

How to form your Group Business Meeting?

The principle of trusted volunteers comes into being when the regular RR meeting members become willing to delegate the responsibility for running the meeting.

A vote is held, among those who have been attending the meeting regularly, and have an agree upon period of continuous time abstinent, to create a Steering Committee. This committee is tasked with creating the group business meeting.

The members who have been elected to do this work make up an informal Steering Committee out of which come the group officers. Votes are held among Steering Committee members for group officers. For information on how to vote in group business meetings please see *Voting and Quorum in RR Group Business Meetings* link on the Service resources page.

For the purpose of most groups, officers usually consist of a Secretary, a Treasurer, and where applicable, an Inter-Sangha Representative. Some groups have additional officers depending on their specific needs.

The officers of a group must be chosen with care because of the responsibilities that their offices carry and the potential effect unqualified officers can have on their group. Recently a number of RR groups have suffered

and broken up, due to the election of officers who were unqualified to serve or did not have a history of time abstinent in recovery.

The group Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day functions of the group. It is the primary responsibility of the Secretary to assure that the group meeting takes place when and where it is supposed to. The Secretary selects a leader for each meeting, keeps the meeting records, arranges for group business meetings, makes sure that the meeting space is left in proper order, and answers correspondence. This job is important because without a good Secretary a group has little chance of attracting new members.

The Treasurer of an RR group is responsible for the funds which come into the group from the collection and for the distribution of these funds. The money collected in our meetings must be carefully budgeted. There are numerous expenses necessary for running a group. The Treasurer keeps an accurate record of all the group's financial transactions, he or she maintains the group bank account, and distributes monies to pay the rent, purchase books, buy supplies, and cover the costs of any miscellaneous expenses the group incurs. In order to maintain our groups, the monies which come from group collections and members contributions must always be used to further our primary purpose. *A group must first support itself.* After paying its bills, any remaining funds

should be placed in a group bank account and a reserve adequate to run the group for 2 or 3 months held back. After this "prudent reserve" has been established, excess funds should be diverted to help Refuge Recovery as a whole. A group can do this by contributing to the local Inter-Sangha, where they exist, or through contributions directly to the Refuge Recovery World Service Office. The Treasurer has a serious responsibility and much thought should be taken in selecting a member to perform this function.

As a general guide, we have found that the group Secretary and Treasurer are most successful if they have certain assets necessary for the performance of their responsibilities.

These qualifications include:

1. The willingness or desire to serve.
2. A history of time abstinent from all intoxicants and process addictions. We suggest a *minimum* of 6 months time abstinent.
3. A good working knowledge of the Refuge Recovery program.
4. An understanding of the Refuge Recovery Guiding Principles.
5. Active and ongoing participation in the groups they are to serve
6. Ability to work with others in a constructive manner.

These assets do not guarantee a good servant, however, they do help to ensure that those we choose will be capable of doing the job.

Normally, group Secretaries and Treasurers serve for a period of one year at which time they are succeeded by other members who have been elected by the group.

Of course, relapse while serving as a trusted group volunteer triggers an automatic resignation for that officer.

One of the responsibilities of group officers is to train group members to replace them. A group can be strengthened by new officers who are prepared to take over the responsibilities of those they replace. Continuity of service can be aided by staggering the election of trusted volunteers, and overlapping terms of service. choose your trusted officers well, it is you who they will be serving.

In some areas Refuge Recovery groups have formed Inter-Sangha committees to join together and serve our purpose in ways individual groups cannot. In these areas, or when multiple groups decide to form an Inter-Sangha, each group will need to elect an Inter-Sangha representative.

Everything stated so far also applies the group Inter-Sangha Representative service position. Given the increased responsibility for this position, increased time abstinent requirements are appropriate. Our suggestion for the Inter-Sangha rep is 12 months time abstinent.