

INSIDE VISITING SPONSOR SERVICE (IVSS)

"every new volunteer is another member served"



A SERVICE OF THE H&I COMMITTEE OF NORTHERN CA

WHAT: to provide one-on-one in-person sponsorship to A.A. members confined at CA State Prisons. Volunteers for the Inside Visiting Sponsor Service CANNOT also go into the institution as regular H&I Meeting Volunteers.

WHY: Due to State Prison regulations and federal PREA requirements, regular H&I meeting volunteers CANNOT sponsor inside members at the institution they serve. Our solution is to create an "inside visiting sponsor service" under the auspices of the NorCal H&I committee which operates in addition to, but entirely separate from, our H&I meeting activities at the prisons. We need only ask ourselves "Would I be sober today without the help of a sponsor?" to understand the vital need.

HOW: A special group of A.A. volunteers go into the prison individually as VISITORS. The clearance procedure for visitors is very simple - just a basic one-page questionnaire. The program was tested at San Quentin State Prison as a model to roll out to other institutions in CA, as well as potentially through-out the U.S. and Canada.

Outside volunteers are matched with inside members requesting the service. After the first meeting, both members are free to decide if they want to work together – like all sponsorship, it is entirely voluntary on both sides.

ANONYMITY: Due to the use of our dedicated P.O. Box and the cooperation of the prison administration, *your anonymity is protected*. Your last name and address aren't revealed.

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VISITING SPONSOR REQUIREMENTS. This commitment is for responsible members only - if you flake on your commitment, it will reflect poorly on this program, the H&I Committee and A.A. as a whole. Since San Quentin houses male prisoners, we are currently looking for *male volunteers* with the following qualifications:

- At least five years' continuous sobriety
- Knowledge and practice of A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- Solid sponsorship experience
- Familiarity with H&I service – some H&I experience preferred, however not as important as solid sponsorship experience
- Attendance at an IVSS orientation – either in-person or video conferenced
- Ability to obtain a simple clearance – no outstanding warrants, not on parole or a former resident of the prison, prior felonies cleared for at least three years
- Ability to visit the prison at least once a month – visiting days at most prisons are on the weekends and holidays.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- Go to our webpage for prison volunteers at <https://www.handinorcal.org/volunteer-prisons> and scroll down the page to the “Inside Visiting Sponsorship Service” section - click on the ‘get started’ link. You’ll be routed to the contact page – just fill out the lines with your information and click ‘submit’.
- OR, just email us at handi.ivss@gmail.com with your name, ph#, email address, the county you live in, your sobriety date, length of sponsorship and H&I experience.
- The program coordinator will contact you to answer any questions and to schedule you for our next Orientation.
- Once you’ve been oriented, you’ll be on the list of available volunteers and will receive information for your potential sponsee as requests from inside members come in.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that, I am responsible.

We thank you for joining us!

Email: handi.ivss@gmail.com