



**Marijuana Anonymous  
World Services Conference**

<http://mawsconference.org/>

**May 28-31, 2021**

Hosted by Marijuana Anonymous World Services

# Conference Materials and Agenda Items

## District/Group Conscience Record

The purpose of the table below is for Districts and/or groups to be able to track the group conscience on each of the agenda items. It is for private use and will not be examined or collected at the Conference. It is recommended that for each meeting's group conscience, a tick mark is made in the appropriate column so that an overall group conscience can be viewed at a glance.

Example:

	Agenda Item	Yes	No
1	Agenda Item 1		
2	Agenda Item 2	<del>    </del>	

<a href="#">Item H: Group/meeting and change steps</a>	Yes	No
Motion 1: Clarify group/meeting language		
Motion 2: Clarify procedure to change steps, etc		

	Agenda Items	Y	N
0	Shall the District offer to host the 2023 Conference?		
A	<a href="#">Sponsorship pledge</a>		
B	<a href="#">Removal of trusted servants</a>		
C	<a href="#">Change “geographic” to “self-defined”</a>		
D	<a href="#">“Spiritual progress” in “How it Works”</a>		
E	<a href="#">Revise sponsorship pamphlet</a>		
F	<a href="#">Continue remote conference</a>		

	Agenda Items	Y	N
G	<a href="#">Chicagoland district</a>		
I	<a href="#">Independent meeting district</a>		
J	<a href="#">Free conference attendance</a>		
K	<a href="#">Iceland district</a>		
L	<a href="#">Change God to Higher Power</a>		
M	<a href="#">Gender neutral language</a>		
N	<a href="#">Update 12 questions</a>		

# Marijuana Anonymous World Services

## 2021 Conference Agenda Items

*Note from the 2021 MAWS Conference Agenda Committee:*

*The MAWS Conference Agenda Committee is tasked with the job of preparing the Conference Agenda Packet, designing the Agenda schedule and making Committee Assignments.*

*You will see that after some Agenda Items we have added a short additional comment attempting to provide a historical and organizational context to inform the Fellowship's discussion and group conscience. We strive to be neutral and fair, and welcome feedback on the content of these comments. We can be reached at [agenda@mawsconference.org](mailto:agenda@mawsconference.org).*

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## 2021 - Item A

**TITLE:** Sponsorship pledge

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**Submitted by:** The Simcoe Group, District 19

**Background/Origin:** This reading was originally instituted at the Main Hope Group in Toronto; to help new MA members understand what defines a proper and safe sponsor/sponsee relationship. It also serves as a testament to not only attending meetings, but to finding a sponsor and working the steps.

It is important to let newcomers know that sponsorship and working the steps are the purpose of the program of recovery in Marijuana Anonymous, This reading concludes by showing those in the meeting to whom to turn for Sponsorship.

**Motion:** That the “*Sponsorship Pledge*” be included in “Marijuana Anonymous World Service Manual,” v.7.0, Part 2, Chapter 8: in the following occurrences.

**i) pg24: Suggested Format – Part 2 – Participation Meeting, No Break**

AFTER: (The Basket is Passed and the 12 Traditions are Read)

**Add:** Our Journey of recovery is not something we should try by ourselves. Together we can do what we could not do alone. Can I ask \_\_\_\_\_ to read the “Sponsorship Pledge”

**ii) pg 25: Suggested Format – Part 2 – Participation Meeting, With Break**

AFTER: (The Basket is Passed and the 12 Traditions are Read)

**Add:** Our Journey of recovery is not something we should try by ourselves. Together we can do what we could not do alone. Can I ask \_\_\_\_\_ to read the “Sponsorship Pledge”

**iii) pg26: Suggested Format – Part 2 – Topic Meeting, With Break**

AFTER: (The Basket is Passed and the 12 Traditions are Read)

**Add:** Our Journey of recovery is not something we should try by ourselves. Together we can do what we could not do alone. Can I ask \_\_\_\_\_ to read the “Sponsorship Pledge”

**iv) after the Twelve Traditions on Page 29**

**Add:** Additional Readings - Sponsorship Pledge

"A sponsor is a fellow marijuana addict who is working the twelve steps, lives by their principles, and has a solid program they work in their life. With their wisdom and experience, they compassionately guide and inspire us in our journey of recovery. Experience has shown that having a sponsor is of great importance in recovery. We suggest you make it a priority.

Look for someone who is working a program you admire, and who you trust and respect. Avoid anyone with whom there is any possibility of a romantic relationship. If you're unsure about whether a person is the right sponsor for you, don't be afraid to ask whether they would consider being your temporary sponsor. In time you'll know whether the relationship is working and should be made more permanent.

May we please have a show of hands of all those who are available to act as sponsors?"

**v) the Sponsorship Pledge be included as a handout as part of the NEW MEETING STARTER KIT**

Sponsorship Pledge

A sponsor is a fellow marijuana addict who is working the twelve steps, lives by their principles, and has a solid program they work in their life. With their wisdom and experience, they compassionately guide and inspire us in our journey of recovery. Experience has shown that having a sponsor is of great importance in recovery. We suggest you make it a priority.

Look for someone who is working a program you admire, and who you trust and respect. Avoid anyone with whom there is any possibility of a romantic relationship. If you're unsure about whether a person is the right sponsor for you,

don't be afraid to ask whether they would consider being your temporary sponsor. In time you'll know whether the relationship is working and should be made more permanent.

May we please have a show of hands of all those who are available to act as sponsors?

*Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee:* None

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## 2021 - Item B

**TITLE:** Removal of trusted servants

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**Co-Submitted by:** Policies & Procedures Committee and current President of the Board of Trustees

**Background/Origin:** As currently written the Service Manual does not set forth a specific procedure to remove for cause, members of the MA World Services or A New Leaf Publications Boards.

**Motion:** That the following text be added to page 48 of the Service Manual v7.0, above the section titled “Actions Without a Meeting: Unanimous Written Consent,” to read as follows:

With a consensus of a majority of the Board of Trustees, written notice may be given to any person holding elected/appointed World Service level positions, including the MA World Services Board of Trustees and members of the ANLP Board of Directors, that they are in danger of being removed from their position. Reasons for such action shall include, but not be limited to, loss of qualifying sobriety, financial malfeasance, unexcused absence from two or more consecutive Board meetings, a persistent and generalized inability to work effectively with others, and/or discriminatory behavior towards others. Such written notice shall be sent by the President or designee giving the recipient time to respond and improve their service, as well as an opportunity to resign.

If said recipient has not acted to correct the problematic behavior within 30 days, the Board of Trustees may vote to remove said trusted servant by a three-quarters super-majority vote. These provisions supersede any provisions to the contrary in the foundation documents, including the ANLP Charter.

*Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee: None*

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## 2021 - Item C

**TITLE:** To remove reference to geographic limitation in the Service Manual's definition of a district/region

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**Submitted by:** The Policies and Procedures Committee of MA World Services

**Background/Origin:** The MA World Service Service Manual was written before the advent of widespread electronic communication, therefore districts and regions were limited by geographic proximity. Due to the evolution of the internet and platforms like Zoom, the ability to affiliate anywhere around the world, or to join together with a common affinity, has become a possibility. This Agenda Item proposes language changes to make our Service Manual reflect modern practices.

**Motion:** To amend the Service Manual v7.0 on pages 12, 20, 31, and 32 in Chapters 3, 7, 9, and 10, replacing the words “geographic” or “geographically” with the phrase “self-defined” (or “as they self-define”) in order to expand and clarify the definition of a district or region; and to amend the Service Manual v7.0 as follows:

Page 12 (Part 1, Chapter 2)

- Districts/Regions are ~~geographical~~ **self-defined** units containing a number of groups.
- ~~A district is generally limited by geographic boundaries that permit GSRs to~~ **District/Region GSRs** meet periodically, usually once a month.

Page 20 (Part 2, Chapter 7)

- If a District/Region is asked to help start a meeting that would be outside of their ~~geographic Area~~ **District/Region**, that district/**region** can refer the meeting sponsor to MA World Services to be mentored by the Outreach Trustee and supported by the Office Administrator.

Page 31 (Part 3, Chapter 9)

- A district is a ~~geographical~~ **self-defined** unit containing a number of groups which has completed the process of acceptance by MA World Services (outlined in Chapter 6). This manual uses the term “Regional Service Committee” to describe a ~~group of geographically related~~



- self-defined unit containing a number of** groups which has not yet been recognized by MA World Services as an official district.
- ~~Districts are generally limited by geographic boundaries that permit group representatives to meet at least~~ **District/Region Group Service Representatives meet periodically, usually** once a month.
  - ~~Due to our geographic diversity, most of the daily service work of MA occurs within the district or region.~~

Page 32 (Part 3, Chapter 10)

- ~~Geographic isolation from other districts or within an existing district's boundaries~~
- ~~Social or cultural divisions within a district~~

Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee: None

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## 2021 - Item D

**TITLE:** Add the word “spiritual” to “We strive for progress, not perfection” in “How It Works.”

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**Submitted by:** John L., District 2

**Background/Origin:** When “How It Works” was written by Marijuana Addicts Anonymous (MAA, now MA District 2) in 1986, it was done quickly to make new members who had started in AA feel comfortable with the meeting format. Most of the founding members of MAA had an NA background, so had a limited understanding of all the important wisdom contained in the AA version. We wanted to compress the reading to one page as we also read “Who Is A Marijuana Addict” as well as “The 12 Questions.”

The original text of “How It Works” was later modified slightly to restate the first paragraph in the present tense. In February 1990, this version, including the agreed-upon wording of the MA Twelve Steps, was adopted by the MA General Service Conference.

After hearing the AA version many more times since then, I am aware that we neglected to include the word “spiritual” in “progress not perfection” like the AA version. The AA version states, “We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.” We can clarify the meaning in MA’s “How It Works” by adding the word “spiritual” twice so the sentence would read as follows, “We strive for spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.” This makes clear the goal of our 12 step program which is spiritual growth. This sustains our recovery and allows us to do service.

**Motion:** Change the third sentence of the last paragraph of “How It Works” to read: “We strive for spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection” in every location it appears in the *Life with Hope* text and the MA Service Manual. Specifically, this change shall be made in the following locations:

- (1) In new printings and/or editions of *Life With Hope*, the first item in the appendices;
- (2) in the MAWS Service Manual v.7.0, page 28;
- (3) in the Spanish translation on page 103 of SM v.7.0; and
- (4) in the French translation on page 107 of SM v.7.0.
- (5) in pamphlet “Working the Program”
- (6) in pamphlet “Introduction to MA”

Contextual comment from World Services Conference Agenda Committee: None.

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## 2021 - Item E

**TITLE:** Update language about sex and sponsorship in the sponsorship pamphlet

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**Submitted by:** Amy, Member of District 8

**Background/Origin:** Language in the MA pamphlet “About Sponsorship” and on the [website](#) could be more inclusive to people who are LGBTQ and non-binary.

**The current language is:**

*Should a sponsor be of the same sex?*

*Yes. In most cases this works best because it reduces the chances of emotional involvement and family complications that might arise. Often, the same-sex sponsor will better understand our gender-related issues.*

Although the explanatory text includes “in most cases,” beginning with “Yes” favors straight people. In addition, “emotional involvement” and “family complications” are rather vague. Further, “gender-related issues” excludes people who do not identify as either/or male or female.

For comparison, NA and AA use more inclusive language, although both could be clearer and more inclusive:

**NA**

[https://na.org/admin/include/spaw2/uploads/pdf/litfiles/us\\_english/IP/EN3111.pdf](https://na.org/admin/include/spaw2/uploads/pdf/litfiles/us_english/IP/EN3111.pdf)

*“A good rule of thumb is to look for someone with similar experiences who can relate to our struggles and accomplishments. For most, finding a sponsor of the same sex makes this empathy easier and helps us feel safe in the relationship. Some feel gender need not be a deciding factor. We are free to choose our own sponsor. It is, however, strongly suggested that we avoid getting into a sponsorship relationship that may lead to sexual attraction. Such attraction can*

*distract us from the nature of sponsorship and interfere with our ability to share honestly with each other.” (pg. 3)*

## **AA**

[https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_us/p-15\\_Q&Aonspon.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_us/p-15_Q&Aonspon.pdf)

*“A.A. experience does suggest that it is best for men to sponsor men, women to sponsor women. This custom usually helps our members stay focused on the A.A. program. Some gay men and lesbians feel an opposite-sex sponsor is more appropriate for similar reasons.” (pg. 10) and*

*“In most instances, A.A. custom does suggest one limitation, already noted on page 10: If the group is large enough to allow a choice, sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex. The reasons are the same from both viewpoints; we A.A. members, no matter how long we have been sober, remain thoroughly human, subject to emotions that might divert us from “our primary purpose.” (pg.12)*

**Motion:** Change the paragraph on page 2 of the “About Sponsorship” pamphlet, on the MA app under Pamphlets, and on the [website](#).

From:

### **Should a sponsor be of the same sex?**

Yes. In most cases this works best because it reduces the chances of emotional involvement and family complications that might arise. Often, the same-sex sponsor will better understand our gender-related issues.

To:

### **Should a sponsor be of the same sex or gender?**

Some members find that they relate better to someone who is similar to them. Others feel that sex and gender aren’t deciding factors. However, it is strongly suggested that we avoid unhealthy attachments, including a sexual relationship, which could detract from the primary purpose of recovery.

*Contextual Statement from World Service Conference Agenda Committee:* None

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## 2021- Item F

**TITLE:** Future World Service Conferences to be Held Remotely

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**Submitted by:** Nina S. (District 2), current MA World Services Secretary;  
**CO-SPONSORED BY:** District 2 District Service Committee

**Background/Origin:** In 2013, the MA World Service Conference passed a motion to amend the Bylaws allowing remote participation at future conferences. In 2018, the Internet Trustee began a trial allowing remote participation for a small number of conference members whose extenuating circumstances prevented their in-person participation. This was continued in 2019 in the same hybrid form. In 2020, as a result of the COVID pandemic, the Board of Trustees was forced to quickly transition to an all-remote Conference using the Zoom platform. In December 2020, the Board of Trustees voted that, due to the pandemic, the 2021 World Service Conference will again be held remotely.

Our experience with the 2020 Conference demonstrated that it is not only possible but preferable to hold our World Service Conferences remotely to allow greater participation and benefit from significant cost savings to MAWS and to the Districts. The cost to World Services alone for the last two in-person conferences was an average of \$9,000. This does not include the expenses incurred by the host districts or by all the districts which sent delegates to these conferences. For the remote conference, the only costs incurred were minimal fees paid to the virtual platforms used to host the conference. World Services pays an annual fee to Zoom of \$149 for a full year of access (which includes at no extra expense free YouTube streaming which the Board plans to make available to the entire Fellowship at the 2021 Conference.) There was also a fee of \$37.50 to pay for an additional program to allow secret ballot Third Legacy voting for the Trustee elections. Although the cost of sending delegates to the Conference varies from year to year depending on factors such as distance and whether one or two delegates are sent, it is common for at least a quarter of District 2's annual expenses in years when it has not hosted the conference to go to sending delegates to the World Service Conference. In other

words, had there been a virtually held conference in those years, District 2 could have contributed 75% more than it did to World Services.

The 2020 Conference was able to get through an extraordinarily full agenda and the virtual format allowed unprecedented participation by a large number of observers, in addition to the voting members (delegates, 1 ANLP Board member and trustees). The average attendance for the last three in-person Conferences was 32 participants. Last year at the remote conference we had approximately 68 participants. Members of our Fellowship from as far away as Israel were able to observe and participate. The prohibitive cost of sending delegates from our more remote, new and/or financially challenged districts no longer was an obstacle to their full participation. Additional benefits of meeting remotely include the savings of travel time, allowing more meeting time, and avoiding diversion of funds to the conference which could otherwise be used to carry the message.

When it came time to elect our new 2020-21 Board of Trustees, there were many more qualified candidates to choose from. As a result of the expanded number of candidates and an amendment to the Bylaws allowing a flexible number of Trustees, we were able to elect a full Board of 11 Trustees and 2 alternates. In the past, there has often been a dearth of eligible candidates willing to serve, and people ended up on the Board who weren't able to fulfill the demands of the position. This year, on the other hand, we have an energetic and motivated Board which has been able to accomplish much more than has been the case in recent years.

The benefits to the Fellowship as a whole of having a more accessible and more economical conference are substantial. Those opposed to this change may argue for the value of the fellowship created by working together at a 3-day in-person conference. This is undoubtedly true but, experience has shown that it is also possible to build this camaraderie through a remote conference. The benefits greatly outweigh the disadvantages, and it is in the interest of the Fellowship as a whole to make this change.

**Motion:** That future Marijuana Anonymous World Service Conferences be held solely remotely, using a virtual platform, accessible through computers, tablets, and smartphones.

Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee: None



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## 2021 - Item G

**TITLE:** Chicagoland District

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**Submitted by:** MA Chicagoland Regional Service Committee

**Background/Origin:**

- Six weekly meetings (currently 4 virtual and 2 hybrid in-person/virtual)
- Two new groups started in last 18 months
- Pre-COVID-19 meeting attendance (in-person): 10-20 fellows
- Post-COVID-19 meeting attendance (virtual): 15-30 fellows
- Consistent touchpoints with approx. 100-120 fellows across the region
- Regional Service Committee formed in January 2020 with elected officers, subcommittee chairs, and group service representatives
- Regular meetings of the Regional Service Committee attended by 80% of officers, subcommittee chairs, and group service representatives, plus 5-6 general fellowship attendees
- Treasury/Finance: Secured EIN, running financial statements kept via MAWS template, planning to make quarterly 7th Tradition contributions to MAWS
- Correspondence: Maintain email account and phone number, receiving approx. 5 emails/week and 3 calls/week (pre-COVID-19)
- H&I: Early outreach efforts pre-COVID-19; engagement campaign planned for virtual speaker circuit
- Public Information: Shortly after statewide legalization, a news story on marijuana addiction in the Chicago Tribune highlighted MA, offering our fellows a perfect opportunity to practice the 10th, 11th, and 12th Traditions (see <http://tiny.cc/chicagotribunestory>)
- Events: Annual weekend-long fellowship retreat with approx. 25 attendees (canceled for 2020 due to COVID-19), virtual Jeopardy-themed trivia nights with approx. 15 attendees

**Motion:** That the MA Chicagoland Region be named an MA District.

*Contextual Statement from World Service Conference Agenda Committee: None*

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## 2021 - Item H

**TITLE:** Procedure for approval of changes in language of the Steps, Traditions, and/or General Warranties; clarification of terms ‘meeting’ and ‘group’ in the Service Manual.

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**Submitted by:** The Policies & Procedures Committee of MA World Services

**Background/Origin:** The 1989 Resolution of the Third Unity Conference and the Conference Charter of Marijuana Anonymous make reference to a requirement that consent of three-quarters of the groups of Marijuana Anonymous is required to make any change in the text of the MA Steps, Traditions, and/or General Warranties of the Conference Charter.

When the original foundation documents were written there was a general assumption that the terms ‘group’ and ‘meeting’ were synonymous. Since then, the fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous has grown in many ways. In the early days, it was assumed that every meeting had its own business meeting, and elected its own Group Service Representative to the local District Service Committee. Since then, many meetings have chosen to organize themselves in a variety of ways. Specifically, some MA members have chosen to have one business meeting for a collection of different meetings. In these cases, the term ‘group’ refers to this conglomeration of associated meetings. Thus, in current practice, it is no longer clear that reference to a single ‘group’ means the same thing as reference to a single ‘meeting’.

Confusion ensues when obtaining consent of three-quarters of groups before changing the text of the Steps, Traditions, and General Warranties. The Policies & Procedures Committee is submitting this agenda item to remove ambiguity, and to specify in the Service Manual that the terms ‘group’ and ‘meeting’ shall be interpreted to mean the same thing. In addition, this agenda item sets forth an explicit procedure to follow should a Conference motion pass which seeks to change the text of the Steps, Traditions, and/or General Warranties.

## **MOTIONS:**

**Motion [H(A)]:** That in Part 1, Chapter 3 (SM v7.0, p12), first paragraph of the section titled “Meetings/Groups” shall be amended to read:

Meetings/Groups are fundamental to the service structure of our fellowship. **Whenever the terms ‘group’ and/or ‘meeting’ are used in the Service Manual or any of the Foundation Documents, the two terms shall be synonymous.** A

meeting/**group** consists of two or more marijuana addicts who meet on a regular basis. **Meetings/groups** are fully self-supporting and remain so by collecting contributions each time they meet. The funds necessary to sustain each meeting are contributed from **the its** members, not **from** outside sources. This collection of monies is commonly referred to as the “Seventh Tradition,” since it fulfills that Tradition. Meetings have no outside affiliations and no opinions on outside issues. Each meeting is autonomous. However, compliance with each of the Twelve Traditions is vital for all meetings.

**Motion [H(B)]:** That in Part 4, Chapter 19 (SM v7.0, p61), the following new section shall be inserted after “Service Manual Revisions,” to read as follows:

### **Procedure for Approval of Changes in the Language of the Steps, Traditions, and/or General Warranties**

The term ‘group’ as used in the Conference Charter, when reference is made to voting on proposed changes to the text of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and/or the General Warranties set forth in Article XII of the Charter, shall mean any meeting registered with World Services, regardless of the terminology they use to define themselves.

Should a conference motion pass which seeks to change the text of the Steps, Traditions, and/or General Warranties, the written consent of three-quarters of all groups, as required by the Conference Charter, shall be obtained as follows: The proposed change shall be sent to all meetings registered with World Services and, after no less than 6 months, those ballots returned shall be counted. A yes vote of three-quarters of the returned ballots shall be sufficient to meet the requirement of the Conference Charter to implement the proposed change(s).

*Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee:* This agenda item is presented by the P&P Committee to clarify procedural requirements, to avoid the confusion which has resulted in past agenda items being ruled out of order.

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## 2021 - Item I

**TITLE:** Independent meeting MA district

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**Submitted by:** Independent MA Regional Service Committee

**Background/Origin:** This region/district is being organized to address a long-standing need of the Marijuana Anonymous organization to provide structure, support, and delegation to the many independent groups/meetings that exist in the United States and around the world. Although I think it will take time and patience for this region/district to show the true potential and power of organizing independent meetings into a larger group, I am confident that it will only serve to benefit those groups/meetings that participate and the larger MA structure as a whole.

We currently have at least 4 scheduled meetings, at least 60 regular attendees, and our members live in either geographic proximity or gather by virtual means.

Our RSC is working towards meeting consistently with a quorum of 70% of our GSRs present.

We anticipate we will be fully self supporting and willing to support MA World Services by the time this application comes before the Conference Body

**MOTION:** That the Marijuana Anonymous Independent MA Region be named an MA District.

*Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee:* None

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## 2021 - Item J

**TITLE:** Allow all MA members to observe and participate in MAWS Conference free of charge

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**Submitted by:** Cheyney S, former MAWS Trustee

**Background/Origin:** The 2020 MA World Services Conference was held virtually (at long last). However, members who did not have the resources to pay \$100 were unable to attend, observe, participate, etc.

When the conference is held at a physical location, not only are any and all members allowed to participate, they are allowed to speak and participate free of charge. Why would we have it any other way for remote meetings of the Conference body?

The MA World Services Conference should remain free for any member who wishes to attend. The inverted pyramid dictates our members at large are the most important voices of all. Nothing should prevent these voices from being heard, especially something that unjustly penalizes socio-economic status.

**Motion:** Add the following statement to page 55-56 in Service Manual 7.0:

Although registration costs for the delegates and trustees may be set by the Conference Committees to cover the expenses of hosting a MAWS Conference, any member who wishes to attend and participate shall be allowed to do so free of charge, regardless of whether the Conference is held virtually, corporeally, or both.

Revised section shall read thusly-

Conference Members

The Members of the conference are the trustees, delegates, and appointed or elected MA World Services committee heads and coordinators. Each district, under present

rules, can send two delegates to the conference. In addition, there are trustees that were elected at the previous year's conference. Trustees are elected at the conference according to the Third Legacy procedure. (Appendix II—The Third Legacy Procedure).

Each conference Member has only one vote, no matter how many positions they may hold. Voting procedures are set forth in The Conference Charter of Marijuana Anonymous and the Bylaws of MA World Services (see Appendix I: Foundation Documents).

Although registration costs for the delegates and trustees may be set by the Conference Committees to cover the expenses of hosting a MAWS Conference, any member who wishes to attend and participate shall be allowed to do so free of charge, regardless of whether the Conference is held virtually, corporeally, or both.

*Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee:* We recognize that last year's costs were too burdensome for some fellowship members so the fee has been reduced to \$25 for voting members and participating observers this year. We also anticipate a free tier of accessibility to the Conference for anyone who wishes to observe.

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## 2021 - Item K

**TITLE:** Iceland district

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**Submitted by:** MA Iceland Regional Service Committee

**Background/Origin:** The first known MA meeting was established in 1998/9 in downtown Reykjavík. It took place every Friday night from 23:30 til 00:30. Back then, the group was more like an AA meeting, using no MA literature (that we know of) and working the steps according to AA. That first MA meeting unfortunately only lasted a short while, dying out sometime in the year 2000 after the venue had to shut down for some time and the meetings fizzled out along with that.

Icelandic MA as we know it today began on the 8th of August 2007, so we'll be celebrating our 14 year anniversary this summer. This meeting was and has always been a Newcomers' meeting, and for a long time it was our only meeting. It's still held every Wednesday at 18:00 and it is still held at our local Alanó Clubhouse in Reykjavík (currently in Holtagarðar). For a long time this was our only meeting. It wasn't until 30th of May 2014 that we established our Friday night meeting, every week at 19:00. That meeting has seen more changes, evolving from a traditional speaker meeting to a month-long 12-step speaker format. The meeting has also changed locations twice, starting at our local Salvation Army lounge, moving to a back-alley meditation loft, and finally finding a home in one of our more popular 12-step meeting venues in Reykjavík, Gula Húsið. The meeting has always had a strong downtown base and has seen a lot of growth since the last move.

It was after establishing this second meeting that we jump-started our monthly regional service meeting, occurring every second Friday of the month right after the regular meeting. Through our regional service we've put up our official website <https://maisland.is/>, organized sweat lodges and other larger social outings with our members, and carried our message of recovery to Vogur, the country's main rehabilitation center, and to local high schools. It is also through these service meetings that we order "Life with Hope" and distribute among our groups for sale,



and we have begun the lengthy process of translating the book and its workbook into Icelandic.

Then it was back in 2019 that we established our third meeting, the 11th-step Meditation meeting. We meet every Monday at 20:30. Recently we have implemented a speaker format once a month, every second Monday of the month, and an extra meditation before the meeting every third Monday of the month.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, our little community got a booster-shot of 2 additional meetings. These are our Thursday 10th-step Reflection meeting at 20:00 and the Saturday Book-study meeting at 11:00. Both meetings are done entirely through the Internet, on Zoom to be specific. Through the Saturday Book-study meetings our efforts to translate “Life with Hope” have gained a lot more momentum, though we still have quite a way to go.

We’re still looking for ways to expand our community. We have plans to establish more meetings, increasing our internet presence (in accordance with the 12 Traditions of course), and now we’re reaching out to the international community to see if we can be of service. If there is a way for us to increase the growth and prosperity of MA globally we want to contribute.

**Motion:** That the MA Iceland Region be named an MA District.

*Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee:* None

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## 2021 - Item L

**TITLE:** Change the word 'God' to 'Higher Power' in the Steps

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**Submitted by:** MA District 12 (San Francisco North Bay, CA, USA)

**Background/Origin:** One question our district has discussed is why many people who initially come to MA don't continue to attend meetings. We are concerned that some newcomers may be put off by how much the word 'God' is used in our books, literature, and meetings.

Many of our district's members who have been sober for a while have no problem using the word 'God' as shorthand for 'Higher Power'. We are fully onboard with the spiritual aspect of the program and the benefit and need of connecting with a higher power. However, we feel that the word 'God' may be causing some newcomers who otherwise might be open to the program to feel uncomfortable and to conclude that MA is not for them.

We believe that these proposed changes will help to bring the steps and the MA meetings into a more contemporary context and allow more newcomers to take advantage of the miraculous gift of recovery.

We do not undertake the suggestion of these proposed changes lightly. It seems to the members of District 12 that if we are to truly fulfill our primary purpose as stated in Tradition 5 - "Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers," that we need to make sure that we are not potentially alienating newcomers who may not feel comfortable with the repeated use of the word "God".

We believe that when a newcomer, after much struggle and heartache finally finds their way to an MA meeting, what that person hears during the course of that meeting has the potential to shape the trajectory of the rest of that person's life. We are concerned that there may be a percentage of newcomers who feel that the

repeated use of the word 'God' during the meeting creates a barrier to them feeling at ease about returning to meetings.

The Twelve Steps were conceived and written in the 1930's at a time when religion was a much more prevalent part of most people's lives.

The current data indicates that people in general and especially younger people are way less religious than previous generations. According to the data from the American Family Survey in the article cited below - 44% of Americans aged 18 to 29 identify as having no religious affiliation.

In District 12, we have an MA member who is a Marriage and Family Therapist. She has stated that she has had numerous clients who have balked at attending 12 Step groups due to the mentions of God. There is also a young woman in her twenties in our district who has stated that she has had numerous friends who have not returned to 12 Step meetings after initially attending, due to the repeated use of the word 'God'.

We are concerned that all of the references to 'God' may be interfering with some newcomers feeling that MA is a good fit for them. If this is the case, and we are convinced that it is, then MA is failing to help as many newcomers as we potentially could. Given the miraculous transformations we have experienced ourselves through working the program of MA, we want to be sure that the MA program is as inclusive as possible and that we are not limiting the program to people who self select by their level of comfort with the word 'God'.

Following are two articles that illustrate the decline in religious affiliation internationally and in the U.S.

The information below is from an online article in *-Foreign Affairs Magazine* titled- "Giving Up on God - The Global Decline of Religion" - dated September/October 2020

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-08-11/religion-giving-god?ut>

[m\\_medium=email\\_notifications&utm\\_source=reg\\_confirmation&utm\\_campaign=reg\\_guestpass](https://www.wsj.com/articles/can-religion-still-speak-to-younger-americans-11573747161)

“From about 2007 to 2019, the overwhelming majority of the countries we studied—43 out of 49—became less religious. The decline in belief was not confined to high-income countries and appeared across most of the world.

“Growing numbers of people no longer find religion a necessary source of support and meaning in their lives. Even the United States—long cited as proof that an economically advanced society can be strongly religious—has now joined other wealthy countries in moving away from religion.”

The paragraph below is from a *Wall Street Journal* article titled, “Can Religion Still Speak to Younger Americans”- dated November 2019

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/can-religion-still-speak-to-younger-americans-11573747161>

“The fastest-growing population on the American religious landscape today is “Nones”—people who don’t identify with any religion. Recent data from the American Family Survey indicates that their numbers increased from 16% in 2007 to 35% in 2018. Over the same period, there has been a dramatic decline in the share of the population who identify as Christian, from 78% of Americans in 2007 to 65% in 2018 according to a report by the Pew Research Center released this month. The rise of Nones is even more dramatic among younger people: 44% of Americans aged 18 to 29 are Nones.”

As stated in the MAWS Service Manual: The Conference Charter of Marijuana Anonymous

*Originally adopted at MA World Service Conference, 1989 (p64 Maws Service Manual v7.0)*

3) **CONFERENCE RELATION TO MA:** The Conference will act for MA in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services and it will also be the vehicle by which MA can express its views upon all matters of vital MA policy and all deviations from our Traditions. Delegates, Trustees and Service Committee Heads should be

free to vote as their conscience dictates and decide what questions should be taken to the group level, for information, discussion, or their own direct instruction.

*Any change in Article Twelve of The Charter, The Twelve Traditions of MA, or The Twelve*

*Steps of MA must be made with the written consent of three-quarters of the MA groups, as defined in the resolution adopted by the October, 1989 Conference\*.*

**Motion:** That the Conference body sends the following changes to all registered MA groups for written consent, and after no less than 6 months, those ballots returned shall be counted. A yes vote of three-quarters of the returned ballots shall be sufficient to meet the requirement of the Conference Charter to approve the proposed change(s). These changes are to be applied to every instance where the steps are used in MA literature, including the *Life with Hope* book, *Life with Hope* workbook, World Service Manual, all pamphlets, handouts, website, and the Marijuana Anonymous application.

### **Proposed changes to be voted on**

#### i) Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of ~~God~~ a Higher Power, as we understood ~~God~~. Higher Power.

#### ii) Step Five

Admitted to ~~God~~ a Higher Power, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

#### iii) Step Six

Were entirely ready to have ~~God~~ a Higher Power remove all these defects of character.

#### iv) Step Seven

Humbly asked ~~God~~ a Higher Power to remove our shortcomings.

#### v) Step Eleven

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with ~~God~~; a Higher Power as we understood ~~God~~ Higher Power, praying only for knowledge of ~~God's~~ a Higher Power's will for us and the power to carry that out.

*Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee:* At the 2020 MA World Services Conference, a similar agenda item was ruled out of order due to a procedural error. The error was the omission of the procedure required to implement changes to the language of the 12 Steps. This error has been corrected in this submission.

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## 2021 - Item M

**TITLE:** Amend all MA literature and publications to be gender neutral, including the MA World Services website.

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**Submitted by:** Heather C, a member of Districts 3 & 7, and co-sponsored by the Policies & Procedures Committee

**Background/Origin:** Consistent with Tradition 3, which states that “the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana,” this motion proposes to amend the language in *Life with Hope* and MA World Services’ pamphlets and corresponding pages on the MA World Services’ website to more accurately include and reflect *all* members of the fellowship by removing gendered language (such as “he or she,” “him or her” and “brothers and sisters”) throughout all MA World Services’ Literature, and replacing it with more inclusive and gender neutral language (such as “they” or “them” or “fellow addicts.”)

This motion is important to many members of the fellowship, especially those who do not identify as men or women, and who therefore do not hear or see themselves reflected in all of MA World Services’ current written materials. This motion is another important step towards helping all people feel welcome and included in the fellowship, consistent with Tradition 3.

The long form of Tradition Three states that:

“A person is a member if they say they have a desire to stop using marijuana. **No matter who you are**, where you came from, or what you did, you cannot be denied membership in Marijuana Anonymous. **To make any requirement for membership other than a desire to stop using marijuana could mean that some addicts would be denied the gifts the program has to offer.**”

For many addicts, MA is their last hope for a life free from the insanity of active addiction. **We do not want to create any**

**barriers between ourselves and the addict who still suffers.**

We are not willing to pronounce a death sentence on any of our struggling brothers and sisters just because they may not fit the mold of what we think our group members should be like.

The fact that there are no requirements other than a desire to stop using marijuana is a strength of MA. **After all, we learn from each other's experiences; the more diverse our groups become, the more experiences we have to draw from. We accept young people, senior citizens, criminals, people with mental or physical challenges, and people from all religions, nationalities, races, and different walks of life. No one is excluded from MA."**

In 2016, a motion passed 14-1 to change language in the Marijuana Anonymous preamble from "fellowship of men and women" to "fellowship of people" for the same reason. This motion seeks to make the same type of change with respect to other types of gendered language that have been subsequently identified such as "he or she," "him or her," and "brothers and sisters" in all MA World Services' materials, specifically in MA World Services' pamphlets, including "About Sponsorship," "Introduction to MA: A Meeting Format in a Pamphlet," and "For Loved Ones." *Even Tradition 3 itself* retains gendered language ("brothers and sisters") that is in need of revision, so this motion seeks to change this language in the long form of Tradition 3 in the next printing of *Life with Hope* from "brothers and sisters" to "fellow addicts."

To retain exclusionary gendered language such as "he or she," "him or her," and "brothers and sisters" is to violate Tradition 3 by creating a barrier between the fellowship of MA and many addicts who still suffer. Such exclusions weaken our fellowship, which is strengthened by the diversity of our members; most importantly, such exclusions deny the gifts of the program to many addicts who desire recovery.

In addition to the change made in 2016 to the preamble from "fellowship of men and women" to "fellowship of people," many individual meetings throughout the fellowship have already made similar changes to their meeting formats and readings



to remove phrases like “he or she” and “brothers and sisters” which are not inclusive. By amending the MA World Services’ pamphlets, website, and long form of Tradition 3 to be more inclusive of people of all genders, more new meetings would default to using inclusive language, helping to make *all* people who have a desire to stop using feel more welcome; these amendments avoid creating barriers to membership in violation of Tradition 3.

**Motion:** To implement the following changes to MA World Services’ pamphlets and corresponding pages on the MA World Services’ website immediately, and the following changes to *Life with Hope* in the next printing, the 4th edition:

1. Amend the “About Sponsorship” Pamphlet and corresponding page on the website immediately from:

“...a sponsor is a special person with whom **he or she** can discuss problems, ask questions, and through whom **he or she** can gain an understanding of recovery through the 12-step programs.”

to

“... a sponsor is a special person with whom **they** can discuss problems, ask questions, and through whom **they** can gain an understanding of recovery through the 12-step programs.”

2. Amend the “About Sponsorship” Pamphlet, in the last sentence of the *What is the proper approach to sponsorship?* section and corresponding page on the MA World Services’ website immediately from:

"A sponsor is not responsible for anyone's sobriety but **his or her** own."

to

"A sponsor is not responsible for anyone's sobriety but **their** own."

3. Amend “Why H&I Panels?” Pamphlet P-07, under the *What is a Panel?* section and corresponding page on the MA World Services’ website immediately from:

“Each panel member shares experience, strength, and hope by telling **his or her** own story:....”

to

“Each panel member shares experience, strength, and hope by telling **their** own story:....”

4. Amend the “For the Loved Ones of Marijuana Addicts” Pamphlet P-15, in the first sentence of the *What is Marijuana Anonymous?* section and corresponding page on the MA World Services’ website immediately from:

“Marijuana Anonymous is a fellowship of **men and women...**”

to

“Marijuana Anonymous is a fellowship of **people...**”

5. Amend the “For the Loved Ones of Marijuana Addicts” Pamphlet P-15, in the *Who is a Marijuana Addict?* section and corresponding page on the MA World Services’ website immediately from:

“A marijuana addict’s life is controlled by marijuana. **He or she** loses interest in all else, their dreams go up in smoke. Marijuana addiction is a progressive illness often leading to addiction to other drugs, including alcohol. The lives, thinking and desires of marijuana addicts center around marijuana—scoring it, dealing it and finding ways to stay high.

Addiction is a progressive, long-term continuing problem. When an addict tries to stop using and fails because life without the drug is just too hard, that is addiction. Once an addict is convinced **he or she** cannot live without marijuana, the dependency becomes an obsession. When the addict uses even though **he or she** promised themselves they wouldn't, this is compulsion..."

to

"A marijuana addict's life is controlled by marijuana. **They lose** interest in all else, their dreams go up in smoke. Marijuana addiction is a progressive illness often leading to addiction to other drugs, including alcohol. The lives, thinking and desires of marijuana addicts center around marijuana—scoring it, dealing it and finding ways to stay high.

Addiction is a progressive, long-term continuing problem. When an addict tries to stop using and fails because life without the drug is just too hard, that is addiction. Once an addict is convinced **they** cannot live without marijuana, the dependency becomes an obsession. When the addict uses even though **they** promised themselves they wouldn't, this is compulsion..."

6. Amend the "For the Loved Ones of Marijuana Addicts" Pamphlet P-15, in the last sentence of the *Suggestions to Family Members and Friends of Marijuana Addicts* section and corresponding page on the MA World Services' website immediately from:

"Addicts often try to manipulate loved ones through the use of guilt, fear, and anger. This is a very common tactic used (both consciously and unconsciously) by the addict to get what **he or she** wants by taking

advantage of the emotions of those closest to **him or her.**"

to

“Addicts often try to manipulate loved ones through the use of guilt, fear, and anger. This is a very common tactic used (both consciously and unconsciously) by the addict to get what **they want** by taking advantage of the emotions of those closest to **them.**”

7. Amend the Long Form of Tradition 3 on Page 77 of *Life with Hope* in the next printing (4th Edition) from:

“We are not willing to pronounce a death sentence on any of our struggling **brothers and sisters** just because they may not fit the mold of what we think our group members should be like”

to

“We are not willing to pronounce a death sentence on any of our struggling **fellow addicts** just because they may not fit the mold of what we think our group members should be like”

Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee: None

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## 2021 - Item N

**TITLE:** Update to the Twelve Questions

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**Submitted by:** Rachel C. from District 22- New England

**Background/Origin:** For the 2020 Conference, an agenda item was submitted to update the 12 Questions. The outcome of the motion was that the proposed update was referred to the Literature Committee, which was then discussed and returned with their feedback. This motion is being resubmitted in agreement with their edits.

Marijuana legalization has changed the landscape of availability and consumption in North America, along with the proliferation of pop culture, industry, and powerful forces that promote cannabis. While Marijuana Anonymous takes no stance on outside issues, per our Traditions we are here for the marijuana addict who still suffers; and, the 12 Questions are an important early identifier to a problem.

Many in our fellowship are dealing with dispensaries, medical cards, apps, home delivery, and easier access to supply in multiple formats with high THC concentrates; and, our 12 Questions could perhaps better address the serious implications of these changes for marijuana addicts. Denial is often a strong barrier to recovery from marijuana addiction. In addition to society not yet fully recognizing our suffering with validation, even within recovery spaces, we often have to find this understanding ourselves. The 12 Questions is an important tool for assessment.

While there is a “sanctity” to the original 12 Questions, there is also an increased severity to the changed reality of marijuana that is much different than when the questions were first written some 30 years ago. Hopefully these edits maintain the integrity of the original, while allowing space for small, but impactful adjustments, with the goal of helping the marijuana addict.

The updates are: 1) combine two questions that are similar, 2) include an additional question for financial and legal difficulty, and 3) add a reference to health problems within an existing question. Comparisons for both versions are below.

**Motion:** That the current 12 Questions be amended with the suggested updates as follows. Changes would be online, within the app, in new meeting starter kits, in the pamphlet, “For the Newcomer”, and in subsequent printings of Life With Hope.

### **Current Version:**

#### The 12 Questions of Marijuana Anonymous

The following questions may help you determine whether marijuana is a problem in your life.

1. Has smoking pot stopped being fun?
2. Do you ever get high alone?
3. Is it hard for you to imagine a life without marijuana?
4. Do you find that your friends are determined by your marijuana use?
5. Do you use marijuana to avoid dealing with your problems?
6. Do you smoke pot to cope with your feelings?
7. Does your marijuana use let you live in a privately defined world?
8. Have you ever failed to keep promises you made about cutting down or controlling your use of marijuana?
9. Has your use of marijuana caused problems with memory, concentration, or motivation?
10. When your stash is nearly empty, do you feel anxious or worried about how to get more?
11. Do you plan your life around your marijuana use?
12. Have friends or relatives ever complained that your using is damaging your relationship with them?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you may have a problem with marijuana.

## Revised version of The Twelve Questions of Marijuana Anonymous by the MAWS Literature Committee

The following questions may help you determine whether marijuana is a problem in your life.

1. Has smoking pot stopped being fun?
2. Do you ever get high alone?
3. Is it hard for you to imagine a life without marijuana?
4. Do you find that your friends are determined by your marijuana use?
5. Do you use marijuana to avoid dealing with your problems **or to cope with your feelings?**
- ~~6. Do you smoke pot to cope with your feelings?~~
- 6. Has your habit led to financial difficulties and/or legal consequences?**
7. Does your marijuana use let you live in a privately defined world?
8. Have you ever failed to keep promises you made about cutting down or controlling your use of marijuana?
9. Has your use of marijuana caused problems with **your health**, memory, concentration, or motivation?
10. When your stash is nearly empty, do you feel anxious or worried about how to get more?
11. Do you plan your life around your marijuana use?
12. Have friends or relatives ever complained that your using is damaging your relationship with them?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you may have a problem with marijuana.

Contextual Statement from World Services Conference Agenda Committee: None