

**G.S.R. (General Service Representative)**  
**May be the most important job in A.A.!**

*“By choosing it’s most qualified person as G.S.R. a group helps secure its own future-and the future of A.A. as a whole.”*

As general service representative: You transmit ideas and opinions, as well as facts. Through you, the group conscience becomes a part of “the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”

Without a GSR your group’s opinion on what happens within AA world wide is lost. The collective group experiences or difficulties are not able to be shared with the rest of our worldwide fellowship.

Every year, AA’s group elected Delegates meet to discuss and vote on changes to AA literature and AA policy. Without a GSR the group does not get a chance to be informed about what changes are being discussed and your unique group perspective is unable to be heard.

Because you were willing to say yes to AA and showed up here today, you get to serve as a vital link in connecting one alcoholic with another, and helping to ensure that AA will continue to stay and serve the alcoholics who may not yet even be born.

## Where are we and why am I here?

Welcome to Area 50! We're glad you're here and we're happy to see you. We are one "delegate area" out of 93 delegate areas in the US and Canada. Together the areas help to make up the total "General Service Conference." Each area is located in a specific geographic location and is responsible to help serve the region in which they sit.

Area 50 is responsible to help serve all of Western New York. We reach as far Northwest as Niagara County, As far Northeast as Orleans County, as Far Southwest as Chautauqua County and as far Southeast as Allegany County.

The Map below shows the size and scope of what Area 50 Covers:



Geographically, we cover 8 different counties and serve major metropolitan districts of: Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Jamestown, and Olean, along with all regions between.

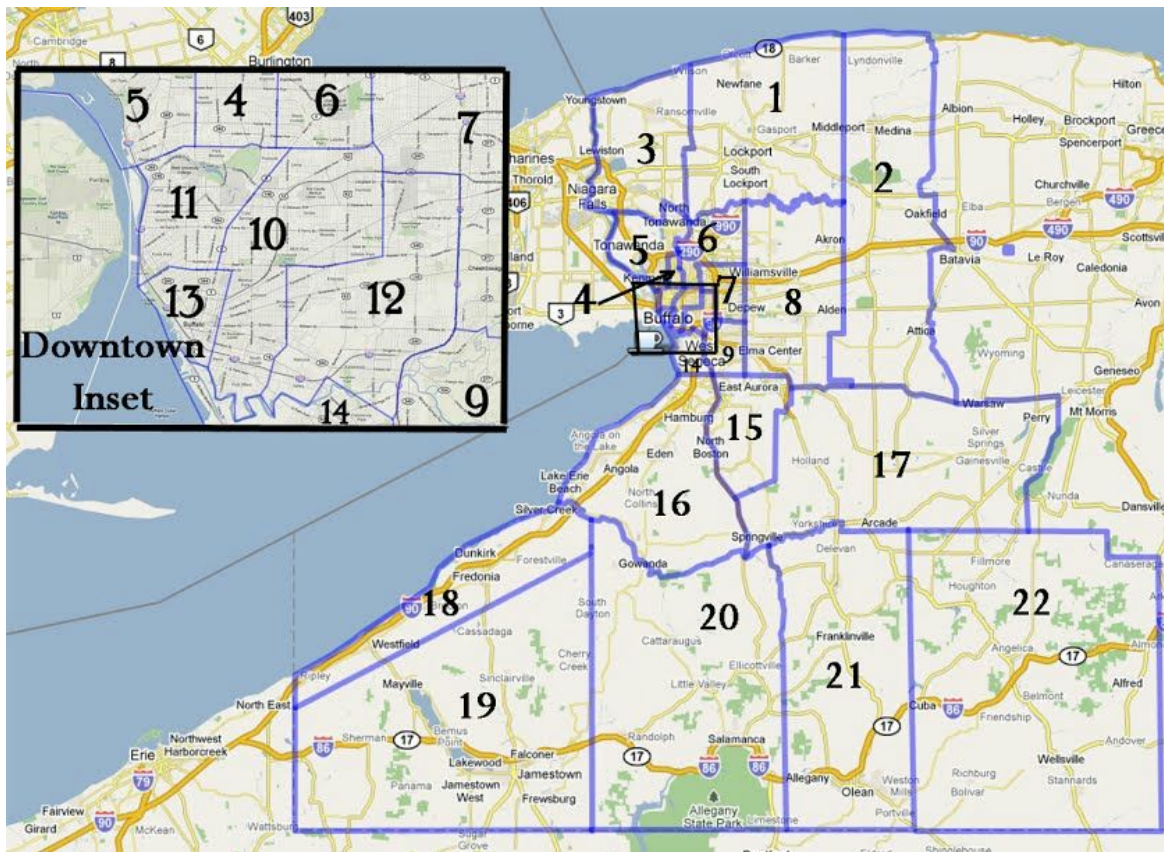
*The main purpose of area assembly meetings is to consider a variety of issues, from General Service Conference business to area problems and solutions and financial affairs. While area sharing sessions, public information programs, workshops, and video programs keep A.A. strong and participation in growing the service structure.*

*The main purpose of Area is to be one level in the service structure where information between AA World Services, the AA Grapevine and the world wide fellowship of AA is able to be transmitted.*

## **Districts:**

There are currently 22 total districts in Area 50. Each district is responsible to help and to represent roughly 6-30 AA groups. If a district has an elected DCM (District Committee Member) and meets together (typically once a month) the group is referred to as active. If a district does not have a DCM or meet together as a district, the district is considered inactive and sometimes referred to as “dark” or a “dark district”.

The map below shows the districts locations in Area 50 and the name and phone number of the DCMs in each district. If your group is located in an active district, please notify the chair and they will work to get you connected to find out more about district activities!



- [District #1](#) – Eastern Niagara County, not Niagara Falls
- [District #2](#) – Western parts of Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming (North of Rte 20A) Counties
- [District #3](#) – Niagara Falls Area – Eastern Niagara County
- [District #4](#) – Kenmore, North Buffalo
- [District #5](#) – Riverside, Tonawanda near River, North Tonawanda, Grand Island
- [District #6](#) – UB South Campus Area, Tonawanda, Amherst north of Sheridan, East Amherst
- [District #7](#) – Snyder, Williamsville, Cheektowaga north of William
- [District #8](#) – Clarence, Akron, Depew, Alden, Elma
- [District #9](#) – W.Seneca & Cheektowaga, E of I-90,W of Transit Rd, S of Losson & N of Milestrip
- [District #10](#) – Buffalo, East Side & Kensington Area
- [District #11](#) – Buffalo, West Side between North/Porter & Amherst St
- [District #12](#) – Cheektowaga, Sloan, Lovejoy, Babcock & the Valley
- [District #13](#) – Buffalo, West Side, Allentown, Downtown
- [District #14](#) – South Buffalo, Lackawanna, Blasdell
- [District #15](#) – East Aurora, Orchard Park, North Boston
- [District #16](#) – Southern Erie County, W of Rte 219, Hamburg, Angola, Eden, Gowanda
- [District #17](#) – SW Erie & S Wyoming Counties, Holland, Springville, Arcade, Perry
- [District #18](#) – Chautauqua County along Lake Erie shore, Silver Creek, Dunkirk/Fredonia, Westfield
- [District #19](#) – Remainder of Chautauqua County, Mayville, Jamestown
- [District #20](#) – Western Cattaraugus County, Salamanca, Ellicottville, Little Valley
- [District #21](#) – Eastern Cattaraugus County, Olean, Franklinville
- [District #22](#) – All of Allegany County

## Intergroups:

Within Area 50 We have 4 long standing intergroups (Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Genesee-Wyoming, NY-Penn), sometimes also referred to as central offices or central committees. While some aspects of these intergroups may sound similar to Area Assembly, the purposes of Area versus Intergroups are different. As mentioned earlier, the primary purpose of an Area Assembly is to obtain and help carry out the collective group conscience of AA as a whole. This is why many of the activities of an Area body will center around transferring information, discussion, days of sharing/learning, focusing on election of a delegate, as well as pre- and post- "conference reports".

Traditionally, general service committees and intergroups/central offices have performed different functions. Central offices provide local services; general service committees maintain the link between the A.A. groups and the A.A. General Service Board by means of the Conference. So these two separate but vital service structures coexist in many areas in mutual cooperation and harmony.

These central offices will maintain services such as:

1. Receiving, arranging and following up Twelfth Step calls.
2. Answering inquiries about A.A.
3. Establishing local public information committees
4. Maintaining information about local hospitals and recovery facilities for alcoholics
5. Publishing local A.A. meeting lists
6. Providing a newsletter
7. Ordering, selling and distributing A.A. Conference-approved literature

In contrast, the Conference structure is the method through which all A.A. groups in an area can provide the most effective communication within the area and between the groups and the General Service Board and G.S.O. on matters of policy that affect A.A. as a whole. These include policy on: Conference-approved literature, A.A. public information, A.A. cooperation with the professional community, A.A. activity in treatment and correctional facilities, AA finances, the AA Grapevine, and the election of trustees to the General Service Board.

Many areas find that a liaison between the intergroups/central office and the area committee is very helpful in maintaining good relations and communication. In some areas the liaison has a vote at the assembly; in others, a voice but no vote. In area 50 we follow the form of courtesy reports, where we encourage member from the 4 intergroups to come and help inform us of their activities or struggles.

## Area 50's Typical Assembly Format:

- Introductions (12pm - 12:15)
- **New GSR School** and Area Committee Meetings (approx: 12:15 - 1:15)
- Lunch (approx: 1:15 - 2:00)
- Committee Reports (approx: 2:00 - 2:30)
- **Business Meeting (Approx: 2:30 - 4:00)**
- Area Learning Session (Approx: 4:00 - 5:00)

## Voting at Area Business Meetings - "Modified" Robert's Rules of Order:

As a GSR in a group in Area 50 you get to vote here! And your voice is counted just as much as the person with 20 plus years experience in general service. In fact, if they are a past delegate, your vote is more powerful than theirs because they don't have a vote. Past delegates are not given a vote as we as a group don't want to depend too highly upon any one individual, but more so focus on the group conscience as a whole.

In AA we use what's referred to as modified Robert's Rules of Order. We use them to help conduct the flow of a meeting where voting takes place and help to establish a process to make sure that each voice can be heard. Certain terms you may hear are: "I would like to make a motion to..." ; "Second" ; "Point of Order" ; "Point of Information" ; "Call the Question" ; "Motion to Table" ; "Motion to Close"

We refer to them as 'Modified' in AA as we do not use them as strictly as the full version. AA general service takes great care in wanting to make sure every voice is heard and that we reach decisions by "substantial unanimity" where in almost all cases want to see a vote pass by a minimum of 2/3rds of eligible voters. This is so we may never slowly become divided into two sizable parties, neither feeling they are getting what they want. We also take care to listen to "minority opinion." This means that whoever was not in the 'prevailing' or winning party has the opportunity to speak again to try to impress why they were for or against a motion.

An abridged 'cheat sheet of robert's rules of order terms and voting procedures is printed out, and you will find this helpful to follow along.

## **Area 50's Typical Calendar Year & Annual Events:**

**January:** First Area Assembly of the new year. After an election year, new area officers are welcomed. In Area 50 our elections are held on odd years and new officers rotate in on January of even years.

**February:** *North East Regional AA Service Assembly (NERAASA)* A weekend meeting of 18 delegate areas in the northeastern region of the US to get together over the upcoming conference agenda items and service committee 'roundtables.' The purpose of the round tables is for past and current servants within the 18 different areas get together to discuss problems and solutions they are having within their service work. Anywhere between 300-600 people will be in attendance and there are panel presentations all throughout the weekend discussing various topics pertinent to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

While NERaasa is not a mandatory event it is highly recommended that anyone who is able to go does, The date for this year's neraasa is from the 26th to the 28th

**March:** The "Agenda Items" which are voted on by all 93 Areas across Canada and the United States are distributed and will be made available by the delegate to be brought back to your group for them to discuss and decide what their feeling is on the proposed changes.

**April:** The Area reconvenes to discuss groups feelings about the agenda items so that our delegate has the opportunity to know what the Area conscience is on our decisions.

**May:** Our Delegate gets to head down to the general service conference to discuss and vote on the agenda items on our behalf

**June:** Our delegate returns and gets to provide us a report as to what was discussed and decided at the conference.

**August:** *New York State Informational Workshop (NYSIW)* - Comprised of all 4 Areas within New York State to share about committee work and try to gain better unity amongst the 4 areas. This Year Area 50 (Us) will actually be hosting the workshop!

**October:** The annual budget for the upcoming year for committees and the assembly is proposed and given to go back to the groups.

**November:** The area discusses and votes on the proposed budget for the next year.



## **Traditions and the 12 Concepts for World Service:**

Most AA members after being around for a little while have at least heard about AA's 12 Traditions. But the 12 Concepts? What the heck are those? Well both AA's Traditions and Concepts help to act a spiritual guides to better inform our actions and our decisions. Many great spiritual principles are contained within each, and are just as vital to a well functioning Area body as the 12 steps to well functioning and contented sobriety. Each individual tradition and concept could easily be discussed for well over an hour each. So we won't get into too much detail here, but it is certainly encouraged to find AA members and groups who are knowledgeable about their history and practical applications to not only your Area, your group, but in many case your own life!

Essays on the 12 traditions can be found in the back half of the book 12 steps and 12 traditions. Essays for the 12 concepts can be found in the back of the service manual. All of these books can be viewed online by going to [aa.org](http://aa.org), AA's international website.

## **Area Officers:**

You may notice the following people being presented:

**Area Chair: (*Chuck B.*)** The chairperson is responsible for the smooth running of area assemblies, consulting with the committee before setting the date and time, making sure that all groups are notified, consulting with officers and committee members on the program, and chairing the assembly meetings. The chairperson, more than any other officer, keeps the delegate informed about what is going on in the area, and makes sure that committee members are aware of what's going on in world services. It is the group conscience at Area 50 that the chairpersons does not get a vote as they have a great deal of power already in ensuring the effective running of the business meeting and making sure we fall in line with the principals of AA.

**Area Secretary: (*Cheryl D.*)** The Secretary records and distributes minutes of area meetings; keeps mailing lists up to date and sends out area mailings; sometimes the secretary is responsible for preparing lively bulletins that will encourage attendance at committee meetings and assemblies. The secretary is in a good position to act as a liaison between officers and committee members.

**Area Treasurer: (*David D.*)** The Treasurer keeps financial records for the area assembly and reports regularly to the assembly. In most cases, the treasure is responsible for encouraging contributions for area and GSO services.

**Area Registrar: (*Mike D.*)** Registrars now develop and maintain records of all groups in the area, including name, meeting location, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of the GSRs, DCMs, district and area officers and area committee members. They may provide mailing labels for area publications such as monthly newsletter of a mailing of minutes. Area registrars also assist the GSO Records Department to keep their records up to date.

**Area Co-Chair: (*Don H.*)** Area 50's co-chair is responsible for assisting the area chair, keeping the Area 50 guidelines up to date and assisting in other capacities at the area level.

**Delegate: (*Wally E.*)** The delegate has a demanding job, not only because a large amount of time and work are involved, but because it is the delegate's responsibility to serve the US/Canada conference as a whole. As voting members of the conference, delegates bring to its deliberations the experiences and viewpoints of their own areas. Yet they are not representatives of their areas in the usual political sense; after hearing all points of view and becoming fully informed during conference discussion, they vote in the best interest of AA as a whole.

## **Area Committees:**

There are Chairpersons at the Area Assembly referred to as Committee Chairs, who help to perform some of the background work within Alcoholics Anonymous. The committees within Area 50 are:

**Archives Committee (*Lila M*):** Archives committee is engaged in the work of setting up an area archives to collect and preserve area history. Written materials (books, pamphlets, newsletters, written histories), photographs, and audio tapes are the foundations of a collection. Local AA historical material is sought out from oldtimers, past delegates, committee members, and others with experience to share. Guidelines on archives are available from the general service office. (Within Area 50 this committee is financially Autonomous. They rely directly upon group contributions to their committee and money brought in from various events such as the annual archives breakfast. Unlike the other committees at Area 50 they do not request or receive budgets from the Area body to support their works. The nature of having to store the archival material, preserve the material, recording devices, etc. make their financial efforts somewhat harder to predict)

**Corrections Committee (*David N*):** they are responsible to cooperate with the 4 local intergroups in getting AA members and AA groups to take meetings into correctional facilities such as jails, prisons and holding centers. The committee is able to take its own initiative, but it is always seen as wise to coordinate with any other district or intergroup corrections committees not to duplicate work and avoid confusion.

As the Area takes more of a hands off approach to the work, rather than the committee chair bringing meetings into a facility (although they are more than welcome to do so) you may see this committee instead try to find out what facilities are being covered, which ones are not, and try to build relationships with Wardens to explain what Alcoholics Anonymous is and request if AA can be present so that we can reach incarcerated alcoholics. Their efforts will also include trying to establish a bridging the gap program, where prisoners being released from elsewhere into WNY or vice versa will be able to obtain a point of contact to get them involved in AA in their local community immediately after being released.

**Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC): (*Steve G*)** This committee is responsible to cooperate with the 4 local intergroups in getting AA members and AA groups to get in front of professionals who may come in contact with active alcoholics through their line of work. Such examples of professionals would be: doctors, nurses, judges, lawyers, human resources workers, trade union leaders, temporary staff agencies, psychologists, etc... The purpose of this work is to help professionals better understand what AA is, what we are do and what we do not do. The importance of this work is immeasurable, as it is almost impossible to calculate the

number of members that are now in our presence as the result of a professional's recommendation or passing suggestion of Alcoholics Anonymous. In the early history of AA, our fellowship had good relations with men of medicine, religion the legal profession and psychology. An aspect of this committee's work is to see that those respected relationships continue.

**Finance Committee (*Vacant*):** Here in area 50, we also have a designated finance committee who is responsible for sending out thank yous to groups for their contributions the area, plan a budget for the upcoming year, and look into how to help increase group participation and contributions to the area assembly through hosting days of sharing, and writing articles in local AA newsletters. The Area treasure is automatically made part of the Finance committee.

**Grapevine Committee (*Hank K*):** The AA Grapevine is seen as AA's principal magazine. There are monthly editions which are made for subscription and distribution. The stories contained within are submitted by AA members and published. AA Loners, the incarcerated and those in treatment facilities will sometimes read the Grapevine as an "AA's meeting in print." The Grapevine committee is responsible to encourage members to subscribe to the AA Grapevine, and special publications. It times past the AA Grapevine committee has held workshops to encourage members from Area 50 to write and submit their own stories to the magazine. AA Grapevine, Inc. also is responsible for publishing La Vina, which is a spanish version of the English magazine.

**Public Information Committee (*Tony T.*):** Like all of AA, the primary purpose of members involved with public information service is to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Working together, members of the local Public Information Committees convey AA information the the general public, including the media.

**Special Needs-Accessibility Committee (*Pat M*):** Assist AA members who have a variety of challenges to accessing the AA messages in meetings, 12th step work and other AA service.

**Treatment Committees (*Nadav W*):** While AA is not affiliated with any form of alcoholism treatment, AA Treatment committees are essential in carrying the AA message to treatment facilities where the suffering alcoholic may be introduced to AA for the first time. Their efforts will also include trying to establish a bridging the gap program, where patients being released from elsewhere into WNY or vice versa will be able to obtain a point of contact to get them involved in AA in their local community immediately after being released.

**Area Website Committee (*Tim W*):** Responsible to maintain and update Area 50's Website. Responsible to coordinate with other intergroups to offer digital assistance to online meeting schedules and the like, and they maintain links to helpful information.

**Area Learning Committee (Sally Ann):** This committee is responsible for helping to shape topics and find speakers for the area assemblies and host an area day of sharing at least once a year.

**Area New GSR School Committee (James C):** Is responsible for conducting the new GSR school workshop each assembly, and to make homegroup presentations about the importance of having a GSR for groups that do not have a DCM in their district.

### **GSR Reports:**

During the assembly you will hear these committee's give reports on their most recent activities and what they plan to do. Some time after this there will be time for GSR reports. This would be a time allotted for you to mention if there are any special events going on in your group, ex: change to group format, a traditions or step workshop coming up, etc. Or to mention if there are any difficulties coming up in your group that you might like to find guidance on or you would like to share the solution you found to the problem. Area Assembly is a sounding board for groups around the region to be able to assist one another by passing out useful information about our traditions, concepts and collective experience.

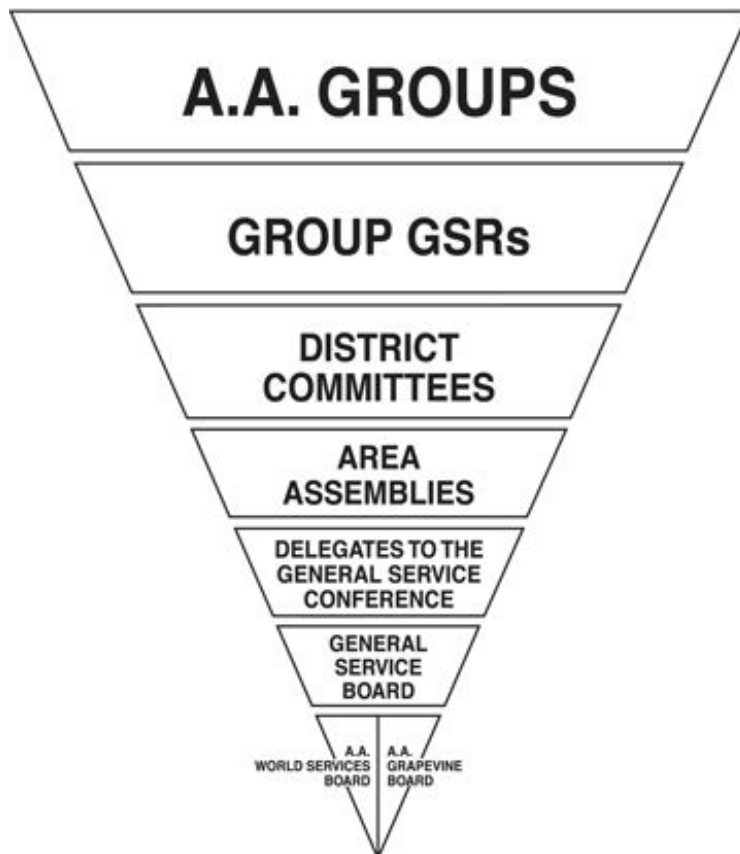
## General Service Structure:

As a GSR you are part of the General Service Structure. You are responsible to your group's conscience and what they feel is best for AA. You are allowed to vote against what your group feels is best, if there is new information presented to you that you feel they knew they would change their vote, or if you believe that voting for or against really was not in the best interest of AA. If done, the group you were asked to serve certainly has a right to ask why you felt it was best to go against the group conscience.

As a member of the group and getting to serve as a GSR, you are on the top of the service structure and those below, such as DCM's and Delegate's are responsible to listen to you!

The chart below helps to illustrate how AA is an "upside down triangle", where the real power and say of AA is to always rely within the groups, and that those set below are responsible to the groups they were entrusted to serve. To help carry out the plans and ideas of the body above them:

### **STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE (U.S. and Canada)**



## **What do I, as a New GSR need to do now?**

- Whenever something comes up, that you're unclear about, raise your hand and ask a question! If it's unclear to you, we can guarantee you others in the room were also wondering the same thing. Only you had the courage to ask.
- It's suggested that if your current sponsor does not have experience with general service, it's recommended to get a service sponsor, a mentor, or at least some kind of designated person you can feel comfortable asking questions. Stay close to that person. Ask them questions about service and their experience. Ask them if they have any suggestions on how you can get more involved or if there are specific things which would be good for you to read.
- If you are a new GSR for your group, or a new group all together, please make sure to introduce yourself to the Registrar. They will help to make sure your information is able to get registered so that GSO (AA's General Service Office) will know to send you a welcome kit full of helpful free literature.
- You should obtain a copy of the general service manual, present at this assembly, and try to familiarize with yourself with that book, our 12 concepts and our 12 traditions. Find others to review this literature with! It's better to do it with friends!
- Try to find out who your dcm is and find out what they are doing in your district!
- Attend this upcoming NERAASA in Springfield, Massachusetts! February 26th- 28th