

SAN QUENTIN PILOT PROGRAM
INSIDE VISITING SPONSOR SERVICE (IVSS)

“every new volunteer is another inside member served”

**MONTHLY ORIENTATION: 7:30PM, 1ST WEDNESDAY OF MONTH
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 111 FAIRMOUNT AVE, OAKLAND**

**In-person orientations cancelled until further notice – all
orientations will be held virtually and scheduled as needed.**

WHAT: to provide one-on-one in-person sponsorship to A.A. members confined at San Quentin SP. 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 would operate in addition to, but entirely separate from, our H&I meeting activities.

HOW: A special group of A.A. volunteers would go into the prison individually as VISITORS. The clearance procedure for visitors is very simple - just a basic two-page questionnaire. The pilot program will be 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 will be 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.

Covid-19 adjustments: due to the shutdown of all CA State Prisons, the visiting aspect of the program is currently on hold and we are temporarily operating as a sponsor-by-mail service until the ban is lifted. We will continue to accept and process applications, to conduct virtual orientations and to establish new sponsorship matches, as the need for contact from outside A.A. members is now greater than ever.

See over for volunteer requirements and how to get involved →

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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 – active participation 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 are Saturday, Sunday & holidays (temporarily on hold during Covid-19 restrictions)

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 “Pilot Program” 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 write to us at handi.ivss@gmail.com with your name, ph#, email address, sobriety date and your length of sponsorship and H&I experience.
- The program coordinator will contact you to answer any questions and to schedule you for our next virtual 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 in this historic and exciting evolution of our ability to carry the message of A.A. to the alcoholic who is confined.

Email: handi.ivss@gmail.com