

# New Meeting Starter Kit



**Marijuana Anonymous World Services**

+1-800-766-6779 (text/call)

[Marijuana-Anonymous.org](http://Marijuana-Anonymous.org)

[Outreach@MA12.org](mailto:Outreach@MA12.org)

*Thank you for contacting Marijuana Anonymous about starting a meeting!*

The only requirement for starting a Marijuana Anonymous (MA) meeting is that you be an MA member in recovery and that the meeting adheres to The Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions. *If you are very newly sober, starting a meeting can be a daunting proposition.* Consider building up some sobriety time, experience in the program, and a fellowship of other members before you decide to start a meeting yourself.

**Prior to starting a meeting, it is strongly suggested that you:**

- Attend a variety of MA meetings (Online / Phone / In-Person) so that you fully understand how the MA program and 12-Step meetings work.
- Have six months free from marijuana (ideally also from alcohol and other substances not taken as prescribed by a medical professional).
- Work with two or more members to start a new meeting, as there are multiple service positions to fill.

There are various responsibilities when starting an MA meeting. This New Meeting Starter Kit is full of resources and insights, gathered from the experiences of many MA members, but the majority of the work is yours to do.

The World Services Outreach committee has also created a [Meeting Resource Library](#) that contains a combination of Conference-approved and non-Conference-approved literature for any meeting to use and/or download. You are welcome to adapt any of the template documents for use in your meetings. [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Library](http://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Library)

Once the new meeting is ready to start, fill out the form to list it on the [Meeting Finder](#) via our List a Meeting page: [marijuana-anonymous.org/maws-meetings/add-meeting](http://marijuana-anonymous.org/maws-meetings/add-meeting)

Sincerely,

*Marijuana Anonymous World Services*

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Getting Started: Things to Consider Before You Begin</b>	<b>6</b>
Responsibilities When Starting an MA Meeting	7
Meeting Finances	7
Types of Meetings/Groups	8
Duties of the Meeting Host(s)	10
Attendance Verification	11
Maintaining a Safe Meeting Space	11
Business Meetings	12
Meeting Trusted Servants	14
<b>Group Resources</b>	<b>15</b>
Resource Library	15
Use of MA's Intellectual Property	15
Meeting Flyers	16
Books	17
Pamphlets	19
Milestone Tokens/Chips	19
Other Resources	20
<b>Meeting Maintenance</b>	<b>20</b>
MA Meeting Finder Listing	20
Membership Retention Suggestions	22
Group Inventory	24
<b>Understanding the Structure of the Fellowship</b>	<b>24</b>
Goal of the Service Structure: Fulfilling our Primary Purpose	24
Understanding Districts and Regions	25
Joining an Existing District/Region	26
Group Service Representatives (GSRs)	26
Delegates	27
MA World Services	27
Trustees/Board of Directors	27
Committees	28
Conference	28
Convention	29
Contributing to MA World Services	29

## **ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT:**

Email: [Support@MA12.org](mailto:Support@MA12.org) to request accommodations. MA World Services is willing to provide different formatting including an alternate font, larger-sized text, wider line spacing, different colors, or any other reasonable accommodations needed to access these materials.

## The MA Service Manual

In order to better understand the responsibility and scope of what Marijuana Anonymous World Services is and does, it is highly suggested to read and become familiar with the Service Manual. This manual will help all who are interested in MA to understand the need for service and the way in which it is rendered.

The purpose of the Service Manual is to act as a guide and to explain the organization and function of the service structure of MA. The procedures, guidelines, and service structures have been created to best unify MA and pursue the goal of helping the marijuana addict.

If you have downloaded the New Meeting Starter Kit, you should have received a link to the Service Manual within your email, however below are alternative ways to access the document:

- Available in PDF on the MA World Services website: [MA12.org/SM](http://MA12.org/SM)
- Optional - purchase a printed version from A New Leaf Publications, the publishing department of Marijuana Anonymous: [ANLP12.org](http://ANLP12.org)

## Using MA's Intellectual Property

*The information in the New Meeting Starter Kit is not intended to be all of the information you should know about MA's Intellectual Property ("IP") policies.*

*"Each MA group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or MA as a whole."*  
- [Tradition Four](#)

As an MA meeting/group, it is vital to adhere to particular elements within the Service Manual in order to protect the fellowship as a whole. Legally, you are also required to comply with MA's Intellectual Property Policy. MA's Intellectual Property includes MA World Services' trademarks (the phrase "Marijuana Anonymous," and the MA Logo *consisting of the abbreviation "MA" inside a triangle*, shown here) and MA World Services' copyrighted materials (including, but not limited to *Life with Hope*, the *Life with Hope 12 Step Workbook*, MA's service materials, including the Service Manual and handbooks, MA's Conference-approved pamphlets, the content of MA's website and app, *The 12 Questions of Marijuana Anonymous*, as well as MA's version of the A.A. owned *12 Steps*, *12 Traditions*, and *12 Concepts for Service*).



The specific rules for the meeting uses of MA's Intellectual Property (IP) are more thoroughly outlined in the MA IP Policy. For most cases, complying with the IP Policy is very straightforward, and more information on specifics are woven throughout this document where relevant.

*Please review the IP policy, comprehensive FAQs, and presentation slides for more important information about MA's IP policies and procedures: [MA12.org/IP-FAQ](http://MA12.org/IP-FAQ), [MA12.org/IP-Slides](http://MA12.org/IP-Slides) and [MA12.org/IP-Flyer](http://MA12.org/IP-Flyer)*

# Introduction

The topics contained in this section are vital to a basic understanding of the fellowship of MA and its meetings. We can gain an understanding of the basics of MA by taking a look at some excerpts from our literature. As recovering addicts, we are individually guided by The Twelve Steps. Likewise, meetings use The Twelve Traditions to guide them, and the fellowship as a whole is guided by The Twelve Concepts for Service.

## **The Twelve Traditions**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on MA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God whose expression may come through in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or MA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers.
6. MA groups ought never endorse, finance, or lend the MA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every MA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Marijuana Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. MA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Marijuana Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the MA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow MA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

---

***The Twelve Traditions help to guide the society of MA to ensure our group unity, and provide guidance on matters which affect MA as a whole. More expansive writings on The Twelve Traditions can be found in Life with Hope; we strongly encourage reading them.***

## The Twelve Concepts for Service in Marijuana Anonymous

1. The Marijuana Anonymous service structure was created to give the groups the freedom to carry out our society's primary purpose of carrying the message to marijuana addicts.
2. The ultimate authority and responsibility for service in Marijuana Anonymous is the collective conscience of the groups.
3. The Marijuana Anonymous groups have delegated to its service committees and trusted servants the full authority to conduct Marijuana Anonymous' business and service regarding district as well as world affairs.
4. All members of a service committee have the "Right of Participation," and bear substantial responsibility for the service committee's decisions.
5. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which service decisions are made.
6. A "Right of Appeal" exists to protect minority opinions, and to ensure that all viewpoints have been considered in the decision making process.
7. The scope of responsibility and authority of every service position should be well defined to ensure accountability of all service positions as well as the ability to perform each position.
8. Effective leadership qualities are essential for Trustees, who are entrusted with the responsibility of making final decisions regarding general World Service business and finances.
9. The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Marijuana Anonymous World Services are legal documents that empower the Trustees to manage and conduct World Service business; the Conference Charter is not a legal document but relies on the force of the traditions and power of the group conscience.
10. The integrity of our service structure depends on continued unity of Marijuana Anonymous groups, Districts, and World Services through effective communication.
11. Marijuana Anonymous' funds and resources should be managed responsibly to ensure their most efficient use in carrying out the primary purpose of Marijuana Anonymous.
12. The Marijuana Anonymous service structure should be one of selfless service and not of power or government, ensuring that the spiritual principles of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and the warranties of Article 12 of the Conference Charter are always maintained.

---

***We look to The Twelve Concepts for Service as we conduct the business of MA. They provide guidance as to how we participate responsibly through the various levels of our fellowship's service structure.***

# **Getting Started: Things to Consider Before You Begin**

## **Who Can Start a Meeting?**

Meetings are facilitated and run by members of Marijuana Anonymous. The Third Tradition of Marijuana Anonymous states, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana."

As it relates to starting a meeting, our members identify themselves in many different ways: marijuana addicts, cannabis addicts, simply "addicts," people with addiction or substance abuse disorder, stoners, potheads, and more. However, no specific identity, such as those listed, is required by our Third Tradition. While MA excludes no one based on a judgment of the quality or quantity of one's desire to stop using marijuana, a self-identified desire is necessary. Those who do not identify with a desire to stop using marijuana (including mental health professionals) are not considered members, and as such can not start a meeting.

## **What is an MA Meeting/Group?**

An MA meeting or group consists of two or more marijuana addicts who meet on a regular basis. *The terms group and meeting are used interchangeably throughout this Starter Kit and The MA Service Manual.*

"To be part of MA, groups must meet the following guidelines:

- Is Fully Self-Supporting Through Contributions From its Members, and Supports All Levels of MA Service Work
- Its Purpose is to Help Marijuana Addicts Recover Through The Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions
- It has No Outside Affiliations
- It has No Opinion on Outside Issues
- Its Public Relations Policy is Based on Attraction Rather than Promotion, and Personal Anonymity is Maintained at the Level of Press, Radio, TV, and Film"

*Service Manual 8.0, Chapter 6 --The Group*

While the Fourth Tradition protects the autonomy of each group to make its own decisions, these guidelines reflect the rest of The Twelve Traditions and purposes of MA. Each group gets to decide through group conscience how it wants to meet.

The diversity of our fellowship is reflected in the many different types of meetings that exist. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana. Desire for total abstinence from alcohol and all mind-altering substances not taken as prescribed by a physician is a recommendation, but not a requirement for MA membership.

## Responsibilities When Starting an MA Meeting

Starting an MA meeting is an act of selfless service to the fellowship. It carries with it many responsibilities, including:

- Understanding the Finances Involved in Hosting the Meeting (*7th Tradition, Location Cost, Literature, Chips/Tokens, etc.*)
- Determining the Meeting Structure
  - Where and When the Meeting Will Take Place
  - Meeting Type and Attributes
  - Creating the Meeting Script
- Regularly Attending and Supporting the Meeting's Growth Until it is Self-Sustaining
- Getting Support From Other Members to Help with Service
- Informing the Community (*Flyers, Meeting Finder, Announcing at Other Meetings*)
- Creating a Safe Environment in Which the Meeting Can Take Place

## Meeting Finances

*"Every MA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."*

- [Tradition Seven](#)

Honoring the Seventh Tradition is a requirement for meetings to be self-supporting. It is important to understand the costs associated with starting a meeting, the establishment of a prudent reserve, and what to do with any excess funds. Funds may be collected via cash or electronically (*fees may apply*). The Meeting Treasurer serves a vital role for the meeting. (For more information about the role and duties of a Meeting Treasurer, see: *Service Manual, Part 2: The Group, Chapter 4 - Meeting Officers*).

As a group grows and begins collecting more than needed to cover basic expenses, a small sum is usually set aside for extraordinary circumstances called a "prudent reserve", normally equivalent to three months' worth of group expenses. After the prudent reserve is established, and meeting expenses have been paid, a [group conscience](#) would be taken to determine what will happen with the excess funds. During these group conscience discussions (at a business meeting), please keep in mind that Seventh Tradition funds should be managed responsibly and used in service of our primary purpose, to help the addict who still suffers.

For example, contributions are often used for purchasing recovery milestone tokens and printing pamphlets (which are given away for free), and buying copies of the *Life with Hope* textbooks and workbooks (which can be sold at the meeting's cost or given away for free).

If the meeting is [part of a District or Region](#), extra funds can be sent to the District/Region Service Committee. We encourage any excess funds from the District, Region, Group or Meeting be sent to [MA World Services](#), or toward the upcoming [fellowship Convention](#).

## Types of Meetings/Groups

Each meeting is as unique as the members of our fellowship. There is no such thing as a typical meeting. How a meeting runs is determined by group conscience. A group conscience is the collective wisdom of the group coming together in agreement on a topic.

There are many attributes that contribute to the culture of each meeting. Some of these include: the meeting venue; day and time; script format; open or closed meeting; special focus meetings; and for closed meetings if there are any additional requirements for attendance.

## Meeting Venue Considerations

Securing a meeting venue is the first step. Originally the majority of MA meetings took place in-person. Since 2020 there has been a large increase in the number of meetings that take place online. There are also phone meetings that take place using conference calling systems.

<b><u>In-Person Meetings</u></b>	<b><u>Virtual Meetings</u></b>	<b><u>Hybrid Meeting</u></b>
<i>Meets at a Physical Location</i>	<i>Meets Online or by Phone</i>	<i>Combines In-Person and Virtual</i>
<b><u>Things to consider:</u></b>	<b><u>Things to consider:</u></b>	<b><u>Things to consider:</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rent and Deposit</li> <li>- Collection of 7th Tradition</li> <li>- The Venue's Policies               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liability Insurance</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Accessibility               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distance from Well-Populated Areas</li> <li>- Room Size</li> <li>- Wheelchair Accessible</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Available Chips &amp; Literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting Platform and Cost</li> <li>- Digital Collection of 7th Tradition</li> <li>- Accessibility               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support for those unable to travel to in-person meetings</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Closed Captions (<i>option</i>)</li> <li>- <i>Some</i> technical ability required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Combination of in-person and virtual responsibilities</li> <li>- Venue that supports this meeting style</li> <li>- Equipment required (<i>mic, speaker, projector, etc.</i>)</li> <li>- Accessibility               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balance of in-person &amp; virtual sharing</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <i>Strong</i> technical ability required</li> </ul>

## Finding a Physical Location

Since 2023, there has been a resurgence of in-person meetings, and World Services has recorded an increase in requests for information about finding in-person meetings. When finding an in-person venue, you may want to consider contacting places where other 12-Step meetings are held such as churches/sanctuaries, libraries, coffee houses, community centers, recreational facilities, or community parks.

It could also be beneficial to contact therapists, residential and outpatient rehab facilities, and hospitals. This can help to raise awareness of the new meeting, whether or not the meeting takes place in one of these facilities. It is a great service to the newcomer who may be a patient or using the services within these spaces.

With in-person meetings, the venue will likely require a monthly or even weekly payment. You may ask the facility to accept a reduced rent, or a percentage of contributions until the meeting is



established when it can support a higher rate. Avoid high-rent locations that could pressure the meeting to close before it has had time to become established.

## **Meeting Day, Time, and Frequency**

Regularly scheduled meetings tend to be better attended, as members want to know the meeting will continue to be there as expected. Equally, it is just as important to begin and end at the same time. Most meetings find that recurring on a weekly basis and on the same day, is the most beneficial, but there are some that meet more or less frequently.

As the founder of a new meeting, it makes sense that the meeting would occur when you all are available to host it. However, it is also important to consider when the majority of meeting attendees would likely be available; given most have daytime jobs, the majority of meetings occur on weekends and weekday mornings or evenings.

When creating a meeting to be held online consider reviewing the MA World Services Meeting Finder to determine if there are underserved times of day in the schedule. The timing of in-person meetings may be subject to the venue's availability. When starting a meeting within a District, consider hosting when there is an opening in the District's meeting schedule.

## **Meeting Attributes**

There are many attributes to the wide variety of meetings in the MA program. Most meetings contain an opening reading, sharing, and a closing reading at a minimum. There is room in MA for all meeting styles; unity does not mean uniformity. Per our Fifth Tradition, "Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers."

Some examples of common meeting formats include: Beginner; Book Study; Discussion; Speaker

## **Meetings May Be Designated as "Open" or "Closed"**

**"Open" Meeting:** Members and non-members may attend

- *Includes friends and family members of the addict, or students and professionals who want to expand their knowledge of addiction.*

**"Closed" Meeting:** Only members may attend

- *Tradition Three - The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana.*
- *Some "Closed" meetings may choose, through a group conscience, to occasionally "Open" the meeting for specific reasons such as speaker meetings, sobriety milestones, etc.*

MA recognizes the right of any group to hold closed meetings and will identify the meeting as closed in meeting notices. Some meetings, through a group conscience, may choose to have additional requirements for attendance. Membership in MA and membership in an MA group should not be confused. Meetings may choose to permit members of a particular gender, sexual orientation, or professional group. Such group preferences, in accordance with The Twelve Traditions, will be respected by MA, and the group's preference will be indicated where feasible in meeting notices published by MA.

MA World Services prefers to reserve the following meeting attributes for meetings that are specifically designed with those members in mind. When listing a meeting on the MA World Services meeting finder, while we appreciate the goal of expressing inclusion, we ask that only the applicable attributes are used.

**Some Examples of These Types of “Closed” Meetings Include:**

- LGBTQI+
- Men
- Nonbinary
- Persons of Color
- Transgender
- Women
- Young People

## **Scripts**

The MA World Services Outreach Committee has created a guide to writing a meeting script based on experience and samples from many different existing MA meetings. This document contains sample language for the most common script sections. These are the building blocks for any member to develop further into their own script. View the Outreach Guide to Writing a Meeting Script: [MA12.org/library/script-guide](https://MA12.org/library/script-guide)

Each meeting script is unique; it is up to the group conscience to decide the contents of the script. The [Meeting Resource Library](#) contains links to various sample scripts that can be modified: [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Library/Scripts](https://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Library/Scripts)

## **Duties of the Meeting Host(s)**

When someone decides to start a meeting, this comes with a commitment to help steward the meeting until it is well established, which can take six months or more. New meetings look different than well-established ones. It is suggested to begin a meeting with more than one person in case you are unable to attend a meeting and to honor a group conscience. Attendance can be low at first, and it is important to have *at least* one of the meeting stewards at every meeting. Best practice is to arrive at least 10 minutes early.

It is the responsibility of the meeting stewards to inform the community of the new meeting. There are various ways to increase awareness and here are some examples:

- Add the meeting to the MA Meeting Finder ([More about listing a meeting below](#))
- Announce at other 12-Step Meetings
- Post flyers on:
  - Meeting Service Boards / Public announcement boards in meeting halls
  - Share digital copies during other online meetings

Providing opportunities for new members to do service is one way to encourage them to keep coming back. Once a meeting has regular attendees it is important to honor the group conscience and hold regular Business Meetings. The meeting belongs to the group, not just those who started it. Business Meetings help a meeting flourish by providing a designated time and place for discussions about ways to improve the meeting, turn over service positions to new members, and ensure the meeting continues to be a safe space for all members. However, it may

just be the meeting stewards holding all of the service positions until the meeting has more regular attendees.

## **Attendance Verification**

Meeting Hosts or other Trusted Servants may be asked by attendees to provide attendance verification for various reasons, such as returning to work, for court, a parole officer, etc. The person may have certain requirements, such as a letter to be signed or an email to be sent.

In-Person Meetings often have the simplest solution for providing meeting verification. The person often has a paper for collecting Meeting Secretary signatures. It can be helpful to include an announcement during the Seventh Tradition that they may place any “court cards” to be signed in the basket.

For Online Meetings, the Meeting Host or Co-Host can announce that they are willing to email proof of attendance. For anyone who needs verification they can send a message privately in the chat at the end of the meeting, with their name and email address. We suggest having an anonymous email specifically for this purpose that belongs to the group such as [meetingname@gmail.com](mailto:meetingname@gmail.com) that can be passed along to the next trusted servant.

### **Example email:**

To Whom It May Concern,

This email is proof that person's full name was in attendance of the meeting name of Marijuana Anonymous on date and time .

Thank you for letting me be of service,

Trusted Servant's First Name and Last Initial

## **Maintaining a Safe Meeting Space**

Recognizing Tradition One and the importance of group unity, we strive to create a safe environment in which we can focus on recovery from marijuana addiction and “...our primary purpose, to carry [MA's] message to the marijuana addict who still suffers.”

It is useful to have some sort of written expectations in the meeting's format so that should a member ever act in a way that is inconsistent with those expectations there is a basis for discussing that conduct with that member. Sharing who to contact if an issue arises is equally important so that any member who is made to feel uncomfortable by another member knows they can reach out to a meeting's trusted servants rather than simply not returning to that or any other MA meeting.

A safety plan should be in place if someone is acting against any cross-talk\* guidelines or in a way that compromises the safety of the group with clarification as to who is the trusted servant responsible for maintaining the safe environment. (\*Cross-talk is typically defined as interrupting, giving unsolicited advice, having side conversations, etc.) In our experience, having the meeting's secretary or chairperson ask the member to focus on their own recovery usually is enough of a

reminder to resolve the cross-talk or behavior. However other actions may also be taken, for example, in a virtual meeting the person causing the disruption can be muted and if needed removed. With in-person meetings, they may be told their time to share is finished, and depending on the severity of the situation, and their response, they may be asked to leave the meeting.

There is no one "correct" way to address behavior that is deemed potentially harassing or inappropriate. In any situation, if a member's personal safety is in jeopardy, or the situation breaches the law, appropriate action may be taken so that group and individual safety is ensured. Calling the proper authorities does not go against any MA Traditions. *Anonymity is not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior.*

**For more information visit the Safety Section of the Resource Library: [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Safety](http://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Safety)**

## **The Business of Hosting a Meeting**

### **Why We Have Business Meetings**

The health of a meeting depends on attendees becoming regular members of the group through service participation. The unification of the group is possible when everyone feels that their opinions are valid and part of the Group Conscience, including any minority opinions. Hosting a Business Meeting is one way that groups can make sure they continue to serve their community and maintain a safe environment in which the meeting can take place.

### **Who Participates in the Business Meeting**

*"All members of a Service Committee have the "Right of Participation," and bear substantial responsibility for the Service Committee's decisions." - [Fourth Concept for Service](#)*

Meeting Stewards are the Trusted Servants of the group and shall always honor the spirit of Group Conscience. However, in a Business Meeting, no individual member's voice or vote is more important than another's. All meeting attendees are welcome and encouraged to participate in Business Meetings as well as any newcomers. Often a fresh perspective or dissenting opinion can help provide insight not previously considered.

### **What is Group Conscience**

*"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God whose expression may come through in our group conscience. Our leaders are but Trusted Servants; they do not govern."*

- [Tradition Two](#)

The Group Conscience represents the members of the group uniting in agreement on an issue in order for final action to be taken. The spirit of group conscience is achieved when group members receive the full information, share their individual viewpoints, and practice the principles of MA with mutual respect and consideration. Group conscience is used to decide on issues such as changes to meeting formats; how to structure the meeting; group service responsibilities; and other topics.

*Nobody runs MA; there are no dictators, masters, or bosses. Instead we have secretaries, treasurers, and representatives. These are positions of service. No one member or outspoken minority is allowed to control MA. At times, each of us may have to accept a group conscience that is contrary to our own desire. Experience has shown us that the conscience of the group, when properly informed, is much wiser than any one leader. Beware of any group that becomes known as "so-and-so's" group. With this in mind, there should be almost complete agreement among the members in order to carry a group conscience on any vote. If nearly complete agreement cannot be achieved, it may be a good idea to table the matter for further study. -Life with Hope - Tradition Two*

## **How to Facilitate**

Most Business Meetings occur monthly following the founding of the meeting, and consist of the following general meeting maintenance:

- Rotation of Service
  - Meeting commitments are best distributed amongst the group to keep everyone coming back and to avoid "service burnout."
- Group Finances (*Seventh Tradition*)
  - Hosting fees (*venue rent / online hosting costs*)
  - Prudent Reserve (*normally equivalent to three months' worth of group expenses*)
  - What to do with any excess funds
    - Contributions to World Services, an MA District, and/or Convention
    - Purchases of Literature & Sobriety Milestone Tokens/Chips
- General Housekeeping
  - Changes to the meeting script or format
  - Review or modify the group's safety guidelines

### **Sample Business Meeting Agenda:**


1. Call to Order (*Serenity Prayer / Twelve Traditions / Twelve Concepts for Service*)
2. Attendance (*Recognition of new participants*)
3. Ask for corrections and approve last month's meeting minutes (*notes from the last meeting*)
4. Meeting announcements (*Treasurer's Report and other Trusted Servants as needed*)
5. Rotation of Service (*elections are suggested every 3, 6, or 12 months*)
6. Old Business (*matters/motions discussed last month but not yet decided upon*)
7. New Business (*anyone may suggest in the moment, or it may be suggested in advance*)
8. Adjournment (*acknowledge any milestones, and closing prayer*)

### **How to Handle New and Old Business Matters as the Meeting Chairperson**

Most Business Meetings use an adapted form of Robert's Rules of Order to process matters brought to the group. This can be done as formally or casually as the group sees fit.

- A member puts forth a motion (*an idea*) by stating it. Another member may second the motion (*they agree with the idea*).
- The motion maker and the person who seconded the motion, may accept "friendly" amendments (*changes to the proposed idea*).

- The Chair states the question (*repeating the idea (motion) so everyone understands the full concept being discussed*).
- It is now active on the floor and open for discussion.
  - The motion maker (*person who originally had the idea*) begins by elaborating on the motion (*why they think this is a good idea the group should adapt*).
  - Discussion then continues with the Chair calling on whoever would like to speak next.
  - In the spirit of group conscience, provide everyone an opportunity to voice their opinion before someone speaks a second time.
  - Consider all viewpoints and ask if there are any dissenting opinions.
- To determine an outcome, a motion may be:
  - Tabled (*to become old business next month*)
  - Referred to committee (*discussions are needed outside of the Business Meeting*)
  - Approved by unanimous consent (*Unanimous consent is when no one disagrees*)
  - Voted on (*Service Manual suggests 2/3rds consent to approve*)
- New motions may not be introduced until the active motion is resolved (*no changing the subject*).

Due to the autonomy granted by the Fourth Tradition, each meeting has the right to determine how to best serve the group and its members.  [Group/Meeting Business Meeting suggestions MA12.org/BusinessMeetings](https://www.maa.org/BusinessMeetings)

## Meeting Trusted Servants

As previously mentioned, it may just be the meeting stewards holding all of the service positions until the meeting has more regular attendees. Recovery, Unity, and Service are the pillars of our program. Rotation of service is important so that group members become engaged and invested, to avoid being “so-and-so’s” meeting, and to prevent members from feeling burned out by retaining service positions for too long.

In order for groups to survive and grow there are important service roles to be filled. The duties may differ depending on the venue (online, phone, or in-person). The basic service structure of the group consists of a Secretary/Chairperson and Treasurer. If the group is affiliated with a District, then a Group Service Representative (GSR) is also needed to serve as liaison between the meeting and the District. Secretary, Treasurer, and GSR typically have a six-month sobriety requirement. For those who are newer to the program, a meeting may choose to also have additional service roles such as celebration coordinator or chips person, a greeter, a timekeeper, etc.

*Remember – the more service commitments each group/meeting has,  
the larger the core of members that return each week.*

**For a more in-depth explanation of meeting service roles and their duties, see: Service Manual, Chapter 4 - “Meeting Officers” within Part 2 - “The Group”**

## **Group Resources**

MA groups have a wealth of materials at their disposal, including MA literature, pamphlets, milestone tokens/chips, and more. These can be used to help facilitate discussion in the meeting, encourage participation, and engage with new members.

### **Resource Library**

A library of digital documents has been compiled by members for use in meetings and is available online. [MA12.org/Library](http://MA12.org/Library)

The Resource Library is updated regularly and contains:

- Creating a Meeting
  - Guide to Building a Script & Sample Scripts
  - Meeting Readings / Prayers
  - Sample Meeting Flyers
- Literature:
  - MA Pamphlets
  - Life with Hope Audio
  - Daily Reader Living Every Day with Hope
  - MA App info
- World Services
  - Being of Service
  - Committees
  - Literature Translations (*including the process for translating our literature*)
- Service Materials
  - Chip/Token Information
  - Purchasing Literature
  - MA Service Manual
  - Public Social Media Information
- Meeting Maintenance
  - Business Meeting Information
  - Safety Information
  - Group Inventory

## **Use of MA's Intellectual Property**

### **MA's Trademarks**



You, your group/meeting, or the district/region that your group is a part of (“MA entities”) must obtain permission to use MA World Services’ trademarks (the phrase “Marijuana Anonymous,” and the MA Logo consisting of the abbreviation “MA” inside a triangle, shown here) in the form of a written signed licensing agreement. While we within MA consider MA entities to all equally be

a part of MA, legally, these MA entities are not considered the same as the corporation of MA World Services, which manages them on behalf of the fellowship of MA. Since they are legally separate, implied permission to use MA's name and logo is not enough to protect MA's trademarks.

Consistent with the Fourth Tradition, ***MA World Services freely grants indefinite licenses to MA entities upon request granting permission to use the logo and name in ways that further MA's primary purpose of carrying the message***, and also authorizes third parties to use MA's logo in ways that benefit the fellowship, such as to make milestone tokens/chips.

### **Meetings/Groups are Included in Licensing Agreements Signed by Districts/Regions**

If your meeting wants to use the MA name or logo, such as on a letterhead (for attendance verification) or on flyers, you need to first ensure that your meeting/group has a signed licensing agreement to use MA's trademarks in particular ways.

If your meeting or group is independent and not part of a district or region, it needs to sign its own licensing agreement with MA World Services authorizing it to use MA's name and logo.

If your group/meeting is "officially" part of a district/region that has already signed a licensing agreement with World Services, it is included in that agreement. To be considered "officially" part of a district or region, a group/meeting must either be registered on the MA meeting finder as being part of the district, must be listed on the district/region's website, or regularly send a representative to DSC/RSC meetings. To find out whether the district or region has signed a licensing agreement, or if your group wants to sign its own licensing agreement permitting it to use MA's trademarks including the logo, contact [Legal@MA12.org](mailto:Legal@MA12.org).

### **Uses of MA's Trademarks NOT Permitted by Licensing Agreements**

There are also limits to the permitted uses of the MA name and logo, even with a signed licensing agreement in place. MA entities are not permitted to use MA's trademarks in ways that may trivialize the MA program, confuse members, or harm MA's reputation or brand. Specifically NOT Permitted Uses of MA's Trademarks include, but are not limited to:

- Social media "memes" or parody videos
- Merchandise that includes profanity, innuendo, or other inappropriate messages
- Flyers for purely social fellowship events (not including a recovery component)
- Uses in conjunction with other trademarks or logos in a manner that may suggest or imply an endorsement, or connection, with an outside enterprise by MA in violation of *Tradition Six*.

## **Meeting Flyers**

Getting the word out to the community is essential. With permission, flyers can be posted on bulletin boards in libraries, places of worship, hospitals, community centers, residential and outpatient rehab facilities, and places where other 12-Step meetings are held such as Alano clubs and other meeting houses. Flyers can also be distributed to psychologists and psychiatrists in the community, along with MA Pamphlets and District meeting calendars or guides they can distribute to their patients. Tradition Eleven reminds us that our program works by "attraction rather than promotion." However, it is okay to post a flyer announcing where and when the



meeting is held or to advertise MA meetings to psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians and other healthcare providers who can refer their patients to MA. For more information about our public relations policy read the expanded version of Tradition Eleven within *Life with Hope*.

## Use of MA's Trademarks on Flyers

MA entities may use the MA name and logo on flyers, but subject to some limitations. For flyers advertising events, the MA logo can only be used if the event includes a recovery-based activity, such as a meeting or speaker, in addition to any fellowship activities. For events that are purely social in nature, the MA name and logo should not be used.

## Sample Flyers

Sample flyers that you can use to help announce the meeting can be found in the Meeting Resource Library. Simply make a copy of the Google doc, then fill in the location, day, and time of the meeting and make some copies.

## Books

*Life with Hope* contains chapters for each of The Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions and a selection of personal stories of recovery from MA members. This book, along with the companion step-working guide, *Life with Hope 12-Step Workbook*, are valuable pieces of literature for recovering MA members.

*Living Every Day with Hope* is the MA book of daily reflections. While it is not in publication yet, it can be viewed at [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Daily-Reflections](https://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Daily-Reflections).

**MA App - *Life with Hope* (2nd edition) and the 12-Step Workbook can be viewed on the Marijuana Anonymous app for free.** Share this link with anyone interested in downloading the app; on a smartphone or tablet it will automatically open the app store: [MA12.org/App](https://MA12.org/App).

*Life with Hope* (2nd edition) is also available in audiobook format, accessible at [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/LwH-Audio](https://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/LwH-Audio).

Many in-person meetings distribute books to members, either by selling them or, if needed, some will give the book away to newcomers who cannot afford a copy. Meetings and Districts can receive copies of *Life with Hope* and the workbook at a discounted rate from Hazelden. **The discounted rate can only be used when contacting Hazelden customer service directly.** Discount rates vary when purchasing for an individual member, group, and district.

- Individual members receive a 10% discount
- Group purchases can receive a 20% discount (only valid over \$200)
- District purchases can receive a 40% discount (no minimum or limit)

**Note:** Members, Group, and District purchasers must contact Hazelden Publishing Customer Service at (800) 328-9000 or [customersupport@hazeldenbettyford.org](mailto:customersupport@hazeldenbettyford.org), before making a purchase, to set up an account.

*A New Leaf Publications publishes MA literature, some of which is distributed by Hazelden Publishing.*

## Use of MA's Copyrighted Materials

MA's literature is protected by copyright law. This includes, but is not limited to, *Life with Hope*, the *Life with Hope 12-Step Workbook*, MA's service materials, including the Service Manual and handbooks, MA's Conference-approved pamphlets, the content of MA's website and app, the 12 Questions of Marijuana Anonymous, as well as MA's version of the A.A.-owned 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts for Service.

Without a prior written request or agreement granting them permission to do so, MA entities may freely share brief quotes or excerpts from *Life with Hope* or the *Life with Hope 12-Step Workbook* (up to 25% of "the work"). They may also reproduce, copy, or screen-share, other MA literature, such as the 12 Questions of MA, or MA's version of the A.A.-owned 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts for Service. PDFs of more than 25% of *Life with Hope* or the Workbook may not be posted online on any group or district's website.

When reprinting, sharing or excerpting any of these Copyrighted Materials, written credit must be included to avoid infringing copyrights. After a quotation, the credit line should read:

***"Reprinted from (name of publication, page number), with permission of MA World Services."***

## Changes to MA Literature When Sharing, Copying, or Using it in Meetings

Note that MA meetings/groups do not have the autonomy (or independent authority) to make any changes to any MA literature when copying, screen-sharing, or otherwise using any MA literature in their groups or meetings (with proper credit). This includes, but is not limited to, changing the wording or otherwise altering, *Life with Hope*, the Service Manual, MA Conference-approved pamphlets, the 12 Questions of MA, or MA's version of the A.A.-owned 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts for Service.

While the autonomy granted to groups by the Fourth Tradition is broad, it is beyond the scope of autonomy granted to MA groups to alter MA literature on their own without following the procedures outlined in the Service Manual for making changes as an entire fellowship. This is because the Fourth Tradition does not apply "in matters that affect other groups or MA as a whole." When groups make unauthorized changes to MA materials or literature on a meeting or district basis, it affects other groups and MA as a whole because it:

- Confuses MA members and newcomers
- Disrupts MA unity (*Tradition One*)
- Prevents MA's ability to effectively fulfill our primary purpose to "carry the message" (*Trad. 5*)
- Infringes on A.A. & MA's copyrights
- Jeopardizes MA's reputation & relationships
- Violates MA's publishing agreements
- *All which could result in costly & time-consuming lawsuits*

To make changes to MA literature as an entire fellowship, depending on the material to be changed, either a Conference motion (for most literature, including *Life with Hope*, Conference-approved pamphlets, and the Service Manual) or a fellowship-wide vote (for The

Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions) is required to obtain the group conscience of the fellowship about whether or not to make the proposed change. Any member, meeting/group or district/region can submit a Conference Agenda item to propose either changing literature or holding a fellowship-wide vote. The procedures for doing so are explained in the Service Manual, Ver. 8.0, pg. 51-52.

## **Pamphlets**

In-person meetings often print and display pamphlets that are free for the taking. Sometimes pamphlets are bundled together as “Newcomer Packets” and are given to attendees who are new to sobriety.

Pamphlets are available for download at [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Literature/Pamphlets](https://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Literature/Pamphlets). Use care when printing. Most are formatted for letter-sized paper, but some require legal-sized paper. If your pamphlet prints with the second page upside-down, you need to make sure that you select double-sided printing and the printer’s function “flip pages on short edge”.

## **Milestone Tokens/Chips**

Meetings typically welcome new members and celebrate recovery milestones with the presentation of a token, medallion, or “chip.” Additionally, many meetings celebrate yearly anniversaries/birthdays with cake, candles, and the Happy Birthday song. Some meetings provide newcomers with a “welcome chip”. There is often a member of the group serving as the Chip Person or Milestone Coordinator.

Members can create simple recovery tokens using stones, sea shells, wood disks, or anything else. Back when our fellowship was young, members would write milestones in nail polish on poker chips or marbles.

A list of authorized vendors who manufacture MA tokens/chips and have written licensing agreements with World Services to use the MA logo is available at [MA12.org/Tokens](https://MA12.org/Tokens). Consistent with the Sixth Tradition, MA World Services does not endorse or promote any particular vendors, these are just those vendors with valid licensing agreements in place.

An MA entity that has signed a written licensing agreement may order or commission the manufacture of milestone tokens or chips from a vendor who makes tokens/chips (whether a member or third-party vendor) solely for use within that group or district. If the chip manufacturer wants to continue to make and post MA chips for sale, they must enter into a separate agreement with MA World Services. Third-party and member-formed token or chip manufacturers who want to license the use of the MA logo for use on milestone tokens or chips that they intend to sell more widely should contact [Legal@MA12.org](mailto:Legal@MA12.org).

If you discover a new vendor please share their information. Send your feedback to [Chips@MA12.org](mailto:Chips@MA12.org).

## Other Resources

1. In addition to the books listed above, ANLP also publishes A New Leaf Monthly Newsletter and the most current Service Manual. To order, visit [ANLP12.org](http://ANLP12.org).
2. Most MA Literature can be found on the **Marijuana Anonymous app for free.** [MA12.org/App](http://MA12.org/App)
3. A collection of speaker tapes curated by MA District 28 (the Marijuana Anonymous Phone Meetings) contains a variety of members' experience, strength, and hope. [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Speaker-Tapes/](http://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Speaker-Tapes/)

For support, contact: [Outreach@MA12.org](mailto:Outreach@MA12.org)

## Meeting Maintenance

*"Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers." - [Tradition Five](#)*

It is important to keep in mind the Fifth Tradition when maintaining your meeting. Starting your meeting is only the first step; you want to make sure your meeting is easy to access, visible to struggling addicts in the community, and fully self supporting.

## MA Meeting Finder Listing

The meeting is ready to be submitted for inclusion in the [MA World Services Meeting Finder](#) once the details have been coordinated.

**To have your meeting listed in the Worldwide Directory, please submit a form online [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/maws-meetings/add-meeting](http://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/maws-meetings/add-meeting)**

## Meeting Contact Information

Each meeting listing must have **at least** one person's contact information. This information is kept confidential and would only be used by World Services if needed to reach out directly to your meeting's contact person. Some groups create an email address specifically for their group and designate a member or two to regularly check the inbox.

When service positions are rotated at your meeting, make sure the contact information is reflected accurately.

## Meeting Description

The meeting description serves as an invitation to join the group and an opportunity to share the meeting's qualities and uniqueness. Many meetings will use this as an opportunity to explain any weekly changes in meeting format, such as: Week 1 Speaker; Week 2 Literature Study; Week 3 Topic; Week 4 Meditation; Week 5 Beginners.

## Meeting Finder Attributes

Meeting attributes help those using our Meeting Finder to identify the various meeting styles such as: Beginners, Book Study, Discussion, Chips, Speaker, and Meditation.

The MA Meeting Finder also has attributes for meetings with a special focus such as: LGBTQI+, Women, Men, Young People, Persons of Color, and Transgender. For general meetings, while we appreciate the goal of expressing inclusion, MA World Services prefers to reserve these attributes for these special focus meetings.

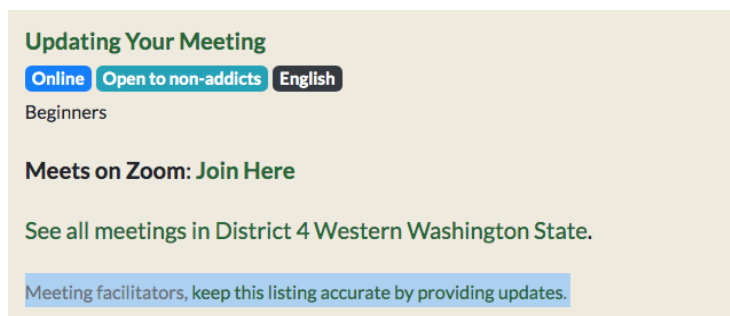
## Meeting Venue Information

<u><b>In-Person Meetings</b></u>	<u><b>Online Meetings</b></u>	<u><b>Phone Meetings</b></u>
<p><b>Things to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Venue Info:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name of the Venue</li> <li>- Address</li> <li>- Notes (<i>i.e. directions, parking info</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Public Meeting Contact               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Highly suggested so attendees can confirm the meeting is happening and to properly find it.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>It is not a requirement to share the specific venue address in the Meeting Finder. If the address is not shared, there must be a publicly listed meeting contact.</i></p>	<p><b>Things to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online Meeting Link</li> <li>- Online Meeting ID</li> <li>- Online Meeting Password</li> <li>- Dial-in Information (<i>Optional</i>)</li> <li>- Location               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>May include City, State, Country, or District.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>It is not a requirement to share the Meeting ID and Password. If that information is not shared, there must be a publicly listed meeting contact. We also suggest a note that this information should be pre-requested.</i></p>	<p><b>Things to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting Phone Number</li> <li>- Meeting Phone ID</li> <li>- Meeting Phone Passcode</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Hybrid Meetings</b></p> <p>These listings may contain any combination of the other venue types.</p> <p><i>Reminder, hybrid meetings carry more responsibilities than a typical meeting. There is often extra equipment needed and a strong technical ability required.</i></p>

## Keep the Listing Accurate

Updating or removing a meeting listing is easy and should only be done by a meeting facilitator.

- Visit the [Meeting Finder](#)
- Locate the meeting listing you wish to update
- Click “Keep this meeting accurate by providing updates.”



When filling out the update form please include the meeting name, and only select the fields which need to be updated. Once the form has been submitted, the directory support team will update the meeting listing within the next 48 hours.

NOTE: Meeting updates are not provided when a meeting will not be occurring for one specific date. It is important to notify members when the meeting may not be happening.

## Membership Retention Suggestions

*"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on MA unity." - [Tradition One](#)*

When a group of MA members come together in pursuit of sobriety, they form something that is greater than the sum of its parts. Throughout this section, we express the importance of service and outline some suggestions for ways to engage members and inspire them to keep coming back.

- **Welcoming Environment.** Acknowledge the newcomer and welcome them into MA. Provide support to them by sharing program information and how they can participate in MA as a whole. Consider meeting accessibility and creating a space that is welcoming to all.
- **Get the Word Out!** Flyers can be posted in public spaces (online/in-person) and within facilities that host 12-Step meetings. Announce the new meeting at other existing meetings you attend. There are additional Public Information resources available to you at the District or World Service Level. For more information, view our template flyers: [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Library/Sample-Flyers](https://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/library/sample-flyers) and contact the Public Information Trustee for support: [PI@MA12.org](mailto:PI@MA12.org)
- **Our Primary Purpose - Carry the Message.** If discussion drifts away from the solution, such as glorifying marijuana use or a drawn out "drug-a-log," try using your share to gently refocus the meeting. Make efforts to share the message, and not the mess, or at least strike a balance between how it was and how it is now.
- **MA Literature.** Provide links to the MA website, share about the free MA App, and where to purchase copies of Life with Hope and the MA Workbook. [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Links](https://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/links)
- **Sponsorship Announcements.** Inform everyone about the importance and benefits of working the 12 Steps. You may ask members of the group to raise their hand if they are willing to sponsor or share about sponsorship. Encourage new members to find a sponsor; if they find someone who "has what they want," to step out of their comfort-zone and ask directly if that person is willing to sponsor them. More about sponsorship: [MA12.org/Sponsorship](https://www.MA12.org/Sponsorship)
- **Fellowship.** The "meeting after the meeting" is an excellent way to create a sense of community and get to know each other better. Fellowship can also be used to ask questions about the program in a relaxed dialogue setting. This also provides an

opportunity for anyone who did not have a chance to share during the meeting and would still like to speak.

- **Events.** In order to be an official MA event outside of the designated meeting time, there should be some recovery-based component included. Some have a designated monthly meet-up (e.g. at a cafe or restaurant) where they celebrate recovery (typically with cake) and everyone who has reached a milestone that month. Some groups have recovery/fellowship based game/movie nights, book clubs, or in-person meet-ups like hiking, coffee, or campouts. [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Events](https://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/events)
- **Safe Meetings.** Members can feel supported by the group when there is language within the script that explains how the meeting is kept safe. MA World Services has crafted sample safety suggestions within the Safety Handbook: [MA12.org/Safety](https://www.ma12.org/safety)
- **Share Contact Information.** Some meetings pass around a list of group members' phone numbers or have group chats set up on third party apps as a way to stay connected outside of the meeting. These lists are meant to connect in the spirit of recovery; remember that member safety comes first. We strongly suggest having safety guidelines and announcing them when sharing information about phone lists or group chats.
- **The Power of Group Conscience.** Announcing and having regular business meetings are a vital part of maintaining a healthy group. Encourage all members to participate in group conscience discussions and voting to determine how the group functions. Every person who attends the meeting has a right of participation; they are part of the group and free to express their thoughts, including minority opinions. See more below about [The Business of Hosting Meetings](#).
- **Service Positions.** Members should be encouraged to have service commitments. Sharing duties and responsibilities provides accountability to attendees, which benefits the meeting and personal recovery. This helps to ensure they "keep coming back." See more below about [Meeting Trusted Servants](#)
- **Support from other MA Groups.** Consider joining an MA District or Region. Districts/Regions are able to provide support and resources including other members in the district helping to spread word about the new meeting. See more below about [Joining an Existing District](#).

## Having Growing Pains?

Remember, it takes effort to get a meeting off the ground. When the meeting is new, it may be a while before it has consistent attendance. However, if the above suggestions have been thoroughly exhausted, and the meeting is still struggling after a few months, we suggest asking yourselves a few questions. Starting with: Are new members not coming, or are they not coming back?

"New members are not coming" might look like the same few people who started the meeting attending every meeting, and only occasionally does another person show up. Can suffering addicts be made more aware of the meeting? Are fellows in recovery aware of the meeting? Take

a look at any barriers that a newcomer might face in trying to attend the meeting. Is the meeting easily accessible? Is the meeting easy to locate? Is the time of day or day of the week convenient for a majority of people?

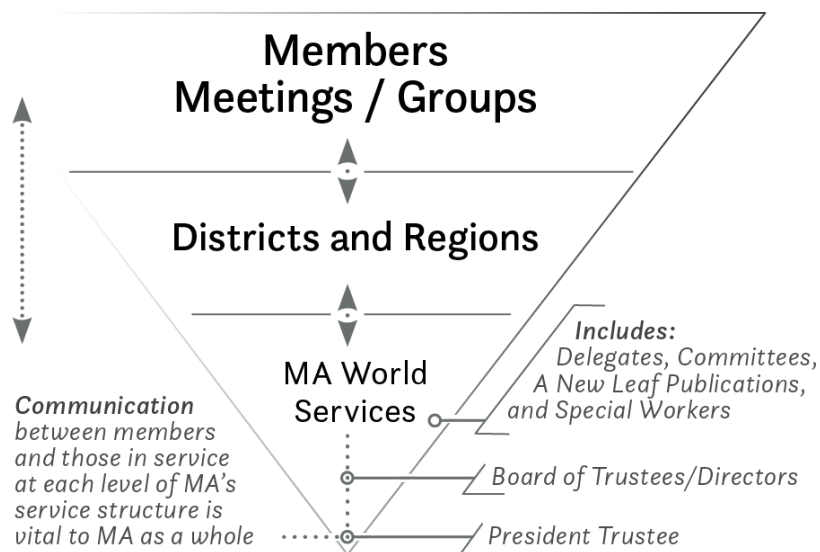
“Members are not coming *back*” might look like attendance is growing slowly, but the people who come only do so once or twice and then do not return. Are there more resources that the meeting could distribute or take advantage of? Is the format effectively carrying the message? Are newcomers given a sense of responsibility/accountability/investment in the meeting? Go to some well-attended meetings and connect with the members who are involved in service at those meetings. Ask what they do that is working.

### Group Inventory

Once the meeting is more established, a group inventory process could be beneficial. It may be time to take a closer look at the meeting practices if the above suggestions have been in use and the meeting is having membership retention issues, or the group seems to be steering away from its primary purpose.

Group inventory resources: [MA12.org/Group-Inventory](http://MA12.org/Group-Inventory)

## Understanding the Structure of the Fellowship



### Goal of the Service Structure: Fulfilling our Primary Purpose

The service structure of Marijuana Anonymous is described as an inverted pyramid featuring three levels. Members, meetings, and groups occupy the broad base at the top of the pyramid. The middle level represents the districts and regions. The smallest portion of the pyramid consists of Marijuana Anonymous World Services.



The pyramid is inverted because the individual members, meetings, and groups are the largest and most vital part of the fellowship. Without recovering addicts, there would be no need for meetings; without meetings, no need for districts; without districts, no need for World Services. This point cannot be stressed enough; the service structure of MA exists entirely to serve the members, meetings, and groups. MA World Services exists to serve the districts/regions, the districts/regions exist to serve the meetings/groups, and all levels of the pyramid exist to fulfill MA's primary purpose, as stated in the Fifth Tradition, to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

There are various methods of communication between the different levels. Frequent, healthy communication and cooperation between all levels of service is vital to the unity of MA which our personal recoveries depend upon, as stated in the First Tradition. The GSRs, delegates, trustees, and committee members at all levels of the inverted pyramid are trusted servants. They do not govern. Each individual serves at the direction and desire of the membership, with only a loving God/Higher Power as the ultimate authority.

If the group is a part of a district/region, they elect a Group Service Representative or GSR who is the liaison (go-between) for that group and the rest of the fellowship. See more below about [Group Service Representatives](#)

Districts and Regions elect Delegates or Regional representatives to attend the annual [World Service Conference](#) and act as liaison between World Services and their district/region for the duration of their term. See more below about the role of [Delegates](#)

The MA World Services consists of Delegates, World Service Committee Chairs, and Members, A New Leaf Publications Department Members, and the Board of Trustees. The [MA World Service Conference](#) is the annual business meeting of Marijuana Anonymous. Matters discussed at the Conference are important to the ongoing unity of MA and our ability to fulfill our primary purpose. Members from around the world gather to discuss matters which affect Marijuana Anonymous as a whole and come to group conscience decisions as we consider how best to move forward as a fellowship and to vote on proposals related to the functioning of World Services.

**It is highly recommended that you take time to familiarize yourself with the 12 Concepts for Service: [MA12.org/ServiceConcepts](http://MA12.org/ServiceConcepts) and the Service Manual: [MA12.org/SM](http://MA12.org/SM).**

## Understanding Districts and Regions

A District/Region is a service body containing a number of groups. Each District/Region and each meeting is a part of MA as a whole. The main difference between a District and Region is that "Districts" have been officially recognized (inducted) by the MA World Service Conference Body. Before becoming an official District, these collections of groups operate as a "Region."

Districts/Regions meet periodically, usually once a month to discuss all of the business of the district/region. This monthly meeting is called the District Service Committee (DSC) or Region Service Committee (RSC) and is open to all MA members. It is vital that all [Group Service Representatives](#) (GSRs) be present at these meetings.

A number of district officers and committee chairpersons are elected at the DSC to carry out district business. Detailed job descriptions of each role can be found in the Service Manual. [SM Ver. 8.0, p. 30-31.](#)

The districts and regions exist to serve the groups within it. Some services may include: purchase and distribution of chips, printing and distribution of literature and meeting schedules, community outreach (through Public Information (PI) and Hospitals & Institutions (H&I) efforts), maintenance of telephone services and written correspondence, as well as collection and distribution of monies to MA World Services. Some Districts also have a shared Zoom account that meetings may be able to utilize for a nominal fee. In addition, the district/region provides assistance to individual groups in need of help, coordinates district/region-wide fellowship events and fundraisers, and helps locate speakers.

## **Joining an Existing District/Region**

When starting a meeting within an existing District/Region, consider the other meetings day/time. Attendance may suffer if the new meeting day and time conflicts with another meeting.

Once there is some progress, however small, on the meeting, you or the group's GSR can attend the DSC meeting and propose that the District adopt the meeting. Next the district or region decides whether or not to adopt the meeting. If adopted, the meeting can begin using the services of the District mentioned above and be added to public information materials (such as the website or meeting schedules).

If you have a question about which District/Region your meeting may belong to, please contact [Outreach@MA12.org](mailto:Outreach@MA12.org).

## **Group Service Representatives (GSRs)**

The GSR is liaison for the group with the District/Region and MA as a whole. The GSR may also choose to be on one of the district/region committees to help serve MA. It is from this group of a district's trusted servants that conference delegates are usually selected. Suggested clean time is six months to serve as a GSR. Length of term is usually one year.

### **Typical responsibilities of the GSR include:**

- Attend the monthly DSC/region meeting, take notes and report back to the group, keeping it well informed
- Share information about the meeting along with any challenges the meeting may be currently experiencing
- Report the group's wishes to the monthly DSC/region meeting, and to delegates attending the MA World Service Conference
- Confirm and/or bring group contributions from the treasurer to the DSC/region meeting
- Confirm that adequate supplies of chips and MA literature are available for the group
- Act as a "service sponsor" for incoming GSRs when their term is done

The GSR represents the voice of the group conscience, reporting the group's wishes and ideas to the District Service Committee meeting. The Group Service Representative is a trusted servant of the group and is the voice for communicating the conscience of their group to the rest of MA.

## **Delegates**

Delegates are elected by Districts as their liaison(s) with MA World Services and have a key role in the smooth and effective functioning of the MA service structure. They carry the group conscience of their Districts to the annual Conference. They serve on World Services Committees at the Conference and throughout the year, continuing to do vital volunteer work on behalf of MA. Without active Delegates, Marijuana Anonymous World Services does not function optimally.

Districts may elect up to two delegates and one alternate. When petitioning the Conference Body to become a recognized district, regions may elect two regional representatives and one alternate, who become delegates once the region is approved and accepted as a district. Delegates and Regional Representatives report the DSC/RSC group conscience to World Services and report World Services information back to the DSC/RSC. A key difference between Delegates and Regional Representatives is that Delegates are voting members at the Conference while Regional Representatives are non-voting attendees until their Region becomes an officially recognized District. The clean and sober time to serve as a Regional Representative/Delegate is one year. "Clean and sober" is defined as abstinence from marijuana and all mind-altering substances including alcohol. The term of office for Delegates is one year, and they may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

## **MA World Services**

MA World Services, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, does the work necessary to keep the society of MA functioning smoothly. World Services is the bottom of the "[inverted pyramid](#)" of service, and serves marijuana addicts in numerous ways. For example: [maintaining the Meeting Finder](#) with up-to-date information to attend meetings; providing guidance on how to start a new meeting; supporting members to bring panels into hospitals or institutions; help new Districts form and encourage Districts to send Delegates to the [World Service Conference](#).

Marijuana Anonymous World Services is a corporation formed to carry out the necessary business and legal affairs of Marijuana Anonymous. A New Leaf Publications is the doing-business-as (DBA) publishing department of MA.

## **Trustees/Board of Directors**

The Trustees are legally the Directors and Officers of Marijuana Anonymous World Services, Inc. and "trusted servants" of the members of MA. On the whole, the work of MA World Services is done by member volunteers, but paid staff sometimes serve as "Special Workers." The Trustees, along with their Committees and our few Special Workers, carry out the organization's obligations, and serve the will of the membership by carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. Carrying the message is the primary purpose of the MA fellowship.

Trustees meet virtually, typically at least monthly. They monitor and coordinate the progress of MA service work which is being performed throughout the fellowship. Trustees also make interim

business decisions that cannot wait until the next conference. They work to carry out the will of the membership but do not direct or control our members, meetings, or Districts/Regions.

Traditionally, each trustee is assigned to a particular post (President, Secretary, Treasurer, H&I, PI, Literature, etc.). Areas covered usually include: Finance, Hospitals & Institutions, Literature, Policies & Procedures, and Public Information.

**See Trustee Job Descriptions:** [MA12.org/Trustees](http://MA12.org/Trustees)

## **Committees**

Each delegate and trustee serves on a committee, and it is common for other conference attendees to be invited to participate. Committees continue to do the service work of the fellowship throughout the course of the year, and sometimes make recommendations which are voted on by the delegates and trustees in a general assembly. This is one of the ways in which policy changes are made in MA.

**See World Services Committees Descriptions:** [MA12.org/Committees](http://MA12.org/Committees)

## **MA World Service Conference**

The MA World Service Conference is the annual business meeting of Marijuana Anonymous. Members from around the world gather to discuss matters which affect Marijuana Anonymous as a whole and come to group conscience decisions as we consider how best to move forward as a fellowship. The Conference Body is comprised of Participating Observers, Delegates, Trustees, and Special Workers. The Conference also allows us to exist and continue as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, as required by our Bylaws.

MA World Services holds its annual Conference usually over the United States observed Memorial Day weekend in May. To increase transparency, participation, and in the spirit of unity, the Conference shall be held online by default to ensure accessibility for members throughout our worldwide fellowship.

### **What We Do At The Conference:**

- Consider and vote on motions made by individuals and committees for changes to our Bylaws, Literature, and Service Manual
- Set the actions and goals for the MA World Services Committees planting seeds for the future as we chart our course for the fellowship
- Approve the World Services budget for the upcoming fiscal year
- Induct new MA Districts
- Determine future Conventions Hosts
- Select members of the Conference Body to serve as Trustees on the Board of Directors
- Share information to serve our primary purpose to help the addict who still suffers, and may not have been born yet

At the Conference, we join in service, and inspire each other to foster growth at the Meeting, District, and World Service levels of our organization. We exchange ideas, provide support to each

other, collaborate to help solve our common issues, and share experience, strength, and hope. The Conference binds all members to our common purpose.

**For more information visit: [mawsconference.org](http://mawsconference.org).**

## **MA World Services Convention**

The MA World Convention is an annual event where we gather to celebrate our recovery in MA and enjoy each other's company in fellowship. The annual Convention usually starts with an opening speaker meeting on a Friday night followed by some type of entertainment. Meetings, workshops, and panels continue through Saturday and Sunday. Often, there is a Saturday night banquet with a guest speaker and a dance, open mic, karaoke, or something similarly fun afterward. Sunday closing session may include a sobriety countdown, birthday cake(s), or a speaker.

Since the first Convention in 1995, MA World Services has officially endorsed one Convention per year, typically hosted by a District or Region, and approved at our annual Conference. However, this does not prevent a group, District, or Region from hosting other member gatherings and events, for example, mini-conventions. These one-day events usually start with a welcome address followed by MA workshops, panels, and/or service meetings, depending on the focus of the Convention. There may be a featured speaker meeting at the end of the event. This is sometimes called a Share-A-Day.

**For more information visit: [mawsconvention.org](http://mawsconvention.org).**

## **How can I contribute to MA World Services?**

Any level of service you and your group members can provide to World Services is valuable to newcomers. Learn more about being of service: [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Service](http://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Service)

A traditional saying among several 12-Step programs is, "You are more important than your money." That being said, we live in a world in which money is often a necessary resource. Each meeting collects voluntary contributions to first pay rent and buy chips and literature, then builds and maintains a prudent reserve to cover future costs, and sometimes to provide refreshments. Once surplus funds start to accumulate, one suggested breakdown is a 60/40 split, with 60% going to your District/Region and 40% to MA World Services. Independent meetings can contribute all of their surplus directly to MA World Services. Some groups contribute all of their funds to the District/Region, with Districts/Regions routinely donating all their surplus to MA World Services.

As a nonprofit entity, MA World Services is tasked with carrying the message and relies on financial support from members, meetings, and Districts/Regions. You and your group contribute financially to MA World Services by donating at the meeting level and by purchasing literature. Of course, donating your time through service to MA is also one of the most important contributions you can make.

**For more information about making a contribution and where your contributions go, visit [Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Make-a-Contribution](http://Marijuana-Anonymous.org/Make-a-Contribution).**