

**Please direct all  
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September 7, 2022

Dear A.A. Friends,

I hope you are all enjoying the beautiful summer months and the fruits of sobriety. As we are now past the halfway point of the year, I think it is important to share highlights of some things happening in the office.

Since my most recent communication, the office has planned and supported two Regional Forums, in Eastern and Western Canada, both of which were well attended and welcomed many first-time attendees. Our corporate boards, A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine, held their June and July meetings here at the office. And just a few weeks ago, we welcomed the General Service Board for their quarterly board weekend. As you can see, it has been a busy few months for our trustees, directors, and staff.

These were in-person events, which gave the office an opportunity to formulate focused contingency plans in the event any of our attendees fell ill. Together in unity and with input from the chairs of our three boards, we have developed what we feel is a good basis to inform our planning for our General Service Conference next April. An attendee of the recent board weekend did, in fact, fall ill, and we were prepared: we made quick adjustments to our protocols and provided options for their participation. Fortunately, they are now on the mend and doing well. Also fortunate is that all the other events mentioned were free of illness.

The office is now moving ahead at full steam, implementing the group conscience expressed at our General Service Conference. A few items worth highlighting:

- Providing the background for the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference simultaneously in all three of our languages (English, French and Spanish): Plans are in motion to add additional translators and to utilize a focused, coordinated workflow to fulfill this very important service to the Fellowship.
- Launching the 2022 A.A. Membership Survey: This important initiative, which has in the past proven to be a highly effective tool to gain various understandings of

our Fellowship, will help us to be more impactful both in reaching the suffering alcoholic and in serving our members.

- Implementation of automated processes for the licensing of our literature to other countries: This will enable us to get A.A. literature into the hands of those around the world who need it more quickly.

These and the many other services provided by GSO have a direct link to your groups and areas, and ultimately provide hope to many by extending the hand of A.A. to the suffering alcoholic.

Over the past two years, the pandemic has brought much uncertainty and many challenges to how the office fulfills the services it provides. Throughout this period, the Fellowship has been more than generous with their contributions. As we have transitioned back to in-person events, our travel and other event costs have returned to pre-pandemic levels. Unfortunately, we continue to struggle with lingering effects of the global shutdown as they relate to the cost and production of our literature, resulting in a notable decrease in publishing revenue, which also supports the office. We continue to explore options to help us overcome these publishing challenges, including those related to access to materials as well as to production costs.

Mindful of our responsibility and stewardship of A.A.'s money, we are committed to continuously improving our budgeting process. Each department now prepares details of how it expects to utilize the A.A. dollar and provides justifications for each expense. This has been very beneficial to ensure that there is a direct line from expenses to the spiritual services we provide — in other words, ensuring that “money and spirituality mix”! This year’s budget is expected to yield a loss of approximately \$1,400,000. Fortunately, last year we had a surplus of \$1,119,000, which will largely fund this year’s deficit; the balance will be covered by cash from previous years. As the year progresses, we continue to look for cost reductions where possible, being mindful not to compromise the services we provide.

As difficult as these challenges are, I have faith that the office, in unity with the boards, will find ways to balance our budget as we move forward.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank all of you for your service and participation in our beloved program. Your patience, dedication, and love are greatly appreciated.

With gratitude,

Bob W.

General Manager, GSO