

# REFUGE RECOVERY

## A Buddhist Path to Recovering from Addiction

### REFUGE RECOVERY GROUP SERVICE POSITIONS

“Each new member in a Refuge Recovery group gives us plenty of opportunities to be of service. New members will need the support of the community. Offering our time and energy to help one another recover is one of the foundations of our program.... [Our] compassionate response is both natural and cultivated. It is a natural outcome of our deliberate internal transformation, an intentional choice to use our life’s energy to free ourselves from confusion and to help others get free from confusion as well.”

-- “Refuge Recovery,” pp. 65-66.

Volunteering for service positions in Refuge Recovery groups can be one of the most important components of our own recovery. Taking on a service position helps keep our minds focused on recovery and develops generosity. Service helps us get away from the self-centered tendency we all have and focus on helping others, which in turn helps our own recovery as well. Here are some of the key service positions explained in this document (noting that each group is free to add more positions to the list):

- Meeting Secretary or Co-Secretary
- Group Representative
- Treasurer
- Business Meeting Minutes Recorder
- Contact List Person
- Door Person (online)
- Greeter (in-person)

Near the end of this document is a list of the qualifications for all Refuge Recovery service positions and a chart summarizing the term requirements.

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### **Meeting Secretary (or Co-Secretary)**

This is the person who runs the Refuge Recovery meeting and ensures that the meeting happens every week as scheduled. Sometimes there are two Secretaries (Co-Secretaries) who alternate between meetings and otherwise help each other make sure that one of them is available every time the meeting is held. The position of Secretary has a term of six months, subject to election to one possible consecutive term afterward.

The particular responsibilities of this position are:

- Ensure that the Essential Elements of RR Meetings are included in each meeting.
- Open the Zoom or physical doors of the meeting room earlier than the actual meeting start time listed on the schedule.
- Before each meeting starts, find members to volunteer to do the various readings and lead the meditation, ensuring if possible that these volunteer roles are rotated, so that all members of the group get a chance to participate.
- Start and end the meeting at the times listed on the schedule.
- In online meetings, keep the Zoom room open for “parking lot time” (informal socializing or brief informal discussion) after the meeting.
- Report any changes of who is serving as Secretary or Group Rep to RRWS and provide the new contact information to RRWS.
- Work with the Group Rep to ensure that elections are held for all meeting service positions, and track when service terms will be expiring so that positions will become open for election.
- Work with the Group Rep to ensure that the RR group business meetings take place regularly as scheduled.
- Train the new Secretary or Co-Secretary when leaving the position.

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### **Group Representative (“Group Rep”)**

Electing Group Reps is the foundation of the larger democratic service structure we are all building for Refuge Recovery. For example, Group Reps will make it possible for state/provincial and regional RR conventions to be held, and for democratic decisions about RR to be made at world services conventions. The position has a term of one year, subject to election to one possible consecutive term afterward.

The responsibilities of the Group Rep are:

- Assist the Secretary (or Co-Secretary) in ensuring that the Essential Elements of RR Meetings are included in each meeting.
- Work with the Secretary (or Co-Secretary) to ensure that elections are held for all meeting service positions, and track when service terms will be expiring so that positions will become open for election.
- Run the RR group business meetings and make sure they take place regularly as scheduled. If unable to run the business meeting, asks another service volunteer to run it.
- Ensure that the democratic voice of the group is communicated to Refuge Recovery committees and Refuge Recovery World Services.
- Stay informed of initiatives proposed by state/provincial, regional, and world service committees, and ensure that any such initiatives that may affect the group are discussed, and when appropriate, voted on, by the group.
- Represent the group at state/provincial, regional, and world RR service conventions, or if that is not always possible, find another officer or member of the group to attend on the group’s behalf.
- Train the new Group Rep when leaving the position.

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### **Group Treasurer (In-Person Meetings Only)**

The Group Treasurer is responsible for the funds donated to the group (also known as “dana”) and for the proper distribution of these funds. The position has a term of six months, not subject to consecutive terms afterward.

Duties of the Group Treasurer are:

- Keep an accurate record of all of the group's financial transactions.
- Maintain the group accounts and be responsible for issuing funds to pay the rent, purchase books, buy supplies, and cover the costs of any miscellaneous expenses the group incurs.
- Make group contributions to directly support the Refuge Recovery World Service office by helping to cover the shared expenses of the entire world sangha, such as creation and maintenance of RR websites, Zoom accounts, and social media accounts, and organization of RR retreats, conferences, and conventions. Each group, after paying its bills and buying a small number of Refuge Recovery books to offer for sale at each meeting, should hold a reserve adequate to run the group for 2 months. After this reserve has been established and is being maintained, all funds collected over this reserve amount are to be passed along to RRWS to help Refuge Recovery as a whole.
- Train the new Treasurer when leaving the position.

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### **Contact List Person**

Creating and maintaining contact lists (with phone numbers and/or email addresses) of group members who wish to be on them can be hugely important in delivering relevant news and information, such as changes to the meeting schedules or locations, announcement of RR sangha events, re-opening of in-person meetings when feasible, changes to Zoom meeting links, announcements of new local meetings, and the RR newsletters. The position has a term of six months, subject to election to one possible consecutive term afterward.

Responsibilities of the Contact List Person are:

- Create the contact list for the meeting if the list does not already exist.
- Maintain the contact list, by circulating a clipboard for members to sign-up at in-person meetings, and by saving the chat windows at online meetings to gather contact details offered there.
- Maintain the meeting's email account, and ensure that the appropriate group volunteer responds to emails from members or prospective members.
- Train the new Contact List Person when leaving the position.

### **Minutes Recorder**

The Minutes Recorder for group business meetings is an important role, helping to maintain an orderly and accurate account of the group's decisions, democratic voice, and operations. The position has a term of six months, subject to election to one possible consecutive term afterward.

The duties for this position are:

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- Take notes at RR group business meetings and prepare the official written record (the “minutes”) of the decisions and elections at the meetings.
- Use an electronic format (such as Google Docs) for the minutes at an online meeting, or a hard copy format for in-person meetings.
- Present the prior business meeting minutes for approval at the beginning of each business meeting.
- Train the new Minutes Recorder when leaving the position.

### **Door Person (Online Meetings Only)**

A door person can be of great help to the online Meeting Secretary and to the group in general. The position has a term of six months, subject to election to one possible consecutive term afterward.

The duties are:

- Allow participants into the meeting from the waiting room (excluding no one).
- Mute participants who are not speaking.
- In consultation with the Secretary, remove participants from the meeting who are disruptive.
- Back up the Secretary if the Secretary experiences connectivity issues, carrying the meeting forward until the Secretary can reestablish connectivity.
- Post the following links in the chat window at the appropriate times: Links to volunteer readings, meditation selection, reading selection page number and chapter title, and dana (donation) link.
- Train the new Door Person when leaving the position.

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### **Greeter (In-Person Meetings Only)**

Greeters are not essential, but they can serve an important function, welcoming newcomers and existing members alike, and encouraging fellowship. The position has a term of two months, subject to election to unlimited consecutive terms afterward.

The responsibilities of the Greeter are:

- Stand near the door and extend a friendly hello and welcome to each person who enters the meeting, paying special attention to newcomers.
- Introduce yourself to anyone whom you don't already know.
- Answer questions to the extent you can, or direct people to those who can answer.
- Train the new Greeter when leaving the position.

### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL RR GROUP VOLUNTEERS**

Below are the qualifications for all RR service positions. Because the opportunity to serve is both an integral part of our recovery and also essential for our groups to be peer-led, any member of an RR group who meets these qualifications must be allowed to volunteer and run for election to any service position:

- The willingness or desire to serve the group.
- A commitment to follow the Refuge Recovery program, including abstinence from all intoxicants and adherence to process addiction bottom lines, work on the RR inventories with an RR mentor, and regular attendance at RR meetings of the group.
- An understanding of the RR Guiding Principles and an intention to adhere to them.

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- For online meeting volunteers only, either experience with electronic record keeping (such as Google Documents) OR willingness to learn.

### Summary of Service Position Terms in Office

Position	Abstinence Suggestions	Term	Consecutive Term Limit
Secretary	6 months	6 months	2
Door Person (online)	1 month	6 months	2
Treasurer (in-person)	6 months	6 months	1
Group Representative	6 months	1 year	2
Contact List Person	6 months	6 months	2
Minutes Recorder	3 months	6 months	2
Greeter (in-person)	none	2 months	No limit

PLEASE NOTE: Term limits may be waived, but only if there are no other volunteers or nominations to fill the position.

The suggestion is to overlap terms so that all new position openings aren't happening at the same time.

### An Explanatory Note on Terminology



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In Refuge Recovery, we use the terms “meetings” and “groups.” Although many of us correctly think of meetings as events, and of groups as entities that hold meetings, this is a conceptual distinction without a practical difference. In Refuge Recovery, the two terms are essentially synonymous. There is no group without a meeting, and there is no meeting without a group. Groups hold meetings, and meetings form groups. A Group Representative is a representative of the group’s meeting, and a Meeting Secretary is a Secretary of the Group. In the Refuge Recovery program, there is very rarely any difference between the two terms in practice.