

## **MID SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA GUIDELINES FOR STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURE**

### **PREFACE**

Service to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous shall be the primary purpose of General Service in the Mid-Southern California Area. In all our proceedings we shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Twelve Traditions and the Six Warranties, mindful of the ideals expressed in *“The A.A. Service Manual”* and the *“Twelve Concepts for World Service.”* The “Right of Decision,” the “Right of Participation” and “Right of Appeal” shall always be observed.

In the absence of specific indications in these Guidelines, the Bylaws of Mid-Southern California Area, or direct Assembly action, the latest edition of *“The A. A. Service Manual”* may be relied upon.

### **THE MID-SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA**

The formation of the Mid-Southern California Area was approved at the Eighth General Service Conference in April 1958 and the first Delegate was sent to the Ninth General Service Conference the following year.

### **ARTICLE I AREA ASSEMBLY**

#### **A. PURPOSE**

The Assembly is the mainspring of the Conference structure and is the representative voice of the movement expressing itself. It is the gathering of the General Service Representatives and the Area Service Committee that deliberates and enacts resolutions concerning service matters brought before it. Its responsibilities include:

1. Electing and supporting the Area Officers, including a Delegate to the General Service Conference.
2. Being an interim repository, through its G.S.R.s, of the collective Group conscience of the Area.
3. Seeking substantial unanimity in all important decisions.
4. Strengthening AA as a whole and carrying the AA message the best way possible in our own particular Area.

#### **B. MEMBERSHIP**

1. If they qualify as a member in good standing, as per B.6., the following shall be full voting members of the Assembly:

- a. Delegate
- b. Alternate Delegate
- c. Other Area Officers
- d. All currently serving G.S.R.s, D.C.M.C.s, Alternate D.C.M.C.s, D.C.M.s, Alternate D.C.M.s, and other District Officers

e. Chairs of Assembly Standing committees including:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| *Archives  | Communications                   |
| Cooperation with Elder Community (C.E.C)             | *Convention Liaison              |
| *Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C) | Corrections                      |
| *D.C.M. Schools                                      | Finance                          |
| *AA Grapevine/La Viña                                | *G.S.R. Schools                  |
| *Literature  | *Public Information (P.I.)       |
| Registration   | *Accessibilities                 |
| Treatment Facilities                                 | Guidelines and Policies (G.A.P.) |
| Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (Y.P.A.A.)      |                                  |

\* Committees with Spanish-speaking Chairs are shown with asterisks.

f. Chairs and/or Directors currently serving or in office within the past twelve months of those Coordinate Committees that are part of our Area structure but completely autonomous, including:

- Intergroups
- Central Service Committees
- Young People in A.A. Committees
- Hospital and Institution Committees

2. The following shall be lifetime voting members of the Assembly:

All past Delegates of the Corporation, and past Delegates from other areas who now reside within the geographic boundaries of the Mid-Southern California Area, who do not qualify under paragraph I.B.1.

3. The following shall be full participating but nonvoting members of the Assembly:

All currently serving Alternate G.S.R.s.

4. Each person qualifying as a voter under this section shall have a single vote even though they may be serving in more than one capacity.

5. Except as specified in I.B.1.b and I.B.1.d above, each alternate may vote only in the absence of their principal.

6. Members in Good Standing:

Members as listed above who have attended at least one Assembly or Area Service Committee meeting within the prior 12-month period.

C. MEETINGS

1. The Assembly shall meet a minimum of three times per year, as determined by the Executive Committee.
2. The time and place of each meeting will be selected by the Executive Committee with Assembly approval.
3. A quorum shall be the number of voting members present.
4. The Area Assembly will approve Area Assembly Minutes.

D. VOTING PROCEDURE

1. Most Assembly business may be passed by a simple majority vote.
2. Unusually important matters such as long-term policy decisions, making contractual obligations, and approval of the annual budget as a whole, will be decided by the principle of Substantial Unanimity.

- a. However, prolonged discussion or a suggestion from the floor may indicate that another subject being debated is a candidate for decision by Substantial Unanimity.
- b. A sense of the meeting may then be taken on the desire to apply Substantial Unanimity voting.
- c. The passing vote for Substantial Unanimity is two-thirds majority.

E. PERMANENT & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

1. Assembly Standing Committees include:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| *Archives  | Communications                   |
| Cooperation with Elder Community (C.E.C)             | *Convention Liaison              |
| *Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C) | Corrections                      |
| *D.C.M. Schools                                      | Finance                          |
| *AA Grapevine/La Viña                                | *G.S.R. Schools                  |
| *Literature  | *Public Information (P.I.)       |
| Registration   | *Accessibilities                 |
| Treatment Facilities                                 | Guidelines and Policies (G.A.P.) |
| Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (Y.P.A.A.)      |                                  |

\* Committees with Spanish-speaking Chairs are shown with asterisks.

a. Minimum suggested continuous sobriety for M.S.C.A. Standing Committee Chairs:  
Five years continuous sobriety.

b. Each Standing Committee shall be represented at Assemblies and Area Service Committee meetings and shall fulfill any duties contained in its own guidelines in a timely manner. If a Standing Committee Chair misses three (3) Area meetings (Assemblies or A.S.C.'s) or performance(s) of their duty(ies) during a two-year period without making arrangements for a designate, the position would be considered vacated, allowing the Executive Committee to start the procedures for filling the vacancy.

2. Those Coordinate Committees which are part of the Area structure but completely autonomous including:  
Intergroups/Central Service Committees  
Young People in A.A. Committees  
Hospital and Institution Committees

3. Each permanent committee shall consist of a Chair and a workable number of committee members.

4. Each Standing Committee shall draft its own guidelines, subject to approval by the Assembly, consistent with this document.

5. Special Committees:

Audit Committee: At each January Assembly, an Audit Committee of three members and two alternates, none of whom are officers of the corporation, shall be appointed by the Area Chair with approval of the Assembly. It shall be the duty of the committee to audit the Treasurer/AP and Treasurer/AR accounts as of the close of the last calendar year and to present the audit report at the May Assembly for approval. The audit shall be conducted according to the Mid-Southern California Area Assembly Audit Procedure approved by the Finance Committee October 9, 2011 and adopted by the Assembly January 8, 2012. Upon acceptance of the audit report by the Assembly, the Audit Committee will be disbanded.

F. FUNDING

- 1. M.S.C.A. maintains the spirit of the Seventh Tradition and accepts donations only from A.A. sources (primarily, but not exclusively A.A. Groups, meetings and individuals).
- 2. M.S.C.A. shall not promote nor carry out any fund-raising activity of any description.

ARTICLE II AREA OFFICERS

A. LIST – The Area Officers shall include:

- 1. Delegate
- 2. Alternate Delegate
- 3. Chair
- 4. Secretary
- 5. Treasurer/Accounts Payable (Treasurer/AP)
- 6. Treasurer/Accounts Receivable (Treasurer/AR)
- 7. Registrar

B. TERM OF OFFICE AND DETERMINATION

- 1. The term of office shall be two years, commencing on January 1 of even-numbered years.
- 2. Area Officers filling regular terms are chosen by the Assembly at an elections meeting held in the odd-numbered year just preceding the year in which the office is assumed.

C. AREA ELECTIONS

1. Voting eligibility

- a. All voting members of the Assembly are eligible if they are Members in Good Standing, as per Article I, B.6.
- b. The Area Secretary shall keep a current list of all Members in Good Standing.

2. Eligibility to office

- a. The current full-term Delegate and all past Delegates are ineligible for Area elective office.

b. With these exceptions, the following are eligible:

- (1) All present and past D.C.M.C.s, Alternate D.C.M.C.s, D.C.M.s and District Officers.
- (2) Area Officers.
- (3) Chairs of Assembly Standing Committees including:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| *Archives  | Communications                   |
| Cooperation with Elder Community (C.E.C)             | *Convention Liaison              |
| *Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C) | Corrections                      |
| *D.C.M. Schools                                      | Finance                          |
| *AA Grapevine/La Viña                                | *G.S.R. Schools                  |
| *Literature  | *Public Information (P.I.)       |
| Registration   | *Accessibilities                 |
| Treatment Facilities                                 | Guidelines and Policies (G.A.P.) |
| Technology   | Remote Communities               |
| Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (Y.P.A.A.)      |                                  |

\* Committees with Spanish-speaking Chairs are shown with asterisks.

(4) Chairs and /or Directors currently serving or in office within the past twelve months of those Coordinate Committees that are part of our Area structure but completely autonomous; including the Intergroups, Central Service Committees, Hospital and Institution Committees, and Young People in AA Committees within the M.S.C.A.

(5) Suggested continuous sobriety

Delegate 6 years

Alternate Delegate 6 years

Chair 5 years

Secretary 5 years

Treasurer/AP 5 years

Treasurer/AR 5 years

Registrar 5 years

c. In order to be eligible to stand for above offices, all must have regularly attended Area meetings in the year prior to the election, as determined by the Executive Committee if necessary.

d. All persons standing for the above offices must be present at the Election Assembly.

### 3. Balloting procedure

a. All persons voting must be present at the Assembly.

b. The Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer/AR, Treasurer/AP, and Registrar shall be selected by Third Legacy procedure in accordance with *“The AA Service Manual.”* Attention should be paid to the advisability of a fifth ballot, if necessary, in order to secure substantial unanimity.

## D. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

### 1. Delegate

a. It is the Delegate’s ultimate responsibility to provide the leadership necessary to build a sound service structure in the Area, without which the job of communication from the Groups to the Conference and then back again would be impossible.

b. The Delegate has the responsibility of attending the General Service Conference, prepared to express the “conscience” of the Area as a result of having presented and discussed the Conference agenda topics throughout the Area during the months preceding the Conference.

c. During the Conference sessions, it is the Delegate’s responsibility as a trusted servant to carefully evaluate the viewpoints expressed on each subject under discussion and then vote on all questions, not as a representative of a particular Area, but as a member of the Conference whose duty it is to act in the best interests of A.A. as a whole.

d. After the Conference the Delegate is responsible for reporting back to the Area in the best way possible to reach all members of A.A. in the Area.

e. Ongoing Conference duties. Maintains constant communications during the year with G.S.O. and the General Service Board on information, studies, and surveys. Serves as a member of a specific Conference Committee during the two-year tenure.

f. Attends all Area Assembly and Area Service Committee meetings.

g. Attends other Area Service functions and visits District meetings as often as possible.

- h. Attends the Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (P.R.A.A.S.A.) and when appropriate, other regional or state service functions.

## 2. Alternate Delegate

- a. Has implicit responsibility for assisting and/or substituting for the Delegate whenever appropriate.
- b. Responsible for all special committees and subcommittees, workshops, and all special functions of the Area Service Committee.
- c. Serve as liaison between the Area Service Committee, Hospitals & Institutions, Intergroup/Central Office, and all other coordinate committees. In addition, attend coordinate committee meetings (e.g., YPAA, Intergroup, Hospitals & Institutions, etc.) and Southern California Hospitals & Institutions committee meetings, as scheduling allows. Work closely with the Delegate in order that the Delegate can function most effectively;
- d. Works closely with the Area Chair in carrying out the latter's administrative duties and shall assume the appropriate duties of the Chair in the latter's absence.

## 3. Area Chair

- a. Conduct all Area Assemblies and Area Service Committee meetings, prepare and have published meeting agenda, appoint ad hoc committees with the approval of the Executive Committee to be affirmed at the next Assembly, and in general perform the duties of the administrative officer of the Assembly.
- b. Responsible for a healthy Area structure and, whenever a District is having difficulty, the Area Chair should be available to assist in restoring it to good working order.
- c. At each January Assembly appoint, with approval of the Assembly, an Audit Committee, which will consist of three members and two alternates who are not officers of the corporation.

## 4. Secretary

- a. Takes the minutes of the Assembly and Area Service Committee meetings. After review by the Delegate and/or Chair, distributes the minutes and the agenda for the next meeting in a timely manner to D.C.M.C.s, Alternate D.C.M.C.s, D.C.M.s, Area Officers, Chairs of Standing and Coordinate Committees, Past Delegates, Pacific Regional Trustee, and the General Service Office. The Secretary takes minutes of the Executive Committee's meetings and, after review by the Delegate and/or Chair, distributes them and the agenda for the next Area meeting to the Area officers and D.C.M.C.s.
- b. Ensures that a roster of the Area Service Committee is distributed semiannually to members of the Area Assembly and advises G.S.O. of changes in the Area Service Committee.
- c. Notifies in a timely manner all Area Service Committee members of meetings and agenda of the Area Service Committee and Assembly.
- d. Has custody of the records of the Area Assembly.

## 5. Treasurer/AP

- a. Responsible for keeping records of the Area payables and providing with the assistance of the Treasurer/AR cash flow statements to the Finance committee quarterly.
  - (1) Keeps checkbook records.
  - (2) Keeps journal and general ledger.
- b. Ensures that approved Area expenses are paid.
- c. Serves as a voting member of the Finance Committee of the Assembly. The Treasurer/AP helps that Committee keep Groups informed of the Area financial status and of the year-end financial reports.
- d. Ensures the filing of all necessary tax forms as required by law.

## 6. Treasurer/AR

- a. Responsible for keeping records of the Area receivables and income and providing, with the assistance of the Treasurer/AP, cash flow statements to the Finance Committee quarterly.
  - (1) Keeps records of income.
  - (2) Makes acknowledgement of income to donors.
- b. Serves as a voting member of the Finance Committee of the Assembly. The Treasurer/AR helps that Committee keep Groups informed of the Area financial status and of the year-end financial reports.

## 7. Registrar

- a. Assumes responsibility for updating the Group records and printouts from the General Service Office (G.S.O.) and keeps Group records up-to-date as much as possible in cooperation with the Treasurer and District leaders (D.C.M.C.s. and D.C.M.s).
- b. Assists the Delegate in locating Groups when requested by G.S.O.
- c. Coordinates the visitations schedules of Area Officers to Intergroup and H. & I. Meetings.
- d. Maintains a current mailing list and telephone numbers of the Area Service Committee.
- e. Collects and maintains on file a list of Members in Good Standing, as per Article I., B.6., to be used to determine voting eligibility, meeting notification, and to determine a quorum.
- f. Prepares and maintains the Area Service Committee roster.

## **ARTICLE III AREA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **A. COMPOSITION**

The Executive Committee consists of the Area Officers. The Area Chair conducts Executive Committee meetings. The Alternate Delegate conducts the meetings if the Area Chair is absent. The Executive Committee meets at the request of the Area Delegate or Area Chair.

## B. PURPOSE

The Executive Committee provides leadership and coordination for the Area Service Committee and Assembly.

## C. MEETINGS

The Area Chair will select a time and place for all Executive Committee meetings and notify each member in a timely way.

## D. VACANCIES

In the event of a vacancy in an Area Officer's position, a replacement shall be appointed by the Executive Committee, subject to ultimate confirmation by the Assembly.

## E. FINANCIAL AND OTHER DUTIES

### 1. Financial duties

- a. Deciding matters of financial policy to present to the Area Assembly.
- b. Helping evaluate the need for capital outlays and making appropriate reports to the Area Service Committee and/or Assembly.
- c. Helping the Finance Committee distribute donation envelopes to nonparticipating Groups and meetings.

### 2. Other Duties

- a. Officers will visit Intergroup and H. & I. meetings on a quarterly rotating schedule as determined by the Registrar.
- b. Officers will be encouraged to make other visitations as needed.
- c. Implement actions of the Assembly and Area Service Committee.

## **ARTICLE IV AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE**

### A. PURPOSE

The Area Service Committee has the following purpose:

1. Identifying, defining, and discussing Area, District, and Group problems and issues.
2. Obtaining the conscience of each District and its Groups.
3. Acting as an advisory committee to the Assembly, Executive Committee and Delegate.
4. Establishing the agenda for the next Assembly.

### B. MEMBERSHIP

The Area Service Committee shall consist of all Past Delegates, D.C.M.C.s, Alternate D.C.M.C.s, D.C.M.s, other District Officers, Area Officers, Standing and Coordinate Committee Chairs.



1. In the absence of their principals, Alternate D.C.M.s are full voting members.
2. In the absence of their principals, Coordinate Committee designated representatives are full voting members.
3. GSR's are not voting participants of the Area Service Committee. However, G.S.R.s are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in discussions at Area Service Committee meetings.

#### C. MEETINGS

1. There shall be a minimum of two Area Service Committee meetings between each regular Assembly meeting, as determined by the Executive Committee.
2. The time and place of each meeting will be selected by the Executive Committee, based upon the principle of rotation among Districts, and be approved by the Area Service Committee.
3. The Area Service Committee meeting will approve the Area Service Committee minutes.

### **ARTICLE V OTHER SERVICE FUNCTIONS OF THE AREA**

#### A. PRE CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

1. The purpose of the Pre-Conference Workshop is to provide Area feedback to the Delegate regarding upcoming Conference issues.
2. It is held in the spring of the year before the Conference.

#### B. SERVATHON

1. The purpose of the Servathon is to focus upon one or more of the Twelve Traditions and all aspects of A.A. service work.
2. It is held in the fall of the year.

#### C. FORO DE M.S.C.A.

1. The purpose of the Foro de M.S.C.A. is to focus on General Service topics.
2. It is held in the summer of the year.

#### D. SERVICE EVENT CHAIRS

The Chair of each function shall be appointed by the Executive Committee subject to approval by the Assembly and shall report to the Executive Committee or its designate.

#### E. SERVICE EVENT COMMITTEES

1. Service events are hosted by Districts on the Area rotation schedule.
2. These Committees function in accordance with their own guidelines.

## **ARTICLE VI TAX EXEMPT STATUS OF THE AREA ASSEMBLY**

### **A. NONPROFIT CORPORATION**

This organization is a nonprofit public benefit corporation and is organized under the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law of the State of California for public and charitable purposes, and not for the private gain of any person. This Corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and/or educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. In the context of these general purposes, the Corporation shall conduct charitable and educational activities with the public at large regarding alcoholism.

### **B. PROHIBITIONS**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the organization shall not carry on any other activity not permitted to be carried on;

1. By an organization exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), or
2. By an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.).

### **C. DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS**

Upon winding up and dissolution of this organization after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed as follows:

1. First, to a California nonprofit, public benefit corporation or other nonprofit foundation, charitable trust or charitable organization having as its express purpose and actual function the acting as an Area Assembly in the State of California under the Service Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous;
2. Second, but only to the extent such assets cannot be distributed pursuant to a California nonprofit, public benefit corporation or other nonprofit foundation, charitable trust or charitable organization as shall be determined in good faith by the voting members in good standing of the Corporation, which complies most closely with the manifest intentions and purposes of the original incorporators of the Corporation.

## **ARTICLE VII RATIFICATION, AMENDMENT, AND SUSPENSION**

### **A. RATIFICATION**

This document shall become effective immediately upon acceptance by two thirds of the Assembly present and voting thereon.

### **B. AMENDMENT**

This document, except as otherwise noted herein, may be amended as follows:

1. All proposed amendments must be written and submitted to the Executive Committee or it's designate for review and recommendations.
2. Not later than four months from its submission, the proposed amendment must be submitted to the Assembly with the Executive Committee's recommendations.

3. Prior to submission to the Assembly, the Executive Committee shall provide opportunity for the G.S.R.s to become fully informed on the issue.
4. Upon acceptance by two thirds of the Assembly present voting thereon, the proposed amendment becomes part of this document.

#### C. SUSPENSION

Upon agreement by three fourths of the Assembly present voting thereon, this document or any part thereof may be suspended temporarily for necessity.

#### D. CHANGES

Any changes in these guidelines shall be compatible with, and/or added to, the Mid-Southern California Area Bylaws.

## **APPENDIX A – Recent Changes to Guidelines**

- May 2005 – Addition of Cooperation with the Elder Community (CEC) Standing Committee.
- January 2008 – Modification of Newsletter Committee to Communications Committee with 4 Sub-Committees.
- October 2008 – Revision H:
- Update of Standing Committees as indicated above (Approved May 2005, January 2008).
- Editing Changes of Typos: Articles I-VII (punctuation); Article III, E,2,c; Article VII, B.
- Editing Changes of Individual, Indented, Labeled Statements: Articles II, III (B), IV, V (D), & VII (A, B & C).
- January 2011 – Revision I: Several changes as per Assembly vote to make the Guidelines compatible with the MSCA Bylaws.
- January 2012 – Revision J: Add Audit Committee under I. E. Committees and to II. D. Chair duties.
- September 2016 – Revision K: Add changes for Treasurer/AP and Treasurer/AR. Several changes as per Assembly vote. Article I, Section E., 5., a. Article II, Section A., 5. – 7. Article II Section C., 2., b., (5). Article II, Section D., 5.
- January 2017 – Entire document reviewed for consistency with Bylaws, grammatical errors, consistent spacing, and consistent outline.
- May 2017 – Revision L: Add changes for Guidelines and Policies (G.A.P.) Committee. Motion passed January 2017. Article I, B, 1, e: Article I, E, 1: Article II, C, 2, b.
- February 2019 – Revision M:
  - Change “Special Needs” to “Accessibilities”. Motion passed January 14, 2018.
  - Add Spanish Chair to D.C.M. School and Communications Committee. Motion passed September 2018.
  - Change all instances of Co-chair to Chair. Motion passed September 2018.
  - Add Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (Y.P.A.A.) Standing Committee. Motion passed September 2018.
  - Article I, Section B., 1., e. Article I, Section E., 1. Article II, Section C., 2., b.
- August 2021 – Revision N:
  - Add Remote Communities Standing Committee. Motion passed May 2021.
  - Add Technology Standing Committee. Motion passed May 2021.
  - Article II, Section D., 4., Article II, Section D., 7.