DISTRICT 28

Starting a New Meeting

New Group Packet

Thank you for wanting to start a meeting. This packet gathers what a new group needs in one place: formats, readings, how to register, how to handle the 7th Tradition and pay for rent and coffee, how to grow a home group, and how to stay connected through a GSR.

All of the forms you need to start are included in the package. If you get stuck, call the District 28 hotline at **(360) 807-0902** and a local member will help.

1. Your First Steps

Work down this list. Most groups take care of these in their first few weeks.

- ☐ Find two or three members willing to commit to the meeting.
- ☐ Pick a place, a day, and a time you can keep every week.
- ☐ Choose a format and decide if the meeting is open or closed (Section 3).
- ☐ Choose a group name.
- ☐ Gather the readings and some literature (attached).
- ☐ Pick a chairperson or secretary, and a treasurer (Section 6).
- ☐ Hold your first business meeting to make these decisions together.
- ☐ Get listed locally so people can find you (Section 5, Step 1).
- ☐ After a month or two, register with Area 72 and the General Service Office (Section 5, Steps 2 and 3).
- ☐ Elect a GSR and an Alternate GSR (Section 8).

2. Find a Place to Meet

Common choices are churches, community centers, clubhouses, and other spaces that rent rooms at a fair rate. Before you commit, ask about:

- Rent, and when and how it is paid.
- Keys, lockup, and who to call if something goes wrong.
- Storage for literature, coffee supplies, and the basket.
- Parking, lighting, and wheelchair access.
- Whether the space can be reserved long term.

A good place to start: the XII Step Club

The XII Step Club in Chehalis has been a home for recovery since 1985. It is a safe, welcoming space used only for recovery and meetings, and it sees a higher share of newcomers than most rooms in the county.

610 W. Main St, Centralia, WA 98531

Visit their website at xiistepclub28.org, call (360)748-6818, or stop by for a meeting to ask about open time slots.

3. Choose a Format

Each group decides its own format. Here are the formats most common in Lewis County but it is entirely up to you.

Format	How it works
Discussion	The chair picks a topic or asks for one. Members share for a few minutes each.
Speaker	One or two members tell their story at length. May open for sharing afterward.
Big Book study	The group reads a passage aloud, then members share on it.
Step or Tradition study	The group works through one Step or Tradition, often using Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
Beginners	Focused on newcomers and the first three Steps. Often paired with a regular meeting.
Literature	The group reads from other A.A. books or the Grapevine and shares on what was read.

Open or Closed?

- **Open meetings:** anyone may attend, including family, friends, and students.
- **Closed meetings:** only for people who have a desire to stop drinking.

During the meeting, can be any number of AA approved literature can be read by the chairperson or the attending members. Common readings are attached to this document.

4. Register Your Group

There are three separate listings. Each one does a different job. All are important.

Step 1: Get listed in Lewis County (do this first)

This puts your meeting on lewiscountyaa.org, the printed District 28 schedule, and the Meeting Guide app, so people can actually find you.

- Email the District 28 web servant directly from the website or at dist28web@area72aa.org
- Send the group name, day, time, address, format, and whether it is open or closed.

Step 2: Register with Area 72

This connects your group to Western Washington Area 72 and gives it a voice through the District. Area 72 has one online form for new groups and for changes.

1. Go to area72aa.org/updategroup (Update/Add Group Form, Area Registrar/GSO).
2. Choose the option to add a new group, and fill in the group name, meeting details, and a group contact (often the GSR).
3. Select District 28 as your district.
4. Submit. Questions go to the Area 72 registrar at registrar@area72aa.org.

Step 3: Register with the General Service Office (New York)

This lists your group with A.A. as a whole. GSO gives your group a service number, which you use when sending contributions. Area 72's form above is labeled for both the Area Registrar and GSO, so ask the registrar if it covers both for you. You can also file directly with GSO:

1. Open the New Group Form (F-30) – Included with this document.
2. Pick Area 72 and District 28 as your preferred area and district.
3. Return it as directed in the form.
4. Expect a 30-day pending period. During that time your DCM and Delegate may reach out to welcome the group. After that, GSO emails a digital Group Handbook.

> **Good to know**
>
> Many groups wait until they have been meeting for a month or two before filing with GSO.
>
> Filing with GSO does not put you on local meeting lists. That is why Step 1 comes first.

5. Handling the Seventh Tradition Contributions

Each meeting's basket pays for what the group needs to keep its doors open: rent for the room, coffee and supplies, and literature. A simple, open routine keeps everyone comfortable.

At every meeting

1. Pass the basket during the meeting.
2. After the meeting count the money and record the date, the meeting, the number of members and the amount in the group's ledger or notebook.

3. Put the money in a zippered bag or envelope and hand it to the treasurer. Some groups get a bank account, some have the treasurer keep it, and some meeting places, like the XII Step Club in Centralia, let you pay it against the rent immediately after the meeting, regardless of the amount.

Paying the bills

1. Pay the rent for the room on the schedule your landlord asks for, and get a receipt each time. Many meeting spaces, like the XII Step Club, can be flexible while you get the meeting going.
2. When a member buys coffee, cups, or supplies, they bring the receipt and the treasurer pays them back from the basket.
3. Buy literature for the group's table (Big Books, pamphlets, reading cards) as the group decides.
4. Record every payment in the ledger the same day, with the receipt tucked in the back.

Each month

1. The treasurer gives a short report at the business meeting: money in, money paid out, and what is on hand. Bring the ledger and receipts so anyone can look.
2. The group decides how much to keep on hand as a prudent reserve, so rent can be paid even in a slow month. Many groups keep one to three months of expenses.
3. The group decides by group conscience what to do with money above the reserve.

6. Building Home Group Members

A meeting becomes a group when members call it home. These habits help that happen.

- **Be dependable.** Open the doors early, start on time, end on time, every week.
- **Greet at the door.** Have a member welcome each person, especially anyone new.
- **Give everyone a job.** Coffee, setup, greeter, literature, chair. A commitment gives people a reason to come back.
- **Rotate jobs.** Short terms (three to six months for most jobs) spread the work and bring in new people.
- **Invite people to join.** Say it out loud: "If you would like to make this your home group, you are welcome here."
- **Hold a monthly business meeting.** Members who help decide things feel ownership.
- **Celebrate milestones.** Chips, cakes, and anniversaries give people something to come back for.
- **Offer a phone list.** An optional list of first names and numbers helps newcomers reach out between meetings.
- **Make sponsors visible.** Ask members willing to sponsor to raise their hands.

- **Take an annual group inventory.** The A.A. Group pamphlet has a list of questions to use.

Read more: The A.A. Group... Where It All Begins (P-16)

7. GSR and Alternate GSR

The General Service Representative (GSR) links your group with District 28, Area 72, and A.A. as a whole. Information flows both ways: the GSR carries the group's conscience out, and brings news and decisions back.

What the GSR does

- Attends the monthly District 28 meeting and votes for the group.
- Gives a short report at the group's business meeting after each district meeting.
- Brings questions that need a group conscience back to the group, then carries the answer to the District and Area.
- Shares flyers and event news with the group.
- Keeps the group's registration current with Area 72 and GSO.
- Attends Area 72 events when possible: Pre-Conference (March), Delegate report back (May and June), Pre-Assembly (August), and the Area Assembly (October).

District 28 meeting: 2nd Monday of each month. Potluck at 6:00 pm, meeting at 6:30 pm. Jackson Prairie Church, 4224 Jackson Hwy, Chehalis.

Electing them

- Most groups elect both at the same business meeting, usually for a two-year term that lines up with the Area 72 rotation.
- Once elected, register the new GSR with Area 72 (Section 5). GSO then sends the GSR a welcome kit.
- A new GSR does well with a service sponsor: an experienced member who can explain how general service works.
- Attend the District 28 Monthly Service meeting on the 2nd Monday for more information.

Starting a meeting is fun and rewarding, and you don’t have to do it all at once or alone. This packet covers a lot, but most new groups begin with just a few things: a place to meet, a format, some readings, and two or three members willing to show up each week. The rest falls into place over time. Every meeting District 28 started this way, with a few alcoholics who wanted a place for the next person who walks in the door. When questions come up, reach out to District 28. We’re glad to help, and we look forward to welcoming your group. Most importantly, Keep Coming Back!

Suggested Meeting Format

Welcome. This is the regular meeting of the _____ group of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is_____and I am an alcoholic.

Let us open the meeting with a few moments of silence to reflect on why we are here followed by the Serenity Prayer:

God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and
Wisdom to know the difference.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. (or ask a member to read the “Alcoholics Anonymous Preamble”).

I’ve asked a member to read “How it Works” from Chapter 5 of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

I’ve asked a member to read “The Twelve Traditions.

I’ve asked a member to read the 9th Step promises from pages 83-84 of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Is there anyone here for their 1st, 2nd or 3rd meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous? Please introduce yourself by first name only so that we may get to know you better.

Is there anyone here from outside District 28? Please introduce yourself and where you are from so that we may welcome you to our area.

I’ve asked a member to read from “The Daily Reflections”.

Sponsorship is at the heart of our program. All who need a sponsor please raise your hand. *(Allow members to respond)* All who are willing to sponsor please raise your hand. *(Allow members to respond)* Thank you.

Please turn off your cell phones or place them in silent mode so as not to disrupt the meeting.

Remember that each member speaks for themselves only and no one speaks for Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. In keeping with our singleness of purpose please limit your sharing to the recovery from alcoholism. Depending on meeting size limit your sharing so that all who wish have an opportunity to speak.

Who would like to begin the meeting with a topic or their thoughts on any of our readings? *(The chairperson may call on a member if no one shares).*

(At or around halfway through the meeting pause for the 7th Tradition)

The 7th Tradition states, “Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” I will pass the basket for those of you who wish to contribute. If you have court or treatment meeting slips please place them in the basket and they will be returned to you.

Does anyone have an announcement for the benefit of Alcoholics Anonymous?

(After any announcements the meeting is resumed)

The meeting is once again open for sharing.

(At the end of the meeting close with the Lord’s Prayer of another prayer as determined by the group conscience.)

Thank you to all that attended. Remember, what who you see here and what you hear here stays here. We will now close with the Lord’s Prayer…

The Alcoholics Anonymous Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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A.A. Responsibility Declaration

I am responsible.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,

I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that:

I am responsible.

HOW IT WORKS

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it — then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol — cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power — that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him,* praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! I can’t go through with it.’’ Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

a. That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.

b. That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.

c. That God could and would if He were sought.

Reprinted from pages 58-60 in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous.*
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12 Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

THE 9th STEP PROMISES

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

From page 83-84, of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous © Alcoholics Anonymous

A Vision For You

From page 164, of the **Big Book**, **Alcoholics Anonymous**

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you—until then.

A portion of page 164 of the Book, Alcoholics Anonymous © Alcoholics Anonymous

NEW GROUP FORM

GSO NEW GROUP LISTING GUIDELINES / FORM *U.S. and Canada*

Thank you for wanting to list your group with the U.S./Canada General Service Office (GSO) It is the practice of the GSO to list groups and not meetings. Listing provides a wider opportunity for communication between your group, GSO, and the General Service Structure which will help the alcoholic who still suffers. Before filling out the new group form below, here are a few good things to know: ■ **This form is for the U.S./Canada Service structure.** The U.S./Canada structure is just one of many A.A. entities around the world. If your virtual group is based outside the U.S. and Canada, we suggest that you contact the office in that country. If your group is based outside the U.S./Canada or your group has no geographic location, and you wish to communicate with GSO you can contact the GSO International desk. ■ GSO is often asked, "Will filling out this form ensure my group appears in local meetings lists?" **The answer is no.** This form is only so that communication can flow between your group and the U.S./Canada Service structure (your district, your area, and your GSO) Please contact the local A.A. entity that publishes meeting lists such as your local intergroup/central office, district, or area. Many of them also share information with the Meeting Guide App. ■ **This form asks groups to designate their preferred district and area.** The U.S./Canada structure is comprised of 93 geographic areas and each area is made up of a number of districts. In-person (including hybrid) groups generally use geographic proximity to decide their district and area. It varies for virtual groups since they are non-geographic in nature. If a group originated in a locale and feels rooted there the group may want to approach the local district about participating. Recently some areas have created non-geographic districts for virtual groups. If a group does not designate a preferred district and area, the default option will be using the location of the group's primary contact. ■ **Area Registrars are often a crucial first point of contact for A.A. groups.** Area registrars develop and maintain records of all groups in their area through Fellowship Connection, a user-friendly interface that facilitates information sharing between areas and GSO Your group's information will be entered into Fellowship Connection and is available to your area delegate and district committee member (DCM). Contact information for your area registrar and other trusted servants can be found on your area's website. List of area websites. ■ **Experience shows it's best if a group has a good start before asking to be listed.** Many groups wait until they've been meeting for a month or two before filling out this form. The pamphlet "The A.A. Group" can be a helpful guide to groups and covers four main areas: what an A.A. group is; how a group functions; group relations with others in the community; and how the group fits into the structure of A.A. as a whole. ■ **GSO lists A.A. groups and not meetings.** Shared experience is that holding A.A. meetings is one function of a group. An A.A. Group is a meeting that participates in the General Service Structure and provides Twelfth Step services that extend beyond the regular meetings times. ■ It is good to keep in mind the long form of Tradition Three: "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation." ■ **The form asks for a primary contact.** Often groups choose their General Service Representative (GSR) as the group's primary contact, but any group member can serve as the primary contact if they can provide a current email address. An email allows GSO to send the group helpful information and acknowledgements of group contributions quickly and at no cost. A group can also set up a group email address and use that for group correspondence. ■ **Being listed with the GSO is not an official sanctioning of a group.** A group listing does not constitute or imply an approval or endorsement of any group's practice of the traditional A.A. program. Tradition Four says, "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." Hopefully every A.A. Group adheres closely to the guiding principles of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. The GSO neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practice of any A.A. group. ■ **Each new group is subject to a 30-day pending period according to a 1990 Conference advisory action.** Once complete information is logged by GSO or the area registrar, your group will enter a 30-day pending period to give your delegate and DCM an opportunity to welcome your new group. After the pending period a digital Group Handbook will be emailed out (in addition your group can opt in to be mailed a print version of the Group Handbook on the form below.) The Group Handbook and many other helpful resources are also available for download on www.aa.org. The link below offers more information on how groups and members participate in A.A. service beyond their group: https://www.aa.org/participating-in-aa

A.A.'s Traditions suggest that a group not be named after a facility or member (living or deceased), and that the name of a group not imply affiliation with any sect, religion, organization or institution.

Virtual Groups are encouraged to check with their Area Registrar regarding their preferred Area and District. List of Area Websites on aa.org

AREA #: _____ DISTRICT #: _____ GROUP START DATE: _____

GROUP NAME: _____ NUMBER OF MEMBERS: _____

GROUP MEETING LOCATION (ADDRESS OPTIONAL): _____

If your Virtual group does not have a specific City/Town or State/Province the Primary Contact's City/Town and State/Province will be used.

CITY/TOWN: _____ STATE/PROVINCE: _____ COUNTRY: _____

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH ☐ | SPANISH ☐ | FRENCH ☐ **TYPE/FORMAT:** IN PERSON (including hybrid) ☐ | VIRTUAL (including phone) ☐

Does your group meet in a hospital, treatment center or detox center setting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, is it open to A.A. members outside the center? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Note: *Contact information provided is used by GSO and AA Grapevine for purposes of A.A. service communication and is shared with your Area Committee.*

PRIMARY CONTACT

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY/TOWN: _____

STATE/PROVINCE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____ COUNTRY: _____

E-MAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR) — Your Group's Link to A.A. as a whole **https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-19_gsr/pdf**

"The GSRs of the U.S. and Canada are the very foundation of our general service structure. Through the GSR, you can make your group's voice heard at district meetings, at area assemblies, and eventually at the General Service Conference.

GSR ☐ **ALTERNATE GSR** ☐ **MAIL CONTACT** ☐ (Please check one) ✓

To opt in to be mailed a print version of the Group Handbook please check ☐

- Digital Group Handbook: **https://www.aa.org/conents-group-handbook-list**
- To sign up for digital delivery of Box 4-5-9 at no charge visit: https://www.aa.org/box-459group-handbook-list

THREE WAYS TO RETURN THIS FORM TO GSO:

GSO POSTAL MAIL
A.A. World Services, Inc.
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163

GSO EMAIL
memberservices@aa.org

LOCALLY
Email your Area Registrar
List of Area Websites on a.a.org