

Reading-Berks Intergroup Structure Manual

“Helping People Find AA”

Revised: 3/7/2023

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.

Reading-Berks Intergroup Structure Manual

This manual will cover the structure of Reading-Berks Intergroup (*hereafter referred to as “RBI”*) its composition of AA members, AA groups and Meetings, Intergroup Representatives (“IGRs”) the Intergroup Officers, committee chairs, representative positions, and its procedures for Intergroup elections, finances and meetings.

Intergroup Terminology

Panel (of Officers)

Those members elected to represent Reading-Berks Intergroup, including the Chair, Alternate Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer

Intergroup

Composed of the Intergroup Panel and the current IGRs or their Alternates. Reading-Berks Intergroup is located in Berks County, Pennsylvania, and is composed of the member groups of districts 33, 66, and 67. Each AA group has a designated Intergroup Representative.

The Intergroup Representative

An Intergroup Representative (“IGR”) is responsible for carrying their group’s conscience to Intergroup. In addition, IGRs should learn about the services that Intergroup provides and become involved with these 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. IGRs 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*.

Service Positions: Services in this respect describe duties that are vital to the operation of Intergroup but are not committees and are usually carried out by one or two members. Any member willing to serve can fill service positions; nominations are not restricted to IGRs. Elections for these positions are held at the November Intergroup meeting of even years. A simple majority vote is needed, with the Intergroup chair serving as a tie-breaking vote.

Institutions Servant

Responsible for coordinating meetings between the institutions, and the list of volunteers, which are acquired at each Intergroup meeting. This list is made up of the individual groups' IGRs 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 or as required by the visited institution. Also acts as a liaison to the institutions involved with or requesting the services of RBI through individual contacts.

Hotline Servant

Responsible for accumulating the data from the hotline 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 the accuracy of the volunteer list. Volunteers must have 1 year of continuous sobriety.

Schedules Servant

Responsible for keeping an up-to-date schedule of A.A. meetings in the Reading-Berks area, and 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. Expenses are compensated by Reading-Berks Intergroup as needed and approved.

Website Servant

Responsible for maintaining and updating the Reading-Berks Intergroup website. The Website Servant keeps Reading-Berks Intergroup informed of the website's progress and growth. The funds needed for the maintenance of the website will be provided by the Intergroup Treasurer.

Archives Servant

Responsible for acquiring and maintaining material pertaining to the beginning and growth of Reading-Berks Intergroup.

Literature Servant

Responsible for taking literature orders, purchasing, distributing, and keeping cost-accounted inventory of approved A.A. materials. The servant is responsible for submitting to the RBI Treasurer literature invoices for payment and receipts collected for deposit as received, and is responsible for distributing "New Rep" packets to new Intergroup Representatives (but not to Alternative IGRs.) Literature is also responsible for providing the pamphlet packets to the Institutions Servant at the RBI monthly meeting to be given to the Homegroup taking the first commitment of the month to each institution. In addition, the literature servant will provide new RBI officers with a copy of the RBI structure manual and the AA guidelines for Central or Intergroup offices.

Committee Chairs *

The Intergroup voting members at the November elections elect each committee chair. 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. Each Chair should seek volunteers for service to that Committee. These volunteers should be active and responsible to help their respective Committees. In the event that a Committee Chair 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 Intergroup Chairperson, by nature of the position, is a de facto member of all committees, Standing and Ad Hoc, and has one vote like any other member of that committee.

"The 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. The representatives are to take the Alternative back to their homegroups to share with meeting attendees. A copy is electronically sent to the Website servant 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, 12th Step commitments, Intergroup contact numbers, and other related articles consistent with the AA Traditions and Concepts.

Unity Chair

The chair 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 rents are paid out of the General Fund.

Corrections Chairs

The corrections committee has co-chairs; a men's prison committee chair and a women's prison committee chair. The chairs 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 Berks County Prison System. This committee will also provide appropriate literature and materials for the inmates (which are approved by the institution,) the cost for which is submitted to Reading Intergroup for approval. The chair will ensure an "Institutions Packet" (of pamphlets) is distributed to Berks County Prison each month. Currently, all volunteers must meet the clearance and training requirements of BCP, must have 1 year of sobriety, have been out of the system including probation for 2 years, and have no family members in the Berks County Prison.

Bridging The Gap Chair

The chair is responsible for running the BTG 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 the institution, the volunteer must have 1 year of continuous sobriety.

Visitation Chair

The chair is responsible for organizing a visitation sub-committee to attend meetings of AA homegroups within RBI territory to educate them on our task and purpose and encourage homegroup participation in RBI.

Cooperation with the Professional Community and Public Information Chair (CPC/PI)

The chair is responsible for RBI cooperation but has 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, the cost of which is submitted to Reading Intergroup for approval. The chair is also responsible for posting advertisements in the Reading Eagle at no cost once a month.

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 resolved, the committee dissolves.

Panel of Officers

Intergroup Chair

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:

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.

Stick close to Third Legacy Procedure for elections; discourage departures from it.

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.

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.

Intergroup makes its own rules, and the Intergroup Chair should be sure that all members are aware of the 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.

Alternate Intergroup Chair

The Alternate Intergroup Chair should be encouraged to assist, participate, and share in the Intergroup Chair's responsibilities. 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 in coordination with the Secretary is responsible for amending the Structural Manual as motions are passed.

Treasurer

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 currently \$3,019 to cover the annual insurance premium expense.

Secretary

Responsible for the recording, publishing, and distribution of Intergroup minutes, Intergroup announcements, the tallying and recording of votes, and IGRs information records. The Secretary in coordination with the Alternate Intergroup Chair is responsible for amending the Structural Manual as motions are passed.

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.

Terms of Office

Intergroup positions are held for a two-year duration from 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.

Eligibility for Nomination and Election of Intergroup Officers

Eligible members include current Intergroup Officers and current IGRs. Eligible members may nominate themselves. Current IGRs 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. Secretary nominees should have at least two years of sobriety and some note-taking ability.
3. Treasurer nominees should have some experience as a Group Treasurer, and have a minimum of four years of continuous sobriety.

Voting Eligibility

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

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 the 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 Chair.
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. (If 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 a majority of hands, on conducting a fifth and final ballot. (If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and we “go to the hat” immediately. If 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 elected.

For other Intergroup Officers:

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

Resignation

In the event that an Intergroup Officer resigns their position, the Intergroup Chair has the option to either elect or appoint a current IGR to that position with the approval of the Reading Berks Intergroup voting members..

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 IGR by majority vote.

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 voting members of RBI. If there is sufficient concern, an IGR could move to censure or remove the person from their position. A simple majority vote is needed to censure, while substantial unanimity (2/3 majority) vote is needed for removal from the position.

Intergroup Finances

Approved Intergroup Expenses:

The Intergroup Treasurer will pay any approved expense documented by a 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 One United Church of Christ 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 a majority vote. Suggested donations to One United Church of Christ, etc., also require a motion and a vote.

Activities Fund Expenses:

Any related expenses, which come under the category of activities, shall be motioned and approved by the IGRs. 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. **(Rents for venues will come from the General Fund.)**

Prudent Reserve

The Intergroup Committee should maintain a prudent reserve, which is determined and approved by the Intergroup Committee. The prudent reserve is based on three months' expenses, in addition to the projected cost of the insurance premium, which total currently amounts to approximately \$3,020.00.

Monthly Intergroup Meetings

Intergroup Voting Procedures: (See Appendix on “[Parliamentary Procedure on Points and Motions](#)”.)

All IGRs, Intergroup Officers, and Committee Chairs shall have one vote. If an Intergroup Officer or committee chair is also representing an AA group as an IGR, that person will still have only one vote. In the absence of an IGR, or the Alternate IGR, 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 IGRs. 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: a paper ballot, a show of hands, or a 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.

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 IGR or Alternate if the IGR is not present. If no group officer is present, the member may request recognition from the Intergroup Chair. Visitors should not enter into discussion during the regular meeting.

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 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM located at the One United Church of Christ, 1730 New Holland Road, Reading (Kenhorst) PA 19607. (unless situations warrant a change in location)

Appendix I - 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, the 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 and the Meeting Guide 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.**

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:

Point of Order: a question about the process, or objection and suggestion of an alternative process. May include a request for the facilitator to rule on the process.

Point of Information: (Question on the Motion) a request for information on a specific question, either about the 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".

Main Motion: what it is you're debating and amending. Motions can be withdrawn from consideration by the proposer at any time during discussion prior to a calling of the vote.

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.

Motion to End Debate and Call the Vote: applies only to the motion on the floor. Not debatable; requires a 2/3 vote.

Motion to Appeal the Decision: not debatable; goes to an immediate vote. Allows the body to overrule a decision made by the chair.

Motion to Divide the Question: breaks the motion on the floor into two parts, in the manner suggested by the mover. Requires a majority.

Motion to Amend: must be voted for by a majority to be considered and by a 2/3 vote to be passed. If the amendment is accepted as "friendly" by the proposer of the amendment then many bodies will allow it to be accepted without a formal vote; this is a way of including a consensus-building process into the procedure without endless debate. Strictly speaking, however, once the main motion is made it is the property of the body to amend.

Motion to Refer to Committee: applies only to the main motion. Refers the question to a specific group with a specific time and charge.

Motion to Adjourn: not debatable; goes to immediate majority vote.