

AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experience Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Group Records Coordinator

G-36

The area group records coordinator serves as the nuts and bolts of the communication connection between the Al-Anon and Alateen member, the group, district, information service, area, the entire service structure, and the World Service Office (WSO).

WHAT DOES THE VITAL ROLE OF THE AREA GROUP RECORDS COORDINATOR CONSIST OF AT THE AREA LEVEL?

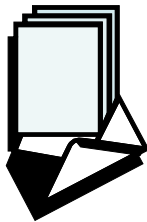
The area group records coordinator is the “keeper” of group information. It is essential that the area delegate be kept informed since the area delegate communicates with the WSO.

GENERALLY....

- Serves as primary contact between the area and the WSO regarding a group’s records
- Informs groups in the area that mail from the WSO goes to the current mailing address (CMA) and not to the group representative (unless the GR is the CMA)
- Makes reports about record-keeping at the area level
- Encourages members and groups to use their WSO identification number.
- Distributes group information from the WSO biannual printout to group representatives and/or district representatives for updating
- Communicates with the area Al-Anon information services
- Updates the area database with all changes received from the groups or the WSO
- Works with other area coordinators to strengthen the area’s groups

SOMETIMES...

- Maintains lists of area trusted servants
- Provides labels to the area or newsletter editor(s) for group mailings
- Submits lists (or labels) to the area Alateen or institutions coordinators
- Assists the registration committee at assembly
- Sends new groups a welcome letter
- Assigns groups to the correct district, and lets them know who their district representatives are
- Keeps the area archivist informed about new and dis-banded groups



WHAT SKILLS ARE HELPFUL FOR GROUP RECORDS COORDINATORS?

- Good organizational skills and the ability to pay attention to detail
- Knowledge of the computer database
- Ability to communicate via e-mail
- Availability to attend area world service committee meetings and assemblies
- Understanding of the area and world service structure

As with any other service position in Al-Anon, the greatest skill a member can offer is his or her willingness.

HOW DOES THE WSO COMMUNICATE WITH AREA GROUP RECORDS COORDINATORS?

Biannual printout – Twice a year, the WSO sends a printout to all group records coordinators. If there is no area group records coordinator, the print out is sent to the delegate. After the annual WSC, a form* is sent to both the delegate and the last known group records coordinator asking them *where* to send the biannual printouts, *when* to send them (usually in conjunction with area assemblies), and in *what* format. Printouts can be sent from the WSO to the area in the following formats:

- A hard-copy (in triplicate)
- Computer disc in Microsoft Word format
- Via e-mail (wso@al-anon.org)



*If the form is not returned to the WSO in the time specified, the printouts will be sent as they had been in the previous year.

New/suspended mail notifications – When a new group registers with the WSO, the registration form is scanned into an imaging system (electronic filing system). The form is then sent to the group records coordinator.

When the WSO sends a mailing to a group and the envelope is returned as undeliverable, the group is placed in “suspended mail.” When a group is listed in the WSO

database with “suspended mail status,” individuals who call for a meeting on the toll-free meeting line are still referred to the group. Since the CMA is the WSO’s only communication directly with the groups, the WSO Group Records Department sends a notification of “suspended mail” to the area group records coordinator. If the WSO is not notified of the new CMA after a year of being placed in “suspended mail,” the group will be considered “inactive” and members will no longer be referred to that group.

Proposed Group Notification – When the WSO



receives a call, e-mail, or letter from a person interested in starting a new Al-Anon or Alateen group, a copy of the request is sent to the area group records coordinator. It is suggested that the group records coordinator contact the individual (or pass the notice on to another area trusted servant for follow up) to guide them and to provide them with information regarding the district or area.

Other Communication – The WSO Group Records staff may also contact the coordinator when:

- Groups have disbanded in the area
- There is a question about the group’s location, contacts, or CMA
- There is a question regarding the status of the group

HOW DOES THE WSO UPDATE ITS RECORDS?

- The major source of updates is from corrections made to the printouts and sent to the WSO twice a year by the area group records coordinators.
- Once a year an update sheet is sent to each group
- Members send updates directly
- Mail is returned indicating the CMA address is changed
- Information is taken from group contribution and *Forum* subscription records

Group records coordinators can help facilitate correct record keeping at the WSO by submitting all group changes from the area on the WSO printouts and by using the Group Records Registration/Update Form.

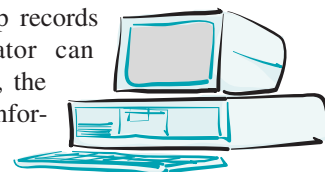
It would be preferable for the WSO to only update its records based on information received from the area. Past experience has proved this unworkable. One reason is there may not be an area coordinator. The area coordinator may resign and not be replaced for a period of time. Also there have been area coordinators who have been unable to keep up with recording changes, and groups then complain to the WSO.

Another reason why the WSO cannot take information from the area only is that the WSO registers all groups as outlined in the Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies in the *Service Manual* (see below) and the area may have different criteria. For instance, some areas only register groups that have been in existence for several months while the WSO registers new groups immediately.

“The WSO will register any group designating itself as an Al-Anon Family Group with the understanding that it will abide by the Traditions and the meetings will be open to any Al-Anon member. Alateen meetings, however, consist of younger family members assisted by an Al-Anon sponsor.”

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS COORDINATORS SHARE?

- Conduct a workshop at the district and/or area level on the best way to update the records.
- Communicate with the Al-Anon information service (AIS) if there is one. Groups may send updates to the AIS because they publish the meeting list. (Talk to each other; let the AIS know you will inform them of all information received in the printout and ask that they inform you of all group changes they receive).
- Whenever possible, keep one database — if everyone sends changes to the group records coordinator, the coordinator can keep the newsletter editors, the districts, and the Al-Anon information services informed.
- Some areas only register groups if they have a WSO identification number.
- Become a service sponsor to the new group records coordinator when you rotate.



Something to think about

Concept Ten states: *Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.*

In some areas, there is an area database of the groups, the information services keep another listing; and the newsletter editor(s) yet another. Experience shows that communication works best when the area group records coordinator is the primary guardian of the records.