

# DISTRICT 54 GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE NORTHEAST TEXAS AREA OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## PREFACE

This Guiding Principles document contains information about the suggested manner in which District 54 goes about conducting its service work and is intended in the spirit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tradition, which states that “For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

It is not the intention that this document should replace or supersede any AA conference approved literature or service material, such as the AA Service Manual<sup>1</sup>, the books Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, AA Comes of Age, and the pamphlets *The AA Group*, *AA Tradition – How It Developed*, *The Twelve Traditions Illustrated*, and *The Twelve Concepts Illustrated*. Rather, this document is intended to describe how this district has traditionally gone about its business of trying to make 12<sup>th</sup> Step work possible so that the AA message may reach the next suffering alcoholic. This document is not intended to be a rigid set of rules, but rather a set of generally used methods for going about district business, a template that can act as a compass for future actions.

### 1) District Trusted Servants

- a) District Officers shall consist of:
  - i) District Committee Member
  - ii) Alternate District Committee Member
  - iii) Secretary
  - iv) Treasurer
- b) District Committee Chairs
  - i) Treatment Facilities
  - ii) Correctional Facilities
  - iii) Cooperation with the Professional Community / Public Information
  - iv) Intergroup Liaison
  - v) Grapevine / La Viña Representative
  - vi) Alternates
    - (1) See the AA Service Manual, S-18 and p. S-42.
- c) Method of Selection
  - i) See “Selection of Trusted Servants” under Panel Rotation.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, references to the AA Service Manual refer to the 2003 – 2004 Edition.

d) Service Responsibilities

i) Common Duties and Qualifications

- (1) The home group of each district trusted servant will be a group within District 54.
- (2) Is it suggested that district officers be past GSRs.
- (3) Each district trusted servant should attend all district meetings. DCM, Alternate DCM, and Standing Committee Chairs should also attend Area Assemblies, Southwest Region AA Service Assemblies and Southwest Regional Forums.
- (4) On rotating out of their respective offices, each trusted servant should assist the incoming trusted servant with information and suggestions for fulfilling the responsibilities of the service position. Meeting minutes and other documents (workshop flyers, etc.) should be turned over to the incoming trusted servant.
- (5) Each district trusted servant should submit receipts with a cover sheet detailing expenses for reimbursement, within 30 days of the expense, or no more than 2 district meeting afterwards.
- (6) Expenses not budgeted require prior District approval.

ii) General Service Representative (GSR)

- (1) Each group is autonomous and elects its own GSR. It is suggested in the AA Service Manual (p. S-24) that each GSR have at least 2 years of sobriety.
- (2) The GSR's responsibilities include attending monthly District meetings and Area Assemblies. Other duties are described in the AA Service Manual on pages S23-S25.

iii) District Committee Member (DCM) Responsibilities

- (1) The duties of the DCM are described in the AA Service Manual on pages S28-S30.
- (2) In addition, the DCM schedules district meetings and sets the agenda in accordance with the conscience of the district.

iv) Alternate DCM Responsibilities

- (1) The main duties of the Alternate DCM are described in the AA Service Manual on page S30.
- (2) Maintains a District Speaker List for the sole use of District GSR's. (District Speaker List is made up of the following: District 54 GSR's, Alt. GSR's and other District 54 Trusted Servants.)
- (3) Maintains the district archives, encouraging groups to provide copies of their group histories.

v) Secretary Responsibilities

- (1) Records the minutes of each district meeting and distributes them to all groups and district trusted servants in a timely fashion.
- (2) Maintains a confidential list of all district trusted servants, GSRs, Alternate GSRs, and groups within the district.
- (3) Assures that copies of historical documents of records are submitted to the district archives for permanent retention.
- (4) Maintains this Guiding Principles document, assuring that incremental versions are clearly distinguishable.
- (5) Maintains a calendar of service events, including district meetings, assemblies, forums, state conventions, and any others as appropriate.
- (6) Distributes copies of the approved monthly District minutes via US postal service and email, within 10 days following the District meeting to the following: (*Amended 3.6.05*)

- i) All groups in District 54 via US mail.
  - ii) District 54 Trusted servants, GSRs, and Alternate GSRs who have requested to receive district communications via US postal service.
  - iii) Minutes will be e-mailed to all District 54 members having e-mail.
- vi) Treasurer Responsibilities
  - (1) As directed by the district, conducts all financial activities of the district.
  - (2) Chairs the budget committee and participates in the year-end process of preparing the next year's budget to be presented for approval and voted on in December of each year.
  - (3) Maintains a business banking account for the deposit and disbursement of district funds.
  - (4) Secures a Post Office Box for receiving contributions.
  - (5) Collects 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition donations from groups and members, and regularly deposits the funds in the district checking account.
  - (6) Provide monthly reporting to the district, including the current balance sheet, a summary of group contributions, and budget vs. actual income and expenses.
  - (7) Maintain forms and procedures for expense reimbursement, and be available to district trusted servants to show how they should be used.
  - (8) Make certain that all of the districts financial activities are in compliance with bank, IRS and any other appropriate business guidelines.
- vii) District Committees Chairs
  - (1) A general description of each district committee can be found in the AA Service Manual on pages S18-S19, and the duties of committee chairs are described on page S-42.
  - (2) Treatment Facilities, Correctional Facilities, Cooperation with the Professional Community/Public Information, and Grapevine/La Viña committee chairs should hold committee meetings with the respective committee representatives from groups within the district.
  - (3) District committee chairs should attend the appropriate NETA committee meetings for their area of service. It is also desirable that committee chairs participate in Intergroup level activities for their area of service, wherever possible and appropriate.
- e) Resignation of Service Workers
  - i) In the event that a Trusted Servant has to resign, this should be done in writing to the DCM.
  - ii) Filling Vacancies Due to Resignations During the Panel
    - (1) In the event of a vacancy of a District trusted servant office, if multiple candidates express an interest in the position, elections based on 3<sup>rd</sup> Legacy Procedures will be held.
    - (2) If there are not multiple candidates for a vacant position, the DCM shall appoint a suitable replacement to complete the panel subject to District disapproval.
- f) Inactive Service Workers
  - i) The AA Service Manual discusses Inactive Service Workers on page S-33.
  - ii) The district should consider replacement of trusted servants in the event that they miss 2 consecutive district meetings or are not fulfilling their duties.

## **2) The Process of Making and Passing a Motion**

- a) A motion is made from the floor by the original presenter, who can be any eligible voter. (Only one motion may be on the floor at a time). The motion should be made in writing.

- b) Eligible voters are defined as the following.
  - i) Any GSR from a group within District 54.
  - ii) If a group's GSR is not present, then the Alternate GSR may vote.
  - iii) If neither a group's GSR nor Alternate GSR are present, anyone present whose home group is within District 54 may vote, if designated by their group to do so.
  - iv) District Officers (see section 1a)
  - v) District Committee Chairs (see 1b)
  - vi) If a District Committee Chair is not present, the Alternate Chair for that committee may vote.
- c) The motion is seconded (If not, then motion dies for lack of a second).
- d) The motion is then read back by the Secretary.
- e) The floor is opened for the purpose of allowing those present to ask questions for clarification of the motion, and the presenter may reword, modify, withdraw, or postponed the motion. (The merits of the motion are not yet discussed at this point.) At this point, the District Committee Member may recommend that the motion be postponed and put on the agenda for the following district meeting. Some of the factors that a DCM may consider when making this request might be:
  - i) Could the motion break one of the Traditions or Concepts?
  - ii) Will it effect the groups, other districts, or A.A as a whole?
  - iii) Does it go against the district's current policies?
  - iv) Should the motion be tabled until all pertinent information has been gathered for a well-informed group conscience?
  - v) Should the GSRs have the opportunity to get feedback from their groups before proceeding?
- f) If modified, the Secretary reads back the modified motion.
- g) The DCM opens the floor for discussion of the motion.
- h) Discussion may be halted by anyone with a request to close discussion (i.e. by "calling the question").
- i) A vote is then taken to close discussion. If it passes, then vote is taken on the actual motion as it stands on the floor. If it does not pass, then discussion continues.
  - i) "On simple matters, a majority vote is enough – even a 'sense of the meeting' can take the place of a vote at times. In such a case, the chair asks: 'Is it the sense of the meeting that...?' If there are no 'nays,' it is apparent there is accord.
  - ii) Meetings may be fairly informal, but the attention of the entire meeting should be on one subject at a time, without the disruptive influence of private conversations.
  - iii) An assembly makes its own rules, and the chairperson should be sure that all members are aware of current suggested procedures in the manual. If members want to make a change in the rules, it should be done *before* a vote is taken, or *before* an election is conducted." (AA Service Manual, p. S-41)

- j) The DCM then calls for any minority voice. After hearing the minority voice, anyone who voted in the majority may call for a revote. (Each person who has voted in the minority has the right to speak, if they wish.)
  - i) If a member in the majority moves for a revote, those present vote on whether to reopen the floor for voting on the motion.
- k) If the motion to revote passes, the original motion is then read back again by the Secretary and a revote is taken.
- l) Upon the second vote, if the motion does not pass, it may not return to the floor during the current meeting.

### **3) District budgetary and financial procedures**

- a) The DCM will designate a budget committee at the end of each year, chaired by the district Treasurer. This budget would be presented for approval in December.
- b) If funds allocated in the budget for a particular committee or expense will not be used, those funds may be reallocated, at any time, with the approval of the district. It is suggested that both committee chairs be consulted before any reallocation be considered.
- c) At the end of each panel rotation, any funds held by the district in excess of the budget-defined operating expenses plus prudent reserve should be contributed to other AA service entities, such as Area 65.
- d) All checks disbursed by the Treasurer. In an emergency, if the Treasurer is not available, the DCM is authorized to disperse funds.
- e) It is suggested that each district committee should have a distinct account through the Dallas Intergroup for the purposes of buying literature.
- f) Any time funds are paid in advance, such as for Assemblies, receipts and unused funds should be returned no later than within 30 days after the expense is incurred.
- g) The DCM should perform a quarterly review the districts bank balances.
- h) If a contribution is received for a specific committee, it should not be included in the district budget as general revenue.

### **4) Panel Rotation**

- a) District 54 will follow the same panel rotation cycle as Area 65. (See the AA Service Manual, S46, the AA Group pamphlet, p. 34)
- b) The outgoing DCM should schedule a meeting for incoming and outgoing officers to share experience. This meeting would have the dual purpose of facilitating the process of handing off service materials and responsibilities, as well as being a Sharing Session (as described in the AA Service Manual on page S-36).
- c) Selection of Trusted Servants
  - i) District Officers are elected in a District Meeting no less than 30 days prior to the Area 65 Election Assembly in even numbered years, using The Third Legacy Procedures outlined in the AA Service Manual (p. S20).

- ii) The eligible voters for district elections are the same as those defined in the section “The Process of Making and Passing a Motion” (see section 2b).
  - iii) Eligible candidates must be present, and indicate their willingness and ability to serve.
  - iv) District Committee Chairs are to be selected by the incoming and outgoing DCM, and presented for disapproval before the district.
  - v) The Secretary, Treasurer, and Committee Chairs may select their own alternates and present them for disapproval before the district.
- d) Inventory
- i) A district inventory should be held near the end of the panel rotation.
  - ii) The DCM will select a moderator and schedule a district inventory to take place in November prior to the panel rotation.
  - iii) The Secretary will take notes during the inventory.
  - iv) The DCM will form an ad hoc committee to review the inventory and make suggestions as it finds appropriate.
  - v) The Secretary will send a copy of the inventory and any ad hoc committee recommendations to the Area 65 Delegate and the General Service Office.

**5. District 54 Website** (*Amended 3.6.05*)

- a) The District 54 website will serve as a place for District 54 members to become informed about District 54 Officers, Standing Committees, District meetings, District minutes, and other upcoming events.
- b) The District website is a function of the PI/CPC committee.
- c) PI/CPC committee chair is responsible for the maintenance of the District 54 website (same as NETA and GSO) and may establish a District 54 website committee (including a webmaster) to assist with this task.
- d) The website will preserve the anonymity of AA members.
- e) The website is a work in progress and any suggested changes will be brought to the District 54 PI/CPC chair for review. The PI/CPC chair will bring changes to the District for consideration for approval.