

AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experiences Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Al-Anon Information Services (AIS) ^{G-4}

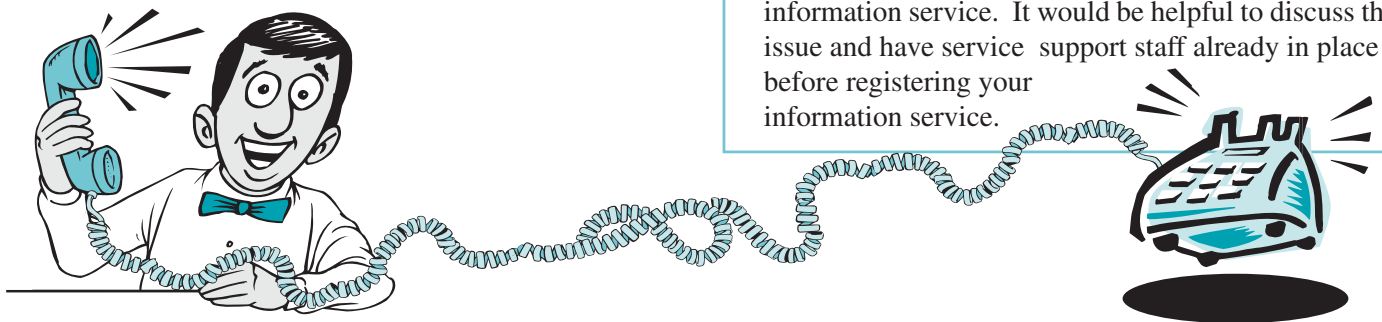
An Al-Anon information service is a local service center established by one or more groups or districts located close enough to one another for easy access and communication. Any local Al-Anon or Alateen group may participate in an information service. An AIS exists to aid the groups it serves in the common purpose of carrying the Al-Anon message to the suffering families and friends of alcoholics.

What does an AIS need in order to be registered at the WSO?

- A title indicative of the nature of its operation, eg., “Al-Anon information service”
- A listing in the local telephone directory. Suggested listing: Al-Anon Family Groups Information Service. Cross listings may include: Alateen; Alcoholics, Families of; or Alcoholism, Help for the Family.
- A post office box number or an office address. Your information service will be listed in *Getting In Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen* (S-23), a publication for the membership and the public. In this way prospective members may be referred to Al-Anon without revealing the anonymity of members. *Getting In Touch* lists all U.S., Canadian and International information services. It may also be used for AISs’ to communicate with each other and share experiences. A copy of this publication can be found on the World Service Office World Wide Web site (www.al-anon.alateen.org)
- An operation that conducts activities in addition to Twelfth Step telephone calls. For example: work with local Al-Anon/Alateen service committees, publish meeting lists and perform any other function as outlined in the World Service Handbook section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.
- A passion for Al-Anon and service!

What services does an AIS provide to the groups it serves? (may include one or all)

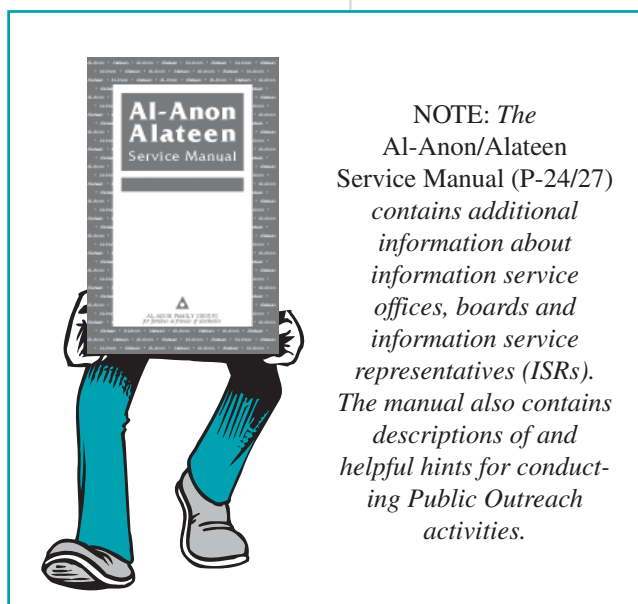
- Receives phone inquiries and directs them to the appropriate group. A list of group contacts, with addresses and telephone numbers should be kept up to date for this purpose.
- Channels local Alateen, CPC, institution or PI work through the districts whenever possible.
- Maintains a stock of literature to give newcomers, the professional community and the general public.
- Prints and distributes its own newsletter of local activities and articles written by members for the groups which support it. Our Traditions suggest the newsletter not serve as a means of promoting various alcoholism related activities or organizations, nor should it contain quotes from outside publications.
- Holds periodic meetings attended by all the information service representatives where activity reports are made and notes are taken on matters affecting groups. Other topics may include public outreach projects, institutions work and fund raising events.
- *Volunteers* - Phones can be covered by volunteers whenever possible. Coverage works best when the information service chairperson prepares a monthly schedule of members willing to cover the phones. Finding volunteers may be the hardest part of running the information service. It would be helpful to discuss this issue and have service support staff already in place before registering your information service.



- *Paid Staff* - According to Tradition Eight, paid help may be hired for the bookkeeping, correspondence, office duties, etc. A member's personal knowledge of Al-Anon is a value in an office, but he or she is paid for office work only. Who is hired, who will do the hiring, the hours, salary and benefits are usually decided by the information service board. The Twelve Concepts of Service define how paid employees fit into our service structure.

- *Employees in Al-Anon Service* - According to the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, any member gainfully employed in an Al-Anon Service does not serve as a volunteer in a policy-making position, such as group representative (GR), district representative (DR), area assembly officer or coordinator, delegate or WSO trustee.

- *Answering Service or Telephone Answering Machine* - Employing an answering service or using a telephone answering machine may solve the problem of calls received after office hours. When using an answering machine leave a warm Al-Anon-related message because many people feel uncomfortable talking to a mechanical device. Meeting information for that day may be included in your message, if time permits. Call forwarding to volunteers at home is one way to have someone available to respond at all times. The use of a beeper is another way for volunteers to respond quickly without being confined.



NOTE: *The Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) contains additional information about information service offices, boards and information service representatives (ISRs). The manual also contains descriptions of and helpful hints for conducting Public Outreach activities.*

Incorporation - Where an office is maintained, it might be wise to incorporate. Individual information services write their own charters or bylaws in keeping with their state or provincial laws. Legal assistance may be required.

How does the AIS fit into the group / district / area structure?

- The information service is supported by the groups it serves within its geographical boundaries. It is suggested that there be a representative from every group at an information service meeting. If the AIS is a function of the district, it is suggested that the alternate district representative serve as a member of the information service board.

- An AIS should not seek or accept support from outside the area it serves. Contributions are voluntary and are not a condition for membership.

- As stated in the Policy Digest Section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, under Autonomy of Groups, "In keeping with the Traditions and Warranty Five of Concept Twelve, area or WSO service entities have no authority to close a group or engage in other punitive actions against a group because they disapprove of the manner in which

a group practices the Al-Anon program."

- Often, information service offices also act as literature distribution centers (LDC). When the two entities are functioning at the same location, the WSO will register them with one identification number. See G-18, *Literature Distribution Centers* for more information about LDCs.

* When AIS committees are formed, they work with the district/area coordinator or the area committee.

Participation and cooperation are the key. The more members involved, the lighter the work. Experience shows that when the information service works closely with the area it increases its formula for success!

Getting Down to Business

Nonprofit, Tax-Free Status - Some information services have asked about acquiring nonprofit, tax-free status in order to economize on the mailing of newsletters, meeting lists and literature, and also to make contributions tax deductible. Acquiring such federal tax-free status would require the help of legal counsel.

The U.S. tax-free, nonprofit status which applies to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. does not cover individual segments of the fellowship. The WSO has no control over AIS' financial affairs, nor does it have any say on how they conduct their business. Each group, district, area and information service is autonomous.