

Suggestions for Starting an Intergroup/Service Board

In order to start an intergroup/service board, you must meet the following requirements.

Service Bodies

Per OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VI – Service Bodies:

Section 1 – Composition

- a) Intergroups are composed of two or more groups that have formed a service body for the purpose of supporting and representing these groups that are affiliated with it. Each state/province/country may have at least once service body (intergroup or national service board). In a state/province/country having only one group, that group may function as an intergroup.
- b) National service boards are composed of groups and intergroups who share a common purpose; to deal with issues that require a combination of membership and financial resources of intergroups and groups established within a single country.
- c) Language service boards are composed of groups, intergroups, and national service boards to serve the common needs of a language group, regardless of geographic proximity.
- d) Special-focus service boards are composed of two or more groups or intergroups to serve the common needs of groups/intergroups with the same focus, regardless of geographic proximity.

Section 2 – Registration

- a) Each service body shall be duly registered with the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous by submitting:
 - 1) a completed registration form;
 - 2) bylaws and/or a summary of its purpose and operating procedures, neither of which shall be in conflict with OA, Inc. Bylaws. At a minimum, such bylaws or summary of purpose shall include a statement indicating that its primary purpose is to aid those having problems with compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service, and to serve and represent the OA groups from which it is formed; and
 - 3) complete registration information on:
 - i) intergroups—each affiliated group;
 - ii) national service boards—each affiliated intergroup and group;
 - iii) language service boards—each participating group, intergroup, and/or national service board; and
 - iv) special-focus service boards—each participating group.
- b) Each service body shall submit a copy of its bylaws and/or summary of purpose to the WSO whenever either is updated or revised.
- c) Each service body shall update its bylaws upon receipt of notification from the World Service Office of amendments to OA, Inc. Bylaws adopted at the World Service Business Conference to ensure that their bylaws do not conflict with OA, Inc. Bylaws. Notices shall be deemed to have been given by electronic transmission to the registered contact for each service body. Any updated bylaws shall be submitted to the World Service Office pursuant to OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VI, Section 2a) 2) above.

Section 3 – Affiliation and Participation

Purpose of Affiliation: To facilitate the count of groups and service bodies of the Fellowship and to encourage the flow of support and information to all.

Purpose of Participation: To facilitate the support and the flow of information within groups and service bodies that have a common need.

For the purpose of registration and WSBC representation:

- a) An intergroup may affiliate with one national service board if it exists, shall be affiliated with one region, and may participate in one or more language service boards.
- b) A national service board is affiliated with the region where their nation exists and may participate in one or more language service boards.
- c) A language service board may affiliate with one region. When the language service board spans more than one region, it may choose which region to affiliate with. Should a language service board choose to not affiliate with a region, the BOT chair shall assign a trustee to serve as liaison to that language service board. The service bodies, and groups acting as service bodies, that participate in a language service board retain their original affiliation.
- d) A special-focus service board may affiliate with one region. When the special focus service board spans more than one region, it may choose which region to affiliate with it. Should a special-focus service board choose not to affiliate with a region, the BOT chair shall assign a trustee to serve as liaison to that special-focus service board. The groups that participate in a special-focus service board retain their original affiliation.

A group may choose to affiliate with an intergroup. The group shall be affiliated with the intergroup's region.

Should a group choose not to affiliate with an intergroup, but affiliates with a national service board, that group shall be affiliated with that national service board's region.

Groups that choose not to affiliate with an intergroup or a national service board shall be affiliated with the region where the group exists, either the geographic region or the Virtual Region.

Any group or service body may participate in the activities (including voting) of another intergroup, national service board, language service board, and/or special-focus service board, and region with their permission.

Ways to Carry the Message

Below are some ways that intergroups and service boards can carry the message.

- Establish a telephone answering system to receive inquiries from newcomers.
- Respond to mail inquiries and route them to local groups.
- Publish regular newsletters or bulletins to keep groups informed about each other and about upcoming OA events.
- Distribute up to date directories of all nearby meetings.
- Ensure that the World Service Office has current information regarding your intergroup/service board and each group that you represent. This includes any new groups, cancellations, revisions to meeting information, and telephone numbers/email addresses of contact people. *(Please indicate the WSO group number(s) on the registration/change form.)*
- Assist newly formed groups in the area.
- Maintain a stock of OA-approved literature for sale.
- Sponsor and arrange workshops, marathons, and other special events for the member groups.
- Establish a Twelfth Step Within Committee to contact compulsive overeaters who need a Twelfth-Step call.

- Develop a committee to handle requests from local news media, arrange for radio or TV public service announcements or programs about OA, and furnish speakers for outside organizations.
- Arrange with local newspapers to have announcements of meetings in free “Community Calendars.”
- Cooperate with agencies who deal with the community so they know where to direct compulsive overeaters who still suffer.
- Send representatives to region assemblies and delegates to the World Service Business Conference.
- When the need arises and the local groups can provide support, a small office may be rented to handle intergroup/service board business.

It only takes two or more groups to form an intergroup or service board. Intergroups and service boards are not expensive—only a name, a post office box (if possible), and a summary of purpose and operating procedures are required. Most important, keep it simple.

It is important to keep accurate financial records from the very beginning of the intergroup/service board’s existence. Should the intergroup/service board seek tax-exempt status from the US Internal Revenue Service, complete financial records from the beginning will be required. For those outside of the US, check with your local tax office.

The above ideas are not meant to be done at once; they are only suggestions. Let the group conscience be your guide to your area’s top priority. The suggestions will help to keep the lines of communication open between the suffering compulsive overeater and OA as a whole. The best source of reaching out is the availability of “someone” 24 hours per day. Many intergroups and service boards make this their goal.

Helpful Documents/Links on the OA Website

Registration Forms: <https://oa.org/add-a-meeting/registration-forms/>

- 1) Intergroup Registration/Change Form
- 2) National/Language/Special-Focus Registration/Change Form
- 3) Virtual Intergroup Registration/Change Form

Sample Bylaws: <https://oa.org/document-library/> under Service Body Resources

- 1) Introduction to the Sample Intergroup/Service Board Bylaws
- 2) Sample Intergroup Bylaws
- 3) Sample National Service Board Bylaws
- 4) Sample Language/Special-Focus Service Board Bylaws
- 5) Sample Intergroup/National Service Board Summary of Purpose
- 6) Sample Language/Special-Focus Service Board Summary of Purpose

Additional Resources: <https://oa.org/document-library/> under Service Body Resources and Treasurer Resources

- 1) Budget Guidelines for Service Bodies
- 2) Designated Downloader Flyer
- 3) Intergroup or Service Board Inventory
- 4) Intergroup Treasurer Guidelines