation process. We then report the total of all such valuations to our clients, so they can be recorded in a single monthly or annual accounting entry.

For a fuller discussion of the accounting for Public Service Announcements, I have enclosed an article I wrote on the subject that was published in the April 2016 issue of the *CPA Journal* (published by the New York State Society of CPAs) and reprinted by a number of national and regional CPA firms.

Television PSA Tracking and Valuation

Television advertisements are encoded with a watermark that allows Nielsen Media Research to electronically identify each airing a PSA receives. Nielsen provides Connect360 with a daily feed that identifies by airing the name of the station that aired the PSA, time the advertisement ran, and the format (representing the length and creative content) the station elected to run. Nielsen's tracking data is then automatically fed to Connect360's Pinpoint reporting and valuation system. I mention this to indicate that there is no manual intervention in the process.

Airings are automatically matched to a continually updated audience database that Connect360 purchases from Nielsen. The data comes from the same source as used for Nielsen's television rating service. It contains by station and by daypart (time of day) audience data for virtually all 1400 commercial television stations that operate in the United States. Audience numbers are then divided by 1000 and matched with a contemporaneous fair market database of CPMs (cost per 1000 viewers) that represent prices actually paid by media buying services for advertising time airing in the same market (DMA), and same time of day (Day-Part), for ads of the same length as the PSA being analyzed. This contemporaneous market data comes from SQUAD, a marketing research company that specializes in

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CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

pooling together confidential fair market price information actually paid by the nation's largest media buying services. Connect360 is one of a limited group of valuation specialists who have access to this confidential data.

Our SQAD database is updated monthly, allowing us to meet the "fair value measurement" requirement called for in ASC 820's Level 2 valuation hierarchy of "other observable inputs." Television stations do publish list prices for the sale of advertising time; however, because media prices are heavily impacted by discounting and price negotiations, list prices do not accurately reflect actual prices buyers paid or meet FinREC requirements.

Using this data, Connect360's Pinpoint valuation system calculates the dollar value of each of the hundreds to thousands of airings that make up a typical PSA campaign and provides its clients with monthly results data (including airings by market, audience impressions, demographic data, and usage by format) and valuation information. At the end of each client's fiscal year, we provide a valuation summary to assist in financial reporting.

Radio Tracking and Valuation

Nielsen Audio creates a digital signature or "fingerprint" of the radio PSA audio track, which its listening stations around the country identify through the use of artificial intelligence. Nielsen currently tracks about 2100 of the nation's largest radio stations, which tend to be stations centered in the largest DMA markets. As with television, Nielsen provides Connect360 with a daily feed of identified airings. Airing information from small stations not tracked by Nielsen (there are approximately 12,000 radio stations in the United States) is gathered from self-reported usage provided directly by stations to Connect360's proprietary usage reporting website.

This airing data is matched by daypart with a database of radio audience, purchased from Nielsen Audio and valued using SQAD CPM values on a DMA by DMA basis with adjustments for spot length, as done for television. Connect360 is one of a very small number of valuation specialists that have access to this confidential information. As with TV, the reporting process meets GAAP's contemporaneous and fair market valuation requirements.

In very small markets, where limited audience data is provided by Nielsen for specific day-parts due to statistically low station response to Nielsen surveys, Pinpoint is able to model data based on information that Nielsen does have station information for in the same DMA and day-part. In all cases, only contemporaneous tracking and market data are used.

Out-Of-Home Media Valuation

Out-Of-Home media includes billboards, airport advertising, digital signage, and other media services provided by media companies that specialize in this type of advertising. The value of the media donated by these companies comes from the companies that provide the media and represents the amount they charge their commercial customers for the same signage, in the same market, at the same time of year as the donated media runs. When a media company requires a nonprofit to pay for part of the cost the media or related services, any payment made to the media company is subtracted from the value reported by the company. In this case, only the net amount (the free portion) is reported as donated value. This bifurcates the transaction, with the free part of transaction being reported as a Gift-in-Kind donation and the paid portion an exchange transaction, consistent with ASC 606's guidance on revenue recognition.

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The Reporting Process

Connect360 provides its clients with both monthly and fiscal year data. It also is always ready to assist auditors and CPA firms to understand its valuations and its impact on the financial reporting process. In all cases, our valuation process is always transparent and highly auditable, because the integrity of our valuations is a key part of everything we do.

If you have any questions, please feel to give me a call. .

Steven Edelman
President

Updated 1/9/18

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2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM H: Public Service Announcements (PSAs):

4. Review a progress report on the development of two PSAs.
-

Background notes:

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee discussed the 2019 Advisory Action that two PSAs be developed at a cost not to exceed \$50,000 for each PSA, and that if full-face characters are shown, to include an "actor portrayal" disclaimer on screen. The committee reviewed the Comprehensive Media Plan subcommittee report on the messaging and audience of each PSA. The committee looks forward to a progress report and/or professional storyboards to be reviewed at the August 2020 meeting.

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM I: Discuss a request “to create a new form of communication” to address anonymity on social media.

Background notes:

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee discussed a request to create a new form of communication specifically addressing the use of social media and anonymity. The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information a request to create a new form of communication specifically addressing the use of anonymity on social media.

Background:

1. Area request to develop new anonymity on social media communication
2. Anonymity a Vital Spiritual Principle page anonymity resources (www.aa.org)
 - ENG - https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/anonymity-a-vital-spiritual-principle
 - FR - https://www.aa.org/pages/fr_FR/anonymity-a-vital-spiritual-principle
 - SP - https://www.aa.org/pages/es_ES/anonymity-a-vital-spiritual-principle

From: Don B
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2019 3:45 PM
To: Conference
Cc:
Subject: 70th General Service Conference Agenda Item Proposal from Area 29 (#4 of 4)
Attachments: Principles Before Posting.FINAL_11_24_2019.pdf; Survey Results.pdf

P.I.
Item I
Doc. 1

Maryland General Service, Inc.
P.O. Box 8043
Elkridge, MD 21075

December 10, 2019

Patrick C
Conference Coordinator
General Service Office

Attached to this correspondence are three pages of background information from Area 29 in support of a Conference Agenda Item proposal (#4 of 4) for the 70th General Service Conference.

The proposal reads: “To create a new form of communication specifically addressing the use of social media and anonymity.”

This proposal was brought forward from the Area 29 Committee to the Area 29 Assembly held on December 7, 2019. The proposal passed with substantial unanimity (only one dissenting vote) in favor of forwarding it to the Conference Coordinator with additional background information, which is attached.

The proposal had its origins in an August 2017 discussion of anonymity, safety, electronic communications, and social media during the post-Conference meeting of CARC 2, one of Area 29's four geographically-distinct Conference Agenda Review Committees. CARC 2 is comprised of members from Districts 1, 6, 22, 23, 27, 35, 36, and 42 located in the four southern counties of the Maryland area. Those August 2017 discussions led ultimately to the adoption of Advisory Action 26 of the 68th General Service Conference, to revise the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” to include a section on anonymity.

CONFIDENTIAL: 70th General Service Conference Background

Yet it is the experience of the vast majority of members in Area 29 that the brief discussion of digital anonymity in the Sponsorship pamphlet is not enough to change the habits practiced by many of our members. The background documents from 2017 indicate a lack of understanding and concern among our members for anonymity in social media, and it appears that not much has changed since then. A new form of communication, beyond pamphlets and posters and service pieces, is needed. Rather than dictate what form that communication should take, it is our intention in Area 29 to get the conversation started about what needs to be done. Highlighting anonymity can be a life or death issue. Specific education for current and future members about anonymity in social media is our responsibility.

The CARC 2 vote on July 27, 2019 was unanimous in support of this proposal. The proposal was forwarded to and approved unanimously on November 16, 2019 by the Area 29 Committee, which sent it forward to the Area Assembly for final ratification on December 7, 2019.

Additional Background Information (attached):

- (1) "Principles Before Posting" - Summary of Proposal (1 page).
- (2) PBP Survey results (2 pages).

In summary, Area 29 proposes that a new form of communication is needed to more effectively address anonymity in social media.

Yours in love and service,

Don B

Don B

Panel 68, Area 29 Delegate

Attachments

“Principles Before Posting”

Social Media and Anonymity – What you might not know

There is an urgent need for a new communication specifically addressing anonymity using social media. The communication could be in a format such as a postcard sized card, poster and/or tabletop card.

As a result of an August 2017 CARC 2 (Conference Agenda Review Committee) meeting, Area 29 began a discussion addressing anonymity, safety, and the use of social media and email by AA members. At the September 23, 2017 Area Committee meeting, a motion was made to add a section about anonymity to the pamphlet, “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.”

At an October 2017 District 22 workshop, attendees completed a survey about their experience with social media such as FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms. The survey also addressed the use of email and revealed that all attendees used a personal computer. Of those surveyed, significant percentages used email and social media to communicate with and about other AA members, including posting photos of the members and announcing anniversaries.

The motion was presented at the December 16, 2017 Area 29 Assembly and it was approved. The same day, there was a sharing session about anonymity.

December 14, 2017, Linda J., Panel 66 Area 29 Delegate, submitted a letter to Rick W, Conference Coordinator at the General Service Office for consideration of the motion as an Agenda item at the 2018 General Service Conference. The motion was approved and became an Advisory Action at the 68th GSC to add the language to the “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” pamphlet.

While this is a step forward, it is not enough. On FaceBook pages, numerous posts are found referencing anniversaries, photographs of members and anniversary chips. This is a serious anonymity issue. While this is no doubt unintentional, the unintended consequences could be serious. People do not realize that potential employers and current employers now use social media as a tool when making decisions on whether to hire or fire. New members of AA are the most likely persons to inadvertently break the anonymity of another member or even their own. This is a direct result of a lack of specific guidance on this issue.

I, Meryl T., would like to bring forth the MOTION that was approved by the Area Committee in November, to create a new form of communication specifically addressing the use of social media and anonymity. Highlighting anonymity can be a life or death issue. Specific education for current and future members about anonymity using social media is our responsibility.

Enclosure: Survey results

PBP Survey

	<u>Answers</u> <u>Yes</u>	<u>Answers</u> <u>No</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Answers</u>	% Yes of Total Answers
Do you use a computer for business?	17	8	25	68%
Do you use a computer for personal reasons?	25		25	100%
Do you use a computer to communicate within AA?	18	6	24	75%
Do you use email to communicate within AA?	20	5	25	80%
If you send an email to a group of people within AA do you list the email addresses in the TO: field?	9	16	25	36%
If you send an email to a group of people within AA do you list the email addresses in the BCC: field?	11	14	25	44%
Do you communicate with members of AA on social media?	14	11	25	56%
Do you post photos on social media?	19	6	25	76%
Have you posted photos of AA members on social media?	8	17	25	32%
If you have posted photos of AA members, did they agree to it?	5	20	25	20%
Have you tagged AA members on social media?	3	22	25	12%
Do you post any AA approved material on social media?	3	22	25	12%
Have you posted your AA anniversary or anniversary chip on social media?	1	24	25	4%
Have you commented or liked someone's post about sobriety?	7	18	25	28%
Are you aware of your social media's privacy settings?	15	10	25	60%

PBP Survey

	<u>Answers</u> <u>Yes</u>	<u>Answers</u> <u>No</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Answers</u>	<u>% Yes</u> <u>of Total</u> <u>Answers</u>
Do you use social media?	20	5	25	80%

<u>Please check all that apply:</u>	<u>Answers</u>	<u>% Users of</u> <u>Social Media</u>	<u>% of Total</u> <u>Survey</u> <u>Respondents</u>
<u>FaceBook</u>	17	85%	68%
<u>Instagram</u>	7	35%	28%
<u>VK</u>			
<u>Tumblr</u>	1	5%	4%
<u>Meetup</u>	1	5%	4%
<u>Vine</u>	1	5%	4%
<u>Flickr</u>	1	5%	4%
<u>Classmates</u>	2	10%	8%
<u>Twitter</u>	5	25%	20%
<u>Pinterest</u>	5	25%	20%
<u>Reddit</u>	1	5%	4%
<u>Google+</u>	9	45%	36%
<u>YouTube</u>	9	45%	36%
<u>Ask.fm</u>			
<u>LinkedIn</u>	8	40%	32%

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM J: Consider a request to develop a plan to create an A.A. podcast.

Background notes:

2015 Advisory Action

In light of the potential for continuing to improve the relevance and usefulness of the aa.org website on a timely basis, the A.A.W.S. Board be authorized to produce and post audio/video service material on the aa.org website provided the following conditions are met:

- *Audio/video service material produced via this process provides information already available on aa.org;*
- *Proposed audio/video service material is for posting on aa.org only (audio/video items produced for distribution beyond the aa.org website will continue to require Conference review and approval);*
- *Proposed audio/video service material is reviewed for content by an appropriate trustees' committee prior to posting - with the prerogative to request input from the appropriate Conference committee prior to forwarding to the A.A.W.S. Board;*
- *Proposed audio/video service material is reviewed and approved for posting by the A.A.W.S. Board – with the prerogative to request input from the appropriate Conference committee prior to posting.*

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee discussed a request that a podcast be created to better carry the A.A. message and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information a request to develop a plan that a podcast be created to better carry the A.A. message.

Background documents attached:

1. Area request for the creation of a podcast

Staff Note: This is the original motion that was forwarded by Area 49 as an Area Proposed Agenda Item

I am seeking support from Area 49 South East New York for the following potential agenda item for the 70th General Service Conference:

Motion: I make a motion that a podcast be created to better carry the A.A. message.

Background information

- A podcast is a digital form of radio. It is essentially a recording that you can listen to through the Internet or on an app.
- There are many podcasts that are about AA, but not by AA World Services or the General Service Board.
- This is a media we are not currently using to reach the alcoholic.
- This podcast could cover a variety of sobriety and service topics, including:
 - Experience with Steps/Traditions/Concepts
 - The Service Manual
 - Experience/strength/hope from current and past trustees and delegates
 - Our different pieces of literature
 - The Grapevine and La Vina
- It is suggested that the General Service Board consider utilizing class A trustees as our communications audit has found that our class A trustees are under utilized. This would eliminate any concern about breaking of anonymity as class A trustees are not alcoholic. The podcast could address the issue that “communication is inconsistent throughout the conference structure” (communications audit) and can help to bridge the information gap created by the varieties of people within the service structure with varying communication skills, which leads to inconsistencies in the information being provided to individual A.A. members.
- Within the summary of the communications audit facilitated by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous are the following findings:
 - “most of the technology in place is ineffectual, unattractive, and underutilized”
 - In most cases, GSO and AAWS are not using communication platforms that are relevant for the external audiences they are trying to reach and engage”
 - That we have an “attachment to paper/manual processes vs. leveraging technology to accelerate and streamline” and that this was found to limit our ability to communicate.
- On pages 14-15 of the General Service Conference report from the 2019 General Service Conference there is a note within the section titled “A.A.W.S Audio/Video Strategy on the popularity of “snack sized content”. Podcasts were listed among this type of media as a popular means of communicating. Based on reading this section a fair assumption that a podcast would be in line with action A.A.W.S. is already looking to take in the upcoming year.
- A motion of support was already passed at the Suffolk Country General Service Assembly

###

2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM K: Review “A.A. Triennial Membership Survey” report.

Background notes:

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information:

The committee reviewed a professional survey methodology report on the A.A. Triennial Membership Survey. The committee agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information the survey report. The committee also asked that additional information be included in the background reflecting discussions and suggestions that came from committee discussions with the survey professional. Noting that the survey methodology review is still in its infancy the committee asked that this discussion be continued at the August 2020 meeting.

Background:

1. A.A. Membership Survey Professional Methodology Review
2. Suggestions for possible improvement of current process and data
3. History and Actions on the A.A. Membership Survey
4. A.A. 2014 Membership Survey pamphlet can be viewed on www.aa.org
 - ENG - https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-48_membershipsurvey.pdf
 - FR- https://www.aa.org/assets/fr_FR/fp-48_membershipsurvey.pdf
 - SP - https://www.aa.org/assets/es_ES/sp-48_membershipsurvey.pdf

Sampling Methodology of the A. A. Membership Survey

A Report to the Trustees Public Information

Committee prepared by Dr. Alexandra Cooper *

submitted January 14, 2020

*non-alcoholic

Executive Summary

This report responds to a request by the General Services Board (GSO) of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. for an assessment of the sampling strategy used for the triennial Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) Membership Survey (“The Survey”) and recommendations for its improvement. The report frames its examination of sampling strategy using the widely accepted Total Survey Error framework for survey methodology and therefore examines both sampling and related sources of error. It identifies many strengths in the existing sampling protocol, notes that only one other 12-Step organization (A.A. U.K.) appears to employ a similarly scientific approach to sampling and surveying its membership, and provides recommendations for ways in which The Survey methodology might be improved or expanded.

Framework

Total Survey Error is a paradigm that seeks to identify, understand, and minimize all sources of error that may affect the accuracy of survey data. A widely used categorization of the sources it identifies involves five such sources, namely sampling, coverage, nonresponse, measurement, and processing error. Of these, in addition to sampling error itself, coverage – discrepancies between the sampling list and the population being studied – and non-response are particularly closely linked to the processes and practice of sampling and as such, merit particular attention in any examination of sampling protocol.

Strengths of existing protocol

The Survey relies on a true probability sample and makes appropriate use of stratification and clustering, tools widely used in survey research to improve the accuracy of survey data and the efficiency of its collection. It also employs a sample size that is more than adequate to generating estimates that are quite precise.

Opportunities for improvement

Any survey research protocol involves tradeoffs across competing goals and as such, it is always worth examining opportunities for improvement as well as considering potential downsides to changing an established protocol, which include (but are not limited to) non-comparability of the findings over time.

In the case of The Survey, areas that merit attention include the following:

- The particulars of the sampling strategy, including whether stratification is needed and if so, whether the use of Areas as strata is the optimal implementation;
- Ways to simplify or augment the data collection process, including addition of digital data collection instruments – an online form in addition to a paper questionnaire;
- The ways in which those who carry out the survey administration may affect results collected, and how they perceive and implement the processes involved;

- Inclusion of additional sources of data, which might involve
 - Using the Meeting Finder App as a source of information about members' locations and meeting-seeking;
 - Calling on data collectors to provide contextual information about the meetings in which members are asked to complete questionnaires;
 - Examining whether other sources of data about alcohol use and abuse and 12-step meeting attendance might enrich our understanding of the quality of the data collected using The Survey;
 - Using community data, e.g. from the Census, to provide context about how well or poorly meeting members reflect the population of their communities.

1. Overview

The General Services Board (GSO) of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. has sought expert assistance in evaluating the methodology currently in use for the triennial Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) Membership Survey ("The Survey"), with the objective of either confirming the current sampling methodology as the most appropriate means of selecting a sample for The Survey; or (2) identifying a more appropriate sampling protocol reflecting the current state of survey sampling methodology.

The request called for the report to include the following:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the current sampling methodology in meeting the purpose for which it is intended;
- Information about methods currently in use by key other self-help and 12-step fellowships to conduct membership surveys, including a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of these methods;
- An analysis of current reliable and valid sample selection methods and their respective strengths and weaknesses as they relate to sample selection for The Survey;
- An assessment of whether there are methods other than what is currently done that would be more effective in reaching members for The Survey;
- In light of the above considerations, an assessment of what constitutes an appropriate sample size.

This report examines these and related topics. It begins with a brief overview of the sampling protocol currently in place for The Survey. It then proceeds to describe information collected concerning whether and how other 12-step organizations survey their membership. Then, because it frames much of what follows in the Total Survey Error (TSE) perspective, it introduces and describes the TSE framework and the relevance of key aspect of this framework to the central question of the sampling protocol for The Survey. With this background in place it provides an overview of sample selection methods and their strengths and weaknesses. Then, turning from this abstract overview, it examines the strengths and weaknesses of the current sampling methodology for The Survey, identifies opportunities for improvement, and issues recommendations for this protocol moving forward, including advice on appropriate sample size. Finally, recognizing the challenge of assessing the accuracy of survey data in a context with limited sources of information outside of the data themselves, it offers recommendations for ways to enrich assessment of the quality of the data collected using The Survey.

2. Overview of Current Survey Protocol

Like many organizations, A.A. has a reasonable desire to understand and describe its membership. In pursuit of this goal, since 1968, the GSO has conducted a survey of its membership every three to four years. It uses the results to assess its operations and success at outreach and service, to keep members informed about current trends in membership characteristics, and to provide information about A.A. to the professional community and the general public.

A.A.'s current survey protocol relies on a multi-stage sample comprised of three stages, as follows:

- A.A.'s 93 areas serve as strata, with groups serving as clusters (see below) drawn from each stratum at probability-proportional-to-size, based on the number of groups in each area.
- Within each stratum, a cluster of groups is selected, with between 1.0% and 1.5% of the groups chosen at random from the list of all the groups in that Area. In its most recent member survey, A.A. sought to sample approximately 1.3% of the groups in each area, with an assumed sample size of 22 members per group, to achieve a target sample of approximately 16,250 respondents; the varied number of groups per area meant that in some cases (2 Areas) as few as 1.0% and in some cases (3 Areas) as many as 1.5% of groups in any given area were surveyed, but in the vast majority of areas (68 Areas) either 1.2% or 1.3% of groups were sampled.¹
- For those groups chosen to be surveyed, a data collector attends what it is hoped is a "typical" group meeting and asks all present to complete a paper questionnaire. This is the only stage of the process in which data are actually collected, and the completed questionnaires – which those in attendance may complete or not at their discretion, consistent with accepted practice for data collection from human subjects – are the only information The Survey gathers about the group and its members.

This protocol has much to recommend it, and it certainly represents a reasonable effort at collecting information allowing A.A. to describe its membership. That said, there exist opportunities to improve on this methodology, opportunities that – it should be acknowledged – it may or may not be appropriate and feasible to implement. Recommendations for ways to improve the quality of the data collected via improvements to the sampling strategy and other aspects of The Survey's administration are presented below in section 6, after examining both other 12-step Organization's approaches to surveying their membership, and the current state of the science with regard to sampling methodologies relevant to A.A.

¹ For all sampled groups, members in attendance at a "typical" meeting are invited to complete the survey. Thus, this final stage in the process does not involve a sample, but seeks to obtain responses from all members present. As such, it is discussed in other portions of this report, but not here.

3. Other 12-step Organizations' Approaches to Surveying their Membership

It is often the case that similar individuals and groups put considerable but separate effort into solving similar problems, when understanding what others are doing or have done might greatly facilitate effective problem-solving – a situation colloquially labeled “re-inventing the wheel.” To examine whether that might be the case in this setting, Racy Joseph, Public Information coordinator for the GSO for the U.S./Canada kindly provided a list and contact information of twenty-five similar twelve-step organizations and two other A.A. service structures (those for the U.K. and Australia). I attempted to contact these via email for organizations that provided an email address (21 organizations), or by online form (7 organizations) or phone (5 organizations). Of these, 16 twelvestep organizations and one other A.A. service structure did not respond at all to my request for information; of these one – Adult Children of Alcoholics – does post a link to its 2019 Membership Survey online; the linked questionnaire itself is similar in focus to The Survey, and the website advises that the questionnaire is open to the membership to complete between November 1 and December 31, 2019. In looking through materials online, I also found a survey provided through Survey Monkey to members of A.A. New Zealand;² the online questionnaire does not include information about how members are invited to find and complete the questionnaire.

Of the organizations that did reply in some way to my request, one (Co-dependents Anonymous) responded that it preferred not to provide any information. One other organization (Sexaholics Anonymous) reported that they had forwarded my request internally but that forwarding did not yield any further reply. Of the remaining 8 organizations, 4 either expressly reported that they do not survey their membership, or the person with whom I connected reported no knowledge of any survey of the organization's membership.

Focusing in on those organizations that do survey their membership and that provided information about their approach, one, Emotions Anonymous, has been surveying its membership for, in its words, the past year or two and relies on a convenience sample, posting a link on the organization's website. In its outreach strategy, then, it is similar to Adult Children of Alcoholics Anonymous, as described above, but the focus of its surveys is largely different, pertaining to topics such as how members want communications to come from E.A., favorite slogans, what sorts of things members would like to see added to the program, and what they would like to see at larger conferences and conventions (though some surveys have also asked how involved members are with their individual group, and about sponsorship – whether members have one or would like to be one).

Another organization, Narcotics Anonymous, seeks to undertake a census of its membership every 3 years by initiating a survey at the main meeting of the N.A. World Convention and simultaneously posting the survey on the na.org website, while a small number of inmates who receive N.A.'s quarterly journal for members, complete and return the survey via the US postal service. The 2018 survey collected responses from 28,495 members. Its commitment to inviting and including its entire membership notwithstanding, N.A. reports that it has 67,000 meetings weekly in 139 countries today, meaning, logically, that 28,495 is but a small fraction of its

² <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5VCRLD9> 4 of 17

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members – while all may have the opportunity to participate in the survey, clearly many either do not learn of it or choose not to respond, and it is likely that those who do are among the organization's most active and most engaged members.

A.A. Australia notes that it has conducted membership surveys in the past, but characterizes the methods used as haphazard and comments that their results could not be considered statistically valid, noting that their purpose was rather to get a broad view of some demographic aspects of the membership. As does A.A. in the United States and Canada, A.A. Australia, which last completed a survey in 2005, has used the results to create a published Public Information item, particularly for the notice of health professionals, but also for a range of many other practitioners; they kindly shared this document, which I can share with the GSO if desired. The Australian A.A. General Service Conference is presently engaged in work to devise and conduct a new membership survey of A.A. in Australia.

Finally, the A.A. in the United Kingdom is – likely unsurprisingly – the organization whose approach is most similar to that of the A.A. in the United States and Canada. On its website³ A.A. U.K. reports that since 1972 it has surveyed its membership approximately every five years, relying (at least at present) on a two-stage sample whereby first, it selects and provides Group Secretaries a Group Survey questionnaire. Though the method for this stage in the process is not explicitly stated, it appears that it may approximate a census; as of 2015, A.A. U.K. reports a total of 4,487 groups in the U.K., and provides as the numerator for those Group Secretaries provided surveys, 3,651. No reason for the discrepancy between these two values is provided. Of those groups whose Secretaries returned completed questionnaires – 1,531 or 42% of the total contacted – a random selection of 250 groups chosen at a rate proportional to Regional size from each of the Regions (which serve as strata) were invited to have their attendees (sic) complete Membership Survey Forms. Of these, 2,217 or 74%, did so. Based on this response rate and the advice of the external survey company whose services it used, A.A. U.K. reports that the estimates generated from these data have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 2%.⁴

To summarize these approaches, then, several organizations (specifically, Adult Children of Alcoholics Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous) use online questionnaires to gather information from and about their membership, with the focus of the Adult

Children of Alcoholics Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous efforts more similar to that of The Survey, and those of Emotions Anonymous more focused on programming. Of these three organizations, N.A. is the only one that reports approaches additional to posting online requests to alert members of the request to respond to the organization's survey. A.A. U.K. surveys its membership in a manner and with objectives similar to A.A. U.S./Canada, though the details of

³ <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/2015-Membership-Survey/Survey-Results-Page-2>

⁴ It merits noting that although as a mathematical estimate of the precision of a sample of 2,217 randomly selected respondents from a population of between 33,000 and 40,000 individuals this level of confidence is entirely accurate, it (as do all such calculations) neglects the error that may be introduced through other sources, a point discussed in section 4 of this report, The Total Survey Error Framework.

its approach differ in some comparatively small ways – notably its attempt to survey the vast majority of its Group Secretaries, and the particulars of its sampling strategy for groups.

Based on this, it appears that there may be useful insights to be gained from comparing the A.A. U.S./Canada's current protocol with that used by the A.A. U.K., but that most other 12-step organizations either do not survey their membership or do not deploy a protocol that would improve on the protocol A.A. currently has in place. The principal discrepancy (and thus, shortcoming) of these other organizations' protocols is their reliance on a convenience sample – the reliance on a general request to the membership at large for input that almost certainly does not yield a representative sample but that instead attracts responses from the most engaged of each organization's members. While there are certainly arguments for seeking information from those for whom a topic is most salient, doing so will not yield information that is broadly representative of the larger community of members, and therefore is not well suited to this goal.

Before considering sampling methodology more generally, this report turns next to a discussion of Total Survey Error, explaining how and why errors in survey data arise from a variety of sources and why this is relevant to sampling.

4. The Total Survey Error Framework

TSE is a term that is used to refer to all sources of error, both systemic (bias) and random (variance) that may affect the accuracy of survey data. This paradigm is widely used by survey methodologists, and while there are different ways of grouping the errors it examines, a widely used categorization involves five sources of error, as follows:

- sampling error,
- coverage error,
- nonresponse error,
- measurement error, □ processing error.

Of these, the first listed, sampling error, derives from the challenge of representing a population based on measurement of a sub-sample selected from its members. Sampling error is perhaps the most readily understood and widely reported source of error. It refers to error introduced by failing to collect data from all members of a population (i.e., from selecting a sample) that – for a sample selected with known probability from a larger population – can be specified mathematically. Sampling error allows us to know exactly both the estimated value of an outcome of interest and the precision (or imprecision) of the estimate in question. However, error can also arise from many other sources; the impact of these other sources of error is generally more difficult or impossible precisely to specify, meaning that it is clear that error has arisen (or may have arisen) but unclear how much error a given challenge has introduced.

These sources include the four others listed above. Coverage error arises to the extent that a sample is not drawn from the entire population of interest and only that population (that is, it arises when the population from which a sample is drawn does not contain everyone it should contain and/or does contain anyone it should not). Nonresponse error is introduced when survey sample members decline to participate in the data collection effort (unit non-response) or to provide particular pieces of information requested (item non-response). Measurement error arises when a survey instrument fails accurately to capture information about respondents' attributes or

experiences. Processing error can arise if data are incorrectly entered, e.g. from a paper to a digital form, or used in ways for which they were not crafted, for example if a sample requires weights to create generalizeable estimates but the weights are mis-calculated or are not applied in the analysis.

Unlike sampling error, these additional sources of error generally cannot be precisely calculated, but conceptual awareness of what they involve and why they matter is nonetheless valuable in assessing the quality of a survey protocol. All these sources of error (including sampling error) interact, and efforts to reduce one can increase others – for example, allocating funds to contact a larger sample at the cost of devoting fewer resources to follow-up requests for completed surveys prioritizes minimizing sampling error at a cost of increasing non-response error. For that reason, to achieve optimal results for a fixed budget it is necessary to consider these different sources of error in concert. Developing strategies to minimize or mitigate each of them (recognizing that there may be tradeoffs between strategies to minimize different sources of error) is essential to conducting an informative, accurate survey.

Of the sources of error, two have particular relevance to the question of the sampling protocol used for The Survey. Coverage error is relevant because (as is often the case for a population of interest to researchers), there exists no list of the population of A.A. members. Thus, necessarily, a proxy is used; for The Survey this is a list of meetings. There is widespread agreement among those who work in and with the A.A. GSO that the list of meetings it possesses is not exhaustive, that some meetings are unlisted. Thus simply by definition, coverage error arises – how severe this may be is not known, and if attenders of unlisted groups do not differ from attenders of listed groups, the problem may effectively be nil. Yet because The Survey data are collected only from members of listed groups, it is impossible to use them know how similar or different the members of unlisted groups are.

Non-response error is also a concern. This pervasive problem facing survey researchers has been growing progressively worse over recent years, perhaps because of an increasing propensity of a widespread number of organizations and institutions to conduct surveys, and a resulting sense of exhaustion from potential respondents. When respondents sampled for a survey decline to participate, or when they participate but do not respond to every item in a questionnaire, the sample (and data) no longer contains the full information it was developed to obtain. If non-respondents do not differ from respondents, this may not affect estimates; the resulting sample will be smaller, of course (though it may be possible to augment it with additional members and increase its size to the planned value or, even if that is not possible, to report accurate results albeit with less precision and certainty). However, if non-respondents do differ from respondents, then error is introduced, as the sample no longer accurately represents the larger population of interest, and of course a critical problem is that we do not have data from – or, often, about – non-respondents. We do not know whether they are different from respondents or not, and if they are different, how they are different. We do by definition know that non-respondents differ from respondents in at least one important way: they are unwilling to respond to our survey. This must lead us to suspect that there may be other important differences between these two groups, but lacking data from the non-respondents, we generally cannot know what they are, or how large they are.

Both coverage error and non-response error relate specifically to sampling because they connect to decisions made in connection with sampling and with the quality of the sample actually achieved (as distinct from that intended). Coverage error is minimized to the extent that a sampling protocol hews as closely as possible to obtaining and using a genuine list of the members of the population of interest in drawing a sample. Non-response error is minimized to the extent that a survey team works as diligently as possible to encourage response from members of the sample, once selected.

To summarize, then, sampling error is but one of a number of sources of error in the survey enterprise. Unlike mathematically estimable sampling error, the inaccuracies introduced into data by these other sources, including both coverage error and non-response error, cannot be precisely quantified. We know they are a problem, but we cannot readily know how big a problem they are. If a sample fails to include individuals it should have included (coverage error), or if individuals who were included decline to participate (non-response error), then the data collected do not include information from the entire sample that should have been surveyed. If those who were surveyed are sufficiently similar to those who were not (it would of course be ideal if they were, on average, identical), this does not pose a problem. However, if they are not, it does; given that they were not included in the list that was sampled, and/or that something about their experiences made them less willing or able to respond, we must expect that they are not, on average, identical – and perhaps not even that similar – to those who were sampled and did respond. With this as background, this report next turns to an overview of sample selection methods to examine tools available to maximize the quality of the data The Survey collects.

5. Sample Selection Methodologies

Since the 1950s, scientific sampling has been probability-based. Such sampling is conceptually straightforward and guided by mathematical principles that allow precise calculations about the estimates it provides. A probability sample involves drawing individuals at a known probability⁵ from a population; data collected from those sampled can then be used to estimate the qualities of the larger population. Importantly, the precision (or more accurately, imprecision) of the estimates developed from surveys administered to probability samples can itself be precisely quantified, so that based on the sample size and the population size, we can know approximately what the data show us, and can know exactly how close “approximately” is – or isn’t – likely to be to the true population values.

Sampling error is commonly reported as being, e.g., 95% confident that the true value for a given parameter is within +/- 2% of the estimated value. In plainer language, that means that the estimate is actually a range as much as 2% larger or smaller than the number reported, and that 95% of the time (or for 19 out of 20 cases or estimates), that range will be correct. Conversely, 5% of the time, or 1 time out of 20, it will be incorrect – the true value will fall outside the estimated range.

These numbers – the +/- 2% and the 95% – are values we as researchers can choose; if we want a smaller range, we can reduce the confidence level, saying, for example, that we are 90%

⁵ The probability of inclusion need not be the same for each individual sampled.

confident that the true value falls within $\pm 1\%$, or conversely, we can increase the confidence level by expanding the range included in the estimate, perhaps being 98% confident that the true value lies within $\pm 3\%$ of the estimate. (It merits noting that these numbers are offered as examples, not precise mathematical calculations, as they are not based on any particular sample size or population). However, increasing the sample size (or studying a smaller population, though this is less likely readily within the researcher's control) always increases the precision of the estimates, for the same confidence level, or the confidence level for the same precision of estimates.

In short, conceptually, probability sampling is straightforward, and the math underlying it, precise and easily applied. Unsurprisingly, it turns out that in application, matters are generally more complicated. First, as already noted (see section 4) although conceptually, probability sampling relies on a population comprised of a list of units from which a sample may be drawn, in practice, such a list rarely exists so a proxy must be used. Common examples include households (as lists of addresses are widely available) and random digit dialing which, in principle, makes possible random samples of phone users (such technologies as cell phones and voice-over-internet-protocols have complicated this, however). In addition, researchers may have objectives – for example, comparing subsets of a population – that are not well served by a simple probability sample. Finally, time and budgetary constraints may necessitate that samples be modified to facilitate data collection; for example, if surveys are conducted in-person, it may be important to group respondents so that interviewers need be dispatched only to a subset of states, counties, and neighborhoods, rather than scattered nationwide.

To address these challenges, several techniques involving grouping a population of interest in some way and using the resulting groups in crafting a sample are widely used. Two commonly used approaches (each already employed in The Survey's sampling protocol) are stratified and cluster sampling. Both are sound sampling techniques, widely used and with extensive research documenting their applications, strengths, and weaknesses. Though each involves grouping the population of interest in some way and using the resulting groups in crafting a sample, they are distinct approaches, with differing motivations and effects, and merit examination separately. Stratification involves dividing the larger population into non-overlapping sub-populations from each of which a portion of the total sample is selected. Cluster sampling relies on the existence of population elements such as households, city blocks, schools, or villages, which comprise the "clusters," or sources of groups of respondents. These clusters are then themselves sampled, with the resulting sample of clusters providing the setting either for a subsequent sampling stage (e.g. of the oldest person in each household, or of a random 10% of all students in a sample of schools) or for a census of all its members.

Stratification and cluster sampling have a number of commonalities. Both can improve the efficiency of sampling, allowing collection of more and/or more informative data at reduced cost. Both rely on population attributes known before data collection begins. However, a key purpose of stratified sampling is to ensure the inclusion of a diverse group of sample members by dividing the underlying population into discrete groups and ensuring that members of each group are included in the sample. That is, good strata are internally homogenous and externally heterogenous. In contrast, clusters, being sampled elements, provide the data that comprises the snapshot of the population of interest that is being studied. For this reason, they provide the most

benefit at the least cost to data quality when they are internally heterogeneous and externally homogeneous.

For a straightforward example of this, imagine a study examining middle-school students in two U.S. states. Using each state as a stratum ensures that schools from both states are included in the sample, and that they are sampled at an appropriate rate – if one state has a very small population while the other’s is very large, it may make sense to ensure selection of more schools from the large state than the small state; conversely, if accurate estimates of the small state’s students’ experiences are needed, over-sampling from its schools may be necessary to achieve a large enough sample for this subset of the population. Substantively, stratification at the state level is almost certainly sensible, as any two U.S. states likely vary from one another in systematic (and identifiable) ways in terms of the experiences of their students – the requirements for teacher certification, the size of classes, the length of the school year, and so on. Stratification ensures that the sample includes proportions of schools from each state appropriate to the purposes of the research, including making it possible to ensure inclusion of enough schools from each state to make statistically meaningful comparisons between the two if this is desired.

With a list of the schools in each state, it is then easily possible to draw a sample of schools and to collect data from the selected schools’ students or a sample thereof. Indeed, if (as is likely) either state lacks a list of middle-school students, using schools as clusters may be the only feasible way to proceed with sampling. However, here things get conceptually challenging. Schools within each state likely vary from each other in important ways. Some may be rural, others urban. Some may be traditional, others magnet, charter, and/or dual-language. Of course, on average any set of clusters (schools) sampled will accurately reflect the attributes of its state’s schools. Yet any given sample, and particularly any small sample, runs the risk of over-representing certain types of schools (and students) and under-representing or even excluding others. For this reason, cluster samples require larger number of respondents than do simple random samples to achieve the same level of precision; moreover, increasing the number of clusters (e.g., schools) sampled generally adds more value to a survey than does increasing the number of individual units within clusters. To see why this is so, consider again the school example: sampling two students from a cluster sample comprised of 100 schools will produce more precise estimates than sampling 100 students from a cluster sample comprised of two schools – in the latter example, there is clearly a much higher risk that the (small) number of schools in the sample are in some way not typical of schools in the state generally.

In short, stratification and cluster sampling both fall within the probability sampling framework and are valuable tools that can improve the quality of data and increase the efficiency of sampling. Stratification ensures the inclusion of members of each stratum, and can be used to ensure proportional data collection across strata, or to oversample small strata or key strata of interest. Clustering increases the efficiency of data collection and can be essential, if clusters provide the closest proxy to a list of the population of interest. Neither stratification nor clustering is without drawbacks, and due consideration must be given to the effects of each, but each is a valuable tool.

6. Assessment of The Survey’s Sampling Protocol and Recommendations for its

Improvement

This report now turns to the question that motivates it, the sampling design of The Survey. It merits repeating that there is much about the existing protocol that is logical and even laudable. Within the constraints of what is feasible, The Survey relies on a true probability sample and goes to considerable effort to include a representative sample of its members. At the same time, the specifics of the existing protocol do allow room for improvement; this section of the report presents these options and the arguments for their implementation, as well as some cautionary thoughts about making the changes they would involve. It merits noting here that any change to an existing survey protocol introduces variation that makes pre- and post-change comparisons difficult (at best), meaning that changes should be made cautiously and only after due consideration.

Considering first The Survey's stratification of its sample by Areas, it is clear that conceptually, this implementation is appropriate – Areas are genuinely separate and unique, and lists of their members (that is, districts and groups) are available. However, it is less clear how well Areas realize the objective of providing subsamples that are internally homogenous and externally heterogenous. Use of internally homogenous strata increases the precision of estimates, but there is (to the author of this report) no clear reason to imagine that groups in, for example, Area 35 (Northern Minnesota) are noticeably more similar to other Area 35 groups than to those in Area 36 (Southern Minnesota). On the other hand, it may be that on average stratifying the sample by Area captures some strata-level homogeneity – groups in Area 27 (Louisiana), seem likely to be more similar to one another than they are to groups in Northern or Southern Minnesota, and to the extent that any given Area has administrative approaches that spread across groups within the Area but not beyond its boundaries, a given Area's groups may be more similar to one another than to groups from other Areas. Using Areas as strata also offers the advantage – which may be important in terms of members' perceptions of The Survey – of ensuring that every Area is included in the sample, and that groups within each Area are sampled at a rate generally comparable to every other Area.⁶

That said, The Survey could cease relying on a stratified sample altogether, and simply draw clusters (i.e., groups) from its complete list of groups; there is no clear advantage to its current stratified design in terms of the quality of the data it collects. It also seems possible that there may be alternative approaches to stratification that would more effectively provide subsamples that are internally homogenous and externally heterogenous and that these might more usefully enrich A.A.'s data collection effort. Stratifying groups by location type (e.g. urban versus rural), or meeting date and time might create strata that are more useful and meaningful than the existing reliance on Areas for this purpose. However, doing so would add to the workload, both at the initial decision-making stage (which variables to use for stratification) and in implementation (e.g. in defining urban and rural divides and creating lists of urban and rural

⁶ As several areas' samples include only one group, there is clearly not enough data per stratum to make meaningful comparison across areas statistically feasible, but as this is not a key objective of The Survey, this shortcoming is likely not cause for concern.

groups). It also raises the distinct risk that some Areas would not be included at all in any given sample. However, it merits discussion as a possible alternative approach to stratifying the sample.

Considering next the use of groups as clusters, there are clear logistical reasons for the strategy that The Survey has used – lacking a listing of members (the target population), sampling groups is a logical alternative. Moreover, the decision to select groups at a rate proportional to the size of each Area is sound, as it ensures that each Area's representation is proportional to its membership (insofar as the number of groups per area is itself accurate, and assuming that all groups are the same size or that variation in their sizes is randomly distributed). Cluster sampling is commonly used when no reliable list of the target elements of a survey is available and/or when it would be expensive to prepare such a list or to locate, identify, or contact members of the list, circumstances that clearly apply to The Survey.

On the other hand, the validity of cluster sampling requires that every unit of the population being studied belong to one and only one cluster (meaning that the total number of sampling units in the frame covers all the units of the population under study without omission or duplication). This condition appears unlikely to be met, as it is surely true that some members attend more than one meeting. Assuming this is the case, it introduces bias, as individuals who attend more than one meeting – that is, who are members of more than one cluster – are disproportionately likely to be included in the sample, thus, their attributes and experiences will be over-counted. Including questions addressing whether respondents are in their home group or how many meetings they generally attend regularly, on the survey questionnaire may shed light on how widespread this issue is, and provide data that can be used to adjust the data to minimize the impact of over-inclusion of respondents who attend multiple groups.

Moreover, as a tool, while cluster sampling (like stratified sampling) has the potential to improve the precision of estimates, as noted it provides the most benefit at the least cost to data quality when clusters are internally heterogeneous and externally homogeneous. It seems unlikely that groups meet this criterion. Certainly it is possible that members of A.A. do not actively sort themselves into groups attended by other members with similar backgrounds, situations, or attributes, and the A.A. leadership and members will be best positioned to speak to this. Yet it seems likely that in many cases either due to their own preferences (a meeting with a particular focus or fellow members with similar backgrounds may speak more clearly to a given member's needs than others) or logistical considerations (it may be easier for members in an age range when they are likely to be parenting school-aged children to attend meetings on weekdays) will result in many groups being relatively internally homogeneous, and thus, externally heterogeneous. This problem is surely unavoidable, though stratifying by e.g. group meeting day and time rather than area might help ensure that an appropriately diverse assortment of groups is captured within the sample. Examining the data collected (or previously collected) might also help illuminate how homogeneous or heterogeneous a typical group's membership is.

In short, while The Survey's sampling protocol is well crafted, there are ways in which it might potentially be improved. Moreover, although the GSO has expressly raised concern about the existing sample size for The Survey – a valid concern, particularly given the challenges involved in clustered samples – at its current level it can be relied on to generate very accurate estimates. For example, using synthetic randomly generated data for age with a distribution drawn at random from a range between 20 and 85 shows that the current sample structure generates an

estimate with a standard error of only 0.74, generating a confidence level (for a point estimate of 52.3) between 50.9 and 53.8 years, and that is true when the synthetic data are structured so that members cluster themselves within each Area by age – the 22 youngest members attend one meeting, the next 22 youngest the next, and so on (which is to say, in the worst-case scenario for the homogeneity of the groups used as clusters).⁷ Indeed, if desirable for cost reasons it may be appropriate to reduce the sample size in order to focus resources on other priorities.

Indeed, beyond the sampling strategy itself and the question of sample size, there are other potential flaws within the existing survey protocol that offer opportunities for improvement. As has been described, both coverage and non-response errors raise questions about the quality of the data collected. Understanding what may be being missed is challenging, but may include the following:

- Members who attend multiple meetings will (on average) be overcounted;
- Members who attend meetings less frequently will (on average) be undercounted;
- Groups excluded from the sampling list will not be included in the sample;
- There exists no mechanism for assessing systematically what proportion of members present at a meeting actually completed the survey, whether those who decided against completing it are different from those who completed it, or why those who don't complete it decide against doing so.

To address these issues, A.A. might fruitfully both ensure it collects adequate data to explore them, call upon its data collectors to work to improve our knowledge of these issues, and explore other sources of data to illustrate more fully (and provide comparative data about) the qualities of its members. Taking each of these recommendations in turn, reviewing the questionnaire used for The Survey is beyond the scope of this report, but ensuring that it asks members about the number of different meetings they attend regularly, whether the meeting at which they are completing the survey is their home meeting, and how often they typically attend meetings would provide useful data that might potentially be used to adjust the data collected to ensure that it more accurately represents the A.A. membership.⁸ Asking members whether they attend unlisted meetings in addition to the listed meeting from which they respond might offer insights into how similar or different listed and unlisted meetings' members are, and into how many unlisted meetings exist.

Turning next to the question of data collection itself, those charged with the data collection effort might be more actively engaged than they may be presently, and could also potentially provide some information about the meeting at which the data are being collected. A.A.'s current practice involves providing data-gatherers a script and relying on them to follow it. Given the nature of the organization and of The Survey effort, this approach seems reasonable, yet (as such efforts often do) it does allow potential variation across data-gatherers and thus, the introduction of bias.

⁷ This estimate was generated using synthetic data created in MS Excel and analyzed using the `surveymeans` procedure in SAS 9.4.

⁸ Indeed, questionnaire design is important to survey quality, including the quality of the sample that completes the questionnaire. For example, ensuring that terminology, e.g. for gender identity and race and ethnicity, are up-to-date helps to ensure that members observe their own attributes within the answer options available and therefore are not discouraged from returning the survey because they feel it excludes them.

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Reviewing the materials provided to data gatherers to examine how they are received and understood holds merit. For example, examining how these materials are understood via a strategy such as a focus group or set of cognitive interviews with willing prospective data gatherers (or other meeting leaders who are likely to be similarly situated and are willing to review and discuss the materials) could prove informative and allow these materials to be improved.

Similarly, asking data-gatherers to self-report on how closely they did (or did not) adhere to the provided information may offer useful insights. Data-gatherers may introduce variation intentionally or unintentionally – a data-gatherer may believe they can provide the information given in a more compelling way to the meeting they address and adapt it accordingly, or they may have to field unanticipated questions from the meeting’s members. In cases where this happens, data-gatherers may well be perfectly willing to report that and to provide information about what variations were introduced, if they are asked to do so.

Knowing what proportion of members invited to complete the survey do so and how they differ from those who do not would also enrich understanding of the data collected. Data gatherers could themselves provide data about the meeting at which data is collected by completing a short questionnaire offering information about how many people are present, potentially (if this can be done while respecting members’ anonymity) including estimates of the race, gender, ages, and ethnic breakdown of those in attendance. They might also be asked to request that non-respondents tick off a short list of reasons for not completing the survey (this list could be provided on the questionnaire itself or as a separate sheet). Whether either of these actions would be appropriate in the context of an A.A. meeting is of course a judgment call, and the sort of question it will be necessary to discuss with A.A. leadership –and that leaders might want to address with prospective data-gatherers – but it could add useful information to this project.

Insofar as a group has mechanisms whereby it communicates with its members other than in person at group meetings, it might be provided access to a link for an online copy of the questionnaire and asked to use those tools to share the questionnaire with its members. If this is done, a record of that should be kept, as each group will have its own practices and it may prove important for the GSO to know how many meetings used these tools (and which they used) to reach out to their members.

Developing an online data collection instrument and providing a link to members in groups surveyed (in addition to making paper forms available) is likely worthwhile, as some members will likely prefer to respond on their phones, and digitally collected data simplify processing and can reduce processing errors. However, it merits noting that an online link can be shared, so provisions to exclude data provided by non-sampled individuals should be developed. The potential to fill out an online questionnaire after a meeting’s conclusion (that is, to think, “I’ll get to this later.”) may also introduce non-response, as individuals dash to their subsequent commitments with the best of intentions, and subsequently forget to complete the questionnaire.

Finally, A.A. may want to explore other sources of data that might be useful in shedding light on its membership and allowing the organization to assess how similar or different the data collected from and about members in attendance at meetings look to other data sources. With its recently introduced meeting app, A.A. has the potential to do two things – one being to collect data from the app itself, if doing so is allowed and consistent with the organization’s policy and ethics. For

example, data from the app could be used to examine where app users are located and where they are seeking meetings. The app might also be used to invite users to respond to a survey (which could be offered to a random sample of app users) to ask users about their attributes, meeting attendance, and use of the app.

A.A. may also want to explore other sources of data about alcoholics and attendance at 12-step groups including A.A. A.A. has identified non-response as a key problem with its current data collection effort, and indeed, this is a challenge facing virtually every survey project in existence today. Many such projects have the opportunity to compare (at least) basic demographic information about those from whom they collected data with the larger population of interest – for example, a random digit dialing effort seeking to reach a city’s residents to learn about their views can compare the race, gender, and age of its respondents with the city’s population using Census and other data and may then use additional data collection, weighting, or other strategies to compensate for shortcomings in the responses it has fielded. While such strategies can, themselves, create problems, they can be particularly useful as a “what if” strategy, as they make it possible to calculate a variety of possible population estimates and to allow exploration of the implications of estimating, rather than simply ignoring, the likely characteristics of non-respondents.

If A.A. is interested in comparing the data it collects to other similar sources, two large surveys, in particular, might offer useful comparative data.⁹ The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH),¹⁰ conducted under the auspices of the U.S. federal government, is a large and carefully crafted survey that collects data including information about alcohol use and abuse and attendance at 12-step self-help groups (“During the past 12 months, have you received treatment ... in a self-help group such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous?” “Was the treatment you received in a self-help group for your alcohol use, your drug use, or both?”). NSDUH makes public-use versions of its files freely available online. The National Alcohol Survey (NAS)¹¹ conducted by the Alcohol Research Group also collects such data and it, too, might provide useful comparisons to data collected through The Survey. These data sources would make it possible to compare how similar or different the respondents they survey who report attending A.A. are to the individuals who respond to The Survey. They also offer the potential to examine alcoholics who are not in attendance at A.A. Meetings, which may be useful if the organization wishes to craft outreach strategies.

Beyond examining other data sources to understand the attributes of A.A. meetings, framing the data gathered through The Survey in context could augment what the information they contain can tell us. For example, using Census or American Community Survey data to examine the racial and ethnic makeup of A.A. groups relative to the communities in which they meet could present a more nuanced picture of how similar or different these groups are to the populations in

⁹ The data sets described here and in what follows focus on U.S. data sources. Similar data may or may not be available for Canada, a question that certainly merits exploration if the GSO is interested in considering the use of such data.

¹⁰ <https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm>

¹¹ <http://arg.org/center/national-alcohol-surveys/> 15 of 17

the communities where they operate. Learning more about imbalances in the data and regional differences in these – if any – may also help A.A.’s leadership consider how, if at all, it might seek to address these imbalances, and where such efforts might most fruitfully be concentrated.

7. Conclusion

Consistent with the request of the GSO for an assessment of the sampling protocol and opportunities for its improvement, this report has examined the sampling methodology of The Survey conducted by the A.A. GSO. Overall, it finds that the existing methodology is sound, but it identifies ways it might be improved, both in terms of the sampling strategy itself and in terms of related issues. It also notes that there is value in maintaining consistency over time, and that the value associated with the possible changes it recommends should be carefully assessed in order to determine which it will be useful to implement, and which may not be feasible or appropriate because of logistical, budgetary, or other concerns. Recognizing the value that understanding and being able to describe its membership accurately provides to A.A. and those interested in the organization’s work, I hope that this report proves useful.

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**Trustees' Public Information Committee
Thursday January 20, 2020**

The trustees' Committee on Public Information (P.I.) met by *Zoom* teleconference at 1:30 p.m. EST on Thursday, January 20, 2020.

Dr. Cooper noted that in her opinion the existing sampling strategy and cluster was sound. There are however some unique "challenges" that A.A. has based on how it is structured.

In Dr. Cooper's research, the A.A. U.S./Canada structure appears to be the only A.A. structure and the only Twelve Step Fellowship (that provided shared experience) that is using a reasonably scientific sampling method for their survey. The submitted report (Item K.1) contains a possible method that is also financially consistent with the current budget for the survey.

The TCPI chair opened the call for questions. After a wide-ranging discussion, the members of the call asked Dr. Cooper what might her primary suggestions be for improvement.

Suggestions included:

- Take a closer look at what information might be missing from the data being collected and ask group "data collectors" to include contextual circumstances that might influence non-response rates and context as to the makeup of the group.
- Comparison to other data sources might include what data is being missed.
- Offer a text box such as "Is there anything that has changed about your group?"

Example:

- o Less female attendance
 - o Meeting room no longer on ground floor, only stair access
 - o Group is now mainly long timers
 - o Average age of member of group is now over 40
- Look more closely at the questionnaire for content (ex. wording, keeping in current terminologies and demographics such as gender identity.)
- Explore an online feedback option but not delineate from the current process. Online feedback should not be open ended to the public. In keeping with the current sampling process, online feedback might have a specialized log-in number such as the group service number where the GSR or Primary Group Contact could provide a fillable online or PDF Form. Groups sampled could have the *option* to provide an online or postal mail feedback questionnaire.

Additional Questionnaire Option:

- Some randomly selected Meeting Guide app users could be sampled in a *separate* survey which might provide feedback to better understand the Meeting Guide app demographic and how they use the app.
- Further information may need to be explored as to whether this is necessary feedback or helpful in gaining insight into the Fellowship and additional populations in A.A.

###

**HISTORY OF ACTIONS OF CONFERENCE PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE AND
TRUSTEES' COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION RE: THE A.A. MEMBERSHIP
SURVEY
As of 2020**

1966 (P.I. COMMITTEE) P.I. Committee prepares and conducts pilot test on A.A. membership.

1968 The first broad survey of A.A. was undertaken following the unanimous recommendation of the delegates to the General Service Conference and under authorization of the Board of Trustees.

1970 The Board formed a separate C.P.C. function. The continuance of the survey was assigned to the surviving P.I. committee rather than the new C.P.C. committee.

1971 (TRUSTEES) Board of Trustees approved for submission to Conference plans for a new A.A. survey of its own membership in order to show the still-suffering alcoholic exactly what sort of people belong to the Fellowship. Since all questionnaires filled out for this survey are to be unsigned, the anonymous Traditions will be fully observed.

(CONFERENCE) The survey proposed by the Trustees' Public Information Committee be undertaken.

1974 (CONFERENCE) The 1974 General Service Conference approved the proposal for the 1974 A.A. survey, and the delegates agreed to cooperate in the distribution and collection of the questionnaire.

1975 (TRUSTEES) Membership survey conducted in summer of this year is extremely successful. Questionnaire sent to 450 groups (3% of the total U.S. and Canadian groups listed). More than 13,000 returns are received and only four out of 91 areas are not heard from. Everyone of the 50 states of the U.S. and all provinces of Canada are represented.

1977 (CONFERENCE) The General Service Conference recommended that the A.A. membership survey be conducted in June 1977 with the cooperation of the area delegate. The drug question appears for the first time.

(CONFERENCE) All material in the P.I. Kit reflect current membership figures.

(TRUSTEES) Fourth membership survey is undertaken by delegates in June of this year.

1980 (CONFERENCE) The 1980 A.A. Membership Survey be done.

(TRUSTEES) 1980 Membership Survey mailed to 3% of A.A. groups in U.S. and Canada and returned by delegates. Results are to be reported some time in January or February 1981. Pamphlet reporting survey and new tabletop display are to be developed.

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1981 (CONFERENCE) It was recommended that the 1980 Membership Survey be accepted as reported and that the Trustees' P.I. Committee and A.A.W.S. develop a pamphlet, tabletop display and wall poster of survey results, if feasible.

(TRUSTEES) Press release on Membership Survey is sent out in July showing increase in numbers of women and the young in A.A.

1982 (TRUSTEES) In anticipation of 1983 Membership Survey committee reviews the questionnaire. Committee also explores possibility of developing a computer program to preselect A.A. groups to be surveyed on a random basis by area. Recommendation is to be submitted to the Conference in April, 1983.

1983 (CONFERENCE) It was recommended that a membership survey be undertaken in 1983.

(CONFERENCE) The 1983 Membership Survey be conducted on a random basis, by area.

(TRUSTEES) Membership Survey questionnaire sent in August to 500 groups selected at random. All 91 delegate areas are included, however, and depending upon number of listed groups per area, two to 15 groups in each area are chosen. Results to be computerized and analyzed by early 1984.

1984 (CONFERENCE) The flyer, one-way display and poster on "The A.A. Member" be updated to include information from the 1983 membership survey.

1985 (CONFERENCE) The phrase in the membership surveys, #14 -- "Were you addicted to any drugs other than alcohol" be re-worded to "Were you addicted to drugs," in support of our singleness of purpose.

1986 (CONFERENCE) The 1986 Membership Survey be taken in the same manner as the 1983 survey.

(CONFERENCE) Question #14 of the Membership Survey questionnaire read as follows: "In addition to your alcoholism, were you addicted to drugs?"

(TRUSTEES) Triennial Membership Survey is begun. Survey questionnaires are sent in July to approximately 500 groups selected at random and distributed by area delegates to the 91 areas. Results will be analyzed in 1987.

1987 (CONFERENCE) The flyer, one-way display and poster, "The A.A. Member" be updated to reflect the findings from the 1986 Membership Survey.

1989 (TRUSTEES) The committee approved the questionnaire for the 1989 Membership Survey with a recommendation that the entire survey be reviewed well in advance of the 1992 survey.

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1990 (CONFERENCE) "The A.A. Membership Survey" pamphlet, the one-way display and poster, "The A.A. Member" be updated to reflect the findings from the 1989 Membership Survey.

(CONFERENCE) "The A.A. Membership Survey" pamphlet, the one-way display and poster reflect all the findings of the 1989 Membership Survey. The answer to Question #14 in the A.A. survey pertaining to drugs should be presented as follows:

"In addition to their alcoholism, X% of members indicated they were addicted to drugs," and include the disclaimer, "A.A.'s primary purpose is recovery from alcoholism."

(CONFERENCE) The Trustees' Committee on Public Information review the background of the entire survey and each question on the survey questionnaire, to determine which questions should be included or deleted from the 1992 Membership Survey. This information should be given to the 1991 Conference Public Information Committee as promptly as possible.

1990 (TRUSTEES) The committee recommended publication of the 1989 Membership Survey pamphlet and authorized distribution of the service piece, "The Analysis of the 1989 Membership Survey" to those professionals and A.A. members who request it.

1991 (CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that:

1. The ten changes on the 1992 membership survey questionnaire in a report from the Trustees' membership survey subcommittee be approved.
 - a. Add the meeting name to the top of the form (on the same line as Town/City, State, Date).
 - b. The statement of purpose at the top of the questionnaire conform to the one used in the final brochure. The current brochure copy (1989) is as follows: The purpose of the survey has been to keep A.A. members informed on current trends in membership characteristics, and to provide information about Alcoholics Anonymous to the professional community and to the general public as part of the effort to reach those who still suffer from alcoholism.
 - c. Combine categories 1 and 2 in question #5 into one question which would read:
 1. Newspaper, magazine, radio or TV
2. The trustees' Public Information Committee, in preparing the 1992 Membership Survey Questionnaire, reconsider Question 14 of the 1989 Membership Survey Questionnaire ("In addition to your alcoholism, were you addicted to drugs?"), and that the Trustees Committee forward their findings with an explanation of their decision to the Conference Public Committee at least one month prior to the start of the 1992 General Service Conference.

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3. It was recommended that the disclaimer, "A.A.'s primary purpose is recovery from alcoholism," originally adopted for use in the membership survey pamphlet by 1990 Conference Advisory Action #32, be added to question #14 on the 1992 Membership Survey Questionnaire. It will now read:

"#14: In addition to your alcoholism, were you addicted to drugs?"

*"A.A.'s primary purpose is recovery from alcoholism."

1992 (CONFERENCE) It was recommended that:

1. The preliminary 1992 A.A. Survey Questionnaire be changed as follows:
 - a. Add item "f" to question #3: **"this is my first A.A. meeting."**
 - b. Revise item "1" of question #5 to read: **"Newspaper, magazine, radio or TV."**
 - c. Change question #9 to read: **"Do you belong to an A.A. Home Group?"**
 - d. Revise item "a" of question #10 to ask: **"Do you have a sponsor?"**
 - e. Change item "b" of question #10 to read: **"Did you get a sponsor within 90 days of coming to A.A.?"**
2. That Question #14 be removed from the 1992 A.A. Survey Questionnaire because the Question:
 - a. emphasizes problems other than alcohol;
 - b. has a tendency to lead to disunity;
 - c. could be construed as conflicting with our primary purpose.
3. That the 1992 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis, as was done in the 1989 Membership Survey.

1993 (CONFERENCE) It was recommended that:

1. The results contained in the final draft of the 1992 Membership Survey be applied to update the Survey pamphlet, poster and one-way display.

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2. The trustees' Public Information Committee undertake a thorough study, followed by a complete report that particularly addresses the need for, and the effectiveness of, "A.A. Membership Surveys" within the context of our Singleness of Purpose.

1994 (CONFERENCE) Not a recommendation: The committee accepts with substantial unanimity the report and recommendations from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the Membership Survey as requested by the 1993 Conference. These recommendations are:

1. that it is worth going forward and conducting a sample survey of the A.A. membership.
2. that we delay the survey for one year to enable us to ensure that the formation of the questions on the questionnaire and that the methods of gathering data are sound and in accordance with accepted statistical practice.

The Committee suggests that the trustees' Public Information Committee consider the sharing from Eastern Ontario in formulating questions for the next membership survey.

1995 (CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that:

1. The revised and reformatted Membership Survey Questionnaire developed by the trustees' Public Information Committee in preparation for a 1996 Membership Survey be approved with the addition of the following new categories/questions:

- race
- are you physically disabled?
- marital status

2. The question on previous questionnaires "Does your doctor know that you are in A.A.?" be reinstated, because this is important information not implied in the other questions.

(TRUSTEES) The Survey Subcommittee verified that the random sample method and the sample sizes used in prior surveys are sound and in accordance with accepted statistical practice. Carol Bigelow, Ph.D., a statistician from the University of Massachusetts, who reviewed past surveys indicated that all previous confidence intervals are very precise based on random selection method and sample sizes.

The committee agreed that G.S.O. should employ a format for the 1996 Survey Questionnaire similar to previous questionnaires and that a format conducive to machine scoring is not recommended at this time.

1996 (CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that: The 1996 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis, as was done in the 1992 Membership Survey.

1997 (CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that:

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1. The Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 1996 Membership Survey.
2. The draft of the revised 1998 Membership Survey Questionnaire be approved.

- 1998 (CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that: The 1998 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis, as was done in the 1996 Membership Survey.
- 1999 (CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that: The Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 1998 Membership Survey.
- 2000 (TRUSTEES) The committee discussed a suggestion to remove Question #4, regarding race, from the Membership Survey Questionnaire. The Conference has discussed Question #4 many times in the past, and the question has remained in the Membership Survey Questionnaire. The committee reaffirmed their earlier motion to forward the Membership Survey Questionnaire, including Question #4, regarding race, to the 2000 Conference Public Information Committee for approval.

The committee approved the revised draft of the 2001 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire and recommended that the 2001 Survey be conducted on a random basis as was done in the 1998 A.A. Membership Survey. This recommendation will be forwarded to the 2001 Conference Public Information Committee for their consideration.

(CONFERENCE) The 2001 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire be approved with the deletion of Question #17 (regarding whether physical disability affects attendance or participation in A.A. meetings), since the responses to this question have been inconclusive in two previous surveys and the committee recognized that there are other more effective ways of determining how the A.A. message can be better carried to those who have these difficulties.

- 2001 (CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that: That 2001 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis, as was done in the 1998 Membership Survey.
- 2003 (TRUSTEES) The committee reviewed the 2004 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey Questionnaire. They noted that the 2000 Conference Public Information Committee requested that in preparing the 2004 Membership Survey Questionnaire consideration be given to suggestions on the "Marital Status" and "Employment Status" questions. The General Service Board accepted the committee's recommendation that the Conference Public Information Committee consider the 2004 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey Questionnaire.

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The committee reviewed the report of the 2003 Conference Committee on Public Information, including the draft of the 2004 Membership Survey questionnaire with the addition of "Skilled Trade" to Question 12: "What is the nature of your employment status now?" The General Service Board accepted the committee's recommendation that the 2004 Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2001 Membership Survey. This recommendation will be forwarded to the 2004 Conference PI committee for their consideration

(CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that the 2004 Membership Survey Questionnaire be approved with the addition of "Skilled Trade" to Question 12: "What is the nature of your employment status now?"

2004 (CONFERENCE) The committee unanimously recommended that the 2004 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2001 A.A. Membership Survey.

(TRUSTEES) The trustees' committee viewed a rough draft of the Alcoholics Anonymous 2004 Membership Survey data and expressed appreciation for the efforts of all who were involved in gathering, editing and summarizing the data. The committee agreed to forward a draft of the "Alcoholics Anonymous 2004 Membership Survey" pamphlet, prepared by the Publications Department, for consideration by the 2005 Conference Public Information Committee.

2005 (TRUSTEES) The committee viewed a rough draft of the Alcoholics Anonymous 2004 Membership Survey data and expressed appreciation for the efforts of all who were involved in gathering, editing and summarizing the data. The committee agreed to forward a draft of the Alcoholics Anonymous 2004 Membership Survey pamphlet, prepared by the Publications Department, for consideration by the 2005 Conference Public Information Committee.

(CONFERENCE) It was recommended that the Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2004 Membership Survey with the following revision to the reporting categories under "Length of Sobriety":

Sober more than 10 years.
Sober between 5-10 years.
Sober between 1-5 years.
Sober less than 1 year.

to better reflect the range in which the "average" appears.

(TRUSTEES) The committee reviewed the background on the historical scope and cost of the A.A. Membership Survey and expressed a wish to continue discussing the topic at the October 2005 meeting. Additional background requested for the October discussion

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included the letters accompanying the survey questionnaires, both to the delegates and to the G.S.R.s. The committee agreed to forward to the 2006 Conference Public Information Committee a request to discuss how to get more delegates involved in the survey process in 2007.

2006 (TRUSTEES) The committee reviewed two requests to add additional categories to the length of sobriety section of the "2007 A.A. Membership Survey" and agreed to forward to the 2006 Conference Committee on Public Information a suggestion to add the following categories to the length of sobriety section of the "2007 A.A. Membership Survey:"

Sober between 11-20 years

Sober more than 20 years

The committee reviewed a request to add the option "Domestic Partner" to the "Marital Status of Members" section of the "2007 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire" and agreed to forward the request to add the option "Domestic Partner" to the "Marital Status of Members" section of the "2007 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire" to the 2006 Conference Committee on Public Information for consideration.

The committee reviewed a request to add a 'Sexual Orientation' category to the A.A. Membership Questionnaire and agreed to forward the request to add a 'Sexual Orientation' category to the 2007 A.A. Membership Questionnaire to the 2006 Conference Committee on Public Information for consideration.

The committee considered a request that a question pertaining to physical disabilities be included in the 2007 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire and took no action. After thoughtful discussion, the committee agreed with the recommendation of the 2000 General Service Conference, that "... the responses to this question have been inconclusive in two previous surveys and the committee recognized that there are other more effective ways of determining how the A.A. message can be better carried to those who have these difficulties."

The committee considered a request to delete question 14.a on the A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire, which reads, "After coming to A.A., did you receive any treatment or counseling, such as medical, psychological or spiritual, etc?" and took no action. The committee felt that this request did not reflect a widely expressed need and that this information may be useful to professionals interested in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The committee agreed to table a discussion on the efficacy of the Membership Survey process and content for their July 2006 meeting.

(CONFERENCE) It was recommended that the section on "Marital Status" in the "A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire" be revised and re-titled as "Domestic Status" with the following 4 options:

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Married
Single
Divorced
Other (please specify) _____.

The option "Internet" be added to the "2007 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire" under Question 11: "Please indicate no more than two of the following entities that you feel were most influential in your decision to come to your first A.A. meeting."

The "2007 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire" be approved.

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee considered a request to add the categories "Sober between 11 - 20 years" and "Sober more than 20 years" to the "Length of Sobriety" section in the "2007 A.A. Membership Survey" pamphlet and took no action. The committee noted that "length of sobriety" categories are not part of the survey questionnaire, and that the categories are developed from data extracted from the question, "I had my last drink in__" on the survey questionnaire. The committee agreed that, although no action was necessary at this time, additional length of sobriety categories may be considered by the trustees' and Conference Committees that would review the next survey and "A.A. Membership Survey" pamphlet.
- The committee considered the request to add a "Sexual Orientation" category to the 2007 A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire and took no action.
- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Public Information review the wording in the "A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire" for consistency with the wording used in the "A.A. Membership Survey" pamphlet. The committee noted the desirability of including a term that would better describe the "Native American" option under Question 4: "Race." The committee also suggested that option K: "Transportation (equipment operator)" of Question 12: "What is the nature of your employment status now?" be clarified or better defined.

(TRUSTEES) The committee discussed an Additional Committee Consideration from the Conference Public Information Committee suggesting that a presentation on the A.A. Membership Survey process be part of the Conference agenda in the years that the survey takes place. The discussion came as a result of the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference concerns that scheduling a presentation on the A.A. Survey process during the year that conducting the A.A. Membership Survey is on the Conference agenda might affect discussion and debate on this item.

The trustees' Public Information Committee discussed several options in view of this potential conflict, including preparing a written presentation, a service piece or Frequently

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Asked Questions document to be distributed after Conference discussion on conducting the survey has concluded. The committee did not reach a consensus and requested that the staff secretary distribute all mailings and explicatory memos regarding the A.A. membership survey process as background for discussion at their next meeting.

The committee considered an Additional Committee Consideration from the Public Information Conference Committee suggesting that the language in the A.A. Membership Survey questionnaire and pamphlet be reviewed for consistency. The committee agreed to suggest that the options “male” and “female” replace “men” and “women” in the next printing of the A.A. Membership Survey pamphlet to maintain consistency with the wording used in the A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire.

On the “A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire” the committee reviewed several options to clarify the option “transportation (equipment operator)” and agreed to replace the term with “Transportation and Material Moving Occupations.”

The committee also suggested that other possibilities and the shared experience from regional/special forums be considered before replacing the option “Native American” in the A.A. Membership Survey Questionnaire. The committee requested that all new information gathered be brought back as background to their next meeting.

The committee reviewed G.S.O.’s policy on the distribution of the 1989 document, “Comments on A.A.’s Triennial Survey” and agreed to support the existing policy of not distributing this document as the information has long been outdated.

The committee continued discussion on the option of including a presentation on the A.A. Membership Survey process at the General Service Conference in the years the survey is conducted. This is in response to an Additional Committee Consideration of the 2006 Conference Committee on Public Information.

The committee reviewed all communications sent to area delegates pertaining to conducting the survey. The committee felt that the communications were adequate but that, additionally, a presentation on the survey process and a document in the form of a “Frequently Asked Questions” sharing experience would be helpful to delegates. The committee agreed to request that the trustees’ Conference Committee consider including a presentation on the A.A. Membership Survey process during Conference week.

The committee reviewed the use of the wording “Native American” in the “A.A. Membership Questionnaire” and took no action.

2007 (TRUSTEES) A trustee member of the Committee on the General Service Conference shared on their committee’s decision not to include a presentation on the A.A. Membership Survey on the agenda for the 2007 General Service Conference. The committee based their decision on the Conference’s longstanding practice of not discussing or making presentations on items that are on the agendas of Conference Committees. Nevertheless, the trustees’ Committee on the Conference encouraged

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that, if the survey is approved by the Conference, the staff member on the Public Information assignment work closely with the Conference Coordinator to find a suitable way to share information about the survey with Area Conference delegates.

(CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that the 2007 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2004 A.A. Membership Survey.

2008 (TRUSTEES) The committee discussed and agreed to forward to the 2008 Conference Committee on Public Information (only) the rough draft pamphlet "2007 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey," after a final review by the statistician.

2008 (CONFERENCE) The Membership Survey pamphlet and one-way Membership survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2007 Membership Survey.

2009 (TRUSTEES) The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2009 Conference Committee on Public Information the rough draft 2010 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey Questionnaire.

The committee requested that the new trustees' Public Information Committee chair consider creating a subcommittee at its August 1, 2009 meeting to explore other methods of surveying the A.A. Fellowship in the U.S. and Canada, including electronic survey models.

The committee discussed at length methods of surveying the A.A. Fellowship in the U.S. and Canada, including electronic survey models. The chair asked the staff secretary to contact a Survey Professional and ask how we could retain statistical validity if we changed from the current methodology for conducting the triennial survey and use another model, such as a web-based tool.

At their October 31, 2009 meeting, the trustees' Committee on Public Information discussed at length methods of surveying the A.A. Fellowship in the U.S. and Canada, including electronic survey models starting in 2013. In response to a question raised during the October discussion, the secretary reported that changing the current (random sampling) methodology for conducting the survey to one using a web-based (self-selected) tool would affect the statistical validity of the results and their credibility to the professional community. The 2010 A.A. Membership Survey will be conducted using the current (random sampling) methodology.

The committee stressed that the survey needs to be credible to the membership, and underscored that trend lines are important and should not be lost. The chair asked the secretary to bring to the July meeting a sample of the trend-lines developed by the office.

2011 (TRUSTEES) The committee agreed to forward to the 2011 Conference Committee on

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Public Information the recommendation that the 2011 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted.

(CONFERENCE) The 2011 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2007 A.A. Membership Survey.

(TRUSTEES) The secretary reported that the data is currently being tabulated and will be presented to the committee along with proposed pamphlet design at the January 2012 meeting.

- 2012 (TRUSTEES) The committee agreed to forward to the 2012 Conference Committee on Public Information the draft pamphlet "2011 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey," with minor edits. The committee also discussed the purpose and process of the Membership Survey and agreed to continue this discussion at the July 28, 2012 meeting.

(CONFERENCE) The Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2011 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey with minor editorial changes.

- 2013 (TRUSTEES) The committee agreed to forward to the 2014 Conference Committee on Public Information the recommendation that the 2014 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted, including updated pre-survey communications and survey instructions.

The committee also discussed the use of online methods for conducting the membership survey, and agreed that while the 2014 survey should follow traditional paper methods, the next survey taken after 2014 might be offered both on paper and digitally, as part of a transitional effort.

- 2014 (TRUSTEES) The committee agreed to forward to the 2014 Conference Committee on Public Information the final report from the Subcommittee on 2014 A.A. Membership Survey.

(CONFERENCE) The committee recommended that the 2014 A.A. Survey Questionnaire be changed as follows:

Item 3a be changed from "Married" to "Married or Life partner."

Item 11e be changed from "Counseling agency" to "Counselor or Mental health professional."

Item 11f be changed from "Court order" to "Judicial system."

Item 11g be changed from "Health professional" to "Medical professional."

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Item 13a be changed to “Before coming to A.A., did you receive any treatment or counseling (such as medical, psychological or spiritual, etc.) **related to your drinking?** (If yes, answer question 13b)” [additional text in bold]

Item 14a be changed to “After coming to A.A., did you receive any treatment or counseling (such as medical, psychological or spiritual, etc.) **related to your drinking?** (If yes, answer question 14b)” [additional text in bold]

Item 15 be changed from “Did a health professional ever refer you to A.A.?” to “Did a counselor, medical or mental health professional ever refer you to A.A.?”

The 2014 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2011 A.A. Membership Survey.

2015 (TRUSTEES) The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2015 Conference Public Information Committee information from the 2014 Membership Survey.

2016 (TRUSTEES)

Following a thoughtful discussion regarding the A.A. Membership Survey, including a pilot electronic survey and adding a survey question regarding the language spoken at the group, the chair appointed a subcommittee to review the timing and process of conducting the A.A. Membership Survey and to review the survey questionnaire.

The chair of the 2017 A.A. Membership Survey Subcommittee gave a verbal report reflecting the committee’s three conference calls since our July 30, 2016 meeting. The subcommittee has determined that the 2017 A.A. Membership Survey will be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2014 A.A. Membership Survey. The subcommittee will continue to discuss and gather background regarding the possibility of future surveys being conducted online.

2017 (TRUSTEES)

The committee reviewed the report from the Subcommittee on the 2017 A.A. Membership Survey and, after considering the process and methodology of the 2014 A.A. Membership Survey, took no action on the subcommittee’s recommendation that an A.A. Membership Survey be conducted in 2017. The committee agreed to forward the report of the subcommittee to the 2017 Conference Committee on Public Information

After extensive discussion the committee agreed to table to the July 2017 meeting of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information, discussion of the request from Area 79, British Columbia/Yukon, to consider changing the gender question on the A.A. Membership Survey to allow for a better reflection of the diversity of our membership.

2017 (Conference)

That the draft 2017 A.A. Survey Questionnaire be changed as follows:

Question 2 be changed from “Sex: ___ Male ___ Female” to “Gender Identity: ___ Male ___ Female ___ [language to include all gender nonconforming] ___ No Response”

Note: *The Conference did not accept this recommendation*

That the 2017 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2014 A.A. Membership Survey and requested that the trustees’ Committee on Public Information review the current A.A. Membership Survey methodology, possible methods for surveying the membership electronically and any reasonable hybrid of the two methods, and that a progress report be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Public Information

Note: *The Conference did not accept this recommendation*

2017 (TRUSTEES)

The committee considered a request that the staff secretary engage a professional survey consultant to review the current A.A. Membership Survey methodology, possible methods for surveying the membership electronically and any reasonable hybrid of the two methods and tabled the discussion to the July 2017 meeting of the trustees’ Committee on Public Information.

2018 (TRUSTEES)

The committee reviewed a report from the staff secretary on the attempts to identify a professional to evaluate the A.A. Membership Survey methodology and agreed to table their discussion to the July 2018 meeting.

The committee discussed the A.A. Membership Survey and recommended that a professional analysis of the Membership Survey methodology be conducted by an outside consultant at a cost not to exceed \$8,000.

The committee met with a potential survey consultant via teleconference to gather information on possible methodologies regarding a new A.A. Membership Survey model. After the call and a wide-ranging discussion, the chair appointed a “technical subcommittee” to meet by conference call with Peter L. chair, Deborah A. Josh E. and Newton P. to discuss a plan of action and bring back a report to the January 2019 meeting.

2019 (TRUSTEES)

The committee reviewed the progress on the survey consultant report. Noting that the

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survey consultant final report will be available in early January the committee agreed to meet by conference call to discuss the report when it is made available.

2020 (TRUSTEES) The committee reviewed a professional survey methodology report on the A.A. Triennial Membership Survey. The committee **agreed to forward** to the 2020 Conference Committee on Public Information the survey report. The committee also asked that additional information be included in the background reflecting discussions and suggestions that came from committee discussions with the survey professional. Noting that the survey methodology review is still in its infancy the committee asked that this discussion be continued at the August 2020 meeting.

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2020 Conference Committee on Public Information

ITEM L: Review contents of P.I. Kit and Workbook.

Background notes:

From the February 1, 2020 report of the trustees' Committee on Public Information:

The committee discussed the suggestions proposed by local committees regarding the current language and resources available in the Public Information Workbook. The committee requested that a full revision of the Public Information Workbook be developed to serve the current needs of local P.I. committees with a progress report to be brought back to the August 2020 meeting.

Staff Note: Due to the new G.S.O. ERP database implementation the service kits may not reflect the most recent updates.

Background:

1. Public Information Workbook available to view on www.aa.org

- ENG - https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/public-information-committees
- FR - https://www.aa.org/pages/fr_FR/public-information-committees
- SP - https://www.aa.org/pages/es_ES/public-information-committees