

▼ CHAPTER 2

THE DISTRICT AND ITS DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

TWO TYPES OF DISTRICTS

A district is part of an area, one of the 93 areas that make up the U.S./Canada General Service Conference. Below are the two types of districts in general service.

Geographic District

This is the most common type of district. The number of groups in a district is usually determined by how many groups a district committee member, or DCM, can reasonably be expected to keep in touch with, learn their problems, and find ways to contribute to their growth. District boundaries may be redrawn should the number of groups increase or decrease significantly. (For more information see Appendix F, Redistricting.)

Linguistic District

To encourage participation of the maximum number of groups, some areas have incorporated linguistic districts within their structure. These districts are made up of groups that conduct meetings in languages including French, Spanish, Polish, Vietnamese and American Sign Language. They usually have a bilingual DCM or liaison. Their boundaries may be independent of the conventional geographic district boundaries.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DCM

The district committee member, or DCM, plays a vital role in general service. While the GSR is the voice of a *group*, the DCM is the voice of a *district*. A district needs a leader. The GSRs will look to the DCM for guidance on being GSRs and serving their groups. They will look to the DCM to lead on forming an agenda for district activities. They'll want to be inspired and encouraged, but not told what to do.

A DCM who can set their own opinions aside in favor of listening and supporting the district's GSRs and of understanding and advancing the conscience of the district's groups is practicing two important principles of leadership in A.A.: leading by example and serving with humility.

The DCM learns the thoughts, wishes and needs of the district's groups in different ways. Many districts set aside time in their meetings for GSRs to give reports on what's happening in their groups. This gives the DCM the opportunity to listen, to ask questions and to make suggestions (and to follow up to see if the suggestions helped).

The DCM also learns by visiting and communicating directly with the groups. Here, the DCM is serving as a resource — and not as a replacement for a GSR. In a group without a GSR, the DCM may be able to open a line of communication. Sometimes this stimulates interest within the group to want a GSR of their own.

What the DCM learns will eventually form the conscience of the district. As a member of the area committee, at area assemblies the DCM has the opportunity to express the district's conscience in more than one way:

- By asking questions and making suggestions on area business and proposing new ideas, perhaps for a new way to carry our message of recovery or a potential revision to a piece of A.A. literature.