

# Task Force Report

## The DISL Position on the Area 9 Panel

### Charge

- Determine if the current DISL position is viable on the Area 9 Panel.
- If so, how should it be funded?
- Is it an appropriate function in every District?
- Should there be a general Area job description?
- Can and should it be District autonomous?

### Task Force Members

- Carmen S., Chair, DISL, District 8
- Sue P., DISL, District 6
- Jill O, DISL, District 9
- Eleanor J., DISL, District 2

### Background/Historical Information

This has been an ongoing conversation in the Area since the North and South Florida Areas came to be. There is no reference to the former AISL, now DISL, function in the Service Manual and WSO does not recognize the title in the Links of Service. North and South Florida are the only Areas that have this position.

### Task Force Timeline

Please meet (via Conference Call and/or Google Hangout) and use whatever technology works for all of you. Focus on the Charge. Complete the task as best you can and submit this form as your Task Force Report. You can do this by sending it to the Technology Coordinator who will post it on the website. Create a proposal that can be discussed at our next AWSC meeting. Submit that to the Technology Coordinator as your Task Force Proposal.

### *KBDM Questions from Thought Force*

**1. What do we know about our members (or prospective members) needs regarding this discussion?** *Members could be confused about what the AISL position is since it is not in the Service Manual. When we have met for roundtable discussions at past Area meetings, and were asked to describe the AISL, everybody described a completely different position. There was no cohesion on what the AISL did from District to District. An Area Task Force could recommend job requirements for the AISL. It could then be consistent in the area. Each District could vote on it to accept it as their AISL position after it moves through the Thought Force and Task Force process. That way, what the AISL does in one District would be the same as what they do in another District. That's the consistency of Al-Anon.*

**2. What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the Area relative to this discussion?** *If the money is the problem, the District could decide to send their AISL. If they did, it would be their responsibility to pay for them. To stage the World Service conference and arrange for travel for all Delegates to attend, the WSO uses equalized expenses - where the WSO calculates a suggested contribution for all Areas the make to cover costs. The Area could calculate a similar suggested contribution in support of AWSC including the costs for the room and meals the Area provides.*

**3. What do we know about current realities, evolving dynamics of the world and our fellowship's environment that is relevant to this discussion? What are the pros and cons?** *Having the AISL at AWSC could be redundant to having the DR attend and could save costs. I really like the sharing and richness of the wisdom that the AISLs bring; it gives them an opportunity to meet the coordinators, who are the go-to people to help motivate district people and help implement ideas. Sometimes the AISL and DR work so closely together that they can bring back separate things from AWSC. The DR does not have to do it alone. Two heads are better than*

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one - when a DR and AISL come together, they can compare notes and see things from a different point of view. Any time we can give more people opportunities for service, if they chose to or not, will benefit us in the long run. The personal contact that the AISL brings to the District Chairs reminds them that they are never alone and have someone to help. There may be a time when technology can help spread out the AISL tasks, but for now, the support for the District Chairs and DR is very important. Considering how it is often difficult to find people to participate in service. While the WSC ensures new delegates are not alone by having a third of their panel be new each year, we're in brand new panels every three years. It can be helpful for newcomers to be lost together in their positions and work their way through it. The costs to the Area for the AISL to attend AWSC appear to be the only costs. Should the name of the position be changed, all references to the AISL in the Area's website, process and procedures, and other documents will need to be updated.

#### **4. What are the ethical implications of our choices? Will our decision be in line with our spiritual principles?**

Having the Districts pay for their AISLs to attend AWSC would be in line with being fully self-supporting. The more information we have and bring it to any of the District Chairs, we are carrying the message to others who are hurting. An implication would be while the change would bring more money to the Area, it may mean Districts would have less. As a 501(c)(3), the Area should not be picking up the tab to avoid paying the taxes, if they are paying something the District should pay and pay the taxes. That's the ethical way to do it.

#### **5. What do we wish we knew, but don't?**

What do the DRs feel about this? How do they feel about the AISL position and how the AISLs support them. If we're the only part of the North America that has AISL participation, we allow AISLs and DRs to vote, is that appropriate to have more people voting and setting the agenda than other Areas do?

### **Thought Force Recommendations**

Based on the discussion, the Thought Force participants agree the AISL position is viable and should be kept as part of the AWSC. Having two representatives from each District at the Area meetings gives the Districts a greater voice in the decision-making process, and all panel members benefit from the shared experience, strength and hope the additional members offer. Participants also agreed that there is confusion about the position's role in the Districts. The Thought Force participants recommend a Task Force be created and charged with the following:

- **Recommending a new name for the position:** The AISL position is often confused with other organizations in the Al-Anon Service Structure. The name should be changed to clarify it is a District-level position. Names suggested were District Information Services Liaison, Information Services Liaison, District Chairperson Liaison, or Lead Coordinator.
- **Recommending a way for the Districts to reimburse the Area for the expenses of the AISL to attend the AWSC meetings:** In line with the Spiritual Principle of being fully self-supporting, Districts should consider reimbursing the Area for the costs of their AISL to attend the AWSC meetings. Districts could recategorize donations regularly sent to the Area to mitigate or eliminate the cost. Another Thought or Task Force may want to consider if Districts should reimburse the Area for their District Representatives to attend AWSC as well.
- **Recommending an Area-level job description for the AISL:** There is no consistent job description among the Districts for the AISL's responsibilities. The Area should develop a common job description that could be suggested to the Districts for adoption. Districts would retain the autonomy to keep their own job description or modify the Area's suggestion.

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## **The DISL Position on the Area 9 Panel**

### **Summary of Task Force/Findings**

The Task force reviewed the following:

1. KBDM Questions from Thought Force
2. Report and recommendations from Thought Force
3. DISL Area 9 Structure Guidelines
4. District Representatives' perspective on DISL position and their support to DR

After review of the above, the task force met via telephone conference on April 30, 2019 at 7:30 pm and discussed our charge as follows:

- **Determine if the current DISL position is viable on the Area 9 Panel.**
  - Good to have more than one person involved at District and at Area. Without the DISL, this would be the sole responsibility of the DR
  - With the DISL at Area it provides more people to work on Thought and Task forces
  - It is a lot of work for one person – District Representative is responsible for GRs and DISL's for the district chairs. They each provide information back from Area to District respectively.
  - It is a viable position at district as a resource for chairs, communicating between area and district chairs and supporting chairs. DISL has the responsibilities of the chairs, leaving the District Representatives available to GRs. By having the two positions, we can better serve the district and be stronger together.
  - We do not have to do service alone. DRs and DISLs working together for balance at District and Area.
- **If so, how should it be funded?**
  - To send DISL to AWSC costs \$220 per conference, \$440 per year
  - The District that can afford to reimburse the Area for the cost of sending DISL to Area, should donate back to Area
  - We are all equal in Al-Anon, the Districts that cannot afford to donate back to Area for the DISL expenses, should continue to send their DISL to Area and the Area will continue to cover their expenses at AWSC.
- **Is it an appropriate function in every District?**
  - Yes. Since it is viable, it is appropriate.
- **Should there be a general Area job description?**
  - There is an area job description titled "AFG Area 9 Service Structure Guidelines: District Information Services Liaison (DISL)"
  - A proposed updated job description is attached

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- **Can and should it be District autonomous?**
  - A District can be autonomous provided that the “AFG Area 9 Service Structure Guidelines: District Information Services Liaison (DISL)” is incorporated in their District DISL job description.

### **Task Force Proposed Recommendation**

Based on our Charge, we recommend the following:

1. The DISL position is viable to Area 9 and should therefore, continue to be a part of the Al-Anon World Service Conference.
2. Each District, who can afford to, should bear the expense (\$220.00 per AWSC) of sending their DISL to Area World Service Conference.
3. If a district cannot afford to bear the expense of sending their DISL to Area, the Area will continue to bear that expense on the district’s behalf.
4. That the “AFG Area 9 Service Structure Guidelines: District Information Services Liaison (DISL)” be amended to reflect the description of DISL as follows:

*Works closely with District Representative to coordinate and conduct District business, attends District meetings, communicates with DISL chairs to connect and share information, coordinate District services and public outreach. Research, and answer email and phone calls redirecting information and requests to District panel members. Attend (2) Area World Service Conferences and (2) Area Assemblies. Share information from Area and World Service at District meetings. Does not vote at District or Assembly but has a voice.*

5. That each district incorporates the language in the “AFG Area 9 Service Structure Guidelines: District Information Services Liaison (DISL)” in their DISL District position description.
6. Each District has the autonomy to create specific duties and authority for the DISL position.

## **AFG Area 9 Service Structure Guidelines:**

### ***Proposed District Information Services Liaison (DISL)***

As a DISL at District:

- 1. Works closely with District Representative to coordinate and conduct District business, attends District meetings, communicates with DISL chairs to connect and share information, coordinate District services and public outreach. Research, and answer email and phone calls redirecting information and requests to District panel members. Attend (2) Area World Service Conferences and (2) Area Assemblies. Share information from Area and World Service at District meetings. Does not vote at District or Assembly but has a voice.*
2. Each District has the autonomy to create specific duties and authority for the DISL position. Please see your District Guidelines for specifics on your District obligations and duties.
3. DISL and DR work together on behalf of the Groups and Members in your geographic location.

As an DISL at AWSC:

1. You are responsible for attending the entire meeting. Meetings are scheduled at the Chairperson's discretion depending on Area needs.
2. You will receive reports, handouts and information that you will need to distribute throughout the District in line with your District Guidelines on Service Authority for the DISL.
3. You are responsible for having a report to the Panel, emailed by the date given by the Chairperson. This can be a combined report with the DR.
4. You are responsible for reading all reports prior to the meeting.
5. At AWSC you participate as a voting member of the current panel. Here you are serving the entire Area, not just your District.
6. You will be participating in Thought and Task Forces.
7. You are required to have a regular and dependable email presence for communication purposes.
8. You will need a working knowledge of the Service Manual.
9. You will need to have a thorough working knowledge of the Steps, Traditions and Concepts.
10. You will need to be an active member of AI-Anon: who attends meetings and works with a personal Sponsor. It is highly recommended to get a Service Sponsor as well.

Updated by Policy Committee September 13, 2015. Discussed and updated at AWSC Feb 2016. Updated January 2019, Updated May, 2019.

As a DISL at Assembly:

1. You are there to serve on behalf of your District. Your District pays your way, and you are a vital part of the support network linking your Groups and District to Area and WSO. Your District Guidelines may assign other duties.
2. You will have to register for Assembly.
3. You will need to attend all sessions.

4. You and your DR will receive reports, information, handouts from the Area Panel and from other Districts. It is up to your District to decide how the information is channeled back to the Groups and Chairs in your District.
5. You may assist your District in any responsibilities (ie: FunShop, Registration, Hospitality, etc)
6. You are required to participate in Thought and Task Forces on various topics throughout the panel. This will require you to participate outside of the meetings by using email, Google docs and Conference calls.
7. At Assembly you do not vote, unless you are also representing a Group as GR. If you are attending as the DISL and a voting GR, your Group pays your expenses (this is an Area financial practice).