

NA World Services Strategic Plan

It may be unfamiliar to many members, but the NAWS Strategic Plan isn't new. What is new is that you're being asked to adopt the plan. NA World Services has operated with a strategic plan for over 20 years. Every conference cycle, the plan is revised and renewed, and the priorities in the plan help shape the work ahead. In past cycles, the NAWS Strategic Plan has been included in the Conference Approval Track material. This is the first time it has been included in the *Conference Agenda Report* for Fellowship approval, and it's the first time the plan has been created by the conference as a whole.

At WSC 2023, the conference decided to approve a three-year cycle on a trial basis. (From 2000 to 2020 the conference cycle was two years.) The longer cycle has allowed the time for a truly collaborative planning process, including planning sessions at each zonal forum. All conference participants have been involved in every stage of co-creating the plan in Addendum B. The unprecedented level of conference participant (CP) involvement means this is a plan created collectively, representing the needs of NA as a whole.

Before we say anything else, we want to say THANK YOU—to the CPs who worked together

to make a collaborative plan possible, and to the members like you who are taking the time to read this essay, the plan, and this *CAR* and making the time to get involved in the process.

Creating and adopting the strategic plan collectively and collaboratively is part of a larger shift from a motion-driven service culture to one characterized by discussion and consensus-building. We've talked about this for decades now (reread the [2006 CAR](#) if you doubt that timeline), and after inching forward year by year, we are really seeing the fruit of our labors in this *CAR* with its strategic plan and discussion questions.

What Is a Strategic Plan?

The idea of planning can be off-putting for addicts. We can mistake it for projecting or trying to control. In reality, planning allows us to live in the present while we prepare for what is to come. Planning allows us to proceed step by step, and to check our direction and our progress. The magic of NA comes from our spiritual connection to one another—the “as such” that ought never be organized. Planning our services supports our groups and frees them to set the stage for that magic.

We understand that “ought never be organized” doesn't mean that we do what we do without any planning or predictability. Our meetings are at regular times and places; we create and maintain meeting schedules, websites, and phonelines. In order for us to grow and recover, we need some structure. Administration is not the same as governance, and the structures we create in service are not the kind of organization this Tradition addresses. We absolutely organize our service efforts, our meeting schedules, and our event calendars. What is never organized is the part that matters most: one addict helping another, reaching out and sharing from heart to heart. The wordless language of empathy is what makes NA work. Without that, the rest of what we do would be meaningless.

Guiding Principles, Tradition Nine

A strategic plan guides change. The vast majority of what World Services does is not covered in this plan. A massive amount of correspondence, phone calls, emails, translations, regular reports, web meetings, layout, production, shipping, copyrights, technology, workshops . . . goes on daily at World Services as part of our ongoing work. The goals and ideas contained in the plan relate to factors within and outside NA that we need to do a better job addressing. These objectives and solutions are about new initiatives and ideas that we would like to implement in addition to our ongoing work.

The plan covers only the cycle ahead of us. These solutions and objectives are simply pieces that we believe we can focus on now. That means that much of what is described represents first steps—what might get done in the next three years—not all of the possibilities. Countless other ideas could be included here; there is always much more to do than time and resources to accomplish the work.

Sometimes issues and objectives are carried forward from cycle to cycle, perhaps with slight revisions. Each cycle we attempt to make progress, but some goals are large and the solutions contained in the plan simply represent the incremental progress we believe we can make before the next WSC, based on what is prioritized. For instance, under the Issue *Generational and Cultural Diversity*, the solutions listed in this plan focus on younger members and newer technology. In the next cycle, the issue itself might remain the same, but the plan might include different objectives and/or solutions more focused on cultural, rather than generational, diversity.

In short, regardless of how much we might want to, we can't do everything at once. The strategic plan solutions focus on *what's next*.

What's in the Plan

Reading through the 2026–2029 plan gives a window into some of the ways NA is evolving. There's much in the plan about carrying the message, collecting funds, and doing service in an online and hybrid environment; using technology to improve communication and connections; making sure addicts find a safe space to

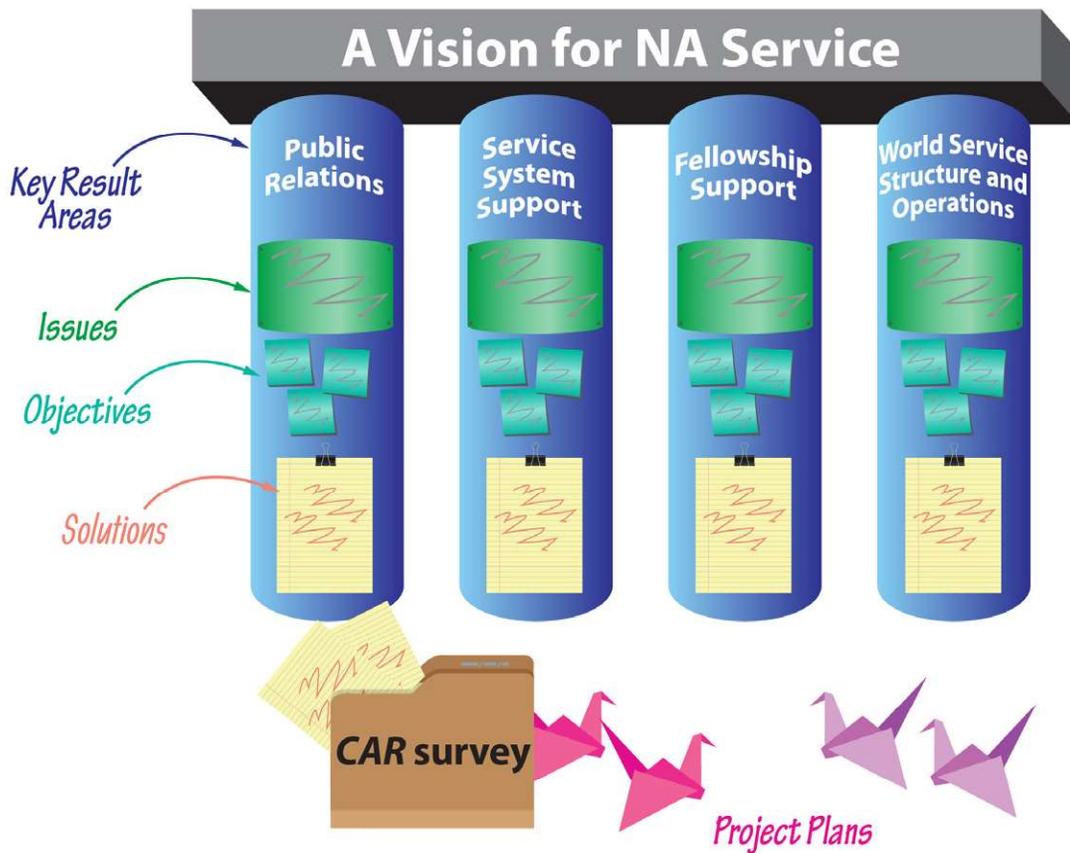
The principles that keep our Fellowship alive and free are universal, allowing us to be incredibly flexible. NA can flourish and thrive in cultures and contexts around the world. The Twelve Traditions are not negotiable, and that means they cannot be bought, bartered, traded on, or sold. That doesn't mean we are rigid, inflexible, or incapable of growth. Rather than seeing our Traditions as limiting, we come to understand that they point the way to freedom. Our guiding principles help us steer clear of pitfalls, allowing us continued growth and change.

Guiding Principles, Introduction

recover in NA regardless of treatment modalities that may be mandated or prescribed for them outside NA; and continuing to explore how to make our language inclusive so that every addict can find a home in NA.

Perhaps one of the most common questions from members new to service is *Why does _____ (fill in the blank) take so long?* NA does evolve, just not quickly! It's okay that we do not change quickly or that we are "behind." We are traditionalists by nature and practice. We don't need to be on the cutting edge of changes in technology; we just don't want to be so far behind that we're chiseling messages on pieces of stone.

There is always more included in the plan than we can do in a given cycle. We work on what has been prioritized first, and we communicate with conference participants about the work throughout the cycle.



Terminology

Understanding the strategic plan means becoming familiar with the vocabulary. These are the components of the plan:

- **Key Result Areas:** Key result areas are the major areas in which we need to focus our service efforts in order to realize A Vision for NA Service. These are the four pillars of the plan we build together. They will change very little, if at all, from cycle to cycle.
- **Issues:** Issues are the factors that conference participants collectively decided are most important to address this cycle.
- **Objectives:** Objectives give us a goal to aim for and help us develop solutions that make sense in our current circumstances. They express *what* we want to achieve by the end of the planning cycle, as opposed to *how* we want to achieve it.
- **Solutions:** Solutions are paths to achieving our objectives. They are the work we want World Services to undertake on behalf of NA as a whole. Solutions don't have to include *everything* that might make progress on an objective, just the steps we want to take in the cycle ahead, if the project is prioritized. They explain broadly *how* we intend to reach our goals.
- **Project Plans:** The details of solutions, such as deliverables, timelines, media, etc., are contained in project plans.
- **Charge Forms:** Sometimes the details about how to administer a project plan are included in what we call *charge forms* that the World Board uses to give instructions to staff and volunteers working on a particular project. For instance, in the case of general projects for service material or recovery literature that are given specificity at the WSC, it's not possible to draft timelines or other specifics until the conference determines the focus of the project. (See the CAR Survey section below for more information on that process.)

We have included explanatory paragraphs throughout the plan to help address some of the questions and comments you may have and to clarify some of the thinking behind the content of the plan.

The Planning Process

The process to create this plan began at WSC 2023. It's a process that's been dialogic—that is, the plan has been created by a back-and-forth dialog among service bodies—zones, the conference, the World Board—for more than two and a half years. The extra time in a three-year cycle allowed us to work together, as a conference, to create this plan. The planning section of the conference webpage contains reports on the progress from throughout the cycle: na.org/planning.

Here are the steps so far:

- Conference participants (CPs) begin an inventory, identifying factors, inside and outside of NA, that could affect our ability to carry the message—**WSC 2023**
- CPs prioritize those factors via survey—**after WSC 2023**
- Every zone in the world meets and discusses the challenges raised by the factors and possible solutions—**February through May 2024**
- World Board drafts objectives based on all those discussion notes and also drafts World Services Structure and Operations objectives—**June 2024**
- Conference participants discuss issues and objectives—**Interim WSC**
- World Board revises objectives based on CP discussions at the Interim WSC. World Board drafts solutions—**July 2025**
- Conference participants discuss solutions—**August CP web meeting**
- World Board revises solutions and finalizes draft of plan based on CP discussions—**September 2025**

At WSC 2026, delegates will be asked to adopt the plan on behalf of their regions and zones.

Implementing the Plan

As we note above, the specifics of how to implement solutions are spelled out in project plans and “charge” sheets. The Conference Approval Track material contains the project plans that grow out of the NAWS Strategic Plan.

CAR Survey

Within the project plans in the Conference Approval Track material are “blank” plans for recovery literature, service material, and Issue Discussion Topics. Since 2016, the results from the CAR Survey have guided conference participants to help select focuses for these projects.

These two streams of ideas—the CAR Survey and the strategic planning process—were created separately, and it's not always a seamless fit between the two. Nonetheless, they will ultimately need to come together to shape the work for the cycle.

For more information on the CAR Survey and project process, as well as a list of projects since 2016, see the Project Process and Status document posted in the planning section of the conference page. (Please note: the document was last updated July 2024. We will revise it again before WSC 2026.)

The conference is new to collaborative planning, and we will continue to refine the process. Evaluating and improving the planning process is one of the many things we'll discuss at WSC 2026. We would like to create a better link next cycle between the CAR Survey and the strategic plan. In the meantime, we have listed objective numbers next to each item in the CAR Survey to show the connection between the items in the CAR Survey and the strategic plan objectives. Sometimes the connection is clear, and in some cases it's a bit of a stretch.

Collaborating on the Work

Most projects for service material or recovery literature begin with some sort of Fellowship-wide survey to determine what members would like to see included or considered in the project. That way, the Fellowship as a whole helps to focus the ideas listed in the solutions in the strategic plan.

We have been using virtual focus groups rather than standing workgroups to get work done, for the most part, because it's a cheaper, more flexible approach, and allows a greater diversity of participation. As their name implies, focus groups typically meet to discuss focused topics. During the 2023–2026 cycle, focus groups

helped us redesign the website, revise IP #21, put together drafts of *Virtual Service Basics* and *H&I Basics*, and much more.

Nonetheless, without regions' and zones' work on projects in the cycle ahead, we won't be successful. There's just too much to do. We've heard many suggestions from conference participants to revise *The Group Booklet* and/or *A Guide to Local Services in NA*, for instance. If those projects are approved, we will be asking zonal and regional bodies to participate in the projects by holding workshops, collecting best practices, and reviewing drafts. Making progress on most of the solutions in the plan depends upon collaboration from zones and regions. World Services is the distillation point for world-level projects because the board is the body elected by the conference, and the logistics of coordinating input from a Fellowship that speaks 105 languages and is located in 143 countries is more than a region or zone needs to undertake—not to mention the fact that zones and regions have their own work to do!

In fact, we hope that the NAWS Strategic Plan inspires local projects. There may be solutions that fit inside these objectives that can be addressed at local levels, and perhaps the plan will encourage more local service bodies to engage in their own planning. For instance, a number of conference participants suggested schools as a target audience for Objective 2. The board opted to focus the objective on the main sectors of the public that refer addicts to

NA and not to add any more audiences for this cycle, but perhaps some regions or zones will opt to focus their PR efforts on schools in the cycle ahead. That's just one example. We hope regions and zones are inspired to adapt some of the solutions for their local service efforts.

WSC 2026

Throughout this cycle, we have illustrated the planning journey as a road trip we have been taking together, but in reality, the planning process is cyclical. Because planning is cyclical, we need to begin creating the next strategic plan even as we approve this one. At the 2026 World Service Conference, delegates will be asked to start that work, just as they started the planning process in 2023 to get here today. Having fewer motions in the CAR means more time at WSC 2026 for discussions, and some of those discussions will center around the factors in NA and the world around us that may most affect NA in the years ahead (2029–2032).

The question participants will discuss at the WSC may be something like this:

What issues, challenges, and needs do we need to address to be ready to serve the addict here today and who will be here in the future?

If that question sparks ideas for you, share them with your delegate or at your area or regional CAR workshop.



Three Years

It's worth noting here that the three-year conference cycle was approved as a two-cycle trial (2023–2029). The 2029 World Service Conference will be asked whether to adopt a three-year cycle on an ongoing basis. Given the uncertainty of the conference cycle length after 2029, the board discussed whether to label the next strategic plan the 2029–2032 plan or to label it the 2029–203X plan. We decided on the former approach (2029–2032).

We will plan for three years, but if the three-year cycle isn't approved, we will have to go back to the drawing board. The collaborative planning process is contingent on a three-year cycle. In a body so large, international, and multilingual, we do not have the time for this much conversation, revision, and review—this much back and forth about each element of the plan—if we don't have at least three years.

The Motion

The NAWS Strategic Plan is large and contains many details, but you're being asked to adopt it as a whole, rather than piece by piece. Your delegates worked together for years (literally) to make sure the plan outlines the work World Services most needs to undertake in the three years in front of us.

The plan may or may not include each of our particular passions, but it absolutely reflects our collective needs and priorities. We might each, as individuals (or groups or areas or regions), prefer different phrasing in one place

or another, or a slightly different emphasis in an objective or a solution, but rest assured, every bit of the plan has been discussed by conference participants—delegates, alternates, and the board. We have had many, many discussions to create this plan. This has truly been a consensus-based process. As *A Guide to World Services in NA* says, "Consensus is based on the belief that each person has some part of the truth and no one person has all of it (no matter how tempting it is to believe that we ourselves really know best!). The consensus process is what a group goes through to reach an agreement. It is how we manifest the idea 'together we can do what we cannot do alone' in a service setting" (from the *Decision Making at the WSC* section of [GWSNA](#)). And so, we are asking you to adopt this plan in the spirit of good faith with which it was created.

We are using the word *adopt* in the motion rather than *approve* because, while most members are seeing this for the first time, the plan has been created collectively over the course of years. We are asking the Fellowship to take ownership of something that your delegates have co-created on your behalf for our common welfare.

With almost 300 conference participants, it takes a tremendous amount of conversation to build consensus. Collaboration with a group this large is highly unusual in any context: It is new to us, and rare in the world. This is the first time ever that the conference as a whole is constructing the World Services Strategic Plan. As they say, *Inclusion is not just being invited to the party; it's being asked to dance*. So let's dance!

Motion 2 To adopt the collaboratively created 2026–2029 NA World Services Strategic Plan contained in Addendum B.

Maker: World Board

Intent: To approve the results of the collaborative planning that began at WSC 2023 and continued with zonal and conference participant involvement throughout this cycle.

Financial Impact: No direct financial impact. Any future expenses will be called out in project plans or budgets.

Policy Affected: None.