

GSR

General Service Representative

“Only through service can we give to others what has so generously been given to us.”

What is a GSR?

The General Service Representative (GSR) may be the most important service position in Debtors Anonymous (D.A.). The GSR is elected by his/her local group to act as the primary link between the group and the Fellowship as a whole. As GSR, you share with your group up-to-date information from the General Service Office (GSO) and the General Service Board of Trustees (GSB). However, that sharing is only the beginning of a far more interesting—and more rewarding—service role.

What Does A GSR Do?

As a GSR, you have the opportunity to serve your group, your area, the World Service Conference, and D.A. members around the world in many ways:

Service to Your Group

You not only receive information from the GSO, you also transmit your group's ideas, opinions, and local news to the office and the board. You help all of D.A.'s trusted servants to keep a “hand on the pulse of D.A.” With your feedback, the GSO and the GSB can better understand and respond to your group's needs.

- Through you, your group's views become part of the collective conscience of the Fellowship as a whole, as expressed through the will of the annual World Conference.
- After you attend the annual World Conference, you report on the activities and action steps of the Conference to help unify and guide the Fellowship's direction at the local level.
- You share with your group your overall perspective based on the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts of Service that you draw from your experience with other groups and members worldwide.
- Working with your group Treasurer, you remind your group of its responsibility to provide Seventh Tradition support for its area GSR Group, area Intergroup, and the GSB (See Note Below.)
- You encourage your group to participate in worldwide D.A. events, such as the annual World Service Month (April) and other special D.A. events at the national and local level.
- You inform your group about D.A. publications and the *Ways & Means*[®] newsletter and encourage the group to maintain an adequate supply for newcomers and regular members.
- As primary contact, when you are elected, your name, address, and other contact information should be sent to the General Service Office. Mailings for your group from the GSO will be sent to you. (Please include the name of the GSR leaving office to avoid confusion with changing the registration.)
- You should confirm—once a year—that your group's registration with the GSO is current and the information about meeting locations and times accurate and up to date.

NOTE: The suggested contribution ratio for any surplus funds is 45% to the area Intergroup; 45% to the GSB; and 10% to the Area Group (for fellow GSRs from your region, if any). If there is no Area Group for GSRs, then the suggested ratio is 50% to the Intergroup and 50% to the GSB. If there is no Intergroup, then the suggestion is 100% to the GSB. This suggestion was approved by the General Service Board of Trustees in 1989.

Service to the World Conference

- You represent your group at the annual World Conference as a voting delegate. You represent your group's needs and its opinions about crucial issues affecting the Fellowship. You share your local "group conscience" with the Conference so that it helps shape the consensus about essential D.A. action plans that the Conference approves.
- You participate on a Conference committee of your choice, and if you so choose, a caucus of your choice, and work with that committee and caucus throughout the year to carry out its Conference-approved action steps. The committees include Business Debtors

Anonymous (BDA), Conference (CC), Fellowship Communications (FCC), Hospitals, Institutions and Prisons (HIP), Internal Operations (IOC), Literature (LITCOM), Public Information (PI), Resource Development (RDC) and Technology. The informal caucuses discuss the concerns of Diversity, Intergroups, and International (beginning 2012).

- You share the results of the World Conference with your local group when you receive a copy of the WSC Report, which includes the Convocation Minutes, the complete results of the annual business meeting.

NOTE: Each D.A. group is responsible for approving a spending plan that covers the expenses of its GSR—to the extent possible—including attending the World Service Conference.

Service to the Intergroup or Area Group

- If an area GSR Group exists, you meet with other GSRs from your region to discuss DA issues that affect D.A. as a whole or those that affect your area. If an area group does not exist, you may work with the area intergroup, which coordinates activities and interests among groups in a close geographical area. As an area grows, groups prosper, and more GSRs are elected, you are encouraged to form a GSR area group.
- Each intergroup also can elect an ISR who attends the World Service Conference and represents the intergroup with the same authority and responsibility as a GSR.
- The GSR, the ISR, and the group representative to the local intergroup are separate positions. If possible, each position should be held by different people when a group or an area becomes large enough to choose them.
- When circumstances warrant, one person may be elected to serve as GSR for several groups when an area Intergroup has not been formed; however, a GSR representing more than one meeting will have only one vote at the Conference like every other GSR or ISR. (A group representative to an intergroup represents his or her home group in matters that affect the geographic area and the intergroup's interests.)

When and How Does A GSR Serve?

- A GSR's term of office is three years. A new term should begin before the World Service Conference so that the GSR can serve on a Conference committee during the year after the Conference. It is also suggested that elections be held several months before the new term begins so the new GSR can become acquainted with his or her duties.
- Delegates should be committed to following the spiritual principle of rotation practiced at all levels of the D.A. service structure. GSRs and ISRs, like Trustees, Appointed Committee Members and other trusted servants, rotate out of their positions after either

one or two 3-year terms, and are expected to serve no more than 3 years on any one committee.

- A group elects a GSR with the same procedures that it uses for each service position, except the qualifications may differ.
- Individual groups determine the qualifications for the GSR position. It is suggested that a person being considered for GSR have the following qualifications: to be actively working the Twelve Steps, to have had at least two Pressure Relief Meetings (PRMs), to have abstained from incurring new unsecured debt for at least one year, to have given service to a local group and/or as an Intergroup officer, and to be an active member of a home group.
- The group should consider the qualities that make a good D.A. member and a valued trusted servant at any level: patience, toleration, dedication to the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, and active support for the D.A. way of life.
- An Alternate GSR should be elected, when possible, to fill in for the GSR as necessary, and to replace the GSR if the GSR is elected to the Board of Trustees.
- It is suggested that a GSR should not hold any other office in your local group or Intergroup. However, it is understood that this may not always be possible in situations where there may be only one or a few D.A. groups and not enough qualified members are available to fill all of the service positions.

Helpful Information

The following publications may help you better understand the structure and operation of Debtors Anonymous, the World Service Conference, and the role of a GSR. They are available for purchase from the General Service Office and some are free downloads on the D.A. website:

- *Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service (DAMS)*
- The Conference Charter of Debtors Anonymous (included in the DAMS)
- Final Report of the Annual Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference (for the previous year or two)
- The Twelve Concepts of Service in Debtors Anonymous (included in the DAMS)
- World Meeting Directory of Debtors Anonymous
- General Service Office of Debtors Anonymous pamphlet (included in the DAMS)
- *A Currency of Hope*

You may also want to consult the following A.A. materials, available from A.A. meetings or A.A. World Services:

- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
- *Alcoholics Anonymous*
- “A.A. Tradition—How It Developed”

Acknowledgments

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Debtors Anonymous

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This is D.A. Service Material, developed from the shared experience of D.A. members throughout the worldwide Fellowship. It also reflects the guidance of the Twelve Traditions, the General Service Board and the General Service Office. In keeping with our Tradition of Autonomy except in matters affecting other groups or D.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of Service Material is to assist in reaching an informed group conscience. Since Service Material reflects the current and ever-developing conscience of our Fellowship as a whole, it does not undergo the usual conference-approval process, but may be updated periodically under the auspices of the General Service Board to reflect current Fellowship experience.



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