

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS OF WESTERN MASS INTERGROUP

Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org

The questions below were compiled from members of the Area 31 AA Fellowship and the answers to the questions were taken from either the AA Guidelines of the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous in New York or from the experience of the Western Mass Intergroup Committee and Office Staff. The A.A. Guidelines below are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members throughout the U.S. and Canada. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference. In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of the AA Guidelines is to assist in reaching an informed group conscience. The answers shared by the members of the Intergroup Service Committee, and the Office Staff, are to show an experienced view and perspectives through personal observations to questions asked, and by no means speak for AA as a whole. We ask that if you have any questions or input to any of the questions or answers below to please share them with us. You may do so by calling Western Mass Intergroup, attending the monthly Intergroup or Steering Committee meetings, or by e-mail or USPS mail to the address above. We look forward to your continued support of Western Mass Intergroup, and we are here to answer any questions you may have. Please share this information with your group, individuals, or any group that you know may have questions on Western Mass Intergroup.

Q. One of the most asked is: WHAT IS AN INTERGROUP OFFICE?

A. Central Office (or Intergroup) is an A.A. service office that involves a partnership among groups in a community—just as A.A. groups themselves are partnerships of individuals. A central office is established to carry out certain functions common to all the groups—functions which are best handled by a centralized office—and it is usually maintained, supervised, and supported by these groups in their general interest. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

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The Western Mass Intergroup follows an Article of Purpose and it is as follows: Western Mass Intergroup Article of Purpose:

WESTERN MASS INTERGROUP is a body made up of representatives from all AA groups in the area (Area 31). It has met on a monthly basis since it was established in 1953. Each AA group elects, annually, one of its members (one year of sobriety recommended) to serve as its representative on this important committee, and, an alternate to regularly attend its meetings (one year of sobriety recommended). Its main responsibilities are to:

1. Coordinate AA activities among its various groups and to help weaker groups in any way possible.
2. Maintain 24 hour AA telephone coverage.
3. Publish regularly updated schedules of group meetings in the area. Western Mass Intergroup 474 Pleasant Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org
4. Provide a program which will promote regular visits between groups.
5. Provide an inventory of AA Literature for the groups and committees in an office which also serves as a communication and information center.
6. And, to act upon any suggestions be any group, through its representatives, that would be of potential benefit to our area groups.

AT NO TIME IS INTERGROUP INTERESTED IN RUNNING THE AFFAIRS OF AA MEMBER GROUPS.

WESTERN MASS STEERING COMMITTEE is an advisory subcommittee of Western Mass Intergroup which meets on a monthly basis. The committee reviews issues or concerns discuss ideas and plans relevant to the body for discussion and or action. The Steering Committee also serves to provide continuity between past and present chairpersons and assists the Executive Committee to carry our Intergroup policies when requested by the body. The Steering Committee is composed of the following Officers of Intergroup:

1. Chairperson (serves as chairperson of Steering Committee)
2. Secretary - Records minutes of the meeting

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3. Treasurer - Handles financial ends of Intergroup and works with the GM on all affairs.

4. General Manager - Handles all day to day activities of Intergroup office

5. Book Store Manager – Handles the buying and stocking of the literature with the GM

6. Bookie Coordinator – Maintains a list of bookies in the area

7. 1 Past Chairperson of Intergroup (2-year term) 2 year: Immediate Past Chairperson takes Events Coordinators Position Responsible for Certain Events, and Creation of Events, throughout their term.

8. 2 Intergroup Representatives: 1-year term, elected by full Intergroup body at the annual Intergroup election in January...(Minimum 1-year sobriety)

9. 2 Intergroup Representatives: 2-year term, elected by full Intergroup body at the annual Intergroup election in October...(Minimum 1-year sobriety)

10. 1 Intergroup Representatives: 2-year term, appointed by Intergroup Chairperson terms to coincide with that of the Chairperson Guests are welcomed to participate in Steering Committee meeting discussions but are not eligible to vote.

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Q. WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF AN INTERGROUP OFFICE?

A. The A.A. experience has demonstrated that Intergroup offices are helpful worldwide, and particularly in this area. There are nearly 1000 central/intergroup offices throughout the world, performing vital A.A services. These constitute a network of service outlets and A.A contacts to help carry the A.A. message. Sometimes, however, central office ventures have bogged down in disputes over money, authority, and like matters— thus becoming less effective in carrying the A.A. message. It's not always clear why these troubles have come up, but often it's been because the proper functions of a central office were not clearly explained or

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understood, or there was some disregard of the principles in A.A.'s Twelve Traditions.

So the following suggestions have been made to outline the basic services that we here at Western Mass Intergroup offer the AA Fellowship of Area 31 as well as AA as a whole.

1) A.A. Inquiries - By providing an Alcoholics Anonymous listing in the local telephone directory, your Intergroup office, or answering service, may receive inquiries from those seeking help. The Intergroup staff will refer the caller to a nearby A.A. group, where individual may begin their AA experience. Without this service, many people would not have the initial contact with an AA representative and would not receive the vital information needed. Many local A.A. offices now have their own Web site. The Intergroup office also provides a 24Hour Hotline that is manned by the AA groups. The hotline is answered by a hired on-call staff that then directs the call to an AA member. The annual cost of the on-call service is \$345.00 per month. The office personnel or on-call staff keeps a meeting list and phone numbers for local detox that can be given to the caller if necessary. The on-call staff or office personnel will direct the caller to the next available AA meeting in their area if asked, and or to our information website if they have online capabilities.

2) An Informational Website – Western Mass Intergroup provides an informational website that the newcomer, or AA member, can find information on a variety of topics. The website is supported by the donations of the AA groups through their 7th Tradition contributions. The Western Mass Intergroup website has the local updated AA meeting list of the Area 31 groups. The site also provides the Spanish Speaking meeting list, Berkshire Meeting list and local AI-Anon information. The website also allows the AA Fellowship to purchase items from the Intergroup through an online catalog and have the items shipped to the individual through a shipping program. The website also supplies information for the Area 31 Service Committees as well as Invited Committees to Area 31

3) Office Facilities - Western Mass Intergroup maintains a conveniently located office in which paid workers and/or volunteers are available to carry the message of A.A. to the alcoholic. The office houses a fully stocked bookstore and through the support of the area groups allow the office to

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keep book prices as low as possible. The office also supplies groups with other items for group or personal needs. Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111
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4) Meeting Lists and Other Literature - At regular intervals, Western Mass Intergroup will publish and distribute up-to-date lists of meetings in Area 31 When and Where and other information about local A.A. services. Western Mass Intergroup maintains the When and Where and makes all corrections or changes to the When and Where for all groups in Area 31. The meeting list is then sold to the groups in order to be self-supporting for re-printing costs. Group change forms are available in the Intergroup office and can be filled out by the group Chairperson, Intergroup Rep, or GSR. Western Mass Intergroup also supplies a selection of non-AA items for the individual AA member to purchase.

5) Information Exchange and Monthly Intergroup Meeting – Western Mass Intergroup also serves the AA Fellowship as the Voice of Area 31 local AA with the circulation and exchange of information among all the A.A. groups in the community as well as the Area Service Committees. This exchange of information can be found during the once a month Intergroup meeting. The Western Mass Intergroup meeting is held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Intergroup office at the Grace United Church, 474 Pleasant Street in Holyoke, MA. In this same connection, a logical function of your Intergroup office is to provide information for the groups such as meeting changes, flyers, anniversaries, special events, AA-related events, events outside Area 31, and much more.

6) Western Mass Intergroup FYI Newsletter - The FYI is an informational newsletter for the Area 31 Fellowship. It provides stories, updated Area information, and informative reading for the individual member to enjoy.

7) Cooperation with local Area 31 Service Committee: - Western Mass Intergroup is an ideal contact with those in the local AA Fellowship, as well as the community, seeking information about Area 31 A.A Service groups. Thus, Western Mass Intergroup's relations with the Area 31 service Committee. From the standing and invited committees of Area 31, Western Mass Intergroup cooperates by passing information of these certain committees to those who seek it. From Archives, PI, CPC, Grapevine,

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District meetings, Accessibilities Committee, and more, Western Mass Intergroup is available to answer questions and direct AA members to the answers to many of the questions about our Area 31 service Committee. We also cooperate with the Area by taking messages and passing on that information to the area as needed.

8) A.A. in Correctional and Treatment Facilities - Western Mass Intergroup maintains contact with the Area 31 Institutions Committee ordering literature for the Institutions Committee monthly. Intergroup also provides to the AA Fellowship contact information for the Institution Committee and or Bridging the Gap program. Western Mass Intergroup also works with the local detox and treatment facilities offering literature and meeting lists for purchase.

9) Local A.A. Events – Western Mass Intergroup participates in many of the AA events that are put on in Area 31. WMIG is involved as a literature participant in the Mass State Convention, Area 31 Round-up, and Young Peoples Conferences and conventions. Western Mass Intergroup has a once a year free family picnic for the Area 31 AA Fellowship, with food, music, games, Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appelton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org and all children receive a free toy, as well as a children's Christmas party and a 24 Christmas Alcahthon.

10) Monthly Bookie Exchange Meeting – Western Mass Intergroup hosts a monthly Bookie Exchange meeting held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm, prior to the Intergroup Meeting. It is held at the United Congregational Church in Holyoke, MA. This meeting is held to exchange, pick up and fill group commitments. A great way to meet and greet new Bookies and to fill Incoming and Outgoing group commitments. Western Mass Intergroup has a Bookie and Alternate Bookie positions that are rotating positions and are elected through nominations from the Intergroup body and elected through the voting process.

Q. HOW DO YOU PAY FOR ALL THE AA SERVICES?

A. Here are the methods to financing Western Mass Intergroup

1) Group Contributions - A.A. groups participating in the financial support of their Intergroup office may choose to make their contributions by setting

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aside fixed sums from their regular collections. Many groups pledge a fixed amount, which is paid periodically. This assures Intergroup of a regular income and certainly helps it to plan the best means of meeting its own obligations. Occasionally there are groups that do not support Intergroup. In these cases, the spirit of contributing voluntarily, which prevails throughout A.A., applies. If groups can't, or choose not, to pay their share of the costs, they shouldn't be denied the services of the office. Western Mass Intergroup always maintains to help the sick and suffering individual and to pass the AA message to those who seek it.

2) Special Contributions - Some groups provide a special collection box or basket in a convenient place during meeting times, inviting members to contribute. In that same vein, A.A. members may make individual contributions, on a pledge or voluntary basis, directly to Western Mass Intergroup. Also, many A.A.s make contributions to their intergroup office in celebration of their A.A. birthday or anniversary.

3) Sale of Literature – Western Mass Intergroup publishes an Area 31 meeting list. These are sold at a minimal earned income to help defray office expenses and re-printing costs. Intergroup also buys literature and pamphlets from G.S.O. for resale at a retail price, the earned incomes are used to support the vital services of your Intergroup office supplies. 4)

Special Events –Western Mass Intergroup holds a yearly free family picnic for the AA Fellowship. All proceeds are put directly back into the services Western Mass Intergroup offers.

Q. WHY DOES INTERGROUP SEEM TO HAVE SO MUCH MONEY?

A,1) Prudent Reserve – Western Mass Intergroup keeps a prudent reserve. The 1977 General Service Conference recommended that “a suggested prudent reserve... preferably is one to twelve months’ operating expense, depending on local needs.” For most AA groups the group conscience sets the limitations of the prudent reserve. The same was done with Western Mass Intergroup. A Financial Position Paper was in 2020 after studying the financial spreadsheets detailing the expenses for Western Mass Intergroup during an 18 month period. Suggested are the following protocols to govern Western Mass Intergroup financial conditions:

1) That the prudent reserve be increased to \$42,500 in 2020

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2) That the amount of money held in the Literature Account not fall below an average of \$2,000 per month

3) That the amount of money held in the Checking Account does not fall below an average of \$2,000 per month if possible. The reasons for arriving at these figures are as follows: Definition of a Prudent Reserve - The AA GSO Handbook recommends that all AA groups (individual and collective, as in Intergroups or Central Service Offices) keep from 1 to 12 months of average expenses in a Prudent Reserve Account (GSO typically keeps 12 months). Our average expense for the office operations (excluding rent \$750.00) is \$3,500.00. Our present reserve of \$15,000 is not quite 6 months of operating expenses. \$42,500 would be 10 ½ months, still well within GSO's recommended limit. In addition, this higher prudent reserve would provide a reservoir for extraordinary one-time expenses, without cutting too much into the total amount needed for relocation, just as an example.

2) Buying Power - The accounts after the prudent reserve is used to pay the office expenses, payroll, insurance, literature, and more. Your book prices remain low due to the donations of the groups. The financial stability of your Intergroup office allows your office to purchase books in volume and this allow the Intergroup to sell them at the lowest costs available. Example: In 1996 a Big Book was selling for \$7.50 – In 2000 it sold for \$7.00 – In 2008 the Book sells for \$6.00, by 2012 the Big Book is \$8.00, but remember AA World Service Raised their prices \$2 in 2009 and 2014 so a Big Book in 2020 costs \$9.50. Your donations make a difference in how you book prices are structured. If the donations do not meet the expenses then book prices suffer.

3) Office employees – Western Mass Intergroup employ's a paid General Manager, as well as 1 paid Store Manager, and an Office Associate, per diem workers, and 2 volunteers. All are AA members who respond to Twelve Step calls at the office, answer the telephone, and often carry Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org out other service office duties.

The General Manager is responsible for overseeing the daily office affairs, the website, the When and Where meeting list, and is also a liaison to the groups. The Store Manager is responsible for book orders, deposits,

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overseeing volunteers, and is also a liaison to the groups. Although the principles involving certain paid employees of A.A. service centers are now widely known in A.A., it is still helpful to review the appropriate A.A. Tradition. As it states in Tradition Eight: "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers." It should be clear from this that the paid office personnel's functions as a paid employee of the Intergroup office—not as an A.A. member—during duty hours and is hired largely on the basis of professional skill. Regarding compensation for paid workers, Bill W. writes in "Twelve Concepts for World Service" as follows: "We believe that each paid executive, staff member, or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world." Also, Social Security and certain insurance benefits are provided, as well as sick leave and vacations. It is suggested that the central office full-time personnel also be accorded a vote as well as a voice on the steering committee. This policy is successfully followed by A.A. World Services, Inc.: The staff coordinator—a paid employee as well as an A.A. member—also serves as a director and thus has a vote on policy matters.

4) Use for Office Expenses – As we discussed previously there are many office expenses that arise in running an Intergroup office. These are the rent of the facility, phone bills, website costs, answering services, insurance, liability, payroll, stock, copier, office supplies, yearly tax preparations, payroll services, printing, and much more. At times the expenses are far beyond the monthly donations received and for this, we must again use funds available to us that are set aside for such a time period. Over the past 4 years, we have received an average of \$3,200 per month, with 30 – 40 groups donating. This is 40 groups out of 283 plus registered AA groups and 350 listed in the When and Where. The number of groups registered varies year to year. Overall observation - it is important that all Area 31 groups see the importance of their Intergroup Office and the services that Western Mass Intergroup offers to the AA Fellowship. We can also see that financial insecurity would not be far off without the donations of the Area 31 AA groups. Unity is vital to your Intergroups existence.

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Q. WHY IS THE PRUDENT RESERVE IN A HIGH-INTEREST SAVINGS ACCOUNT?

A. In 2017 the Intergroup body voted to place the Prudent Reserve into a special high-interest savings account. This account will earn .5% interest on the money transferred from the funds cashed in from the CDs. Using this account now to our benefit we can transfer each month a payment to ourselves in the amount of \$500.00 towards our When and Where payment. This will add to our account balance and earn the 5% interest instead of earning 0% in our checking. We also deposit our monthly donation can to this account. At the end of 12 months, we have the Western Mass Intergroup 474 Pleasant Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org funds to pay the When and Where cost but an additional \$1700 plus dollars going to our prudent reserve. By using this method we are also able to immediately remove funds for any emergency, or create a loan to our self that can be paid back monthly. Also, the saving will have no penalty or time restraint if we withdrawal our funds as a CD would. This account with help slowly reach the goals established by the position paper without taking the funds from the group's donations. The donations would go directly to paying for the vital services Intergroup offers to the AA Fellowship of Western Mass. Though we found that the AA General Service Office in New York City also has their Prudent Reserve in interest-bearing CD's offering an earned income to be used to offset the cost of their present operation. The Intergroup body felt that the savings account would be the best way to use the funds acquired from the groups to create a small earned income to reach the specified goals of the Prudent Reserve base figures here at Western Mass Intergroup. When the base figures are meet their goals literature prices will decrease.

Q. HOW DOES THE INTERGROUP TREASURY WORK?

A. Western Mass Intergroup has fallen on hard times in the past. There are many individuals to thank for bringing the treasury back to where it is today. We as AA members are grateful for the effort and dedication the Fellowship has shown to help Intergroup to continue to spread the message of AA. Below will explain how the Western Mass Intergroup treasury is broken down and how the accounts work. There are 3 accounts to Western Mass Intergroup:

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1) Checking Account or 777 accounts: This is the account that all group contributions are placed in. Office expenses are paid out of this account with the exception of the rent. Office expenses are around \$3,200 per month and monthly contributions over the past years are coming closer to matching the outgoing costs.

2) Literature Account or 751 account: This account is for the daily deposits of book sales and items sold from the store. All monies used from this account pay for the restocking of literature and other AA and Non-AA items. The rent for the facility is also paid from this account.

3) Prudent Reserve – The funds from these accounts were voted on by the body of Intergroup in 2017 to be placed into a high-interest savings account. This money is for unforeseen expenses. When these accounts are healthy, the costs of literature remain or can be lowered in price. The donations to the office certainly help to establish the literature prices and services to the AA Fellowship.

Here are a few of the effective ways a stable treasury can help AA as a whole.

1) The ability to sell the Institutions Committee literature at a discount price if possible.

2) To provide the lowest costs of AAWS literature as possible.

3) To be able to sell When and Where Meeting Lists at a small earned income. Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org

4) Allow us to help groups, and donate literature to special Area 31 events such as Western Mass Young Peoples in AA, Area 31 Round-Up, Mass State Convention, just to name a few. The Treasury certainly reflects the goodness of the individual AA groups in Area 31 and how they choose to spend their money. With the donations of the Area groups, Intergroup is able to keep the vital services going that help the newcomer who is seeking the AA message. Without your Intergroup this certainly would become an overwhelming concern.

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Q. WHY DOES OUR GROUP NEED AN INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVE?

A. Western Mass Intergroup has no authority on its own account; Intergroup derives it from the participating groups. Though Intergroup has Trusted Servants that help make the best decision for the groups, local group representatives reflect the groups' conscience in Intergroup's operations. Western Mass Intergroup steering committee is set up to help handle the administrative activities of the Intergroup office.

The steering committee holds regularly scheduled meetings and deals with general policy and plans. Periodically, the steering committee reports to group representatives any Intergroup problems and accomplishments. It is extremely important to keep a two-way flow of information going between the Intergroup and groups. As an Intergroup Representative, we are able to hear the group's conscience on issues concerning Western Mass Intergroup.

The rep is a trusted servant and at times is asked to vote in the best interest of his/her group. The rep also carries the AA message back to the group and keeps its members informed on the AA information given from the service committee present at the monthly meeting. The rep is the groups' voice to Intergroup.

Q. DO ALL DONATIONS GO INTO A POT, ARE THEY SHARED BETWEEN SERVICE COMMITTEES, AND DOES GSO SUPPORT LOCAL AA IN NEED?

A. "A.A.'s far-flung Twelfth Step activities, carrying the message to the next sufferer, are the very lifeblood of our A.A. adventure. Without this vital activity, we would soon become anemic; we would literally wither and die. "Now where do A.A.'s services; worldwide, area & local, fit into our scheme of things? Why should we provide these functions with money?"

The answer is simple enough. Every single A.A. service is designed to make more, and better Twelfth Step work possible, whether it be a group meeting place, a central or intergroup office to provide phone numbers to local detoxes, and offer general AA information to the newcomer, or the World Service Headquarters [now the General Service Office] to maintain unity and effectiveness all over the globe. "Though not costly, these service

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agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion—to our survival as a Fellowship. Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org

Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to recognition on our part that A.A. must everywhere function in full strength—and that, under our Tradition of self-support; we are all going to foot the bill.” Bill W., October 1967 Grapevine Each A.A. entity—group, district, area, central or intergroup office, and G.S.O.—provides a specific service and is autonomous. Separate checks need to be sent to each entity.

Western Mass Intergroup survives solely on the donations of the Area 31 Groups. That is the same for all Area 31 service Committees. At no times does the GSO supply any financial support to local AA Intergroup’s. Without the groups support Intergroup’s have been known to go bankrupt and fold leaving AA groups to find alternatives for Area Services, literature, meeting lists, phone service, and more.

Q. WHAT IF OUR GROUP CAN ONLY SEND A SMALL AMOUNT?

A. The General Service Conference has emphasized that it is not concerned about the amount each group contributes, but that each group contributes something. At a service assembly, one G.S.R. said, “It is a spiritual obligation to participate by contributing.” All funds given will be used in the best way to support the Intergroup Office. As one member said, Intergroup is not just for the present, but for the generations of members to follow, it would be foolish not to invest in AA’s future. For further information on how money and spirituality mix please refer to the pamphlet. Self Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix. This a free pamphlet located at your local Intergroup office.

Q. OUR GROUP WANTS TO DONATE BUT WHERE DO WE SEND THE MONEY? AND HOW DO WE SPLIT THE MONIES?

A. There are Pie Charts with the suggested donations to each service committee. It all comes down to the individual group conscience that has the final say of the division of funds. Checks can be sent to the following addresses if your group would like to donate. Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 [ww.westernmassaa.org](http://www.westernmassaa.org)

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Suggested Guidelines for Area 31 contributions as per Western Mass Intergroup Office and the Area 31 Committees Donations to the General Service Office make your check out to:

To: 40% Western Mass Intergroup you may make your check out to:
Western Mass Intergroup Office 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040

To: 30% Area 31 service Committee make your check out to: Western Mass Area Committee P.O. Box 6818, Holyoke, MA 01041-6818

To: 20% Area 31 Institutions you may make your check out to: Western Mass Institutions Committee P.O. Box 1391, Holyoke, MA 01041-1391

To: Area 31 Berkshire Intergroup you may make your check made out to:
Berkshire Intergroup 85 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

To: 10% General Service Office P.O. Box 459 Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163 Thank you for your continued support of all Area 31 service committees.

Your personal & group donations provide the vital services that give back to you, the fellowship, and most of all; the newcomer finding their way into Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you. Western Mass Intergroup 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-2111 www.westernmassaa.org Q.

Q WHAT HAS INTERGROUP DONE TO USE THE GROUP DONATIONS WISELY?

A. In the past 4 years, Intergroup has been running at a steady pace breaking even or slightly ahead at years end. We have been working hard to use the group's money to its fullest, and have cut costs in many ways. Here a few of the ways your office has worked for you.

1) Intergroup Picnic - With an established location for the picnic, it saves \$1,000 in rental fees which allows the picnic to be free of charge. In the past years, we have been able to greet 1,000's of people at Intergroup's family picnic. Because of the location we also saved on food, supplies, coffee, and more. All these savings go right back into the services Intergroup offers to the Area 31 Fellowship.

2) Christmas Alcathon & Children's Christmas Party - Intergroup also puts on a yearly children's Christmas Party, for the years volunteers have been

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able to hand out gifts to AA members children. All gifts were purchased by group donations. Intergroup also puts on an annual AA 24-hour Alcathon. This function has AA meetings on the hour from 6 pm Christmas eve to 6 pm Christmas Day. There is coffee, tea, food, and fellowship. Donations are accepted during the event to help offset costs.

3) Answering Service – By restructuring the answering service with the initiation of a prompt system, Intergroup has been able to save \$100's per month in service fees. This new system better serves the caller with information about the office without taking away the vital 12th step call when needed.

4) New Payroll Service – In 2008 the insertion of a new payroll system has allowed Intergroup to be self-sufficient. Intergroup is able to write payroll through a payroll service and is able to buy its own workman's comp package. By doing this Intergroup was able to leave the large staffing service corporation and save \$5,000 per year in payroll costs. This helps to support Intergroup, as well as the Area 31 groups, by continuing the vital AA services Intergroup offers.

5) New Copier – In 2011 Intergroup was able to lease its own copier for the office. By leasing its own copier Intergroup could save \$1,000's per year on maintenance and toner. This allows Intergroup to better serve the groups by being able to print more flyers, newsletters, and information for the AA Fellowship. Intergroup will receive a new copier every 5 years under its lease agreement as we did in 2016.

6) Pay-Pal Invoicing Service – In 2012 the office implemented this service for the convenience of our customers. With this service, we email an invoice with price and shipping. The order can be paid with a PayPal account or a major credit card in a secure payment area. Upon payment, your order will be shipped. (see shipping below) Western Mass Intergroup
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7) Shipping Service – Intergroup implemented a new shipping program through the US Postal Service this includes Priority & Media mail programs. This has helped Intergroup to be able to ship books worldwide and create added revenue for the Intergroup Office. Intergroup has had orders from all over the United States, Korea, and Russia. We are able to get literature in

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the hands of rehabilitation centers, detoxes & correctional facilities throughout the US and also to those AA members in remote areas. This is all possible due to you supporting your Intergroup office.

8) Western Mass Intergroup Website – Having a fully intergraded website allows the newcomer to AA sees firsthand the information about the Fellowship. From a newcomers page, Area Service pages, On-line When and Where in both English and Spanish, Online Literature Store, Events Calendar, and so much more, save Intergroup \$1,000's of \$\$\$\$ each year.

This savings is generated from the minimal use of the answering service which allows the service to handle the 12 step calls at not those for minor informational needs. In 2016 – 2017 the website averaged 45,000 visits each month. We invite you to visit your Western Mass Intergroup Office during normal business hours. Intergroup hopes that you'll see where personal & group donations are going to help pass the AA message to those in need. Intergroup thanks you for taking the time to read this informational package and Intergroup hopes you have a better understanding of the way Western Mass Intergroup works for you and your group.

The Three Legacies of AA The 1st Legacy to AA is Recovery, which is embodied in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, in the Steps and in Person to Person 12th Step Work.

The 2nd Legacy to AA is Unity. This Bill had realized when he said, "We can do together what I cannot do alone" It was vital that AA's stay together. To ensure Unity, Bill has written the 12 Traditions.

The 3rd Legacy to AA is Service. The General Service Conference is the means by which the Fellowship is autonomous, operating through the instrument of a truly democratic, representational, elected form of self-government. As defined by Bill, "...an AA service is anything whatever helps us to reach a fellow sufferer – ranging all the way from the 12th Step itself to a phone call & a cup of coffee, and to AA's General Service Office for national and international action" - Thank You Western Mass Intergroup