

NA World Services Webinar Report

“Carrying the Message Virtually”

19 December 2020

Virtual Meetings and Carrying the Message Effectively and Virtually is the primary focus for the Local Service Toolbox Project this Conference cycle. This project will continue through at least 2021, and we invite all members to help shape this important work for the Fellowship. Information about the project is posted at www.na.org/toolbox. Please check back regularly for updates.

The fourth open web meeting about virtual meetings was held on 19 December 2020. It was the second since the project was approved at WSC 2020; these open web meetings are an opportunity to continue informing members about the work of the project, and provide a chance for members involved in virtual service efforts around the world to share their experience. The focus for this meeting was *Carrying the Message Virtually*. We will continue to post reports like this one after each webinar on the Virtual NA Meetings page: www.na.org/virtual, along with the PowerPoint and other related materials. We hope you find helpful information and experience.

Over 280 people attended the webinar for at least 30 minutes, with many more people attending for less time. Translation services were provided in Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Italian, Greek, Farsi, and French. The platform was set up so that all attendees’ microphones and the chat function were disabled. Attendees were invited to ask questions by typing them into a Q&A box. The webinar was also live-streamed on YouTube.

Four communities shared about a range of service efforts during the two-hour webinar:

- The Southern California Regional PR committee talked about its efforts to organize “presentation meetings” to introduce parolees to NA. These meetings follow a similar format to regular NA meetings, but are a service effort open only to those parolees that are required to attend as a condition of their release.
- The chair of the North East Zonal Forum’s PR committee presented information about the virtual criminal justice conference they organized cooperatively with the Connecticut Region.
- The delegate from the Rio Grande Region in New Mexico shared his experience bringing virtual meetings into jails and prisons and the steps involved in making this possible.
- The final panelist was the regional H&I chair from the Minas Region in Brazil who shared about the cooperative efforts between his zone and regions from the Latin American Zonal Forum to bring meetings into prisons in Mexico.

General information about the current service efforts of NA World Services was also provided during the webinar.

Questions and Answers

Presenters took turns answering attendees’ questions.

In response to requests for contact information for the panelists, attendees were reminded that this information is contained within the PowerPoint shown during the webinar, which will be posted on the Virtual NA Meetings page at www.na.org/virtual.

Parolee Meetings

Who do we contact within the parole to make the parolee meetings possible? Existing PR contacts within the department were utilized.

How do we get the information to parolees when they don't have internet access? The parole agents are responsible to get the parolees who are required to be there to the meeting. Parolees have the option to share in the meeting and are encouraged to attend regular meetings.

Are there women and men serving together on the parolee panels? Yes, when possible.

Virtual Panels in Institutions

Are there security concerns when working with more than one facility at a time? New Mexico has a system where security clearances apply to all prisons in the state. Having multiple institutions attend a single panel is still in the planning stages, but having more than one pod within a single prison attend a panel has happened and has expanded the reach of H&I services. Institutions limit participation to members from within the state.

Often the first response to an approach by a PR committee is “no” but persistence pays off. Public officials may be easier to reach than some of the prison officials, and can result in improved access to correctional department employees. Contact information for officials is easy to find online.

Are US jails asking for background checks for recorded speakers? Not at this time. Virtual panelists do require them.

Are all the presentations made to long-stay facilities, and do they use the long-term format? Institutional meetings are encouraged in long-stay facilities, and different types of units are served.

General Questions and Responses

Will NAWS be providing electronic literature to institutions? Please contact pr@na.org for more information on inmate tablet programs.

Are there any efforts to carry the message to LGBTQi addicts in institutions by recovering addicts who identify with those communities? None of the panelists had information this, but it was said that H&I committees do inform inmates that common needs meetings focused on these communities exist in the NA community outside the institution.

Does anyone have experience with institutions that are providing Web RTC or Microsoft Teams platforms? No experience was offered.

Is there experience with doing presentations with the staff or students in schools? The NEZF is considering participation in PTA meetings. A video presentation has been sent to schools and posted on the Rio Grande regional website.

How does an NA member get involved in H&I service? Have the goodwill to serve and get involved. Attend H&I subcommittee meetings. Remember that you don't have to be a former inmate to get involved in H&I. Use social media to share meeting times of service bodies.

Information about hybrid meetings is posted on the Virtual NA Meetings page.

Any region that has created a presentation about how NA has adapted to the Zoom platform was asked to share it.

We would like to remind everyone that we are pleased to provide what is described as an “interpretation feed” in Zoom for any language communities that need it and that can provide a translator. Please email toolbox@na.org or wb@na.org well in advance of any webinar, and we will work with you to make this happen. We also want to remind everyone that we do not share video recordings of our webinars, or any videos shown during them, in order to protect members’ anonymity, but we are posting audio recordings of the meetings.

Please know that the entire World Board has seen each question asked during the webinar, and the questions themselves are input to the project. We hope that in the upcoming months that together we can find answers to all of these questions that our members are struggling with. The next Fellowship webinar is provisionally scheduled for March 13th. Information about this will be posted on the NAWS web meeting page at www.na.org/webinar when it becomes available. The webinar will be at 11 am Pacific time. Please join us if you are able.

Thank you for participating!

The World Board