

**The General Service  
Structure  
Of  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**



**1952 - 1956**

**1957 - 1992**

# Why get involved with A.A. General Service?



- 1) Your sponsor has suggested it.
- 2) You're Group has asked you to.
- 3) You want to be with people that are excited and energized
- 4) You want to "freely share what you have been given."

It has been my experience that our Higher Power uses A.A. service work to prepare us with skills we will need in the future, either professionally or personally. So, when asked – consider it an offer to build a skill from your Higher Power.



# A.A.'s Legacy of Service

by Bill W.

## THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

YOUR THIRD LEGACY  
WILL YOU ACCEPT IT?

# Our Legacy of Service



## It's purpose

**Purpose:** *The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is expected to become the basic guardian of A.A. Tradition and World Services. It is especially hoped the Conference will lend guidance to, and perpetuate the Alcoholic Foundation (now known as the General Service Board) and the A.A. General Headquarters at New York City (G.S.O.). The Conference will be a service body only; never a government.*

# What is the difference between “service”. And “Service”?

While the words seem  
to be the same



The actions related to them  
are often very different in  
focus – but identical in their  
underlying spiritual  
principle!

**While the actions may seem similar – the focus differs.**



*One serves locally ➤ ➤  
the other serves Fellowship wide*

# Why General Service?

“We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services...”

Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, past chairperson of the board of trustees

# Why General Service?

“We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A, and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.”

Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, past chairperson of the board of trustees

# Definitions

**Disintegration:** Failing to do for the alcoholic what they **CANNOT** do for themselves!

**Over integration:** Doing for the alcoholic what they **WILL NOT** do for themselves.

***Carrying the A..A. Message –  
not the alcoholic!***



**OUR CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY  
TO THE NEWCOMER IS AN  
ADEQUATE PRESENTATION OF  
THE PROGRAM**

# Important Resources

A.A. Service Manual, A.A. Comes of Age  
Quarterly Report, Box 4-5-9

THE A.A. SERVICE MANUAL  
combined with  
TWELVE CONCEPTS  
FOR WORLD SERVICE

## Quarterly Report from GSO

AA Grapevine, Inc.  
Third Quarter, 2024

Activities of the General Service Board Including A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc.  
*This is a confidential bulletin, for use only within A.A.*

### General Service Board Meeting

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., held its quarterly meeting at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge on Monday, July 29, 2024. Scott H., Chair of the General Service Board, presided. All committee met during the weekend. Highlights of committee reports appear below.

### Archives

The committee discussed the 2024 Conference Committee on Archives Committee Consideration concerning the suggestions to "add appropriate images to enhance the contents, where applicable, as determined by the General Service Office (GSO) Archives Department" to the Archives Workbook. In the section "What to Collect" add "reference to digital materials in the suggested list of materials local archives might consider collecting." GSO Publishing Department is examining committee that the Publishing Department might explore, including formatting, reduction of wide margins, and blank pages. It was the sense of the committee that images to enhance the content might be added conditionally when feasible and not cost prohibitive. Another condition to keep in mind is that proposed image content should not result in additional pages or an increased staff workload.

At a future meeting of the committee, GSO's Archivist will present a draft Archives Workbook to include the 2024 Conference committee consideration regarding a reference to digital materials and proposed image content, as well as other updates, along with estimated costs.

The committee reviewed and discussed the Archives draft Deed of Gift Form. Following discussion, the committee approved the revised Archives Deed of Gift Form with a suggestion to clarify circumstances whereby the donated materials might not be retained by the GSO Archives. Additionally, in the section "Material Not Retained by the GSO Archives," change "GSO Archives" to "AAWS, Inc." in the sentence "I transfer, convey, and assign any literary and copyright rights, titles...to GSO Archives."

The committee received a report on Phase I of the Archives Audiovisual Preservation Project and considered the three discussion points outlined in the report. Following a wide-ranging discussion, the committee directed the Archives department that will outline what we need, what to maintain and other applicable conditions. Guidelines for the collection that will assist the Archivist assess the collection and create a list of materials for future digitization and materials that might be discarded, based on the progress report at the November 2024 meeting.

The committee reviewed a draft of proposed changes to the Archives "Digitizing Archival Materials Guidelines." Following discussion, the committee expressed satisfaction with the proposed changes as presented and approved the guidelines with one noted amendment to section "File Storage."

The committee had a robust discussion proposed changes to the Archives Classification. The committee will continue their discussion at the next meeting in November 2024. Additional examples of materials that might fall into classification categories was requested by the committee to aid in their discussion.

Mail address: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

edition  
UPDATED

box  
459

### Meet New GSO Staff Member Nick S.

The General Service Office (GSO) recently welcomed a new staff member, Nick S., who serves on the Corrections assignment. There currently are 12 staff assignments, or "desks," that are filled by a rotating group of professionals who are also A.A. members. With the help of staff assistants, staff members provide a broad range of services specific to their desk, which cover a wide range of areas related to A.A., while responding to thousands of inquiries from the fellowship. GSO's newest staff member Nick S. lives in Rockland County, New York, but says he is "still holding onto the Bronx," specifically the borough of Throgs Neck neighborhood where he grew up. "It was or non-occasion, whether I lived to drink for every occasion acceptable where I lived to drink for every occasion Columbus Day or just Tuesday," he says. "I started out drinking on the beaches of the Bronx at the age of 12. My first drunk was a blackout."

Nick's father died when he was an infant; his mother remarried and Nick grew up with three younger sisters. "Drinking became my first love," Nick says. "It made me feel comfortable in my own clothes. As time went on, I realized I was still drinking like a 12-year-old on the beaches, while my friends were getting married, going on vacations, and get-

"My journey began for real," he says. "I wasn't sure I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure I wanted to leave." So he stayed. "The first 90 days I was in recovery, I was asking for help but trying not to take advice," Nick says. "I felt like I was a giant bruise walking around. But I got up to the Third Step and everything kind of changed. My shoulders went down a little. I changed sponsors. I started really working the Twelve Steps. I believed in the program at that point."

News and Notes from the General Service Office of A.A.  
Vol. 71, No. 1 / Spring 2024  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

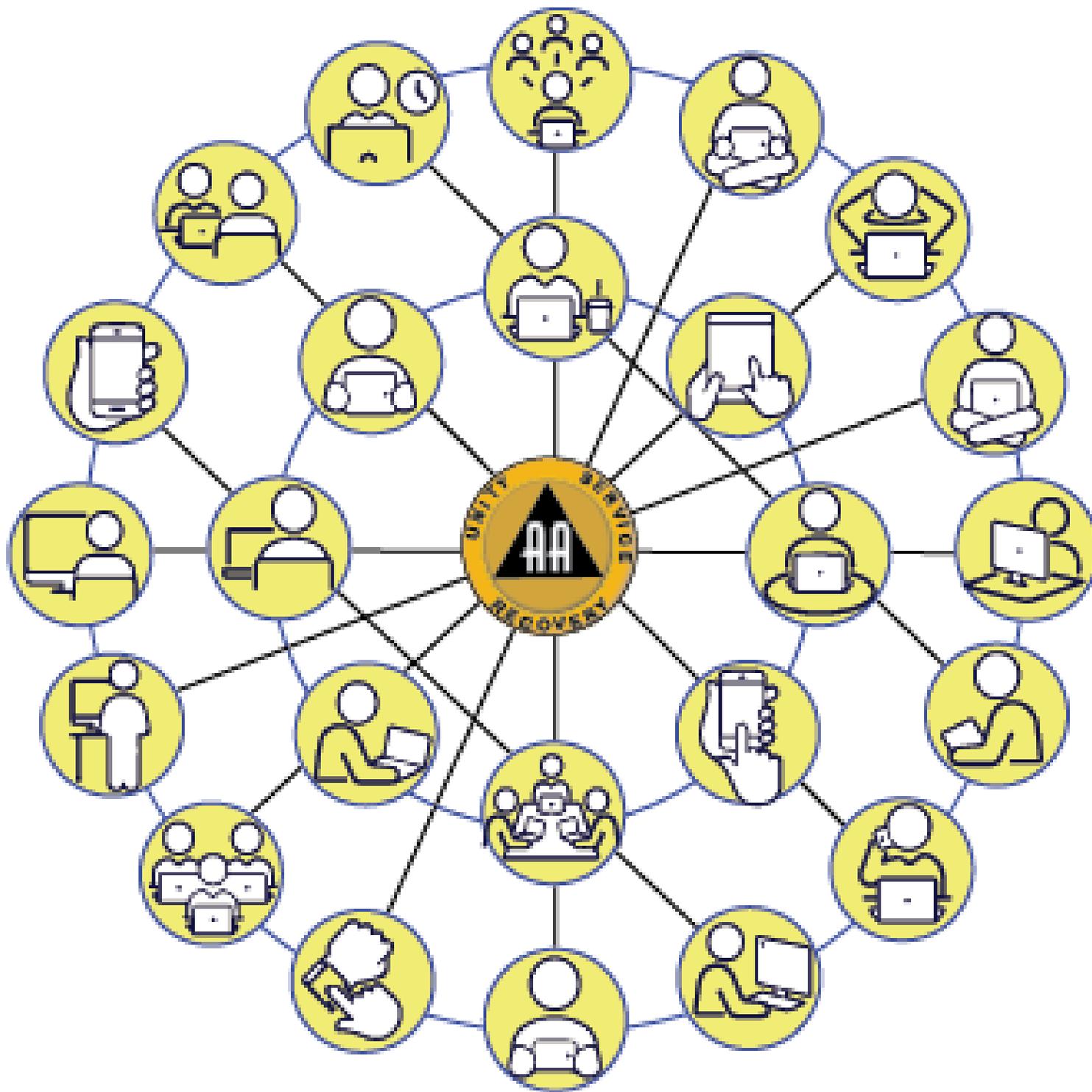
ting career jobs. Eventually I was getting these things myself — relationships and jobs — but I was just throwing everything away." Nick loved sports and had dreams of becoming either a teacher or a social worker. He attended college in New York, graduating with a liberal arts degree in American Urban Studies, but "the best thing I could think to do with the degree was to become a bartender," he says. "I hated everything about where I lived and the people I was around, but I was afraid to leave them, so that was my world."

Nick's heavy relationships started to suffer because of his heavy drinking and he knew it was the root of his problems. He wrote a letter to a woman he was dating saying he had a drinking problem and needed to do something about it. A year later, with a different names in the substitution) to apologize for his behavior once again when drunk. This girlfriend suggested he go to A.A., but he only lasted a month because, he says ruefully, "I had it figured out." But his drinking continued, unaltered by a stint in the New York Army National Guard. When Nick's stepfather died in 2016, his family relied on him more for support. Although he had a steady job at Con Edison, his drinking was

A.A. International Convention,  
St. Louis, Missouri, 1955

Available from G.S.O.

# THE CORE PRINCIPLE

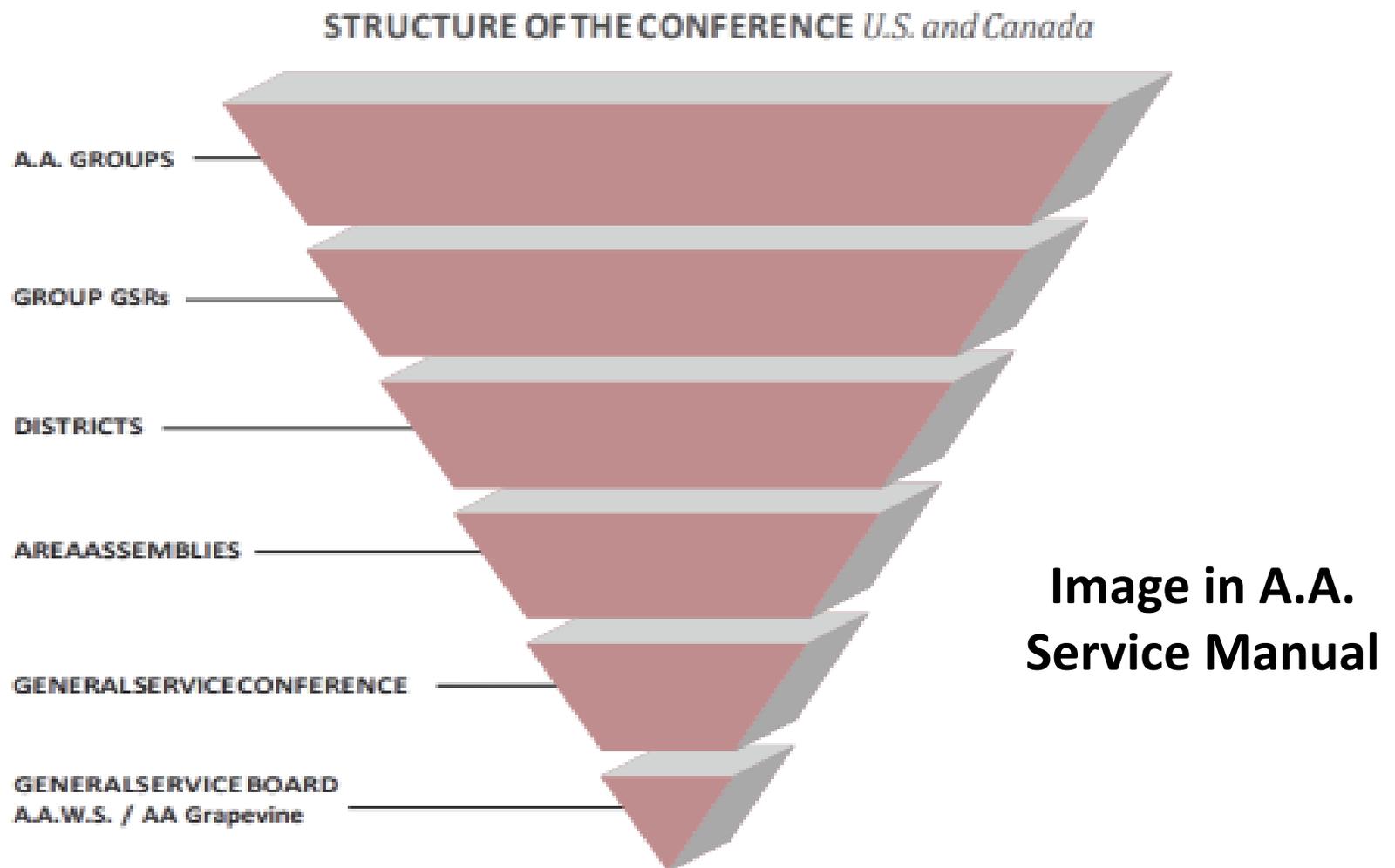


# COMMUNICATION

# A.A. General Service Structure

## STRUCTURE OF U.S./CANADA GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

THE "UPSIDE-DOWN TRIANGLE"



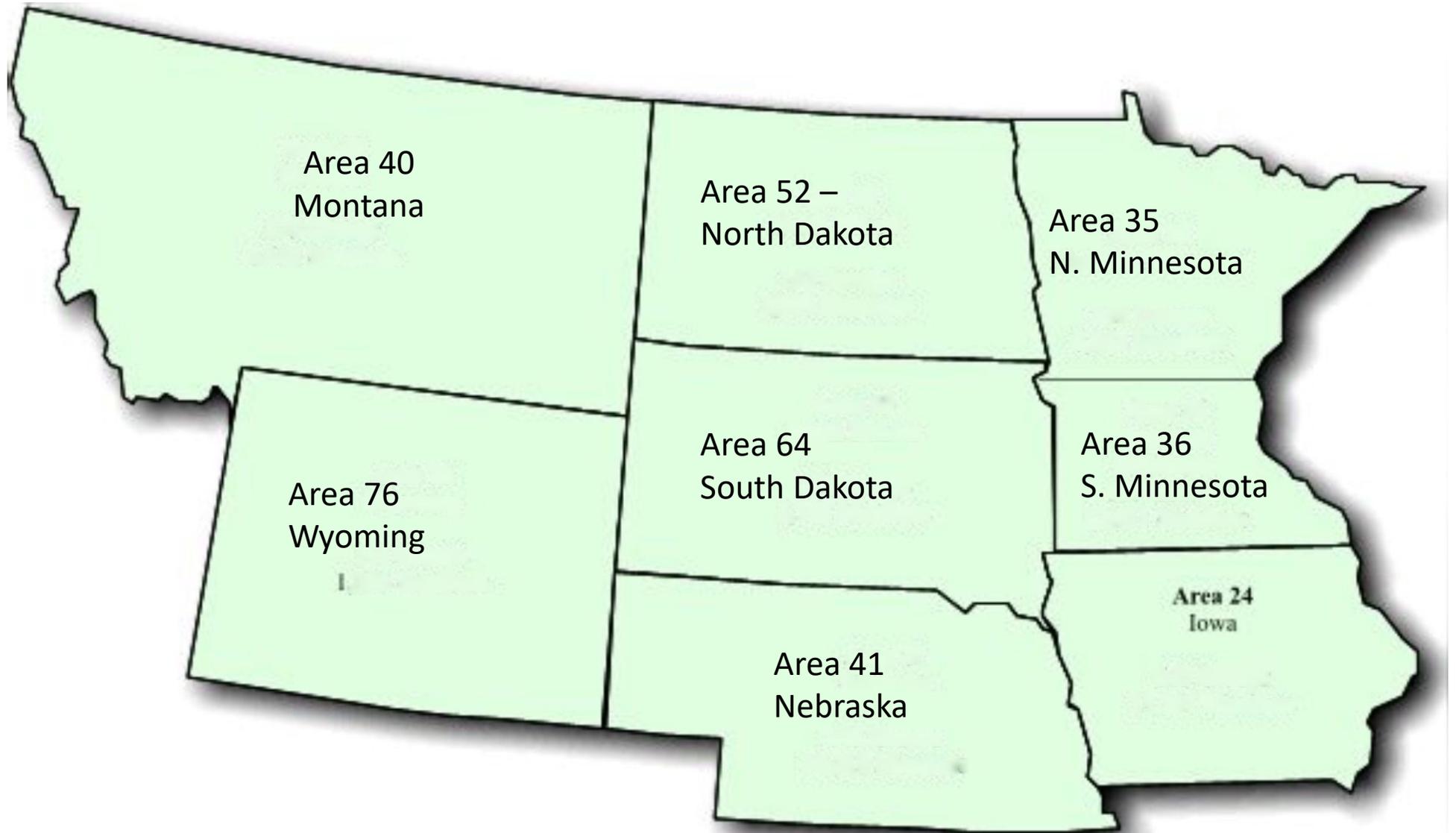
For more information about the U.S. and Canada General Service Conference Structure, please see [The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service \(BM-31\)](#).

# Regional Map of U.S. & Canada



Image in A.A.  
Service Manual

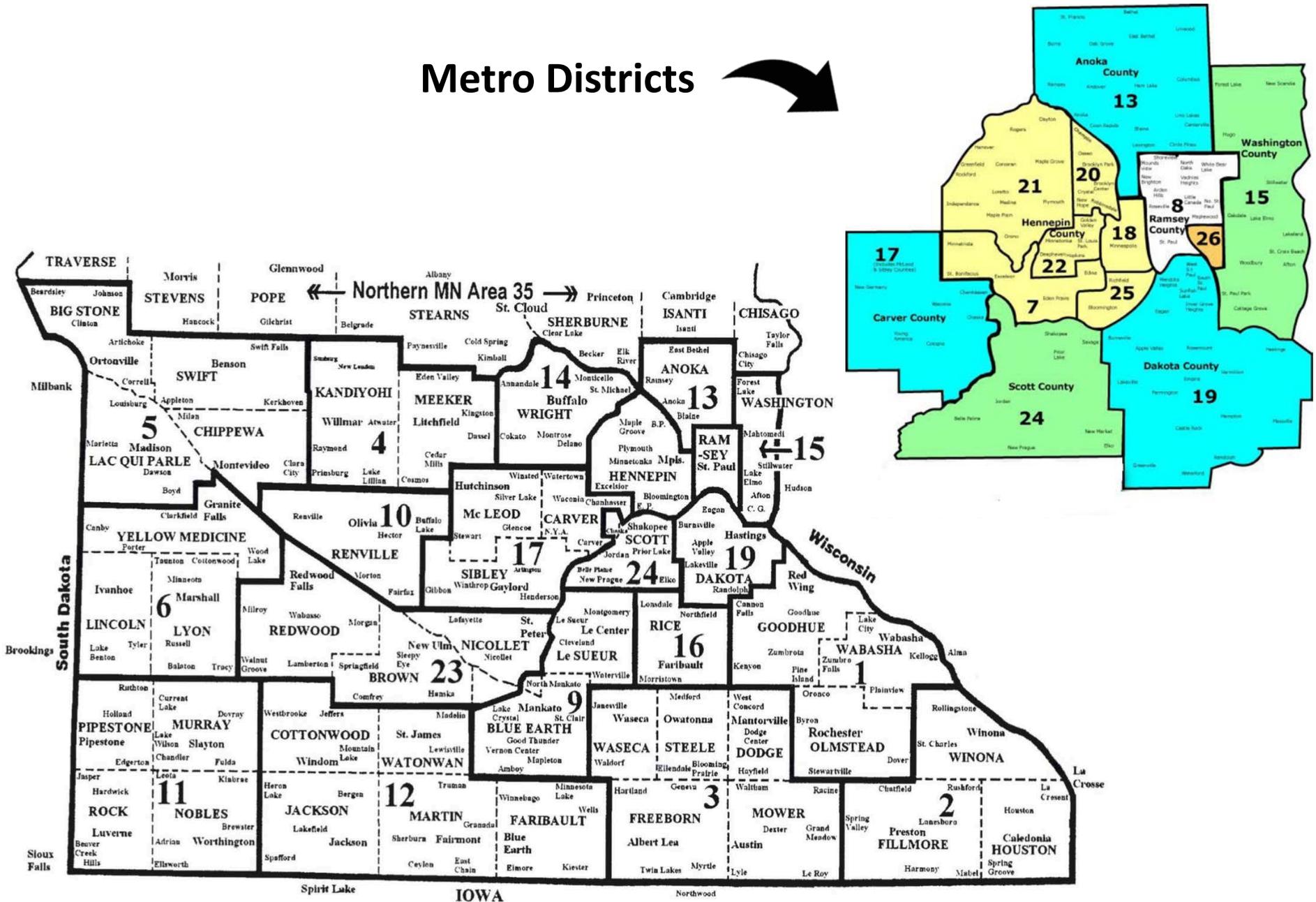
# West Central Region



**Statistics regarding each Area are printed annually in the General Service Conference Report, which is available from a D.C.M. or the Area Delegate**

# Southern Minnesota Area

## Metro Districts



**Southern Minnesota Area 36** Boundaries per 2012

# A.A. Acronyms

AAWS – Alcoholics Anonymous World Services

GSO – General Service Office

GSR – General Service Representative

GIR – Group Institutions Representative

GVR – Grapevine Representative

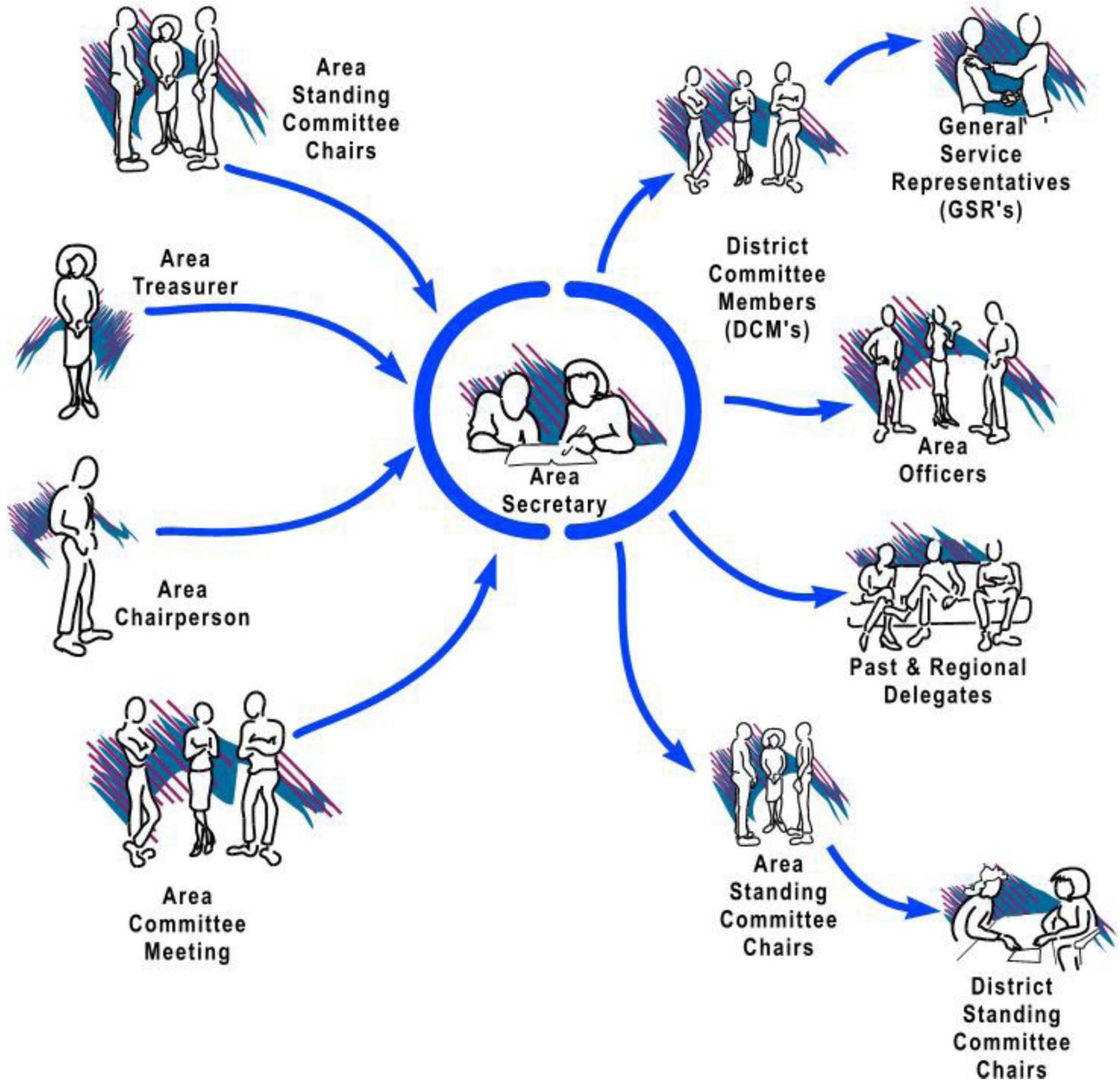
DCM – District Committee Member

PI – Public Information

CPC – Cooperation with the Professional  
Community

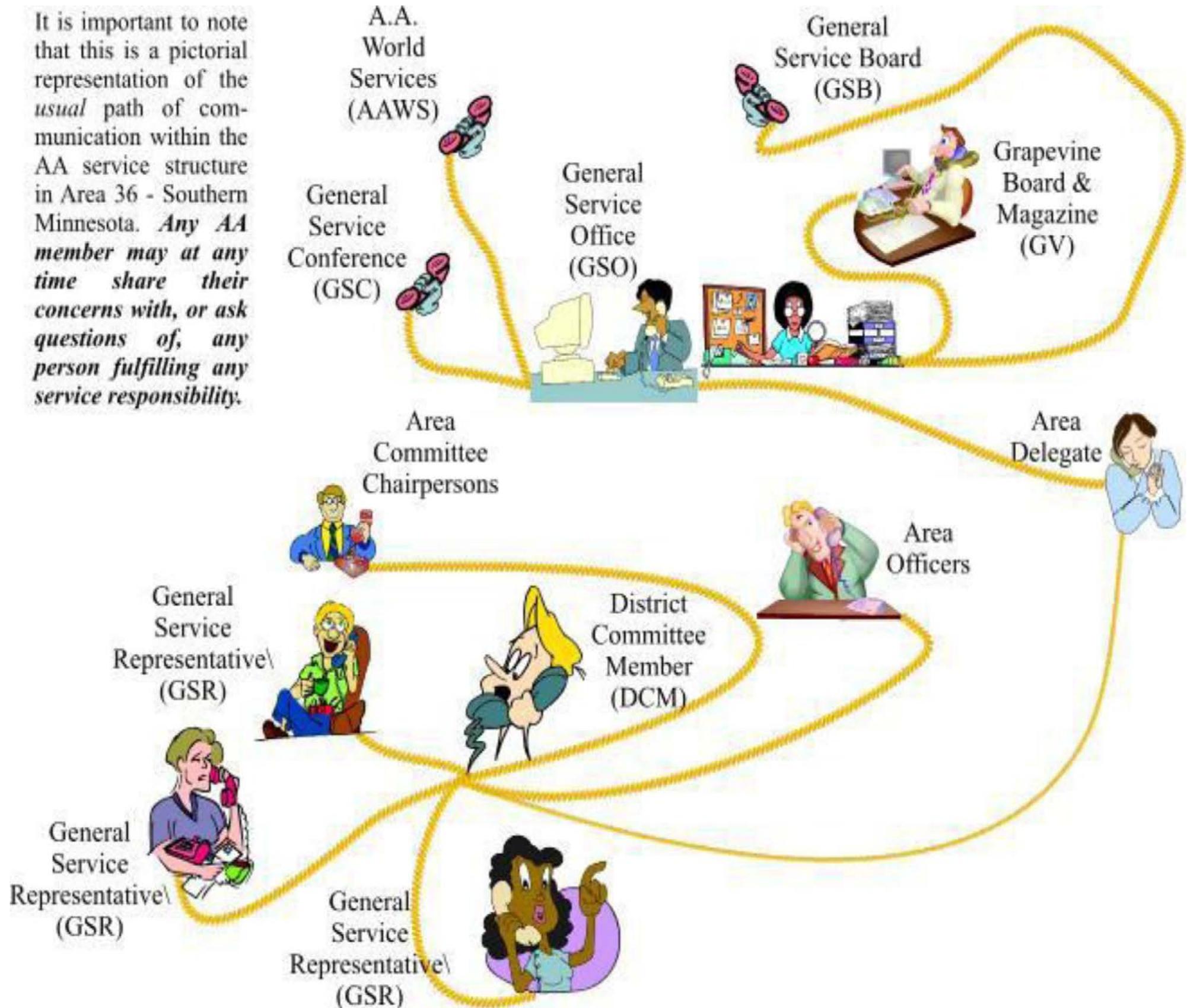
**Page 85 in the A.A. Service Manual provides descriptions of the most common terms used in General Service work.**

# Area Communication



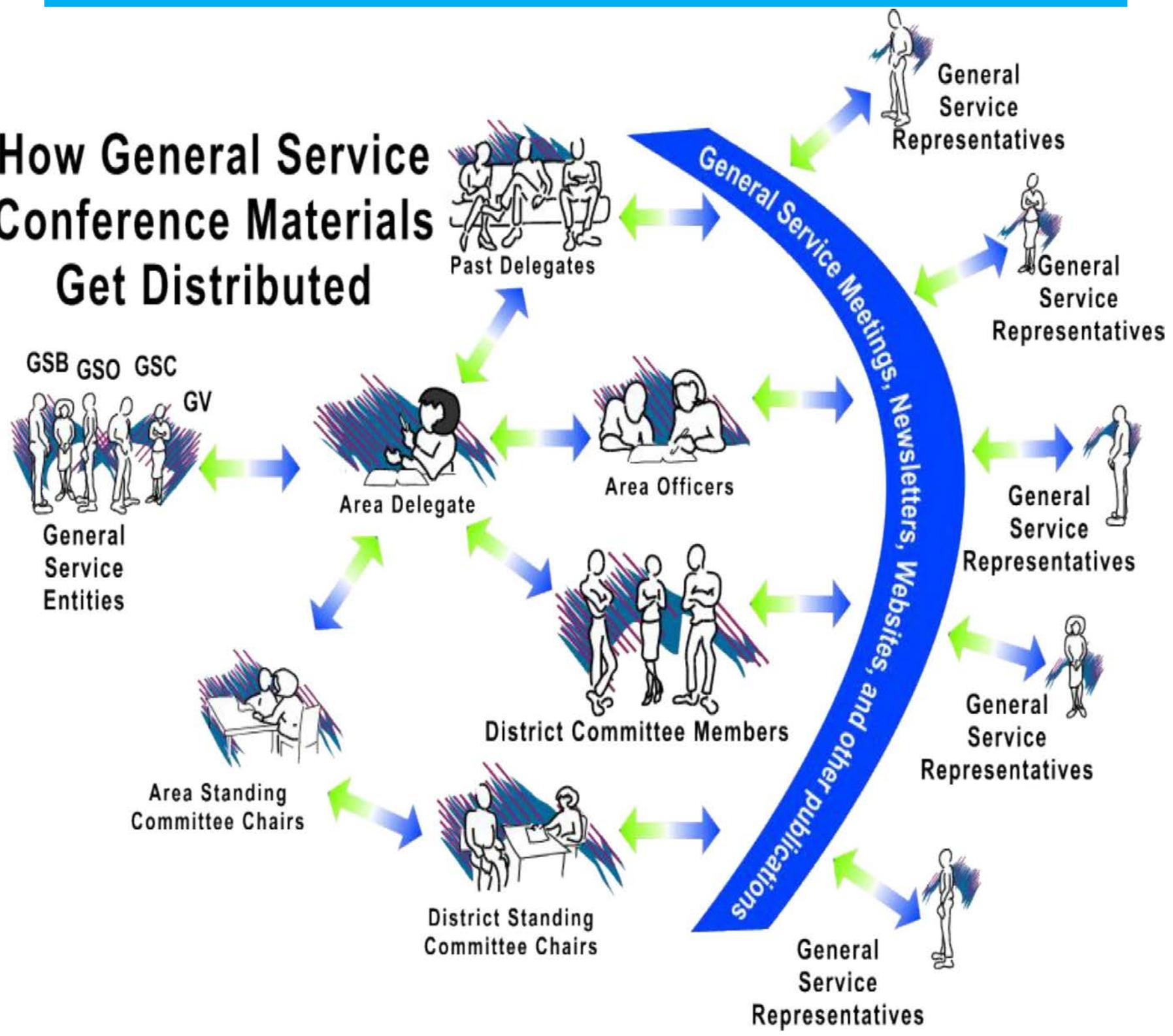
# A.A. Communication

It is important to note that this is a pictorial representation of the usual path of communication within the AA service structure in Area 36 - Southern Minnesota. *Any AA member may at any time share their concerns with, or ask questions of, any person fulfilling any service responsibility.*



# General Service Conference Communication

## How General Service Conference Materials Get Distributed



# Conference Process

1	An idea, suggestion, question, concern or subject comes from an A.A. member, GSR, DCM, area committee member, delegate, trustee, or G.S.O./GV staff, and may be shared or discussed at the group, district and area assembly and sent to the...	Conference Coordinator G.S.O.
2	The idea is reviewed by the G.S.O./GV Staff and forwarded to the...	Appropriate Trustees' Committee
3	which then may refer the matter to the...	Appropriate Conference Committee
4	which meets during the General Service Conference week and makes <b>recommendations</b> that are presented in the Committee Report to the...	General Service Conference
5	If a Conference Committee recommendation is approved, after full floor discussion, it becomes a... <b>Conference Advisory Action</b> , which becomes binding when approved by the...	General Service Board

*Note: This chart provides a broad overview of the process.*

# Committee System

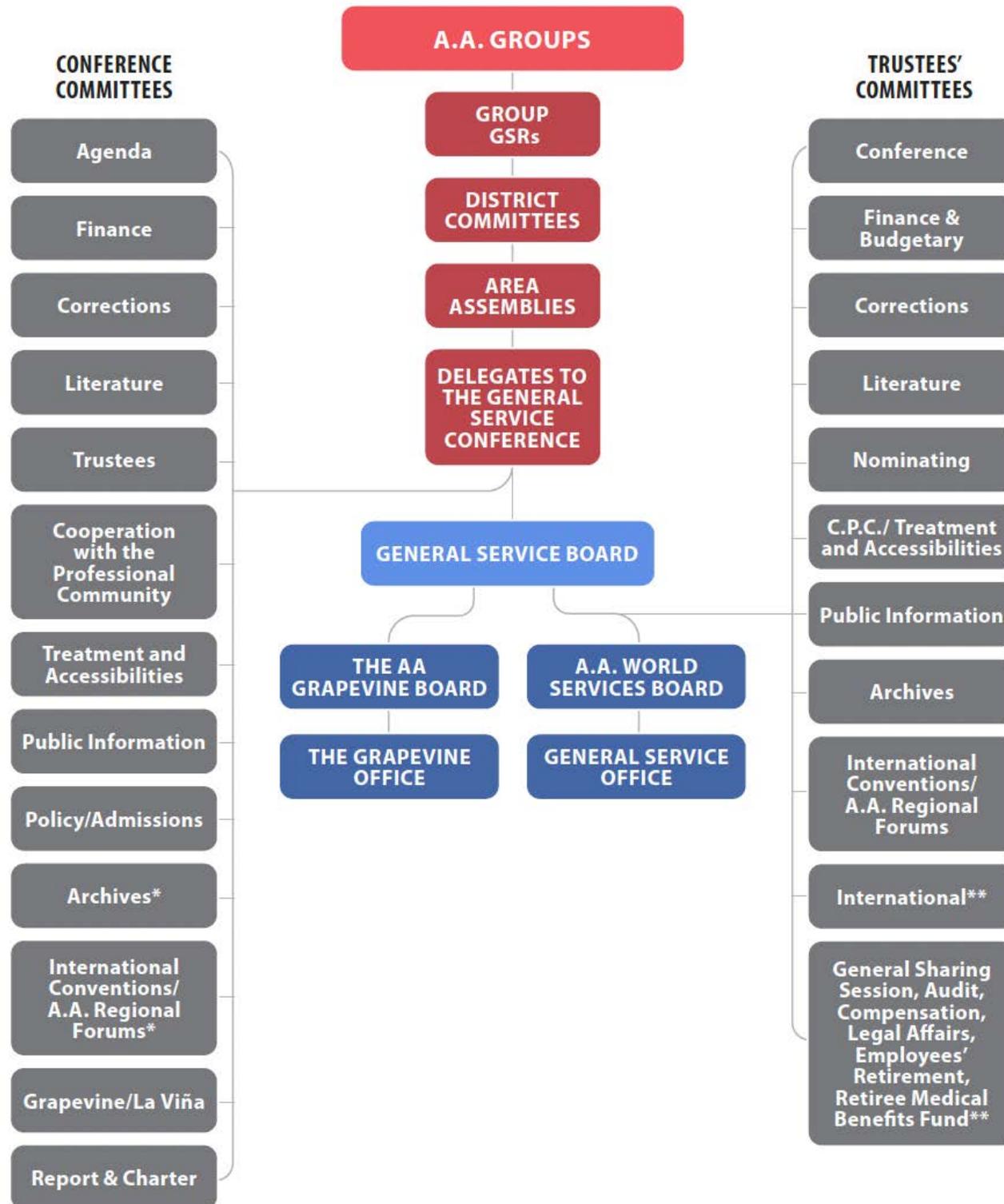
The General Service Conference is based on the committee system. This system has proven to be successful and is also used by our Area.

"Were it not for Committees it is doubtful that any Conference could get over a fraction of the ground it now covers. As the Conference has grown in size and influence the Committee's importance has grown even more" .... A.A. Service Manual

Currently, the deadline for submissions is September 15<sup>th</sup> for the Conference the following year.

# Conference Structure

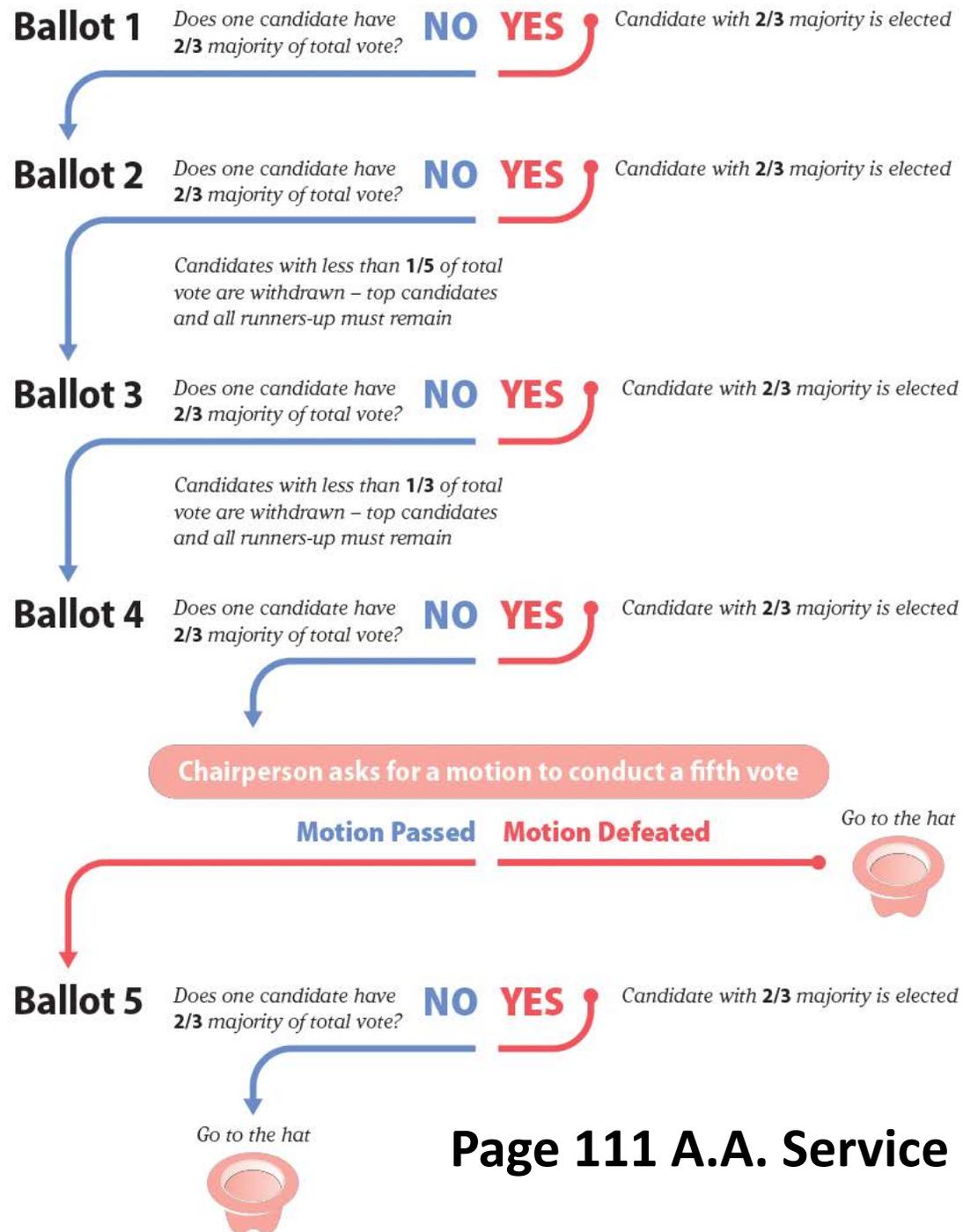
## THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE STRUCTURE *U.S. and Canada*



This can be found on page 104 in the A.A. Service Manual

# Third Legacy Procedure

## THE THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE



# Minority Opinion

After each vote on a matter of policy, the side which did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. Occasionally, a well-reasoned minority opinion can result in another vote, reversing the first decision. Ideally, of course, that is the rare exception; any matter should be so thoroughly considered *before* a vote is taken that the Conference's original conclusion will stand.

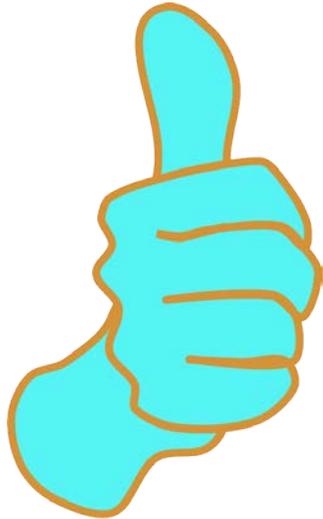
As noted in Concept V regarding the minority opinion, “*On many occasions the Conference has insisted on a continuing discussion even in certain cases when a two-thirds majority easily could have been obtained. Such a traditional voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to minority views. Unless it has been absolutely unavoidable, the Conference has usually refused to make important decisions on anything less than a two-thirds vote.*”

# Minority Opinion



When we respectfully and carefully consider the Minority Opinion – we ensure that our decisions have been well thought out.

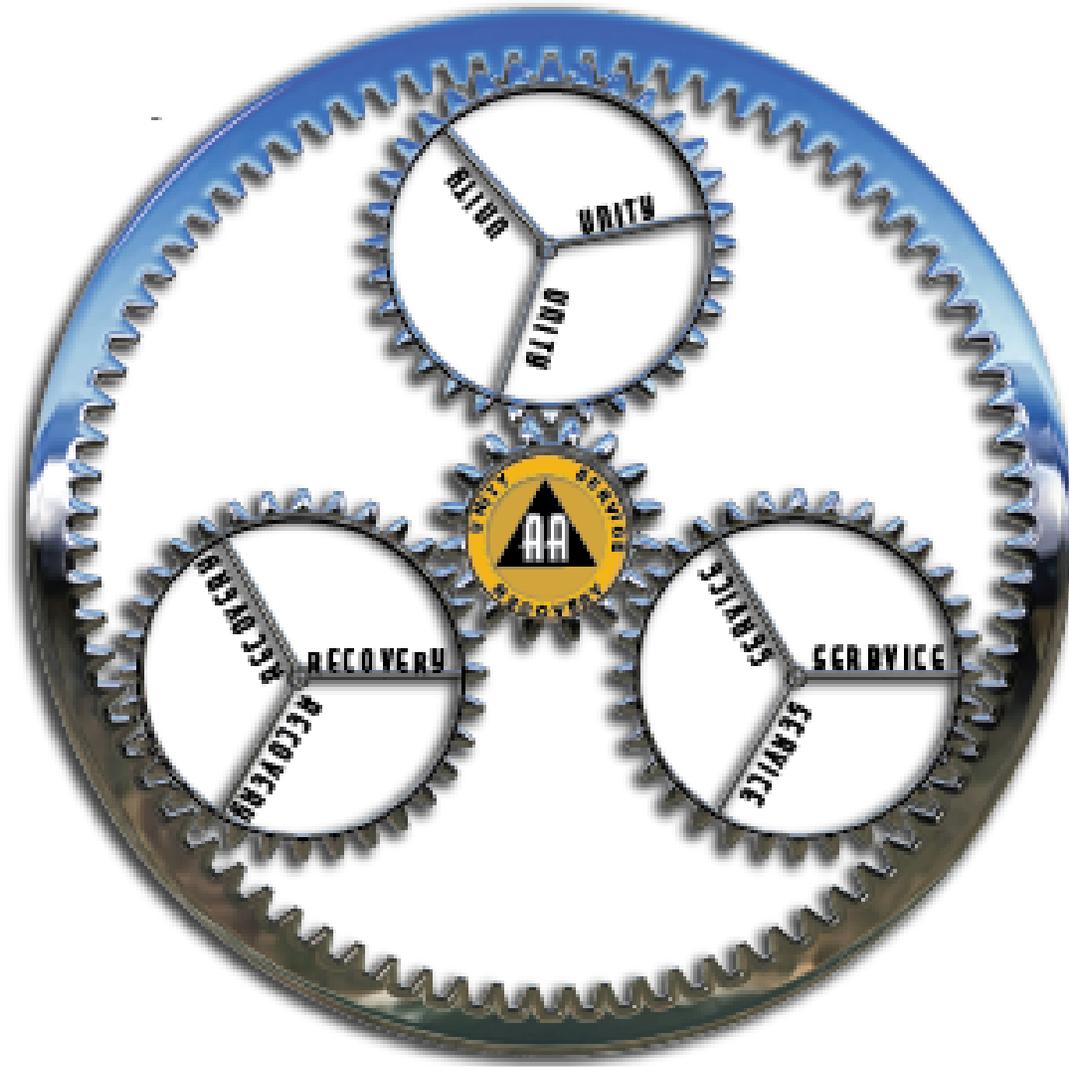
# Minority Opinion



**An easy Rule of Thumb to remember when a 2/3rds vote is needed, or when a simple majority will do:**

*If the matter under discussion will affect people outside the room – then 2/3rds is needed. If the matter under discussion will only affect those in the room for the duration of the meeting – a simple majority will be sufficient.*

# How the Conference Operates



For a detailed explanation of how the Conference operates, please see pages 41 – 43 in the A.A. Service Manual.

# Approximate Agenda



Opening Talk



Board Reports

General Service Board

A.A. W.S. Board

A.A. Grapevine Board



Area Delegates Report



Special Reports



Committee Meetings



Regional Trustee Elections



Committee Reports



Closing Branch

# TEAMWORK

**General Service is our focus  
Teamwork is our method.**



***Big Book page 89: "...see a  
fellowship grow up about you . . ."***

# FELLOWSHIP

The following slides present a description of “FELLOWSHIP” shared by Bernard Smith (Co-architect of A.A.’s service structure) in the book A. A. Comes of Age, page 276. It perfectly describes what both forms of service are intended to produce.

# FELLOWSHIP

*“Three conditions are necessary for true fellowship. The possession of a common ideal involving a complete release from selfishness and division. The discharge of a common task big enough to capture the imagination and give expression to loyalty. And the comradeship, the “togetherness,” thus involved as we find the joy and power of belonging to an organic society and engaging in a whole-time service.”*

# FELLOWSHIP

*“We can find it at its fullest extent where the ideal is highest and most exciting, where the task extends and integrates every once of our strength and every element of our being, where the comradeship is so solid and deep that we respond one to another without conscious effort, realize the unspoken need, and react to it spontaneously and at once.”*

# FELLOWSHIP

*“Under such conditions, all the vitality that we usually waste upon our jealousies and our vanities – upon keeping up appearances and putting other people in their place – becomes available for creative use.” (Canon C.E. Raven, British religious leader)*

# FELLOWSHIP

*“These words have meaning for A.A., I believe, not only as a definition of a true fellowship and our goals and attitudes but as reminders that A.A. is not a static, passive, social organism but, in its largest sense, a dynamic, creative force that releases our latent power to live and act constructively.” (Bernard Smith)*

A golden compass rose is centered on a map of a landmass, with a dark, ornate pendulum bob hanging from a chain above it. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color with a subtle pattern.

Thank You  
for joining us  
on this  
adventure!