

REGION 9 VITAL LINK:

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR REPRESENTATIVES

ATTENDING REGION 9 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
Introduction / Glossary	2
Region 9 Statement of Purpose	2
Where and when do we meet?	3
Why should my Intergroup send a Representative?	3
What qualifications are required to be a Representative?	3
What is the role of the Representative?	3
What is the Region Assembly composed of?	4
What is the purpose of the Assembly?	4
What services does Region 9 provide?	4
What are the main Region 9 documents?	5
Who is on the Region 9 Board and who is the Trustee?	5
How does the Region coordinate with other service bodies?	7
How is Region 9 funded?	8
What are our expenses?	8
What area does Region 9 cover?	8
Service Structure	9

INTRODUCTION

The Representative is a vital link in the chain of OA's Service Structure – You have been elected by your Intergroup (IG) or Language/National Service Board (NSB/LSB) to attend the R9 Assembly – congratulations!

If you are lucky, your predecessor has briefed you on the job or given you a file with information in it. If not, you may need to find out a lot, very quickly. We hope this booklet helps you.

Here are some of the questions that experienced members in OA are frequently asked about R9 service matters. These answers may give you a clearer idea of what the role of a Representative is in relation to the R9 assembly.

It must be emphasized that there are no 'right answers', only shared experience of what has worked well for others. All the suggested answers are to be found either in the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of OA, the R9 Bylaws or the Policies and Procedures (P&P) Manual of R9. Other sources of information are Groups, IGs and NSB/LSBs and previous year's R9 minutes, which are available [online](#). When in doubt, don't hesitate to ask the advice of more experienced OAs.

GLOSSARY

OA	Overeaters Anonymous
IG	Intergroup
BoT	Board of Trustees
WSBC	World Service Business Conference (also known as the Conference)
NSB/LSB	National/Language Service Board
R9	Region 9
WSO	World Service Office
RCC	Region Chairs Committee
BL	Bylaws
P&P	Policies and Procedures Manual
REP	Representative

REGION 9 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our statement of purpose reads: "Our primary purpose is to carry the OA message to the still suffering compulsive overeater, wherever they may live and whatever language they may speak. In fulfilling our purpose, we should ever strive to achieve worldwide unity and common policies among all countries. With love and tolerance as our code, together we can do what we could never do alone".

WHERE AND WHEN DO WE MEET?

Every year we hold an Assembly in which the officers of R9 meet with representatives from IGs and National/Language Service Boards (NSB/LSBs) from all over R9. Non-affiliated groups (groups which are not part of an IG) may also be represented.

We meet within R9. IGs and NSB/LSB who feel able to host the event make an application, with the selection usually taking place one-two years in advance.

WHY SHOULD MY INTERGROUP (IG) SEND A REPRESENTATIVE?

Because this is the only way to get your IG or NSB/LSB's views heard by the group conscience of R9 as a whole. If your representative isn't there you cannot contribute or change anything or indeed listen and take home to your IG or NSB/LSB news and views of what's going on elsewhere. When more representatives are present, the group conscience process is strengthened.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO BE A REPRESENTATIVE?

Your local IG or NSB/LSB decides. Successful representatives are OA members who have previously had some active experience of service at group, IG or NSB/LSB level and are familiar with the 12 Traditions, 12 Concepts of OA Service and the OA Service structure. This service is not appropriate for a newcomer. Qualifications are set by the local IG, or NSB/LSBs in their Bylaws.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE?

The representative at R9 Assembly has two important roles to carry out. First is to be the liaison person between their home Service Body and R9. In particular informing their home SB of R9 matters and informing the R9 assembly of the needs and wishes of their home SB. The other is take an active part in service at region level. This service may take the form of participation in one of the Task Forces, fulfilling one of the many volunteer positions in the Region, becoming a Board member, or any combination of these positions.

You should be aware that some service commitment may be required during the year after the Assembly. Each IG or Service Body decides for themselves the term that their representative will participate in R9 Assembly. As the first year is often a learning year, we recommend that representatives should serve a term for at least two years, providing some essential continuity which is beneficial to both R9 and the individual representative.

If the representative speaks English as their second language, it may take some time to become comfortable in the R9 Assembly environment. In this instance it may be more appropriate for the representative to bring this to the attention of their SB with a view to them serving for longer than the suggested two years.

WHAT IS THE REGION ASSEMBLY COMPOSED OF?

The Assembly is composed of a Board, and IG and NSB/LSB representatives. The Board members are elected at the Assembly for a period of two years and

a further two-year term if re-elected. The board members are: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Communications Officer. In addition, Committees are formed (from the representatives present) and Committee Chairs are elected or nominated. The R9 Trustee attends the Assembly and has a voice but no vote. Visitors are welcome as observers.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSEMBLY?

- To carry the OA message of recovery within R9
- To re-affirm OA unity within R9
- To report and discuss the different activities in the Region since the last Assembly
- To vote on Bylaw and Policy & Procedure manual changes, if any are proposed
- To elect new officers and Committee chairs
- To serve as a place where representatives from throughout the Region can get together to share their common experiences, problems and solutions
- To receive input and more information and news about the WSO from the BoT through the Trustee.

WHAT SERVICES DOES R9 PROVIDE?

Through our committees and other volunteer positions that operate year-round, R9 offers the following services to its members, NSB/LSBs, IGs and groups:

Budget and Finance

The Treasurer's main function is to project expenditure for the upcoming year, produce a budget and promote contributions throughout the Region. Details of our expenses are listed further in this document. The Treasurer is also responsible for our Projects and Translations Assistance fund.

Bylaws

The Assembly operates in accordance with Bylaws that were first laid down in the second Assembly of R9 (Munich 1985). Bylaws volunteers evaluate the Bylaws and P&P and propose changes/additions to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Assembly and the Region as a whole and are in accordance with OA Bylaws Subpart B.

Public Information (PI)

The PI committee selects one or more projects to work on throughout the year, to help bring the message about OA to the general public, or to help other members of OA in R9 with this important service.

Translations and Literature

We have volunteers reviewing our master lists of translated materials and literature, as well as a large glossary of OA terms. R9 Translation guidelines are available on the [website of R9](#).

Webmaster

R9 has a dedicated volunteer who assumes the role of webmaster for our website, www.oaregion9.org. The website is an important tool for us to keep vital information available to our member groups.

Sponsorship list

Individual OA members in R9 have access to a unique resource coordinated by two volunteers in the Region. Available sponsors are invited to register on the list, which is provided to OA members looking for a sponsor. Sponsors are available in many languages represented throughout the Region. Members can email sponsors@oaregion9.org to be added to the list and to find a sponsor or a sponsee.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN R9 DOCUMENTS?

Bylaws – Our Bylaws form our main official document which defines our structure, our affiliation with OA, our Purpose and our legal status as an organization.

Policies and Procedures – commonly referred to as our P&P, this document details how we go about achieving our goals, with a large portion devoted to our financial procedures, as well as job and taskforce descriptions.

Changes to these documents can only take place at our Annual Assembly, and as such, they are only updated once a year. The latest version of these documents can be found [here](#).

WHO IS ON THE R9 BOARD AND WHO IS THE TRUSTEE?

R9 Chair

The R9 Chair is elected by the R9 Assembly for a period of two years and fulfills a variety of duties; re-election for another two-year term is possible.

- Represents R9 at WSBC and is involved in different Conference Committees and activities
- Is invited with other Region Chairs to attend one BoT meeting each year
- Attends one additional Region Chairs Committee meeting held in conjunction with an assembly of one of the other regions
- Is a member of the WSBC's Region Chairs Committee (RCC), working in cooperation with the Chairs of the other 9 regions, meeting and communicating about the services and needs of all the regions
- Chairs the annual R9 Assembly, and R9 Board meetings
- Attends different functions within the Region and may hold Service and Traditions workshops where budget allows.
- Coordinates all activities of the R9 Board, its task forces and its volunteers

R9 Treasurer

The Treasurer is elected by the R9 Assembly for a period of two years and fills a variety of duties:

- Prepares an annual budget for approval of the assembly.
- Maintains records of all Income and expenses incurred by the different activities in the Region.
- Provide an annual report of all contributions received, as well as income and expenses.
- Maintains the R9 bank account and records of monies kept by different functions in other countries
- Liaises with the Accountant, signatories and the Banker as necessary.
- Liaison with some of the R9 volunteers.

R9 Secretary

The Secretary is elected by the R9 Assembly for a period of two years and fills a variety of duties:

- Maintaining accurate minutes and records of all Region decisions and actions at the Assembly.
- Scheduling regular Board meetings throughout the year, and recording decisions and reports.
- Coordinating various Assembly documents before Assembly
- Liaison with some of the R9 volunteers.

R9 Communications Officer

The Communications Officer (CO) position was created in 2016 to assist other board members and perform the duties of any board position when required. The CO is elected for two years, and fulfills a variety of duties, including:

- Liaison with the R9 fellowship through regular communications.
- Maintaining updated contact lists for OA members, groups and Service Bodies in R9.
- Liaison with some of the R9 volunteers.

R9 Trustee

The R9 Trustee is elected by the WSBC for a period of three years and fulfills a variety of duties:

- The Trustee is a member of the BoT (see more information below).
- Attends BoT meetings with BoT members and WSO staff in a face-to-face capacity or electronically.
- Is involved in different committees and activities at WSBC level and/or within the BoT.
- Carries the message of the BoT in the Region, by visiting and communicating with the NSB/LSB, IGs and groups within the Region and by holding workshops (these may have varying topics covering service, traditions, concepts, OA's primary purpose & topics from the strategic plan) in different locations throughout the Region.
- Works with the other trustees and the Region chairs on the strategic operations plan for OA.

- The Trustee attends, WSBC and WSO convention.
- The Trustee's expenses are met in part from the budget set and agreed upon by the trustees (this is funded from contributions from the worldwide fellowship) and in part when conducting a workshop, from the local SB.
- The Trustee also attends the R9 Assembly as the representative of the BoT and has a voice but not a vote.

HOW DOES THE REGION COORDINATE WITH OTHER SERVICE BODIES?

World Service Business Conference (WSBC)

The WSBC (the Conference) is an annual meeting of delegates from NSB/LSBs and IGs worldwide, held in April/May in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. The conference lasts five days with discussions, workshops, committees, debates and decisions relating to OA as a whole, and represents the Group Conscience of OA as a whole.

The WSBC discusses and provides guidelines for all aspects of OA group, IG and NSB/LSB activities – literature, budget, group handbook, committee guidelines, public information etc. All literature that is approved at the WSBC carries the 'conference seal of approval' which means that it represents the group conscience of OA as a whole.

OA also offers a Delegate support fund aimed at assisting NSB/LSBs and IGs for their delegates to attend WSBC. Contributions are received from service bodies throughout the fellowship and are distributed to NSB/LSBs and IGs who apply for assistance. Details can be received from www.oa.org.

Board of Trustees (BoT)

The BoT is comprised of Trustees from the ten different Regions, and six General Service Trustees, plus one Virtual Service Trustee each of whom are elected directly by the delegates to the WSBC. Candidates for Region Trustee are put forward to the Conference by the Regions. The main functions of the BoT are to represent OA as a whole, to act as guardians of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of Overeaters Anonymous and to promote education within the fellowship worldwide.

World Service Office

The WSO located in Albuquerque New Mexico, USA, provides a variety of services for the BoT, WSBC, Regions, NSB/LSBs, IGs and Groups, including:

- Clearing house for worldwide inquiries
- Providing information about OA to the still suffering compulsive overeater, to media representatives and health professionals interested in OA's Twelve-Step approach to recovery from compulsive overeating
- Supporting individual members and OA groups worldwide
- Registration of all OA groups, IGs and NSB/LSBs (available online)
- Providing everything new groups need to get started in the Group Starter Kit
- Providing office services to the BoT, WSBC and the World Service Convention, including printing and distribution of material

- Producing all the Conference and BoT approved literature
- Selling over 100 literature and recovery-related items which can be ordered from the Catalogue
- Producing and distributing of the quarterly newsletter *A Step Ahead*, and the *Courier* (newsletter for professionals) to all NSB/LSBs, IGs (available online)
- Website – maintaining the OA Website (www.oa.org)

HOW IS R9 FUNDED?

R9 is self-supporting, receiving contributions from its member NSB/LSBs, IGs, groups and non-affiliated groups. The surplus from our conventions/assemblies is an important source of funding for activities.

WHAT ARE OUR EXPENSES?

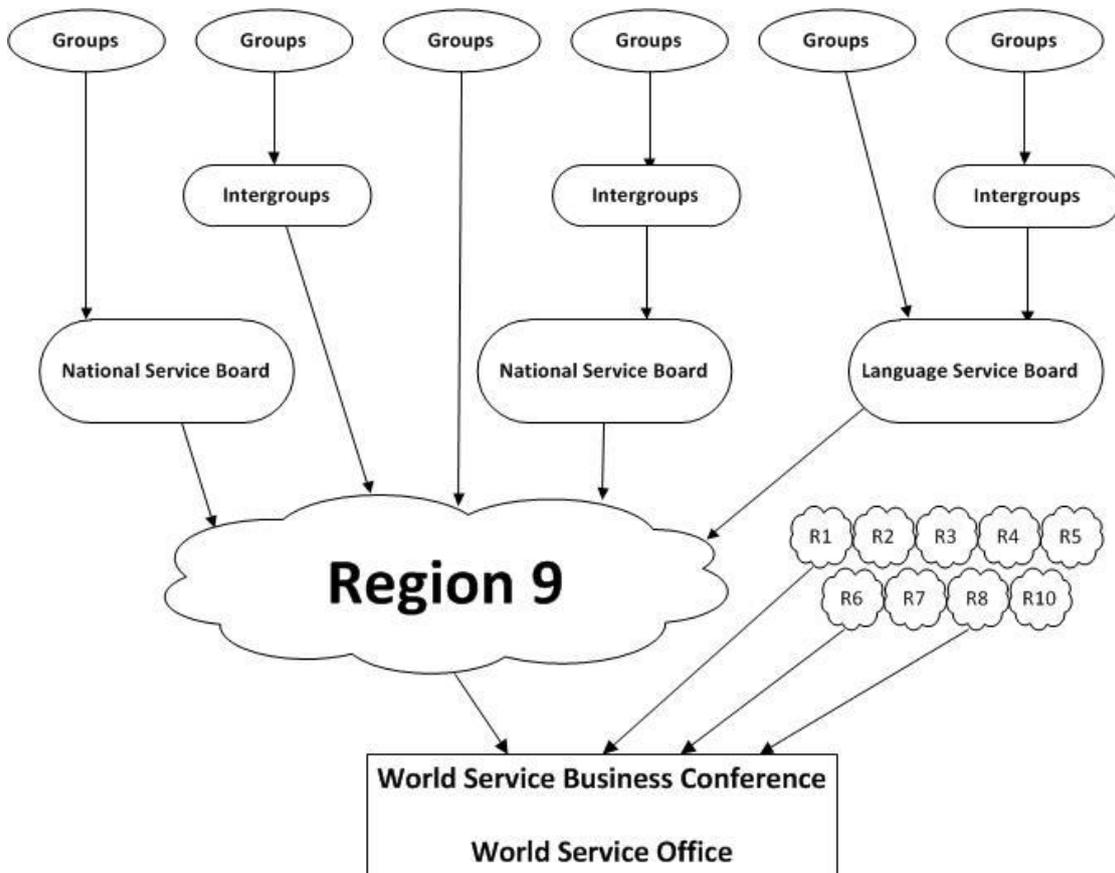
Due to the vast geographic range of our Region and our diversity in language, our expenses for travel and accommodation etc. are much higher than some other Regions and they are:

- Funding of R9 Officers to R9 Assemblies.
- Funding R9 Chair to WSBC; funding R9 Chair to Region Chairs Committee meetings when appropriate and when funds are available.
- Subsidizing NSB/LSB and IG representatives to attend R9 Assembly.
- Assistance to IGs, NSB/LSBs for translations and other projects.
- Website – maintaining the R9 Website – www.oaregion9.org.

WHAT AREA DOES R9 COVER?

R9 is composed of OA groups and IGs and NSB/LSBs in Africa, Europe, Middle East and Western Asia.

SERVICE STRUCTURE OF OA IN THE COUNTRIES THAT MAKE UP R9



Overall Service Structure

This chart shows the overall flow of service within the OA Fellowship.

One of the most important points to emphasize here is that there is no 'us' and 'them' in OA. We all are responsible for establishing OA policies and participating in group conscience decisions at all levels. Our views are important and participating in decision making on all levels is important. Members of our meetings are sent to IG, and IG sends representatives to the Region where perspectives can be heard from other members within in our Region. Then, at the WSBC, the GROUP CONSCIENCE of the body as a whole decides how we carry out our primary purpose.

OA is OUR PROGRAM, but it works only if you work it! If your meeting isn't sending a representative to IG, then your meeting does not have input into the process.

We can give service at all levels, and service of all kinds is essential to our continuing recovery as a Fellowship. We would not exist if people were not willing to extend their hands.

All of us can do some kind of service every day - let's all try to incorporate service into our daily lives by using this valuable tool of recovery.