

Suggestions for Starting an Intergroup/Service Board

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

Intergroup

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

Section 1 – Definition

An intergroup shall be a duly registered service body. For the purpose of this document a service body is defined as a service entity that provides services beyond the group level.

Section 2 – Composition

- a) Two or more groups may form an intergroup for the purpose of servicing and representing the groups of which they are composed and acting as the guardian of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of OA Service.
 - 1) A land-based intergroup is composed primarily of groups within its region, or groups within its geographical proximity.
 - 2) A virtual intergroup is composed primarily of virtual groups.
- b) With permission, a land-based group may affiliate with a virtual intergroup and a virtual group may affiliate with a land-based intergroup.
- c) Each state/province may have at least one intergroup. In a state/province having only one group, that group may function as an intergroup.

Section 3 – Registration

- a) Each intergroup shall be duly registered with the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous by submitting:
 - 1) a completed intergroup 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 with the problems of 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 each of its affiliated groups.
- b) Each intergroup shall submit a copy of its bylaws and/or summary of purpose to the WSO whenever either is updated or revised.
- c) Each intergroup 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 the intergroup bylaws do not conflict with OA, Inc. Bylaws. Notices shall be deemed to have been given if sent by mail and/or electronic transmission to the registered contact for each intergroup. Any updates shall be submitted to the World Service Office pursuant to OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VI, Section 3a) 2) above.

Service Board

Per OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VIII – Service Boards:

Section 1 – Definition

For the purpose of this document, a service body is defined as a service entity that provides services beyond the group level. A service board shall be a duly registered service body. The purpose of a service board is to deal with issues that require a combination of membership and financial resources of intergroups and groups not otherwise served within the existing service structure. The service board shall serve and be responsible and accountable to these groups and intergroups. These service boards may be known as national service boards or language service boards.

Section 2 – Composition

- a) National service boards may be registered in countries outside the US and Canada in which the intergroup serves the entire country or the groups/intergroups within a country have formed a service board to serve the entire country. In cases in which there are common needs that exceed the boundaries of one country, the national service board may serve more than one country.
- b) Language service boards may be registered to serve common needs of a language group, regardless of geographical proximity.

Section 3 – Registration

- a) Each service board 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 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 with the problems of 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 each of its affiliated groups and intergroups.
- b) Each service board shall submit a copy of its bylaws and/or summary of purpose to the WSO whenever either is updated or revised.
- c) The intergroups shall register separately with the World Service Office as defined in Article VI – Intergroups.
- d) Each service board 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 that the service board bylaws do not conflict with OA, Inc. Bylaws. Notices shall be deemed to have been given if sent by mail and/or electronic transmission to the registered contact for each service board. These updates shall be submitted to the World Service Office pursuant to OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VIII, Section 3a) 2) above..

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.
- Maintain phone book listings in as wide an area as possible to attract the still suffering compulsive overeater.
- Respond to mail inquiries and route them to local groups.

- Publish regular newsletters or bulletins to keep groups informed about each other and about coming 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, telephone numbers of contact people, and/or secretary mailing addresses. *(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 regional 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.

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 on the OA Website

Registration/Change Forms: <https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/service-bodies/registration-forms/>

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

Sample Bylaws: <https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/resources/documents/>

- 1) Introduction to the Sample Intergroup/Service Board Bylaws
- 2) Sample Intergroup Bylaws
- 3) Sample Service Board Bylaws
- 4) Summary of Purpose

Additional Resources: <https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/resources/documents/>

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