



# THE S-ANON SERVICE STRUCTURE

## 1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The S-Anon service structure provides a framework for members to volunteer their time and skills in the service of the S-Anon fellowship as a whole. This document briefly describes the responsibilities of the two groups of trusted servants that make up the Traditional and Legal service structures, and shows how they are accountable to those they serve. The graphic below is a visual depiction of the structure as a whole.

As part of the **Traditional** service structure, members represent their Area groups. S-Anon groups hold the ultimate authority and responsibility for S-Anon World Services (C1). See Section 4, below, for additional information.

As part of the **Legal** service structure, members serve on the S-Anon Board of Trustees (BOT) or on one of the BOT Committees (C2). See Section 5, below, for additional information.

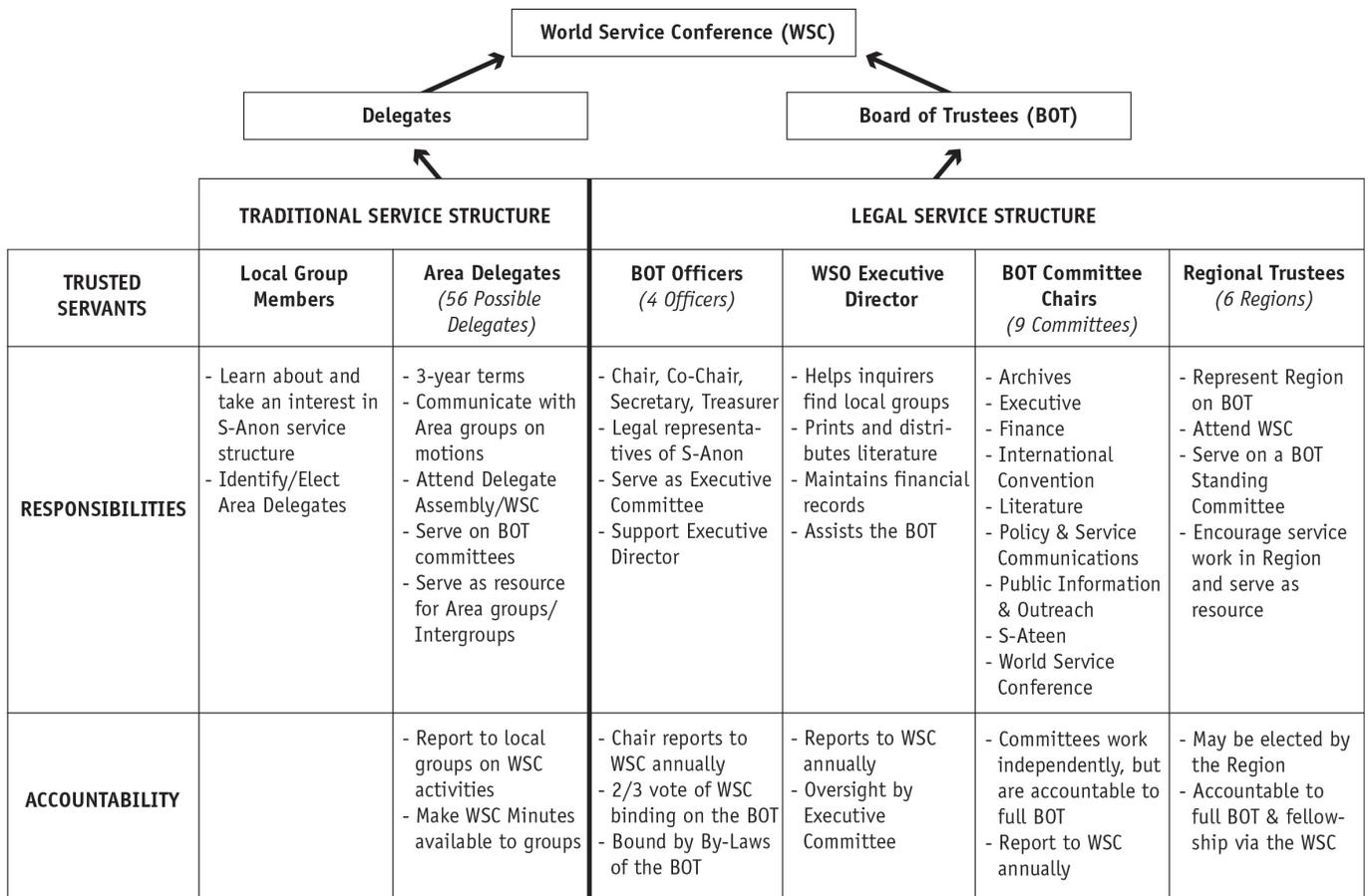
References to S-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service appear as (C1), (C2), and so forth.

References to the *S-Anon/S-Ateen Service Manual* are shown in text as SSSM, with page number.

## 2. WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE S-ANON SERVICE STRUCTURE?

The S-Anon service structure may seem unrelated to the more urgent concerns we discuss in our local groups. But soon we realize that "someone" must have created the literature we use. "Someone" must be making sure that the telephone is answered at the World Service Office. We may wonder, "Where does the money go that groups are asked to donate to support the World Service Office?" "Who makes sure that the Trustees are conducting the legal affairs of the fellowship in accordance with S-Anon's Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service?"

The purpose of this material is to provide some answers to questions like these, and to show that each member and each local group is a vital part of a worldwide fellowship (C4). Experience has shown us that as soon as our recovery is on solid footing, and as our gratitude for the S-Anon



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fellowship increases, we want to give back some of what we have been given. We ask you to explore the possibility of using your skills and talents to serve the S-Anon fellowship above the group level. This service work has very real potential to enhance your personal recovery. Ultimately, the S-Anon service structure begins and ends with *you*. You can be there for the next person, as someone was there for you.

### 3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF HAVING TWO SERVICE STRUCTURES?

The Traditional service structure follows the pattern that has worked for other 12-Step fellowships, placing decision-making authority in the hands of the Area Delegates, representing local groups. S-Anon is also a legal entity, a 501c3 organization, and as such has certain legal requirements. The BOT fulfills those requirements. The Traditional and Legal service structure processes operate simultaneously. Each service structure has unique service positions, and the S-Anon fellowship is best served when these two bodies work in harmony (C7). The graphic on page one shows the responsibilities undertaken by each group of participants.

### 4. TRADITIONAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

Responsibilities and accountability of participants in the Traditional service structure are described below.

**4a. LOCAL GROUPS.** This is where most of us begin our personal recovery journey by working the Twelve Steps of S-Anon. If the group is healthy and functioning well, discussion of the Twelve Traditions of S-Anon keeps us on track and helps to solve group problems. Group service positions are established, and the group grows and prospers. If an Intergroup is operating in the local area, local groups may elect Group Service Representatives (GSRs) to attend Intergroup meetings and report back to their groups on the matters of interest to all the local groups.\* (SSSM, p. 35-36)

As mentioned in Section 1, above, S-Anon *groups* hold the ultimate authority and responsibility for the functioning of the fellowship as a whole (C1). How does a local group exercise that authority and responsibility? They do this by electing an Area (state or province) Delegate, giving that Delegate feedback, when requested, and taking an interest in the Delegate's report after she or he attends the World Service Conference. Groups may also reach out to their Regional Trustee;

this trusted servant is their representative in regard to the legal aspects of the fellowship structure.

**4b. AREA DELEGATES.** Each Area (51 U.S. areas [CA has 2]); 3 Canadian Areas (Eastern, Central and Western), 1 phone meeting and 1 email meeting "Area"—total 56) can elect or affirm a Delegate by a method of its own choosing. If an Area is not organized enough to hold an election, a willing member may and contact any other groups in the Area to obtain a consensus to act as the Area Delegate on their behalf. Either way, the responsibility and accountability is the same. The Area Delegate meets by phone/email with other Delegates, brings the Area-wide group conscience to the WSC, participates in WSC discussion and voting on issues that affect S-Anon as a whole, and serves on a BOT Committee. After the WSC, they report to groups in their Area on decisions reached. (SSSM, p. 36-38)

### 5. LEGAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

The Board of Trustees (BOT) is the legal entity responsible for stewardship of S-Anon's funds and administration of services (C6, C7). Most important, the Board serves as guardian of the S-Anon Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the World Service Conference Charter (SSSM, p. 39-41). The BOT is governed by the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees (SSSM, p. 157); responsibilities and accountability of the S-Anon Trustees are described below.

**5a. REGIONAL TRUSTEES.** North America is divided into 6 Regions, each of which may elect a Trustee. Composition of the regions is shown in the SSSM on page 46. Regional Trustees historically have been volunteers, elected by the BOT, and if a Region is not organized enough to elect a Trustee, vacancies still may be filled in this manner. Service structure processes are a work in progress, and Regional Trustee responsibilities are evolving even as this is being written. It is an exciting time to be a Regional Trustee. Regional Trustees actually elected by their Region can best represent the needs and desires of the groups they serve and can be held accountable by those same groups.

**5b. BOT STANDING COMMITTEES.** Eight standing committees were created in 2004 when the current Legal service structure was adopted, and the BOT has since created a Policy and Service Communications Committee to add to the original eight as shown in the graphic on page one. BOT Committee Chairs serve as Trustees-at-Large. They coordinate the activities of the Committee and report to the full BOT in a monthly written report detailing activities and expenditures. Each committee works independently, but final review and approval of the implementation of all committee work rests with the full BOT (C10, C12-Wiii). Committee descriptions, terms of office, member-

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\* Intergroups exist to provide needed services to local groups; they are not governing bodies. Intergroups can facilitate and strengthen the service structure in an Area, but they are not part of the Traditional or Legal service structure.

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ship, and responsibilities are discussed in the SSSM, p. 46-53.

**5c. WORLD SERVICE OFFICE (WSO).** The WSO (C11) is the central headquarters for providing services to individuals and groups. It is fully accountable to the S-Anon fellowship through the Regional Trustees and the Executive Committee of the BOT (SSSM, p.47-48). The Executive Director of the WSO makes an annual report to the WSC and a monthly report to the BOT. The WSO helps inquirers find S-Anon groups and members; serves as a communication link; prints and distributes Conference Approved Literature; maintains financial records; assists the BOT and its committees, and serves as a first point of contact for media and referral agencies (SSSM, p. 54). The Executive Committee of the BOT, comprised of the BOT Officers and the Executive Director, oversees the daily activities of the WSO; approves financial transactions, sets WSO policy and procedures, and ensures that the WSO is adhering to those policies and procedures (SSSM, p. 47-48) (C8). The Executive Director is a paid special worker who also serves as a Trustee during the length of her or his employment.

**5d. BOT OFFICERS.** The Officers of the BOT include the Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. They are the representatives of S-Anon for purposes of signing legal and financial documents. Duties of the Officers are discussed in the SSSM, p. 43-45. The four Officers of the BOT, along with the Executive Director, comprise the Executive Committee (discussed above). The BOT Chair, in addition to monthly reports to the BOT, also reports to the WSC annually. All BOT Officers are accountable to the full BOT.

## 6. WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC)

The purpose of the WSC is to provide a forum where the issues and policies affecting all S-Anon and S-Ateen groups can be discussed and informed decisions can be made with all members of the fellowship being represented. The Traditional and Legal service structures come together annually at the WSC. The Area Delegates, Board of Trustees, and the Executive Director of the World Service Office are members of the WSC.

At the WSC, the Delegates and the Trustees hear reports from the Area Delegate Assembly, the BOT Chair and Treasurer, and the BOT standing committee chairs. By way of Motions presented at the WSC, discussion and voting on issues that may affect the S-Anon fellowship as a whole take place. Minutes of the WSC are available on the S-Anon website.

## 7. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As mentioned above, the operation of the S-Anon service structures, both Traditional and Legal, are works in progress. We have provided references to the existing *S-Anon/S-Ateen Service Manual*, dated 2007, but a portion of the information it contains is no longer current and is due to be updated. Both the Bylaws of the S-Anon Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference Charter have been revised since 2007, and up-to-date copies of those documents are available from the WSO. The S-Anon website is another source of valuable information. Go to [www.sanon.org](http://www.sanon.org) and click on the "Literature" tab, "Group Resources/Materials," and the "For Groups and Members" tab.

If you wish to communicate with a member currently serving in the Traditional or the Legal service structure, please contact the World Service Office and ask to be put in touch with an Area Delegate, Regional Trustee, or the Chair of a committee you are interested in. Any of these members will be happy to speak with you.



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