

INCREASING SEATTLE AIS OUTREACH LINE ITEM ON ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEARS 2022-2025

Proposed Motion: Set the AIS Outreach Line item in the AIS annual budget each year to \$6,000 for fiscal years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Vision: Providing AIS-wide large scale outreach services each year to attract more families and friends of alcoholics who are still suffering from the family disease of alcoholism, heeding to our primary purpose, 'helping family and friends of alcoholics'.

History and Background: In early 2018 AIS changed to an all-volunteer organization. Previously, AIS had a paid special worker. The majority of our annual budget was used for their compensation and associated costs. At the same time, we also took several other cost-saving measures including reducing our office expenses by changing location and better utilizing technology. The AIS ample reserve amount reflected the needs of the previous much larger budget.

In late 2019, the Chair formed a 6-person Financial Policy Task Force to recommend the appropriate amount for our ample financial reserves. The Taskforce recommended that the total reserve fund should be a minimum of \$25,000 to include \$8,000 in checking and \$17,000 in CD's. They noted in their report that the all-volunteer model is still new and that the Outreach Committee may have suggestions on ways to spend down the excess funds. The Task Force recommendation was approved by a vote of the Council at their February 2020 meeting.

The total amount of funds in Ample Reserves has continued to exceed that agreed upon amount. As of July 31, 2021, the checking account balance was \$16,196.20. The total of CDs and savings accounts was \$31,910.91. Added together, the excess funds amount to \$8,196.20 in checking and \$14,910.91 in CDs and savings accounts for a total of \$23,107.11 above the amounts approved by Council.

Knowledge Based Decision Making Questions & Our Responses

- 1. What do we know about our members' (and prospective members') needs, wants and preferences that relate to this issue?** (How important is it? Is it what our current members want? How will it affect newcomers? What purpose would this serve? Is it necessary? Is it helpful?) What do we wish we knew, but don't? Might our decision have unintended consequences? We might need to do some additional work or research to help us make a sound decision.)
 - A. We know outreach to newcomers is important to our members because:
 - On September 10, 2020 following an Outreach presentation and discussion about possible outreach projects, the Council voted to allocate up to \$3,500 for a multi-faceted outreach campaign. The motion carried unanimously.
 - October 22, 2020 the Board voted to change the proposed 2021 budget line item for outreach from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The Budget was then approved by the Council.
 - On August 12, 2021 the Council approved an additional \$600 to the \$5,000 Outreach budget so that both a YouTube and Spotify awareness campaign can run this winter.
 - The Financial Policy Task Force specifically noted in their report to Council that the Outreach Committee may have suggestions on how we might spend down the excess funds.

- Although not a vote by the AIS Council or Board, 89% of Group Reps (GRs) at the WA Area Fall Assembly 2020 approved significant increase in funding for Area outreach projects, including increasing the proposed \$3,000 to \$4,000. (Note: AIS member groups make up around 30% of all groups in WA Area.)

B. We know from Council and Board discussions that members would like to have the funds spent locally to support those in our local area who still suffer from the affects of someone else's drinking.

2. What do we know about the resources and our vision for Al-Anon and our meetings that are relevant to this issue? (What are our resources? Can we afford it? Do we have enough volunteers to make it happen? Do we have any background information in our archives that can help us answer this question?) What do we wish we knew, but don't?

A. We know that we have excess financial resources adequate to fund this proposal.

- The checking balance and money in savings and CDs is adequate to offset any unexpected drop in income, especially since we now have more experience with the all-volunteer model.
- For the 2021 budget period, AIS may have a shortfall in annual expenses vs. income. A shortfall was included in the budget. The shortfall might occur when the funds are spent on the 2021 budgeted outreach projects and attorney fees for the Bylaws update. That shortfall will be covered by the excess funds beyond those requested in this proposal.
- Consistent messaging is proven to be the most effective way to spread a message. By spreading the expenditure of the excess funds over a 4-year period, we can have a greater impact than spending it all at once.
- Spreading the spending into future years, we have the opportunity to reach people who may not currently be affected by someone else's drinking or might not be aware of the effects of alcohol in their lives.

B. We know that Groups are valuable to our members.

- Through reaching out and informing those who still suffer that we exist and are here to help, we will bring newcomers into our Groups to help guarantee that "When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, the hand of Al-Anon will always be there." We can assist with that in our local AIS area by spreading the word through public outreach.

C. Many members have a vision of our local Groups better reflecting our local demographics.

- Broad-reaching public outreach messaging reaches a broad demographic, far beyond word of mouth and health fairs, etc.

D. We now have volunteers with experience in working with media channels to put together awareness campaigns.

- That experience includes realizing that there are organizations who will place the ads and do the "heavy lifting" for us with no need for our volunteers to have specialized knowledge.
- The addition of Outreach Coordinators in Groups is positively affecting the number of members involved in public outreach and serving on the AIS Outreach committee.

E. Al-Anon's primary purpose is reaching out to those who are affected by alcohol.

However, even those not affected may know someone who needs our program. The greater the awareness in the general public, the more likely those who need us will find us." (The Best of Public Outreach, p-90)

What do we wish we knew, but don't?

- A. We don't know what our outreach volunteer resources will be in the future.
- B. We don't know how COVID-19 (or other future events) will impact our resources.
- C. We don't know what unforeseen expenses might arise, for example, the possibility of increased office rental expenses.
- D. We don't know the future costs of running broad-reaching public outreach campaigns utilizing existing and yet to be invented technologies.

3. What do we know about our "culture" and "environment" that is relevant to this discussion? In other words--Will our decision be consistent with our principles, policies, and legacies: The Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts? What are the implications of our choices? What are the pros and cons? (How would this affect our meeting? How would this affect our fellowship? Newcomers? Al-Anon (and A.A.) as a whole? Does our Service Manual provide any guidance about this issue? Pros/Cons: The advantages of this change might be? The disadvantages might be?) What do we wish we knew, but don't?

- ✓ Having wide-scale AIS outreach projects shows our members that AIS prioritizes the Tradition 5 message of our primary purpose, as well as it may energize more members to also carry the message.
- ✓ It may help members see that AIS is providing a valuable service that is visible and shows results by increasing newcomer attendance.
- ✓ Having a yearly line item of \$6,000 will encourage future AIS Outreach Coordinators to 'think big' yearly in ways to serve our area with outreach projects. It may help the Outreach Coordinator plan ahead knowing these monies are allocated as a line item.
- ✓ Having yearly AIS area-wide outreach projects will bring more people to Al-Anon and Alateen will help sustain and grow our membership, as well as improve the overall health and future of our Groups, our Districts, our Area, as well as Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole.
- ✓ Letting the public know about the help and hope available in Al-Anon is supported by our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
- ✓ Warranty One states: "That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle." In "Reserve Fund Guideline G-41" it states: "Some Areas use reserve funds to save money for future special projects such as a Public Outreach project that will carry the message to those suffering from the effects of living with a problem drinker." In reserving funds for the next 4 years, AIS would be doing exactly that.
- ✓ Warranty One says that "only" sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve... It does not encourage us to dwell in fear and "what ifs". None of us can predict the future. By working within the parameters the Guidelines in "Reserve Fund Guideline G-41," AIS would be in compliance with those suggestions and working with what we know today and putting our trust in a power greater than ourselves rather than guessing about the future.
- ✓ The \$25,000 ample reserve recommended by the Financial Task Force has exceeded the suggestions in G-41 for fiscal year 2020 and, as of the last available report, for fiscal year 2021 based on expenses. It is a generous ample reserve despite the reduced price and free shipping of literature during the pandemic as well as the expense last year's Outreach awareness campaign.
- ✓ We know that the 2020-21 AIS public outreach campaign made many more people aware of Al-Anon and Alateen. (Note: Responses are tracked electronically.)

- ✓ We know that the AIS Board and Council can vote to override this motion if there were to be some catastrophic event that required using the funds beyond the ample reserve to maintain the existence of Greater Seattle AIS.
- ✓ **"If... Al-Anon groups do not let the public know of our presence,... we block ourselves off from those in need."** (Lois Remembers, p-194)