

From Letters to Logins: WSO's Role in Our *Mobile App*

As we celebrate 75 years of Al-Anon Family Groups, we honor the vision of Lois W. and Anne B. who founded the Clearing House in 1951 to share the collective wisdom of members with members. Through letters, newsletters, and the development of Conference Approved Literature, the Clearing House became the heartbeat of our fellowship.

Thirty years ago, in 1996, the Clearing House, known as the World Service Office (WSO), relocated from New York to Virginia Beach, Virginia. The move was prompted by the rising rental costs in New York and the Board's fiduciary responsibility to make best use of the members' Seventh Tradition contributions. While the location changed, the mission did not. Today, WSO Staff continue to support the Al-Anon Family Groups by responding to member correspondence, publishing electronic newsletters, developing Conference Approved Literature, and more.

In 2020, Al-Anon Family Groups launched its first mobile app, *the Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*, which includes a way for members to meet electronically. In doing so, the WSO became more than a clearinghouse; it also became a virtual venue. Just as local churches, libraries, or community centers provide a key to access the space for in-person meetings, WSO Staff now provide login credentials to access the meeting rooms within the *Mobile App*. As with physical venues, challenges can arise, whether technical or related to access. For groups meeting in the *Mobile App*, those challenges are appropriately raised with the WSO Staff responsible for maintaining the virtual venue.

Through every challenge, our principles endure: unity, service, and self-support. For 75 years, WSO has continued to support the shared wisdom and flow that move through our fellowship, keeping us connected through letters, literature, and now, logins.

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