

# **GUIDELINES FOR AREA 29 WEBSITE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

## **I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

A. This Website is a public information vehicle of Maryland General Service, Inc., Area 29 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It contains information that is publicly available.

In general, the purpose of this Website is to be a vehicle to provide accurate and current information to Area 29 Districts, Groups and Members of A.A. activities within Area 29. The website shall also facilitate communication of the services and activities provided by Maryland General Services, Inc., Area 29, in order to provide accurate and consistent information regarding Alcoholics Anonymous to the general public, media and professionals and facilitate face-to-face contact between members of our Service Area and those wishing to learn about Alcoholism and the A.A. program of recovery.

In its conduct, this Website will follow the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for World Service of Alcoholics Anonymous. To preserve anonymity, no personal names, nicknames, or contact information, such as email or postal addresses or phone numbers, will be used.

In keeping with the Fourth Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous, Maryland General Services, Inc., Area 29, is an autonomous entity. We permit no affiliation, representation or endorsement of any outside enterprise by this site, either actual or implied. Links to other sites are informational convenience only. Maryland General Services, Inc. is not responsible for any material posted on those sites. Only posts regarding this site itself and the information contained within will be considered for posting.

B. The only links through this site will be to Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., The AA Grapevine, Inc., Area 29 Committees, Districts, Intergroups, and other General Service Conference Areas and Regional Service Assemblies/Forums. (See also Links section.)

C. Information such as announcements of Area and District events, as well as other A.A.-related information as may be deemed useful by the members of Maryland General Service, Inc., will be presented on the site. (See also Links section.)

## **II. OWNERSHIP**

A. The registered domain name for this Website is marylandaa.org. The owner of the domain name will be Maryland General Service, Inc. The owner of the web hosting account will be the current Area chairperson of Maryland General Service, Inc. The technical point of contact for both the domain name and the web hosting account will be the Webmaster. Note: Area chairperson, referred to above, is a generic name and not the personal name of the individual who has been elected. On the application, "Area Chairperson of Maryland General Service, Inc." will be written in as the applicant's name, not the name of whoever happens to be the elected chairperson at any given time.

B. All development and maintenance software tools, including any specialty software that might not otherwise be available to the webmaster, are to be purchased by and will thus be the property of Maryland General Service, Inc.

C. All fees and expenses are to be paid by the treasurer of Maryland General Service, Inc., as provided for in Article VI of the corporate by-laws.

### **III. ADMINISTRATION**

A. Website Committee: Maryland General Service, Inc. shall have a Website Committee, which has direct oversight of the Website of Area 29, Maryland General Service, Inc. of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Website Committee's Technical Support Group (see III.B, below) will be the responsible entity for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and changes.

1. The purpose of the Website Committee shall be to establish and maintain the Website of Maryland General Service, Inc. of Alcoholics Anonymous according to the guidelines approved by the Area Assembly.

2. The Website Committee shall be responsible for finding the best price of suitable goods and services to enable the Website to exist.

3. The Website Committee shall ensure that the Website is self-supporting by Maryland General Service, Inc. without receiving anything of value from any source outside the A.A. Service Structure or Fellowship.

4. The Website Committee Chairperson shall designate additional members of Alcoholics Anonymous to serve as members of a Website Committee Subcommittee known as the Website Technical Support Group.

5. The Website Committee shall maintain current paper or electronic back-up copies of all information displayed on the Website. This back-up copy shall be available for viewing by anyone at all Area 29 Assemblies and Area 29 Committee Meetings.

6. The Website Committee shall consider any comments from the general membership of Area 29 concerning whether or not the Website is fulfilling its purpose.

B. Website Technical Support Group: The Website Technical Support Group shall minimally consist of the Website Committee Chairperson and a Webmaster. In addition, the Website Committee Chairperson may appoint a Website Coordinator whose duties may include assisting the Webmaster in carrying out the duties of maintaining the Website.

1. The Website Technical Support Group shall be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the Website which includes: updating meeting and event information in a timely manner, backing up all Website files on a biweekly basis as well as implementing changes in the presentation of information posted on the site. Any minor changes of the

website will be at the discretion of the Website Committee. Any major changes of the website shall be brought before the Assembly for a vote.

i. Minor changes in standing content may be made by the Website Committee without prior Area approval for the purpose of enhancing site visibility and accessibility, to improve the site's ease of use for its visitors, and to maintain accurate and up-to-date information, such as that contained in the Districts Links list, and any other time/date sensitive material, including the Current News box.

ii. A major change to the website would consist of any change to the items in section VI of these guidelines.

2. The Website Technical Support Group shall have equal and full technical access to the Website, including file transfer privileges and control of the site's E-mail Listserver. Unilateral actions taken regarding the Website, without prior approval of the entire Website committee and/or the Area Assembly may result in removal of the committee member's access to the Website.

3. The Website Technical Support Group shall have sole access to make changes to the Website and shall have responsibility for maintaining appropriate security for the integrity of the Website and the information it contains.

4. The Website Technical Support Group shall delegate the responsibilities in the administration and technical support of the Website among themselves and shall keep the Website committee informed as to the Website Technical Support Group's organization and operation.

5. As trusted servants, the Website Technical Support Group shall be authorized to make changes to the Website, as they deem necessary. Should irreconcilable disputes arise within the Group, the Website Committee Chairperson shall bring these matters before the entire Website Committee to be resolved. In any case, the Website Technical Support Group shall not at any time violate the letter or spirit of the Website guidelines.

6. If the Website Technical Support Group determines that the need exists, it may choose to maintain an E-mail Listserver to conduct the business of the Website. An E-mail Listserver is a computer software device that sends a single e-mail message automatically to all individuals whose e-mail addresses are entered on the Listserver's address list. Any interested A.A. member may request to be included on the Listserver. Any communications outside the membership of the Website Technical Support Group and its operations shall be made only after the entire Website Technical Support Group has been consulted about the question at hand.

7. The Website Technical Support Group will provide a report of all website update activity to the Website Committee.

#### **IV. ACCESS**

- A. Website construction should permit viewing by anyone having access to the Internet. (See item C below)
- B. Accessibility: In the spirit of Unity, the site should be designed to provide accessibility to the broadest range of members of the Fellowship as is practical, to include, but not be limited to non-English speakers and vision-impaired members.
- C. Site viewing should not be system or browser specific. It is recommended that the Website be constructed in such a manner that it be available for viewing by anyone who accesses the internet through any means and with any system. Care should be taken not to show preference to specific systems, browsers, etc. that would make accessing the site through other means difficult.
- D. An e-mail address and postal mailing address should be included on the Website to permit users to obtain additional information or report problems. To avoid any confusion as to the content of the site, an e-mail address should be included to which additional questions may be sent, along with a postal mailing address for those unable to send electronically. No personal telephone numbers or personal e-mail addresses will be listed on this site.
- E. The use of multimedia has become common for the purpose of communicating information and enhancing the experience of the web itself. However, it is recommended that information be presented in a format that is common to all or most systems so as not to exclude those who do not have the same multimedia capability. Excessive use of graphic material should be carefully considered, as the 11th Tradition warns against the use of "sensational advertising". Intensive graphical, musical or video which is not pertinent to, or in support of, the Website's informational content could be viewed as "sensational advertising" by those viewing the site.

#### **V. LINKS**

- A. The only external links from the Home page will be to AAWS and AA Grapevine, or to other Areas or service entities as approved by the Area Assembly.
- B. In keeping with the A.A. tradition of non-endorsement, and recognizing the fact that any A.A. site can and will be accessed by the general public, links to any commercial sources, including religious, institutional and political advocacy sites, will be avoided, as A.A. endorsement of such groups and organizations may mistakenly be implied through such links.
- C. Links from this site are provided only to the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous website, the AA Grapevine website, General Service Conference Area websites (U.S./Canada) and to sites established, maintained and officially adopted by groups, districts, and/or Intergroups within the service structure or geographical boundaries of Area 29. Recognizing the autonomy of individual groups and districts and because Maryland General

Service, Inc. cannot control the content of links other than this site, Maryland General Service, Inc. claims no responsibility for the content of these sites and does not recognize, recommend, or endorse any particular site listed here, nor is Maryland General Service, Inc. affiliated with any site included on this site. These group, intergroup, and/or district links are provided solely to make available, more detailed information of Alcoholics Anonymous activities within a particular part of Area 29 (Maryland). The General Service Conference Area links are provided solely for the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous activities in that particular Area and for travelers to find a meeting in that Area.

D. A pop up dialogue box will be displayed when an external link is accessed, or a footnote will be displayed denoting that a linked document may contain external links, in order to notify the user that he/she is leaving the Maryland General Service, Inc. website.

E. All external links will be verified for accuracy on a regular basis by the Webmaster.

## **VI CONTENT**

A. The content allowed on the website shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. A home page that displays the name of the Website as well as clearly identified connections to the other sections of the website.
2. A current schedule of Area 29 meetings, including, where possible, the meeting location.
3. A listing of Area 29 events. Due to the difficulty in determining the content and/or sponsorship of roundups and conventions and in order to avoid the appearance of, endorsement, or affiliation with any outside entities, the Maryland General Service, Inc. website "Area Events Calendar" will list only events directly related to Area 29 and Maryland General Service, Inc. and its Districts. The items listed on this calendar will be dates, locations and information regarding Area Assembly meetings, Area workshops, Area Committee meetings, Area 29-sponsored conventions, and Area 29 District events. Please note: In accordance with the General Service Structure found in the Alcoholics Anonymous Service manual, we do not provide information for Intergroup events at this time. However, we do provide a link to the Area 29 Intergroup websites where that information may be found.
4. A map of Maryland showing the names and locations of Maryland districts.
5. A link to the GSO Website.
6. The Guidelines for the Website.
7. Steps, Traditions, Concepts.
8. GSO literature.

9. A privacy statement.
10. A connection to the E-mail Listserver may be provided.

## **VII ANONYMITY**

- A. The principle of anonymity should be extended to cover this Website.
  1. No personal information, including names, nicknames, or contact information such as e-mail or postal mailing addresses or phone numbers, will be displayed on this website or in any flyers or newsletters posted on this site.

## **VIII Guidelines**

These guidelines may be revised upon approval by substantial unanimity of the voting membership of Maryland General Service, Inc. at a regularly scheduled Area Assembly meeting.