

July 2025 Chairperson of the Board Letter

Dear Al-Anon and Alateen members,

The purpose of this Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter is to share with you some of the highlights from the July 2025 Board week. Included are updates from our Policy Chairperson, our Treasurer, and our Conference Leadership Team (CLT) Chairperson.

The July 2025 Board meeting was held at Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. in Virginia Beach. World Service Office (WSO) Volunteers arrived by Sunday, July 27. It is always so exciting to be at the WSO, and this was especially true for our new Volunteers, who were able to tour the office in addition to all of us participating in a meet-and-greet with the WSO Staff. There were introductions and time for fellowship.

The Executive Committee (EC) Meeting was held on Monday. All the Trustees who are not part of the EC were invited to attend the meeting with no voice or vote as part of their fiduciary responsibility.

At -Large members of the EC participated in the WSO Volunteer Orientation, the Policy Committee Meeting, the Envisioned Future Workgroup Conversation, the Strategies Update, the WSO AMIAS Annual Alateen Training, and the session to review Road Trip presentations. The first two days of Board week were definitely full.

Spirituality

The Board continued our spiritual practice of having Al-Anon meetings on the schedule prior to beginning our Board discussions. All WSO Volunteers and Staff who are members of Al-Anon were invited to attend. It was a great way to start our days in a spiritual manner.

Additionally, the WSO Volunteers were invited to participate and share on a Tradition of their choice at the Global Gathering. The sharings were well received by the international community, and we were privileged to hear from those trusted servants who were participating virtually. In total, more than 30 international structures were represented.

Vision and Strategy

Envisioned Future Workgroup (EFWG)

The EFWG is a workgroup of the Board and is charged with facilitating forward-looking discussions on strategic topics. The topic this time was miscommunication, understanding that even when we communicate with the best intentions, sometimes our communication can be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

Our discussion centered on these forms of miscommunication: misinformation, disinformation and sometimes mal-information.

Strategies Updates

The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), which consists of six members of senior WSO Staff, presented updates on the 2025 Strategies to the Board. Additionally, SLT presented to the Board that they had identified, after thorough and thoughtful discussion, the need to add a few Strategies and postpone or reduce the scope of cur-

rent Strategies. New Strategies were only introduced in light of urgency and importance. Reductions in scope reflected both these new priorities and ongoing WSO Staff capacity constraints.

The WSO continues to be short-staffed. In particular, we struggle to fill positions requiring Al-Anon membership and service experience, as most of these also require relocation to Virginia Beach.

The Board of Trustees approved the SLT recommendation on 2025 Strategies, which are described below.

Additions

- **Website Rebuild** – This Strategy was prioritized to mitigate risk inherent in older technology contained in al-anon.org. The current al-anon.org website was deployed in 2017, so it has far outlived its useful life, which is typically three to five years.
- **75th Anniversary: Public Outreach Activities** – Given the April 2026 timeframe for the celebration, public outreach activities to gather acknowledgements as the WSO and Areas have done in the past need to begin immediately.

The **Core Systems Overhaul** Strategy was split to separate the core database/ association management system (CRM/AMS) from the accounting system projects. Accounting was split from the Core Systems Overhaul so that the more urgent and less complex accounting system replacement could proceed prior to CRM/AMS vendor selection.

Date & Scope Changes

The Board supported changing dates and/or scope of the following Strategies to mitigate the additional work approved:

- **eBooks Globally** – Dates changed to support a four-month launch and communication timeline, rather than the initial six-month plan, for the ebook pilot of *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33).
- **Core Systems Overhaul** – Vendor selection has been delayed; however, the hiring of the WSO's new Systems Program Manager is anticipated to positively affect progress moving forward.
- **Update Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism** – The selection of sharings step in the project has been postponed into 2026, since Staff believed the deferral would not delay scheduled publication date.
- **Professional Outreach** – Young People – Attendance by WSO Staff at one related conference was deferred from 2025.
- **Passing It On** – Work on this project to share experience, strength, and hope with trusted servants within the WSC Structure will be limited to finalizing the charge and selecting participants, which allows for work to commence in early 2026.
- **Risk Mitigation** – The project to adopt a risk-aware organization and process has been completed, with a core WSO Staff team continuing to review organizational risks on a monthly basis and meet with our virtual Chief Information Security Officer (vCISO) quarterly. To manage capacity, work in 2025 is being limited to level one priority activities, which has become part of Staff's ongoing work.

Completed

- **2025 Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) International Convention** with Al-Anon participation in Vancouver, British Columbia was held with both A.A. and Al-Anon members participating in the Al-Anon program.
- **2028 Al-Anon International Convention Planning** completed the vital step of selecting and securing facilities in Minneapolis, Minnesota to host our ninth International Convention.

In making its recommendations, SLT asked the Board of Trustees to consider not only the scope of these projects but also the services provided by the WSO on an ongoing basis. (For more details about these services, please refer to the back of each Quarterly Appeal Letter.)

Board Development

WSO AMIAS Annual Alateen Training

The WSO Group Services team conducted the annual WSO AMIAS training for Al-Anon members of the WSO Staff and WSO Volunteers who might be required to attend events on behalf of the WSO, including Alateen activities.

Finance Statement Training

This training was presented by the Senior Director of Finance & Operations to ensure that all Board members understand the financial statements that are presented to them each quarter.

Board Evaluation

The Board continues to evaluate itself and its effectiveness quarterly as it relates to oversight and direction setting, relationship with the Executive Director, Board meetings and relationships, fellowship relationships, and personal qualities.

As at the past two Board meetings, Trustees reviewed previous comments and actions taken or suggested as improvements. At the July Board meeting, several changes were implemented based on previous evaluation discussions. Building on the experience of the World Service Conference, the Board implemented changes to create a culture to ensure Trustees were comfortable before voting. For instance, a new process was implemented to invite Trustees to show whether they were ready to vote. The agenda was also adapted to separate discussion from any decision, as is done at WSC.

Financial Matters

Revised Budget

The Finance Committee submitted a Revised Budget to the Board of Trustees to consider as the result of lower than anticipated literature sales, investment income, and contributions, excluding bequests.

The Board approved the Finance Committee recommendation for a deficit 2025 WSO Revised Budget of \$170,800. (See Finance Update for more details about the Revised Budget.)

Equalized Expense

The Board approved the Finance Committee recommendation to set the Equalized Expense amount at \$2,183.00 (70% of the Full Cost) and the Full Cost for a Delegate to attend 2026 Conference at \$3,119.00.

WSC Follow-up & Preparation

Next Steps from 2025 WSC Thought and Task Forces

As part of the Board's annual process for evaluating important concerns or topics discussed at Conference, the Trustees considered what next steps, if any, were needed as relates to the Thought and Task Force presentations shared at the 2025 WSC. After thoughtful discussion, the Board reached the following conclusions:

- **Revitalizing Archives Thought Force (ThF)** – Conference members were very excited about the materials presented by the ThF and asked for the opportunity to share with their Areas. After consideration, the Board recognized it was important to continue the practice of maintaining confidentiality of materials intended for WSC Conference discussion only. This discussion centered on the value of having a consistent process to ensure decisions about release of documents is based on objective rather than subjective criteria.
- **Stepping Stones Visit Task Force** – Through consensus, the Board accepted the Conference Leadership Team recommendation, based upon the 2025 Stepping Stones Delegate Visit Task Force, to assign responsibility of the facilitation of the two remaining Stepping Stones visits that are part of the six-year trial to Staff and to hold these visits outside the Conference agenda. The recommendation was fully supported by WSO Staff.
- **Growing Future Leaders (Board Strategic Topic)** – This topic served as an introduction to the Strategic Plan initiative “Passing It On.” The Board agreed they were excited to hear updates on this project as part of the Strategic Leadership Team's quarterly updates on Strategic Plan initiatives.

- **Overcoming Regional Trustee Barriers Thought Force** – Conference members did not provide any guidance on proceeding further with reducing Regional Trustee application barriers, instead expressing their preference to continue discussion on the options offered by the Single Trustee Selection Process Task Force.
- **Single Trustee Selection Process Task Force** – This Task Force introduced ideas for increasing the number of members applying to serve as Trustee. At the WSC, Delegates welcomed the ideas presented and requested the opportunity to discuss the options with their Areas. To ensure clarity, they also requested a review session with the Board so they could ask questions. The Board is preparing for these sessions, which will be scheduled soon. The Board is looking forward to further generative discussions about this topic at the 2026 WSC.

CLT Delegate Work Groups

The CLT brought forth a recommendation to the Board of Trustees to defer the work on the WSC CAI Education Work Group for 2025 due to Staff and WSO Volunteer capacity constraints. The Board approved this motion. You can read more in the CLT Update about the Delegate-led WSC Agenda Collaboration Work Group, which is already in progress.

2026 WSC Board Strategic Topic

The Board considered the capacity of the WSO Volunteers, as the Board is currently five members short, and the WSO Staff as well as the number of generative and strategic discussion topics already planned for the 2026 WSC Agenda when determining whether to facilitate a Board Strategic Topic. The Board concluded that it would not prepare and present a Board Strategic Topic at the 2026 WSC.

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

After thoughtful and considerate discussion, the Board reached a consensus to approve the sale or presale of CAL at the Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event by the Area welcoming the event, if the Area wishes to do so, the space is available, and the Area agrees to bring at least the *Service Manual* and any pamphlets being referenced during event presentations.

“Beyond the Group Level” on WSO Volunteer Applications

At the January 2025 Board meeting, the Board discussed definition of the phrase “beyond the group level” in regard to its use on our applications, resumes, and role descriptions. The Board determined that it would be better for clarity to replace the phrase with specific requirements on each document. The Nominating Committee was tasked with reviewing those documents and brought recommendations to the July Board meeting which the Board accepted. The Board of Trustees application, the Executive Committee on Real Property Management and Executive Committee At-Large member resumes, and the Trustee and Executive Committee At-Large Member role descriptions will all be updated before the next application process.

I do want to take this opportunity to say “thank you” to all of you for all you do to support Al-Anon Family Groups.

With Gratitude,

Katherine M.

Kathi M.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.