

Virginia Area Policy: Transforming Electronic Groups to Al-Anon Family Groups (AFGs)

Version History

Original: Transforming Electronic Groups to AFGs Policy, approved Spring Assembly, May 15, 2022

Revision 1: presented at Officers Meeting, January 14, 2023 *this would be updated when final approval received*

Purpose

This document is the policy of the Area 57 (Virginia) Assembly providing guidelines to the VA Area on administering Electronic AFGs into and/or out of the VA Area.

Introduction

The need for a Virginia Area policy regarding the transformation of Electronic Groups to Al-Anon Family Groups (AFGs) grew out of the 2021 World Service Conference (WSC) approval of two motions. The first of these motions changed the status of permanent electronic groups with no representation to Al-Anon Family Group status entitled to elect representatives. The second of the motions allowed for all permanent electronic groups to form a new Electronic Area and petition the WSC for admittance to that body.

Now that the new Electronic Area has formed and has been admitted to the WSC as of April 25, 2022, each newly formed AFG may now decide whether it wants to remain affiliated with the newly formed Electronic Area or if it wants to petition an existing geographic Area for admission to that Area. Now that the new Electronic Area has been admitted to the WSC, the new Al-Anon policy is that all groups are AFGs and are entitled to elect their representatives and to have voice and vote at the District, Area and World Service levels.

To change a permanently electronic group to a new Area, the Virginia Area's policy will be guided by the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p. 162, "Miscellaneous: Renaming an Area, Changing a Group/District to a New Area." WSO has defined the newly formed Electronic Area as having a contiguous boundary with every other Area.

The Virginia Area Policy for transformation of electronic groups to AFGs will account for: 1) Permanent electronic groups petitioning to join the Virginia Area; 2) A Virginia Area AFG that has voted to be permanently electronic and wishes to leave the Virginia Area and petition to join a contiguous Area, such as the new Electronic Area; 3) A Virginia Area AFG that was previously face-to-face and now wishes to be permanently electronic and maintain its historic District and Area affiliation; 4) A newly formed Virginia Area AFG that is permanently electronic.

Procedures

1. Permanent Electronic Groups Petitioning to Join the Virginia Area

In keeping with the current AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual recommendations, the Virginia Area will accept the petitioning group, provided that the following conditions are met:

- The group currently belongs to an Area that is a recognized member of WSC and has a Process/Policy approved by that Area's Assembly for allowing Permanent Electronic groups to join another Area.
- The Area that the petitioning group is leaving is contiguous to the Virginia Area.
- The group has held a Group Conscience and the members agree to this process.
- The group follows the Process of the Area it wishes to leave and is granted approval. That Area sends a letter to the Virginia Area Chair indicating that it agrees to this process.
- The group agrees to give up participation in the first Area since a group may belong to only one Area.
- The group petitions the Virginia Area Chair for approval to join.
- Once the Virginia Area Officers grant approval, the Virginia Area Secretary will send a letter stating such to the Area that the petitioning group is leaving.
- The Virginia Area will then follow WSOs procedure for notification that the AFG has been approved to change Areas.

District Affiliation of the Newly Admitted Group

If the new group has some connection to an existing Virginia Area District and that District is willing to accept the new group, the newly admitted group will be assigned to that District, and Virginia Area Group Records procedures for indicating such will be followed.

If the new group *does not* have a connection to an existing Virginia Area District, the Virginia Area Officers may assist the new group in establishing a connection.

2. A Permanently Electronic Virginia Area AFG Petitioning to Leave the Virginia Area and Join a Contiguous Area

In the case of a permanently electronic Virginia Area group that wishes to leave the Virginia Area and petition to join another Area, the process is similar to that of a permanently electronic group petitioning to join the Virginia Area.

- The Area which the Virginia Area group wishes to join must be a recognized member of the WSC and have a Process/Policy approved by that Area's Assembly for accepting Permanent Electronic groups from another Area.
- The Area that the leaving group wishes to join is contiguous to the Virginia Area, either an Area that borders Virginia geographically, or the new Electronic Area, which is considered contiguous to every other WSC Area.
- The leaving group has held a Group Conscience and the members agree to this process.
- The group petitions the Virginia Area Chair for approval to leave the Virginia Area. The leaving group agrees to give up participation in the Virginia Area once it is accepted into the new Area, since a group may belong to only one Area.

- After the Area Officers grant approval for the petitioning group to leave the Virginia Area, the Virginia Area Chair will contact the Chair of the Area the group wishes to join and that Area's Process/Policy will then be followed.
- The new Area sends the Virginia Area Chair a letter indicating that the leaving group is accepted into the new Area and provides notification to WSO of their acceptance.

3. a. A Virginia Area AFG That Was Previously Face-to-Face and Now Wishes to Be Permanently Electronic and Maintain its Historic District and Area Affiliation

Some Virginia Area groups that changed from meeting face-to-face to temporarily electronic, either via phone or a virtual platform, during the Covid-19 shutdown, now wish to remain permanently virtual. A group may now become permanently electronic, delete a physical location from their Group Record, and remain a member of the Virginia Area and their historic District.

The Virginia Area Group Records procedure currently facilitates the listing of permanent electronic groups in the Virginia Area, while the WSO Group Records process continues to evolve.

b. Formerly Face-to-Face Virginia Area Groups that Wish to Become Hybrid

Groups that meet face-to-face while simultaneously providing an electronic platform, also known as a hybrid groups, are not affected by this policy. The WSO currently does not distinguish groups as specifically hybrid. All groups are now considered as Al-Anon Family Groups by the WSO. The Virginia Area has established a Group Records procedure to list hybrid groups' electronic meeting information at both the Virginia Area and the WSO levels.

4. A Newly Formed Virginia Area AFG That is Permanently Electronic

Prior to May 15, 2022, when the Virginia Area Assembly first approved the [Virginia Area Policy: Transforming Electronic Groups to AFGs](#), the Virginia Area was precluded by WSO from registering a newly formed meeting *without* a physical address (i.e., a Permanently Electronic meeting) **and** associating it with the Virginia Area. This type of registration is now possible and is no different than registering a face-to-face or hybrid meeting. Please refer to the Virginia Area Group Records Process posted on the Virginia Area website [here](#)