

Frequently Asked Questions about Becoming a Debtors Anonymous General Service Board Trustee

Adopted by the GSB 1995¹

What is the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board?

The Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, Inc. (D.A. GSB) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization incorporated in the State of New York. The General Service Board is the chief service arm of the D.A. World Service Conference and is essentially custodial in its character.

Who are the General Service Board Trustees?

The GSB bylaws establish a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of fifteen (15) Trustees, including a maximum of ten (10) Class A compulsive debtor Trustees and a maximum of five (5) non-debtor Trustees. Class A Trustees are those who have arrested their compulsive debting, have not incurred new, unsecured debt for a period of at least three years and who are living so far as possible within the principles of the Debtors Anonymous Twelve Steps. Class B Trustees are those who are not now and have not been afflicted by the disease of compulsive debting and who express a profound faith in the D.A. program. Trustees elect their own successors from among all interested parties, subject to ratification at the next annual Conference.

What is the purpose of the General Service Board?

The following excerpt from the bylaws of the General Service Board describes the primary function of the General Service Board as a whole:

“The Corporation (Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, Inc.) shall use its best efforts to ensure that the Traditions are maintained, for the Corporation is regarded by the Fellowship as the custodian of the Traditions and, accordingly, the Corporation shall not itself nor, so far as it is within its power to do so, permit others to modify, alter, or amplify the Traditions, except in keeping with the provisions of the Certificate of Incorporation (the ‘Certificate’) and the bylaws of the Corporation (the ‘bylaws’). The Corporation shall put forth its best efforts within the context of the Conference, Articles of Incorporation, and these bylaws to protect the Twelve Traditions.”

What else does the GSB do?

The Trustees are responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the D.A. program, including maintaining D.A.’s financial records, managing D.A.’s cash flow, overseeing the D.A. General Service Office and employees, maintaining the D.A. Website and other communications channels, reviewing and publishing D.A. literature, taking ultimate responsibility for the annual World Service Conference, and responding to requests from D.A. members, newcomers, professionals, journalists, and other members of the public.

¹ revised 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2021

How do the Trustees work together?

GSB Trustees meet twice a year in person—in late summer they meet for two days prior to the start the annual D.A. World Service Conference, and in the late winter/early spring they meet for a long weekend. During the rest of the year, the Board meets on two-hour conference calls, spaced approximately six weeks apart. In addition, each Trustee serves on several Board committees and participates in the work of those committees via email and conference calls. Each trustee also serves as a liaison to a World Service Conference committee and/or caucus.

How long do GSB Trustees serve?

GSB Trustees serve for a 3-year term, and may renew their service for another three-year term, for a total of six consecutive years. New Trustees may be elected at any time during the year and begin their term at the WSC. If there is a vacancy on the Board they may join immediately, however, their term of office begins when they are ratified at a World Service Conference. It is suggested that upon completion of their board service, Trustees will refrain from serving as part of the World Service structure again, including the positions of Trustee, Appointed Committee Member (ACM), General Service Representative (GSR), or Intergroup Service Representative (ISR). However, former Trustees may be invited to serve in a nonvoting capacity as special workers.

What are the suggested qualifications to become a Class A Trustee?

The General Service Board of Debtors Anonymous has found that the following attributes are those that contribute most towards being able to fulfill a General Service Board commitment. It is suggested that a GSB Class A Trustee nominee would:

1. Be a member of D.A. who regularly attends meetings, has a sponsor and is a sponsor, has and sits on pressure relief groups, and has at least three years of not incurring any new unsecured debt.
2. Be committed to working the Twelve Steps of D.A.
3. Have a desire to seek the will of a Higher Power, however one may conceive of a Higher Power.
4. Be committed to service as a principle of life; have a willingness and desire to grow through service with the knowledge that it will have its challenges, requires a definite commitment of time, and that world service takes priority over other service.
5. Be dedicated to and active in D.A. service, as demonstrated by successful completion of service commitments on an ongoing basis, including experience and participation as a GSR or ISR in at least one World Service Conference.
6. Have the ability to follow through with commitments and show willingness to complete those commitments in accordance with D.A. principles, D.A. Tools, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions.
7. Have a desire and the ability to perform leadership roles in the spirit of being a trusted servant rather than a ruler and have the ability to work independently while at the same time being part of a team.
8. Be dedicated and committed to the health of D.A. and have a desire to carry the message to the still suffering debtor.
9. Understand the difference between majority rule and group conscience and be willing to work within the group conscience.
10. Have a flexible attitude and the ability to work with other people, even if the direction was not the first choice.

11. Have reliable and private access to a telephone, a computer, a printer, and email.
12. Have effective communication skills, including the ability to listen to others and speak honestly, the ability to write and deliver reports, the ability to follow-up on messages and engage in the group process with the GSB, and to the ability to use the telephone, email, and the Internet.
13. Have good time management and organizational skills.
14. Have the ability to travel twice a year or more on GSB business.
15. Have the willingness to use one's full name, address, telephone number, and email address in order to communicate effectively with the GSB and the General Service Office, and to carry out various GSB duties, such as negotiating contracts.

What are the suggested qualifications to become a Class B Trustee?

1. The GSB seeks Class B trustee candidates with significant 12-Step Fellowship service experience and professional skills in finance, law, and nonprofit administration.
2. Prior nonprofit board experience is a plus.
3. Have reliable and private access to a telephone, a computer, a printer, and email.
4. Have the ability to travel twice a year or more on GSB business.

What are the legal responsibilities of trustees of not-for-profit boards?

Under well-established principles of nonprofit corporation law, a board member must meet certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out his or her responsibilities to the organization. These standards are usually described as the Duty of Care, the Duty of Loyalty and the Duty of Obedience.

1. Duty of Care - The duty of care describes the level of competence that is expected of a board member, and is commonly expressed as the duty of "care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances." This means that a board member owes the duty to exercise reasonable care when he or she makes a decision as a steward of the organization.
2. Duty of Loyalty - The duty of loyalty is a standard of faithfulness; a board member must give undivided allegiance when making decisions affecting the organization. This means that a board member can never use information obtained as a member for personal gain, but must act in the best interests of the organization.
3. Duty of Obedience - The duty of obedience requires board members to be faithful to the organization's mission. They are not permitted to act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization. A basis for this rule lies in the public's trust that the organization will manage donated funds to fulfill the organization's mission.

How do I nominate someone or myself for GSB Trustee?

The GSB Trustee applicant must apply online at <https://debtorsanonymous.org/gsbapply>. The online submit form asks for basic details, as well as whether the candidate is applying as a Class A or Class B Trustee. Class A Trustees are asked about their solvency date, as well as if they have an unsecured credit card in their name. If they do currently have an unsecured credit card in their name, they are required to fill out the additional credit card questionnaire.

After submitting the online application, the candidate or nominating person must submit a nomination package by email.

What form should the nomination package take?

A nomination package consists of three mandatory items and an optional fourth:

1. A Letter of Intent: This is a letter from the nominee stating his or her interest in GSB Service and that he or she meets the guidelines as described for a Class A or Class B Trustee. Please be sure to include all contact information, including full name, address, telephone number, and email address.
2. A Service Resume: A resume/biography of the nominee showing prior D.A. service, other Twelve Step service, and any qualifications or experience that may be helpful to the D.A. General Service Board.
3. A Letter of Recommendation: A signed letter from the nominating person or group making the nomination and stating their knowledge of the nominee's experience in a service role or activity.
4. (Optional) A professional resume may also be useful in evaluating the professional skills a candidate could bring to the Board.

The three items (or four, if including the optional professional resume) in the nomination package should ideally be emailed as an attachment (in Word, rtf, pdf, or jpeg formats) to the GSB Nominations Committee at nominations@debtorsanonymous.org.

Who can nominate a candidate?

Any interested party, including but not limited to, any past or present GSB Trustee, any D.A. member, D.A. group, D.A. Intergroup, or collection thereof, may nominate a candidate. All members of D.A. and friends of D.A. are encouraged to suggest possible candidates to serve as Class B Trustees.

What is the deadline for submitting a nomination?

New Trustees begin their service when they are ratified at the annual World Service Conference. Nominations should be received by the Nominations Committee by April 1. If approved, the new Trustee will begin serving at the next World Service Conference. If there is an opening, they can begin serving immediately.

How will I be notified if my nomination has been approved?

The chair of the Nominations Committee will notify each nominee of the outcome of the GSB review process by email. If you do not receive any response by the Nominations Committee, please contact the GSO at office@debtorsanonymous.org.

What happens if my nomination is not approved?

The GSB reviews each candidate's qualifications carefully. The review process includes interviewing each candidate by telephone. The GSB is looking for candidates who have a history of consistent and effective D.A. service, a willingness to serve D.A. as a whole, and the ability to work well in the context of the spiritual group conscience process. Sometimes, after reviewing a candidate's service history, the GSB declines to approve a nomination. This does not mean that the candidate may not apply again in the future, after gaining more experience in D.A. recovery and service.

Why should I consider becoming a D.A. Trustee?

1. To give back what I've been given.
2. To help D.A. live, prosper, and grow.
3. To maintain my own recovery.
4. To demonstrate the power of service to transform lives.
5. To understand how our organization operates.
6. To learn how to apply the D.A. Steps, Traditions, and Concepts to our service work.
7. To gain humility.
8. To practice leadership skills in a spiritual context.
9. To work with trusted servants who are working a rigorous recovery program.