

A56

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SOUTHWEST OHIO GENERAL SERVICE AREA 56

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Mini-Conference in a Nutshell

Everything you needed to know about the Area 56 Mini-Conference, but were afraid to ask. Because sometimes we all need help when someone in a group surprises us with a question we're not prepared to answer.

What is the Mini-Conference?

The Mini-Conference is an annual event in Area 56, usually held the third weekend of March. At the Mini-Conference we try to duplicate what happens at the General Service Conference, but at a smaller scale. It has a three-fold purpose:

- ▲ to prepare the Area Delegate for the annual General Service Conference in New York and to collect an informed group conscience on the items to be addressed there,
- ▲ to inform the GSRs and groups about what will be on the agenda at that meeting, and
- ▲ to provide an opportunity for any AA member in Area 56 to participate in the decision-making process and to learn about the General Service Conference and what it means for AA.

Everyone who attends the Mini-Conference has the opportunity to share their opinions and experience to help determine the Area's group conscience regarding items on the agenda for the annual Conference in New York. This informs our Area Delegate, who then takes this input along when he or she travels to the GSC to participate in a Fellowship-wide group conscience meeting.

It's all about group conscience, locally and fellowship-wide!

So what is the General Service Conference, anyway?

To put it in a nutshell, the General Service Conference is both a process and an event. They both come together to help AA create an informed group conscience about its service activities.

It is a year-round **process** of communication, planning and action.

There is communication among the geographical Areas in the US and Canada, the General Service Office and the General Service Board. Some of this communication consists of trouble-shooting. Some of it is sharing news back and forth. And some of it is planning.

There is a year-round planning process, where material for the agenda of the annual General Service Conference is gathered and put together. The agenda is the plan for what will happen at the annual meeting: the topics for discussion and decision, as well as feedback to the Board from the Fellowship, through both the Delegates and GSO Staff.

Finally, there is action: following decisions made (or not) the General Service Board and GSO Staff often have a great deal of work to do to implement the instructions that come out of the Conference meeting. Sometimes new literature needs to be developed. Sometimes annual finances need to be addressed. Sometimes the Conference needs to manage itself and its own workload.

The General Service Conference drives the direction of the General Service structure. Communication is at its heart.

The General Service Conference is also a week-long **event**, held each spring when Delegates, Trustees and GSO staff members convene in New York to develop the informed group conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole concerning the items on the agenda which have been gathered during the preceding year.

The Delegates bring the group conscience of their Areas – they have delegated authority from local groups to make decisions in the best interest of Alcoholics Anonymous *as a whole*. GSO staff bring their unique perspective of experience dealing with AA groups all across the US and Canada. And the General Service Board both takes direction from the groups and makes decisions that affect the financial, legal and spiritual health of the Fellowship.

Why should I participate in the Mini-Conference?

- ▲ Fabulous AA fellowship!
- ▲ A chance to offer opinions on a wide variety of topics!
- ▲ Meet a member of the GSO Staff and your East Central Regional Trustee, member of the General Service Board (they're alcoholics, just like the rest of us)!
- ▲ The impressive hospitality room!
- ▲ Learn about the varieties of AA service outside a home group!
- ▲ It makes AA stronger to hear from as many people as possible and to have a thorough discussion of all points of view!

Many people consider the Mini-Conference to be the single most important thing the Area does each year. We need your help and participation to make it successful and useful.

Registration flyers for the Mini-Conference are available for download at the Area 56 website, aaarea56.org. There is no cost to register and no cost to participate. We want as many AAs as possible to come and make their feelings known.

AA needs your help!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact;

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