

WCNA 36, planned for the Central and South America zone. WCNA 36 was ultimately held in Rio de Janeiro.

With the exception of WCNA 32 in San Antonio, the trend for conventions held in North America was positive. Both WCNA 34 and 35 had good attendance and modest profits. The magic of WCNA 37 (Orlando), in 2018, was outstanding. That convention saw more than 21,000 in attendance and a substantial income of over a million dollars. This was largely due to the beneficial contract for meeting space and the level of attendance.

Prior to the global pandemic in 2020, NA World Services had planned for WCNA 38 to be held in Melbourne, Australia. After the global shutdown, the World Board discussed the situation with delegates and decided to try to postpone the convention for a year and reevaluate. When the situation was reevaluated, travel and health concerns from COVID, entwined with the strain on financial and human resources of NA World Services, made canceling the convention in Australia seem the most responsible action.

Present

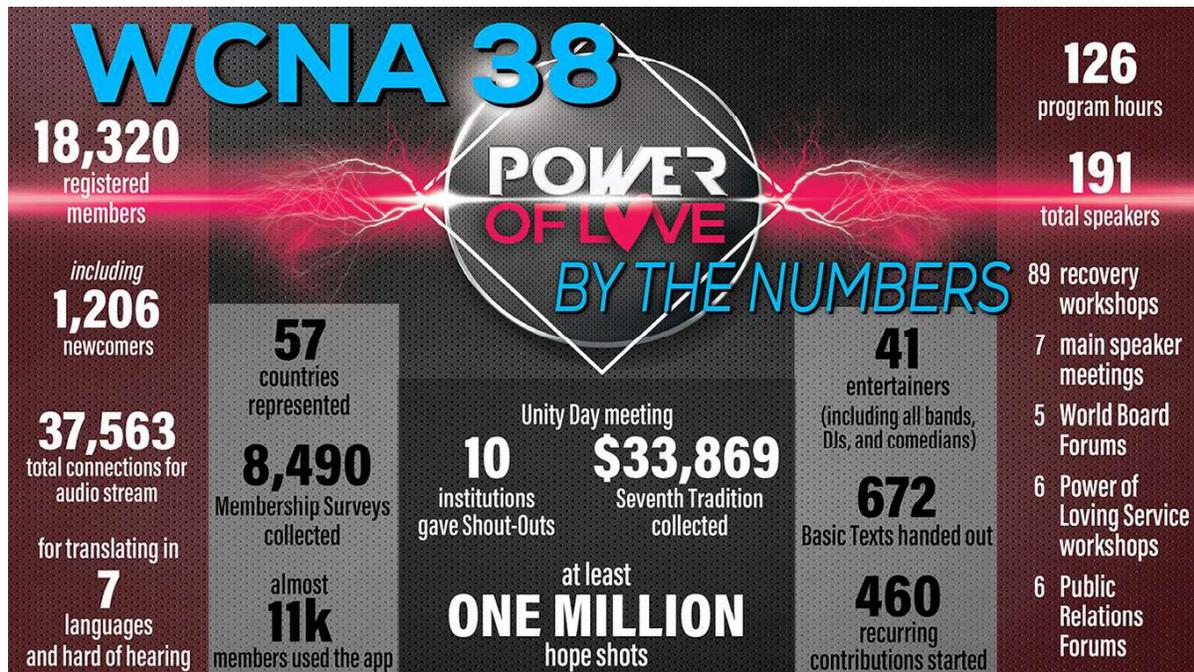
Going into WSC 2023, planning was underway for WCNA 38 to be held in 2024 in Washington, DC—a return to the location of WCNA 15 almost 40 years prior. However, World Ser-

VICES was still uncertain about the practicality of the rotation plan and what the future held. Current policy assumes a relatively stable set of circumstances. There is no provision for a world in which a global shutdown leads to the canceling of a convention and the skyrocketing of expenses associated with event planning. In response to unstable circumstances, the 2023 WSC approved a motion offered by the World Board to suspend the WCNA rotation policy after 2024, to allow time to research and determine what is possible and practical moving forward with the World Convention.

Motion 8: As a result of the COVID pandemic, to suspend the World Convention of NA (WCNA) rotation policy after 2024, to allow the World Board to determine what is possible and practical moving forward and then seek approval from conference participants.

Maker: World Board

Intent: Given the disruption in the rotation of WSC and WCNA that has already occurred, the increases in event costs, and the other changes brought about by the pandemic, to allow an evaluation by the World Board and approval by conference participants for what is possible and practical in the future.



One of the main things we learned from WCNA 38 in Washington, DC, is just how much the landscape has changed and how uncertain convention attendance can be. Based on the trends from the past two conventions in North America, the fact that there had not been a WCNA in six years, and that Washington, DC, is located within an easy drive of many of the most densely populated NA regions, it was reasonable to think that attendance had the potential to be even higher than in Orlando, and it made logical sense to plan accordingly. In most cases, past performance can be indicative of future outcomes, but that was not the case here, as we now know. We underestimated some of the ways that the pandemic had changed the Fellowship. Prior to the pandemic, many members only experienced the diversity of NA's membership by traveling to events, especially WCNA. With the rise of virtual NA, members today can experience our diversity from their phone by attending an online meeting anywhere in the world, any time of day. The option to stream main meetings for free and the uptick in other NA conventions and events likely played additional roles in members' choices to opt out of in-person atten-

dance in Washington, DC. There were a total of 37,563 connections to the eleven meetings that were offered to stream at WCNA 38.

In addition to financial strain in the current economy, other factors, such as lingering health and safety concerns, especially among our aging members, may have also contributed to the overall level of attendance in DC. WCNA 38 was planned for a projected attendance of 24,000, and just over 18,000 members registered. We are not the only organization faced with problems of predicting attendance. AA recently held their international convention with nearly half of what they had anticipated. With 21,000 attending the convention in Orlando six years prior, it seemed reasonable to anticipate that we might exceed that number. As was reported in the 2024 *Annual Report*, the bottom line for WCNA 38 reflects expenses over income of \$956,129. Thankfully, World Services' efforts to increase reserves helped us to be prepared for an unfavorable outcome. The work at hand has continued without major disruption; however, the outcome has had a significant influence on the discussions and decisions shaping the future of the convention.

Final Financial Report for WCNA 38					
31-Mar-25					
EVENT-SPECIFIC as of March 31,2025					
EVENT-SPECIFIC INCOME	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	VARIANCE%	ANNUAL
WCNA-38 INCOME					
REGISTRATION	\$ 3,031,586	\$ 4,261,000	\$ (1,229,414)	-29%	\$ 4,261,000
SPECIAL EVENTS	550,969	663,750	(112,781)	-17%	663,750
NEWCOMER DONATIONS	48,467	15,000	33,467	223%	15,000
MERCHANDISE	964,070	798,584	165,486	21%	798,584
OTHER SALES	328,764	242,765	85,999	35%	242,765
Total Event-Specific Income	\$ 4,923,856	\$ 5,981,099	\$ (1,057,244)	-18%	\$ 5,981,099
EVENT-SPECIFIC EXPENSE					
WCNA-38 EXPENSE					
REGISTRATION	\$ 2,381,281	\$ 2,463,000	\$ (81,719)	-3%	\$ 2,463,000
SPECIAL EVENTS	558,636	387,910	170,726	44%	387,910
PROGRAM	337,932	385,000	(47,068)	-12%	385,000
MERCHANDISE	834,506	399,292	435,214	109%	399,292
FACILITIES	1,376,584	900,000	476,584	53%	900,000
SUPPORT COMMITTEE	12,222	50,000	(37,778)	-76%	50,000
ADMINISTRATION	378,822	400,000	(21,178)	-5%	400,000
Total Event-Specific Expense	\$ 5,879,984	\$ 4,985,202	\$ 894,782	18%	\$ 4,985,202
Total Event-Specific Excess Revenue/Expense	\$ (956,129)	\$ 995,897	\$ (1,952,026)	-196%	\$ 995,897

Future

The motion to suspend the current rotation policy of WCNA adopted at WSC 2023 gave World Services time to research and evaluate what would be practical moving forward. The motion stipulates that the board will seek approval from conference participants. It took most of the past 18 months to gather the information needed for the discussions and to reach consensus on what changes in policy made the most sense.

The proposed guidelines delegate more of the rotation and location decision-making responsibility to the World Board simply because so much is unknown—inside and outside NA. The conference industry as a whole is changing; our members' behavior is changing; and there is no way to predict what the landscape will look like years in the future.

In addition to the outcomes of past World Conventions, such as WCNA 38's shortfall, World Services considered many factors, such as market trends for event-related costs. Overall event expenses, especially expenses related to audio and video production—something we rely heavily upon—continue to climb. Rising costs and increasing complexity of international travel have to be taken into consideration, especially for events outside North America, given that most WCNA attendees, regardless of where the convention is held, typically are US members. When deciding upon recommendations about the future of the convention, the World Board discussed global political and economic climates, PR and FD benefits of the event, potential revenue or losses, size of the convention in both US and non-US locations, and more. In addition, NAWS opened a survey to see if there was a common theme of why NA members attend (or don't attend) WCNA. As expected, the majority of the 3,616 responding ranked costs of travel and other financial factors, as well as location, as the highest influencers on their decision of whether to attend. Nearly half of the responses received (48%) were from members who have never attended a WCNA. We will report more on the results from this survey in the *Conference Report* prior to WSC 2026.

One item where the World Board reached consensus was for each World Convention to be a revenue-neutral event. Although we have always hoped to be, at minimum, "revenue neutral," often the opportunities the event provides for public relations or Fellowship development have meant we were comfortable with expenses exceeding income if hosting was impactful on the community. Planning a convention that is budgetarily prudent, in the current conditions, may mean requiring capped attendance. One of the biggest challenges we have is not being able to estimate the number of people who are actually going to attend a convention, which makes it almost impossible to plan for effective facility use. One of the arguments we hear about this issue is that we are limiting a newcomer's opportunity to attend a meeting. There is nothing further from the truth. On top of having newcomer registrations available, in our current planning for facility use there are always meetings available that don't require registration in at least one or more of the neighboring facilities. Another idea that is being considered is creating a registration for the streamed meetings but keeping the WCNA Unity Day event free or low-cost.

There was also agreement to schedule the event for every five years rather than every three. It is believed that having the convention less frequently will make it a more special occurrence and allow our membership more time to plan. In addition to the benefit for members to be able to plan further ahead, it also gives the same extension on planning for World Services. Holding WCNA every five years, starting in 2028, means that we can celebrate the milestone anniversaries of NA—the 2028 convention will mark NA's 75th anniversary!



The final piece is the rotation plan. The old rotation plan, which aspired to hold every other WCNA outside North America, is no longer a practical framework for planning. The world is far too unpredictable, especially looking out over long periods of time. What seems to make the most sense is to remove the current Convention Zone Rotation Plan and delegate the decision making to the World Board. Sites will be considered that allow for rotation to the extent that is prudent and possible based upon the geopolitical and financial circumstances in the world at the time. The fact that we are now in the practice of having a conference participant webinar every two months allows for a dialogue with delegates from around the world in this process going forward. There is more about the process for deciding location in the Proposed World Convention Guidelines, located in Addendum C, under “Site Selection.” If approved, these guidelines will replace the current pages in *A Guide to World Services in NA*,

which you will find in Addendum D. World Services remains committed to a WORLD convention—we are a worldwide Fellowship—but it no longer seems possible or practical to determine a location so far in advance of planning the event. The modern world is far less consistent than it has been at any point during NA’s existence, which has made event planning much more challenging than ever before. As an example of our commitment to rotation, we intend to hold the 2028 convention in Europe; we are finalizing the location as we type this report.

As the Proposed Guidelines make clear, WCNA isn’t just a large event; it is a celebration of our unity, diversity, and recovery. NA World Services is committed to prudent planning, transparent communication, and global participation for the future of WCNA. Together, as a Fellowship, we look forward to many more World Conventions. We hope to see you in Europe in 2028!

Motion 3 To hold the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous (WCNA) every 5 years, beginning in 2028. The location to be determined by the World Board based on fiscal and geographic considerations that lend themselves to, at minimum, a revenue-neutral event. (The specific changes to the WCNA Guidelines in *GWSNA* are shown in Addendum C.)

Maker: World Board

Intent: To have guidelines for the World Convention (WCNA) that reflect the changing nature of large events worldwide and support the prudent use of Fellowship resources.

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

Policy Affected: The policy offered in Addendum C will replace the current WCNA guidelines in *GWSNA* (pages 46–48) shown in Addendum D.