

Al-Anon Family Groups, Area 57

A Group Representative's Guide to the Virginia Area Assembly

Revised January, 2025

Table of Contents

Page 2	I. Assembly Definition II. Assembly Structure III. Roles and Responsibilities
Page 3	IV. Communication
Page 4	V. Assembly Purpose VI. Decisions
Page 5	VII. Voting VIII. Election Assemblies IX. Attendance
Page 6	Frequently Asked Questions
Page 7	Commonly Used Acronyms
Page 8	Resources

Special thanks to the BC/Yukon, Area 81 for permission to use their GR Guide to Assembly;
to Beverly W. and Stephanie F. for their assistance in preparing this document.

Ellie Fetterly, Alternate Delegate, Virginia Area 57, September 2022
Deb Teer, Alternate Delegate, Virginia Area 57, January 2025

Assembly

- I. Assembly Definition.** The Area Assembly is the business meeting for all Group Representatives (GRs) to elect a Delegate to the World Service Conference, and to elect all other Area Officers for the Area. In addition to these elections, GRs approve the business and policies of the Area.

II. Assembly Structure

a. Members

- Group Representatives (GRs)
- District Representatives (DRs)
- Area Liaisons
- Area Coordinators
- Area Officers

[See page 8 for current listing of Area Officers, Coordinators and Liaisons]

III. Roles and Responsibilities

a. Group Representatives (GRs)

- You are an essential link for communication among the Group, District, Area and World Service Office. Because of you, your Group will have many opportunities for growth through sharing the best Al-Anon has to offer.
- Read the Assembly Agenda and note the voting issues. Background information on voting issues is given to the DRs at Virginia Area World Service Committee (VAWSC) meetings. The DRs in turn distribute this information to the GRs in their District. Discuss these issues with the members of your Group so you can represent their thoughts and ideas during discussions at Assembly. Prepare yourself to vote on your Group's behalf by taking into consideration all the information shared on the voting issue at Assembly.
- Read the Minutes of the previous Assembly and note any errors or omissions. This helps to inform/remind you of previous actions and reports and helps to ensure that the Assembly has accurate records.
- Learn about important issues regarding the needs of Al-Anon from a broader perspective. By listening, asking questions, and participating in discussions, you can gain valuable information to share with your Group members so they may be informed keeping Al-Anon relevant and available.
- Write down interesting ideas and comments. At Assembly, you will hear different perspectives and ideas from other members that you may want to consider. Writing them down will help you share them with your Group.
- Learn about resources available to your Group members. You will have access to Area Officers, Coordinators, and Service Center liaisons, all of whom have resources to help you in your role as GR. Assembly is a great time to network with others who can provide help.
- Prepare a report to take to your Group. It is your responsibility to share what you learn with the members of your Group. There is no "one way" to do this. You will have the opportunity to talk about this at Assembly in your Opening Sessions, and you will develop a style of sharing that works best for you and for your Group.
- Participate in a workshop or discussion topic break out session at Assembly. The topics of both the discussions and the workshops come from VAWSC and reflect the requests

from DRs who respond to the needs of the Groups in their District. Officers and Coordinators, also have input on Area-wide needs for training and/or discussion on various aspects of the work of the Area.

- Each Group should have funds set aside to cover the costs for you to attend Assemblies. See section IX Attendance for information on financial assistance for groups without sufficient funds to send their GR to Assembly.
- b. District Representatives (DRs)
- Serve as the voice of the Groups in their District at the VAWSC. VAWSC meetings are held twice each year.
 - Share information or questions with the Area Officers, Coordinators, Liaisons, or the World Service Office (via the Area Delegate).
 - Act as a resource to GRs to help Groups learn from each other and to help resolve any concerns that may arise in the Groups.
 - Help to prepare the agenda for Assembly.
- c. Area Officers
- Conduct the day-to-day business of Al-Anon at the Area level.
 - Act as resources to Groups and Districts in the Area.
 - The Delegate communicates with the World Service Office and attends the annual World Service Conference with Delegates from the U. S., Canada, Bermuda, Puerto Rico and guests.
 - Reports what is happening at the World Service Conference for the good of Al-Anon.
 - Take ideas or suggestions to the World Service Office to help serve the needs of the Groups.
- d. Area Coordinators and Liaisons
- Offer resources and support to Groups on their area of interest.
 - Provide reports at each VAWSC and Assembly on the happenings of their respective area.

IV. Communication

- a. Communication within the Virginia Area is most effective through the respectful use of the Links of Service. [See World Service Conference Structure chart on pp. 176-177 of the 2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual for more information on the Links of Service.]
- GRs share information from their Groups with their District and from the District with their Group.
 - DRs share information from their District with the Area and from the Area with the GRs in their District.
 - The Area shares information from the Area with the World Service Office and World Service Conference via the Area Delegate and from the World Service Office and World Service Conference with the Assembly.
 - Each service position (GR – DR – Area Officers and Coordinators – WSO and WSC) serves as a liaison between each other in sequence.
 - The active involvement of GRs at Assembly ensures each member's access to experience, strength and hope of the larger fellowship.
 - GRs serve as the voice of their Group.
 - GRs attend District meetings and are the information source for their Groups.

- GRs have the key role in connecting their Group members to the larger Al-Anon community.
- GRs inform their Group members so that members have informed input in all Al-Anon decisions through their GR at Assemblies.
- Only with active involvement of a GR, can Al-Anon serve members effectively and make the most of growth opportunities and thrive as a resource to families and friends of alcoholics.

V. Assembly Purpose

- a. Assembly provides the opportunity for communication from the Area, the World Service Office, and the World Service Conference to reach every Group.
 - Assemblies are held twice each year.
 - Election of Area Officers is held at the end of each three-year term. Each three-year term begins in January of the first year and ends in December of the third year.
 - GRs vote to elect new Officers.
 - Assembly is a time when we communicate beyond the Group level to ensure Al-Anon continues to help members “find solutions that lead to serenity.”

VI. Decisions

- a. The Virginia Area Assembly uses an Informed Group Conscience Process (see Making Decisions in Al-Anon on vaalanon.org/members) to make decisions.
 - First, background information on an issue is presented to the Assembly.
 - Next, members ask questions to be sure all aspects of the issue are clear and needed information is known.
 - When there are no more questions, then members may express their opinions without judgment.
 - The Informed Group Conscience Process reflects the principles of:
 - Talk to each other. (Equality)
 - Reason things out. (Patience)
 - Participate in discussions. (Honesty and generosity)
 - Be open minded. (Understanding and compassion)
 - Show respect. (Acceptance and trust)
 - Once the Assembly has enough information to make a decision (usually determined by taking a consensus), the motion is ready for a vote to be taken.
- b. Procedures for open discussion
 - All discussion is at the microphone. This allows everyone to hear what is asked or shared.
 - When you go to the microphone, introduce yourself by your name and your District name and number.
 - Asking a question does not count as your one time at the microphone.
 - Each person can have one two-minute turn at the microphone per discussion topic.
 - When there are no more questions, then members may share their viewpoint or opinion without judgment.
 - Begin and end each discussion session on time.
 - No side conversations.
 - No cell phones.
 - No distractions.

- No applause.
- Stay on topic.
- If someone has already expressed your opinion, do not repeat it.
- Be courteous.
- Agree that everyone wants what is best for AI-Anon, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with them. Place principles above personalities.

VII. Voting

- a. Motions for voting items are presented at each Assembly.
- b. Voting is done by GRs and each GR has one vote.
- c. GR roll call is taken (in-person and virtual) to determine the number of eligible voters in attendance.
- d. The Area Chair determines if a simple majority or 2/3 majority is needed for a motion to pass.
 - Simple majority – GRs who approve the motion are asked to stand and/or a poll is taken for virtual attendees. If this is visually the majority of GRs then the motion passes. Those opposed or abstained may be counted.
 - 2/3 majority – The Secretary determines (based on roll call of both in-person and virtual GRs) the number of votes needed for a 2/3 majority. GRs who approve the motion are asked to stand and count off. A poll is taken for virtual attendees. If both the in-person and virtual votes combined reach the 2/3 majority number, determined by the Secretary, the motion passes. Those opposed or abstained may be counted.

VIII. Election Assemblies

Panel – Each Area is assigned to a Region. There are nine Regions in the World Service Conference and each Region has a Panel number, which coincides to a 3-year term. The Virginia Area is in the Southeastern Region and is currently in Panel 65 (years 2025-2027; Panel 68 will consist of years 2028-2030). A Panel consists of one-third of the Delegates attending the World Service Conference. A panel is elected every year for a three-year term. The elections of the three panels are staggered so that a Conference always includes one panel of Delegates with two years' experience.

- a. Every Three (3) years.
- b. The election Assembly is held at the Fall Assembly of the third year of a panel.
- c. There is ample notice prior to the Election Assembly.
- d. Be familiar with the Officer Job Descriptions, which are provided in advance. (These descriptions are reviewed and updated by VAWSC at least once during each three-year panel.)
- e. GRs vote for the incoming panel of Officers.

IX. Attendance

- a. It is each Group's responsibility to send a GR or an elected alternate to each Assembly.
- b. Your attendance is important!
- c. If your Group is not financially able to fund your attendance at Assembly, in part or in whole, go first to your District and ask for help with the costs.
- d. If your District is not financially able to help, contact the Area Chair or Area Treasurer to request a scholarship. Your expenses may be paid in part or in whole depending on the amount and number of requests.
- e. Make arrangements for this scholarship assistance at least one week BEFORE the Assembly registration deadline.
- f. The Area may also fund a DR whose district is financially unable to pay for the DR's attendance. Contact the Area Chair or Area Treasurer.

Let it Begin with Me
When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there,
and let it begin with me.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I be voting at Assembly?

Yes. Only GRs vote at Assembly. The “ultimate authority” rests with Group members. This is how Al-Anon is guided by the members rather than a governing body. [See Concept One]

Can other members who are not GRs attend Assembly?

Yes. All Al-Anon members are welcome and encouraged to participate in Assembly.

Why is it important for me to attend? Can't I just get a written report of Assembly?

For your group to have a voice and a vote you must attend the assembly. There are many useful conversations that take place at Assembly. It is impossible to capture all the ideas and opinions given in a written report. By attending, you can discover interesting possibilities that may serve to improve your Group meetings. Fellowship is an important part of recovery. Take the opportunity to discover the wonderful experience of fellowship at Assembly.

I am not able to attend Assembly. Can I send my vote by proxy or can another GR take my place?

There are no proxy votes at Assembly because discussions often bring out additional information and/or new ways to think about issues. A GR votes for their Group only. To have your Group represented, the Group elects a member (who is not also an AA member) to attend Assembly in your place. They are considered the Alternate GR and registers as a voting member at Assembly.

If I can't find someone to share a room with, can you help me find a roommate?

If you are unable to find someone to share a room, you may select “need a roommate” on your registration. The Assembly Coordinator will assign a roommate.

How can I find a service sponsor to help me with my service position?

There are many members who have participated in service who are happy to help you on your service journey! Check with service members in your District, or talk with current service members at Assembly. Almost everyone in the room has something to offer. This is where fellowship can be helpful in choosing the right person for you.

What are the qualifications for an Officer position?

The person standing for an office is required to be a current or past DR, be prepared to serve for three (3) years and be an active member of Al-Anon. Candidates are asked to outline their service experience which indicates their involvement in Al-Anon and familiarity with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service. Candidates may also outline their personal knowledge, skills and abilities to demonstrate they can perform the duties of the position for which they stand. [See Concept Nine]

Will there be time for fellowship at Assembly?

Yes. Although the Area business is priority, there is a breakout session planned where you may choose a workshop or focus topic to attend. This session, plus breaks, Early Bird and Night Owl meetings, Chat Rooms, and Opening Sessions, offer the opportunity to connect with other members. Then, there are mealtime opportunities to share fellowship with returning and new friends.

Will there be a Tradition Seven collection at Assembly?

Yes. We pass the basket at Assembly for Tradition Seven contributions. Many members make personal contributions at this time. Groups often have their GR turn in their quarterly contributions and their Area semi-annual appeal contribution at this time.

New information came forward at Assembly that makes me think my Group would make a different choice if they had all the information. What should I do?

As a trusted servant, you have the delegated authority to make effective decisions. [See Concept of Service Ten] When attending Assembly, where you have access to all the facts to guide you, it is expected that you act according to your own conscience for the good of Al-Anon as a whole. [See Concept of Service Three]

Commonly Used Acronyms

AAPP	Area Alateen Process Person
AFG	Al-Anon Family Groups
AFG, Inc.	Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc.
AIS	Al-Anon Information Service
AMIAS	Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service – Alateen Sponsor
ASC	Al-Anon Service Center – May be an AIS, LDC or both
CAL	Conference Approved Literature
CMA	Current Mailing Address
DR	District Representative
GR	Group Representative
LDC	Literature Distribution Center
ODAT	One Day at a Time
PO	Public Outreach
PSA	Public Service Announcement
VAWSC	Virginia Area World Service Committee
WSC	World Service Conference
WSO	World Service Office – Located in Virginia Beach

Resources

Al-Anon and Alateen Service Manual 2022-2025

www.vaalanon.org the Virginia Area website

www.al-anon.org the World Service Office website

www.tidewaterasc.org the Tidewater Al-Anon Service Center

www.alanonva.com the Northern Virginia Al-Anon Service Center

Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

Group Representative's Guide to the Virginia Area Assembly

Virginia Area Officers (your DR can contact each of the following Officers, Coordinators and Liaisons):

Delegate – Laura L.

Alternate Delegate – Deb T.

Chair – Amanda R.

Alternate Chair – Val P.

Secretary – Martha R.

Treasurer – Jessica B.

Alternate Secretary – Chris B.

Alternate Treasurer – Brett H.

Virginia Area Coordinators:

Alateen – Jill S.

Archives – Open

Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) – Ava B.

Assembly – Ed W.

Communications – Cheryl L.

Group Records – Sophie L.

Literature/Forum – Maria N.

Long Range Planning – Debbie P.

Public Outreach – Duane F.

Website – Wendy R.

Virginia Area Liaisons:

ASC Tidewater – Lee N.

ASC Northern Virginia – Michelle R.

Convention Liaison – Deb T., Alternate Delegate

Current Area Convention Chair – Robynn B.

Past Area Convention Chair – Diana A.

MEAC – Shannon W.

ESAC – Open