

Bylaws of the Western Mass Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous®

(Est. 1971?) Last Adopted 12/11/2016 Revised JANUARY 1/8/2017

GENERAL STATEMENT

In all its proceedings, Western Mass Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous shall observe the spirit of the Overeaters Anonymous Traditions and Concepts of Service, taking care that the Intergroup and its officers never become the seat of wealth or power. None of its trusted servants shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others. All important decisions will be made by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity. Intergroup will not act in a punitive manner or engage in public controversy. The Intergroup may act for the service of Overeaters Anonymous groups within its membership, and will never perform any acts of government. Like the fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous, Intergroup and its officers will always remain democratic in thought and action, placing principles before personalities.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Western Mass Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, also known as WMI.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The primary purpose of WMI of Overeaters Anonymous is to carry the message of recovery to those with the problem of eating compulsively, by fostering the practice of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service; and to serve and represent member groups.

A) Twelve Steps

The Twelve Steps suggested for recovery in the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous are as follows:

- 1) We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
- 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
- 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all affairs.

B) Twelve Traditions

The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous are:

- 1) Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
- 2) For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
- 3) The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
- 4) Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
- 5) Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
- 6) An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
- 7) Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 8) Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
- 9) OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10) Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11) Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.
- 12) Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

C) The Twelve Concepts of OA Service

The Twelve Concepts of OA Service are:

- 1) The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
- 2) The OA groups have delegated to World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole.
- 3) The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible.
- 4) The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process.
- 5) Individuals have the right of appeal and petition in order to ensure that their opinions and personal grievances will be carefully considered.
- 6) The World Service Business Conference has entrusted the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the administration of Overeaters Anonymous.
- 7) The Board of Trustees has legal rights and responsibilities accorded to them by OA Bylaws, Subpart A; the rights and responsibilities of the World Service Business Conference are accorded to it by Tradition and by OA Bylaws, Subpart B.

- 8) The Board of Trustees has delegated to its Executive Committee the responsibility to administer the OA World Service Office.
- 9) Able, trusted servants, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are indispensable for effective functioning at all service levels.
- 10) Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority; therefore, duplication of efforts is avoided.
- 11) Trustee administration of the World Service Office should always be assisted by the best standing committees, executives, staffs and consultants.
- 12) The spiritual foundation for OA service ensures that:
 - a) no OA committee or service body shall ever become the seat of perilous wealth or power;
 - b) sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, shall be OA's prudent financial principle;
 - c) no OA member shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority;
 - d) all important decisions shall be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity;
 - e) no service action shall ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; and
 - f) no OA service committee or service board shall ever perform any acts of government, and each shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERS

Section 1 - Membership

Membership of the intergroup (IG) with voice and vote includes the following:

- A) The IG officers; the chair may vote during a written ballot
- B) Intergroup representatives (IRs), which consist of member(s) from each group
- C) World Service Business Conference delegates
- D) Region representatives
- E) Committee chairs

NOTE: any intergroup member will have only one vote even if also serving as an IR.

Section 2 - Qualifications

- A) Qualifications for group membership in an intergroup: Groups registered with the World Service Office (WSO) that are within its region or geographic proximity may affiliate with an intergroup, except that virtual groups registered with the WSO may affiliate without regard to geographic proximity.

Each intergroup has the autonomy to determine which groups may affiliate with it; that decision should always be guided by OA Traditions and Concepts.

- B) Western Mass Intergroup endorses the definition of an OA group in Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article V, Sections 1 and 2, as written and as it may be amended by a future World Service Business Conference.

Section 1 - Definition

These points shall define an Overeaters Anonymous group:

- 1) As a group, they meet to practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service.
- 2) All who have the desire to stop eating compulsively are welcome in the group.
- 3) No member is required to practice any actions in order to remain a member or to have a voice (share at a meeting).
- 4) As a group they have no affiliation other than Overeaters Anonymous.
- 5) It has affiliated as an Overeaters Anonymous group by registering with the World Service Office.

Section 2 - Composition

- a) A group may be formed, as set forth in Article V, Section 1, by two or more persons meeting together, either
 - (i) in the same physical location (face-to-face);
 - (ii) through some form of electronic device (virtually); or
 - (iii) both

Section 3 - Intergroup Representatives

- A) Intergroup representatives (IR) will be selected by the group conscience of the group they represent.
- B) The duty of the IR is to represent the group at IG meetings and to serve as a contact to carry communications between the IG and the represented group.

ARTICLE IV – THE INTERGROUP (IG) BOARD

Section 1 - The Intergroup Board

- A) The board consists of the following officers: chair, vice chair, treasurer, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, archivist, and website & publications coordinator.
- B) The IG board also includes the World Service Business Conference delegate(s), and regional representatives.
- C) Meetings shall be chaired by the chair of the board. In the event the chair is unable to chair any meeting, the vice chair will lead the meeting. In the event the vice chair is not available, the treasurer will chair or will open the meeting and hold an election for a temporary chair.

Section 2 - Nominations to the IG Board

Nominations to the board are to be held in November or can be made from the floor at the time of the election in December.

Section 3 - Qualifications for the Intergroup Board

To qualify for election to the IG board, an individual must:

- A) Be working the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of OA Service to the best of his/her ability.
- B) Have **6 months of current abstinence** except as follows (each person shall be the sole judge of his or her abstinence):

- 1) World Service Business Conference delegates must comply with the abstinence and length of service requirements in the OA, Inc. (Bylaws, Subpart B, Article X, Section 3c 1). Current requirements are one year current abstinence and at least two years of service beyond the group level.
 - 2) Region representatives must comply with the abstinence and length of service specified in the region 6 Bylaws Section IV - C. Current requirements shall be determined by each Intergroup.
- C) Be a regular member of an affiliated group.

Section 4 – Election of Board Members

- A) Nominations may be made from the floor 1 month in advance or at the time of election.
- B) Nominees must be present at the election meeting. For election, the candidate must receive a majority vote of ballots cast.
- C) Voting will be by ballot.

Section 5 – Term of Office

- A) The term of office for a board member is 1 year starting at the January meeting; except for WSBC delegate(s) and Region representatives, who shall serve for 2 years.
- B) Board members may serve no more than 2 consecutive terms in the same position. A member may serve again after a leave of 1 year from the position. WSBC may serve up to 6 years according to WSO.
- C) Once elected, the chair may not serve as a group representative at the intergroup.
- D) Officers other than the chair shall have the option to cease representing a group as an IR.

Section 6 – Responsibilities of the Intergroup Board Members

- A) Serve as guardians of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts with respect to the functions of the intergroup.
- B) Perform the duties of their offices in accordance with IG policies and procedures.
- C) Serve as guardian of IG funds; participate in an annual financial review.
- D) Provide a forum for the interchange of ideas and information among member groups.

Section 7 – Vacancies and Resignations

- A) If a board member has unexcused absences from an IG meeting more than 2 times in 6 months he/she may be removed from the position by a majority vote of the ballots cast either at a regular IG meeting or a meeting announced for that purpose.
- B) Any board member may resign at any time for any reason by giving the chair of the IG written notice.
- C) Any board member of this IG may be removed from office for due cause by a 2/3 vote of the ballot cast at a regular or special meeting announced for that purpose.

Section 8 – Filling of Vacancies

- A) Vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote at the next meeting or special meeting of the IG after the vacancy occurs. Such persons chosen to fill said vacancies shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- B) A person chosen to fill any vacancy on the board shall meet the qualifications as defined in Article IV, Section 3.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

Section 1 – Regular Meetings

The IG will meet monthly at a time and place designated by a majority of the voting members.

Section 2 – Annual Meetings

An annual meeting shall be held in the month of December for the election of officers.

Section 3 – Special Meetings

A special meeting may be called at any time by a majority vote of the IG board, or by a quorum of IG members, provided sufficient notice is provided to the membership.

Section 4 – Method of Notification

The IG will provide at least 7 days notice to each member group.

Section 5 – Quorum

The quorum for voting purposes shall be, at a minimum, 3 intergroup officer(s) and at least 5 other voting members.

Section 6 – Meeting Procedure

The WMI business meeting shall open with a minute of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. The Tradition and the Concept of Service of the month will then be read and discussed for five minutes.

Section 7 – Video Conferencing

Because WMI serves such a large geographic area, videoconferencing will be allowed for the business meeting. Procedure for this is described in Policies and Procedures Article V section 7.

ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES

The board may establish committees as are needed for the welfare and operation of the intergroup. Each committee is responsible to the IG board.

ARTICLE VII – PRUDENT RESERVE

The IG treasurer will maintain a prudent reserve of 3 months to cover expected operational needs. Excess funds will be donated to OA service bodies as determined by the IG.

ARTICLE VIII – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

WMI conducts its business as outlined by the *Twelve Concepts of OA Service*. Meeting procedure is described in Policies and Procedures Article VIII Section A. The parliamentary authority common in use throughout Overeaters Anonymous is the most current available edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS TO THESE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended at any time by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the intergroup. The proposed amendment must be communicated in writing to each member group at least 30 days prior to the voting meeting. Amendments to the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of OA may only be made as per OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article XIV, Section 1.

ARTICLE X – DISSOLUTION

Section 1 – Deregistration

In order to deregister, an intergroup must submit a written notice to the World Service Office, region chair and region trustee.

Section 2 – Disbursement of Remaining Funds

When this intergroup ceases operation and all debts have been paid, all remaining funds shall be distributed to other Overeaters Anonymous service bodies or the WSO in accordance with Tradition Six.

Section 3 – US Non-Profit with 501c (3) Status

Upon the dissolution of this association, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of association, the remaining assets shall be distributed to the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous, or to a non-profit fund, association, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational or religious and/or scientific purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under Section 501c (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In accordance with Overeaters Anonymous Traditions, such non-profit fund, association, foundation or corporation should be either the OA World Service Office or another OA service body.

No part of the net earnings of this association shall ever inure to be or be used for benefit of, or be distributed to its members, trustees, officers or other private person, except that the association shall be empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payment and distribution in furtherance of the expressed purpose for which it was formed.