

Zones for Third Draft Service System Proposals

The board has only had preliminary discussions about the possible roles of zones in a new service system. The ideas described here are all the result of brainstorming and discussion and don't represent decisions or final thoughts. Rather, these are the board's ideas at this time that they are sharing in part to get a sense of whether interested members of the fellowship agree.

Perhaps the most significant change the board discussed was the sense that, if zones are to be part of a *system* of service, they need some greater set of uniform standards both in terms of their composition and their roles. Are zones decision-making bodies, for instance? Should they decide things by consensus? Is there an admin body at a zonal level? The answer to these questions varies greatly from zone to zone.

Currently, zones are self-determined bodies, but looking at them as part of a larger system, it makes sense to reexamine zones—to look at what states, countries, and provinces make them up, and at zonal boundaries and composition to see if makes sense to consider changes in any or all of their composition. Rather than having them self-determine their boundaries, perhaps it makes sense for the boundaries and composition of zones to be decided at the World Service Conference since the conference can take a more holistic view of the world how NA communities around the world might best be served.

Similarly, zones perform a wide variety of different roles and accomplish a span of tasks depending on the zone. Again, if zones are part of a purpose-driven system, we ought to be able to agree upon a purpose or set of purposes for the zones and perhaps some uniform practices. Zones are positioned on an axis. They present a great opportunity to share laterally across nations/states/provinces, and to receive information from and give information to NAWS. As part of systematizing our services we should think about formalizing the roles that zones may have given their unique position.

Among the possible roles that the board discussed are the following:

1. Fellowship development: Zones are well positioned to do fellowship development like PR support, outreach, and local community development. In some cases, zones may be well positioned to help meet PR needs on a federal level. Ideally zones are well placed to have a broad and long vision. They also can facilitate pooling resources and meeting common needs such as the language needs that are currently met at the LAZF.
2. Leadership development: Because world services travels to zones that request a visit, it's an easy place for NAWS to spot local leaders, and at the same time, since there are "train the trainer" sessions and workshops rolled out at a zonal level, motivated members can get workshop materials and display those leadership qualities back home when they put on workshops. This is a place where leaders could be recognized and cultivated; training, perhaps even training targeted at delegates or those with positions at a state/national/province body could naturally take place at a zonal level.
3. Planning: Zones can function well to help spot trends and participate in scanning. Information could be collected at a zonal level to feed into an environmental scan at the world level and/or the state/national level. And of course, zones themselves would be plan-driven, as are all parts of an ideal service system.
4. Part of a fund-flow system: Currently zones are not part of the formal fund flow system in a regular sort of way. Ideally, there would be more regularity about the way in which zones fit into

the fund flow.

5. Exchange of best practices: Many zones currently function well as a place where states or nations can gather to discuss what is working well for them. This role seems natural for zones where there could be open forums or sharing sessions among state/nation/provinces.
6. Point of connection—unity link: Zones form a unity link between geographically related communities, between larger and smaller communities, and between emerging and more developed communities, for instance. They are a place where unseated communities can feel part of a larger NA, and are also a good forum for more experienced members to stay involved in service. Because of their informal nature, it's relatively easy for interested members to attend and feel relatively engaged.
7. Communication link: Zones' potential contribution to environmental scanning and their ability to function as a point of connection or a unity link both fit into their role as a communication forum. Zones are ideally positioned to facilitate the information flow to and from world services and from member state/country/provinces to other state/country/provinces. In addition, border communities may find it helpful to use zones as a way to communicate with their home state if they attend service meetings in the neighboring state. PR forums, IDT topics, and other types of workshops at a zonal level could help the flow of communication. Communication from zone to zone may also be productive.

As we mention in the introduction to these proposals, we have in fact, talked about a zonal seating option for the World Service Conference, but zonal representation would be difficult for zones with a less formal structure. Ideally zones in a new system might function more like an event such as the Florida Symposium or a worldwide workshop, holding workshops, acting in a training capacity, dealing with local service issues and partnering with NAWS. They can be a kind of information clearing house. The zones are good central point for coordination of NA services among NA service bodies. They can function to facilitate communication, coordination, information, and guidance.

Again, these ideas are all the result of a brainstorming session at a World Board meeting. They are offered as food for thought. The role of zones in the new system needs further discussion by the board and the fellowship as a whole. Should zones be more standardized in their roles? Should their composition be coordinated in some way? These are questions we will need to answer collectively. As with any part of the service system proposals, if you have ideas, please send them to the World Board: worldboard@na.org.