

October 2025 Chairperson of the Board Letter

Dear Al-Anon and Alateen Members,

I'm pleased to share highlights from the October 2025 Board Week in this Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter. You'll find updates from our Policy Chairperson, Treasurer, and the Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team (CLT).

The Board meeting took place in Omaha, Nebraska, and was followed by the energizing Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event. World Service Office (WSO) Volunteers arrived on October 20 and 21, depending on their committee schedules. These gatherings are always a joyful opportunity for fellowship and meaningful connection.

The Executive Committee (EC) convened at the end of Board Week. Trustees not serving on the EC attended without voice or vote, fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities. By Board motion, At-Large EC members and members of the Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) were invited to engage during discussions on the Envisioned Future Work Group and Strategic Plan Strategies Updates.

After the meetings, Volunteers participated in the excitement of a technical walkthrough for the Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect.

Governance & Board Operations

Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) Generative Discussion

The EFWG presented the topic, "Why Do Good Boards Make Bad Decisions?" for generative discussion. Articles were shared in advance. Key questions explored included collaborative culture, decision-making fatigue, reliance on leadership under pressure, and emergency agenda items. Board members highlighted that many of the recommendations had previously been implemented, such as the consent agenda and consensus-building techniques, decision-making by substantial unanimity rather than simple majority, and efforts to encourage those who have a minority opinion to share. Trustees recognized the efforts had created a meeting environment that is both safe and inclusive.

Board Evaluation

The Board continued its process of reviewing the previous quarter's Board evaluation quantitative results and comments. This quarter, the conversation turned toward the evaluation itself. Are the questions still relevant and best suited to support the Board's work and continuous improvement efforts? Is the evaluation format working? Following the conversation, the Board asked the EFWG to brainstorm ideas for revising the Board evaluation and to bring this discussion to the January Board meeting.

October Board Week Format Review

The Board evaluated the two-year trial undertaken to reduce the October Board week from four to three days. Trustees had similar observations to those expressed by Conference members about the shortened Conference week trial. Overall observations included that limited discussion time was available for important deci-

sions and the trial had not substantially changed the workload for Trustees. Benefits included cost savings and reduced time away from home for Trustees, which was noted as being helpful for those who are balancing work and volunteer responsibilities. Challenges included fatigue and other factors that Board members suggested could contribute to diminished quality in decision-making. After thoughtful discussion, the Board agreed to discontinue the trial and return to a four-day October Board week schedule beginning in 2026.

Bylaws Review

The Board initiated a review of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) Bylaws with the goal of enhancing the Trustees' understanding of the governance responsibilities of their positions and those of the Board Committees. Trustees took turns reading each sentence aloud before addressing questions and inviting feedback. Suggestions for updates were captured for future consideration.

Organizational Planning & Staffing

Executive Director – Succession Planning and Performance Evaluation

The Board discussed how to handle the substantially revised Executive Director job description, which only became available for review the week of the Board meeting. While time for review was limited, the Board concluded that, based on their initial assessment, the new job description represented an improvement over the previous version. Following a thoughtful discussion, the Board approved the revised version and agreed to complete a more thorough review in January 2026 to ensure alignment and clarity moving forward.

The Board also completed the Executive Director's 2025 Annual Performance Evaluation.

Implications of Expanding WSO Staff Beyond 49 Employees

The Board had asked Staff to research the implications of increasing WSO Staff beyond the current threshold of 49 employees. The Senior Director of Finance and Operations presented a detailed evaluation of the implications of crossing the 49-employee threshold. Several factors identified for future Board consideration included added compliance obligations, workspace availability, and financial feasibility.

Staff noted that before any opportunity arose to exceed the threshold, a solution must be found to address the challenge the WSO is experiencing in recruiting Staff willing to relocate to Virginia Beach. This situation is particularly evident for member positions. While some WSO Staff positions require membership, others do not, and the membership positions have become much harder to fill. The organization remains committed to exploring options with new positions actively being posted and budgeted for.

Outsourcing to Expand WSO Capacity

Given ongoing concerns, Staff are continuing to seek creative options to enhance Staff capacity. This quarter, an event management company was engaged to serve as our outsourced event logistics team. Staff will have the opportunity to interview potential event planners to manage logistics for upcoming WSO-hosted events.

Events & Finance

75th Anniversary Ticket Price

The Trustees were excited to understand plans for the 75th Anniversary celebration scheduled to take place the Saturday immediately following the 2026 WSC. The event will include both a WSO open house and gala banquet. The Board considered the Finance Committee recommendation to set the banquet ticket price at \$75.00. The Board also approved offering a 50 percent discount for any WSO Staff members who wish to attend and are not scheduled to work the event, in recognition of their efforts in service to the fellowship.

2026 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

As always, one of the highlights of the October Board meeting is the selection of three locations that submitted bids to welcome the 2026 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event. The locations were drawn from a "hat," allowing Higher Power to guide the destination. WSO Staff, with the aid of an outsourced event planner, will coordinate with hotels in the three locations and finalize the contract. The final destination for the 2026 Road Trip! event will be announced in the January Chairperson of the Board (COB) Letter.

IAGSM Equalized Expense

Every two years, Delegates from Al-Anon international structures that have formed General Service Offices (GSOs) are invited to gather at a service event designed to offer support and share experience: the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). At the 2024 IAGSM, Delegates discussed and agreed on the importance of continuing this biannual event after attendance dipped to an all-time low. A key concern for Delegates and GSOs was the rising cost of the IAGSM Equalized Expense.

With the approval of the Delegates attending in person and virtually during the first-ever hybrid business meeting, bidding for the structure to welcome the 2026 IAGSM was handled during a virtual meeting. The Board is excited to recognize the effort of the Slovenia Board and GSO, which submitted a bid to host the 2026 IAGSM. The IAGSM Delegates unanimously approved the location: Lake Bled, Slovenia. With the bid approved, WSO Staff set about contacting potential hotels and calculating Delegate costs. A stumbling block to reducing the Equalized Expense were travel costs. Staff presented a proposal to reduce the Equalized Expense that would balance the needs of the structures and WSO. The Board approved the proposal, which included using a new travel platform with more extensive and budget-friendly options.

Strategic Plan Initiatives Updates

Preliminary Overview: 2026 Strategic Plan Landscape

The Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) presented its quarterly updates to the Board on the in-progress 2025 Strategies, many of which are multi-year projects that will continue into 2026. Additionally, as is the practice in October, the SLT presented the proposed 2026 WSO Projects Landscape, including the 2025 Strategies being carried over and proposed 2026 initiatives. The purpose of this conversation is to ensure the Board is aligned on WSO Staff direction prior to their investing effort estimating costs, refining scope, and confirming capacity before the beginning of the 2026 budget planning cycle.

Staff presented 12 projects, all but one of which was a carryover from 2025. SLT will submit the final 2026 WSO Projects Landscape for approval at the January 2026 Board meeting in conjunction with the 2026 Preliminary Budget.

Core Systems Overhaul: Accounting System

Staff were excited to report that a new accounting system had been selected and contracts signed. This selection was prioritized to address risks associated with operating on the existing, outdated software. Implementation of the new system will begin in November and is scheduled for completion after the year-end closure and audit in January. The Core Systems Overhaul (CSO) project was one approved for funding through Excess Reserve Funds.

Excess Reserve Funds Allocation

CSO: Accounting System was one of three projects approved in 2024 for funding using the excess Reserve Fund value beyond one year's WSO operating expenses as of December 2023. Other projects included Public Outreach to Professionals – Young People and Passing It On. When funding was approved, the Board agreed to complete the transfers as spending was incurred. Each transfer must be separately approved by the Board of Trustees. In October, a total of \$160,581 was approved for transfer to fund expenses related to CSO: Accounting and the PO to Professionals – Young People efforts.

World Service Conference Planning & Farewells

WSC Task and Thought Force Discussions

Every year, the Board takes the opportunity to consider what topics or concerns are most relevant to the fellowship and would benefit from Delegate thought or task force contribution. Trustees proposed topics based on concerns raised by WSC members on AFG Connects, as well as unresolved issues from the 2025 WSC. Consensus was reached to establish a Delegate Thought Force focused on Tradition Four. This group will use the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to explore two key concepts: the meaning of autonomy and the interpretation of "affecting Al-Anon as a whole." Delegates will share their findings at the 2027 WSC.

Single Trustee Process

The Board discussed what was needed to prepare the Conference members for the 2026 WSC follow-up conversation on proposed options to create a single process for Trustee selection. At the 2025 WSC, Delegates agreed to discuss the options with their Areas and gather feedback. Recognizing at least 22 new Delegates will be joining the 2026 WSC, the Board concluded it would be helpful to charge a Board Task Force (TF) with preparing a document summarizing the Single Trustee conversations to date and revisiting the three questions presented during the post-Conference virtual meetings.

The Conference Leadership Team was asked to reserve time for the Board-facilitated session on the topic to gather Area feedback and explore next steps.

2026 WSC Theme

2026 marks an important milestone in our history: the unification of our family groups under the name Al-Anon Family Groups and the founding of its Clearing House, known today as the World Service Office. As we approach this remarkable milestone, the Board unveiled the theme for the 2026 World Service Conference:

75 Years, One Purpose

75 años, un propósito

75 ans, un but

The Trustees look forward to celebrating decades of dedication, unity, and service both at the Conference and throughout the year.

Outgoing Panel 63 Delegates

Sometimes just saying “thank you” does not seem enough. But I do want to express my gratitude to the Panel 63 Delegates for the service they have provided over the last three years.

Our time together included a Welcome Home to the WSO, a power outage, and, last year, the opportunity to be quite close as we conducted business in a small room. I believe that those shared experiences and many more helped us to come together, talk to each other, and reason things out.

I hope that as you walk through these last few months of your term, you will remember that you have made a difference and recognize that you have done your part to make sure that Al-Anon will continue to be here for the next person who walks in these doors looking for help. I’m sure you know that your job isn’t over; I know you will keep carrying the message as only you can. So this is not goodbye but rather “see you later.”

And finally, thank you to all of you, for your continued dedication and support of Al-Anon Family Groups.

With Gratitude,



Kathi M.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.