

CREATING AN OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE

When we talk of bringing about a new service subcommittee there is often a mix of both hope and concern expressed. There may be fear of creating yet another subcommittee with a budget and in need of support. On the other hand, the hope for a workable new way to “carry the message” and help addicts generally brings unity and fulfillment. This bulletin is about creating an outreach subcommittee. Some of this information may apply to other efforts, though most of this material is specific to outreach.

We offer this process as a way to increase awareness and understanding of outreach, and help service committees in identifying outreach needs and in shaping a mechanism to meet those needs. Any productive service effort requires us to build consensus, develop support, and devote time and effort to many identify outreach needs and in shaping a mechanism to meet those needs. Any productive service effort requires us to build consensus, develop support, and devote time and effort to many individual commitments. Experience shows that outreach is no different, and the process for creating an outreach subcommittee should be as open and inclusive as possible. The following outline is general in nature and suggests the relevant topics discussed by others along the way.

Creating an Outreach Subcommittee

- I. Is there a need? Are there members or groups who are isolated in any way? Do group business meetings, service committee open forums, subcommittee meetings, phone-line workers, confusion at the ASC, suggest that some members and groups want to be more involved than they are able to be?
- II. Gather Information about outreach
 - A) Contact USSC Outreach Subcommittee, see outreach bulletin “What is Outreach,” visit nearby areas/regions with outreach.
- III. Would outreach address these concerns expressed? Are the volunteers and financial resources available? Is there another alternative? Does ASC or RSC want to know more?
- IV. Plan and present an outreach workshop (see outreach bulletin “Outreach Workshop Presentation Guide”).
- V. Draft a statement of intent and purpose and propose an ad hoc outreach subcommittee to the ASC or RSC.
- VI. If approved, form an ad hoc outreach subcommittee. Set regular time and place for subcommittee meeting, contact USSC Outreach Subcommittee again, received additional materials and samples, register your ad hoc outreach subcommittee.

- A) Initial task will be to examine the statement of intent and purpose and refine it to include a plan for implementation. Gather more input from members and other subcommittees, work together to complete ad hoc outreach subcommittee guidelines. Present proposed guidelines to service committee.
- B) Ad hoc outreach subcommittee begins outreach tasks to address needs.
 1. Ad hoc committee reports on progress and problems at each regularly scheduled service committee meeting.
 2. Maintain communication with USSC Outreach Subcommittee and send USSC a copy of approved guidelines and any other successful materials so others may borrow from your experience.

VII. Reassessment. It it working? Shall we continue? Ad hoc or standing committee?

Notes:

The “Gather Information” stage is basically what would be happening anyway when an idea is presented. To do a good job though, we suggest digging a little deeper than local current wisdom. Contact the USSC Outreach Subcommittee and gain some new insights. Talk to members in other places that are doing outreach. Become a resource of information about outreach.

Presenting an outreach workshop is not as hard as it sounds. Follow our USSC outreach bulletin “Outreach Workshop Presentation Guide” and add to it as may be appropriate. The intent here is to introduce interested members and especially your service committee to this new idea called outreach. We recommend a panel style format and make sure to have time for questions and sharing. Attendance will be better if flyers are distributed announcing the workshop. Refreshments also help. The goals of the workshop are to provide information, generate interest and pull together a few interested members who wish to follow through with this process.

Drafting a statement of intent and purpose is easy accomplished with a few interested members working around a table. With this demonstration of commitment your service committee may be willing to appoint the work group as an ad hoc. The initial task of the ad hoc outreach subcommittee will be to refine the statement of intent and purpose for proposal to the service committee, including plans for implementation.

The rest of the process is fairly self explanatory. We can assume you there will be lots of questions. Sometimes the best answer is “I don't know, though I'll find out.” We encourage you to contact the USSC and to keep in touch with members doing outreach in other places. When it comes right down to it – people won't expect you to be a guru on outreach. What they will decide is if they've developed a measure of trust in your integrity and ability to follow through. The key to this process is: keep following through.