

Question 1

Please enter your district number below (optional):

112 people answered this question. (24) from District 10, (7) from District 11, (1) from District 12, (1) from District 20, (6) from District 21, (11) from District 22, (3) from District 23, (1) from District 28, (8) from District 40, (2) from District 41, (2) from District 42, (6) from District 43, (2) from District 51, (3) from District 52, (3) from District 61, (5) from District 62, (6) from District 64, (3) from District 70, (2) from District 71, (5) from District 73, (1) from District 80, (8) from District 90, (1) from District 91, and (1) from Districts 40/42

Question 2

What is the purpose of the NIA 20 Committee? Of the Assembly?

110 people answered this question. The three main ideas expressed here are to collect an informed group conscience(74), to assist in carrying the message to the suffering alcoholics(31), and to educate people about service(6).

Question 3

How well do Area Standing Committees (i.e., Answering Service, Corrections, Treatment Facilities, etc.) assist Districts in carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic? In what ways can this work be improved?

109 people answered this question. Most people thought that the committees were doing a fine job with a handful saying that they need improvement. The most common suggestions for improvement are improved communication(14), encourage participation(8), attending district meetings(4), enthusiasm(5), more committee participation(4), more workshops(6), and focused breakouts at assemblies(3). Some other ideas mentioned are making better use of committee alternates, better reporting at assemblies, service sponsorship, encouraging GSR attendance, more surveys with results of survey going to the appropriate committee, DCM's should encourage participation from their service committees, and area committee chairs should contact DCM's requesting time at their district meetings.

Question 4

How can the Area better carry the message of our Legacies of Unity and Service (12 Traditions and 12 Concepts)?

79 people answered this question. The most popular answer was to hold more workshops(15). Some others that multiple people voiced are service sponsorship(4), hold breakouts at assemblies for newcomers about this(possibly led by past delegates)(3), visit district meetings and groups(4), encourage GSR attendance at area functions(3), and "by example-attraction rather than promotion"(2). Some other responses include providing \$10 gas cards to newcomers, reminding DCM of the importance of visiting all the groups in their district, 12x12x12, 'bring back the circle and triangle', and make them "fun".

Question 5

Did you attend the State Conference or Spring Conference in 2010? If yes, what parts were most beneficial to you?

118 people answered this question. 63.6% answered "yes"(65 people) and 36.4%(43 people) answered "no". The most popular beneficial parts of the conferences were the main speakers(22), workshops(8), panels(6), alcathons(6), fellowship(5), "service stuff"(5), the assembly combined with the conference(4), archives(2), GSO staff on program(2), and the hospitality room(2). Some other responses are concepts panel, dancing, seeing Judd and his laptop, movies, "it was close to my mother-in-laws house", movies, skits, banquets, the registrar, Big Book study, service fair, meditation room, and service work/being involved

Question 6

How do Area-sponsored conferences (spring conference / state conference) fit with our stated purpose of service? Be specific.

85 people answered this question. The most popular responses were that service focused conferences help to educate members about the importance of and also the how-to of various aspects of service work(16), they help to increase communication(12), through carrying the message(15), fellowship(13), generating enthusiasm(5), and exposing individuals to a broader picture of Alcoholics Anonymous(3).

Some other answers include "I feel they have become more of a ritual than anything aimed at achieving a specific purpose", "It seems to me that the Spring and State Conferemce do not support the purpose of service. They are mostly just focused on having fun and talking about sobriety. They are a waste of dollars put in the basket by paying for service members to stay in the hotels and eat. At least we don't pay for them to drink.", "In years that NIA hosts the State Conference we should not hold a Spring Conference.", "Mixing Business and fun is a good idea. I didn't think so last year but the business is becoming fun for me."

Question 7

What can the Area do to encourage growth of AA within Northern Illinois?

87 people responded to this question. Some of the common answers are by holding more workshops(11), encouraging participation(9), through service sponsorship(7), more GSR education(5), better communication(4), by members sharing there service experience highlighting the benefits(4), and by area committee members attending more district meetings(4). Some of the other responses, are "Encourage GSR's to be cheerleaders", educate DCM's, "STOP FIGHTING ABOUT MONEY!!", the delegate should attend more group business meetings, "getting back to the basics of old time AA", "At assemblies be encouraging rather than shaming. You might get a person to one assembly but if the elected servants put the "ass" in assembly you may not get that person to come back.", hold mini-assemblies in four quadrants of NIA to promote participation, "Outstep the bounds of tradition. Advertise. Take out ads.", "Keep trudging the happy road of destiny." and "Keep talking."

Question 8

What more can/should the Area do with 'Dark Districts'? (dark districts lack support and financial resources to provide services to local AA groups).

93 people answered this question. The most common answers were visit groups in the district with our experience(16), meeting raids/field trips/traveling road shows with area committee members visiting groups in dark districts as groups educating and spreading enthusiasm(10), encourage healthy districts to adopt struggling districts(7), absorb them into neighboring districts(7), bring workshops there(3), recruit a volunteer or two from that district(2), and nothing but encourage and pray(3). Another common thread was to offer financial help where needed. Some other responses were "Dark districts may be doing just fine. They obviously do not see any benefit in being involved in the larger AA community.", have LCM's from neighboring districts visit meetings there, "plant seeds", "Not an area issue-is a district issue.", "Have someone shame them into contributing.", and "Have a Roving Ambassador to travel as a representative."

Question 9

Please enter your district number below (optional):

102 people answered this question. (23) from District 10, (13) from District 22, (7) from District 90, (6) from District 40, (6) from District 43, (6) from District 64, (5) from District 11, (5) from District 21, (5) from District 73, (4) from District 62, (3) from District 23, (2) from District 41, (2) from District 42, (2) from District 51, (2) from District 61, (2) from District 70, (2) from District 71, (1) from District 12, (1) from District 20, (1) from district 80, (1) from District 91

Question 10

What can be done to improve Area Assemblies?

The majority of answers regarding location state that we need to have the assemblies centrally located or have more in the western portion of our area. Regarding frequency: (7) people would like three or less assemblies per year and (2) people suggested monthly assemblies. (6) people said that they would like a shorter assembly. Comments concerning agenda include: more focus to issues that matter to groups and GSR's, publicizing the agenda more and turning in written reports rather than reporting verbally. (13) people commented that they did not like combining the Spring Assembly with the Spring Conference. (7) people reported that they did like combining the assembly with the conference. A few other suggestions are to have a facility map at the registration table, to not announce anniversaries because it is time consuming, and to use an air horn rather than a bell.

Question 11

What can be done to improve Area Committee Meetings?

It seems that this question confused many people. Many people were reporting on assemblies rather than committee meetings. The overall opinion is that people are satisfied with committee meetings. There were (7) suggestions to shorten the meetings and (1) suggestion to discontinue them. Another person suggested that we eliminate DCM reports.

Question 12

How well does the Area Inform and collect the group conscience about the General Service business? About Area business?

(39) people were satisfied (53%), (9) people were dissatisfied (12%), (7) people had no opinion (23%), and (8) people gave ideas of thing we could change (11%). 93 people answered this question. While this was a two part question most people either agreed or disagreed the same with both parts of the question. Many comments suggest that collecting group conscience about General Service business is difficult because there is so much information and so little time to get it back to the groups. The information needs to be simplified so that it is easier for GSR's to pass info along to groups. Many people commented on their district and group involvement rather than the Area's. There were a couple of requests for receiving General Service information via the web.

Question 13

How well do we educate about the value and purpose of a GSR?

95 people answered this question. (31 people; 32%) were satisfied, (24 people; 25%) were dissatisfied, (19 people; 20%) had no opinion, and (22 people; 23%) gave ideas. While a third of the people were satisfied, additional education ideas are: Carry out the service orientation workshops that were approved, GSRs should have a "first step meeting", DCM workshop on how to encourage and educate GSR's, a recurring theme is that GSR's are lost, and host quarterly GSR schools in different locations.

Question14

How well are we educating people about the Service Structure?

84 people answered this question. (14 people; 16%) were satisfied, (23 people; 27%) were dissatisfied, (31 people; 36%) had no opinion, and (18 people; 21%) gave ideas. The greatest concern expressed was that additional education is needed. Some of the ideas were to have an area on our website where people can direct questions about General Service, more workshops, more service fairs and orientations, to make more literature available, and also to hold a GSR conference.

Question15

Please enter your district number below (optional):

97 started this portion of the survey - 21% district 10, 5% district 11, 2% district 12, 5% district 21, 11% district 22, 3% district 23, 6% district 40, 2% district 41, 2% district 42, 6% district 43, 2% district 51, 3% district 52, 2% district 61, 4% district 62, 6% district 64, 3% district 70, 3% district 71, 5% district 73, 5% district 90, 1% district 91

Question16

Are Area Officers and Standing Committee chairs elected or chosen with care and consideration on the basis that serving is a great responsibility?

80% of 92 answered say YES and feel this done with care. 20% say NO and indicate concerns with the following variety of points - 1. Politics / Ego get involved or its a popularity contest
2. Just looking to 'fill a slot' or 'rope' people in to service
3. Not enough advanced notice of who is in the running
Suggestions: more training for new people in roles they are not familiar with more advanced knowlledge to districts of who the potential candidates are more committee involvement in election process

Question17

Are GSRs fully informed on the members standing for Area office?

45.7% of 92 answered say yes. 54.3% say no and make the following points -
1. If GSRs attended assemblies, it would be yes 2. Most people do not know who they are voting for 3. Could do a better job at the district level communicating info about candidates

Question18

How well do we participate in the spirit of rotation?

89 responses. 54 respondents indicate satisfaction with rotation as we are presently doing it. Remaining responses include the following: 1. did not know about rotation 2. would work better if there were more people participating to serve 3. some positions, namey concepts, should rotate more frequently

Question19

Are incoming trusted servants fully informed of their responsibilities and provided with the information necessary to serve effectively?

83 responses, 63.9% yes, 39.1% no. Prevailing comments include the following:
1. There could be better turnover from one chair to the next 2. Past experiences should be set on paper to be shared with incoming servants. 3. Certainly not to begin with - maybe pass out packets to interested people before they volunteer - this is probably a district/goup education
4. Previous trusted servants should be obligated to provide as much help as possible to their successors.

Question20

Are we making the best possible use of past experience (past delegates and trusted servants)?

85 responses - 69.4% yes, 30.6% no. Suggestions include the following: 1. Consider having a mentor program 2. Could ask them to speak more 3. Should advise on committees to generate ideas 4. All past delegates should be budgeted for past delegates conference

Question21

Rotation is a valuable principle that ensures healthy growth of our area and the transition isn't always smooth. What could we do better to make rotation work for us?

80 responses. Prevailing comments / suggestions include: 1. Need a better transition plan for old members helping the newer 2. Make transition planning a part of duties and responsibilities 3. Need to have stronger alternates willing to step up to chair when term ends 4. Chair people should stay in term until an alternate can be found for continuity 5. Alternates and chairs should not rotate on same year

Question22

Are new GSRs given enough information and support to be effective?

80 responses, 56.3% yes, 43.8% no. 1. Group support is lacking for GSR education 2. Mentor / service sponsor program needed 3. Groups don't understand the importance 4. Could an online course be created and posted for any GSR to access? 5. Introduce service members to GSRs so they know who is who and who to ask questions

80 responses, 56.3% yes, 43.8% no. 1. Group support is lacking for GSR education 2. Mentor / service sponsor program needed 3. Groups don't understand the importance 4. Could an online course be created and posted for any GSR to access? 5. Introduce service members to GSRs so they know ho is who and who to ask questions

Question23

Do new GSRs stick with us?

63 responses, 55.6% yes, 44.4% no. 1. Need a new area or district position to go to each GSR meeting place for introduction 2. They may not know what they are supposed to be doing 3. Groups do not understand / support the role of the GSR. Most GSRs dont either so when they come to area, they get bombarded with all they have to do and how important they are not equipped to follow through with their groups support

Question24

Is the Area attracting a diverse cross-section of members willing to become trusted servants within Northern Illinois?

71 responses, 70.4% yes, 29.6% no 1. Service heavy districts dominate area service 2. Would like to see more young people 3. Would like to see more spanish apeaking and african american representatives

Question25

Please enter your district number below (optional):

88 people answered this question. (17) from District 10, (4) from District 11, (1) from District 12, (0) from District 20, (4) from District 21, (12) from District 22, (3) from District 23, (0) from District 28, (5) from District 40, (2) from District 41, (1) from District 42, (5) from District 43, (1) from District 51, (3) from District 52, (2) from District 61, (2) from District 62, (6) from District 64, (3) from District 70, (3) from District 71, (5) from District 73, (0) from District 80, (6) from District 90, (1) from District 91, and (1) from Districts 40/42

Question26

Is Area 20 prudent in its financial affairs and with its use of group contributions?

87 people answered this question. 93.1% said yes, and 6.9% said no. The most predominant concern expressed in the comments was regarding the costs of our conferences; with some citing concerns about contracts, and two expressed specific concerns about Area funds being spent on Area trusted servants staying at hotels. An additional specific comment was made here about printing and mailing costs. Several positive comments about PPR.

Question27

Is Area 20 incurring unnecessary expenses (i.e. travel, printing, copying, etc.)?

56 people answered this question. 19.5% said yes, 80.5% said no. The largest concern expressed was about the costs of copies, with concern about conference costs being the second largest concern. Two people made comments about the Area purchasing literature and indicated that this should be done at the Group and District levels. A specific comment about paying for hotel rooms of Area trusted servants.

Question28

Is Area 20 adequately supporting our committees and other activities and at the proper financial level?

81 people answered this question. 96.3% said yes, 3.7% said no. There were two comments about "special collections" which seemed to be about pink & green can funds. It seems that these related that if these special collections are needed, then the Area is not funding enough. Another specific comment was in regards to Groups stepping up and participating more. This question did seem to have a number of people who said they didn't know.

Question29

Does the average member understand what the financial responsibility of being self supporting is as it relates to Area services?

79 people answered this question. 27.8% said yes, and 72.2% said no. The largest comment was that most people do not understand past the group level. The comments also indicated that many don't seem to care past the group level. A specific comment was made about CASO (Chicago Area Service Office) and that groups support it rather than NIA. One felt that people understand GSO and District, but not Area. One suggestion was to have 15 minute "talks" at District meetings to help GSRs understand better. A specific comment about people still think \$1 in the basket is enough.

Question30

Does Area 20 provide Districts and other service entities the opportunity to be fully self-supporting?

70 people answered this question. 92.9% said yes, and 7.1% said no. There seemed to be a theme about the Area overstepping it's boundaries and doing things for the Districts that it shouldn't. A specific comment about buying Big Books at the Area level, rather than leaving that to Groups and Districts. Comments concerning the Area bring workshops to the District were positive, and suggestion for more of these.

Question31

Should the Area provide further financial support to District Committee Members in service to the area?

63 people responded to this question. 58.7% said yes, 41.3% said no. This questions was the most evenly divided amongst those pertaining to finance. While it was acknowledge that Groups should support the District, and District should be self supporting, it seems that there is support for the Area to help those District more that are struggling financially, particularly in economically distressed areas. Several comments regarding support to dark Districts, and that this type of funding may help get them more active.

Question32

Do you understand Primary Purpose Financing?

82 people answered this question. 74.4% said yes, and 25.6% said no. Many comments showing strong support for the effort, and only 1 person commented that it was a bad idea, sighting there were too many steps and it was non-responsive. One comment stating the groups don't like the pink & green cans. Several comments that they hadn't heard of it, needed to have multiple explanations, or simply that it should be explained more frequently.

Question33

What more can Area 20 do to educate its members about Primary Purpose Financing?

62 people answered this question. The predominate suggestions were either to visit Districts to explain, or to host workshops. A suggestion pertaining to better educating of the District Treasurer in specific to help them be a resource. One suggestions was for a Primary Purpose Finance Handbook to be created. Overall consensus seems to be that we could and should do more at the Area level to help the District understand PPR, which includes simple explanations and e-mails or web site page.

Question34

Please enter your district number below (optional):

83 people answered this question. (15) from District 10, (4) from District 11, (1) from District 12, (0) from District 20, (4) from District 21, (10) from District 22, (3) from District 23, (0) from District 28, (6) from District 40, (1) from District 41, (1) from District 42, (6) from District 43, (1) from District 51, (3) from District 52, (2) from District 61, (2) from District 62, (6) from District 64, (3) from District 70, (3) from District 71, (5) from District 73, (0) from District 80, (5) from District 90, (1) from District 91, and (1) from Districts 40/42

Question35

Do all districts feel a part of our Area and receive equal attention and service?

72 people answered this question. 69.4% said yes, and 30.6% said no. The majority of the respondents felt that enough was being done. One feeling is that the collar Districts do not receive the same amount of attention that the more central or north eastern Districts do. A suggestion to have Area people visit Districts, there was one comment that the Districts themselves need to open up. Comments seem to relate to the experience of the member's District, & the activity level of their DCM(s). In those Districts that have active participation, there seems to be the perspective that they are connected. It is hard to tell if the comments on the collar Districts are from members who live there, or the perspective of people who they themselves have limited experience of connection, and transfer that perspective to outlying Districts. Another key comment was that perhaps more could be done for dark Districts. That perhaps the Area needs to reach out more to them, or that these Districts should be encouraged to either partner up with stronger Districts or become absorbed in to stronger Districts

Question36

What more can the Area do to foster cooperation and communication amongst the Districts in our Area?

65 people answered this question. There were a number of suggestions to encourage Districts to co-host various events such as conferences, workshops and Assemblies. Some specific comments were made regarding DCMs and the need to somehow be better connected, not only as a liaison between the Districts and the Area, but between themselves. This included the idea that they should be a committee that works together, rather than strictly being "talked to". Again, suggestions to visit the Districts, with the acknowledgement that the Districts need to invite the Area. A comment about attraction rather than promotions, but sometimes you need to promote attraction.

Question37

Does our Area structure foster communications within AA (i.e., between Groups, Districts, the Area and GSO)? A need to develop better committees (as in a group of people rather than a few individuals)

73 people answered this question. 84.9% said yes, 15.1% said no. There were a couple suggestions to send information to groups that appear to have no active participation. That there should be more communication within these committees rather than being divided entities doing their own thing. More communication between the Districts. A comment that acknowledges that alcoholics isolate, and that work needs to happen on a one to one basis. Reach out better to dark Districts. Two specific comments were that we do a poor job and we need to do more.

Question38

Is there adequate cooperation and communication between the Districts and the Area?

80 people answered this question. 75.0% said yes, and 25.0% said no. While there were a number of comments about using the internet more, there was also the concern that we leave people behind who are not connected. A comment about a "committee of one." A comments about how Groups don't know what District or Area they are in. A few comments regarding the activity level of Districts and DCMs and how that challenges communication.

Question39

Are the Area Service Committees doing the actual work intended for the Groups and Districts or are they trying to coordinate and communicate that work? Please cite examples.

53 people answered this question. The comment that came through the most was that the Groups need to be more responsible, and that the Area is sometimes overstepping it's boundaries. Comments were made referencing that it depends entirely on the committee, and that some do better than others. A comment that the Area Committee chairs should do more to promote ideas and foster cooperation between Districts. Specific comment about buying literature at the Area level is not part of the job of the Area. Find a way to engage GSRs and Groups more in the process.

Question40

Should there be an option to receive the Area Newsletter (Concepts) in an electronic format only?

84 people responded to this question. 73.8% said yes, 26.2% said no. Of those who said no to the questions, it seems that the concern is for those who do not have access to a computer and the internet. In addition, it was acknowledged that this might be a database nightmare. The reasons sited were that it would save money on both printing and mailing costs. A few comments were positive that it would be a good option, but that they themselves would prefer to still have a printed copy, and that it might be harder to share with individual groups. The largest concern in opposition is that many still do not have access to computers. However, there is strong support to make this an option, not an entirely either or proposition. Also the idea of password protected version on the web, and anonymity protected.

Question41

Should there be an option to receive the Area Minutes in an electronic format only?

71 people answered this question. 77.5% said yes, and 22.5% said no. Like the idea of the newsletter in an electronic format, there's a concern for those who do not have computer or internet access. One comment suggested a brief summary page with bulleted items. A suggestion that was made in both is the idea of somehow having the ability to sign up for e-mail "alerts" which include events, links for registrations, updates to the web, etc. And again, as an option that was clear so that those who are uncomfortable with technology would feel no pressure to change from printed.