

How to Start a Meeting of Overeaters Anonymous

Starting an OA meeting in your area is easy. The World Service Office (WSO) is here to support you in your efforts to carry the message of hope and recovery. This form of service will add to your own program of recovery! All you need is a desire to stop eating compulsively and the willingness to start the meeting.

Order the New Group Starter Kit, item #730 at bookstore.oa.org. It contains items to help you get your meeting off to a good start, such as a New Group Registration/Change Form. The kit also includes the *Suggested Meeting Format* and the *OA Handbook for Members, Groups, and Service Bodies*. The OA Handbook has ideas for spreading the news in your community about the meeting and as a guide to your group as it grows. It can answer many questions over the years to come. You will also receive the pamphlet, *Where Do I Start? Everything a Newcomer Needs to Know*.

Find a meeting space. Be sure to check out churches, community centers, schools, and libraries, as well as the hospitals. Each group ought to be self supporting, so be sure that your group considers a donation, should the facility you choose not charge you rent.

Submit the New Group Registration/Change form to WSO or register your meeting electronically. We suggest you do this as soon as you start your meeting, so it can be listed in our international directory and people searching for a meeting in your area can find you. Please be sure to keep the WSO informed of any changes that occur regarding your meeting. Contact name (first name only) and phone number are important. This is how the newcomer or traveling member gets more information about the meeting. Each meeting must have a contact name, phone number, and email address. If there is no one in your group who wants to be listed as the contact, you can use the intergroup or service board name and number should you choose to affiliate with one.

We strongly suggest that your group affiliate with an intergroup/service board. An intergroup/service board is made up of several groups in a geographic area or within the virtual community. Its purpose is to service and represent the groups of which they are composed and act as the guardian of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of OA Service. Affiliation gives the group access to this support. At some point your group will need an intergroup/service board representative to attend the intergroup/service board meetings and be part of the OA community in your area. The intergroup/service board can be helpful in supporting your meeting during this initial phase of your development. Please contact the WSO if you need assistance in locating your nearest intergroup or service board.

Check out other meetings! If there are no OA meetings in your area and you are not very familiar with OA, you might want to consider taking a “field trip” with other potential members to visit the meetings outside your area that are more established. It can be great fun traveling with a carload of compulsive overeaters and great for your recovery. It is also helpful for the groups that you visit. They may want to return the favor and bring members to your meeting once your group has started.

Get the word out! The OA Handbook will give you suggestions on how to let your community know about the meeting such as listing your meeting in newspapers and on bulletin boards. A good idea is to look at the *Public Information Service Manual*. Its focus is on carrying the message in your community and offers several helpful suggestions and examples. It is item #762 and can be purchased at bookstore.oa.org.

You are welcome to contact us at any time at info@oa.org or 505-891-2664. Thank you for carrying the message of recovery.