

KNOWLEDGE BASED DECISION MAKING FORM

TOPIC: Re-evaluating the methods used to print and distribute communications to groups and individuals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – WHAT WE KNOW

Historical perspective

AI-Anon Family Groups of Ohio, Inc. currently publishes 3 items for distribution to the groups and members in our Area: AI-A-Notes, published 3 times a year; a Plea Letter, mailed twice a year; and the Assembly minutes, published and sent out twice a year.

According to the Handbook, of General and Committee Working Procedures for the Ohio Area Assembly Meeting, the following Officers / Coordinators have these responsibilities:

Alternate Delegate – Serve as Coordinator of Area Newsletter Committee and may serve as Editor of Newsletter. Maintain personal, individual subscription records and newsletter exchange records. Be responsible for all phases of preparation and distribution of minimum of three (3) copies per year of Ohio Area Newsletter, in keeping with Guidelines for Area Newsletters (G-21).

Secretary – Attends to all regular secretarial work and takes minutes of meetings. These should be sent to the area Committee members and Group Representatives soon after the meeting and be recorded in a permanent minute book to be passed along to their successor.

Treasurer – Twice a year prepares a special appeal letter to be sent to all groups asking them to contribute to the Area treasury to cover Assembly expenses, including the contributions to the Delegate's fund.

Group Records Coordinator – Supply Secretary and Newsletter Editor with mailing labels whenever needed sorted by zip code.

Additionally, budget categories have been created for these expenses. They are explained in the Handbook, as follows:

AI-A-Notes:

1. Addition to Budget Procedures: AI-A-Notes expenses cover any insertions from Officers, Coordinators and Committee Chairs. All others are the expense of the individual functions. (10/00 – motion #12)
2. That the cost of inserting a flyer in our AI-A-Notes be collected at the time of receiving the flyer at the current rate charged by the printer chosen by the Editor
3. To add Ohio AI-A-Notes to the Ohio Area website with all personal contact information removed. (10/14 - motion #2014-002)

Bulk Mail and Returned Mail – No specific guidelines in either the Handbook or the Bylaws.

Secretary – No specific guidelines in either the Handbook or the Bylaws.

Treasurer – No specific guidelines in either the Handbook or the Bylaws.

The following is the condensed version of actual printing/ mailing costs for 2015 thru Spring of 2017.

2015 Average costs of mailings:

- Bulk mailing permit (used for mailing of Plea letters AI-A-Notes and Assembly minutes bulk mailing is covered by printers doing the work.) \$220.00 once/yr.
- AI-A-Notes- 3 per year -average 545 copies- 8 pages -\$1.04 ea. \$566.80/ mailing
- Plea Letter -2 per year – average 450 copies - .97 ea. \$436.50/ mailing
- Assembly minutes – 2 per year -average 506 copies -.845 ea. \$427.57/ mailing

2016 Average costs of mailings:

- Bulk mailing permit (used for mailing of Plea letters AI-A-Notes and Assembly minutes bulk mailing is covered by printers doing the work.)
\$225.00 once/yr.
- AI-A-Notes- 3 per year -average 494 copies- 8 pages- .885ea.
\$436.80/mailing
- Plea Letter -2 per year – average 457 copies
\$140.83/postage*
- Assembly minutes – 2 per year -average 460 copies -.845 ea.
\$402.00/mailing**

*Costs shown are for postage only; printing and folding costs Were handles by Secretary and no figures were available.

** a special mailing was sent in the summer of 2016.

2017 through Spring - Average costs of mailings:

- Bulk mailing permit (used for mailing of Plea letters AI-A-Notes and Assembly minutes bulk mailing is covered by printers doing the work.)
once/yr. \$225.00
- AI-A-Notes- 3 per year -average 500 copies- 8 pages -\$1.05 ea. \$524.15/mailing
- Plea Letter -2 per year – average 459 copies - \$1.04 ea. \$477.07/mailing
- Assembly minutes – 2 per year -average 460 copies -.86 ea. \$394.00/mailing

EXISTING MOTIONS THAT PERTAIN TO THIS TOPIC: None.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR MEMBERSHIP’S NEEDS, WANTS AND PREFERENCES?

AI-Anon Family Groups of Ohio rely heavily on donations from the Plea Letters as a part of the overall budget process. In 2015, plea letter donations comprised 33% of the total donations received. In 2016, they comprised 31% of the total donations received. Abolishing plea letters would severely hamper our budget process.

Just as the World Service Organization publishes the World Service Conference Summary (the report of the World Service Conference), AI-Anon Family Groups of Ohio publishes the minutes of its two Assembly meetings. Maintaining an open line of communication to groups is a vital part of the AI-Anon program.

A survey was done either late 2015 or early 2016, which received 84 responses (out of approximately 500) from the mailings, showed that members preferred to receive AI-A-Notes via the Postal Service. However, having the AI-A-Notes posted on the Area website was a viable alternative. As it was noted in the survey, the Postal Service is the most expensive option.

Email is the preferred form of communication for most of us. Using WSO as an example, they use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, email and traditional mail as forms of communication. We believe most individuals have an email address or access to one. For those who don't there are places like local libraries, office supply stores and mailing depots that offer computer use for information retrieval.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR CAPACITY (RESOURCES)?

We currently have the resources to continue mailing/printing as usual. However, some board members have been doing the work of either doing the printing/folding/collating etc. saving AFG of Ohio, Inc. money but this is not something we can or should rely on. There would be significant savings by utilizing the Area website and emails for mass communications.

However, in our zeal to “do it cheaper”, we must follow Al-Anon Policies, as stated in the current Al-Anon /Alateen Service Manual 2014-2017, P24/27:

Page 97 –

“Discounts and Services

WSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts or services that are routinely available to other non-profit organizations (e.g. non-profit postal rates, free placement for public service announcements, etc.). Discounts may not be accepted if the discount is given only to Al-Anon and not to other non-profit organizations.”

Also, on page 97 –

“Outside Contributions

Al-Anon and Alateen groups do not accept contributions of money, goods, or services from outside the Al-Anon members in order to adhere to the Seventh Tradition of full self-support.”

We must ensure that we abide by these Al-Anon policies.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR CHOICES? (PROS AND CONS)

(1) Plea letters:

Pros –

As was noted before, the plea letters are responsible for approximately 30% of our annual available funds. Delivery of the plea letters, to the Group’s CMA, remains the most effective way of allowing our members to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level.

Cons –

At the present time, a plea letter mailing has not been done utilizing the printing service. A bid was received, however, estimating the cost of printing & folding the plea letter, printing both envelopes and preparation for mailing, would be \$384.00 for 460 plea letters, a per piece cost of \$ 0.834 each. Mailing costs would be separate, however the printer estimated that cost at \$125.73 for bulk rate and \$74.28 for non –profit rate. That would make the final, per piece cost, \$1.11 at bulk rate and \$1.00 at non-profit rate.

(2) Assembly Minutes:

Pros –

Minutes are the official record of the Assembly business. Although we do not follow “Robert’s Rules of Order”, per se (as a KBDM is actually the reverse of that), we do have an order of business, plus reports and presentations that are done at Assembly meetings.

Over the years, the Assembly Minutes have become more of an Assembly Report, or Assembly Proceedings, as described in the last paragraph above. The World Service Conference publishes such a report annually and distributes it to the Areas. Keeping the Area Minutes as a Report, or Proceeding, produces a comprehensive document containing all the proceedings of the Area Assembly.

Again, utilizing our Area web site would enable us to post the complete report of the Area Assembly meeting for a very minimal cost.

Cons –

Condensing the Area Assembly proceedings down, to true “Minutes” shortens the overall length of the document, but much of the “meat and potatoes” is left out. However, even in shortened form, the cost of preparation and mailing is a significant budget item.

(1) Al-A-Notes:

Pros –

As stated in the Al-A-Notes, it is the “Voice of The Ohio Area Assembly”. It is our only means of communication with our Al-Anon Family Groups, and other Areas. Recent refinements have produced a nicer

finished product and it is easier to read. Additionally, we are able to include time-sensitive information, i.e. the Area Convention Flyer and the Fall Assembly Flyer, in the AI-A-Notes to be sent to the CMA for all registered groups. It would not be difficult to redact personal information, i.e. street addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of Officers, Coordinators, and Committee Chairs from a "Web Version". As a side note, our webmaster is also creating a mailing address for the Two-Day Fall / OAC Liaison and the Registration Committee Chair for the web site Contact page.

Cons –

Again, printing and mailing costs are a significant factor if we decide to continue distributing AI-A-Notes via the Postal Service.

WHAT WE WISH WE KNEW, BUT DON'T:

If we distribute the Assembly Reports and / or AI-A-Notes via the Area web site, how many groups will download and print these items and take them to their respective meeting?

How do we distribute the Assembly Reports and / or AI-A-Notes to groups where the CMA does not have an email address listed, and the group has no group email address listed?

What other items in our budget would have to be reduced / eliminated to accommodate the printing and mailing costs associated with the Assembly Reports and / or AI-A-Notes?

Respectfully submitted: Melanie B. Chair, Printing and Mailing Issues Committee

Motion(s) to be considered:

- Printing - Have an outside service contracted to do all bulk mailings. To included but not limited to printing/folding/correlating and mailing.
- Plea letters – continue to bulk mail a hard copy of Plea Letters to all groups.
- AI-A-Notes and Assembly minutes – email these to all groups having a valid email address and mail a hard copy to those groups who do not.