

2025 Early Motions Background and Rationale Document in preparation for the 39th Annual World Service Conference of Debtors Anonymous to be held in the San Francisco Bay Area August 6-10, 2025.

Early Motions for Discussion

Part of the World Service Conference's ongoing momentum towards becoming more participatory is to send out Early Motions for your group to discuss, should you wish. These motions will come before the WSC in San Francisco for your GSR or ISR to vote on. There are five in all: two from WSC Conference Committee, one from WSC Fellowship Communications Committee and two from WSC Literature Committee.

If your group has a Group Service Representative (GSR) you might wish to hold a group conscience and give them an indication of how the group would like to vote. If you do not have a GSR going to Conference this year, your local or regional Intergroup would be a good place to make your views known so that the Intergroup Service Representative (ISR) can take views into account when they vote.

Each delegate, however, is entitled to vote according to their own conscience, in the spirit of the Right of Decision described in Concept 3 of the Twelve Concepts for D.A. World Service.

The first two motions require 120 days advance notice to the fellowship as they affect the D.A. Charter. The remaining three motions require 90 days notice. All five early motions are contained in this document.

The motions are:

From **WSC Conference Committee** (two motions)

1. The Conference Committee moves to update the current Section 6 of the WSC Charter to allow for the consideration of a virtual World Service Conference by inserting the following after the first sentence: "The location may be in-person or virtual."
2. The Conference Committee moves to update The Conference Charter Section 3 (DAMS 2024 edition pg. 88) to lower the total number of votes necessary for a motion to pass from 3/4 to 2/3 of registered groups and to add a third voting option of "abstain" in addition to "for" and "against". The changes in wording to the DAMS are in italics below:

No change in Article Ten (10) of the Charter or in the Twelve Traditions of Debtors Anonymous or in the Twelve Steps of Debtors Anonymous may be made with less than the written consent of *two-thirds (2/3)* of the Debtors Anonymous groups. *All fellowship wide votes will include the option to vote "abstain".*

From **WSC Fellowship Communications Committee (FCC)** (one motion)

3. The Fellowship Communications Committee moves to change the name of the online publication "Ways and Means" to "**Within Our Means.**"

From the **WSC Literature Committee on behalf of the WSC Underserved Under-represented Outreach Committee (UUOC)** (two motions)

4. Gender Identity and Debt literature concept proposal

The WSC Literature Committee, together with the Underserved and Underrepresented Outreach Committee, moves that the Conference approve the development of a pamphlet outline on Gender Identity and Debt: Voices of Gender-expansive Debtors.

5. Unhoused Recovery and Debt literature concept proposal

The WSC Literature Committee, together with the Underserved and Underrepresented Outreach Committee, moves that the Conference approve the development of a pamphlet outline on the intersections of debt and fear of being unhoused entitled "Experiences of Housing Insecurity: A Debtor's Unspoken Fear."

Background and Rationale for these five early motions.

1. **MOTION:** The Conference Committee moves to update the current Section 6 of the WSC Charter to allow for the consideration of a virtual World Service Conference by inserting the following after the first sentence: "The location may be in-person or virtual."

BACKGROUND:

The proposed addition of the phrase: "The location may be in-person or virtual" recognizes the evolving needs of the Debtors Anonymous (D.A.) fellowship and the importance of inclusivity, accessibility, and global representation in our service structure.

Rationale for the Motion

D.A. has witnessed firsthand the benefits and challenges of virtual meetings and conferences, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. The experience of two virtual WSCs demonstrated that remote participation can increase accessibility, allowing General Service Representatives (GSRs) and Intergroup Service Representatives (ISRs) from around the world—many of whom face financial, geographical, or physical barriers—to actively participate in the service process. The subsequent increase in international attendance at a post-pandemic in-person conference held outside the U.S. underscores the demand for broader accessibility.

By updating Section 6 to allow for virtual conferences, the fellowship acknowledges the necessity of balancing in-person connection with the benefits of a virtual format. Many D.A. members experience financial constraints, visa

challenges, travel restrictions, or disabilities that make attending an in-person WSC difficult, if not impossible. A virtual conference option helps ensure that members worldwide have an equitable opportunity to engage in the essential service work that supports the suffering debtor. Additionally, allowing for a virtual WSC provides groups with an opportunity to gradually raise the necessary funds to send their GSRs and ISRs to the next in-person WSC. Currently, planning committees for in person conferences face challenges finalizing rates and establishing a spending plan well in advance. As a result, groups that have not planned ahead and now want to send a representative to the conference are left with only a few months to fundraise. Having a virtual WSC as an option helps alleviate financial pressure, allows groups and international attendees to plan and raise funds over a longer period, and leads to more sustainable financial planning.

Spiritual Principles and the Mission of D.A.

The proposed change aligns with the spiritual principles of D.A. as outlined in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts and the vision of reaching and supporting more debtors worldwide, and expanding conference accessibility. Opening the conference to virtual participation is not a deviation from tradition but rather an expression of the spiritual abundance that guides D.A. members in their recovery.

Service and Long-Term Fellowship Growth

The WSC serves as a platform where the global D.A. community unites in service. Members participate in ongoing committee work throughout the year, but to do so, they must first attend the WSC. Limiting conference attendance to in-person participants unintentionally excludes members who could otherwise contribute meaningfully to committees, leadership roles, and the overall health of the fellowship. Virtual conferences also allow for a Virtual Host committee to have members throughout the world, expanding the possibilities for engagement in hosting the WSC in the future.

By making the WSC more accessible through virtual participation, D.A. has an opportunity to reach members who might otherwise remain isolated due to financial hardship, geographical barriers, or lack of local fellowship support. Virtual conferencing extends this opportunity to a wider audience, ensuring that the suffering debtor—no matter where they are—has access to representation and service participation.

Ensuring a Balanced Approach

This motion does not propose that the WSC become exclusively or primarily virtual.

Instead, it provides the flexibility to simply consider a virtual conference as part of the bid review process for future WSC conference hosting. These bids are evaluated by both the WSC Conference Committee and the General Service Board. Ultimately, the Conference Committee makes a recommendation each year for the conference location, which is then voted on at the WSC.

Currently, virtual bids are not able to even be considered in this process. This motion would allow them to be included, ensuring that in-person connections—long a vital part of D.A.'s tradition—are preserved while also recognizing the evolving landscape of global communication and accessibility.

Conclusion

This motion seeks to honor the spirit of inclusivity, service, and accessibility by formally recognizing the potential for virtual WSCs. By making this change, the Fellowship ensures that all members—regardless of their geographic, financial, or physical circumstances—have the opportunity to participate in the essential service work that keeps D.A. strong and thriving. Additionally, it supports sustainable financial planning by giving groups more time to prepare for in-person conferences. By incorporating this flexibility, the motion strengthens D.A.'s mission to serve the still-suffering debtor in all parts of the world.

2. **Motion: The Conference Committee moves to update The Conference Charter Section 3 (DAMS 2024 edition pg. 88) to lower the total number of votes necessary for a motion to pass from 3/4 to 2/3 of registered groups and to add a third voting option of “abstain” in addition to “for” and “against”. The changes in wording to the DAMS are in italics below:**

No change in Article Ten (10) of the Charter or in the Twelve Traditions of Debtors Anonymous or in the Twelve Steps of Debtors Anonymous may be made with less than the written consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the Debtors Anonymous groups. *All fellowship wide votes will include the option to vote “abstain”.*

BACKGROUND

What is the Problem?

- We believe that despite substantial unanimity being achieved (73% of all registered groups voted in favor of the motion, and of the groups that voted, 89% voted in favor), the failed vote in 2024 on changing gendered God language in our 12 Steps & 12 Traditions shows that the current voting structure for a fellowship-wide vote is not working. This vote was impacted by a lack of participation from a substantial number of groups (18% of all registered groups), even after significant resources of time and money were committed by the

fellowship to engage all groups.

- Per parliamentary procedures, if a group does not vote, it is still counted in the quorum and so that vote is in essence a “no” vote. While the overwhelming majority of groups that voted were in favor, the motion did not pass.
- We would like to provide a group the ability to participate in the fellowship-wide votes without having to vote yes or no.

Proposed Solution

We explored various ideas and passed them to the Parliamentarian for feedback. It was felt that the most pragmatic and simplest approach is to lower the number of yes votes required for fellowship-wide votes to pass from 3/4 to 2/3 of the voting quorum. This reduces the impact that non-voting groups will have on future votes, while still ensuring substantial unanimity is required to make a change.

We believe that it is important to ensure complete clarity about every group's position when it comes to fellowship-wide votes and so wish to introduce a third voting option of “abstain”, where a group does not wish to vote for or against a motion.

3. **Motion: The Fellowship Communications Committee moves to change the name of the online publication *Ways & Means* to *Within Our Means*.**

Background

This document sets out the background to an early motion presented for consideration at WSC 2025 in San Francisco. The motion being:

The new title will be *Within Our Means* but the masthead of the magazine will show the full Promise for context: “We will live Within Our Means, yet our means will not define us.”

At WSC in August 2024 FCC presented the following motion:

Motion 1: FCC moves that we change the name of the online publication *Ways & Means* to *Within Our Means*. MOTION DID NOT PASS

The motion was based on the following submission:

“I'd like to propose a new name for the *Ways & Means*, changing it to *Within Our Means*. While the original newsletter title has historical value, most of us don't really get what it means. Also, it sounds more like a D.A. Board newsletter, addressing the financial interests of a not-for-profit organization rather than a Fellowship-wide communication resource. The proposed new title, “Within Our

Means" serves two appealing purposes and presents a clearer sense of purpose. First, it supports our primary purpose, a desire to stop incurring unsecured debt one day at a time-- in other words, living within our means. Secondly, it suggests the gifts of the program as described in the D.A. Promises are well within our means when we work the program. In addition, it's inclusive. Whether you underearn, overspend, depend on creditors to get by, or live in pauperism, living within our means is a goal we all can understand. And it would help newcomers better understand the program as well".

The motion failed by one vote. FCC have since looked into the history of the name and discovered that The name, Ways & Means, was an idea by one of the early editors for W&M.

FCC decided to present the motion again to change the name of *Ways & Means* to *Within Our Means*.

For further explanation the committee proposes the full text of the title would show both the masthead of the magazine and the full Promise, to read:

*We will live **Within Our Means** yet our means will not define us.*

This will give context to the title *Within Our Means*

4. **Motion: The WSC Literature Committee, together with the Underserved and Underrepresented Outreach Committee, moves that the Conference approve the development of a pamphlet outline on Gender Identity and Debt: Voices of Gender-expansive Debtors.**

Background/rationale:

Trans women, Trans men and BIPOC gender-expansive debtors have been silenced and/or censored in meetings based on Tradition 10. In keeping with Tradition 3, and in the interest of making D.A. safe and inclusive for these members, we propose a pamphlet which would contain member stories addressing issues that directly affect the gender-expansive community:

- Gender affirming care expenses and debt
- Unhousedness
- Employment
- Spirituality
- Risk of suicide

Voices to be presented in this pamphlet will include:

- Transmen
- Transwomen

- Gender non-conforming
 - BIPOC gender expansive members
5. **Motion:** The WSC Literature Committee, together with the Underserved and Underrepresented Outreach Committee, moves that the Conference approve the development of a pamphlet outline on the intersections of debt and fear of being unhoused entitled “Experiences of Housing Insecurity: A Debtor’s Unspoken Fear.”

Background/rationale:

The idea for this pamphlet began with a suggestion presented at the opening of the 2024 World Service Conference that an exploration be initiated as to the relationship between experiences of being unhoused/homeless and debting. The initial idea itself gained wide overall interest throughout the conference.

The fear, shame and addiction of being unhoused is absent in the literature of D.A. The focus of this pamphlet would be to illuminate the underlying and unspoken factors that may lead a debtor to become unhoused. This is a taboo subject even within the walls of recovery in D.A. and the undisclosed experience of a debtor can perpetuate shame.

The UUOC Unhoused Recovery Subcommittee was formed and an initial private panel conference call was held including six members of D.A. who had experienced being unhoused/homeless in one of many forms along with the three members of the subcommittee.

There was an overall experience and expression of gratitude by the panelists of being heard and known while many similarities in their stories were revealed: signs and patterns leading to being unhoused/homeless. Extensive notes and findings were compiled after the initial panel and submitted to both the overall UUOC as well as the GSB liaison to the committee. It was agreed that there existed a strong basis for creating a Fellowship Wide Call on the subject to further explore and give voice to this community which was held on Saturday, March 29, 2025. This call was recorded and will be available soon at:

<https://debtorsanonymous.org/2024-2025-conference-year/>

Because the experiences of this community are not reflected in the current literature, people who have had this experience, may be currently having this experience, or are in fear of becoming unhoused may be in grave danger of losing their solvency which may lead to homelessness and shame.

This pamphlet would contain member stories addressing issues related to becoming unhoused:

- Underearning and employment challenges
- Mis-prioritizing one’s biggest expense (rent) last
- A feeling that someone will come to the rescue

- Addiction and bonding to the experience of being unhoused
- Shame and reluctance to share or ask for help within the fellowship
- Lack of awareness of available resources

Last revision: 2024-04-06