

Who runs A.A.?

A.A. has no officers or executives who wield power or authority over the Fellowship. There is no “government” in A.A. It is obvious, however, that even in an informal organization, certain jobs have to be done. In the local group, for example, someone has to arrange for a suitable meeting place; meetings have to be scheduled and programmed; provision has to be made for serving the coffee and snacks that contribute so much to the informal comradeship of A.A. gatherings; many groups also consider it wise to assign to someone the responsibility of keeping in touch with the national and international development of A.A. When a local group is first formed, self-appointed workers may take over responsibility for these tasks, acting informally as servants of the group. As soon as possible, however, these responsibilities are, by election, rotated to others in the group for limited periods of service. A typical A.A. group may have a chairperson, a secretary, a program committee, a food committee, a treasurer, and a general service representative who acts for the group at regional or area meetings. Newcomers who have a reasonable period of sobriety behind them are urged to take part in handling group responsibilities. At the national and international levels, there are also specific jobs to be done. Literature has to be written, printed, and distributed to groups and individuals who ask for it. Inquiries from both new and established groups have to be answered. Individual requests for information about A.A. and its program of recovery from alcoholism have to be filled. Assistance and information have to be provided for doctors, members of the clergy, business people, and directors of institutions. Sound public relations must be established and maintained in dealing with press, radio, television, motion pictures, and other communications media. To provide for the sound growth of A.A., early members of the Society, together with nonalcoholic friends, established a custodial board — now known as the General Service Board

of Alcoholics Anonymous. The board serves as the custodian of A.A. Traditions and overall service, and it assumes responsibility for the service standards of A.A.'s General Service Office at New York. The link between the board and the A.A. groups of the U.S. and Canada is the A.A. General Service Conference. The Conference, comprising about 93 delegates from A.A. areas, the 21 trustees on the board, General Service Office staff members, and others, meets for several days each year. The Conference is exclusively a consultative service agency. It has no authority to regulate or govern the Fellowship. Thus the answer to "Who runs A.A.?" is that the Society is a uniquely democratic movement, with no central government and only a minimum of formal organization.