

SOBER & FREE CONFERENCE CHARTER
SOBER & FREE CONFERENCE
San Jose, California

DEFINITION

Sober and Free is a conference sponsored by the gay and lesbian members of San Jose Alcoholics Anonymous, with Al-Anon participation. The Charter is not a legal instrument, but practically speaking, it is the primary guideline for the Sober and Free Conference, hereafter referred to as the Conference.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Conference is to carry the message of recovery from alcoholism as explained in the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" and other General Service Conference approved literature.

DIRECTION

The Conference is guided by the principles of the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Conference will also use the A.A. Guidelines for Conferences and Conventions.

DESCRIPTIONS

The SOBER AND FREE CONFERENCE STEERING COMMITTEE, hereafter referred to as the Steering Committee, will consist of members elected at an open election event sponsored by the Sober and Free Advisory Committee (see section titled "Sober & Free Advisory Committee"), hereafter referred to as the Advisory Committee. Service on any conference committee shall not be paid. All committee members must be clean and sober members of A.A. with the exception of the Al-Anon Committee, which will be composed of Al-Anon members selected by gay and lesbian Al-Anon (see section titled "Al-Anon" under Conference Chair functions and responsibilities).

CORE STEERING COMMITTEE - The Core Steering Committee serves as the planning, facilitating and coordinating body for the Conference. The role of the Core Steering Committee is to make decisions regarding the conference location, date, and budget, prepare a preliminary fund-raising schedule sufficient to meet the budget, and recruit and work with individuals as required to ensure successful completion of the tasks required to put on the conference.

The Core Steering Committee and recommended lengths of continuous sobriety shall be:

One (1) Conference Chair	5 years
One (1) Conference Vice-Chair	5 years
One (1) Treasurer	3 years
One (1) Secretary	2 years
One (1) Webmaster	2 years

Members of the Core Steering Committee will be selected in an open election event held by the Sober and Free Advisory Committee which will be held directly following the close of the conference each year.

FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CORE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(1) **CONFERENCE CHAIR**: Suggested sobriety requirement is 5 years of continuous sobriety. Chair should have good organizational skills and enjoy and be able to work well with others.

The Conference Chair shall be the voice of the Conference between Steering Committee meetings, and is entrusted with the "Right of Decision." In matters covered by the Charter, he/she has authority to act. He/she has the responsibility and authority to request action from committee members who are in turn responsible to the Conference. His/her decisions, spelled out by the Charter or approved by the Conference Core Steering Committee, are binding. The Conference Chair shall be available to the Advisory Committee, Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster, and all committee members, and will provide assistance as needed. He/she is responsible to convene and conduct Core Steering Committee meetings in an orderly fashion and will provide a written agenda to all committee members at least 1 week prior to the meeting. He/she will serve as a member of the Advisory Committee and will attend all Advisory Committee meetings, providing quarterly progress reports, including budgets, to the Advisory Committee. The Chair will review the Conference budget and make recommendations concerning proposed expenses. The Chair shall have the responsibility for the final approval of all budgets, co-sign checks and approve disbursement of funds for all Conference related expenses with the advice of the Core Steering Committee.

The Conference Chair is also responsible for overseeing the following conference responsibilities:

SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOPS: Responsibilities include selecting the AA speakers, creating the schedule/program, creating the workshop topics, selecting workshop and meeting leaders, and designing and arranging for printing of the conference program. AA speakers shall have a minimum sobriety requirement of FIVE (5) years. Reasonable expenses for travel, lodging (as appropriate for out-of-area speakers) and conference registration for AA speakers shall be paid by the conference from the Speakers and Workshop budget. Meals, miscellaneous personal expenses, and rental cars will not be reimbursed to AA speakers by the conference. Every effort will be made to ensure gender parity and equal female/male representation each year. It is suggested that individuals have a minimum of TWO (2) years for workshop leaders, and ONE (1) year for leaders of on-going meetings. Every effort will be made to ensure there are both female and male co-leaders assigned for each workshop. Conference workshop topics, the overall conference schedule, and the conference program will be presented to the Core Steering Committee for concurrence. Expenses incurred for Speakers and Workshops will be within approved Speakers and Workshops budget

ENTERTAINMENT: Arrange for the entertainment activities during the conference. Such activities could include, but are not limited to, a dance, a variety show, a play, a musical, or a comedic act. Subject matter for performances should express recovery in A.A. and be suitable for a mixed audience of all ages. Expenses incurred for entertainment will be within approved Entertainment Committee budget.

AL-ANON: As invited guests, the lesbian and gay Al-Anon members coordinate Al-Anon activities in conjunction with the Core Steering Committee. The purpose of Al-Anon participation in the conference is to carry the message of recovery from the effects of the family disease of alcoholism as explained in Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. The Al-Anon Committee selects the Al-Anon speakers, creates the Al-Anon workshop topics, and selects their own workshop and meeting leaders. Al-Anon workshop topics will be presented to the Core Steering Committee for concurrence and inclusion in the conference program. Reimbursement for Al-Anon speaker expenses shall be at the discretion of the Al-Anon Committee but must be within the approved Al-Anon Conference budget. The Al-Anon Committee will ensure Al-Anon literature is available at the conference, disperse any Al-Anon 7th Tradition collections, and participate in and support the conference activities. Al-Anon participation is bound by the principles of the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of Al-Anon.

(2) **CONFERENCE VICE-CHAIR:** Suggested sobriety requirement is 5 years of continuous sobriety. Vice-Chair should have good organizational skills and enjoy and be able to work well with others.

The Vice-Chair will move into the position of Chair for the following year's conference.

The Vice-Chair is also responsible for overseeing the following conference responsibilities:

INTERIOR DESIGN: Decorate the conference site with banners, flowers, signs, balloons, or other items as appropriate, keeping within the guidelines of the landlord. The size of the banner shall be 3 feet high x 4 feet wide (36" x 48"), using materials consistent with past banners. Expenses incurred for Interior Design will be within approved Interior Design budget.

HOSPITALITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS: Create an environment to welcome those attending the Conference. Coordinate the set-up of all meeting rooms and hospitality/social areas in conjunction with the landlords of the conference site. Assist those attending the conference who are in need of housing, childcare, and other special needs. The conference will attempt to meet the needs of the differently-abled persons of our community. Expenses incurred for Hospitality and Special Needs will be within approved Hospitality and Special Needs budget.

The Conference Chair and Vice-Chair will be jointly responsible for the following conference functions:

FUNDRAISING: Coordinate activities to raise moneys to support the conference. Suggested activities may include, but are not limited to, dances, cake sales, garage sales, bingo, bowling, picnics, auctions, theatre parties, outings, karaoke events, or catered dinners. Fundraising should not be directed at the general public in accordance with Tradition 7: "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." Expenses incurred for Fundraising will be within approved Fundraising budget.

COMMEMORATIVE ITEMS; Seek out vendors in an effort to obtain appropriate items to commemorate the conference. Such items must be presented to the Core Steering Committee for consideration and approval. Recommend prices for such items for approval by the Core Steering Committee and have such items available in a timely manner for sale. Expenses incurred for Commemorative Items will be within approved Commemorative Items budget.

(3) **TREASURER**: Suggested sobriety requirement is 3 years of continuous sobriety. Treasurer should also have some experience with maintaining a checking account, and using Excel or similar financial spreadsheet software.

The treasurer will maintain the financial records of the conference treasury, assist in the development of the budget for the conference, and provide a written itemized financial statement at each Core Steering Committee meeting. He/she will be responsible for maintaining records for the bank account(s), reconciling and accounting for all funds in the bank accounts(s), and making all bank deposits and payments on a timely basis. All

expenditures from any Sober and Free account must have two (2) signatures: the treasurer's and either the Chair or Vice-Chair.

(4) **SECRETARY**: Suggested sobriety requirement is 2 years of continuous sobriety.

The secretary will attend all Core Steering Committee meetings, record the minutes during the meetings, and provide written minutes of the prior Core Steering Committee meeting for committee approval. He/she will have a working knowledge of the Sober and Free Conference Charter and be ready to verify actions of past meetings.

The Secretary is also responsible for overseeing the following conference responsibilities:

ARCHIVES: Attend all fundraising and conference activities to collect and maintain historical records, mementos (ex: event flyers, tickets, photographs, etc.) and minutes of the activities leading up to and including the conference, and create a scrapbook/album of these materials for display at the conference. Put up sign at all fundraisers letting people know that photographs may be taken at the event and to let the Archivist or people selling event tickets know if they don't want their picture taken. Expenses incurred for Archives will be within approved Archives budget.

LITERATURE: Make available A.A. Conference Approved Literature during the Conference. Books, tapes, etc. sold by the conference shall be sold at cost. Pamphlets are to be free to those attending the conference; the cost of such pamphlets will be paid by the conference. Subscriptions for the Grapevine and Box 459 are to be available for conference attendees. Expenses incurred for Literature will be within approved Literature budget.

(5) **WEBMASTER**: Suggested sobriety requirement is 2 years of continuous sobriety.

The webmaster will maintain the Sober and Free web site throughout the conference year. He/she is responsible for sending emails to the Sober and Free Yahoo email group, notifying the International Advisory Council for Homosexual Men and Women in Alcoholics Anonymous (www.IAC-AA.org) of our conference dates and providing an updated list of the local Gay and Lesbian meetings to the www.IAC-AA.org website annually. In addition, the webmaster will make lists of hotels, motels and restaurants in the conference area and a map showing the location of the conference available on the website for conference attendees. Expenses incurred by the Webmaster will be within approved Webmaster budget.

The Sober and Free web site is to be used for the purpose of publicizing events and information relating to the conference, including dates, times, and locations of the conference and fundraisers. The web site is the property of Sober and Free. Webmaster shall have responsibility of ensuring that the subject matter contained in the web site falls within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Webmaster is also responsible for overseeing the following conference responsibilities:

PUBLICITY: Publicize the conference. Conduct a Logo Contest at the beginning of the conference year (logo submissions must be in .eps format and include PMS colors). Produce and distribute newsletters, flyers and announcements to inform the community of the conference and all activities as appropriate leading to the event. Inform agencies, such as the Grapevine, Box 459 and appropriate Intergroup offices 4 months in advance of the conference. Contact individuals to carry the message, personally, to as many meetings as possible in and out of the area. Expenses incurred for Publicity will be within approved Publicity budget

REGISTRATION: Design the registration form and present it to the Core Steering Committee for approval. Process registrations as they are received; produce nametags for the registrations; staff the registration table at the conference; compile statistics on conference attendance. The Registration Committee shall maintain a mailing list. Such list shall be kept confidential and used for Sober and Free Conference purposes only. Expenses incurred for Registration will be within approved Registration budget

SOBER & FREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – The Advisory Committee serves as the general policy setting body for the conference. It is not the role of the advisory committee to run the conference, but rather to set guiding principles for the conference and ensure the conference is run according to the principles outlined in the charter.

FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 1.** Members of the Advisory Committee are responsible for conducting a search to find people who are qualified to serve as members of the Core Steering Committee, approach these individuals and discuss the positions(s), duties, and commitment required, inquire as to if the individuals would make themselves available for the position(s), and if they are have the person attend the open election event. In the spirit of the AA Traditions, it is suggested that no person on the Core Steering Committee serve in the same role TWO years in a row.
- 2.** The Advisory Committee will host an open election event directly following the close of the conference for the purpose of forming the Core Steering Committee for the following year's Sober and Free Conference.
- 3.** In the event a position on the Core Steering Committee becomes available after the open election event, the Core Steering Committee will notify the Advisory Committee, which will assist in filling the position.

4. The Advisory Committee will meet at least quarterly (4 times per year), with one of the meetings being held within 30 days before the start of the conference to discuss and plan the open election that will be held directly after the conference.
5. Advisory Committee meetings will be open for anyone to attend; only Advisory Committee members will vote on items brought before the Committee.
6. The Advisory Committee will insure that there is an orderly transition of material, moneys and information from one conference to the next. They are responsible for all carryover business (e.g., annual renewal fees, mailbox, website, bank account, storage locker, etc).
7. Decisions of the Advisory Committee will be by a simple majority of members present.
8. The Advisory Committee is responsible for review and revisions to the Sober and Free Charter and acts as an oversight body to ensure conference guidelines as stated in the Charter are maintained.

There will be a total of 5 members of the Advisory Committee as follows:

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| One (1) | Current year's conference Chair |
| One (1) | Chair from the prior year's conference |
| Three (3) | Past Conference Chairs |

Advisory Committee members may serve on this committee for 2 consecutive years after which time they will rotate out. Any individuals wishing to serve on the Advisory Committee again may do so providing that at least 2 years have passed since they last served on the committee, and if they are selected per the Advisory Committee selection procedures.

When vacancies occur on the Advisory Committee, all eligible past co-chairs whose whereabouts are easily determined will be notified to determine if they are interested in being on the Advisory Board. If there are more individuals interested than spaces available, selection will be determined by a lottery to be conducted by the Advisory Committee.

PROCEDURES TO AMEND THE CHARTER

Proposals to amend the Charter may be submitted by any member of the gay and lesbian San Jose A.A. community. The proposal must be in writing and submitted to the Conference Advisory Committee FOUR (4) weeks prior to the Advisory Committee meeting. The Advisory Committee will place the proposal on the meeting's agenda or call a special meeting. A simple majority vote of the Advisory Committee members present is required to pass the amendment, and it will become effective upon passage.