

Area 57 Inventory Summary Report

Sept 2024

Question #1 - Area 57 Policies and Procedures are not always in alignment with the AA Service Manual. While every Area has autonomy, are there opportunities to improve Oklahoma's P&P to align with the AA Service Manual more closely, including with things like job descriptions, roles/responsibilities, voting procedures, etc.?

- **Participation and Voting Rights:** There are concerns about the low participation of GSRs at the Area level, with some arguing that GSRs lack sufficient voting rights and voice in decision-making processes.
- **Autonomy vs. Alignment:** Opinions are divided on whether Area 57 should align more closely with the AA Service Manual or maintain its autonomy to better serve local needs. Some argue for alignment for consistency and ease of understanding, while others emphasize the importance of autonomy.
- **Structure and Job Descriptions:** There is a need for clearer job descriptions and a more defined structure within Area 57. Many feel that the lack of detailed descriptions hinders effective service and that clearer guidelines would improve participation and functionality.
- **Challenges with Current Structure:** The current structure of Area 57 is seen as both a strength and a weakness. While it allows for quick changes and equal representation of rural districts, it also leads to confusion and inefficiencies that could be addressed by aligning with the Service Manual.
- **Frequent Changes and Evaluation:** Aligning more closely with the AA Service Manual might require continual evaluation and frequent changes, which could be both a challenge and an opportunity for improvement.

Question #2 – How well is Area 57 fulfilling its purpose? What could Area 57 do to better meet its purpose?

- **Top-Down Approach:** Concerns are raised about the Area's top-down approach to business, suggesting a reallocation of funds from the Area office to committee chairs to emphasize the primary purpose.

- **Training and Participation:** The lack of training for GSRs and DCMs is highlighted as a reason for low participation, with suggestions to improve through regular schools and better engagement.
- **Individual Responsibility:** There is a call for individuals to take more responsibility for their participation in the Area's activities.
- **Primary Purpose Beyond Newcomers:** The importance of carrying the message beyond just newcomers is emphasized, suggesting a broader interpretation of the primary purpose.
- **Challenges with Structure and Participation:** The current structure is seen as both a strength and a weakness, with suggestions for rotational meetings and online schools to improve participation and training.
- **Alignment with Service Manual:** There is a debate on whether to adhere strictly to the AA Service Manual or maintain some autonomy, with some advocating for the former to improve clarity and functionality.
- **Outreach and Inclusivity:** The need for better outreach, especially to rural districts, women, and underrepresented groups, is mentioned to ensure the message reaches all who are suffering.
- **Effectiveness of Area Meetings:** The effectiveness of Area meetings in fulfilling their purpose is questioned, with suggestions for improvement in various aspects of service and representation.

Question #3 – Is it time to re-evaluate redistricting in Area 57?

- **Historical Context:** Redistricting was evaluated 25 years ago but lacked support from groups and districts, making it an unpopular solution at the time.
- **Current Structure Issues:** The current zones and clusters setup is seen as confusing and inconvenient, with a notable disconnect between how areas and districts are described in the service manual and their actual implementation.
- **Voting and Representation Concerns:** Districts are limited to six DCM votes each, which restricts representation. Any increase in the number of districts would necessitate changes in the voting system.
- **Potential Benefits of Smaller Districts:** Smaller districts could enhance participation and provide more intimate support and education, although the process to evaluate and implement such changes would be lengthy.

- **Challenges of Redistricting:** Redistricting might not address issues of education and participation and could lead to the creation of unviable districts, especially in rural areas.
- **Mixed Opinions on Redistricting:** Opinions are divided on whether redistricting is necessary. Some see it as beneficial for improving local work and participation, while others believe it could complicate representation and committee functionality.

Question #4 – Does the Area have enough time to conduct its business with just one business meeting once per quarter? Is it time to go to a two-day meeting, consider meeting more frequently than once per quarter, or have more than one assembly per year?

- **Proposal for Two-Day Meetings:** There is a suggestion to switch to two-day meetings to handle all business items and increase GSR participation, as more frequent meetings would be too inconvenient.
- **Time Management and Focus:** Some believe that better time management and staying on topic would negate the need for additional meeting time.
- **Authority and Technology:** The Area chair has the authority to move to two-day meetings, and leveraging technology could make meetings more efficient.
- **Financial and Logistical Concerns:** Meeting more frequently or for two days would be more expensive and require logistical changes, such as altering the meeting locations or schedules.
- **Mixed Opinions on Meeting Structure:** There are mixed opinions on whether to move to two-day meetings, with some suggesting restructuring the current format or using technology to improve efficiency.
- **Alternative Suggestions:** Other suggestions include having fewer but more focused meetings, rearranging assembly items, moving meetings to Saturdays, and increasing the frequency of GSR voting opportunities.

Question #5 – How can Area meetings be made more effective, both in taking care of business and in increasing participation? Are there any barriers that prevent members of the Area from getting involved in the service structure?

- **Agenda and Meeting Efficiency:** Suggestions include removing items that can be handled via email from the agenda, prioritizing important topics, and allocating sufficient time for discussion.
- **Inclusivity and Training:** There is a need to ensure that new and less experienced members feel welcome and are properly trained on their roles to encourage participation.
- **Participation Challenges:** Issues such as court-ordered members, general apathy, and lack of awareness about service roles contribute to low participation in meetings.
- **Compensation and Structural Changes:** Proposals include compensating DCMs and GSRs, rotating meeting locations, and possibly splitting the area into smaller districts to improve engagement.
- **Leadership and Meeting Dynamics:** Effective leadership, setting the right tone, and focusing on relevant reports and committee activities are seen as crucial for improving meeting dynamics.

Question #6 – Does Area 57 effectively support the Districts and Groups? Do our Area Service Committees reach out to provide enough support to Districts and groups? What improvements can be made to better support them?

- **Engaging Underrepresented Groups:** Engaging groups that are not historically involved will increase support and participation.
- **Ideas for Activities and Presentations:** Suggestions include organizing a traveling "Fun in the Fellowship" event and creating narrated presentations for easy distribution and education.
- **Making Meetings More Attractive:** Meetings should be interesting, attractive, and informative to encourage attendance. It's also essential to make people feel needed.
- **Utilizing Technology and Better Scheduling:** Technology can be used for better presentations, and meeting minutes and reports should be posted online. Workshops should avoid conflicting with other events.
- **Improving Representation and Participation:** Only 25-35% of groups are represented at Area business meetings. Efforts should be made to improve this representation and participation.

- **Leadership and Training:** Effective leadership and proper training for DCMs and committee chairs are crucial. Job descriptions should be clear and documented to maintain continuity.

Question #7 – Does the Area’s finances effectively support the members of Area 57 in their efforts to carry the message to the next suffering alcoholic? If not, why?

- **Budget Allocation and Spending:** The percentage of the budget allocated to committee chairs is about 15%, but there is confusion about how to spend the money effectively. Some committee chairs do not utilize their funds, leading to a surplus and debates on spending.
- **Responsibility of Fund Allocation:** Fund allocation responsibility lies with the groups and districts rather than the area. Giving money back to districts can help them fund activities like DCM trips.
- **Area as a Business:** The area operates like a business and must be managed accordingly. There are concerns about expenses like a paid secretary and an area office, which some see as unnecessary.
- **Improving Group Contributions:** Increasing group contributions has been a longstanding issue. More contributions would provide more resources to work with.
- **Transparency and Communication:** There is a belief that the area is transparent with its spending, but better communication through proper channels is needed to ensure everyone is informed.
- **Meeting and Event Costs:** Suggestions include being flexible with the days and locations of area meetings to save money, and potentially having districts bid to host meetings.

Question #8 – Does the Area trust those it selects as their trusted servants? Or does the Area try to micromanage its trusted servants?

- **Need for Better Education:** To reduce micromanaging, there should be more education about who the trusted servants are and what they do.
- **Fellowship's Role:** The fellowship often provides opinions and oversight, which should be listened to even if there is disagreement.

- **Scope of Authority:** Trusted servants should be mindful of their scope of authority and avoid asking for permission for every action.
- **Issues with Accountability:** There are concerns about accountability and the effectiveness of current delegates, with some feeling that politics have reduced effectiveness.
- **Election Concerns:** There are criticisms that elections are based on popularity rather than qualifications, and there is a need for more thorough vetting of candidates.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Suggestions include more frequent meetings for Area Officers and Committee Chairs, and better defining committee jobs to improve organization.

Question #9 (SKIPPED) – Does the Area effectively integrate new GSRs/DCMs at Area meetings and make them feel welcomed and included?

Question #10 – Does Area 57 want to consider regular Area inventories? If so, how frequent? Any other suggestions about how a regular inventory can be done more effectively?

- **Interest in Regular Inventories:** Many participants expressed interest in conducting inventories regularly, with suggestions ranging from every year to every 4-5 years.
- **Role of Outside Facilitators:** There is a strong preference for using outside facilitators to provide an impartial perspective during inventories.
- **Open-Sharing Sessions:** Some participants suggested having open-sharing sessions instead of specific questions to foster more open dialogue.
- **Concerns About Participation:** There were concerns about low participation in the inventory, with less than 5% of the fellowship giving their opinion, which might indicate a lack of interest.
- **Linking Inventories to Concepts and Policies:** Suggestions included tying inventory questions to specific concepts, policies, and procedures to make them more targeted and relevant.

- **Frequency and Timing Recommendations:** Recommendations for the frequency and timing of inventories varied, with some suggesting every other year, some every 3-4 years, and others recommending alignment with non-election years or the delegate's term.