



SCIF

GROUP SECRETARY'S GUIDE

A large graphic with a diamond-patterned background. In the center is a jagged-edged circle containing the text "SONOMA COUNTY INTERGROUP FELLOWSHIP". Surrounding this central circle are several diamond-shaped icons:

- Top-left: A clock face with the word "ALKATRAZS" written across it.
- Top-center: An icon of a book.
- Top-right: An arrow pointing right with "AA" inside, labeled "MEETING DIRECTORIES".
- Middle-left: Silhouettes of people, labeled "LINC".
- Middle-right: Silhouettes of people sitting at a table, labeled "Recovery Seminars".
- Bottom-left: A triangle with "AA" inside, labeled "YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE".
- Bottom-center: A newspaper icon with the text "SCIF Fellowship News".
- Bottom-right: A globe with a telephone handset, labeled "TELESERVICE 544-9000 AA HOTLINE".

Alcoholics Anonymous In Sonoma County

Did You Know

- That there are over 300 A.A. Meetings in Sonoma County every week?
- That from early morning, all during the day, and in the evening you can walk in, have a cup of coffee, sit down and be welcome?
- That at each meeting you attend there's likely to be a Secretary, Chairperson, Treasurer, Coffee Maker, Greeter, Literature Person, and representatives to Intergroup, General Service, and the Hospitals & Institutions Committees?

In Sonoma County A.A. We Have

- **AN ACTIVE INTERGROUP FELLOWSHIP** (about 140 meetings send representatives to S.C.I.F. monthly meetings), which has a Chairperson, Co-chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Registrar who are assisted by numerous Committee Chairs. Within Intergroup:
- **A STEERING COMMITTEE** (open to all A.A. members) provides guidance and communication within the Fellowship and sets the agenda for the regular Intergroup meetings.
- **AN INTERGROUP CENTRAL SERVICE COMMITTEE (I.C.S.C.)** sets policy and regulates the affairs of the Intergroup Office & Bookstore.
- **A TELESERVICE COMMITTEE** operates our A.A. Hotline, assisting the community with 12-Step calls and providing information about local A.A. meetings.
- **A COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE** produces a **MONTHLY A.A. NEWSLETTER** (free of charge at meetings) that keeps A.A. members up-to-date with local A.A. ideas and activities. The Communications Committee also produces a free **MEETING DIRECTORY** (twice a year), which lists times and places of A.A. meetings in Sonoma County (changes appear regularly in the Newsletter or as a periodic supplement to the Directory). The committee also maintains our local website, sonomacountyaa.org.
- **A GENERAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION**, which serves as our link to A.A. as a whole. This organization funds:
- **A PUBLIC INFORMATION / COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE (PI/CPC)** which works with the community—explaining to the public and professionals what A.A. does and does not do.
- **A BRIDGING THE GAP COMMITTEE** of General Service, which helps A.A.'s released from institutions and treatment facilities all over the country get established in our local A.A. community.
- **An ACCESS SONOMA COUNTY COMMITTEE**, which offers resources to ensure that Sonoma County A.A. is accessible to and inclusive of all alcoholics who seek sobriety.
- **A HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTION (H&I) COMMITTEE**, under the Northern California Council of A.A., which brings A.A. meetings and literature to alcoholics who are confined.
- **SOCYPAA (SONOMA COUNTY YOUNG PEOPLE IN A.A.)**, which aims to carry the A.A. message to young people (those with room to grow) by sponsoring meetings and events aimed at the young and young at heart.

★ **Best of All** ★

All of these services are accomplished by volunteers.

*For all those countless hours of service to
Alcoholics Anonymous, we are most grateful.*

THANK YOU!

CONTENTS

GROUP SECRETARY	1
RESOURCES & INFORMATION.....	1
GROUP REGISTRATION	2
YOUR MEETING PLACE	2
GENERAL MEETING PROCEDURE	3
CHAIRPERSON (SPEAKER).....	3
MEETING FORMAT	4
GROUP OFFICERS & REPRESENTATIVES	4
GROUP TREASURER.....	5
GROUP FUNDS	5
GROUP LITERATURE PERSON	6
COFFEE MAKER	6
INTERGROUP REP	7
GENERAL SERVICE REP	7
HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS REP.....	7
GRAPEVINE REP	8
GROUP INVENTORY & GROUP CONSCIENCE.....	8
A.A. PUBLICATIONS.....	9
YOUR GROUP INFORMATION	9

Group Secretary

Recommended Sobriety: _____

Term Length: usually six months

Congratulations! You have been given a position of trust and responsibility by your group.

In Alcoholics Anonymous each group is autonomous, except in matters which may affect other groups or the Fellowship as a whole. The group's primary purpose is to help the alcoholic who still suffers. It is hoped that the following information and guidelines will help you to better perform the service with which you have been entrusted.

RESOURCES & INFORMATION

1. The pamphlet **The A.A. Group**, published by A.A. World Services, Inc. is the best source of information on group policies & procedures. It is the product of over 75 years of shared experience. This and other A.A. General Service Conference approved literature may be obtained from the Sonoma County Intergroup Fellowship (SCIF) Bookstore at 750 Mendocino Ave., Suite # 10. (Just north of College, on the east side of the street.) Hours 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. Mon.- Fri. , 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat. (Hours are subject to change; call 546-2066 for current schedule.)
2. From time to time SCIF sponsors Secretaries' & Treasurers' Seminars. These usually feature presentations by a panel of experienced members and group discussion. If you are a new secretary or have experience to share, please attend.
3. It is recommended that A.A. groups hold regular Steering Committee or business meetings. The group's Steering Committee usually consists of present and former group officers and other interested members. Some groups elect steering committee members on a rotating basis. The committee meets to discuss and deal with normal group procedure and business, and may make recommendations to the group on policy issues. However, issues of importance to the whole group, such as meeting format changes, meeting relocation, financial problems, etc., are best dealt with by holding a sharing session to which all are invited to arrive at an informed group conscience* prior to making any decisions.
4. **The SCIF Fellowship News**, published monthly, includes a directory of local A.A. resources, with addresses and phone numbers, on its back page. Inside is a calendar of local A.A. events. The SCIF Fellowship News is available free to groups at the regular monthly SCIF meeting at 8 p.m. on the 4th Monday of the month at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 905 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa. Individuals or groups may elect to have the newsletter mailed to them in a plain envelope by sending \$8 to cover postage to: SCIF Newsletter, 750 Mendocino Ave, # 10, Santa Rosa, CA 95401. Email delivery is available at \$4 per year - just include your email address with your subscription.
5. The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are the best guide for group policy. The Second Tradition states: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." The group conscience* may be sought at any time to help resolve group problems.
6. The General Service Office, PO Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 (Tel. (212) 870-3400), or on the web at aa.org, is a resource for all A.A. groups. If your group has a problem, a question, or experience to share, GSO will be glad to hear from you and will attempt to provide you with information on how other groups have dealt with similar issues.

* See P.8

GROUP REGISTRATION

1. New groups may register directly with the General Service Office in New York. However, *it is strongly recommended* that you register through your local Sonoma County General Service, PO Box 536, Santa Rosa, CA 95402, or by sending a representative to the regular Sonoma County General Service meeting at 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month. This will help to insure the accuracy of your group information and to avoid faulty registration listings. Check the SCIF Newsletter or our website for current meeting location.
2. When registering, you'll need to supply the following information: meeting name, time, street address, mailing address, and type of meeting; General Service Representative's name, address, & phone number, or if your group has not yet elected a GSR, that of the secretary or contact person.
3. Your group will be issued a Group Registration Number by the GSO in New York. This number may be obtained from Sonoma County General Service or from your GSR. All communications with the GSO in New York should include this number. Upon registering with the GSO, new groups should receive the A.A. Group Handbook which contains key pamphlets and other information for group use.
4. Please also register your group with Sonoma County Intergroup by sending a representative to the regular monthly meeting. Or you may contact the SCIF Communications Committee (phone # on the back of the newsletter.) Your group will then be listed in SCIF's Meeting Directory after it has been active for six months. New meetings are listed in the monthly **SCIF Fellowship News**.
5. In order to facilitate communication with all our service organizations, it is highly recommended that your group obtain a Post Office Box to serve as a permanent mailing address as soon as you can afford to do so.
6. If changes in meeting time or location occur, please report them promptly to SCIF Central Office, the "Meeting Changes" phone number listed in the Fellowship News, and Sonoma County General Service. Otherwise people may show up looking for help at your empty meeting place. Local meeting schedules are updated every six months, and meeting changes are published monthly in the SCIF Fellowship News and reported to the Teleservice Committee.

YOUR MEETING PLACE

1. All A.A. groups should be self-supporting (Tradition Seven). This includes paying rent for our meeting places. If liability insurance is required, we have no master or umbrella policy.
2. If a key is necessary, find out when and how it can be obtained. If it's not necessary to obtain the key before each meeting, find out where one can be obtained in the event of an emergency, or for holidays. Customarily, the meeting takes place every week, including holidays. Holidays are often the time when alcoholics need their meetings most.
3. Learn how to arrange for lighting, ventilation, and heat. Have adequate seating and table arrangement best suited to your type of meeting—speaker, discussion, or study.
4. Remember that you represent A.A. in the community where you meet. Disrespect shown to people or property will hurt our reputation, while a clean, quiet, and orderly meeting will help to promote good will in the community. We all depend on that good will to secure meeting places.

GENERAL MEETING PROCEDURE

1. Arrive at your meeting place early to help set up and to greet and welcome members, especially new members and visitors. (This responsibility can be assigned to a group member other than the secretary, but it is really the responsibility of all group members.)
2. Post current announcements if a group bulletin board is available. Some meetings keep a phone list of members. If your meeting does this, try to keep the list current, dated, and available.
3. Summarize announcements in order to keep your group informed, and ask for other A.A. announcements from the floor. Most groups do not allow non-A.A. announcements.
4. Obtain the mail before each meeting, and take care of any business that needs tending, unless the group opinion is required beforehand.
5. It is recommended that the group purchase a loose-leaf binder in which you may keep up-to-date group information, including your group registration number, the rental amount and the landlord's address and phone number, the names, phone numbers, and terms of office of group officers, steering committee recommendations and group policy decisions, copies of meeting literature and member phone list, etc. This will be useful to future secretaries as well as to you and the group now, and will provide for group continuity.
6. If it is customary in your group, assign copies of "How It Works," Step Cards, The Twelve Traditions, "The Promises," etc. to individual members for reading.

CHAIRPERSON (SPEAKER)

1. Select a chairperson or speaker at least a few days in advance so that he or she will have time to prepare. If the chairperson does not show up a reasonable time before the meeting, ask another member to be available to fill in.
2. Vary speakers. (Male, female, and guests from other groups and other areas.)
3. Go over the meeting format with the chairperson and answer any questions. Let him or her know how long to speak, when to open the meeting for discussion, and if he or she should suggest a topic.

MEETING FORMAT

(Suggested example for speaker-discussion meeting. An A.A. group may adopt any format it chooses. Remember our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery from alcoholism.):

1. "This is the regular meeting of the _____ Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is _____; I'm an alcoholic. Let's open the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer."
2. Read the A.A. Preamble (the "definition" of A.A., inside the cover of most A.A. pamphlets & The Grapevine.)
3. Ask for newcomers & visitors to introduce themselves to the group.
4. "How It Works" from Chapter 5 of Alcoholics Anonymous. Usually read by a member selected in advance. Some groups have twelve other members read the 12 Steps from printed cards.
5. The Twelve Traditions, as above.
6. Secretary's announcements, & A.A. announcements from the floor.

7. Pass the basket in observance of our Seventh Tradition. State what the money is used for. Pass the pink H&I can separately, for pocket change only, and state what that money is used for. (Over 95% goes directly to pay for literature for those confined in institutions.)
8. Introduce chairperson (speaker). He or she speaks for a limited amount of time, usually 10-30 minutes, then suggests a topic for discussion or asks for one from the floor. Some meetings have a ten minute fellowship break at this point. Group discussion follows.
9. Close the meeting with a moment of silence, or a recitation of the group's choosing -- Serenity Prayer, Responsibility Statement, Lord's Prayer, or other prayer -- for those who wish to participate, or otherwise as the group wishes.

OTHER GROUP OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

1. When a group service position becomes available it is customary for the Steering Committee to meet to discuss the qualifications of candidates. For most offices it is customary for candidates to have a specified length of sobriety and to be known to the group. The committee reviews the available candidates and may recommend one or more to the group. Nominations may also be taken from the floor. The election may be held according to Third Legacy procedure. (For a description of this see **The A.A. Service Manual**, or ask your GSR.)

Note: Descriptions of group officers and representatives are presented in detail on the following pages:

TREASURER	Page 5
COFFEE MAKER	Page 6
LITERATURE PERSON	Page 6
GENERAL SERVICE REP	Page 7
INTERGROUP REP	Page 7
H & I REP	Page 7
GRAPEVINE REP	Page 8

Group Treasurer

Recommended sobriety: 2+ years

Usual term of service: 2 years

1. At each meeting the group treasurer counts and makes a record of the money collected in the 7th Tradition baskets. In new or small groups, the secretary may also have to serve as treasurer.
2. It is recommended that the treasurer make periodic (at least quarterly) reports to the group, and that surplus funds, beyond a prudent reserve (one or two months' operating expenses), be distributed with similar frequency. Many groups have a bank account and may require checks with two signatures. Group funds should not be routed through an individual member's personal or business account.

GROUP FUNDS (Suggestions for distribution)

Your group should determine by group conscience how to distribute its excess funds over expenses and prudent reserve. (Please also read the pamphlet **Self Support—Where Money and Spirituality Mix.**) Most groups give at least half of their excess to fund vital local services such as meeting schedule printing and distribution, local newsletter, local teleservice, providing A.A. literature to groups, etc., which are funded through contributions to the local Central Office (S.C.I.F.) The rest may be divided among the three General Service organizations. H & I funds are collected and distributed separately through the Pink Cans, which are passed after the basket, for pocket change only.

1. Group expenses: rent, refreshments, literature, supplies, PO Box rental, insurance, etc.
2. Sonoma County Intergroup Fellowship (SCIF): 750 Mendocino Ave. #10, Santa Rosa, CA 95401. This is your Central Office. Money goes to pay the rent on Intergroup Office/Bookstore, to cover Central Office expenses, to provide A.A. pamphlets to local groups, to print **SCIF Fellowship News & Sonoma County Meeting Directory**, to fund Teleservice, etc. A financial statement is printed in each issue of the **SCIF Fellowship News**, along with suggestions for distribution of excess group funds.
3. Sonoma County General Service: PO Box 536, Santa Rosa, CA 95402. Pays for Sonoma County Public Information literature (placed in schools, libraries, DUI classes, etc.), expenses of Bridging the Gap and Access Sonoma County committees, District Meeting rent, literature, mailings, officer and representatives' travel expenses, etc. Financial statement available at monthly District meeting. Please include Group Registration Number with donation.
4. California Northern Coastal Area General Service (CNCA): PO Box 884222, San Francisco, CA 94188. Pays for Area Assemblies, monthly meetings, Delegate's & Officers' travel, Archives, Public Information, Bridging the Gap, Records, Newsletter & other Area services. Financial statement in monthly newsletter, **CNCA Comments**. Please include Group Registration Number with donation.
5. General Service Office: PO Box 459, Grand Central Station, NY 10163. Pays for annual General Service Conference, Regional Forums, A.A.'s world services. Financial statement available annually in Conference Report. Make check payable to "General Fund" & please include Group Registration Number with donation.
6. Hospital & Institution Committee: Area 22 H&I Treasurer, PO Box 192490, San Francisco, CA 94119-2490. Over 95% of the money from the pink can is used to buy literature to carry the message to those confined in hospitals, jails, etc. Write "Area #22" on checks.

Group Literature Person

Recommended sobriety: _____.

Usual term of service: _____.

1. Many groups elect a member to take charge of the group's A.A. literature.

Most groups use only A.A. Conference Approved literature.

2. A.A. pamphlets and books, Sonoma County Meeting Directories, SCIF Newsletters and other notices should be clearly displayed, and provision should be made for their safe storage between meetings. Get the landlord's permission before storing such materials at the meeting place.

3. Pamphlets are provided at no charge to all meetings by Sonoma County Intergroup Fellowship. In the spirit of our Seventh Tradition, it is recommended that groups begin contributions to SCIF when they are able to do so, in order to help defray the expense of this and other services. However, no group will be refused this literature because it is unable to pay. Normally, up to five copies each of any A.A. recovery pamphlet will be available at no cost to SCIF member groups. For greater quantities groups can purchase pamphlets according to the current SCIF Bookstore price list.

4. A.A. books, tapes, CD's and DVD's are available from the SCIF Bookstore

5. Sonoma County Meeting Directories are available at no cost to groups at the regular monthly SCIF meeting on the fourth Monday, or through the SCIF Bookstore. Monthly updates appear in the SCIF Newsletter Fellowship News.

Group Coffee Maker

Recommended sobriety: _____.

Usual term of service: _____.

1. Have coffee prepared half an hour before the meeting begins. If possible have hot water for decaffeinated coffee or tea. If group funds are adequate, refreshments may be provided at group expense, or these may be volunteered by group members.

2. Clean up after the meeting, making sure the meeting place is in good condition, and return all utilities to normal. Volunteer help should be sought for this if needed. Police the immediate area for cigarette butts and trash. This is especially important on church and school grounds. If there has been property damage of any kind, inform the landlord and provide for repair or replacement.

Intergroup Representative

Recommended sobriety: 1+ year.

Usual term of service: 1 year with possible second term.

1. The Intergroup Rep serves as a link between the group and the rest of Sonoma County A.A., attends the SCIF monthly meeting as the group representative, voicing the group's conscience at need and reporting back to the group on SCIF activities.

2. The Intergroup Rep is responsible for supplying the group with the SCIF Fellowship News and Sonoma County A.A. Meeting Directories.

3. The Sonoma County Intergroup Fellowship is Sonoma County's Central Office. Regular business meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 905 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa at 8 p.m.. Steering Committee meets 2nd Monday at 750 Mendocino Ave., Suite #10 at 8 pm to review agenda for regular meeting and hear proposals.

General Service Representative

Recommended sobriety: 2 years.

Usual term of service: 2 years.

1. The GSR serves as a link between the group and A.A. as a whole (via the General Service Office in New York, Regional, Area, and District meetings, conferences & assemblies). See the pamphlets **GSR and Circles of Love and Service** for a more complete description. The GSR attends the regular District meeting at 7:30 on the first Monday of the month. (New rep orientation is at 7 pm.) See SCIF Fellowship News newsletter or the website sonomacountyaa.org for location of meeting.
2. The group GSR is also responsible for obtaining and voicing to the Area Delegate the group's conscience on matters to be discussed at the annual General Service Conference.
3. Through familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and **The A.A. Service Manual**, the GSR may be able to advise the group on issues of procedure, and may be a resource for the resolution of group problems.

Hospital & Institution Committee Representative

Recommended sobriety: 6 months.

Usual term of service: 1 year.

1. The H&I Rep serves as a link between the group and the Hospital & Institution Committee, which is responsible for bringing A.A. meetings and literature to those who are confined in our area and who would otherwise be unable to have access to A.A. meetings.
2. The H&I Rep attends the regular H&I meeting at 6:00 the first Wednesday of each month and reports back to the group on H&I activities and opportunities for service. See **SCIF Fellowship News** or the website sonomacountyaa.org for location of meeting.
3. Many H&I Reps take on volunteer commitments at the committee level in addition to representing their groups.

Grapevine Representative

Recommended sobriety: 6 months

Usual term of service: 6 months.

1. The Grapevine Rep (GVR) is responsible for encouraging reading of and subscriptions to A.A.'s "Meeting In Print," **The Grapevine**. **The Grapevine** is a monthly publication (\$2.50 per issue) with a cross section of A.A. opinion and stories relating to our Steps and Traditions.
2. Generally the GVR may read a short excerpt from the current issue from time to time at group meetings to acquaint the membership with its content .
3. Group subscriptions are encouraged. Some groups like to offer unsold issues to newcomers at no cost.

Group Inventory

1. From time to time your group may elect to conduct a group inventory in order to determine how the group is doing. It is often useful to discuss such questions as “How are we treating our meeting place?”, “Are we fulfilling our primary purpose?”, “How is our sponsorship?”, “How is our representation?”, etc. Guidelines for this process may be found in **The A.A. Group** pamphlet. Most groups set a time apart from the regular recovery meeting for this.

Group Conscience Procedure

1. The group conscience is usually arrived at by means of a sharing session. Information on the issue at hand is presented to the group, then each member is called on to share briefly in turn, the chairperson sharing last. No member shares a second time until everyone present has had the opportunity to share once. This process is repeated as many times as necessary until all have had their say.
2. The object of a sharing session is simply for all group members to find out how the others feel. It is a sharing process, not a decision-making process. Sometimes substantial unanimity or a clear course of action emerges from the sharing. If not, it is best to defer a decision until a clear group conscience emerges. Adequate time apart from the regular recovery meeting should be provided for this process.

A.A. Publications

A.A. Grapevine: our “meeting in print,” is the national magazine of A.A. \$2.50 per issue. Mailed in a plain envelope. PO Box 1980, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-1980. The group may want to order copies for its members.

Box 459: quarterly publication of the General Service Office of A.A.. \$3.50 per year, \$6.00 for group subscription of 10 copies, mailed in a plain envelope. A.A. World Services, Inc., PO Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10163. Articles of interest on A.A. activities nationally and worldwide.

SCIF Fellowship News: much information on local A.A. activities & services. Free to groups at SCIF meeting, \$8 per year mailed in a plain envelope or \$4 for an email subscription.

SCIF A.A. Meeting Directory: a must for newcomers and active members. Available free at SCIF monthly meeting & SCIF Central Office/Bookstore.

Your Group Information

WRITE YOUR GROUP'S NAME AND REGISTRATION NUMBER HERE:

P.O. BOX

BANK & ACCOUNT #

NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER OF THE MEETING PLACE LANDLORD
