

Summary Town Hall: Accepting Electronic Meetings into the Oregon Area April 4, 2023 – an electronic meeting

The Electronic Group Task Force has been delegated by the AWSC to investigate and recommend to the AWSC and the Oregon Area policies, procedures and parameters for accepting electronic groups into the service structure of the Oregon Area.

Task Force members: Stephen Y, chair, Meredith, Gayle, Bonnie, Troy, Carol B and Joanne, Ex Officio

This summary is a record of for the comments and questions from the attendees and responses from the Task Force members at the Town Hall meeting on April 4, 2023. This meeting was an electronic meeting.

For a more complete picture of the Town Hall, please refer to the power point slides that are available on oregonal-anon.org. Saved under “Service” which can be found in the menu.

The Task Force attempted to capture comments and questions from the attendees using the chat function. These topics would be to address at future events. There was a technical problem with the chat function and most of these comments were lost. If you have a comment or question that you would like addressed in the future, you can email them to alternatedelegate@al-anon.org.

The meeting began with a welcome and an explanation of the meeting agenda and the meeting etiquette.

Poll 1: You may vote for more than one option.

Results

- a. **50%:** I am here because I attend an electronic meeting that would like to register and be accepted into the Oregon Area service structure.
- b. **42%:** I am here because I want to give input on the policy and procedures that the Task Force writes to accept e-groups to the Oregon Area service structure.
- c. **2% (1):** I am here because I don't want e-groups to be accepted into the Oregon Area service structure.
- d. **6%:** I am here for another reason.

The first three items on the agenda were:

- Brief history of how we got here
- Brief overview of the Task Force timeline
- The Guiding Principles that the Task Force is using

Questions and comments from attendees about what has been shared so far.

1. In terms of the agenda is any content to be presented by how Spanish groups will be affected by this. Is a translation being offered? How are they getting the information?

Response -- Great question without a great answer. TF will take note and talk about it more. Can help put some things out there and take the process of what's happening with Spanish groups and another thought force and combine to reach these groups with this information

2. Is the TF dealing with hybrid meetings or are they being considered differently?

Response -- The TF is dealing only with EG which do not have official status in the OA until the OA can develop and accept policies for accepting EG into the OA

3. Can you get copies of information presented on the zoom shares?

Response – PowerPoint slides will be shared on the OA website as well as a summary of the Town Hall

4. A question about setting up emails for hybrid groups, which might also apply to EG; can we use the term “al-anon” in setting up emails?

Response – Meredith, Area Group Records Coordinator, says she can help groups with that.

5. Housekeeping questions: How will EG have a meeting list? How do they participate in 7th Tradition? How will they participate in the district? Will there be options about how EGs are assigned to districts or the OAED?

Discussion topics and questions

Question 6.A *The Task Force is discussing the options for how the Oregon Area will register and assign Electronic Groups to the Oregon Area.*

Question 6.A.a *What do you think about the Oregon Area creating an Electronic District?*

1. I represent a young people's focus group. Since covid, the idea of have OAED is a good idea for recovery for young people – young parents, people early in careers, people with disabilities – they take advantage of electronic meetings
2. What are the pros and cons of ED vs. geographic districts?

Response --The ED gives opportunity for wide geographic areas to gather with people they are familiar with in an accessible manner.

Response -- One of pros of an ED is that groups share the same issues in common when they are EGs, so if they can have representation by a DR at the OA their issues become clearer to the larger group.

Response -- An EG may have an affiliation to a specific geographic area. But it could also be a con because the EG might benefit from similarity of issues that other EGs have. It's up to group autonomy whether or not to join the OAED or a geographic district.

3. Would the OAED be separate from the GEA?

Response -- Yes, it could be an opportunity for an EG wishing to join the Oregon Area.

4. What about an EG that would like to join the OAED because of similarity of issues, but would like to see a limited voting participation in a geographic district because members want to have a voice in the operations of a geographic district?

Response -- At this time the WSO is not giving consideration to any type of dual membership in electronic districts and geographic districts.

5. I'm confused by having the options between an EG being part of an ED vs. a geographic district.

Response -- The TF is looking at the choice between and EG joining either the OAED or the geographic district. It's the choice of the EG which they choose.

Question 6.A.b. What do you think about Electronic Groups having the choice of joining the Electronic District or one of the geographic districts in the Oregon Area?

1. There are a couple of groups in District 4 that have become fully electronic. They are in support of having EGS participate in the geographic area.
2. Wants clarity about the ability of EGs being able to make an informed choice to stay with the district. Would they have to be able to participate in person? Does the district need to have the ability to have electronic meetings for district meetings? How do groups make this choice?
3. It's great that EGs will be registered. Is creating a separate OAED for EGs creating a double headed management system?

Response -- The ED will be separate from the geographic districts. The ED will be an overlay district just for ED groups. It will be one new district added to the 17 that already exist. It's still group autonomy which district they join, the OAED or a geographic district.

Response -- If you are an EG and want to join the OA, you would have a choice to be in a geographic district or you could decide to join the OAED that is an overlay district and is for EGs only.

4. There are lots of pros and cons that are best identified once the process begins. Is it possible to allow for a liaison within the OAED to gather information?

Response -- This is really about the links of service – where all the DRs and/or GRs meet and talk about issues for all groups. Hopefully, would occur naturally within the OA system.

Question 6.B. All Al-Anon family groups (physical and electronic) are able to elect their group service positions. “Every member has the right to participate in the group. Members welcome opportunities . . . to accept group offices.” (p.72, 2022-2025 Service Manual) The only exception is that “Al-Anon members who are also members of AA may not serve as GR or Alternate GR.” (p. 64 2022-2025 Service Manual)

Question 6.B.a. What are your thoughts about an out-of-state member of an Oregon Area Electronic Groups serving in a Group position, such as GR, Alt GR, Secretary, etc.?

1. A member from several groups asks about members who attend from out of state or internationally and is in favor of all members having the ability to serve even as a GR.
2. Any EG in any district can currently elect members to serve so we are not restricting the OA districts to in-state Al-Anon members only. Who can participate? Is this up to group autonomy? Will each meeting get to decide?

Response -- This question is about out of state attendees who want to serve being allowed to serve.

3. Has the OA has decided to continue to do electronic assemblies? If the OA has decided, has each district decided? Isn't this up to the autonomy of the district?

Response -- Yes, it's been voted on to do hybrid assemblies and AWSC.

Response -- It's up to the group to decide what kind of representation they want. Can a member fulfill the duties of the office?

4. AFGs are with members for life, so a member might move or elect to attend a meeting that might be out of their home district. So, out of district members may already be serving.

5. One of bedrock principles is equality so if I attend an EG, I should be allowed to service in a position if I so choose.

Question 6.B.b. What are your thoughts about and out-of-state member of an Oregon Area Electronic Group member serving in a District position, such as District Representative (DR), Secretary, etc.? (Note: DRs are elected by outgoing GRs from among the outgoing or past GRs.)

1. They should be able to serve but there is a guideline in OAH about residency. Does that need to be looked at?

Response -- This addressed the complexity of the TF issues.

2. If I moved out of state but still participate in my Oregon based meeting, can I still be able to serve even though I am no longer a resident of Oregon?

Response – The moderator quotes the Oregon Area Hand Book – it is “preferred” that those members reside in the state of Oregon or have their home group be in the state of Oregon. The TF may make a recommendation for changes in the Oregon Area Hand Book.

3. Some tasks for an out-of-state DR may be difficult – e.g. doing site visits to plan assemblies, meeting in different time zones.
4. Look at the list of tasks for each position. Do the individuals in service always to all the tasks? Maybe groups could have alt people in service to share the tasks.

Question 6.C. The WSO anticipates that some Electronic Groups may want to transfer from the Global Electronic Area to Geographic Areas. One example is if a group had a prior connection to an area. Some Electronic Groups from a Geographic Area may elect to join the Global Electronic Area.

Question 6.C.a. What do you think about the Oregon Area accepting Electronic Groups from the Global Electronic Area?

1. This question speaks to me because we had a break due to pandemic, so would like to see groups from the GEA return to the OA.
2. What does it mean to the OA? Can see how members would like to be back in the Oregon Area but would like to see a cut off for how to accept EGs from GEA accepted into the Oregon Area.
3. Would like to see some limitations but also want to see some groups listed.

Response -- In the world of KDBM groups will self-select where they will go. It does not make sense that groups that have the majority of members from out of Oregon, would elect to choose to join Oregon. EG groups exist in time.

4. This is a complicated topic. How did this start in the first place? There was a problem and at one time the only solution was for EGs to join the GEA. Keep in mind what we started this. Trying to be a good service person. Each group is autonomous according to Tradition 4. How did we end up with geographic areas to begin with? How does accepting EGs from other areas change the structure of all the areas in the WSO?
5. Is there some contact from other areas that have adopted policies? Do some policies from other areas inform the TF in making these decisions?

Response -- There are at least 30 areas that have completed their policies to accept EGs into their service areas.

Poll 2: What do you think the best option is for electronic groups being accepted into the Area: Vote for one.

- a. **83%:** Having the option to join either a Geographic District (such as their originating District) or join the Electronic District created by the Area.
- b. **5%:** Having only the option to join a geographic District.
- c. **12%:** Having only the option to join the Electronic District created by the Area.
- d. **0%:** I don't want electronic groups to be accepted into the Oregon Area service structure.

Poll 3: Are you OK with members of an Oregon Area Electronic Group serving in a Group position, such as GR, Secretary, etc., regardless of where the member lives?

- a. **69%:** Yes
- b. **17%:** No
- c. **14%:** Undecided

Poll 4: Are you OK with members of an Oregon Area Electronic Group serving in a District position, such as DR, Secretary, etc., regardless of where the member lives?

- a. **43%:** Yes
- b. **38%:** No
- c. **19%:** Undecided

Poll 5: Was this Town Hall helpful?

- a. **69%:** Very helpful
- b. **26%:** Somewhat helpful
- c. **0%:** Not helpful
- d. **5%:** No opinion

