

# SUPPORTING GROUPS AND SERVICE BODIES

## Seventh Tradition of OA

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*Every OA group ought to be  
fully self-supporting, declining  
outside contributions.*



## The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

# How much is your recovery worth to you?

## **Give to keep our Fellowship thriving.**

Our Seventh Tradition states that Overeaters Anonymous “ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” While no fees or dues are required for membership, OA members have a responsibility to keep our rooms open, provide opportunities for fellowship, and spread our message of recovery.

To know the true freedom of recovery is to know that we can make sensible and necessary financial contributions to OA at all levels, and that this investment in our Fellowship ensures we can continue to carry the message to the still-suffering compulsive overeater inside and outside our rooms.

When the Seventh Tradition collection comes around, do we remember how much we could be spending if we were bingeing instead of attending an OA meeting? Do we remember all the money we spent on weight-loss programs that didn't work? OA, too, requires income to be a viable organization.

Experience has shown that recovery in OA is far more important and lifesaving than the debilitating disease of compulsive overeating. As long as we keep the Seventh Tradition, paying our own way from our own pockets, we earn the respect of the public and self-respect as well.

## **How do members give?**

By far, the most common way individual members contribute is by donating at OA meetings. The suggested contribution is US\$5, and we give as we are able. (Members who attend multiple virtual meetings in a day are encouraged to contribute US\$5 per day.)

## **Individuals can contribute in a number of ways:**

- Donate at meetings and request that the group make quarterly contributions to its intergroup/service board and region and to the World Service Office.
- Send a monthly, a quarterly, or an annual contribution to the service body (intergroup, national service board, language service board, or region) of our choice, or contribute directly to the WSO.  
One suggestion for how much to contribute is to consider giving the amount previously spent on a binge.
- Contribute to a virtual meeting by check, money order, or electronic funds transfer.
- Contribute to the World Service Office.  
A member may contribute up to US\$5,000 per year to the world service general fund, up to US\$5,000 per year to any world service special fund, and up to US\$5,000 per year to honor the memory of a deceased OA member.
- Include a bequest to OA in a will.
- Use the Automatic Recurring Contribution program (ARC) to send an additional monthly or quarterly donation to the WSO.

## **How to set up automatic contributions**

By signing up with OA's ARC program, members can give monthly or quarterly contributions automatically, using a credit card. Recurring contributions help the WSO budget contribution income each year. To set up an Automatic Recurring Contribution, visit [oa.org/contribute](http://oa.org/contribute). Members may also sign up for the ARC program by calling the WSO at 1-505-891-2664. Members may also mail in a contribution form to: PO Box 44727, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA.

## **What if I can't afford to contribute now?**

According to OA's Preamble, "There are no dues or fees for members." All are welcome at an OA meeting as OA does not require a contribution. However, many of us have found that a financial contribution, no matter how small, supports our recovery.

The concept of self-support also applies to service as well as finances. OA members strengthen their recovery by giving service to groups, intergroups/service boards, regions, and the WSO.

## **Are contributions tax-deductible?**

The laws of the country in which a member lives determine if a contribution is tax-deductible. In the United States, contributions to the WSO are tax-deductible. Contributions to the intergroup/service board and region may also be tax-deductible. For questions, check with a tax advisor in your area.

## **Are there special considerations for OA members who live outside the United States?**

The WSO can incur costly transaction fees for international contributions. Here are some ways members can maximize the value of their contributions:

- Use a credit card to make contributions at [oa.org/contribute](http://oa.org/contribute). (This is the most cost-effective method.)
- If sending money by wire transfer, check with the bank for the least expensive method.
- Pool funds with other OA members from the same country to send one larger contribution through a service board.
- Send contributions with delegates to the

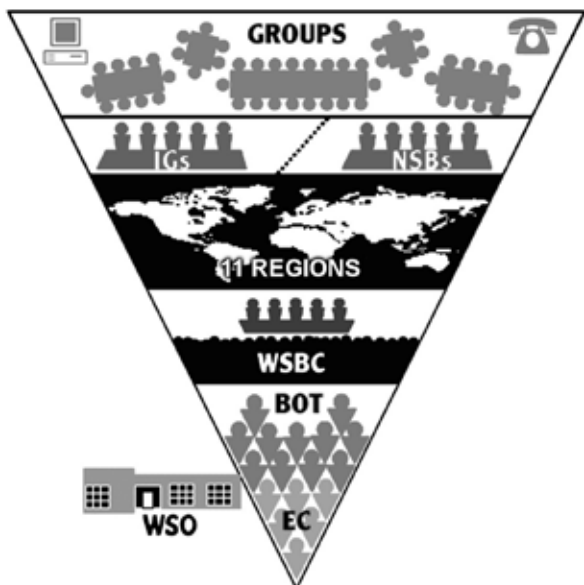
annual World Service Business Conference or by representative to the next region assembly.

- Add contributions to any other payment being sent to the WSO, for example, literature orders.

## Contributions flow downhill in OA

The structure of OA can be compared to an upside-down pyramid.

At the top are thousands of **members** all over the world. They contribute to all levels of OA. Anyone who wishes to stop eating compulsively can become a member.



**Groups** consist of two or more members. Each group practices the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA, guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service. No member of a group is required to practice any actions to remain an OA member or to have a voice at a meeting.

**Intergroups** and **service boards** consist of two or more groups. Intergroups (IGs) are formed to provide services beyond the group level. Service boards (SBs) are service bodies that provide sup-

port for groups and/or intergroups that are not otherwise served within the existing service structure. They include national service boards (NSBs) and language service boards (LSBs). NSBs may be registered in countries outside the United States and Canada in which the intergroup or service board serves the entire country. LSBs serve common needs of a language group, regardless of geographic proximity.

OA has **one virtual and ten geographic regions** around the world, which maintain direct communication with groups and intergroups/service boards and sponsor regional conventions and assemblies. The eleven regions each have regional trustees.

The seventeen-member **OA Board of Trustees** is elected at the annual World Service Business Conference. The board is responsible for representing the Fellowship as a whole, including oversight of finances at the world service level.

The **World Service Office** in Rio Rancho, New Mexico USA, receives contributions from all levels of OA. Its purpose is to support all levels of the Fellowship and help spread the OA message of recovery worldwide.

## **How are finances handled within the OA structure?**

OA groups and service bodies are encouraged to be self-supporting, using their own contributions to cover expenses, carry the message of OA, and keep a prudent reserve at all times.

Groups may contribute specifically according to the informed group conscience, frequently choosing to send 60 percent to their intergroup/service board, while forwarding 10 percent to the region and 30 percent to the WSO.

Groups may also choose, instead, to contribute funds to their intergroup/service board, knowing that the funds may be forwarded to the region and WSO.

The Executive Committee of the board makes the decisions about how to use OA funds at the

world service level. In addition, elected delegates at the World Service Business Conference vote on major new initiatives that involve the worldwide Fellowship. The full board approves the annual budget, and the Executive Committee reviews the financials monthly.

## **What does OA do with your contributions?**

### **Groups**

- Provide places to meet and share recovery.
- Purchase supplies to run meetings.
- Buy literature and media from the WSO.
- Support the intergroup/service board, region, and WSO.

### **Intergroups and service boards**

- Offer local outreach to professional communities, hospitals, schools, and libraries.
- Hold recovery events.
- Maintain websites.
- Keep updated meeting lists.
- Provide telephone information and answering services.
- Publish newsletters.
- Send representatives to region assemblies and delegates to the World Service Business Conference to vote on behalf of the Fellowship and contribute to the group conscience of OA as a whole concerning policies and services.
- Translate literature.

### **Regions**

- Hold assemblies and recovery events.



- Support community and media outreach.
- Maintain websites.
- Publish newsletters.
- Keep lists of speakers.
- Support officers' expenses.
- Maintain reference and media libraries.
- Offer support to intergroups/service boards and unaffiliated groups.

## **World Service Office**

- Produces and distributes OA-approved literature, media, and specialty items.
- Maintains, monitors, and updates oa.org.
- Offers worldwide meeting information on-line and by phone, mail, fax, and email.
- Publishes *Lifeline* magazine, *A Step Ahead* newsletter, and *WSO News Bulletin*.
- Sends starter kits for new groups.
- Registers and updates groups, including service bodies.
- Handles OA's media and public relations requests.
- Reaches out to professionals.
- Holds annual World Service Business Conferences.
- Holds World Service Conventions.

## **Special Funds**

The Board of Trustees or World Service Business Conference may establish a dedicated or "restricted" fund to which members may make targeted contributions. Members wishing to contribute to these funds may indicate their specific choice. Information about any restricted funds can be found on oa.org.

# Resources

Additional references are available from the OA bookstore (bookstore.oa.org), as downloads from the OA website (oa.org), or through the World Service Office.

- **On fundraising and prudent reserve:**

*Fundraising and Prudent Reserve Guidelines for Groups and Service Bodies*, available for download at oa.org/documents under “Group Treasurer Materials”

- **On group conscience:**

*OA Handbook for Members, Groups, and Service Bodies* (#120)

*Guidelines for a Group Conscience Meeting*, available for download at oa.org/documents under “Group Support”

- **On service:**

*The Twelve Concepts of OA Service* (#330)

- **On the Traditions:**

*The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, available for download at oa.org/documents under “Historical Literature”

*Service, Traditions and Concepts Workshop Manual* (#773)

*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition* (#990-2)

*Twelve Traditions Pocket Guide* (#445)

## The Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive over-eater who still suffers.
6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## **How to find OA**

Visit the OA website at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org),  
or contact the World Service Office at 1-505-891-2664.  
Many directories also include local listings  
for Overeaters Anonymous.

### **Overeaters Anonymous®**

World Service Office  
6075 Zenith Court NE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6424 USA  
Mail Address: PO Box 44727  
Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA  
Tel: 1-505-891-2664 • Fax: 1-505-891-4320  
[info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org) • [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org)

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