

# Reading-Berks Intergroup Structure Manual

(Revised & Approved by Reading-Berks Intergroup February 2020)

## Mission Statement

Reading-Berks Intergroup serves as a central office, giving AA groups a way to coordinate twelfth step work on a larger scale than would be possible by an individual group. Scheduling speaking commitments in various institutions, operating a telephone “hotline”, publishing a newsletter and website, printing meeting schedules, selling literature, and maintaining a local archive are some of the ways that Intergroup assists local home groups in fulfilling the primary purpose of an AA group; to carry the message of recovery from alcoholism to those who still suffer.

## General Intergroup Information

What is an Intergroup and how does it function? See “The AA Group” pamphlet. Your Intergroup, or Central Office, is often where the sick alcoholic first calls or shows up for AA help. Although local Intergroups operate independently of AA’s worldwide service structure, they are a vital part of the Fellowship. In most areas, any group that so wishes can belong to the local Intergroup, which is supported by contributions from its member groups. The contributions are purely voluntary. Most Intergroups rely heavily on AA volunteers for help. Many AA’s have found that serving at Intergroup greatly enriches their sobriety and broadens their circles of friends.

What does an Intergroup do? See “The AA Group” pamphlet. Methods and goals vary from one area to another, but generally, Intergroup’s responsibility is to:

1. Respond to phone or walk-in requests for help from the sick alcoholics and, when appropriate, arrange for AA volunteers to accompany them to an AA meeting.
2. Maintain “AA” listings in local phone directories, meeting app, handle phone and mail inquiries, and route them to local groups, thus distributing Twelfth-step work on a geographical basis so that newcomers are assured of help.
3. Distribute up-to-date meeting lists.
4. Stock and sell AA literature
5. Serve as a communications center for participating groups, often issuing regular newsletters or bulletins to keep groups informed about one another.
6. Coordinate the efforts of Intergroup committees.
7. Sometimes provide information on treatment facilities, hospitals, and halfway houses.
8. Cooperate with local, district and area committees. (Some Intergroups elect members to serve as area liaisons and welcome their participation in Intergroup meetings.)
9. Maintain communication and cooperation - but not affiliation - with the community and helping professionals in the field of alcoholism.

## **The Intergroup Representative**

See “The AA Group” pamphlet. In many locations where an Intergroup has been formed, each group usually elects an Intergroup representative, who participates in business meetings with other such representatives several times a year to share their groups’ experience in carrying the AA message. The Intergroup representative tries to keep the group well informed about what the local Intergroup is doing.

### **(1) Reading-Berks Intergroup Structure**

This manual will cover the structure of Reading-Berks Intergroup, it’s composition of AA members, AA groups and Meetings, Intergroup Representatives, the Intergroup Officers, committee chairs, representative positions, and it’s procedures for Intergroup elections, finances and meetings.

Terms used in this manual:

**Intergroup Panel or Intergroup Officers:** Those members elected to represent Reading-Berks Intergroup at the Intergroup level.

**Intergroup Committee:** Composed of the Intergroup Panel and the current Intergroup Representatives or their Alternates. Reading-Berks Intergroup is located in Berks County, Pennsylvania. It is composed of the member groups of districts 33, 66, and 67. Each AA group has an elected Intergroup Representative who carries the group’s conscience to Intergroup.

#### **(1a) The Intergroup Representative**

An Intergroup Representative is responsible for carrying their group’s conscience to Intergroup. In addition to being their home group’s voice, IGR’s should learn about the duties that Intergroup performs and become involved with these duties whenever possible. They should also encourage members of their home group to participate by taking speaking commitments at one of the many institutions that Intergroup provides meetings for. Intergroup reps are encouraged to know the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and never hesitate to speak up if something is happening that might violate the Traditions. IGR’s are also encouraged to know about the Twelve Concepts for World Service (as explained in Twelve Concepts for World Service) and especially the Right of Decision, Right of Participation and Right of Appeal.

**(1b) Representative Positions:** Representative positions are duties that are vital to the operation of Intergroup but are not exceptionally involved and are usually carried out by one or two members. Any member willing to serve can fill representative positions; nominations are not restricted to IGR’s. However, representative positions do not get a vote unless the position is filled by an IGR. Elections are held at the November Intergroup meeting of even years. A simple majority vote is needed, with the Intergroup chairperson serving as a tie-breaking vote.

1. **Institutions Rep:** responsible for coordinating meetings between the institutions, and the list of volunteers, which are acquired at each Intergroup meeting. This list is made up by the individual groups IGR’s taking commitments for their respective groups (RBI requires that these individuals must have one year of continuous sobriety and have been through the 12 steps to participate in carrying the message to

institutions 10/2014). Also serves as liaison between Intergroup and the various institutions. The institutions rep should know who their contacts are at the institutions and make themselves known to these contacts to ensure open communication between Intergroup and the facilities.

2. Hotline Rep: responsible for accumulating the data from the hot line answering service, and making a report at each Intergroup meeting. This representative also provides up to date meeting schedules to the answering service, so that they have the proper information to pass on to alcoholics who call for information. This rep is also responsible for recruiting new volunteers from the local membership and regularly verifying accuracy of the volunteer list. Volunteers must have 1 year continuous sobriety (02/2015).
3. Schedules Rep: responsible for keeping an up to date schedule of A.A meetings in the Reading-Berks area, printing and distributing these schedules to groups and members who request them. New meetings must be functioning for a minimum of 4 months to be included in the printed version of the meeting schedule (07/2018). Funds are to be provided by Reading-Berks Intergroup (as needed, and approved).
4. Website Rep: responsible for maintaining and updating the Reading-Berks Intergroup website [www.readingberksintergroup.org](http://www.readingberksintergroup.org). The Website representative keeps Reading-Berks Intergroup informed of the website's progress and growth. The funds needed for maintenance of the website will be provided by the Intergroup Treasurer on an annual basis.
5. Archives Rep: responsible for acquiring and maintaining material pertaining to the beginning and growth of Reading-Berks Intergroup.
6. Intergroup Liaison: attends the meetings of Districts 33, 66, and 67, and in that capacity informs the Districts concerning the affairs of Intergroup.
7. Literature Rep: responsible for taking literature orders, purchasing, distributing and keep cost accounted inventory (10/2014) of approved A.A. materials. The rep is responsible for submitting to the RBI Treasurer literature invoices for payment and receipts collected for deposit as received. The rep is responsible for distributing packets to new Intergroup Representatives and not to alternative representatives (7/2014). The rep is responsible is for distributing the pamphlet packets to the Institution Rep at the RBI monthly meeting to be given to the Homegroup taking the commitment to provide to the institution (1/2015).

**(1c) Committee Chairpersons:** The Intergroup Committee at the November elections elects the Chairperson for each Committee. Each Chairperson should seek volunteer IGR's for service to that Committee. These volunteers should be active and responsible to help their respective Committee. In the event that a Committee Chairperson is unable to fulfill their duties, Intergroup may elect a replacement to assume those duties. A voting member will make a nomination and an election held. The nominee need not be a currently seated Intergroup Representative, but may be any member willing to serve and attend Intergroup on a regular basis.

\*The Intergroup Chairperson, by the nature of his/her position, is a defacto member of all committees, Standing and Ad Hoc, and has one vote like any other member of that committee.

1. **Alternative Chair:** The Alternative is the Reading-Berks Intergroup monthly newsletter. The committee is responsible for writing, editing, publishing, and distributing the Alternative to IGR representatives at the monthly RBI meeting (12/2013). The representatives are to take the Alternative back to their homegroups to share with meeting attendees. A copy is electronically sent to the IGR Website Rep to be posted to the RBI website every month. The committee also purchases printing supplies to publish the Alternative using funds provided by the Intergroup Treasurer. Included in the Alternative, are various articles, announcements, 12<sup>th</sup> step commitments, Intergroup contact numbers, and other related articles.
2. **Unity Chair:** The chairperson is responsible for maintaining the best possible working relationship with the Districts, the Groups and the members within the Reading-Berks Area, and with Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, stressing the value of the A.A. Traditions in maintaining this relationship within The Fellowship. The Unity Committee should present at least one workshop in a two-year term. All supplies for food/refreshments are to be paid out of the Activities Fund and Rent paid out of the General Fund (12/2015).
3. **Corrections Chairs:** The corrections committee has co-chairs; a men's prison committee chairperson and a women's prison committee chairperson. The chairpersons are responsible for encouraging participation; educating members about the clearance procedure, coordinating meetings by members who have clearance, and serving as a liaison between Intergroup and the facility which meetings are taken into. This committee will also provide appropriate literature and materials for the inmates (which are approved by the institution), the cost which is submitted to Reading Intergroup for approval. The chair will ensure an "Institutions Packet" (of pamphlets) is distributed to BCP each month that is being donated by RBI (11/2015). All volunteers must have 1 year of sobriety and have been

out of the system including probation for 2 years and have no family members in the Berks County Prison (03/2015).

4. Bridging The Gap/First Contact Chair: The chairperson is responsible for running the BTG/FC program. The chair is responsible for educating members about the program, encouraging involvement, and coordinating communication between volunteers and members in institutions. In order to correspond with members in institution the volunteer must have 1 year continuous sobriety (01/2015).
5. Visitation Chair: The chair is responsible for organizing a visitation sub-committee to attend business meetings of AA homegroups within RBI territory and encourage homegroup participation in RBI (02/2016).
6. Cooperation with the Professional Community and Public Information Chair (CPC/PI): The chairperson is responsible for RBI cooperation but no affiliation with the professionals in the community such as educators, physicians, clergy, court officials and others who are often in contact with active alcoholics. The chair is responsible to arrange for group volunteers to join together in carrying the A.A. message at professional meetings, seminars and more. The chair is responsible for arranging volunteers to participate in Public Information programs requested by schools, businesses, law enforcement agencies and other organizations interested in the A.A. approach to recovery from alcoholism. This committee will also provide appropriate literature and materials and the cost which is submitted to Reading Intergroup for approval (10/2014). The chair is also responsible for posting advertisement in the Reading Eagle and Merchandiser at no cost once a month (02/2016).

#### **(1d) Ad Hoc Committees**

Intergroup may form Ad Hoc committees when there is a special need. Such committees by definition are formed to consider a specific issue (i.e. Structure committee), and when the issue has been acted upon, the committee dissolves

#### **(1e) Intergroup Officers**

1. The Intergroup Chair is responsible for the smooth running of Intergroup meetings. Much depends on the Intergroup Chair's ability to conduct a smoothly functioning meeting. These suggestions should be helpful:
  - a. Keep the issues clear. If a motion is offered, be sure it is stated clearly and distinctly so that all know what they are voting for or against.
  - b. Stick close to Third Legacy Procedure for elections; discourage departures from it.

- c. On simple matters, a majority vote is enough; even a “sense of the meeting” can take the place of a vote at times. In such a case, the chair asks, “Is it the sense of the meeting that...?” If there are no “nays”, it is apparent there is accord.
  - d. Meetings may be fairly informal, but the attention of the entire meeting should be one subject at a time, without the disruptive influence of private conversations.
  - e. Intergroup makes its own rules, and the Intergroup Chair should be sure that all members are aware of current suggested procedures in the manual. If members want to make a change in the rules, it should be done before a vote is taken, or before an election is conducted. If it is the sense of the meeting that a change might be needed, a structure committee will be convened to address the issue.
2. The Alternate Intergroup Chair is a backup for the regular Intergroup Chair. If the latter resigns, or for any reason is unable to serve, the alternate steps in. The alternate is elected at the same time as the regular Intergroup Chair, by the same election procedure. The Alternate Intergroup Chair should be encouraged to assist, participate, and share in the Intergroup Chair’s responsibilities. The Alternate Intergroup Chair in coordination with the Secretary is responsible for amending the Structural Manual on a quarterly basis as motions are passed.
  3. The Treasurer is responsible for collection and distribution of donations, payment of all Intergroup bills and records keeping associated with the financial functioning of the Intergroup. The Prudent Reserve is \$2,300 to cover the annual insurance premium expense (11/2017).
  4. The Secretary is responsible for the recording, publishing and distribution of Intergroup minutes, Intergroup announcements, the tallying and recording of votes, and I.G.R. information records. The Secretary in coordination with the Alternate Intergroup Chair is responsible for amending the Structural Manual on a quarterly basis as motions are passed.

## **(2) Election of Intergroup Officers**

Election of the Intergroup officers is held in November of even years. Nominations for office are offered and accepted at the election meeting in November. Nominees must be present.

### **(2a) Terms of Office**

Intergroup positions are held for a two-year duration. January 1 to December 31. The Intergroup Chair and the Alternate Chair will be seated at the December Intergroup meeting of the election year. The remaining Intergroup Officers will assume their Intergroup responsibilities on January 1 of the next calendar year. It is customary for Officers to rotate out after their term. They may however be nominated, and elected to another term, if they are able to serve that position past the duration of their current term.

## **(2b) Eligibility for Nomination and Election of Intergroup Officers**

Eligible members include current Intergroup Officers and current IGR's. Eligible members may nominate themselves. Current IGR's and Intergroup Officers, or committee chairs can make nominations.

It is suggested that:

1. Intergroup Chair and Alternate Chair nominees have at least four years of sobriety.
2. Other Intergroup Officer nominees have at least two years of sobriety. Secretary nominees should have some note taking ability. Treasurer nominees should have some experience as a Group Treasurer, and have a minimum of 4 years sobriety.

## **(2c) Voting Eligibility**

All AA Group IGR's, Intergroup Officers, and Committee Chairs are eligible to vote. If the Group I.G.R. is not present, that AA Group's Alternate I.G.R. or designee may vote in their place.

## **(2d) Election Procedures**

Third Legacy procedures are in effect for the election of Intergroup Chair and Alternate Chair by substantial unanimity (2/3) and all other Officers by simple majority. All nominees must be present at the time of election.

For Intergroup Chair and Alternate Chair:

1. Written ballots are cast. The vote is counted by the current Intergroup secretary and verified by an appointee of the outgoing chairperson.
2. The first candidate to receive 2/3 of the vote is elected.
3. After the second ballot (assuming no candidate receives the necessary 2/3 on the first ballot), any candidates with less than 1/5 of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except that the two top candidates must remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and the tied second-place candidates remain.)
4. After the third ballot, candidates with less than 1/3 of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except that the top two candidates must remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and the tied second-place candidates remain.)
5. After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has 2/3 of the total vote, the current Intergroup Chair asks for a motion, second and majority of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot. (If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and we go the "hat" immediately. In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and the tied second-place candidates remain. If not, the candidate with the smallest total is dropped. If the motion carries, a fifth and final ballot is conducted.)
6. If no election occurs by this time, the current Intergroup Chair announces that the choice is to be made by lot (from the hat).

7. Lots are to be drawn by the current Intergroup Secretary, and the first one “out of the hat” becomes the elected.

For other Intergroup Officers:

Follow the same procedure as out-lined above, with the exception that a simple majority is needed for election.

### **(2e) Resignation**

In the event that an Intergroup Officer resigns their position, the Intergroup Chair has the option to either elect or appoint a current I.G.R. to that position with the approval of the Intergroup Committee.

### **(2f) Default/Absence of an Intergroup Officer**

An Intergroup Officer that has an unexcused absence from attending Intergroup meetings and is unable to perform the duties of that position for a period of not less than three (3) months, shall be replaced by either the “runner up” from the last election, by appointment of the Intergroup Chair, or a newly elected I.G.R. by majority vote.

### **(2g) Misuse of office**

Any member representing Intergroup in any fashion is asked to abide by the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. If a situation arises that a member is violating the Traditions, it should be brought to the attention of the Intergroup committee. If there is sufficient concern, an I.G.R could move to censure or to remove the person from their position. Simple majority vote is needed to censure, while substantial unanimity (2/3 majority) vote is needed for removal from position.

## **(3) Intergroup Finances**

### **(3a) Approved Intergroup Expenses:**

The Intergroup Treasurer will pay any approved expense documented by receipt. Approved expenses may include, but are not limited to: answering service charges, telephone bills, printing fees for both the Alternative and schedules, literature purchases, expenses for the minutes and announcements, and donations to Christ Mertz Lutheran Church in lieu of rent. It is suggested that Intergroup assume the expenses for sending some Intergroup Officers to EPGSA, Mini-Assemblies and Conferences if the Intergroup financial status permits. These expenses shall come out of the General Fund. With respect to the charges for the answering service, telephone bills, printing expenses, and related postage, these expenses do not need approval by vote, and are to be paid by the Treasurer, unless of course, there are additional expenses related to these items. Approval for payment of the additional expenses is required by majority vote. Suggested donations to Christ Mertz Lutheran Church, etc., also require a motion and a vote by IGR's.

### **(3b) Activities Fund Expenses:**

Any related expenses, which come under the category of activities, shall be motioned and approved by the IGR's. These expenses are generally recognized as social events. The Intergroup Picnic, or other activities that are not related to 12-Step work, are generally called social events.



### **(3c) Prudent Reserve**

The Intergroup Committee should maintain a prudent reserve, which is determined and approved by the Intergroup Committee. As of December 2019, the prudent reserve is based on three months expenses to include insurance premium, which amounts to approximately \$2,300.00.

### **(4) Monthly Intergroup Meetings**

**(4a) Intergroup Voting Procedures:** See Appendix on “points and motions”. All IGR’s, Intergroup Officers, and Committee Chairs shall have one vote. If an Intergroup Officer or committee chair is also representing an AA group as an I.G.R., that person will still have only one vote. In the absence of an I.G.R., or the alternate I.G.R., a member designated by a home group, shall have a vote. Only one vote is allowed per group. In matters of housekeeping, a simple majority is needed for approval. In matters affecting the Groups or AA as a whole, substantial unanimity (2/3) is required for approval. Motions may only be made by IGR’s. After a motion is made, the Intergroup Chair may recognize the motion and call for a second. If a second is made, discussion on the motion will be entertained. The Intergroup Chair will determine the method in which the vote is cast: paper ballot, show of hands or voice vote. After the final vote, minority opinions will be heard, and the chair will ask the panel if anyone wants to change their vote. Only eligible voters may question or appeal. The Intergroup Secretary will use the sign-in sheet to determine the number of votes necessary for approval and be responsible for vote recording and counting.

### **(4b) AA Members Addressing Intergroup**

Attendance at Intergroup meetings is open to all AA members. If a member wishes to address Intergroup, they may do so through their group I.G.R. or Alternate if the I.G.R. is not present. If no group officer is present, the member may request recognition from the Intergroup Chair. It is requested that visitors not enter into discussion during the regular meeting.

### **(4c) Meeting Format & Schedule**

The Intergroup Chair, the Alternate Intergroup Chair, or the Intergroup Chair’s designee will chair Intergroup meetings. The Intergroup Chair in cooperation with the Intergroup Officers will set the format of the meeting. Intergroup meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM located at the Christ Mertz Lutheran Church, 16 Fleetwood Rd, Fleetwood, PA 19522. (unless situations warrant a change in location).

## **APPENDIX**

### **Parliamentary Procedure on Points and Motions**

In the course of doing business at Intergroup, many motions are made. Clarity and information on the motion is often needed. The following procedure on points and motions will be helpful to the IGR as he/she takes part in the ongoing debates at this level. Although Intergroup does not go by strict parliamentary procedure, it is often invoked as a way of breaking into an ongoing discussion. Following these guides will eliminate confusion, speed up the process and provide an orderly method for conducting business.

## Points

The following two points are always in order:

1. **Point of Order:** a question about process, or objection and suggestion of alternative process. May include a request for the facilitator to rule on process.
2. **Point of Information:** (Question on the Motion) a request for information on a specific question, either about process or about the content of a motion. This is not a way to get the floor to say something you think people should know.

## Motions

Only the Chair may recognize a motion. All motions must be seconded, and are adopted by a majority vote unless otherwise noted. All motions may be debated unless otherwise noted. Motions are in order of precedence, i.e., don't call for a Motion to Adjourn while a Motion to End Debate and Call the Vote is under consideration, this is "Out of Order".

1. **Main Motion:** what it is you're debating and amending. Motions can be withdrawn from consideration by the proposer at anytime during discussion prior to a calling of the vote.
2. **Motion to Table the Question:** allows the body to postpone debate on the issue until a specified time. Comes under "Old Business" in the specified proceeding.
3. **Motion to End Debate and Call the Vote:** applies only to the motion on the floor. Not debatable; requires 2/3 vote.
4. **Motion to Appeal the Decision:** not debatable; goes to immediate vote. Allows the body to overrule a decision made by the chair.
5. **Motion to Divide the Question:** breaks the motion on the floor into two parts, in manner suggested by mover. Requires a majority.
6. **Motion to Amend:** must be voted for by a majority to be considered and by a 2/3 vote to be passed. If amendment is accepted as "friendly" by the proposer of the amendment than many bodies will allow it to be accepted without a format vote; this is a way of including a consensus-building process into procedure without endless debate. Strictly speaking, however, once the main motion is made it is the property of the body to amend.
7. **Motion to Refer to Committee:** applies only to the main motion. Refers question to a specific group with a specific time and charge.
8. **Motion to Adjourn:** not debatable; goes to immediate majority vote.