

# WORLD BOARD **NEWS FLASH**

## WSC Issue Topic One:

**“How can we continue to provide services to our fellowship and at the same time decrease our reliance on funds from events and conventions?”**

Participants at WSC 2000 selected this topic for fellowship discussion. NA members, area committees, and regional committees can help your regional delegate prepare for a discussion of this topic at WSC 2002 in April by hosting and participating in discussions in either your area and/or your region. We hope this *News Flash* helps you join in this fellowshipwide discussion. There's no right or wrong way to discuss these topics. There are no right or wrong answers. (A second topic is: “How can we create a bridge that builds and maintains a connection to service for home group members?” See our other *News Flash* for help discussing that topic.)

Here are some additional questions to help stimulate discussion of the main question. Exploring these questions may be helpful, and we might each answer them differently in different situations.

1. Are we having problems providing a stable and reliable flow of funds or other support for any crucial local services?
2. Locally, have there been problems, controversy, or disunity over events or fundraising?
3. Are local services here overly-dependent on funds raised from events?
4. How do we know what is the right amount of money for events and conventions to make? Is there such a thing as having too much extra money?
5. Is event income different than donation income? Why or why not?
6. Does our principle of self-support apply differently to conventions versus other services?
7. Is anything wrong with relying on conventions and events for funding services?

At the end of discussion, the facilitators and the note takers should get together and combine their observations about the discussion. Then, information can be given to the region or the regional delegate about how well the discussion stimulated thought and interest, along with a list of the most important points made about the discussion topic. This information can help your region to prepare an issue discussion paper for the *Conference Agenda Report*. (**Deadline for papers is 15 October 2001.**) It can also help your regional assembly and delegate prepare for the WSC discussion.

NA World Services is also interested in the results of your discussion. Please consider sending the same information to the World Board, c/o WSO. It will be a great help to the board in structuring the WSC issue discussions and finalizing results at the end of the WSC issue discussion process. We hope these results can eventually be shared by the WSO in correspondence related to these topics.

*Please share your solutions and ideas with us:*

- From your experience, what can our fellowship do to increase direct contributions from NA groups?
- Share your observations about how NA members learn the spiritual principles of self-support?
- In your opinion, what can service committees do to help members better understand these issues?



**HELPFUL HINTS:** We suggest that each discussion group or committee strive to keep the discussion simple and loosely structured. It's a good idea to set aside 60 to 90 minutes for each topic, eliminate physical barriers between people (like tables, etc), break into small groups of 10 to 20 people, and ask one person to facilitate the discussion and one person to write down important points. The facilitator should keep time (3 to 5 minutes per speaker), give everyone fair opportunity to speak, prevent domination by one person, and set the ground rules (give everyone respect, no cross talk, observe time limits, don't repeat what's been said, etc). If possible, include members with differing opinions and varying lengths of clean time in each small group. Asking each person to address just one or two points that they feel the strongest about can also help keep the discussion flowing well. The goal is to share ideas and experience, not engage in debate or argument. If desired, use some NA resource material, e.g. *It Works: How and Why, Twelve Concepts for NA Service, Self-Support: Principle and Practice*, etc.

- You may want to identify a local situation to use as a real life example for your discussion of the topic. The discussion could then focus on what worked and what didn't work.
- An ASC or RSC could plan a special workshop, using one or both discussion topics, before the regular committee meeting—or plan a separate Topic Discussion Learning Day or Workshop. The issue discussion question(s) could also be a topic for convention workshops.

**BACKGROUND:** Our experience discussing this topic has shown that raising awareness is often the first step to taking action to make changes to decrease the reliance on event funds. We have found it's easy to fall prey to the "What if the money isn't there?" kind of thinking. The fear of losing services, credibility, and the chance for addicts to find NA can be strong motivation for accumulating money at the group or committee level—just in case! When funds aren't passed along to other levels of service, we begin to look to other sources. Fundraising is often a choice we make. The opportunity to make extra money at a convention or event can also be hard to pass up, because we can always find a use for the money. Our members and our literature describe the gratitude that results when NA members donate to their groups and to the service structure. Many oldtimers share about the values of commitment, faith, trust, integrity, and responsibility as important Seventh Tradition principles that help us overcome our fears about the lack of money and our fears of change.

Conventions and other events are part of NA. We've come to enjoy the unity and fun that goes with them. These events are usually meant to be self-supporting. Sometimes they bring in more money than it costs to put them on. Our experience is that NA communities in the earlier stages of development tend to rely heavily on event fundraising for providing services. Over time, as communities grow and stabilize, this sometimes causes problems or raises questions about how we provide and fund fellowship services.

Our first and seventh traditions give guidance about the importance of supporting our efforts to help addicts in keeping with our fifth tradition primary purpose. We know that addicts must find NA recovery for our fellowship to grow and thrive. NA members around the world give their time and money to help build strong and successful groups and committees, and NA unity results – the NA unity spoken of in Tradition One. Our personal recovery depends on this unity. The Basic Text also reminds us in Tradition One that "Our Traditions are the guidelines that protect us from ourselves." As recovering addicts striving to overcome our self-centered fears, we certainly know that matters of money, property, and prestige can cause much trouble in our personal lives—just as they can in our fellowship. So too we know that freedom comes for the individual from the Twelve Steps and for the groups from our Twelve Traditions and our Twelve Concepts for service.

The Eleventh Concept also offers guidance about money: "NA funds are to be used to further our primary purpose, and must be managed responsibly." The essay on the Eleventh Concept tells us that funding the work of our service structure exclusively through group contributions helps our groups to be more aware of the work being done and of their responsibility to provide resources. It emphasizes the idea that direct financial support from the groups strengthens the bonds of mutual responsibility, frees committees from the need to raise funds, and allows them to devote full energies to NA's primary purpose.