

that the money the treasurer is often so busy overseeing serves a very spiritual purpose within the Fellowship: it allows each group the opportunity to fulfill its primary purpose, that of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is the fundamental work of A.A., and to ensure that the hand of A.A. will remain outstretched, the group must find appropriate means of keeping its doors open. The group treasurer is an important part of this Twelfth Step work.

Additional Resources for Group Treasurers

Treasurers may have questions not answered in this brochure. Such as: How do groups set up a bank account or get a tax I.D. number? What about group insurance? Does it matter if the group can only send a very small contribution in support of A.A.'s essential services? Where should contributions be sent? Do you have to be an accountant to be a group treasurer? What is the Birthday or Anniversary Plan and how can members be a part of it? Is there a limit on the amount a member can contribute to A.A.?

A number of these questions and suggested answers about group bank accounts, insurance, and A.A. essential services may be found in the pamphlet, "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix," and in A.A. Guidelines on Finance. For information about the Twelve Traditions of A.A. and how they apply to finances, see the pamphlet, "A.A. Tradition — How It Developed." Also, the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" discusses the role and qualifications of treasurers and how they fit into the A.A. service structure. Additional copies of these items may be obtained by contacting the General Service Office in New York.

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Memo to an A.A. Group Treasurer



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The position of group treasurer is one of the most responsible positions in the group and requires accuracy, attention to detail, and accountability to the group as a whole. While there is no standard length of sobriety necessary for a member to take on the position of group treasurer, many groups suggest that the treasurer should have a reasonable period of sobriety (at least six months to a year or more). It is also suggested that group treasurers be well grounded in the Twelve Traditions and be familiar with the principles and practices of the group itself.

When the basket is passed at an A.A. gathering, members make a very special contribution to the effective functioning and well-being of the Fellowship as a whole — a contribution that is not just a financial one. When members put whatever they can into the basket, this is a direct way of making sure the group will survive and continue to carry the A.A. message to newcomers and oldtimers alike. But A.A. members not only put dollars and cents into the basket, they are also investing their support and trust.

Duties of the Group Treasurer

The general duties of a group treasurer can be summarized as follows:

- *Collection:* The traditional means of assuring that the group is self-supporting is to pass the basket. Since there are no dues or fees for A.A. membership, those members attending the meeting are asked to make a voluntary contribution to help cover the group's expenses. Typically, after the basket is passed, the group treasurer takes custody of the money collected.

- *Safeguarding:* The group treasurer takes reasonable precautions to safeguard the group's funds. Many groups keep the group's treasury in a bank checking account in the group's name, often requiring at least two signatures on all checks. This provides security against accidental loss; it also provides ease of disbursement and a continuing record of income and expenses. Monthly bank statements are normally sent directly to the group treasurer who can bring them to the group as needed.

- *Disbursement:* The group treasurer is usually the person responsible for paying the group's routine bills and for keeping accurate records of the group's funds. The treasurer needs to be well informed about how the group's money is spent and should have addresses and mailing information for all A.A. service entities that the group contributes to.

- *Reporting:* Most groups request a treasurer's report and all relevant documentation at regularly scheduled business meetings. This way, all group members can stay informed about the financial health of the group and make group conscience decisions about how the funds should be spent.

Where Does It Go?

Money contributed at A.A. meetings belongs to the group, so that it may serve A.A. as a whole. Group funds are used in a number of ways throughout the Fellowship, always with the aim of making more and better Twelfth Step work possible. From A.A.'s earliest times members have been providing financial support to make sure that individual groups survive, that newcomers have a way of contacting A.A., and that accurate information about A.A. reaches prospective A.A. members. When an A.A. member puts money "in the basket" it helps to ensure that A.A. groups will be able to maintain a meeting space, that telephones will continue to be answered at intergroups and central offices, that prisoners will get Big Books, Loners will get letters, newcomers will get pamphlets and meeting books, and that professionals interested in alcoholism will get answers to their questions about A.A.

First, the group's basic needs are met, such as providing for rent, literature, refreshments, insurance, and any other relevant expenses approved by the group conscience. Then the group can participate in the financial support of the Fellowship as a whole by sending money to various A.A. service entities: their local intergroup or central office, the General Service Office, their area and district, and whatever is appropriate in their locality.

These service entities do much of the work of A.A. and, like the group itself, need money to function and survive. These entities utilize contributions in a number of different ways, always with the aim of carrying the A.A. message.

As co-founder Bill W. wrote in 1957, "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every A.A. member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and our bills paid."

Having a Prudent Reserve

Most groups try to have a financial reserve which they can draw upon in the event of any unforeseen circumstances, such as an increase in the group's rent or the sudden need to purchase a new coffeepot. There is no predetermined amount for such a reserve, but most groups try to put aside enough money to cover at least one to three months' operating expenses. The group itself usually determines the actual size and scope of the prudent reserve. It is important, however, to remember that this reserve is not an operating account and is intended to cover extraordinary fluctuations in income or expenses.

Spirituality and Money

While much of the work of the group treasurer involves a lot of details, it is important to remember