

**The Fellowship Service Manual of**

 **Co-Dependents Anonymous**

**Part 3**

**CoDA**

**Guidelines for Service Levels Between**

**Meetings and CoDA ,Inc.**

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***Table of Contents***

[**Section 01 Introduction**](#_Section_01_)

Purpose of this Manual 4

**Section 02 Service Levels Between Meetings and CoDA, Inc.**

Community Service Group (CSG)/Intergroup 5

Voting Entity 5

Purpose of Community Service Group (CSG)/Intergroup ­ 5

Purpose of Voting Entity 6

Excerpt from CoDA ByLaws related to Voting Entities 6

Voting Entity Splits 7

**Section 03 Group Conscience Decision Making** 8

[**Section 04**](#Section_05) **Doing Service at the VE and CSG/Intergroup Levels**

What are ByLaws/Guidelines? 9

Where and When Should an Intergroup or VE Meet? 9

[**Section 05**](#Section_05) **Officer Positions**

Officer Positions and Terms 10

Who Are Delegates and Alternate Delegates, How Do We Select Them, What is Their Term Length? 11

What are the Expectations and Responsibilities of a Delegate 11

Officer and Delegate Rotation and Removal from Office 12

[**Section 06**](#Section_05) **Meetings: What they Entail and How They Are Conducted**

Business Meetings 13

Special Meetings 13

VE Assembly or Conference 13

Community Problem Solving Method of Decision: Bringing a Motion to Vote 13

Robert’s Rules of Order 14

Alternative Format Meetings (AFMs) 15

[**Section 07**](#Section_05) **Other Useful Information**

Phone Set-Ups 16

Teleconference Calls 16

Meeting Lists 16

Websites 16

Intergroup and Voting Entity Committees 17

Handling a Dispute or Conflict 17

Intergroup and Voting Entity 7th Tradition Distribution 18

CSC Travel Reimbursement Opportunity TRO 18

Prudent Reserve 19

7th Tradition Donations Acknowledgement 20

Opening a Checking Account 20

### **Section 01 Introduction**

### **Purpose of this Manual**

The purpose of this document is to provide a more detailed description of our service structure between the meetings and the CoDA, Inc. level. It also includes guidelines gathered from various existing organizations at these levels and other places. The 12 Traditions and the 12 Service Concepts are both important guidelines to use in service work at any level. Both can be found in Part 1 of the FSM, CoDA Structure and General Information. It is recommended that all decisions be made using the Group Conscience Process. Information about the Group Conscience Process is available below in Section 03 as well as in

### **Section 02 Service Levels Between**

### **Meetings and CoDA, Inc.**

**Intergroup/Community Service Group (CSG)**

A strong CoDA Intergroup sometimes called a Community Service Group (CSG) contributes to the success of CoDA in general. A sense of community at the local level leads to success in attracting and sustaining the involvement of members of the fellowship in service work and in community building activities. The Intergroup/CSG is made up of Group Service Representatives (GSRs) from area meetings and CoDA members from the local Fellowship. The Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Service Concepts of CoDA offer guidance in establishing service boards. Intergroups/CSGs typically elect officers and committee chairs.

Some things that a CSG/Intergroup might do are:

* Manage finances including the collection of a percentage of money received from the meetings’ 7th tradition donations to use to provide funds for acquiring literature, running social events and office type expenses
* Obtain CoDA Conference Approved literature for purchase by meetings and individuals
* Develop and maintain a website
* Issue resolution between and among meetings
* Plan and host events and functions
* Help meetings get started by offering things like starter packs of literature, suggestions on signage and advertising of new meetings and other items as requested

**Voting Entity**

A Voting Entity (VE) is a level of Fellowship within CoDA that handles the business aspects for a group typically made up of two or more Intergroups/CSGs and/or Meetings. An Intergroup/CSG may serve as a Voting Entity if decided by group conscience when it is the only Intergroup/CSG within a VE. The Voting Entity organization provides a bridge between Intergroups/CSGs, and CoDA, Inc.

Each State and Territory of the United States of America and each Country is automatically defined as a VE and entitled to send two (2) Delegates to the CoDA Service Conference (CSC). Sometimes two or more Voting Entities may choose to join together in order to combine resources and better serve the needs of their meetings and Intergroups. A Voting Entity may also choose to divide into two or more Voting entities according to CoDA's By-laws.

A Voting Entity (VE)’s primary purpose is to represent the members of its communities at the CoDA Service Conference (CSC). It is made up of members who represent their communities or their meetings where there are insufficient meetings to need Intergroups/CSGs. These representatives, called CSRs (Community Service Reps) or GSRs (Group Service Reps) bring the Group Conscience of their meetings to the VE for resolution or to be presented at the CSC, just as the GSRs bring issues to the Intergroup/CSG where one exists.

Many of the functions performed at the VE level for the communities are similar to those provided by a Intergroup/CSG for the meetings they represent. An additional function of VEs is to elect and send one or two Delegates to CSC each year. In addition, one or more Alternate Delegates may be sent.

The primary purpose of the Delegates is to facilitate communication between the VE and the CSC. The Delegate is a conduit between CoDA, Inc.and their local communities. An important part of this communication is the gathering and distributing by the Delegates of the CSC Motions and VE Issues to be addressed at CSC to acquire group conscience decisions from their VE membership as to how they should vote.

**Excerpt from CoDA ByLaws related to Voting Entities**

Section 2. Voting Entities (Entities).

Each State and Territory of the United States of America and each Country is established as a Voting Entity (VE) and entitled to send two (2) Delegates to the Service Conference. A single Voting Entity is established to represent all “Alternative Format Meetings” (AFM) and is entitled to send two (2) Delegates. AFM is defined as all meetings that do not physically meet face-to-face in a physical location.

Any Voting Entity may surrender its two (2) Delegates and request to subdivide. The governing principle is that a member of the Fellowship will only be represented by one (1) set of two (2) Delegates. An entity may request sub-divisions for reasons of geographical separation, language, or other recognizable characteristics. Each entity may request that it be split along an internally agreed upon division and each sub- division of the entity granted two (2) Delegates. Each sub-division should have enough members and meetings to support a viable service group so that all meetings are still represented.

The Issues Mediation Committee will handle requests for CoDA to recognize Voting Entities. Through the group conscience process, Voting Entities select Delegates and Alternate Delegates to carry the will of the membership of CoDA, Inc. meetings. In order to guarantee voting rights, each Voting Entity service board must be duly authorized by the Issues Mediation Committee. In the absence of a Voting Entity service board, members of that Entity shall present an alternative selection process based on group conscience decision making to the Issues Mediation Committee. This procedure insures adherence to the program of recovery endorsed by this Fellowship.

**Voting Entity Splits**

Each Voting Entity may sub-divide into two Voting Entities based on specific logic and criteria. The

Issues Mediation Committee (IMC) oversees this process and approves all divisions. CoDA’s Bylaws offers guidance for the VE and the IMC. After the division, both VEs will have two delegates. The Fellowship Service Manual recommends the following issues and process be considered:

1. Make sure a division will solve some problem or issue with representation of the Membership and that adequate meetings exist to justify the split.
2. Consider geographical boundaries.
3. Consider division by Language.
4. Consider city, county, parish, state boundaries.
5. The division should be agreed upon by both new VE’s.
6. All meetings from the current VE should be included in one of the new VE’s.

Please contact the IMC at imc@coda.org for an application.

### **Section 03 Group Conscience Decision Making**

The spiritual structure of CoDA is based on Tradition Two: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority: a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." By polling our group conscience, we seek guidance from our Higher Power and make decisions affecting our groups, our service boards, and our committees.

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and this represents substantial unanimity on one issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of CoDA’s principles.

The group conscience process is also used to make decisions that affect CoDA as a whole and to elect trusted servants to carry out those decisions. The Intergroup (community, area, country, state, regional) elects delegates to represent them at CoDA meetings (see Intergroups defined in Section V.). The GSR (Group Service Representative) carries the group conscience of the home group meeting to Intergroup. Intergroup holds a group conscience and decides whether the item will proceed to CoDA, or the next level (the Voting Entity).

At the Voting Entity level (Country, State and Regional or other Voting Entity levels); group and community representatives select trusted servants to become officers to serve the members of that Voting Entity. At the same time, delegates are selected to represent the Voting Entity and carry the Voting Entity group conscience to the annual CoDA Service Conference. Delegates also work together to make decisions dealing with CoDA, and select trusted servants who will serve our Fellowship at the CoDA, Inc. level.

Decisions at all levels including the Intergroup and Voting Entity levels of CoDA are made with the guidance of our Higher Power as expressed through the Twelve Traditions. Particularly useful are Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends upon CoDA Unity." and Tradition Two: "For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." Thus as with all our recovery, group conscience is about putting aside the "self" and looking to Higher Power for guidance.

For more guidance on the Process of Determining a Group Conscience (and Safety, Boundaries, and Respect in the Group Conscience Process), refer to Part 1 of the FSM, CoDA Structure and General Information.

### **Section 04 Doing Service at the VE and CSG/Intergroup Levels**

**What Are Bylaws/Guidelines?**

It is highly advisable that every Intergroup and/or Voting Entity creates and maintains either a set of written operating Guidelines or Bylaws. Guidelines/Bylaws widely vary from group to group, but they are generally operational procedures covering topics such as how officers are elected, how meetings are conducted, how often business meeting are held, what officers the organization will have and a description of officers’ duties.

Bylaws, by definition, are rules and regulations (or laws) enacted by an association or a corporation to provide a framework for its operation and management. Bylaws contain the most fundamental principles and rules regarding the nature of an organization.They are often required by banks to open checking accounts.

Guidelines are statements or indications of policy or procedures by which to determine a course of action. They are not laws and their policies and procedures are never mandatory.

Some examples of existing CoDA’s Fellowship Bylaws can be found on the following links:

1. Southern California CoDA Intergroup(SoCal): [http://socalcoda.org/docs/SoCalCoDABylaws053114.pdf](http://socalcoda.org/docs/SoCalCoDABylaws-053114.pdf)

1. Illinois CoDA Intergroup: <http://www.illinoiscoda.org/by-laws>
2. New England CoDA Intergroup: <http://www.necoda.org/Active%20PDFs%20and%20Flyers/Bylaws.pdf>
3. CoDA, Inc. Bylaws: <http://coda.org/default/assets/File/By%20Laws%202012-approved.pdf>

At business meetings, the members of the Voting Entity and/or Intergroup are guided by CoDA’s 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Service Concepts.

**Where and When Should an Intergroup or VE Meet?**

Every Intergroup/VE is self-supporting, so deciding where to meet and how to pay for it should be a collective group conscience decision. Intergroup/VE members usually search churches, libraries, and/or hospital institutions for available locations to hold business meetings at a nominal fee (e.g., $10-50/month). If you can’t find a meeting room using telephone and/or video conferencing are available options. (See Teleconferencing and video conferencing sections). Special meetings may be called throughout the year outside the usual schedule (e.g., for workshop and/or convention planning, Conference motions and Voting Entities’ review, etc.).

Intergroup general meetings typically either meet monthly or quarterly within the year depending on how much business they have on their agendas. A Voting Entity usually meets at least once or twice a year; large VEs may meet more often.

### **Section 05 Officer Positions**

**Officer Positions and Terms**

The election, terms and duties/responsibilities of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are usually outlined and maintained. Examples of how various formed committees such as an Outreach, Events, Website and/or Hospital and Institutions committees are formed and may also be included at an Intergroup level and/or at the Voting Entity level.

The Chair usually facilitates all the business meetings and sets the agenda. Sometimes the Chair does not have a vote, but serves as a tie-breaker when there is a tie vote.



The Vice Chair usually takes over the Chair’s responsibilities/duties in the absence of the Chair.

The Treasurer is usually responsible for receipt, disbursement and proper accounting and documentation of all funds (7th Tradition donations) and expenses for the Intergroup/VE. Maintains proper and accurate records of all receipts and disbursements; prepares and presents a written report of the status of the Intergroup/VE account in the established meeting periods (and when requested) to the Fellowship for transparency purposes. It is highly advisable to open a checking account (in the Intergroups/VE’s name) as soon as possible. It is usually suggested that there are at least two signatures on a checking account (e.g., the Treasurer’s and the Chair’s or/Secretary’s). Please refer to Part 2 of the FSM, Meeting Handbook.

The Treasurer can accept all 7th traditions donations either through a P.O. Box (which should be opened and paid for in the name of your Intergroup and/or VE) or in person at every held business meeting. Seventh Tradition donations can be made either by check, money order or in cash at local meetings at the suggested percentages made by CoDA Please refer to Part 2 of the FSM, pages 4 and 12-13 for information about the suggested percentages for dividing 7th tradition donations.

The Secretary usually records, maintains and distributes business meeting minutes and key information to attendees, officers and the local Fellowship. They also create and maintain a local contact list and handle most mass mailings.

Terms of office and/or rotation of officers is highly recommended and considered healthy in CoDA. A term office of two years if suggested unless otherwise specified by a Group conscience. If no one can fill the position after a term is up, then the same candidate may continue filling the position another year or two if the group conscience allows, until a suitable candidate is elected. Or the position can remain vacant until a candidate may fill the position. Outgoing officers are expected to attend to supply information and materials to their successors and cooperate to ensure the smoothest possible transition. This may apply to Committee Chair positions as well.

**Who Are Delegates and Alternate Delegates?**

**How Do We Select Them and What Is Their Term Lengths?**

Delegates are a Voting Entity’s (VE) voting representatives who are sent to CoDA’s yearly CoDA Service Conference (CSC). They are selected by a VE’s group conscience decision making process at the yearly VE Assembly or Conference. Every Voting Entity may send up to two Delegates to Conference.

Delegates are expected to serve as a liaison between CoDA, Inc. and its Voting Entity. Delegates serve as a communication link between CoDA, Inc. and its local Fellowship providing key information on Conference and VE updates, changes, etc. At Conference, Delegates may be asked to give a brief oral report on their local VEs. After the Conference experience, a Delegate may be asked by their VE to either prepare or present an oral and/or written report of their overall experience at Conference with detailed information on presented motions and reports. A typical Delegate’s term is for 2 years.

An important goal of a Voting Entity is to be represented at Conference and to send a Delegate(s) for voting purposes. If financially possible, Delegates get reimbursed by their VE for their travel expenses.

An Alternate Delegate may serve in the absence of a Delegate at CSC. When the Delegate is not able to serve on the floor or steps out of the Conference room for a short period of time, the Delegate “passes his/her badge” to the Alternate to vote in his/her place. An Alternate may or may not be reimbursed by its local VE. An Alternate’s term is usually 1-2 years. Alternate Delegates often become Delegates for a future CSC.

Some Voting Entities select a Junior and Senior Delegate to go to Conference the same year. A Senior Delegate would have gone to Conference the year prior. A Junior Delegate would have not and would be attending Conference for the first time. The reason for this method is to have a ‘seasoned’ Delegate ‘showing the ropes’ to a new Delegate at Conference.

It is may be recommended that a Delegate have served previously as an Alternate Delegate.

 **What Are the Expectations and Responsibilities of a Delegate?**

CoDA, Inc.’s Events Committee put together “A Delegates Checklist” for all delegates at Conference. Below are listed the expectations and responsibilities outlined on this checklist which can be useful knowledge for delegates prior to going to Conference.

## Delegate Checklist

First and foremost, a delegate is responsible for being a conduit for communication between the CSC and the fellowship. The following is a checklist that we hope will help delegates ensure that they have completed all their duties before, during and after Conference.

Several motions were passed at the 2010 CSC that requires VE Issues and all motions be sent to the Events Committee at least 60 days prior to the start of CSC. This is to allow adequate time for the delegates to retrieve these items and pass them on to their respective communities so that the communities and meetings can know what is happening and share their group conscience on each matter. Thus, the voice of the CoDA membership may be heard and voted by delegates at Conference.

1. Ensure that any items the VE wishes (Voting Entity Issues -VEIs) brought to Conference are available according to the timeline (60 days prior to the start of CSC).

1. Check the CoDA .org website early and often to acquire all items (e.g., VEIs, motions, Board and Committee’s Reports, Goals/Objectives and Budget submissions) to be brought to the Conference floor and provide these to the communities' reps for group conscience at the meetings.

1. Check with the communities for all membership group conscience on items to be brought to the Conference (from the CoDA website).

1. Preparation for Conference: have all group conscience decisions for items and be familiar with the delegate package provided on CoDA website.

1. At Conference, be sure to vote as your VE's collective group conscience has determined. Also, keep good notes and collect any handouts to show to your VE.

1. After Conference, write a report on all that transpired, including the status of your VE's motions, if any, and the status of all motions voted on or tabled at the Conference. Understand that the database does not often give much detail about the motions, so any detail you can provide will be helpful.

1. If your VE has submitted issues or motions that were given to a committee or to the Board to decide, be sure to acquire and maintain contact with that committee or Board so that you can monitor progress on your issues and perhaps initiate motion from that committee.

1. Emphasize to the Voting Entity secretary, intergroup officers, and the Voting Entity Liaison (IMC) and group representatives the importance of sending current directory information to CoDA as changes occur.

1. Act as a liaison for the Voting Entity and CoDA Board of Trustees.

1. Keep the alternate Delegate informed and engaged with all activities, correspondence, and events to build the alternate's expertise in Intergroup, Voting Entity, and CoDA matters.

1. When your term is over, be sure to pass this checklist and all pertinent information to your successor.

**Officer and Delegate Rotation and Removal from Office**

CoDA encourages rotation of officer and Delegate positions. A term period for an officer is usually 2 years. If a position cannot be filled, a group conscience may be taken and a person may either continue until another candidate is available or that individual may serve for another 2-year period, up to a total of 4 years. If no one is available or willing to serve, that position will remain vacant until a candidate is available to be of service. A term period of a delegate is 2 years. It is suggested that new delegates be selected at each term; however, a delegate may have served as a previous alternate.

If someone is not fulfilling their assigned duties/responsibilities as outlined in their Intergroups/VE’s Guidelines/Bylaws, the group may remove the individual from their perspective position. CoDA suggests caution with this action and that this action is only taken as a last resort. This should only be done with a group conscience decision and only if someone was found to have either seriously violated CoDA’s 12 Traditions and/or 12 Service Concepts or if someone is not fulfilling their assigned duties/responsibilities. CoDA’s Issues Mediation Committee encourages all groups to read and follow CoDA’s “Dealing with Disagreement Process Diagram” <http://coda.org/default/assets/File/IMC/IMC%20Disagreemen%20Process.pdf>

and our “Disagreement, Mediation, and Resolution in Our Group Conscience Process” [a](http://coda.org/default/assets/File/Foundational%20Documents/Fellowship%20Service%20Manual%2004_13_15.pdf)s outlined in Part 1 of the FSM, CoDA Structure and General Information.

An Intergroup/VE may establish guidelines or Bylaws which stipulate that any officer can be removed from office by a majority vote of the Assembly or when two-thirds of the Intergroup/VE members present voting either at a quarterly meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose, provided that in any of the above cases, the officer subject to removal and all members of Intergroup/VE have been informed at least 30 days in advance.

Some Intergroups/VEs also follow additional guidelines as follows: Failure to attend two consecutive scheduled meetings of an Intergroup/VE without prior notification and/or without reasonable cause shall be sufficient grounds for immediate removal from office of any officer, or any position elected or appointed by the Intergroup/VE or the Assembly. Such removal requires a simple majority of service board members present.

### **Section 05 Meetings: What they Entail and**

### **How They Are Conducted**

**Business Meetings**

 A business meeting at the Intergroup level is usually expressed by the group conscience of the selected/elected GSRs and officers. They may be held monthly, quarterly and may be bi-yearly depending on CoDA related business needs.

Business meetings at the Voting Entity (VE) level are usually expressed by the group conscience of the selected/elected Intergroup(s) GR(s) (group representatives) and VE officers. The date and place of business meetings are customarily rotated between major cities in the VE where there are enough volunteers to set up and operate the meeting. If an Intergroup is both an Intergroup and a Voting Entity, there may be no need for meeting rotation between major cities.

**Special Meetings**

During the year, a Special Meeting at either the Intergroup level may be called by its officers and/or at the

Voting Entity level by the Board, or by a petition from not less than one-third (1/3) of the Group Representatives (in the case of a VE) or GSRs (in the case of an Intergroup) of all current registered group meetings. The petition is to be addressed to the Board (or Intergroup, if applicable) and shall specify the reasons that a Special Meeting is being called. It is then incumbent upon the Board, or Intergroup, to arrange the meeting as soon as possible and to notify the Fellowship.

**VE Assembly or Conference**

An Assembly or Conference is a Voting Entity (VE) meeting (or if an Intergroup is a combination of an Intergroup and a VE then the this meeting would be an Intergroup/VE meeting) called upon once a year for the purpose of (1) members of the VE to attend and address the Assembly and submitting and voting on motions; (2) selecting and electing vacant officer positions; (3) selecting and electing delegates and alternate delegates to go to CoDA Service Conference; (4) selecting and passing on Voting Entity Issues from the Fellowship to Conference; and (5) establishing and Intergroups/VE’s procedures and guidelines within the framework of CoDA’s 12 Traditions, 12 Steps and 12 Service Concepts and their Bylaws or Guidelines. They may or may not decide to follow *Robert’s Rules of Order.*

**Community Problem Solving Method of Decision: Bringing A Motion To Vote?**

One option that can be used in group decision making when bringing a motion to vote would be to use the Community Problem Solving Method of Decision Making found in Part 4 of the FSM, CoDA Service Conference Procedures. The other is the Robert’s Rules of Order described below.

**Robert’s Rules of Order**

Robert’s Rules of Order is a set of rules (standard) for facilitating discussions and group decision making in meetings. It is meant for deliberation, debate and conduct that allow everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion and in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. The conduct of ALL business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership - the right of the deliberate majority to decide. Complementary is the right of at least a strong minority to require the majority to be deliberate - to act according to its considered judgment AFTER a full and fair "working through" of the issues involved.

Robert's Rules can provide for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly. Under no circumstances should "undue strictness" be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation. Your group is free to modify them or find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise.

Here are some basic elements of *Robert's Rules* used by some meetings:

1. *Motion:* To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a group member ("I move that......") A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it.") After limited discussion the group then votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your bylaws.)

1. *Postpone Indefinitely:* This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed, the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion ("I move to postpone indefinitely..."). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone the motion under consideration.

1. *Amend:* This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a "friendly amendment" is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.

1. *Commit:* This is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second. A majority vote must rule to carry it. At the next meeting the committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee is established.

1. *Question:* To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say "I call the question") and needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further discussion is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.

1. *Table:* To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.") A second is needed and a majority vote required tabling the item being discussed.

1. *Adjourn:* A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

*Note:* If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent takes precedence over the ones preceding it. For example if #6, a motion to table the discussion, is proposed, it must be voted on before #3, a motion to amend, can be decided.

Remember, these processes are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner. These procedures should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues.

Note that a group does not have to use *Robert’s Rules of Order* in order to effectively and fairly operate and conduct their meetings.

**Alternative Format Meetings (AFMs)**

Alternative Format Meetings (AFM) consists of all telephone and online meetings, nationally and internationally. AFMs differ in structure from typical face-to-face meetings in that their Intergroups and/or Voting Entities are not necessarily grouped according to their geographical local areas.

### **Section 07 Other Useful Information**

**Phone Set-Ups**

An Intergroup and/or Voting Entity may or may not have a need for a phone set-up for their Fellowship and/or the outside community to reach them or to have access to their local meeting list information. This depends on a group’s needs.

There are many phone **companies** whereby an Intergroup and/or Voting Entity can pay for a private line(s) at a nominal monthly service fee. Some Intergroups actually dictate their local meeting list on phone line(s) for their Fellowship in lieu of a local website listing and in addition to the coda.org website listing.

**Teleconference Calls**

If an Intergroup and/or a Voting Entity cannot find a meeting place to meet nor has a need for a conference call or video conferencing, there are numerous online conference call companies available free of charge. These online services provide specific accounts where you can conduct audio conference calls with countless callers anytime without reservations, plus the added benefit of managing (and recording) your live conference calls on the web, again, for free with detailed instructions. Just search the web for free conference calling.

**Meetings Lists**

Most Intergroups and/or Voting Entities create, maintain and distribute a local meeting list for their Fellowship either on hard copy, their website (if they have one) or both. Intergroups usually are well connected with their local communities and have the most updated contact meeting information and can report a most accurate and updated meeting list.

Here is an example of a local meeting list: [http://www.lacoda.org/meetings.pdf](http://www.lacoda.org/meetings.pdf%20) .

Intergroups not only distribute their meetings lists to their Fellowships but often also distribute them to local behaviorists and clinical institutions as part of their Outreach efforts in fulfilling their 5th Tradition.

**Websites**

Some Intergroups and/or Voting Entities have been able to create and maintain a website for their Fellowship depending on its local resources. Usually an Intergroup and/or Voting Entity begins with starting a Website Committee and either gathers free computer web design knowledge/talent from their local community and/or usually pays for these computer services from their 7th tradition funds by taking a group conscience vote.

A typical website might include the following:

* Home page – general information about the group and CoDA.
* *Preamble*, *Welcome*, *Twelve Steps*, *Twelve Traditions*, *Twelve Promises*.
* List of local CoDA events
* Local newsletter
* *The Fellowship Service Manual of Co-Dependents Anonymous Approved CSC 2014*
* Contact phone numbers
* Meeting information / list
* Literature information, and how to order
* Links to other CoDA web sites

You can refer to CoDA’s Voting Entity Contact list for website addresses and examples at: [http://coda.org/index.cfm/coda-area-contacts/area-contacts/.](http://coda.org/index.cfm/coda-area-contacts/area-contacts/)  For additional information, please refer to Part 1 of the FSM, CoDA Structure and General Information.

**Intergroup and Voting Entity Committees**

Most Intergroups and Voting Entities (VEs) form and operate one or more committees within their groups to better serve their local Fellowships. Voting Entity committees are organized along the same structural lines as meetings and Intergroups (groups and community service groups).

Voting Entity Committees function through the group conscience decision making process as they carry out service work. Priorities for this work usually come from meetings and Intergroup’s.

 A committee usually has a Chairperson (and volunteer members) who facilitates that committee, sets the agenda and holds its meetings, etc. Some examples of committees are:

* Outreach; members handle correspondence from the outside public and the ‘still suffering codependents; attend, coordinate, and give information at special outreach events that reach the still suffering codependent who is unaware of CoDA; may send local meeting list to behavioral institutions and physicians for informational purposes;
* Events: members plan and coordinate special events like the Assembly/Conference meetings; conventions/conferences; various topic related workshops, social events, etc.
* Website/Webpage: members create, place key information, and continuously maintain/update website page(s) for either the local Intergroup area or entire Voting Entity;
* Hospital and Institutions: members hold meetings at local hospitals and prisons for the still suffering codependent; answers correspondence from prisons and hospitals and other institutions; discovers ways to bring CoDA literature to these institutions at nominal fees.
* Communication: members handle, create, maintain and distribute correspondence to facilitate incoming and outgoing communication within the Fellowship. May create periodic newsletter; banners; posters, etc.

 All committees have but one purpose: that of serving the Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous.

**Handling a Dispute or Conflict?**

During the group conscience process, it is important that we all practice our program by balancing patience with assertion. We respect the boundaries of others and expect the same consideration. We assume responsibility for our behavior and accept accountability for our actions.

However, because we are in recovery, we will still run into conflict and conflict will lead to disputes that find their way to Intergroup business meetings and to Voting Entity meetings following structural guidelines. The question then becomes, “How do an Intergroup and/or Voting Entity handle a dispute or conflict once it reaches its level?”

According to CoDA’s Issues Mediation Committee’s “Dealing with Disagreements” Process Diagram

[(http://coda.org/default/assets/File/IMC/IMC%20Disagreemen%20Process.pdf)](http://coda.org/default/assets/File/IMC/IMC%20Disagreemen%20Process.pdf), it is recommended that all disagreements be first dealt with by person-to-person. Then, if the issue(s) is not resolved by the individuals, a third neutral party, trusted by both parties, may be asked to help support and resolve the issue. If that doesn’t work, then assistance from a meeting is recommended. If that doesn’t resolve the situation; then seeking guidance and assistance from the Intergroup level is recommended. And so on. Therefore, when an Intergroup receives a dispute at their level, the Intergroup should ensure that these past steps should have already been taken before coming to the Intergroup level.

Once at the Intergroup (and then the Voting Entity level if not resolved at the Intergroup level), the group conscience, maintaining neutrality, objectivity and using specific CoDA literature as outlined in the

Fellowship Service Manual (see Section Two on The Group Conscience Process, on “The Disagreement,

Mediation, and Resolution in Our Group Conscience Process” and again IMC’s “Dealing with Disagreements” document above) along with Higher Power’s guidance are all key components with resolving disputes and conflict.

An example of conflict may be that an Intergroups treasurer ran off with the group’s money and the group finds itself uncertain on what to do. A possible answer (based on some group’s Experience Strength and Hope/ESH and using the above tools) may be to hold a group conscience meeting and ask questions like: Was the group careful in their selection of a responsible treasurer? Did they have more than one signatory on the account to monitor the on goings of the account? Was the treasurer helped to the understanding of his/her responsibilities of the position? Are excess funds being held? And, whether these questions were being asked or not, some groups still find it helpful to hold a group conscience meeting to review the way the group’s finances are being handled and to update procedures.

If an Intergroup and/or Voting Entity find they cannot resolve a dispute, or finds that they are just not equipped to do so, they may refer the case to CoDA’s Issues Mediation Committee at the CoDA, Inc. level which handles disputes and mediation at this next level. They may be contacted at imc@coda.org .

**CSC Travel Reimbursement Opportunity (TRO)**

A Travel Reimbursement Opportunity is a financial assistance award offered by CoDA, Inc. to Voting

Entities and Voting Entity delegate(s) who qualify for financial assistance to come to Conference. CoDA, Inc. reimburses an eligible Voting Entity delegate who is voted in by their Voting Entity; preferably, a new attendee/Voting Entity to Conference; eligible for aid; and who must agree with the reimbursement method with CoDA, Inc’s Treasurer prior to the TRO being awarded.

No Voting Entity/Person is eligible more than twice in a lifetime. No Voting Entity will receive the “TRODEL" (Travel Reimbursement Opportunity - Delegate) in two consecutive years.

The Events, Issues Mediation Committee and Finance Committees are all involved in the TRO solicitation, vetting, education and reimbursement process. You may contact Events and/or IMC in reference to the solicitation, vetting and education of TROs and the Finance committee on reimbursement procedures, respectively at: events@coda.org; imc@coda.org; finance@coda.org. More information about TROs is available in Part 4 of the FSM, CoDA Service Conference Procedures.

**Prudent Reserve**

An Intergroups and/or Voting Entity’s (VEs) Prudent Reserve is generally 2-3 months of average operating expenses put in “reserve” in a meeting’s budget. Its principal purpose is to provide the financial resources to continue the essential services of its Intergroup and/or VE for up to 2-3 months (or longer) in the event of unexpected and substantial reduction in the normal revenues of the meeting group(s). The prudent reserve is intended to cover expenses in the event that the group has unusually low attendance or donations.

A prudent reserve is a made up of a group’s ongoing expenses such as rent, phone line(s), CoDA endorsed literature, refreshments, website fees and various miscellaneous expenses like photocopy expenses, etc.

The Voting Entity usually collects delegate funds donations from local meetings since delegates are selected and elected at this level of structure. How to distribute the money in excess of a meetings prudent reserve is discussed in Part 2 of the FSM, Meeting Handbook.

However, if an Intergroup is set-up in structure as both an Intergroup and Voting Entity, they could establish a separate “fund” within their budget or a separate account as a “delegate’s fund” so that meeting groups can donate directly to this fund, if they choose to. {In addition, the Intergroup/VE can take a group conscience to transfer funds from their operational fund to the delegate fund as needed to ensure the delegate fund is adequate to fund the elected delegate(s)’ expenses.} This way, the Intergroup/VE can separate its 7th Traditions from its delegate fund budgets. These funds are meant to be “internal” set-up accounts within the budget.

**7TH Tradition Donations Acknowledgement**

Most Intergroups and Voting Entities acknowledge donations by a receipt, sent to the person indicated on the contribution envelope, or to the GSR (Group Service Representative) if a name and address is not indicated. Usually, quarterly contribution statements are sent to each group’s GSR. These statements reflect year-to-date information, whether or not the group contributed.

**Opening a Checking Account**

Most banks are willing to work with small nonprofit organizations with opening a checking account to hold 7th Tradition funds at either the Intergroup and/or Voting Entity level. Unfortunately CoDA cannot allow groups to use their Federal Tax ID number when opening a checking account at a bank institution.

Your own Intergroup and/or Voting Entity can apply for a Federal Tax ID number (with the IRS) or one of your officers (usually the Treasurer and/or Chair) can open a business account using your groups name on the account. It is recommended to have at least two signatories on the account. This is to avoid any misuse of funds and to ensure proper management of funds. It is also recommended not to secure a debit card. This is so that all transactions are made visible by check, taking the time to clear, and again, to discourage and avoid misuse of funds.