

NAGSC 2024 Agenda Items Roundtable Presentations and Feedback

V. Grapevine and La Viña — Item D.

Explore the services provided by AA Grapevine and how they should be funded.

Agenda Topic: Explore the services provided by AA Grapevine and how they should be funded.

Historical Context: Why is it on the Agenda?

The committee discussed the Grapevine budget report and referenced the request for funding of services provided by the Grapevine. They felt the decision to fund services for Grapevine should be sent to Conference for further discussion.

The financial statements for the first nine months of 2023 contain a new line item under circulation for the apps. These publishing services to the Fellowship are currently at no charge. The Conference Committee on Grapevine will be discussing how these services shall be funded going forward.

The 2023 costs include vendor, talent, editing, freelance and platform fees.

Total \$91,390.00

(Ref. Background, 4th Q, Quarterly Report from GSO)

Presentation; Terri N

1993: Committee Consideration: The committee discussed the Grapevine's history of self-support and wanted to reestablish focus on the magazine and to affirm the desire that the magazine be self-supporting through subscription income only.

1994: It was recommended that all AA members be strongly urged to work toward the goal that the AA Grapevine magazine be self-supporting through the sale of magazine subscriptions.

2017: Committee Consideration: The committee discussed the spiritual value of Grapevine and La Viña in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous and agreed that the magazines are important Twelve Step tools, noting that they serve as a beacon of hope for alcoholics in treatment centers and prisons and alcoholics all over the world.

The committee recognized that Grapevine and La Viña cannot accept contributions and are self-supporting only through subscriptions and sales of books and other items.

2018: It was recommended that A.A. Grapevine, Inc. allow sales of Grapevine and La Viña books, single-issue magazines (as available), and other products to non-A.A. entities, such as (but not limited to), hospitals, treatment centers and bookstores.

NOTE: As a current practice, A.A. Grapevine Inc. does not seek outside sales for magazine subscriptions.

November 16, 2023 The Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee recommended to the General Service Board to forward a request to the Conference Committee on Grapevine/La Viña to explore the services provided by AA Grapevine and how it should be funded.

At the request of the General Service Conference, AA Grapevine, Inc. provides digital publishing services to the Fellowship at no charge to members. The Conference Committee on Grapevine will be discussing how these services shall be funded going forward. Below is a rundown of the cost of these services in 2023. These costs include vendor, talent, editing, freelance and platform fees.

<u>Project</u>	<u>2023 costs</u>	<u>Notes</u>
AAGV Podcast	\$47,640.00	Talent, Editing, Travel, Captivate, Apple, staff time.
GV & LV Instagram	\$14,850.00.	Sticky Media, research, scheduling, posting, creative.
GV & LV YouTube Channel	\$2,900.00	Editing, posting.
In-house cost estimate	\$26,000.00	Staff time, promotional materials, equipment, zoom, etc.
Total \$91,390.00		

NAGSC Feedback:

Question:

What is the trend of Grapevine subscriptions.

Answer: Going down like all print media

Question: If there is budget shortfall, how is it made up.

Answer: Anytime there is a shortfall of the Grapevine or La Viña is made up by the General fund. There was a drawdown of the \$500,000 for the development of the app.

Question: If not charging for digital copies to correctional facilities what the plans are to cover that:

Answer: The answer question is part of why this agenda item is being discussed.

Question: Do we want to think of the Grapevine as a service tool or as a for profit entity?

Answer: Grapevine and La Viña are important 12 step tools serving as a beacon of hope carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Comment: Are the trustees protecting integrity of the primary purpose of the grapevine? One group views the Grapevine falling short representing the singleness of purpose.

Comment: Increase group involvement

Comment: Are the trustees protecting the single of purpose and why? One group doesn't not to support the Grapevine doesn't represent the singleness of purpose.

Comment: There are only 67,000 subscriptions to the grapevine. At PRAASA that the Grapevine is not conference approved but conference endorsed because it isn't practical the board to approve every issue

II. CPC — Item E

Agenda Topic Consider a request to develop a pamphlet on the unhoused alcoholic in A.A.*

Historical Context: Why is it on the Agenda?

In 2023, the trustees' Literature Committee considered a request to develop a pamphlet on A.A and the Unhoused Person. This agenda item originally was proposed by the A.A fellowship of Area 40, Montana by a group within District 41 that recognized a need in their community after the group was asked to provide literature for the local homeless shelter. To the group's surprise, A.A did not have any pamphlets addressing the homeless, unhoused alcoholic. This pamphlet would be reaching out the hand of A.A to an underserved remote community and allow an unhoused/homeless person to see themselves as a member of A.A and to know they are welcome. The proposed pamphlet would be used in both inward (for the alcoholic) and outward (for non-alcoholics) capacities and could be a useful tool for professionals to use this pamphlet as a resource specifically for the unhoused and homeless. This is the first time this topic has been put on the agenda

Presentation: Terri M

Consider a request to develop a pamphlet on the unhoused alcoholic in A.A.
(That specifically addresses alcoholism, what A.A. is and is not; and includes personal stories from A.A. members who have experienced homelessness)

How this agenda item came about was,

In 2023, A member of Alcoholic Anonymous from Area 40, district 41 in Montana was approached by the executive director of St. Vincent DePaul in Great Falls, Montana requesting a meeting for the unhoused and to be hosted by AA at St. Vincent's Angel Room, a location where the unhoused can get food, clothing, haircuts, showers, and laundry service. The executive director noted that many of the unhoused feel stigmatized by their lack of housing to attend established AA meetings, and many of these meetings are logistically difficult for this population to attend. While deliberating the feasibility of this request, this member of AA researched which AA material would be most appropriate to have at the Angel Room. Much to her amazement, she discovered there was no pamphlet, brochure, or any other type of AA literature specific

to the unhoused population. Before submitting this item they reviewed current AA literature and were unable to find any references to the unhoused or homeless, including in any of the following pamphlets:

From Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare, Access to A.A. ,Members Share on Overcoming Barriers, Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community, Problems Other Than Alcohol, Do You Think You're Different?

There was not a lot of background on this agenda item so my counterpart Chris, the SAGSC CPC chair set me up to talk to Amy L the alternate delegate from Area 83 Eastern Ontario who is also involved in Inter-Area-Remote-Communities working committee. She then reached out to other fellow servants and asked what they thought about making a pamphlet for the unhoused alcoholic.

Here are some of the responses given.

Shannon H BC/Yukon Panel 73 Area 79, Remote Communities/Grassroots Chair states, "This is a very important marginalized group of people to amplify with a pamphlet like this because many of our fellow sufferers are or have been unhoused as part of where their alcoholism took them."

De Rail DCM /Accessibilities/CPC for District 02 Milton in Area 83 Eastern Ontario stated, "The topic has not been fully realized but it is very important."

Marietta M GSD Area 81 Panel 74 said "I have not heard this topic being brought up here though we do have unhoused persons in this area. I think that it would address a need within our A.A community.

Ron P Remotes Chairperson of Area 80, Manitoba Canada stated, "It is my opinion that a pamphlet for the homeless is a very good idea. They need all the help we can provide."

James O'Donnell, Panel 73 Delegate, Area 83 Eastern Ontario International chimed in and stated, "Firstly I would suggest that elements of the proposed pamphlet already do exist in our literature. Unhoused members or potential members are no different than any other alcoholic. So, it would be wise to stock the usual newcomer literature that we hand out to all newcomers. Here are a few examples:

P. 1. - This is A.A.

P. 2. - Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.

P. 3. - Is A.A. For You?

P. 13 - Do You Think You Are Different?

P. 24 - A Newcomer Asks

In Area 83 we connect with the homeless community through our CPC and PI work. We work closely with our friends to educate them on what A.A. is and what it is not.

The more direct work we do in our Area is putting on meetings in the homeless shelters, jails and treatment centers where alcoholics may currently, or will soon be facing housing challenges. We keep our focus on our primary purpose - to carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic."

Julie C, our past Area 42 Delegate and our committee advisor stated, "The pamphlet is for the newcomer that is less likely to have technology which is also something to consider. Is a new pamphlet the best solution?"

So, how big a problem is alcoholism in the homeless population? In 2022, SAMHSA which is Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration does an annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress and stated 16% of individuals experiencing homelessness reported having alcohol issues and that chronic stress for individuals may lead to elevated alcohol use. www.samhsa.gov

In Nevada alone, there are 7,544 people homeless on a given night. California where I live has 129,972 people homeless on a given night. That data is from www.endhomelessness.org

Here are some questions to ask yourself. Are the unhoused coming into A.A and staying? Who are the unhoused? According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the definition of Unhoused is: Not having a dwelling place or shelter.

What about the other pamphlets? Are they enough? and do they even address the unhoused population?

What are the intended/expected outcomes if this proposed item is approved?

The hope is that if this item is approved, a pamphlet will be developed for Alcoholics Anonymous and the Unhoused. This pamphlet can be used in both inward and outward facing capacities. Members from the AA fellowship will have the opportunity to share their experience, strength, and hope with being homeless or unhoused as content for the pamphlet. The pamphlet will allow people from the unhoused population to see themselves in and on the front of some of our literature and know that they have a place in AA. Professionals will also be able to use this pamphlet as a resource specifically for the unhoused and homeless.

Thank you so much for letting me be of service.

Terri M

NAGSC Teedback

Comment: The pamphlet not necessary since we are all alcoholics and to expensive

Comment: The pamphlet and other pamphlets are not just good for the different communities, but it educates the membership how to approach the communities.

Comment: Are we creating so pamphlets are in danger breaking AA unity?

Comment: There are different situations of unhoused alcoholics.

Comment: We need of a inventory of all the pamphlets and determine which ones aren't cost affective

VIII. Public Information — Item N.

Agenda Item Review results of A.A. Membership Survey convenience sample pilot.

Historical Context: Why is it on the Agenda

Presentation: Daniel B

Following the 2022 Survey Questionnaire, a six-page survey was created for the Meeting Guide App and AA.org using Survey Monkey. This was done immediately because any significant time lapse would render the survey incomparable to the 2022 Survey Questionnaire. The only modifications made to this survey from the 2022 survey methodology were the inclusion of questions aimed at understanding the respondents in a general manner. For instance, inquiries were made to ascertain if they belonged to a home group or a meeting, whether their group had a GSR or not, and their location of response. The survey was also translated into French and Spanish. (Further details can be found in the Background Information).

One of many aspects of the convenience sample pilot survey was to determine potential differences between responses gathered via the Meeting Guide app and the aa.org website. (Specific data regarding these distinctions can be found in the background information).

The gathered data from the 2023 Convenience Sample Pilot survey was collected and cleaned. A process of cleaning the data can be found in the background information. As with any large data collection project, the data has to be “cleaned” to qualify or to disqualify submitted surveys. For this survey, the cleaning took many forms. (Cleaning details can be found in the background information).

For the convenience sample data to be easily compared to the 2022 Membership Survey, the same criteria were applied to this data so that the comparison reflected the same population. More than 32,000 individuals participated in the Convenience Sample pilot. Out of these, 10,300 had to be excluded from the analysis during the cleaning process. (See Data "Cleaning" in the background).

In Conclusion, the Next Steps:

1. The cleaned data from the Convenience Sample Pilot will be compared to the data collected as part of the 2022 Membership Survey.

A final report or a progress report on the project will be submitted to the trustees' PI Committee in July

NAGSC Feedback:

Question: was the 10,300 that were excluded from the survey of the 32,000 that took the survey?

Answer: Yes, they were of the 32,000 many were excluded because they didn't fill out all of the questions.

Comment: some Spanish do not fill out all of the questions because they may feel there could be consequences.

V. Grapevine and La Viña — Item E.

Agenda Item: Consider a request to develop a pamphlet on the Asian and Asian-American alcoholics in A.A.

Historical Context: Why is it on the Agenda

In 2023, the trustees' Literature Committee considered a request to develop a pamphlet on A.A and the Unhoused Person. This agenda item originally was proposed by the A.A fellowship of Area 40, Montana by a group within District 41 that recognized a need in their community after the group was asked to provide literature for the local homeless shelter. To the group's surprise, A.A did not have any pamphlets addressing the homeless, unhoused alcoholic. This pamphlet would be reaching out the hand of A.A to an underserved remote community and allow an unhoused/homeless person to see themselves as a member of A.A and to know they are welcome. The proposed pamphlet would be used in both inward (for the alcoholic) and outward (for non-alcoholics) capacities and could be a useful tool for professionals to use this pamphlet as a resource specifically for the unhoused and homeless. This is the first time this topic has been put on the agenda.

Presentation: Sue H

Last October 28, 2023 The trustees' Literature Committee considered a request to develop a pamphlet for Asian and Asian-American alcoholics. To included stories of experience, strength and hope from Asians and Asian-Americans and agreed to forward to the 74th General Service Conference.

This idea came from an Area committee member in Area 49. It has been discussed that AA needs to reach out to our Asian AA members.

The proposed agenda item was also discussed during our Area Assembly on September 10, 2023.

It was seconded, there was discussion and then a sense of the body with Area 49 supporting this proposed agenda item with substantial unanimity

The committee member is an Asian in recovery in Area 49. The following is her experience and opinion:

She found it hard for her to relate to people in the rooms. Since there were no Asians in the meetings, she couldn't feel like she belonged. Even if an Asian came into the room. As a newcomer or as an alcoholic it was hard to identify. The drinking culture is slightly different from Western drinking culture. Culturally Asians don't think drinking alcohol is a problem at all. They think it's a mindset of having a sense of control.

Also there is the culture of honor and shame, if admitting that they are alcoholics; it means the family will not have honor and will be shamed in society.

During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, some Asian members of the fellowship have dropped out of the program. This is because they were being verbally/physically assaulted on the streets.

Most Westerners didn't really know what to say or do while this was happening to their Asian fellows, so they rather say and do nothing.

She continues, AA, the minority myth is rampant; if an Asian male comes in, most do not come up to him. If an Asian female comes into the rooms, everyone comes up to them.

It seems like if Asians come into AA, most Westerners think they could figure things out for themselves. The Chinese translated Big Book only contain the first 164 pages of the Big Book, and not the personal stories in the back because Asian don't identify with the

stories of Westerners. The 12th step say we carry the message of recovery to the next suffering alcoholic

NAGSC Feedback:

Comment: our membership ought to include “All” that suffer from alcoholism, do we already have literature that is available? When someone comes in the rooms it is our duty to treat them all equally.

Question: It was stated that the Asian Big Book that the stories were not included, when the 5th edition of the Big Book comes out will those stories be included in the Asian Big Book?

Answer: There are many General Service Offices (GSO) around the world and our GSO helps them translate the Big Book with their own translators. The stories are not translated from our English version; they have the ability to add stories for members of their particular language. Just like the Spanish edition does not have stories from the English edition but their own stories.

Comment: We say the first 164 pages but if you look carefully, you would be excluding the preface, forwards, the doctor’s opinion, and the appendices

XIII. Int’l Conventions/Regional Forums — Item C

Agenda Item: Discuss a report concerning virtual programming for the 2025 International Convention.

Historical Context: Why is it on the Agenda:

1. Adding a participatory virtual program session like “A.A. Around the World” as part of the purchase of a three Big Meetings product.

- 1) Full hybrid and do the two A.A. Around the World sessions only.
- 2) Set up one-way virtual, no hybrid (no sharing from those online) Committee discussed:

1. Is the committee on board with the concept of having a two-day 8 session virtual track for people who are unable to attend the 2025 International Convention in person? Yes

The discussion estimated the virtual sessions to cost an estimated \$85,000 to complete

Zoom Webinar Pricing:

- 10k attendees \$6490
- 20k attendees \$7650
- 30k attendees \$9754
- 50k attendees \$14631

Rationale: This is an international convention and international travel always has difficulties. The international A.A. community has especially embraced virtual meeting technology

Opportunities: Focus on the international element, basing the plan around the A.A. Around the World sessions, either only or as an anchor point – allowing us to meet the needs of A.A. members around the world who cannot attend. Considerations: Full faces- Our members have come to expect this, it is normal now. Notification in the room that this is a hybrid meeting with both video and audio.

Interpretation: In considering interpretation, What we can propose is that with a virtual session we would ensure that we offered interpretation into our primary languages, French and Spanish for participants as well as other languages of registrants via an interpretation product, such as Wordly, for example.

Presentation: Dan M

With the help of one of your trustees' Committee members, Talley Management and the 2025 International Convention Coordinator researched the concept and took the following into consideration

- 1) Full hybrid and do the two A.A. Around the World sessions only.
- 2) Set up one-way virtual, no hybrid (no sharing from those online) and consider doing it for all sessions in that room. i.e.: the 2 A.A. Around the World sessions and all others that are scheduled in the same space or all of Saturday only if easier/significant cost difference.

Rationale: This is an international convention and international travel always has difficulties, more so today with communicable disease concerns and political unrest. The international A.A. community has especially embraced virtual meeting technology

Opportunities: Focus on the international element, basing the plan around the A.A. Around the World sessions, either only or as an anchor point – allowing us to meet the needs of A.A. members around the world who cannot attend as well as offer a true “international” convention experience for those in the US and Canada who are opting for the Big meeting recordings, and seeking virtual engagement.

Our members have come to expect this, it is normal now. Notification in the room that this is a hybrid meeting with both video and audio, those who do not wish to participate in that format should decline if called, refrain from capturing or recording as you would in an in person meeting etc

Interpretation: In considering interpretation, we typically have the sessions in-person at International Conventions in English. There are other live sessions for additional languages. What we can propose is that with a virtual session we would ensure that we offered interpretation into our primary languages, French and Spanish for participants

1. Is the committee on board with the concept of having a two-day 8 session virtual track for people who are unable to attend the 2025 International Convention in person?

The discussion estimated the virtual sessions to cost an estimated \$85,000 to complete. The cost would be self-supported via the members who registered to participate in the virtual session track. A final registration fee will be determined to cover the cost of production.

Zoom Webinar Pricing:

- 10k attendees \$6490
- 20k attendees \$7650
- 30k attendees \$9754
- 50k attendees \$14631

Here are some key benefits of using Zoom webinar:

Scalability: Zoom Webinar is able to accommodate large audiences. We have pricing below for up to 50,000 attendees. Our Zoom Representative mentioned that they could easily accommodate larger audiences, but they required event details beyond what we were prepared to share at the time.

Ease of use: Many of the conference attendees are familiar and comfortable.

participating in online meetings via Zoom and the barrier to entry will be minimized by not introducing new platforms & tools.

Here are some key benefits of Vimeo:

Vimeo allows for an embedded stream on AA.org or other designated sites, with paywall/password protection available. Chat and Q&A features are available as well. Vimeo allows for higher resolution streaming than Zoom, which increases the attendee experience.

Full Hybrid version

To create a broader hybrid option, we can explore many services not included in the scaled-back proposal such as custom-created content and methods for developing an engaging virtual experience for attendees. This would bring an enjoyable, engaging viewing experience to the attendees. This full-hybrid version will include the following:

- 2-way communication between attendees and panelists, method TBD—chat or voice pending further discussion.
- Potential for discussion and sharing from a wider variety of convention attendees.
- Custom built video and graphics content to further the experience of virtual attendees.
- Additional language interpretation beyond English, Spanish, French, and ASL if desired (additional costs will apply).

NAGSC Feedback:

Comment: I think this is a great idea, wouldn't it be wonderful for those around the world to participate.

Question: How would we pay for this, would there be an online registration fee?

Answer: Yes, the fee would depend on how many signed up to be online to cover the cost.

Comment: This would open it up for those that have legal outside issues that might prevent them from crossing the border into Canada.

Question: How would the cost for ASL be covered?

Answer: It would depend on how many members signed up for ASL to determine the cost.

Comment: If you have any legal outside issues (past DUI, Canada sees this as a felony) you can go to aa.org and see what you have to do to cross the border.

Comment: I have attended previous International Conventions, and it was a wonderful experience and I believe this would be a great idea for that have to travel long distances.