

# ISO Area Handbook



Literature Committee approved February 2023

# ISO Area Handbook

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## Introduction

ISO areas were created as part of the structural changes within the International Service Organization (ISO) proposed by the Board of Trustees and approved by the Conference in 2014. It was envisioned each area would consist of approximately thirty or more member groups, and would be defined primarily by geographical proximity, although non-geographical areas might be based on compelling commonalities, such as language or mode of meeting (e.g., electronic meetings).

It was agreed each area would be expected to:

- Hold an annual meeting of Group Service Representatives (GSRs) elected by member groups in that area—to be referred to as an area assembly,
- Elect a delegate to represent the area in the ISO International Conference, where those delegates function as members of the ISO corporation.
- Strive to fund a delegate to the annual meeting of the Conference via the Seventh Tradition, and
- Consider issues affecting SAA as a whole and carry the group conscience from an area to the ISO Conference via the area delegate.

The purpose of this handbook is to facilitate the formation of ISO areas by offering suggestions and guidance for use by area advocates, GSRs, area chairs, and other area trusted servants.

## Section 1: Purpose of an Area Assembly

An area assembly is a meeting of Group Service Representatives (GSR) from a defined ISO area for the purpose of conducting area business in the following ways:

- To enhance the capacity of the ISO to fulfill its mission to serve member groups by helping carry the SAA message of recovery to the sex addict who still suffers.
- To allow GSRs to share the group consciences of the meetings they represent.
- To review issues brought to the assembly by local groups or sent from the ISO for review and comment by the area.
- To draft and submit motions for consideration by the delegates at the annual meeting of the ISO Conference.
- To develop an area group conscience on motions on the agenda of the annual meeting of the ISO Conference.
- To provide a platform for the area delegate to report back to its constituent member groups through their GSRs on issues discussed and actions taken by the ISO Conference and other programs within the ISO.
- To fill the area trusted servant positions listed in Section 2 of this document.
- To establish an annual area budget to guide expenditures for the year.

## Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities of Area Assembly Trusted Servants

Areas are typically formed when an SAA member from a designated or proposed area volunteers to serve as an **area advocate**. The roles and responsibilities of an area advocate might include (but are not limited to):

- Acts as the champion for a proposed area, reaching out to local groups and encouraging GSR registration.
- Completes preliminary paperwork for the registration of a proposed area with the ISO.
- Helps convene the first area assembly.

*Note: This position may or may not be needed once the initial area assembly leadership has been elected.*

Suggested area members and officers and their roles, and responsibilities:

### Group Service Representatives (GSRs)

- Chosen by their individual SAA groups to attend local area assemblies, discuss the business of the ISO, and act as the information conduit between the ISO and the areas, and their constituent groups.
  - At area assemblies, GSRs will elect an area delegate to represent them at the annual meeting of the ISO Conference.
  - The GSR will serve as the primary contact person between the ISO and their member group on matters relating to the ISO and the fellowship at large.

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- The GSR is the key means by which member groups will participate in the new service structure, acting as the voice of their group's conscience to area assemblies while at the same time taking information on ISO issues and activities back to their groups.
- Eligible to attend the area assembly as a voting member and to stand for election to any area steering committee or officer position, or to be elected as the area delegate.
- GSRs may serve as area advocates encouraging other groups to elect GSRs and assist with early formation of an area.

## Area Assembly Chair\*

- Provides leadership and conducts area assembly meetings.
- Convenes an executive committee and the area assembly as needed.
- Drafts the annual area report for presentation to the assembly.
- Acts as one of the contact people between the ISO and the area.

## Area Assembly Vice-Chair\*

- If the area assembly chair is unable to fulfill the length of their term, the area assembly vice-chair would then become the chair until the next election.
- Works with the alternate delegate to coordinate GSR training workshops at the area level.
- Acts as one of the contact people between the ISO and the area.

## Area Assembly Secretary\*

- Maintains registration records for area GSRs, helping to ensure that the information in the ISO database is accurate and current.
- Records and maintains area assembly and executive committee minutes and documents/records/archives.
  - Acts as one of the contact people between the ISO and the area.

## Area Assembly Treasurer\*

- Responsible for maintaining financial records and making necessary transactions for any funds collected and expenditures incurred by the area, including but not limited to:
  - Establishing a checking account (suggest two signatories, if feasible).
  - Helping the area create and maintain an annual budget.
  - Submitting a detailed treasurer's report for presentation at area assemblies.
- Some areas may want to establish a checking account with a local bank.  
*Groups and areas cannot use the ISO's Employer ID Number (EIN). One option is to use a member's name or a fictitious name (d/b/a) from the local county or city clerk and apply for EIN from the IRS for that name.*

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- For EIN information and forms go to <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers>.

An individual in the area, perhaps the treasurer, will need to agree to be the “responsible party,” which includes use of that person’s full name and Social Security number on the form.

## Area Delegate\*

- Delegates will represent their area as a voting member of the ISO Conference.
- Delegates will convey information from the ISO Conference to the area and to groups within that area.
- Delegates are key to maintaining multi-directional communication among local groups, the area, the ISO Conference, and other ISO entities (e.g., newsletters, workshops, *The Outer Circle (TOC)*, etc.).
- Delegates are encouraged to submit service résumés and stand for election to various service bodies at the International level (e.g., ISO Board, Literature Committee (LitCom), Conference Steering Committee (CSC), Nominating Committee (NomCom), Area Coordinating Committee (ACC), etc.).
- Guidelines for time in the fellowship, sobriety, and other attributes have been adopted by the ISO Conference (see Appendix B) or <https://saa-iso.org/svc/index.php>

## Alternate Area Delegate\*

- Serves as area delegate if/when the delegate is unable to fulfill their duties.
- Works with area assembly Vice Chair to coordinate GSR training workshops at the area level.

\*May function as area assembly executive committee responsible for the planning and implementation of area assembly operating procedures and other area business.

## Suggested Committee Chairperson Positions

There may be pre-existing structures in a given area, e.g., an intergroup (IG), which may preclude the need for these positions in the area's committee structure:

- Literature chairperson
- LGBTQ outreach chairperson
- Prisoner outreach chairperson
- Public Information (PI) chairperson (may be combined with CPC)
- Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) chairperson
- *The Outer Circle* chairperson

The roles and responsibilities of these positions might include acting as liaison to the corresponding ISO or Conference committee and coordinating local efforts for outreach, information distribution, and participation.

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## Terms/Length of Service

- It is recommended each area consider two-year terms for all area assembly officer positions and delegate positions in order to ensure continuity of leadership.
- It is recommended each area consider alternating, initial terms of one and two years to allow partial continuity in leadership each year.

## Section 3: Area Assembly

As an area begins the work of formation it is recommended that interested members of the area meetings schedule a pre-assembly planning meeting (in person or by electronic means) of GSRs and meeting contacts (first time only).

### **Suggested methods for reaching out to local GSRs and meeting contacts:**

- Forward an invitation email to the ISO for distribution to already registered GSRs and meeting contacts.
- Distribute an invitation email using a local intergroup contact list.
  - Use the local intergroup website to publicize the meeting date and time.
  - Attend local meetings to announce the planning meeting and/or gather the contact information of interested members.

### **How to schedule a Zoom video conference through the ISO.**

- Send an email to [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) with the requested day and time.
- The ISO staff will send a confirmation email confirming the date and time, along with instructions on how to access the online meeting by computer or telephone.

### **Alternate strategies for improving attendance at an initial planning meeting:**

- Combine with an annual local retreat.
- Combine with an existing intergroup meeting.

### **Consideration for the initial planning meeting:**

- Set a date(s) for an annual, semi-annual, or quarterly area assembly meeting.
- Consider the following time frames:
  - August/September to develop an area group conscience for issues and motions on the ISO Conference agenda and prepare the area delegate for their role at the annual meeting.
  - November/December for the delegate to report back about ISO Conference discussions and decisions.

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- February/March for elections, budget discussions, and handling local issues.
- May/June to discuss, refine, and submit any motions the area might want to bring to the annual meeting of the Conference. *The deadline for submission of motions for consideration by the Conference is June 30 each year.*
- Decide on an assembly start time and length of the meeting.
- Select an assembly location.
  - Regular local meeting location
  - Hotel or church meeting space
  - Local retreat center (perhaps at the time of a regularly scheduled retreat)
  - Use a videoconference service

## Outreach Suggestions

- Use the same distribution strategies used for your pre-assembly planning meeting.
- Consider distributing an agenda with discussion topics and possible motions on the agenda of the ISO Conference annual meeting.

## Support from ISO

- Financial
  - Self-support per the SAA Seventh Tradition is the norm.
  - Support from well-established areas may be sought to assist small or new areas for initial participation in the annual meeting of the ISO Conference. The best interest of the fellowship and ISO is served by maximum possible participation of areas in the annual meeting of the Conference.
  - Area groups, local Intergroups or the ISO may consider some level of financial support for first time assemblies and area delegates.
- Communication with GSRs about area activities should be implemented as needed.

## Section 4: Suggested Activities of an Area Assembly

- An area assembly meeting may be called by the current chair (or area advocate).
- Robert's Rules of Order have been adopted as the parliamentary authority for all entities within the ISO. Under Robert's, special rules may be adopted to address issues such as substantial unanimity, format for the agenda of the area assembly, etc.
- Area annual report (prepared by the area chair) may be presented for approval and submission for inclusion in the ISO annual report.
- Draft and implement Area Operating Procedures and regularly review
- Elections may be planned as required.
  - Election of an area assembly chair
  - Election of an area assembly vice-chair
  - Election of an area assembly secretary



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- Election of an area assembly treasurer
- Election of the area delegate
- Election of the area alternate delegate
- An executive committee may be defined with acknowledgement of outgoing executive committee and delegate service to the area.
- **Elections and Other Area Business**
  - Before an election is held, areas may choose to draft area operating procedures, remembering that all ISO entities are subject to the Bylaws of the ISO of SAA, Inc. Assistance with this process may be obtained by contacting the executive director of the ISO ([director@saa-iso.org](mailto:director@saa-iso.org)).
  - Recommended election procedures for trusted servants:
    - Review of guidelines for international service at <https://saa-iso.org/svc/index.php>, and roles and responsibilities of each area position.
    - Call for Nominations.
      - Members may nominate themselves.
      - Consideration of past area, regional or international service experience is suggested.
    - Presentation of the nominee slate and a three-to-five-minute statement by candidates to include willingness to serve, service history, sobriety date, etc.
    - Distribution of ballots and voting.
    - Counting and announcement of election results.
  - Review of upcoming Conference motions.
  - Develop an area group conscience to guide delegate participation at the annual meeting of the ISO Conference. Note: Delegates should be allowed to vote their conscience at the Conference meeting, while keeping in mind the group conscience of their area.
  - Creation of area specific motions to be considered by the Conference.
    - Note: The deadline for submission of motions for consideration by the Conference is June 30.
  - Reports by GSRs on local meeting activities, e.g., three-to-five-minute presentations about each meeting in the area, covering meeting format, make-up, average attendance, service roles, outreach activities, special needs, etc.
  - Reports by area assembly trusted servants as needed (chair, treasurer, delegate, etc.).
  - Consider new business brought to the assembly by GSRs.

## Section 5: Funding an Area delegate

### Expenses to consider when planning to send a delegate to the annual meeting of the ISO Conference:

- Travel costs (airline, taxi, car rental, shuttle fees, etc.)
- Hotel (consider room sharing, hotel points, etc.)
- Conference registration fee

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- Miscellaneous expenses (e.g., per diem for meals and incidental expenses or reimbursement for documented incidental expenses)

## **Options for funding:**

- Group donations
- Individual donations
- Specific fundraising efforts to support the area delegate participation in the Conference meeting.
- Requests may be submitted to local groups, intergroups, or the ISO for assistance.

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## Appendix A

Terms and acronyms used in this handbook:

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ACC:   | Area Coordinating Committee                 |
| Board  | ISO Board of Trustees                       |
| CSC:   | Conference Steering Committee               |
| CPC:   | Cooperation with the Professional Community |
| GSR:   | Group Service Representative                |
| IG     | Intergroup                                  |
| ISO:   | International Service Organization          |
| LGBT:  | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender         |
| LitCom | ISO Literature Committee                    |
| NomCom | Conference Nominating Committee             |
| PI:    | Public Information                          |
| SAA:   | Sex Addicts Anonymous                       |
| TOC:   | <i>The Outer Circle</i>                     |

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## Appendix B

### Identifying Leaders for International Service Work

#### – ISO Conference Delegates

The ISO of SAA has learned through experience that those who serve well at the international level have had success in their own personal recovery. For this reason, guidelines for effective leadership were adopted at the Organizing Convention in Houston in 1989 and updated by the Board of Trustees in 1998 and 2010. These guidelines for Area Delegates were adopted by the Conference in 2022.

These guidelines are not intended to be applied as rules. They are meant to be helpful suggestions that remind us that the ISO needs experienced and sober trusted servants at all levels of service. Each area assembly must consider the candidates available, and choose the person best able to serve.

#### Guidelines for a candidate:

- Has at least two years participation in the fellowship;
- Has at least one year of current continuous sexual sobriety, including abstinence from all inner circle behaviors;
- Has worked the Twelve Steps with an SAA sponsor;
- Has demonstrated leadership in service work at the local level;
- Has received endorsement of his or her sponsor and home group, intergroup, or area – affirming their belief that the candidate has the serenity and wisdom necessary to serve at the international level;

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- **Observes Traditions Ten and Eleven in a manner that protects SAA from repercussions related to any actions that might draw SAA into public controversy.**

**The ISO recognizes that the identification of candidates who qualify for international service begins at the local level, where delegates are also elected. The ISO depends on local group conscience to identify members who have the skills, serenity, wisdom, and willingness to serve effectively.**