**1.** **What do we know about our members’ *(and prospective members’)* needs, wants and preferences that relate to this issue? What do we wish we knew, but don’t?**

**We know…**

* Currently, about 58% of meetings (~3 of 5) in WA Area use an electronic format.
* Some members in our Area prefer/need to attend virtual meetings and yet still want to be connected with WA Area.
* If WA Area welcomes Permanent Electronic Groups (PEGs) into our Area, these groups can have voice/vote in our WA Geographic Area.

**We don’t know…**

* How many Electronic Groups fall into the category of wanting to officially belong to our WA Area and participate in Area business.
* The details of how this will work out.

**2.** **What do we know about the resources and our vision for Al-Anon and our meetings that are relevant to this issue? What do we wish we knew, but don’t?**

**We know…**

* Our members have historically financially supported the Area and we have closed most fiscal years with a surplus.
* Having Electronic Groups welcomed into our Area is consistent with our Vision for Al-Anon, which is to:
  + Welcome all newcomers/members (Al-Anon/Alateen Declaration).
  + Be inclusive so members of both physical meetings and electronic meetings feel welcome and a part of our Area.
  + Encourage participation in service beyond the group level.

**We don’t know…**

* If our members will step up and volunteer for a position that may need to be filled to support Electronic Groups in our Area.
* If there will be or would be financial impacts to the Area if PEMs are added.

**3. What do we know about our “culture” and “environment” that is relevant to this discussion? In other words--Will our decision be consistent with our principles, policies, and legacies: the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts? What are the implications of our choices? What do we wish we knew, but don’t?**

**We know…**

* **Tradition 1**: **Our common welfare should come first; personal progress depends upon unity.**

WA Area’s mission is to facilitate the links of service of the Al-Anon program and both electronic groups and face-to-face (FTF) groups and their members are equal in the Al-Anon program within the boundaries of WA Area.

Accepting Permanent Electronic Groups (PEGs) into WA Area is the essence of unity.

* **Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants – they do not govern.**

WA Area has a Group Records Coordinator who is the process person.

* **Tradition 3**: **The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al‐Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.**

Electronic Groups areAl-Anon Groups. They fit the “requirement for membership”.

* **Tradition 4: Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.**

WA Area accepting PEGs aligns with our principle of Autonomy. This will allow PEGs to make the decision to be where they, through their Group Conscience, deem appropriate.

If WA Area chooses to accept PEGs they can petition to WSO to be a part of WA Area.

Once in WA Area, a PEG can choose to be in a geographical district or an Overlay (electronic) District.

WA Area would be following the suggestions of the WSC’s Electronic Meeting Workgroup (page 32, 2021 WSC Conference Summary) and WSO by considering allowing PEGs into our Area.

Permanent Electronic Groups are Al-Anon Groups.

**Tradition 5:** **Each Al-Anon family group has but one purpose: to help families of Alcoholics. We do this by practicing the 12 Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of Alcoholics.**

WA Area’s mission is to facilitate the links of service of the Al-Anon program of both electronic groups and face to face groups. Group members are equal in the Al-Anon program within the boundaries of WA Area.

Welcoming Electronic Groups into our Area supports our primary purpose.

* **Tradition 7: Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**

FTF and PEGs groups have the responsibility to do service work, donate 7th Tradition, time and efforts for the good of the Al-Anon program in WA Area.

PEGs need to be self-supporting along with supporting its service arms.

* **Tradition 9: Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**

The current PEM Task Force began in October 2022 and developed this KBDM.

* **Tradition 10. The Al‑Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**

PEG representation is an Al-Anon issue, this is not an outside issue.

* **Concept 1: The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.**

WA Area has the authority to create an Overlay District. Once established, the PEGs within that District have the responsibility and authority to maintain the district.

* **Concept 2: The Al‑Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.**

WA Area has been delegated the administrative and operational authority by the WSC to create guidelines for accepting PEGs into WA Area.

* **Concept 3: The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.**

WA Area has the right to accept or not to accept PEGs because of the WSCs of 2021 and 2022 actions and the groups have the responsibility to make decisions.

* **Concept 4: Participation is the key to Harmony.**

PEGs should be aware of the WA Area guidelines for acceptance into the WA Area and how the group can fully participate in the WA Area service arm.

Permanent Electronic Groups would be encouraged to elect a GR that participates in their District meetings and the WA Area Assemblies.

Our spiritual principles of Cooperation, Participation, Responsibility, Singleness of Purpose, Unity or Common Welfare (SM p. 91) are supported by welcoming Electronic Groups into our Area service structure; “We are a fellowship of equals” (SM p. 39).

* **Concept 5: The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.**

If a PEG is not allowed into WA Area, after given reasons by the Area, they can correct or reapply after the group comes into compliance with the guidelines. The GR can contact the WA Area Group Records Coordinator or the Chairperson.

* **Concept 10: Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.**

The Group Records Coordinator is the process person for PEG applications and appeals to the WA Area Overlay District or a geographical district in WA Area.

* **Concept 12: The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon’s world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.**
  + **(2) that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;**

The Group Record’s Coordinator represents WA Area and serves as the liaison with WSO Group Records.

This process would follow the guidelines written in the WA Area Handbook for PEGs.

* + **(3) that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;**

This thought/task force provides information and gives suggestions for PEG representation into WA Area.

* + **(4) that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;**

PEGs have clear guidelines for PEG acceptance into WA Area along with an appeal process. WA Area Behavior Guidelines, which include the CAL Conflict Mediation process, will be available to guide members.

* + **(5) that though the Conference serves Al‑Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al‑Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.**

The GRs have the ultimate authority to decide whether or not PEGs are represented in WA Area.

WA Area may want to consider having a PEG Guidelines trial period.

This aligns with Warranty Three. Please see page 220 in the 2022 – 2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual.

**4. What are the ethical implications of our choices? Would we be practicing our “principles in all our affairs”? What do we wish we knew, but don’t?**

**We know…**

* *“Practicing our principles in all our affairs”* means we are recognizing not only Al-Anon Groups that are meeting at a physical location, but also those Groups that are meeting electronically.
* In 2018, the World Service Conference (WSC) began discussing having PEMs welcomed into Areas. The WSC and the Al-Anon Family Groups (AFG) Board of Trustees have encouraged Areas to develop a plan to welcome Electronic Groups into their Area in 2021. Electronic meetings have been around since the 1990s and before.
* Our “culture” and “environment” has moved more into the electronic age; electronic meetings have increased significantly and have been integrated into the world wide Al-Anon Fellowship.
* Our Service Manual now has multiple references to Electronic Groups.

**We know this is still about choices:**

* A Permanent Electronic Group would still have the choice to be in the Global Electronic Area or WA Area, depending on their group conscience.
* When someone asks about which meetings to attend, our response could be “We have a variety of meetings - in person meetings, electronic meetings, and the Al-Anon Mobile app.”

**We don’t know…**

* All of the details regarding the process of registering Permanent Electronic Groups in WA Area, and how the PEGs in our Area will be listed on the World Service Office (WSO) website.
* What changes will be required in the WA Area Handbook or the WA Area Group Records submissions forms.