

Family Group Guide to Finances

How does the Family Group support itself?

Our Seventh Tradition says every group ought to be fully self-supporting. During each meeting, we pass the basket around for voluntary contributions. Any amount one cares to donate is greatly appreciated.

Why do we need to collect donations at our meeting?

If family groups are autonomous, donations collected must be used to cover all group operating expenses. These expenses may include (but are not necessarily limited to)

- the purchase of Nar-Anon approved literature (usually purchased from the literature store from the Nar-Anon World Service website) for distribution to family group newcomers or for use in local outreach activities.
- the payment of rent for the meeting location
- white literature copy expenses
- contributions to the Midwest Region or the World Service Office

How do we hold our group funds?

It is suggested that family groups ask for a member volunteer from the family group to collect the monies weekly. This volunteer is considered the Treasurer for the family group. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to collect and disburse funds as necessary to support the operation of the family group. It is suggested that this be done in a very accurate and transparent manner. Each group should determine in what manner (reference can be made to the Midwest Region's website for one way this can be presented) and with what frequency (i.e., monthly, quarterly or semi-annually) they would expect a report on the group's finances.

What is a "prudent reserve"?

A "prudent reserve" is an agreed upon amount to be held in reserve for operating expenses in the family group. It is suggested by the *"Guide to Local Services"* that the "prudent reserve" be based on the average operating expenses over a three month period. Expenses considered "operating expenses" may include rent, literature, travel expenses for GSR (group service representative) to attend regional assembly, outreach costs, copying and any minor postage expenses.

What happens when our group exceeds its “prudent reserve”?

When a family group’s funds exceed their “prudent reserve”, as an autonomous body, the group decides how to manage the excess. The Nar-Anon program suggests that once a body’s “prudent reserve” is met, the remaining funds should be sent up to the next level in the service structure. As Nar-Anon is a bottom up organization, it’s overall health is first reliant upon a financially healthy family group. Once the family group’s prudent reserve is met, then it is important that the next level in the service structure – the region – is healthy as well. This is possible only through the donations from the family groups. Once the region is financially healthy, then it is important for funds exceeding the region’s “prudent reserve” be passed on up the service structure to the WSO.

How does our family group hold funds?

Most family groups maintain a minimal balance as a “prudent reserve”. Many of our family groups’ Treasurers maintain their funds in cash. Again, it is suggested that the Treasurer report out to the group routine updates (as determined through group conscience) on donations and group expenses.

Should groups have a checking account?

This is, as with everything else, truly left up to each family group to decide through a group conscience. This can be done by a motion, discussions and a vote by the members in the group. While there are places in our literature that reference a checking account as an acceptable idea, a good amount of thought might be appropriate prior to pursuit of this course. Here is only a partial list of potential challenges:

- Different states and different banks have different requirements. Opening a checking account must be researched in relation to your state’s and bank’s requirements.
- Opening a checking account may require a Federal Employee Identification Number (i.e., FEIN) issued from the IRS. This can be difficult to secure for a non-profit entity and requires periodic updating.
- Every time a group changes Treasurer, the names on the account must also change. Making this adjustment to a checking account often requires signers, the ones currently on the account as well as those being added to the account, to **all** be present at the same time at the bank.
- Some banks charge monthly finance charges – particularly on accounts that have modest balances. These charges can consume a considerable amount of funds over time.

- The WSO suggests that groups do not open a checking account. Perhaps their experiences over the years and across many family groups throughout the country are worth giving most careful consideration.

What does the “*Guide to Local Services*” say?

The last sentence in section 8-2 says, “It is suggested that all monies accumulated in excess of the prudent reserve be sent to the next service levels based on a group conscience”.

Information for this guide was taken from the following:

Nar-anon Midwest Region Family Groups website can be found at www.naranonmidwest.org. Click on “**How to Start a New Meeting**” then click on link “**Financial Considerations**”.

The World Service Office can be found at www.nar-anon.org. Click on “**Members**” then click on link “**Service Literature**”. After the page comes up, click on the “**Guide to Local Services**” box. Sections 4-1, 4-5, 8-1, 8-2, and 8-3 contain information for Family Groups regarding all aspects of finances.