

Service System

Our vision statement lays out an inspiring view of what our services are striving to accomplish. However, realizing our vision isn't like being on the Starship *Enterprise* and being able to just say, "Make it so!" If it were just a matter of desire or hard work, we would be there already. We addicts are certainly dogged in the pursuit of our goals. Our service structure was created so that groups can focus on their primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, while our service bodies come together to build public relations, carry meetings into institutions, produce literature, and perform other services that support the groups. As you have shared with us in numerous forums and workshops, however, our current service system can, at times, almost seem to make things harder rather than easier.

Our First Tradition talks of the unity needed in NA groups to fulfill our primary purpose, while our First Concept talks of groups coming together to create a service system to better achieve this common aim.

But the reality of our current system is often far from those ideals. For many years we have heard from delegates and members about problems with the current service system. Finding enough members to be of service and the atmosphere we encounter when we do serve are just two examples of some of those challenges. We have discussed these issues as a fellowship with topics like Infrastructure and Our Service System over the last few conference cycles in an effort to move forward. Reviewing the history of the development of our system shows us that we have been working on building ways to more effectively carry the message almost since our inception as a fellowship.

Concept One:

To fulfill our primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole.

A Brief History of the Service System

This may be a God-given program, but our service structure was surely human-made. Like the LA freeway system, NA's service system was created to meet the needs of a fellowship very different from the NA of today. It has been added onto and changed as our fellowship has grown and our needs have changed, but the system as a whole hasn't necessarily adapted in the most effective ways. We have, in a sense, always paved this road as we've driven on it.

Where We Came From—A Vision of a Global Fellowship

Our service structure really began about 40 years ago with the creation of the World Service Office by Jimmy K and Sylvia W. The office operated from Jimmy's home and served as a phoneline, literature creation and distribution point, and fellowship development resource. It was intended to be a concrete way to fulfill Jimmy's vision of a worldwide fellowship. By 1963 discussions were underway to create some form of service body to continue ensuring the growth of NA. These discussions resulted in the 1964 formation of the Board of Trustees, consisting of two addicts and two non-addicts. The trustees' role was loosely defined as providing guidance to the growing fellowship and creating new literature.

The idea of a Parent General Service Organization grew from discussions among our earliest members and was presented to the trustees in early 1969. This GSO provided for monthly meetings with group representatives, the establishment of a central office and a public relations committee, and the re-formation of the trustees as the General Service Board of Trustees.

Following a business meeting at the first world convention in November 1971, the first actual WSO was opened in 1972. Also around this time, NA “intergroups” began to appear, following the AA service structure model, with a focus on sharing experience and resources to better carry the message. These were initially in Northern California and Philadelphia. By 1973 the new chairman of the GSO, Greg P, had formulated plans to create a new level of service between the groups and the GSO called the area service committee. This idea was born from the problems that groups in Southern California encountered due to the geographical distance between them. As the fellowship grew, it became increasingly impractical for groups to travel many miles for a monthly business meeting with the parent GSO. The ASC would allow for groups to band together and send one representative to the business meeting. The San Fernando Valley Area was the first to embrace this idea and began holding its own monthly meeting and sending a single area representative to the monthly GSO meetings. After some resistance, other areas began to form similar bodies, and the existing intergroups re-formed as ASCs.

The first World Service Conference was held in conjunction with the sixth World Convention in 1976. It was here that the trustees presented our first service manual, *The NA Tree*, created by Greg and Jimmy the previous year and adopted by the trustees after much discussion. *The NA Tree* included the concept of levels of service—group, area, and region—with each level sending a representative on to the next, and it contained the first publication of the NA service symbol.

Where We Went—Creation of the TWGSS

At the 1982 WSC, the local section of the *Service Manual of Narcotics Anonymous* was approved, but the world services section was rejected. A motion was passed to “compile from previously approved actions, all of the information that would comprise the Structure of NA.” This led to the 1983 creation of *A Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure (TWGSS)*, which consisted of the various descriptions of the service structure that had been approved at different meetings over the previous three years. The WSC Policy Committee was instructed “to rewrite the service structure for approval by the WSC.” The TWGSS was revised as motions were passed and the changes they mandated were incorporated into the manual on a year-by-year basis. At the 1984 WSC the Select Committee was formed to continue developing a guide to service. They achieved little over the next two years and eventually decided to start from scratch in 1986. At the 1987 WSC, they presented a draft of *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous* for review and input. This manual contained material on the previously untouched subject of group conscience and the trusted servant. The next six years saw deadline extensions, a name change to the Ad Hoc Committee on NA Service, and the realization that NA needed a foundational piece on the principles of service.

Initially, ideas for this foundational piece revolved around the subject of delegation and responsibility when it came to trusted servants and the groups they represented, but the piece grew to become the *Twelve Concepts for NA Service*. Much of the committee’s work between 1988 and 1992 focused on the material that became *The*

Group Booklet (approved in 1990) and the concepts (approved in 1992), and led to several changes to world services' procedures and guidelines. Both the WSC Policy Committee and the WSC Literature Committee were also involved in this work.

The *TWGSS* contained material on the basics of a group and its trusted servants, and the purpose and structure of the ASC, RSC, and NAWS. The section on world services constituted over half of the guide and contained detailed procedural guidelines. These guidelines would be the focus of much of the conference's energy over the next few years, with most of the changes to the document over the next several years addressing the internal workings of world services' various boards and committees, along with the conference itself, but with no significant changes being proposed to the local service structure at any level.

The efforts of the Ad Hoc NAS, the Policy Committee, and the Literature Committee finally led to the approval of *A Guide to Local Services* in 1997. (The remaining material from the *TWGSS* on world services was published as *A Temporary Working Guide to our World Service Structure*, also in 1997.) The *GLS* contained material not previously included in the *TWGSS*. The main additions were:

- The Twelve Concepts for NA Service in the body of the manual
- A section on developing NA communities
- A section on dividing ASCs
- A section on metros
- Material on rural communities
- A sample Rules of Order for business meetings
- The section on the group, its trusted servants, and their responsibilities was enlarged. The six points of what constituted an NA group were included for the first time.
- The sections on the ASC and the RSC were also expanded. The Area and Regional Service Representative positions were renamed Regional Committee Member and Regional Delegate to reflect the ideas on delegation and participation contained in the concepts.

A summary of the service structure was added as a result of a motion at the 2002 WSC, but there have been no other significant changes to our primary local service manual since its adoption thirteen years ago.

Reshaping NAWS—Inventory, Resolution, and Transition

World services, on the other hand, was fundamentally restructured during the same time period. The difficulties with world services in the 1980s (and early 1990s) were summarized in this extract from the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on NA Service report to the 1990 WSC:

“One body – the group of conference committees – has large responsibilities for developing and maintaining services, and highly detailed guidelines describing the degree of accountability they are to be held to. Yet the conference committees have almost no authority when it comes to making decisions concerning allocation of the resources necessary for fulfilling those services. A second body – the World Service Office Board of Directors – also has large responsibilities, but its fiscal authority far exceeds those responsibilities. WSO directors, despite their substantial responsibilities and authority, are the most distant from the World Service Conference of the three service arms. Only one member of the board – its chairperson – is a conference

participant, and only three of its twelve members are directly elected by the conference. The third world service body, the World Service Board of Trustees, has only the most vaguely defined responsibilities, and no authority whatsoever. Yet all the trustees are voting members of the World Service Conference, and all are elected by the conference, as if the conference believed them to be in positions requiring substantial participation and accountability.”

The rapid growth of NA following the publication of the Basic Text, dissatisfaction with the process of the WSC meeting itself, and the widespread duplication and inefficiency of world service efforts finally led to the world services inventory, which was approved by conference action in 1993.

The two-year inventory process identified several main problems:

- Lack of vision for WSO, WSC, and the World Convention Corporation
- Lack of a strategic plan
- Incorrectly sized committees and boards
- No integration of management techniques to world services
- Inefficiently bringing the message of hope to the suffering addict

In response to these problems, the Resolution Group was formed at the 1995 WSC. The group developed four goals that they believed, if accomplished, would make a significant contribution toward developing and implementing specific solutions to these problems. These goals were:

- To write a vision statement for NA World Services
- To write a mission statement for the World Service Conference
- To create proposals for structural change of NA World Services
- To create proposals for future work

They presented a NAWS Vision Statement, a WSC Mission Statement, and a series of eight resolutions to the conference in 1996, of which six were adopted.

- Resolution A proposed, in principle, a change in participation at the WSC. Its intention was to reduce the number of representatives, ensure an equal representation from all geographic entities, and move the conference toward consensus-based decision-making.
- Resolution B proposed, in principle, the adoption of a World Board to replace the BOT, BOD, and WSC Admin committees.
- Resolution C2 proposed, in principle, a significantly downsized WSC standing committee structure that would be responsible to the Board.
- Resolution E proposed, in principle, the adoption of a unified NAWS budget.
- Resolution F proposed, in principle, the adoption of the World Pool.
- Resolution G proposed, in principle, the adoption of the Human Resource Panel.

From 1996 to 1998 the Transition Group worked on a series of proposals to present to the conference. Motions resulting from these led to the creation of the World Board, HRP, World Pool, and a unified budget for NAWS. Resolution A was the only resolution adopted that didn't result in any specific proposals being accepted by the WSC at that time, although subsequent conference action has led to some of the elements being adopted, for example, the funding of delegates from all seated regions and the adoption of CBDM guidelines at WSC 2008.

Creation of the Service System Project

Part of our process with this project was to understand how we got the service structure we have today and to review fellowship input about what's working and what's not working within this structure. We've gathered input on this topic in various forms over the past years—in the Issue Discussion Topics Our Service System and Infrastructure, as well as from idea trees and general conversations at worldwide workshops and zonal forums around the world. And now we are moving forward to build on our strengths and try to resolve our weaknesses.

At the 2008 WSC, participants approved the Service System Project in an effort to take a holistic look at how we can better provide services in a fellowship that has come so far and changed so much over the years. We have seen tremendous positive benefit from the changes in world services, but we have yet to take a similar holistic look at local services. Since we have continued to evolve and look at processes at the world service level, we wanted to focus this project on the other levels of our service system. The Service System Project was created to begin imagining changes on a local level to move the reality of our service provision closer to our ideal. After talking for years together as a fellowship about “what's working and what's not working,” we determined the only way to really address the fundamental issues with the service system was through a project devoted to the system as a whole.

The project grew from this approach in the 2006–2008 NAWS Strategic Plan:

“Develop a vision for all NA service efforts and begin to explore best practices and options for local service delivery. This project will be rooted in an analysis of the success factors that work across our service structure, as well as allow for flexibility in meeting unique local needs. This will ultimately result in a rewrite of *A Guide to Local Services in NA*. We expect that the first cycle of this project will be focused on gathering options and presenting them for discussion in the fellowship.”

Of course, before we can bring the real closer to the ideal, we need to make sure we are all focused on the same set of ideals, that we share a common vision. As the approach in our strategic plan spells out, we were tasked with developing a vision for NA service efforts.

Revising the NAWS Vision Statement

After some discussion we decided to widen the focus of the existing NAWS Vision Statement to make it “A Vision for NA Service.” The NAWS vision is already embraced by many groups, service bodies, and members, but it really is the NAWS vision. We hope, with some relatively minor revisions, to be able to broaden the scope.

The draft vision included here for your consideration contains several changes. First, we have tweaked the language in general so that it is more clearly a vision statement for all NA services, not just for world services. Then we added a second bullet that speaks to the joy and spiritual growth that come from service. We felt that adding the new bullet in the second spot makes for a logical and elegant progression from a bullet focused on addicts, to one on members, to one on NA communities, and finally to one on the world at large.

The next change, to the third bullet, was perhaps the most difficult for us. There was much discussion about how to phrase the idea of systemic or lateral cooperation throughout NA service, not just between world services and NA communities. After several revisions, we think we captured the idea of interconnectivity that we were trying to emphasize.

The final changes are to the closing paragraph. Again, these changes resulted after much discussion. Our goal was to shorten the length of this paragraph but retain the references to honesty, trust, goodwill, and a loving Higher Power.

From a technical policy standpoint, we actually do not need to include this motion in the CAR as it is service material and we typically include service material in the Conference Approval Track mailing. We included it here in the CAR, however, because we believe it is fundamental to our primary purpose and will benefit from as wide an exposure as possible. Our hope is that by creating a common vision for all of us to work toward, we will be able to better focus our service efforts toward the ideal image of the future we wish to create.



Motion 1: To approve “A Vision for NA Service” stated below to replace the existing “NA World Services Vision Statement”.

A Vision for NA Service

All of the efforts of Narcotics Anonymous are inspired by the primary purpose of our groups. Upon this common ground we stand committed.

Our vision is that one day:

- Every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life;
- Every member, inspired by the gift of recovery, experiences spiritual growth and fulfillment through service;
- NA service bodies worldwide work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to support the groups in carrying our message of recovery;
- Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

Honesty, trust, and goodwill are the foundation of our service efforts, all of which rely upon the guidance of a loving Higher Power.

Intent: To replace the NAWS Vision Statement with a vision statement for all NA services.

Financial Impact: The cost of creating this material has already been incurred as agreed to by passing the service system project plan at WSC 2008. The production and translations costs associated with replacing the vision statement in the material where it is printed would be minimal because these revisions would occur when there are new printings.

Policy Affected: This motion would replace the current NA World Services Vision Statement:

All of the efforts of Narcotics Anonymous World Services are inspired by the primary purpose of the groups we serve. Upon this common ground we stand committed.

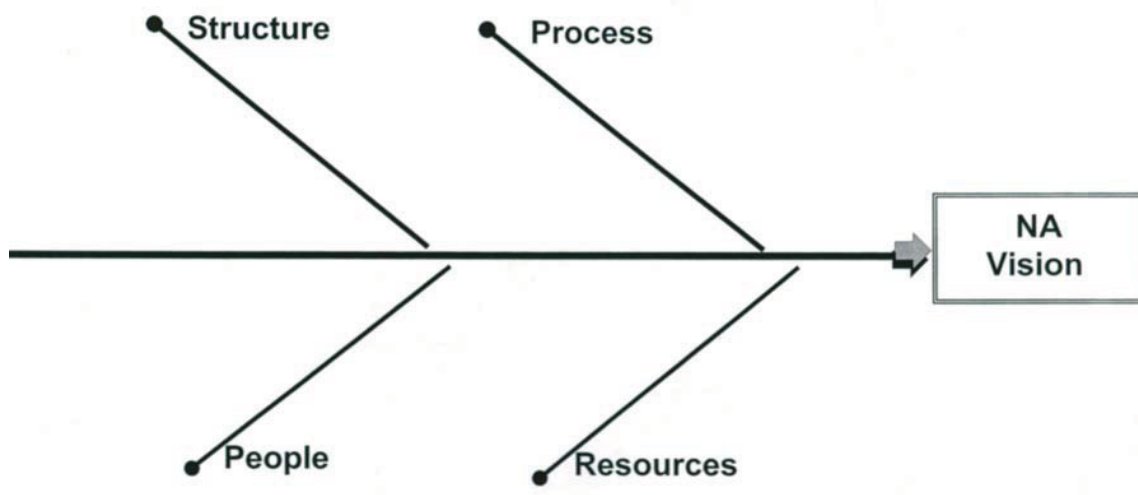
Our vision is that one day:

- Every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life;
- NA communities worldwide and NA World Services work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry our message of recovery;
- Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

As our commonly held sense of the highest aspirations that set our course, our vision is our touchstone, our reference point, inspiring all that we do. Honesty, trust, and goodwill are the foundation of these ideals. In all our service efforts, we rely upon the guidance of a loving Higher Power.

Options for Change—Opportunities for Growth

Working on a vision statement was only one small part of the work of the Service System Project. We have spent most of our time preparing to develop “options for local service delivery.” One of the first things we began to wrap our heads around was that structure is just one part of a service system. In addition to structure, a system includes people, processes, and resources. We cannot focus on any one of these components to the exclusion of the others.



In order to begin thinking about alternative options for service delivery, we went through a protracted process of defining and refining a series of essentials before we began to frame more concrete ideas. What we wanted was to think very carefully about our principles and the purposes of a service system before we began focusing on practical implementation of those principles. Guided by the maxim “form follows function,” we first created a long list of all the needs we expect our system to fulfill. Some of these are very basic, like “an addict needs to be able to find a meeting,” while others are more complex, like “treatment facilities need to understand who NA is, what it does, and how it is relevant.”

After exhaustive brainstorming about the needs the service system was created to meet, we began to compile more lists. At times this felt like a “list-fest,” as they got longer and more numerous. We created a list of functions that any system would have to include, such as PR/external relations, information management, and community

development and support. From here we moved on to delivery vehicles like “meeting directories” or “PR roundtables/focus groups.” We tended to think of the functions as the “what” of the system and the delivery vehicles as the “how.” Our final stop was to think about “who” is to fulfill these functions by creating a list of roles. As we worked through the process we continually referred back to our initial needs document to ensure we were covering these necessities.

In addition to this we spent a lot of time talking about the ideals of a service system. We compiled a list of essential elements and principles that a system must embody and a list of the many variables for which it should account. These tools will help us “means-test” options as we design them; in other words, any models we come up with can be held up to these essentials and variables to make sure it accounts for them all. Throughout this part of the process we avoided any discussion of structure, as it seems that many of our difficulties are rooted in our overemphasis on structure alone.

Clearly, issues like poor communication have as much to do with processes and people as they do with structure. The most efficient structure possible will not work unless we have sufficiently trained members in key positions. Accordingly, we are approaching the task of framing options for service delivery as a systemic task and focusing on each of the four components listed above: structure, process, people, and resources.

We look forward to discussing these options with delegates at the conference. Keep a lookout for more material from the project before the WSC in the *Conference Report*.

WSC Seating—An Uncomfortable Perch

Any discussion of our service system inevitably crosses paths with the topic of WSC seating. Changes we make to one component of the structure directly influence the other. As many of you know, the 2008 conference elected to institute a moratorium on the conference policy on seating new regions until 2012. As we have reported repeatedly over the years, the policy we were using, adopted in 2000, had proven itself ineffective by 2006. The criteria did not provide a method for evaluation of either the conference’s or the region’s needs, but sought to apply a rigid set of criteria across all cases. What’s more, that policy did not address the desire to stem the growth of US regions or regions resulting from a split. The 2008 Conference Approval Track material explained this difficulty:

“The conference has discussed its own growth and how to deal with issues related to representation for years without coming to consensus. We all agree that the growth of NA is a positive thing, but we haven’t yet come to an agreement about how to reconcile our growth as a fellowship with the need to conduct business effectively at the conference.”

And so, while the Service System Workgroup has been doing the background work for us to begin thinking about alternative options for service delivery, the board has been talking about models for seating at the World Service Conference. Any effective seating model has to satisfy both the needs of the fellowship in ensuring clear communication and participation, and the needs of the conference in terms of size, diversity, and financial viability.

At times we have found ourselves stuck between deciding which comes first, local service delivery or WSC seating. We spent a great deal of time talking about the basic principles underpinning the seating issue, much as we did with the service system. We

asked ourselves, “What is the conference for?” Decision making, training, sharing experience, receiving direction from the fellowship, and the “magic” of coming together as a global fellowship were all key points brought up in our discussion and reflected in GWSNA. From here it isn’t hard to agree in principle on what we want to see at an ideal WSC. We want the diversity of our fellowship to be represented, but we want to not be so large that we are prohibitively expensive or unwieldy in our discussions and decision making. We want our newer communities to participate, but we want to retain the experience of our older communities as well. We want the “magic” of worldwide NA to be felt broadly throughout our fellowship, but we are not certain whether that must occur through WSC representation or through other means. We are beginning to try to translate those ideals into something more concrete that we can look at together at the conference. Although we do not plan to focus on world services per se, world services and conference seating in particular have to be considered as part of any proposed system.

The service system is a four-year project, and the seating moratorium extends for two more years as well. We expect there will be many discussions about these topics over the next two years. We will use this conference to talk together—board and delegates—about the ideas generated from the board and workgroup so far. As we get closer to the conference, preparatory materials like the *Conference Report* will have more information. This will set the stage for the ideas and work the fellowship will be discussing over the next two years.