

# Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

## Area Group Records Coordinator

G-36

The Area Group Records Coordinator serves as the nuts and bolts of the communication connection among the Al-Anon member, the group, district, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), 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 Al-Anon group information. It is essential that the Area Delegate be kept informed of group records matters, since the Area Delegate communicates with the WSO.

Note that Alateen group information is handled via the Area Alateen process. The Area Group Records Coordinator communicates with the Area Delegate, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP), and Area Alateen Coordinator to become familiar with the Area Alateen process.

#### Generally...

- Serves as primary contact between the Area and the WSO regarding Al-Anon group records.
- Uses the WSO On-line Group Records application to:
  - Register new groups.
  - Make group changes.
  - Generate reports as needed.
- Informs groups in the Area that mail from the WSO goes to the Current Mailing Address (CMA) and not to the Group Representative (GR), unless the GR is the CMA.
- Reports about record-keeping at the Area level.
- Encourages members and groups to use their WSO identification number.
- Encourages DRs to use the WSO On-line Group Records application, and assists them in how to access it.
- Communicates with the Al-Anon Information Services in the Area.
- Updates the Area’s records with all changes received from the groups or the WSO.
- Works with other Area coordinators to strengthen the Area’s groups.

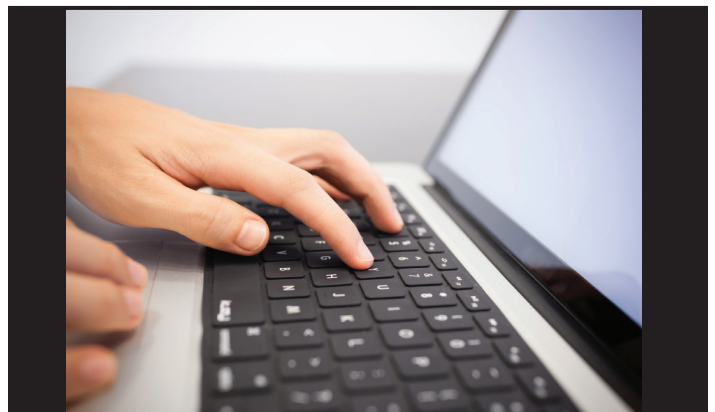
#### Sometimes...

- 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.
- Informs groups which districts they are located in and provides the name and contact information of their District Representatives.
- Provides training for new DRs in how to access e-Communities, if assigned by the Area.
- Keeps the Area Archivist informed about new and inactivated groups.

**Note that Alateen group information is handled via the Area Alateen process.**

### What skills are recommended for Area Group Records Coordinators?

- Good organizational skills and the ability to pay attention to detail.
- Experience working with computer databases.
- Strong general computer and Internet skills.
- Ability to communicate via e-mail.
- Availability to attend Area World Service Committee meetings and Assemblies.
- Understanding of the Area and world service structure.



## How does the WSO communicate with Area Group Records Coordinators?

Most of the information will be posted on e-Communities, a password-protected Web site where WSO staff posts news and information that is helpful to the Area Group Records Coordinator. Documents can be viewed and saved. A computer-generated e-mail notification is sent to the Area Group Records Coordinators when a new document is posted.

E-Communities also features discussion boards for the Area Group Records Coordinators to connect and communicate with each other, share their experience Area-to-Area, and ask for shared experience from other Areas. The discussion boards help Area Group Records Coordinators to enhance and enrich their service experience.

**Registrations coming directly to WSO** – When a new group registers with the WSO, the registration information is entered into the WSO database. The information is available to the Area Group Records Coordinator on the WSO On-line Group Records application. An e-mail notification of newly registered groups is sent weekly to the Area Group Records Coordinators.

**No mail notifications** – When the WSO sends a mailing to a group and the envelope is returned as undeliverable, the group is placed in “No Mail” status. Callers who are seeking meeting information on the WSO toll-free meeting line are still referred to the group. Since the CMA is the direct communication link with the group, a report listing the groups in “No Mail” status is available to the Area Group Records Coordinator and the DR on the WSO On-line Group Records application. If the WSO is not notified of a new CMA after two years of being in “No Mail,” the group will be considered “inactive” and callers on the toll-free meeting line will no longer be referred to that group. In time, the group will be purged from the WSO database.

**Inactivation of a group** – One of the following criteria must be met to inactivate a group:

- The group has notified the Area or WSO that it is no longer meeting.
- A trusted servant has verified that the group is no longer meeting.
- The group has notified the Area or WSO that it is no longer an Al-Anon group.

When WSO receives verification of the criteria and inactivates a group, the information will be available to the Group Records Coordinator on the On-Line Group Records application.

**Proposed Group Notification** – When the WSO receives a call, e-mail, or letter inquiry about starting a new Al-Anon group, members who have access to the Internet are directed to the Al-Anon Members’ Web site where new group registration information is available; otherwise, the information is sent via postal mail. The DR or Area Group Records Coordinator contact information is provided so members can inquire about the Area process for submitting a new Al-Anon group registration. A proposal packet is sent to professionals and non-members,

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which includes the Area Delegate contact information. Once the group is registered, an e-mail notification is sent to the Area Group Records Coordinator. It is suggested that the Area 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:

- There is a report that a group in the Area is no longer meeting.
- There is an inquiry about the group’s location, contacts, or CMA.
- The status of the group needs to be verified.

### On-line Group Records

The user-friendly, Web-based WSO On-line Group Records application requires a broadband Internet connection. It allows Area Group Records Coordinators to:

- View the Area group records information.
- Register new Al-Anon groups and view the status of the registration.
- Process Al-Anon group changes directly into the WSO database.
- Compare Area records with the WSO records.
- Check when a new group has been registered or a change has been processed by WSO staff.
- Run reports on demand.

The Area can have one additional Group Records person access the WSO On-line Group Records application. The applicant must be a current AWSC member; access is concurrent with the Area Group Records Coordinator’s term. The Area Group Records Coordinator oversees the WSO On-line Group Records application training, provides instructions, and updates the Area Group Records process.

The Area Delegate and DRs have read-only access to the application. The DRs can view the Al-Anon groups in their own district.

## How are group records updated in the WSO database?

- Area Group Records Coordinators update Al-Anon group records directly into the WSO Database using the WSO On-line Group Records application.
- Once a year, an Al-Anon Family Groups Annual Update Sheet is sent to each group.
- Members send updates directly to the WSO.
- Mail is returned indicating the CMA address is changed.
- Information is taken from group contribution and *Forum* subscription records.

Area Group Records Coordinators can help facilitate correct record keeping at the WSO by encouraging DRs to access the WSO On-line Group Records application to verify the group information in their district, and notify the Area Group Records Coordinator of any discrepancies.

The WSO would prefer to only update its records based on information received from the Area. Past experience has shown this to be impractical. One reason is there may not be an Area Group Records 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 *Al-Anon/Alateen 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 that meetings will be open to any Al-Anon member.” (See “Alateen Policy” section for information on registering an Alateen group.)

## 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 database; and the Newsletter Editor(s) yet another. Experience shows that communication works best when there is one primary guardian of the records, usually the Area Group Records Coordinator.

The timeliness of the Area Group Records Coordinators keeping the Al-Anon group records up-to-date is essential, as meeting information is provided daily on the WSO toll-free meeting information line, by Al-Anon Information Services locally, and is also available on Area Web sites and meeting schedules. The goal is to provide anyone seeking Al-Anon meetings with current information and the cooperation between the WSO and the Area Group Records Coordinator is a vital component.

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## Tips Coordinators Share

- **Conduct a workshop** at the district and/or Area 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 can provide up-to-date group listings to them, and ask that they inform you of all group changes they receive.)
  - **Keep one database whenever possible**—if everyone sends changes to the Area Group Records Coordinator, the Coordinator can keep the Newsletter Editors, the districts, and the Al-Anon Information Services informed.
  - **Some Areas list groups only if they have a WSO ID number.**
  - **Become a Service Sponsor** to the new Area Group Records Coordinator when you rotate.
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