

## **A Summary of the WB's Service System Discussions January 2011**

We spent much of our January meeting holding discussions about the next stage of the Service System workgroup. We spent two full days in discussions with the Service System workgroup members and staff and will be formulating a new, revised proposal in the upcoming weeks. We expect to have this next draft to you by March. We hope it will be the basis of further discussion that will help us to frame what proposals will be contained in the 2012 *Conference Agenda Report*.

Much of our discussions were about how components of the system work as well as how they work together based on being Purpose Driven, Group-focused, Defined by Geographic Boundaries, Flexible, and Collaborative. Our discussions will be reflected in the revisions of the proposals, but this eblast should give you an overview of our ideas in the meantime. We are also working on developing material about processes that we believe can help us all be more effective in working toward our vision.

So many of you have held and are planning to hold workshops and discussions about these proposals that we wanted to let you know as soon as we could about our discussions of your input and the direction of our ideas for revision of the proposals. We reviewed the more-than-100 pages of input you submitted, and we thank each of you for helping to shape the proposals and move this work forward.

### **Foundational Principles—Collaborative**

“Collaborative” will be added to the list of foundational principles. There are now five foundational principles: collaborative, group-focused, purpose driven, flexible, and geographically defined.

Successful service provision depends on all the elements of a service system working together toward our common primary purpose. This means that structure, processes, people, and resources must work together, and that components of the system must cooperate both “vertically” and “horizontally” throughout the structure.

### **Group Support**

A service body devoted most centrally to meeting groups' needs will continue to be a central part of the proposals. We do not feel it is necessary, or helpful, at this time to recommend a particular option—linear or two-track—for local services, but will try to outline the different options and provide reasons why a community might prefer one or the other.

### Things that will happen at GSU meetings:

- Informal training and mentoring
- Discussion of group issues, group sharing, no business
- Welcoming and outreach to new groups and members
- Orientation and introduction to service (recovery literature & service literature, traditions, concepts, etc.)
- Informal information sharing (e.g., upcoming events, LSU activities, new merchandise, NAWS issues topics)
- In some instances or circumstances, GSUs may be involved in some service delivery (e.g., putting up flyers in the community or supporting a local H&I meeting).

GSU attendance is open: Groups send a delegate and any interested member can come.

### **Local Services**

We have spent quite a lot of time at our last two board meetings discussing how we believe an LSU actually works. These discussions will result in better clarification of our vision of this component of the system rather than any real change to the structural model already offered.

Revisions to the proposals will describe the local service unit as comprised of a local service board and a regular (three to four times a year) planning conference, including an annual planning assembly event.

### Local Service Board:

- Includes chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, delegate(s), and service coordinators for essential services
- Meets monthly or as needed
- Oversees workgroups and routine services; coordinates the planning assemblies; develops budget and strategic plan to be reviewed, input, and approved by the planning conference; maintains external relationships; sends a delegate to the next level of service.

### Planning Conference

- Consists of group and/or GSU delegates, LSB members, project coordinators, and interested members
- Meets three to four times a year

- Starts with an annual assembly (see below) to gather input and set planning goals. Planning conferences follow the stages of the planning cycle. They are used to prioritize, approve workgroups and budget created by the LSB, monitor and report, change direction as necessary, evaluate service delivery, and elect the board.
- There may also be training sessions and a session for interfacing with the intermediate, state/national, and world services levels (like a *CAR* workshop).
- As throughout the system, decisions will be made by consensus where possible.

### Annual Assembly

- The annual assembly is a planning event that gathers input from everyone to set planning priorities (like our environmental scan).
- It consists of everyone who attends the quarterly/triannual planning conference.. All interested members are encouraged to attend.

### **Intermediate Bodies**

Intermediate bodies are those service bodies created to meet needs of density or distance or language. In essence, they are intended to span a gap between one level of service and the next in places where the NA community is densely populated, such as New York, or where the distances are great, such as Texas, or in places where the population is bilingual, such as Montreal. They are “permanent” and they are within the delegation stream. While it may be tempting to rename an existing service body an “intermediate body” to minimize the impact of restructuring, that’s not the spirit of the proposals. A clear need must be established to create an intermediate body.

As already stated in the proposal, they are not created to provide shared services outside of the delegation stream. We acknowledge the need to explain how shared services will function in the new system and are asking that some of you who have experience with shared services share your experience with us.

### **State/Nation/Province**

The board needs to further discuss what we mean by “state,” “nation,” and “province.” In the revisions to the proposals we will more explicitly acknowledge that the terms “state” and “province” are more flexible than simply “US states, Canadian provinces, and everyone else is a nation.” Some type of “state” approach may be applicable to countries such as Brazil, Russia, Mexico, and India with many meeting and multiple regions. Conversely, it may make sense to combine states in places like New England. The issue needs further discussion.

## **WSC Seating**

We will be recommending a seating model based on state/national/province service bodies. We recognize that this model may have a shelf life due to the size of the WSC, and we will continue to be interested in exploring something like a “zonal” seating model (with the understanding that the “zones” as we now know them might need to be revamped to make such a model workable). At this time, however, state/nation/province seating seems most practical.

Further seating criteria need to be developed, including but not limited to better defining “state” and “nation” (see above).

## **Zonal Forums**

Zonal forums have only really been addressed in the proposals insofar as they do or don't factor into seating. Their role in the system needs to be better defined in the proposals.

## **Processes**

Ultimately, we would like to see concrete material on processes, like the ideas on planning discussed above in the “Local Services” section. However, given our perennial struggles with leadership and communication processes, we just don't feel like we are there yet. We will be offering fundamental principles related to leadership, communication, and planning (and possibly decision-making, and what we are currently calling information management and issue management) in the next drafts of proposals.

## **Issues for Further Discussion**

The following items need further clarification and discussion. This is by no means an exhaustive list. These are simply the items that came up in our recent discussions that we didn't have time to fully address:

- Fund flow, including how the GSU is funded
- Literature distribution—where will groups buy their literature?
- Legal issues: corporations, insurance, RSOs
- Synching planning cycles throughout the system
- Who creates intermediate bodies?
- Who determines LSU boundaries?
- How do shared services (committees) work?
- The state/nation issue—e.g., Brazil, Mexico, India, Russia
- Further seating criteria

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This is only meant to be a summary and an effort to help in your discussions about this project. A more complete revision to the proposals will be coming to you soon. We want to thank you again for your efforts in having these ideas discussed locally and ask that you let us know how we can help to support your efforts.