

2026 Service Body Renewal GUIDE

The Renewal Playbook

Mission, Leadership, Process, and Tools for Transforming Your Service Body

Adapted from Region 6 Intergroup Renewal Workshops

Overview

Purpose of this document

This document is a comprehensive guide to service body renewal in Overeaters Anonymous. It explains why renewal matters, how healthy service bodies strengthen meetings and recovery, and how leaders can use inventories, surveys, strategic planning, workshops, outreach, and focused service to carry the message more effectively. Throughout, the document emphasizes that personal recovery is the foundation of leadership, that service bodies exist to support groups in ways meetings cannot do alone, and that practical training can increase sponsors, improve newcomer retention, strengthen meetings, and revitalize OA service.

Five Types of Service Bodies

- Intergroups
- National Service Boards
- Language Service Boards
- Specific Focus Service Boards — two or more groups/service bodies serving common needs regardless of geographic proximity
- Regions

What Service Bodies Do — From the OA Handbook

1. Acting as guardians of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Creating and maintaining websites (most newcomers now find OA through oa.org or a local service body website)
3. Maintaining OA listings and handling telephone and mail inquiries
4. Sponsoring workshops, marathons, and special events to help members strengthen personal recovery
5. Publishing regular newsletters and event directories
6. Handling public information requests; arranging PSAs and providing speakers to outside organizations
7. Maintaining contact with health care professionals in fields related to OA
8. Arranging a system for groups to obtain abstinent OA speakers
9. Helping to find sponsors for new members
10. Maintaining a stock of OA literature
11. Sending representatives to regional assemblies and delegates to the WSBC

Intergroup's Greatest Service

Show people HOW to strengthen their personal recovery.

Show people HOW to work the program.

Show people HOW to spread the message of recovery.

Service Body Transformation

The Paradigm Shift

Everything in OA stems from personal recovery. The objective is to transform the service body into a proactive, Tradition Five organization whose highest priority is providing opportunities for members to strengthen their personal recovery and carry the message.

The service body becomes a training organization to supplement sponsorship. Find and mobilize the grateful recovering compulsive overeaters. Every member is a service body member, whether they realize it or not.

Changing the Image of Service Bodies

- Our main product is usefulness. We provide opportunities; willingness is up to each member.
- First comes our own recovery — OA is a program of attraction.
- There is no “they” — only us. Everyone is part of a service body.
- If not me, who?

Leadership and Recovery

Strong Recovery Is the First Requirement

A leader needs to be an example of physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery. We need to be before we can do.

"Those of us who live this program don't simply carry the message; we are the message. Each day that we live well, we are well, and we embody the joy of recovery, which attracts others who want what we've found in OA." — OA 12&12, 2nd Ed., pp. 86–87

Recovery (you) + Passion (you) + Leadership (you) + Process (we'll show you) = Service Body Renewal

What Good Leaders Do

- Can motivate people by creating a compelling vision
- Gather quality people and build well-functioning teams
- Lead, rather than simply facilitate discussion
- Are always wearing their recruiting hat
- Take no credit — it's always the group
- Communicate honestly without fear
- Bring people together rather than apart

- Spread hope — because hope is contagious

The Renewal Process: Step by Step

Basic requirement: a dedicated leader or core of leaders living in recovery — people who walk the walk and talk the talk.

Recovery + Passion + Process = Renewal

If you build it, they will come.

Step by Step Process

1. Conduct an Inventory — Service Body or Membership

Purpose: Establish an honest picture of the service body's current condition. **Process:** Select an inventory format, explain why the inventory is being done, invite broad participation, collect responses, and summarize the themes without blame. **Output:** A short findings summary that identifies strengths, concerns, urgent needs, and opportunities for renewal. **Suggested timing:** Complete within the first 30–60 days.

2. Create the Cause Based on the Results

Purpose: Turn information into a compelling reason for action. **Process:** Review the inventory and survey themes, identify the most important problem or opportunity, and describe it in clear, simple language that members can understand and care about. **Output:** A concise cause statement that explains why renewal is needed now. **Suggested timing:** Draft immediately after results are reviewed.

3. Recruit Through One-on-One Conversations

Purpose: Build a core team of willing, recovering members. **Process:** Identify members with recovery, reliability, and enthusiasm; speak with them personally; explain the cause; and ask them to help with a specific task or role. **Output:** A small renewal team with named people, clear commitments, and initial assignments. **Suggested timing:** Begin immediately and continue throughout the renewal effort.

4. Hold Kickoff Meetings

Purpose: Bring members into the process and create shared ownership. **Process:** Schedule one or more kickoff meetings, present the cause, share inventory or survey findings, invite discussion, listen carefully, and collect ideas for action. **Output:** Member feedback, possible volunteers, early priorities, and increased awareness that the renewal belongs to everyone. **Suggested timing:** Hold within 30 days of creating the cause statement.

5. Establish a Clear Vision

Purpose: Define the destination before choosing activities. **Process:** Use the inventory, survey results, kickoff feedback, and group conscience to describe what a healthier service body would look like. Keep the vision recovery-centered, simple, and memorable. **Output:** A written vision statement that guides goals, priorities, budgets, and communication. **Suggested timing:** Complete before setting goals.

6. Set Goals and Priorities

Purpose: Convert the vision into focused, manageable work. **Process:** Identify possible goals, compare them to member needs, select the highest-impact priorities, and make sure each goal supports recovery, meetings, newcomers, sponsorship, outreach, or service participation. **Output:** A short list of strategic and current-year goals. **Suggested timing:** Complete during the planning phase after the vision is approved.

7. Define Activities That Accomplish the Goals

Purpose: Choose practical actions that make the goals real. **Process:** For each goal, identify workshops, trainings, outreach efforts, communications, committees, or projects that directly support it. Avoid activities that do not connect to the vision or priorities. **Output:** An operating plan with activities linked to specific goals. **Suggested timing:** Complete after goals are selected and before budgets are assigned.

8. Assign Responsibilities, Commitments, Accountability, and Budgets

Purpose: Make sure every activity has ownership and support. **Process:** Assign a lead person or committee, define the task, set a reporting schedule, identify needed funds, and confirm the commitment. Include accountability without criticism by asking, “What help do you need?” **Output:** A responsibility chart or action plan showing owners, due dates, budgets, and reporting points. **Suggested timing:** Complete before announcing the full plan.

9. Distribute the Plan to All Members

Purpose: Create transparency, trust, and participation. **Process:** Share the vision, goals, activities, opportunities for service, and timeline through every available communication channel, including meetings, newsletters, email lists, websites, announcements, and direct outreach. **Output:** A shared renewal plan that members can understand, support, and join. **Suggested timing:** Distribute as soon as responsibilities and budgets are confirmed.

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