

Local Service Group Guidelines and Recommendations

Last updated January 2021

1. What is a Local Service Group (LSG) and what is its purpose?
 - An LSG consists of two or more FA members from more than one FA meeting group who combine resources to do service for FA. (FA Bylaws: Article IX, Section 2b).
 - An LSG is an informal group. It is not a legal entity.
 - The ultimate purpose of the LSG is to carry the FA message of recovery. Additionally, forming an LSG creates opportunities for connection with other meetings as well as with FA as a whole.
 - Therefore, an LSG can:
 - operate at the local level to spread the word of FA to the still-suffering food addict and others such as family, medical professionals, faith community leaders, and employers; and
 - facilitate communication and fellowship across meetings.
 - While the LSG may perform functions that are helpful to individual meetings, its purpose is not to be a governing body over meetings. It has been found more helpful to keep the focus on its primary purpose.
 - Whereas attendance at LSG meetings is encouraged, attendance or service at the local service group level is not intended to replace attendance or service at committed FA meetings.

2. Who can attend a Local Service Group (LSG)? Do you have to have 90 days of abstinence?
 - Ninety days of abstinence is not required. Any FA member can attend an LSG meeting.
 - In order to protect our personal recovery, it is suggested that a member speak with their sponsor before participating especially if a member has fewer than 90 days of abstinence.
 - In situations requiring a formal decision, only members with at least 90 days of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor shall have a voice and a vote (FA Bylaws: Article IX, Section 2b).
 - A member of the LSG should have at least 90 days of continuous abstinence and be working with an FA sponsor in order to take on a temporary service position such as coordinating a writing workshop or contacting doctors in the area. See the FA website for abstinence recommendations for service positions at public information (PI) events.

3. What types of activities do Local Service Groups (LSGs) find especially helpful?
 - Before starting any of these activities, reach out to your intergroup or chapter's PI committee to access resources and support your initiative.

- Getting together to prepare for and host information sessions.
 - Monitoring calls to an 800 or centralized local number printed on area FA brochures.
 - Ordering tri-folds in bulk.
 - Contacting corporate wellness representatives to discuss having information sessions, lunch and learns, distributing tri-folds within the company, or working with their Employee Assistance Program.
 - Working with FA weblinks to get links to the FA website posted on local high school, college, and business websites.
 - Coordinating classroom information sessions for local high schools and colleges.
 - Setting up and coordinating booths at local health fairs.
 - Donating the FA book to local libraries.
 - Reaching out to local media such as newspapers and radio stations. PI's (Public Information) Media Outreach committee is a great resource for coordinating this effort.
 - Note that even though the LSG may coordinate efforts, members of the LSG can and should call other FA members to help with the work even though the members may not be able to attend the LSG meeting regularly.
 - In addition to spreading the word of FA, there are activities that strengthen the local fellowship such as helping to coordinate a *connection* writing workshop, Thank-a-Thon, or a Fellowship Day.
 - To get more ideas, attend the bi-monthly Service Group Support Committee (SGSC) meeting. For information about how to log in to the meeting, check www.foodaddicts.org and click on the Service Group Support tab.
4. How do you know when an area is ready to form a Local Service Group (LSG)?
- An area is ready to form an LSG when FA members from different meetings see a need to get together to do service.
 - If you find two or more people from two or more meetings getting together to perform service-oriented activities (such as those described in question 3) then the group is already acting as an LSG.
 - Combining resources is strongly encouraged; however, if there is no desire to collaborate with another meeting or members outside of a meeting to do service, there is no need yet for an LSG.
5. How is service organized in Local Service Groups (LSGs)?
- It is recommended that the LSG have a facilitator and a note taker for each meeting; other service positions may be created as the need arises. For example, if the group is participating in a health fair, someone may volunteer to coordinate the effort.
 - Rotating positions gives more people an opportunity to do service. It also keeps the LSG informal but is not required. Please note that holding a service position

in any meeting including positions for an LSG, requires a member to have at least 90 days of continuous abstinence in FA and be working with an FA sponsor. See the FA website for suggested abstinence requirements for PI efforts. Additionally, some LSGs choose to determine abstinence requirements for other temporary service positions.

6. Does a Local Service Group (LSG) need to maintain a treasury?

- The LSG should not need to maintain a treasury. As is outlined in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (Tradition 7), accumulating funds at the meeting level, beyond what is necessary for “bare running expenses plus a prudent reserve” conflicts with “the principle of corporate poverty [which has been] firmly embedded in Twelve Step tradition.”
- If needed, an LSG may pass the basket to pay for meeting space. Typically, whoever is facilitating the meeting for the month will make certain the monies are channeled to the appropriate party at the venue. Any leftover funds would be distributed per the “Your FA Seventh Tradition” pamphlet.
- There are times when the LSG needs funds. For example, if the LSG is coordinating an FA table at a health fair and needs funds for tri-folds, the LSG should let the area meetings know of this financial need. Whoever is holding the temporary position of coordinator for that event could gather the donations for the tri-folds from a meeting (or several meetings). All money collected would be used for the printing of the tri-folds. Any leftover funds would be distributed per the “Your FA Seventh Tradition” pamphlet.
- When using 7th tradition funds, LSGs should show prudence and carefully consider the benefit to the fellowship and the still suffering food addict.
- If the area needs additional financial support for an event, they can contact their intergroup or chapter.
- Note: For additional information on the concept of corporate poverty, or how to distribute excess funds, refer to the “Your FA Seventh Tradition” pamphlet at www.foodaddicts.org.

7. How often should a Local Service Group (LSG) meet?

- Even though there is no set frequency for holding an LSG meeting, best practices recommend that LSGs meet monthly either before or after an FA meeting.
- It is important to have a time limit on the meeting. LSGs typically meet 30-60 minutes per month. Some groups meet for a longer time period. It depends on what the group is working on.
- It is recommended to keep the agenda focused and work on only one or two projects at a time.

8. Does each FA meeting in the area need to be represented for a Local Service Group (LSG) to form?

- Though positively encouraged, it is not necessary for each meeting in the area to be represented to form an LSG. Many LSGs find it helpful if each meeting is represented. If there is someone from each meeting group at the LSG meeting, it makes it easier to inform the entire FA community of events.
 - As an alternative, each meeting could have an LSG contact. This contact would not have to attend each meeting, but they would be the person to be contacted when information needs to be disseminated.
 - Please keep in mind that the LSG is not a governing body.
9. Do you need to take notes? If so, should they be circulated (how and to whom)?
- It is recommended that each meeting of the LSG has a note taker. This is especially important for the sake of continuity.
 - Notes could be distributed via email. It is helpful if they are circulated within a week of the meeting. Some groups send the notes to all who attend the meeting and others have a set distribution list for all who have ever attended a meeting. Others send the notes to LSG contacts.
 - Sending out an agenda a few days prior to the meeting serves as a meeting reminder and also can be used to let people know what is coming up in the area. Some LSGs set the agenda for the next meeting as the last piece of business at each monthly meeting.
10. How do you let people in your area know that you and others are thinking of forming a Local Service Group (LSG)?
- On your calls to fellows in your area, mention the idea of starting an LSG.
 - When you find people who are interested in forming a group, determine a meeting date and invite people who attend your meetings to join you.
 - Announce the meeting of the LSG, explain the purpose of an LSG, and share freely about the benefits of doing service in an LSG at your FA meetings.
 - Talk with your sponsees and invite them to join you.
11. Once you have your group formed, how do you keep the momentum going and grow your Local Service Group (LSG)?
- Keep it simple. Selecting activities that are manageable and achievable help your group feel it is being successful. Encourage everyone who attends to express their ideas without fear of judgment.
 - Give everyone who attends a task to help people feel a part of the group.
 - Send out an agenda a few days prior to the meeting.
 - Encourage sponsees to attend.
 - Inviting members to help plan one event is a good way to get people involved.
 - Announce the LSG meetings, along with any successes, at your weekly meetings and/or monthly business meetings.

- Hold annual events such as a Fellowship Day, *connection* writing workshop or information sessions and consider having on-going activities such as maintenance of and/or distribution of trifolds and racks.
- Be willing to try new ideas and share your successes at the SGSC bi-monthly meeting!
- Access the Public Information tab under For Members on the FA website and take time to review as a group. This is a great opportunity to invite the local PI reps to attend an LSG meeting.

12. What language do we use to announce Local Service Group (LSG) meetings?

Here is an example of a meeting announcement:

Hi – my name is XXX and I’m a food addict. I’m also a member of our Local Service Group. This is a group of FA members from several different meetings who join efforts to reach the still suffering food addict and strengthen the local fellowship. All are welcome to join us. Our next meeting is (day, time, location). We (are planning an information session, need help to staff a booth at a health fair on whatever date, or are going to be reviewing the public information tab of the FA website, or whatever else is going on). If you have any questions, please see me during the break or after the meeting.

13. Is it OK for one area to have more than one Local Service Group (LSG)?

- The purpose is to pool resources. Therefore, if the groups are geographically close, it is recommended to keep it to one group. Keep in mind it is principles over personalities.

14. Since meetings have Public Information (PI) reps, what is the benefit to also having a Local Service Group (LSG)?

- Since the PI rep rotates, the LSG gives some continuity to PI activities.
- The existence of a local service group gives meetings and their PI reps the opportunity to pool resources.
- Having an LSG gives more people the opportunity to do service.
- The PI rep position is composed of a lot of service activities, so having a group to support them could be beneficial. Check with the local meeting PI reps about areas where they could use support.

To get more ideas, ask questions, or share information, attend the bi-monthly Service Group Support meeting. For log-in information, check www.foodaddicts.org under the Service Group Support tab.

AT ALL TIMES, REMEMBER TO KEEP IT SIMPLE!