

SERVICE SPONSORSHIP



Cocaine Anonymous World Services, CAWS
11460 N. Cave Creek Road, Suite 12
Phoenix, AZ 85020
Tel: (310) 559-5833
cawso@ca.org
ca.org

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C.A. World Service Conference-Approved Literature
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Service Sponsorship

Much like sobriety, service is both easier and more enjoyable when we have the benefit of one-on-one guidance from someone whose knowledge and experience we trust. Fully understanding our role in C.A.'s service structure and navigating business meetings often requires asking many questions, but during a service meeting may not be the ideal time to get the answers we seek. This is why many of us have a service sponsor in addition to our recovery sponsor. The purpose of this pamphlet is to explain the difference between the two types of sponsorship and provide a better understanding of how to create an effective service sponsorship relationship.

What is Service Sponsorship and How Does It Differ from Recovery Sponsorship?

Most of us have a wonderful recovery sponsor, who has shared their experience and guided us through the C.A. Twelve-Step program. Our recovery sponsor helps us understand how to practice the Twelve Steps and perhaps the Twelve Traditions in our everyday lives. They may or may not have experience at various levels of service. Some of us, inspired by service work at Group level, are interested in committing to serve at District, Area, and World. To help us on that journey, it can be very useful to ask for additional help from a member who has experience of the specific service work we are interested in.

The concept is similar to the relationship an individual has with their recovery sponsor. Quite simply, a service sponsor is a member who can help guide us by sharing their experience and knowledge of service to our Fellowship. Our service sponsor's goal is to help us become a more effective trusted servant.

A service sponsor will be able to share their understanding of our Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, and the content of our World Service Manual, including C.A.'s service structure. They will also be able to share their experience and knowledge about the work of our service committees and how they operate. This can help guide us to where we would like to apply our time and efforts.

An understanding of the principles contained within the Twelve Steps of C.A. is imperative to begin a journey of service. We urge you to also study and practice the additional principles contained within the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of C.A.

Service at levels beyond our home group may seem daunting, but it need not be. There are lots of members who can help demystify the processes and aid us in gaining the confidence to participate in a new service role. We suggest you seek guidance from a member who conducts themselves and carries out service in a manner attractive to you.

Both types of sponsors make use of written materials produced by or approved for use in C.A. to help educate the sponsee, sharing their own experience as they do so. Recovery and service sponsors also teach sponsees how to find and use these resources.

A service sponsor's guidance should be grounded in the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, and applicable guidelines. This dedicated guidance helps bring more of our fellows into our service structure, which ensures the continued presence and growth of our Fellowship.

Once we are guided to gain our own knowledge and experience of service, we are then able to sponsor others. As with service at any level, service sponsorship can be a valuable experience that contributes to individual growth while also supporting the Fellowship as a whole.

What Are the Benefits and Rewards of Service Sponsorship?

Perspectives from service sponsees:

- Directly after finishing my first set of Steps, I got a service sponsor (someone who had served at the level I wished to serve at one day). After going through the Traditions and Concepts with him, I got my first District service position.
- I gained an idea of the time and effort that would be required to fulfill my service commitment. This helped inform my decision on what, when, and how to be of service so that I did not overextend myself.
- With my service sponsor, I studied the A.A. Service Manual¹ as well as C.A.'s World Service Manual, Traditions, and Concepts. This increased my confidence in navigating the service structure at the Group, Area, and World Service levels. I also learned where to find the answers when I had questions.
- My service sponsor taught me about Robert's Rules of Order (parliamentary procedures) and how to apply them properly. This helped me participate in service meetings with a better understanding of the procedures and how to use them.
- I had someone I could always ask for guidance as I journeyed through the service structure. My service sponsor gave me an idea of the work done by each committee and helped me navigate my new position.
- I learned about the humility needed to step down, step aside, and help mentor the next trusted servant. It is important to ensure that the spirit of rotation is alive and well.
- After studying the Traditions and Concepts with my service sponsor, I went through them with each of my service sponsees.
- Having a better understanding of the principles involved in service helped me enjoy the process in a way I had not been able to previously. I'm grateful I had the courage to ask what seemed like an almost endless list of questions and that someone was willing and able to answer them.

Perspectives from service sponsors:

- Being a service sponsor is another way to share my experience. I can cite many examples of how I have learned and grown as a trusted servant over the years.
- I appreciate the opportunity to revisit and expand my own understanding of the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, and Robert's Rules of Order. Going over them one-on-one and answering questions can give me a much-needed, fresh perspective.
- Helping others with an understanding of the phrase "principles before personalities" shines a light on how well I'm practicing that myself.
- I enjoy seeing others connect with the spiritual aspects of service and embrace this crucial aspect of Step Twelve in carrying the C.A. message. It's rewarding when I can help someone who has become restless and/or unhappy in their recovery rediscover the joy of getting out of themselves by being of service to others.
- I've seen how unity increases within the Fellowship when our members understand our service structure and how they can be most effective within it (choosing new positions that are a good fit, better fulfilling current commitments, etc.). It's important to set our trusted servants up to succeed, so they in turn can pass on their own enthusiasm and knowledge to others.

¹ At the 2004 World Service Conference, an Advisory Opinion was passed that, "The book *A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service* is a valuable tool of recovery in service, and as such, it is the opinion of Cocaine Anonymous that meetings and service meetings within the Fellowship should be allowed to have this book available to support the members in their recovery."

Finding a Service Sponsor

Possible qualifications for a service sponsor include:

- Experienced in C.A. service;
- Understands and practices the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts;
- Uses and has experience with the C.A. World Service Manual and applicable local guidelines;
- Has a working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order (parliamentary procedures);
- Knowledgeable and even-tempered;
- Participates in service with enthusiasm;
- Speaks positively of service and is happy to serve without credit;
- Shares openly during regular C.A. meetings about their experience with service and the resulting rewards;
- Supports C.A. group conscience decisions wholeheartedly, even when disagreeing with them;
- Comfortable with those they sponsor disagreeing with their own opinion while actively doing service;
- When lacking knowledge and experience, freely admits it and suggests other C.A. members who could help;
- Humbly practices the spirit of rotation in service commitments;
- Promotes a spirit of unity within the Fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous.

Some of the ways we have found a service sponsor include:

- Observing how others conduct themselves in service and finding someone whose behavior we want to emulate;
- Listening to and identifying with what others share about service in regular C.A. meetings;
- Sharing at meetings that we are looking for a service sponsor;
- Asking other C.A. members to recommend a service sponsor;
- Showing up early and/or spending time after C.A. business meetings to get to know the people attending;
- Participating in C.A. activities or events related to service and unity.

As with choosing a recovery sponsor, remember that this does not have to be a life-long relationship. Many of us have changed service sponsors as our service journey unfolded. Whether you are a newcomer hesitant about "imposing on" someone or a member who has been around for some time trying to go it alone, service sponsorship is yours for the asking.

Now That You've Found a Service Sponsor, What Do You Do?

First, set up an agreed meeting time. This is a mutual relationship that helps both the sponsor and sponsee. Learning about the Traditions and Concepts builds on the principles learned in the Steps. These principles can be applied in all our affairs.

The service sponsorship journey can be as wide or narrow a path of study as both desire; plus it can change over time. Some possible study materials include the Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Concepts, Robert's Rules of Order, the *C.A. World Service Manual*, the *A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service*, and local service guidelines.

Ask questions. We all find ourselves in service in various stages and don't always know what we are supposed to do. Asking questions helps us look at service from different perspectives. Often we grow

in our service by sharing our experiences, both our successes and our challenges. Share with your service sponsor what you are going through and what excites you.

There is no required path of study, but we suggest some heartfelt conversation between sponsor and sponsee about needs and expectations. Service sponsorship helps share our collective knowledge. Have fun, enjoy the journey, and others will want to join you in service.

Resources for Further Reading²

C.A. Publications Related to Service:

A New High from H&I
Being a GSR
Being of Service
The 7th Tradition
Traditions Group Inventory
Unity

C.A. Guidelines and Workbooks (available for download from ca.org):³

Cocaine Anonymous World Service Manual (of particular note are the Acronyms Used in The World Service Manual, the Service Structure Chart, and the Robert's Rules of Order Motion Chart)
CAWSC Unity Committee Guidelines/Duties
Cocaine Anonymous World Service Archive Committee "Pass-It-On" Archiving Guidelines and Procedures
Cocaine Anonymous World Service Conference Committee Guidelines
Cocaine Anonymous World Service Conference Hospitals and Institutions Committee Suggested Guidelines and Information
Cocaine Anonymous World Service Convention Committee Guidelines
Cocaine Anonymous World Service Literature, Chips, and Formats Committee Guidelines
Cocaine Anonymous World Service Public Information Handbook
Cocaine Anonymous World Service Structure and Bylaws Guidelines
Financial Guidelines for Groups, Districts, Areas & Sub/Standing Committees of Cocaine Anonymous
Information Technology (IT) Committee Workbook and Guidelines

Non-C.A. Materials:

*A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*⁴
*The A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service*¹
Robert's Rules of Order by Henry M. Robert III, et al.

² For a complete list of all WSC-Approved Literature, Books and Guidelines, see the appendix of the C.A. World Service Manual.

³ Titles subject to change as updates are approved by the annual World Service Conference.

⁴ At the 1989 World Service Conference, an Advisory Opinion was passed that, "The books *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous* are two of our most valuable tools of recovery and as such, it is the opinion of Cocaine Anonymous that meetings should be allowed to have these books available to support members in their recovery."