

## Re-establishing the Ottawa ACA Organization

Once all restrictions due to the COVID-19 situation are removed, it is hoped that in-person meetings in the Ottawa will be re-established. However, certain measures will need to be taken to accomplish this. When the aca organisation in this region was first started during the late 1980's and early 1990's, it was supported by a committee called the Intergroup. This Intergroup would meet monthly and consist of a least one representative from each of the groups existing at that time. Its meetings would deal with issues affecting the entire membership and pass along news from one group to all the others. I feel it will be necessary to create a new intergroup or committee to re-establish the multiple meetings again.

The new committee will have to deal with several factors to achieve this task. The main points include location, affordability, accessibility, and scheduling. Location is important because the regular attendance of the meeting could be very well affected by it. Access to good public transportation, free parking, and good travel routes are usually necessary to enable members to come more regularly. Meetings held in the suburbs were usually not as well-liked because they were harder for most members to get to. Also, a clean comfortable climate-controlled space with wheelchair access can be important for some individuals. Another important factor is the scheduling of the meeting. The first 3 weekdays were always the most popular with our organisation while Fridays and Saturdays were the least. The start time was always at 7pm because members needed enough interval to get home, have dinner and travel to the location.

Unlike all the meetings before 2007 which required no rental or insurance, meetings now will likely require some funds to book a place. Even churches may require some liability insurance to be obtained before granting a space. In the past, a typical cost for insurance was usually more than \$1000 annually for \$2 million coverage. Rental fees could vary widely. Recently, we have found renting an Ottawa city facility was the most reasonable, renting a city lounge with a maximum accommodation of 15 for 2 hours in the evening was less that \$20 per evening for non-profit organisations such as 12 step groups, etc. plus we were covered under the city's insurance policy. Since our in-person and on-line meetings never go over 15 this size should be large enough. However, all bookings with the city require payment at least a month before an event and a fee is charged for any refund requested (more than a single night's rental). The availability of a space from any city facility will be determined by the bookings of that facility. Some community centres will have no available space during certain periods because of heavy bookings. It is best to book at spot for a period of 3 to 6 months because members want a constant continuing meeting place. This also creates more loyalty by the facility's manager to keep you and prevents other groups from taking over your meeting spot.

The ACA council should have a treasurer and a backup to maintain some funds for establishing new meetings and helping the groups through tough times. The council may wish to establish a bank account but be careful as some banks do not like small rarely used accounts and could impose extra charges. An account will enable the council to issue and receive checks.

Please note as above, most new groups will not have the necessary funds to rent a location. Also, a policy should be set up that if a group does fold and still has money remaining, those resources should be donated to the council for future use. Council should also have a location booker to arrange the rentals and act as the contact person on the contracts. This person is necessary to receive notifications from the rental agency if schedule changes must be made if the rental location is made unavailable for various reasons (fire, election polling station, or water damage, etc.). This contact person will be required to provide their real name and contact information on any contracts.

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