

Virginia Area Boundary Policy and Procedures Motion
VA Area 2024 Spring VAWSC
March 2, 2024

This motion was approved: **insert date**

MOTION:

Made by: Area Officers

Seconded by:

The VA Area Officers recommend that the VAWSC approve the VA Area Boundary Policy for establishing VA Area procedures for changing District and Area Boundaries of the Virginia Area, and send it to the 2024 VA Spring Assembly for their approval in May 2024.

Background Information:

In the 2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual General Information for Assemblies, “Groups or Districts located in one Area contiguous with another Area may, through group conscience and following Area procedures, choose to participate in the second Area and give up participation in the first Area, as agreed upon by both Areas.”

Changes to District or Area boundaries must demonstrate that the links of service will significantly improve. The primary risk of changing boundaries is that communication will be broken. The Area is responsible for maintaining Group Records at WSO. This includes the contact information for each Group, assigning Groups to the correct District, and the District information in each Area. Boundary changes for the convenience of a member will not be considered by the Area or WSO. WSO has the final approval of any Area boundary changes.

Informed group conscience will be used when considering changes to boundaries. GRs must be given ample notice and opportunity to participate in the group conscience at both the District level and at the Group meetings before any requests are made. In keeping with 1 VA Area Boundary Procedure LRPC FINAL 01/13/2024 Warranty Three of Concept Twelve, “...all important decisions will be made by discussion, vote, and, wherever possible, by unanimity.

- The Virginia Area was approached and asked to consider facilitating the realignment of Groups between Districts within the Virginia Area and between the Virginia Area and another contiguous Area. The *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p. 67, defines an Area as “comprised of Groups and Districts in a determined location that can be geographically or non-geographically defined.” The *Service Manual*, p. 74, defines a District as “comprised of Groups segmented either by geography within a geographic Area or other commonality within a non-geographic Area.”
- Districts are a collection of Groups typically aligned by geography, language and/or technology.
 - As of now the Virginia Area does not have a policy to guide how to redraw boundaries between Districts or between Areas.
 - The *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p. 162, states: “Groups or Districts located in one Area contiguous with another Area may, through Group conscience and following **Area procedures**, choose to participate in the second Area and give up participation in the first Area, as agreed upon by both Areas.”

- No additional information is posted on the World Service Office (WSO) website or in the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.
- The Virginia Area will need to have a policy in place to accommodate District boundary requests, both internal to and between the Virginia Area and an adjacent Area.
- This VA Area Boundary Policy is intended to establish “**Area procedures**” as stated in the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p. 162.

Virginia Area Boundary Policy

- The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) established a VA Area Boundary Policy Sub-Committee, chaired by Tom S., past VA Area Chair, Panel 59, and assisted by Terry W., past VA Area Delegate, Panel 59.
- The LRPC charged the VA Area Boundary Policy Sub-Committee with the task of “*developing a Policy for the Virginia Area to address boundary changes between Districts within the Virginia Area, and between the Virginia Area and a contiguous Area.*” The purpose of the new Policy is to establish an **Area process** to guide both Districts and the Area on how to accomplish boundary changes.

The Knowledge Based Decision Making Questions (KBDM):

1. **What do we know about the Fellowship’s needs, wants, or preferences that are relevant to this discussion?**
 - WSO will not approve one AFG moving to a contiguous Area.
 - The VA Area has been asked recently by a few groups how they could move their group or groups from one District to another contiguous District to shorten the distance for their GRs to attend District meetings.
 - Currently the VA Area does have a process in place to change an individual group’s affiliation from one District to another. This process applies only to the group requesting a change in District affiliation. The “Transforming Electronic Groups to AFGS,” passed by the VA Area Spring 2022 Assembly established that process.
 - Another group that is located close to the group requesting a move would *not* have its District affiliation affected.
 - If a new group forms within the District’s geographic boundaries, that new group will belong to the original geographic District, regardless that a nearby Group changed its District affiliation.
 - That first group, the group that changed its affiliation to a contiguous District, is ‘grandfathered’ into that new District.

- However, the VA Area *does not* have a process in place to redraw District boundaries so that all the groups, current and future, could be moved to a contiguous District. This new VA Area Boundary Policy addresses that case.
- The VA Area has been discussing the Eastern Shore District, which has been inactive in the VAWSC and the VA Area Assembly for a long time. It has been learned recently that at least one of the Eastern Shore AFGs has been affiliating itself with the Maryland/DC Area. There is one inactive AFG listed on the WSO website and in the VA Group records. Three additional AFGs are registered currently in the Eastern Shore District.
- The Maryland/D.C. Area recently asked the VA Area to allow one VA Eastern Shore AFG to be affiliated with the Maryland/D.C. Area.
- Both the WSO and the VA Area group records would like to resolve the issue of which Area to assign these 6 Groups to.
- In order to resolve the Eastern Shore District matter, the VA Area needs to establish a process to accomplish an Area Boundary Change.

2. What do we know about the ability of the Virginia Area to support this topic?

- We know that the VA Area has redrawn District Boundaries in the past. No one currently serving was present during that time and we do not have documentation of how those changes were managed.
- The VA Area is capable of creating a new policy that can serve as guidelines to the current questions around redrawing District Boundaries, and also serve as a guideline for any Boundary matters that may arise in the future. The VA Area has developed policies that addressed other issues that have arisen within the VA Area.

3. What do we know about the current and future items and trends that are relevant to this discussion?

- Groups open and groups fold. Districts add groups and lose groups. Population in Virginia shifts over time.
- As our Districts are confronted with these changes, they need a process to redraw their boundaries to suit the needs of the AFGs they serve.
- The recent growth of virtual and hybrid AFGs may also impact the Districts' groups and the ability of their GRs to attend District meetings. The goal is for the District meetings to be as accessible as possible, whether that is by changing the geography of the District, or in adding virtual or hybrid District meetings. All of these factors will need to be considered in the question of whether to, or how to redraw District Boundaries.

- Both Virginia Area's District and Area boundaries are historically stable and only rarely have required consideration for a change in boundary. Thus, it is anticipated that this Virginia Area Boundary Policy, if adopted by the Virginia Area, will be used only rarely.

4. What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)?

Pros:

- Establishing a Virginia Area policy now allows us to address current concerns about Groups and Districts that wish to change their boundaries to better serve their members.
- Establishing a Virginia Area policy will also allow other Districts to evaluate if their members will be better served in future by changing their boundaries.
 - Districts that have too many groups for the District Officers to adequately service may want to consider dividing their District into a more easily managed size.
 - Districts with too few groups may want to explore combining with a contiguous District, which may provide more members from which to draw District Officers.
 - Districts that have Groups that are geographically separated from the other Groups within their District may decide to affiliate with a District that is closer.

Cons:

- Some groups may be divided in opinion about changing their District affiliation.
- Some Districts may not want to have some groups leave their District for another one, or for new groups to join.

5. What do we wish we knew, but do not?

- We do not know how many Districts may be affected by groups leaving their District or by groups joining their District.
- We do not know if instituting these boundary changes will affect the VA Area's, the Districts' or the AFGs' treasuries.
- In the case of a VA Area Boundary change, we do not know how working with another contiguous Area will proceed.