

Red Light Green Light

Voting and Attendance at Assembly – Under Financial Stress

Question #2: “A small group can’t afford to send their GR to Assembly and asked an area coordinator (who happens to attend that group) to vote for that group. The Area Guidelines state that if an Area Officer or Coordinator votes for a group, the group pays. The District does not have extra funds either.

Does that mean only established prosperous groups have a voice and vote at Assembly?

Could a fund be created at the Area Level, funded by voluntary contributions, for groups to utilize if they can’t afford to send their GR’s to Assembly?”

Questions within the questions:

- Is it mandatory for a Group to attend and vote at Assembly?
- Who has the authority to vote a Group’s vote?
- Does an officer (Area or District) who is already attending then change the source of funding to the Group if able to vote on Group’s behalf?
- Is there an alternate fund source method in AI-Anon to support special cases?
- Does the ability to send a GR or Alt-GR to vote constitute a matter affecting another group or AI-Anon or AA as a whole?

Sources for Research:

- AI-Anon Service Manual
- AI-Anon Guidelines from WSO website
- On-line Forum
- District 6 and Area 9 Websites

Citations to answer the questions:

There is no statement found that requires voting and/or attendance at the group level for a group to exist, nor that the lack of this vote affects AI-Anon or AA as a whole.

Duties of Group Rep:

Guideline - Group Representatives G11:

Duties

- Attends District meetings and Area Assemblies and reports back to the group; votes on behalf of the group.
- Requests that the Alternate GR represent the group if unable to attend District meetings and Area Assemblies; the Alternate GR becomes the voting member of the group when participating in the absence of the GR.

Page 145 – Service Manual

“The GR or Alternate GR, in the GR’s absence, votes at the Assembly. Each group has one vote.”

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Group Finances/Budget

Tradition Seven

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

“In keeping with Tradition Seven, a group’s membership is the source of its funds. Assistance from sources outside of Al-Anon or Alateen violates this Tradition. There are no dues or fees to attend Al-Anon or Alateen meetings. Supporting Al-Anon and Alateen groups financially is a way for members to express their gratitude for the help they have received from the program, thus ensuring that Al-Anon and Alateen will be available when someone seeks recovery from living with the effects of alcoholism.

Groups are within their autonomy to create a financial budget to plan for the purchase of literature, refreshments, the group’s trusted servants’ expenses to attend business meetings; purchase of Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism as a public outreach project; and contributions to the service arms. Some groups take additional collections for special local projects within the District or Area. If necessary, groups can add to the voluntary contributions by having fundraising events. (See “Financial Matters” in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual.)

The spiritual principle of prudence suggests that groups avoid accumulating money beyond current needs and a small but ample reserve, with just enough funds to pay the Group Representative (GR) expenses to Assembly and group expenses for a couple of months. This can be decided by making an informed group conscience decision. (See the Reserve Fund guideline [G-41].)”

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In keeping with Traditions Six and Seven, the group does not provide financial aid to members in need or to any outside enterprise. Individuals are free to help others in need as they choose; however, it is always without involving Al-Anon’s name or other group members.

If a group is not able to support the service levels due to excessive meeting expenses, it may wish to reconsider its choice of meeting locations. A group is discouraged from giving all of its funds to an outside entity, such as a clubhouse, even as a condition of using the meeting room. Al-Anon groups are not responsible to support a clubhouse, other than paying rent. Likewise, Al-Anon groups meeting electronically pay for use of the platform that hosts them but are not otherwise responsible to support the platform.

A group may need to periodically review its budget as changes to meeting expenses occur, such as rent or platform fee increases, a change in attendance or an increase in member donations, funding a group public outreach activity, etc.

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Treasurer:

Maintains the group’s financial records in a manner that reflects the group conscience. Requests voluntary contributions from members during each Al-Anon/Alateen meeting in accordance with Tradition Seven.

Maintains the group’s financial records in a manner that reflects the group conscience.

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DRs and GRs are expected to attend meetings of the Assembly whenever its Chairperson calls them. Once every three years, at the Assembly, the eligible GRs elect a **Delegate** to the WSC for the ensuing three years.

“Al-Anon service arms or conferences/conventions may have fundraising events to provide full or partial scholarships for Alateens or Alateen Group Sponsors who may not otherwise be able to attend these events. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, any contributions of financial support are solicited only from within Al-Anon/ Alateen. (See “Financial Matters”: “Contributions of Money, Goods, and Services”: “Fundraising” and the following guidelines: Alateen Conferences [G-16], Al-Anon/Alateen Area Conventions [G-20], and Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention [G-7].)”

G-16 (Alateen Conference)

- Areas, districts, groups, or conferences may have fundraising events to provide full or partial scholarships for Alateens or Alateen Group Sponsors who may not otherwise be able to attend.
- Alateen groups may raise money to attend the conference by performing services and by means of activities within the fellowship, e.g. bake sales, car washes, spaghetti suppers, or the sale of articles pertinent to the program such as the Serenity Prayer, slogans, etc. These activities should be held at reasonable intervals and with the permission of the respective Al-Anon groups. (See “Fund Raising” in the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual [P-24/27].)

G-20 (Area Convention)

- Financing the event - One method is for groups in the convention locality to form a host committee, sometimes called the “Ways and Means Committee,” to raise money. Some Areas have held their first convention by securing a loan (“seed fund”) from the Assembly. The loan is repaid after all bills have been paid.

G-41 Reserve Funds

Area Reserve Funds Questions:

- Could the Area cover expenses for officers and/or coordinators to present workshops to Districts if the District cannot pay?

District Reserve Funds Questions:

- Could the District pay for the Group Representatives to attend the Assembly if the groups lack funds?

Supported Statements:

Who can vote for a group? Only a Group Rep or Alternate Group Rep according to G11 under **DUTIES**. There is no place in the Service Manual where an area officer may vote at the Group level based on their holding Area office, unless they are the group’s Alt-GR. Area 9 does not have a web—based document that provides for anyone other than a GR or Alt-GR to vote.

Scholarship funds can be set up within any District or Area for conference/convention attendance by Alateen Group Sponsors if funds are short, according to page 98 Service Manual. A district supplies only startup funds at a Group’s beginning. If this support logic follows through to the Al-Anon Group level, there is nothing to stop a district or area from specifically setting up a fund to assist a Group in need to attend assembly or being asked to assist a Group in need to attend assembly from surplus funds.

Al-anon groups are self-supporting declining outside contributions. Trad 7, Trad 4 says each group is autonomous except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole. This research does not support that the lack of ability to send a GR or Alt-GR to assembly constitutes a matter affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.