

2015 INVENTORY DETAIL RESPONSES

GROUPS/DISTRICTS

1. How can we better convey the importance of the principle of participation in Area 40 General Service to our respective Groups and Districts?
 - Participation gives results
 - Sponsor into service; sponsorship seems to have an impact, do we sponsor service?
 - Encourage involvement
 - District & Area share at group level about service positions do, explain service structure
 - Improve flow of information in both directions
 - Groups don't understand importance; go to groups who are not participating in district/area; Set the example in our groups and it filters down.
 - Invite people to district & area
 - Old timers stay involved (important); use the wisdom of elder statesmen
 - Communicate 'why' we do service and participate in general service; communication directly, one on one, with members about service; information sharing about service, the "why" it is so important, our primary purpose:
 - (to make 12 step work possible, to carry the message)
 - Sense of 'ownership'
 - Benefits to individual sobriety
 - Importance of keeping A.A. available for our children and grandchildren if needed
 - Make it personal
 - A.A. may not always be here if members don't do the work
2. What can we do to make our Groups, Districts, and Area more attractive?
 - Practice principles before personalities
 - Practice enthusiasm, not negativity; Use positive, inspiring energy when talking about service at all levels
 - Bring District to groups in outlying areas
 - Create fellowship
 - Keep in mind our primary purpose and singleness of purpose and how we convey our solution
 - Be informed (in our home group); to be able to bring something to group, district or area; to be a better member of A.A.
 - Show up when trusted servants give reports, be interested in what they are doing, thank them for their service
 - Service is gratitude in action; and it's attractive
 - Keep commitments, show up
 - Groups where participation is important are thriving, which is infectious
 - Go out of way to greet people or introduce self
 - Take people with you and let them have the experience of it all; ask others to participate
 - Focus on how we carry the message through service
 - Starts with the individual example, we set the example and it grows
 - Focus on solutions rather than problems at all levels

3. Is the business of Area 40 seen as a result of a year-round process by and for its Groups and Districts?
 - Probably not
 - Answering service, ad hoc committees ... lots going on all the time
 - GSR relays information
 - If a group is involved, the answer is yes; if not involved they may not be aware of the work that is done
 - Many think the work is done only at the fall and spring area assemblies
 - Assembly is where we hear the ongoing nature of our committees' work and the work our trusted servants do all year round
 - This is on us, those in service, to share what is going on, what's happening
 - Yes, for those who participate in service
 - Cooperation is key!
 - In some cases yes, some no, depends on the group/district

4. Considering Concept I, "the final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship", (the A.A. groups today hold final responsibility and ultimate authority), do the groups in Area 40 have everything they need to carry out this responsibility?
 - Not without a GSR who participates in district and area
 - Yes, but the groups have to pick up the tools, i.e. make use of the information

If not what could Area 40 do to help provide what they need?

- We should be concerned about groups who have the desire but not the ability or means to participate
- District (trusted servants) visit groups monthly to explain what they do
- Practice the Traditions & Concepts
- Invite speakers to talk about service in addition to sharing their story
- Conference Report can be used to communicate information
- Have annual GSR school- use conference report's power point
- Read job description of service positions before elections
- Group members responsible to ensure group continues to function well
- Speak up of find out why if information is missing
- Have information available and accessible on tables for members

INDIVIDUAL/PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE

1. Who are underrepresented alcoholics in Area 40?
 - Native Americans & Reservations
 - Less populated areas
 - People with accessibility issues
 - Many groups in each district
 - Those without a home group or members of unlisted groups

- Veterans (disabled and newly returning)
- Rural areas with low income / non - reg. groups / loosely organized group / loners
- People with mental health issues
- Aging populations
- Single Parents / young adults
- Juvenile offenders
- Non-English speaking

What can be done to overcome difficulties in attracting these people?

- District 21 – Libbie went suggested they have a DCM and they now do!
- Native Americans – invite them to come.
- Be an attraction. Don't complain about having to go to the Assembly. Invite people to come along.
- Funding issue – scholarship to pay for groups to send their GSR to the Assembly. Can the Area pay to have unfunded DCMs attend?
- My group is against scholarships. If a group wants to participate they will.
- Treat new to the assembly people well. Take people out for ice cream.
- Libbie assigned a mentor to a person new to the assembly. Can we do this at the Assembly? Have some indication of first time assembly goers on their nametag.
- Remember to explain for the new to assembly goers what is going on. Correct misinformation when it is given at the mike.
- In larger populated areas, it's easy to lessen the burden of unfunded GSRs.
- What about moving the assembly larger cities in the Area?
- Can we use technology to help?
- Al Anon meets once a year in Lewistown and then moves around the Area.
- Communicate how important it is to participate in the service structure.
- Competition among districts with an traveling award for the district with the most increase participation.
- DCMs go visit groups especially those that do not participate and invite them to come.
- See the background information from 2015 Conference.
- Lead a horse to water, can't make him drink, but don't take the pail away.
- Starts in the home group. All have a vote in home group. Make it attractive.
- Make it personal. It's important for my recovery.
- It is not us and them. It's just us.
- Veterans:
 - Lit racks at VA centers
 - AA PSA for vets
 - Transportation
 - Booths at Vet Stand Downs
 - VFW out reach
 - Work with College vet centers
 - Job service vet outreach

- Rural challenges:
 - Sponsorship...get cars and go to meetings to support
 - “No Man’s Land Group” go to different rural mtg weekly
 - DCM visit groups
 - Encourage PI to bring lit. to dark areas
- Mental Health issued:
 - Lit in centers, esp. new pamphlets
 - Group Home reach out
- Native Am. and Reservations:
 - Visit meetings on reservation (attend)
 - PI visit with literature
 - Contact Spiritual leaders
 - Rotate district meeting
 - Native American involvement at round-up
- Aging:
 - Bring meetings in homes (CPC)
 - Hold meetings in Sr. Centers
- Single Parents / low income
 - Lit in appropriate sites (WIC, welfare, HRDC)
 - Child care funding or availability at meetings
 - Activities for kids (coloring, etc.) at meeting
- Juvenile:
 - Check into what types or programs and where...show up with lit
 - Host meetings
 - Panels at high schools
 - Have treatment and Corrections chairs work together
- Non-English speaking
 - Have lit in other languages
 - Promote through churches
 - Promote/use LaViñas
 - Start a Spanish meeting/bilingual...promote it

2. What can the Area do to help members of the Area Assembly be better prepared as we come to participate?

- Provide a mentor as described above
- DCM can help better prepare new GSRs
- Experienced members take the time to help new to the Assembly people. Getting with other GSRs.
- Rather than having the GSR and DCM breakouts, have a GSR and DCM school. Talk about what the duties of the DCM and GSR
- New GSR workshops within the District work well
- I’m responsible, when anyone anywhere.... It’s a sponsorship thing; some people can’t show up yet; get the people who are ready to serve here; We can make service a gift of hope
- Frequent contact with GSRs – even in between meetings

- Never hesitate to ask DCMs and Area Chairs about procedures, agenda items, background material, and so on
 - Make sure background material is delivered promptly; agenda out to all GSR's electronically and/or print
 - List of materials to bring: service manual...background
 - Teach importance of being informed
 - 12 x 12 Traditions and Concepts at district prior to assembly
 - All GSR access to dashboard; Area Dashboard / spring and fall
 - Use DCM
 - Letter/packet to GSR month before with agenda draft included
 - GSR School
3. Do we effectively integrate new people into the Area Assembly?
- Work in progress
 - Tell new people it will be ok
 - Some GSRs are thrown in on short notice
 - A lot is up to individuals; it would be helpful if alternates had a chance to attend Area
 - Take care and help those who we elect
 - Prepare GSRs for the Assembly; give them something to do; make them part of the process
 - Keep the communication channels open
 - Mentorship and use the Area Committee chairs to help integrate; we need to get people excited about being here before we cast them into these positions
 - The Friday night meeting is good
 - Find a new use or eliminate the workshops conducted by the Past Delegate; if we keep the workshop, make it for new to the assembly people
 - Give those new to the assembly a job; invite them to dinner or coffee
 - Has improved with new framework
 - Advanced GSR packet
 - Check list for Area Chair to use to prepare GSR
 - Packets for GSR
 - Pay alternate GSR to attend prior to rotating in
 - Area Chairs intro at Friday night welcome
 - Not always...when we don't allow access
4. Are we attracting new people to participate in the Area 40 service structure?
- Yes, but a small %
 - Rate of growth in service doesn't match rate of growth in the fellowship
 - Yes, through spirit of rotation

What could we do to improve?

- Educate as to the need for service

- There may be people doing great work at the local level that would serve; Area Committee should reach out to people who they know is doing good work locally and encourage them to participate at the Assembly; is there a better way of selecting our Area Committee Chairs? perhaps look at the ways we fill Area Committee Chairs; can we use the same procedure used to replace vacant Area Committee Chairs; the selection process must look to bringing new people into service
- Push the issue that the Area Committee Chairs are available for workshops; they will then get to know more people and be able to encourage their participation
- Encourage the member of Area Committees to stand for the Chair position
- Start bringing up Area Elections in the spring before rotation
- Area Outreach
- Scholarships
- Promote in our groups / positive peer pressure
- Panel in district about service
- Share about service growth in meetings
- Make reports FUN
- Bring others
- Promote how important GSRs job is!
- Move out of Lewistown or rotate within state
- Add fun to format...early morning meeting
- Ride Share on web site
- DCM report to groups without GSR's
- Sponsorship
- Assembly Outreach Committee

COMMITTEES/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

1. The Triangle is the Area's newsletter; its purpose is to communicate service information among trusted servants, groups, districts and the area committee. How effective is the Triangle in serving this purpose?
 - Pretty effective, if you read it; we cannot force anyone to read it
 - Good content
 - Available in mobile-friendly format
 - Love the Triangle, read it
 - As GSR read it, group doesn't read it
 - Serves its purpose
 - Meeting purpose among GSR's
 - Read it when sponsor tells me to
 - Like it
 - Not receiving it; address issue
 - Read it

What can be done to improve its effectiveness?

- Announce it more; use articles/information as topic at a meeting
 - Find a way to engage individuals on a more personal level; dedicate a section to a personal story on how service has enhanced writer's sobriety
 - Insure individual members know their contributions are welcome
 - Assure GSR's are receiving the Triangle; that the group subscribes
 - Make subscriptions available on-line
 - Highlight article by each Area standing committee chair each edition; include explanation of the position and what they are doing
 - Define what we want from the Triangle
 - Make sure groups know they can pay for their subscription
 - Group could appoint a Triangle rep to recap an announcement-type communique
 - More group and district information
 - Incorporated minutes, cut back to 8 issues because of finances
 - Need hard copy, keep it simple
 - GSR's could call attention by reporting a piece now & then, call attention to finding
 - Sponsor to encourage value of Triangle through example
 - Resolve address issues
 - Go digital; hard copy only to people who request it
 - Share it on table, as literature; write an article; subscribe
 - Communicate subscription status; groups can pay for subscription
2. How can we improve the methods of encouraging and selecting effective leaders as well as nurturing leadership qualities in our trusted servants?
- Process of awareness and educating the newcomer on what A.A. is really all about
 - Ask leaders to educate as they go; not assume everyone knows what the acronyms mean
 - Don't intimidate individuals who are less aware
 - Use sponsorship as a tool to educate about service
 - Use sobriety suggestions to choose trusted servants
 - Participate in group business meetings
 - Encourage sponsees to attend group business meetings and get involved
 - Sponsor people into service work
 - Consider ways to battle negative perception of some members
 - Conduct workshops on how to nurture and grow effective leaders
 - Choose trusted servants with care; ask if they are willing and can meet the needs of what the position requires
 - Bring fun and interesting tidbits to home group
 - As a person why they want a service position
 - Encourage people who seem interested in service and direct them to where they could be useful based on the interest they have shown; encouragement and selection of leaders starts in the home group
 - Observe the leaders among us

- Personally invite group members to stick around for business meetings
- Ask committee chairs to be speakers at home groups
- Current leaders available for questions
- Make local A.A. communities more informed on what the chair of a certain committee actually does
- Have guidelines and job descriptions available to people at the district level
- During orientation of new committee chairs, add training on “chairing a committee meeting”; this could coincide with pre-Assemblies
- Fill group service positions; fund GSR to Area
- Keep enthusiasm about service high; mentor new position holders
- Lead by example; railroading not good; some don’t want to serve
- Enthusiasm starts at ground level; nurture and encourage new folks into service; sponsor into service; take time give back
- All service is good; encourage, “you might want to consider standing for...”
- 1 out of 8 who started; took chance to give back to stay sober; try new job if one is not working; “make choice to stay sober”
- Tough in small towns 2/small core groups
- Enthusiastic, committed, attraction rather than promotion
- Walking the talk; Living it; HOW, service is a big part of the triangle
- Positions well defined at all levels (group, district, area)
- Share: Life gets bigger the more service I do; service is enriching
- Nurture & support GSR; be interested in what they have learned
- Topic of meetings” service, solutions
- Activities that promote quality sobriety

3. Considering that the 2011 Membership Survey indicates most A.A. members are introduced to A.A. by sources other than A.A. members, what might the Area 40 Committees do to support the Districts in carrying the A.A. message to these sources?

- Use service chairs of CPC, PI, and Treatment more
- Hold workshops and luncheons for professionals in a professional manner; be polite, be persistent, be humble
- Build relationships with professionals in the community
- Don’t badmouth treatment centers, jails, institutions, churches, or science in meetings --- or ever, really
- Shift our focus; go to professional conferences instead of inviting them to our conferences; send our delegate to professional conferences
- Realize our ability and power; a jail said that the suicide rate seemed to go down in direct proportion to A.A. meetings becoming more available
- Make speakers available to carry the message into treatment centers and institutional facilities; we may be able to do what the counselors and facilitators are not able to do
- Put more effort into reaching the mental health community
- Refrain from practicing behaviors that do not help us build relationships with corrections, treatment, and mental health facilities (chanting or non-inclusive behavior)

- Be friendly with our friends
- Encourage people to write to A.A.'s in prison
- PI & CPC events with Treatment and Corrections
- Thank stations that play PSA's
- Ask stations that don't (play PSA's) to play them
- Panels with professionals to inform them
- Cops brought me in
- Have districts with strong PI & CPC share at assembly how they are doing it
- Get literature in medical, library, cop shop; carry the message
- Make sure Area Chairs offer help to District Committees, reach out - invite district folks on trips
- Drop off used books to library
- PI stronger – more Jack Alexander – type articles needed; get more involved with the press
- Keep reaching out to provide information to judges and professionals
- More informal state to state, group level sharing of ideas on how to reach out
- Get more involved with Bridging the Gap; doing a good job on Area level
- Strength in numbers
- Meet more often to keep ideas fresh
- CPC needs dynamic people
- General shares at West Central Region Service Conference (annual); Bismarck 2016; Delegate & Chair represent Area 40

4. How are Committee Chairs communicating with their District counterparts?

- They are doing great
- In smaller areas, it's hard to get people to participate and do work with the Area Chairs
- It's hard to get people to show up and do work
- Bridging the Gap has to continually communicate
- Very well
- Don't know who district counterparts are

What could be done better?

- Reaching out through phone calls, email not preferred; flexibility is appreciated
- Offer some history and background about what has been done service-wise in our district
- Invite Area Chairs to District meetings
- Help me (GSR?) generate/encourage interest in my group to participate
- Small towns and remote communities need a lot of support and encouragement
- During travels, visit and share at group and district meetings
- Email monthly; invite Area chairs to events, go to assembly
- Could use information earlier with more time to consider
- Quarterly conference calls; ask if districts want a visit
- More workshops

- Transfer of information from outgoing chair to new chair with time to share ideas at last assembly

AREA ASSEMBLY

1. Is the Area Assembly effective in communicating information within the General Service structure?

- Yes---seems we do a good job; new to this
- Include Alternate DCM in emails (area business –agenda, background material)
- It works; new just listening
- Triangle/website both good; get information to the district and groups sooner on inventory questions
- Separate meeting at District lever for Area
- If something uploaded, let DCM/district know; responsibility; reply
- Seems relatively effective; 3-4 people who know information when he needs to know; yes it's working
- Works well for GSRs
- Effective if accessed; Friday orientation is awesome; Area Committee could meet outside assembly at some time
- Committee system is very effective
- Identification of who/where to go for more information
- Get information to committee attendees, even the non-voting members requesting communication
- Friday orientation is awesome; Area Committee meets at same time
- Committee system very effective
- Doing well; a few glitches, but information can be found on the website, in the Triangle, or with DCM's
- Pre-Assembly meetings and *Fellowship New Vision* (GSO membership database) help us to connect with different areas
- Conduct Webinar pre-assemblies
- It's perfect; honor to be here

2. How are the Steps, Traditions, and concepts guiding our decisions and actions when we conduct business at assemblies?

- Previous officers keep us in line (elder statesmen vs bleeding deacons)
- Yes; if we're not doing it that way, how are we doing it?
- So many with experience that we are kept in line
- Legacy of leadership, past delegates and chairs
- More workshops on Concepts would be good
- Good discussion of concepts; how can we bring them to the group structure?
- Too much assumed that the Traditions and Concepts are understood. Bring Traditions and Concepts into District Committee meetings
- Make an extra day in between Saturday and Sunday

- Better communications with groups about the inventory questions
 - It helps that they are read at the beginning
 - Participation is the key to harmony
 - Appreciate minority opinion
 - Service work is important and the right thing to do with the Steps, Traditions and Concepts our guides
 - We are always learning
 - On the floor, at times we allow emotions to rule the day rather than the traditions
 - Distill the concepts down to their general principles
 - Expectation that we know and understand the concepts
 - Appreciate the kindergarten version of directions for newcomers.
3. Does the current format and scheduling effectively address communication and the business to be conducted?
- Restructure has worked
 - Make good use of time together
 - The format was revised three years ago.; we're doing okay
 - Things have changed for the better since
 - The Friday night session was nice to get an idea of what was going to happen on Saturday and Sunday
 - Appreciated the "buddy" assignment at the spring assembly, being asked to stand up as a person that is attending their first assembly

How can Area 40 more effectively conduct its business?

- Use technology to expedite work (i.e. google doc)
 - Do voting on Saturday
 - "I need someone to just point me in the right direction "
 - Consider a workshop for everybody rather than having to make the choice between committee work and the workshop - perhaps a recording of the workshop; inventory this assembly used the 30 minute workshop slot at 1 pm
 - Why do we have to start so early in the morning?
 - Don't wait to give a minority opinion
 - Put a PDF on what the newcomer could expect on the website
 - Have a meeting or show up at the Lewistown meeting or invite them to our meeting
4. What keeps groups from attending Area Assembly?
- Money, especially for those groups that only meet once a week
 - Apathy
 - Ignorant about what Area is about

- Apathy, lack of commitment
- Geography
- Contempt prior to investigation

What could be done remove these barriers?

- Some groups contribute money only; some groups have GSR's, but no money; share?
- Get a bus
- Mechanism to share rooms (other resources); network
- Some districts help groups pay for their GSR to attend
- We've gotten away from sponsoring people into service work and the concepts
- Create a forum to share rooms, etc
- Program of attraction rather than promotion; be enthusiastic about service work and share it with others
- The answer is in the Serenity Prayer