



How To Get the Most Out of the TIAA Forum - NAATW 2022

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Admin Team Lead and Board member/moderator



<https://ttaa-forum.org>

Presented at 2022 NAATW workshop



Today's presentation

- What is tiaa-forum.org?
- Demonstration
- Status and plans for the future
- Questions

tiaa-forum.org: A fellowship of people who share their experience...



- *Primary Purpose of TIAA* - to share experience, strength and hope in using technology to carry AA's message of recovery – not to focus on technology per se.
 - The number of alcoholics has grown dramatically over the past quarter century (in the US, by 50%)
 - AA membership has remained flat at 1.9 million worldwide
- There is a growing awareness that today, technology can help carry the message
 - We need non-technical folks to keep the nerds useful!
 - Whenever literally anyone, literally anywhere, reaches out for help, the hand of AA can be there – virtually if not physically.
 - Participation as tiaa-forum.org members by everyone from AA members to Area Delegates, Trustees, GSO staff
- General discussions of how we do what we do in AA service
 - How do we stop reinventing the wheel?
 - Many of the needs of Groups, Districts, Intergroups, and Areas are similar; approaches for meeting those needs can now be shared and stored for future reference
- Forum currently has over 2,600 members
 - Growth has been steady, with a couple of increase “bumps” in ‘19 and ‘20

Demonstration...





What kind of discussions are on tiaa-forum.org?

- How do I...?
 - ... set up a website for ...?
 - ... run a hybrid District meeting?
 - ...?
- Here's my experience...?
 - Running a hybrid election assembly...
 - Setting up a chat function on our Intergroup website...
 - ...
- Help! My _____ is down/broken/giving an error
 - Websites, virtual meeting software, donation page, etc.
- Anyone with experience in...?
 - ... chairing a group conscience?
 - ... dealing with conflict between virtual and in-person meeting attendance?



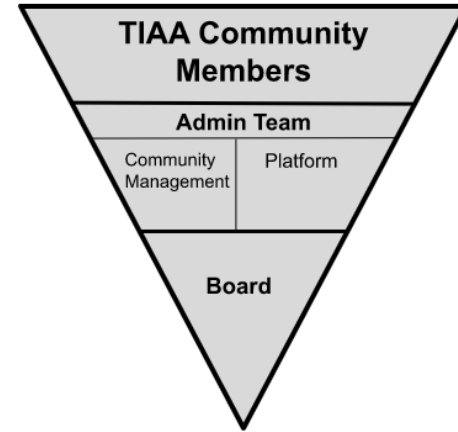
How It (ttaa-forum.org) Works

- The forum was built on “Discourse,” one of the most popular forum platforms available
- Member posts (conversations) are grouped under “Categories,” which cover a wide spectrum of AA and its service structure
- Members can post new topics (questions, information to share, etc.), or contribute to existing discussions by posting replies
- All content on the forum is SEARCHABLE
- Any AA member or person doing work for AA can join ttaa-forum.org
- WordPress “front end”

Organization



- **Community**
 - Poses the questions, share the answers – the heart of tiaa-forum.org
 - “Private” – comprised of AA members and people who are in service to AA
- **Admin Team**
 - Responsible for day to day administration of the forum
 - Meets monthly
 - Platform Sub-team
 - Responsible for infrastructure management
 - Community Management Sub-team
 - Community Support and moderation of Forum following the principle: “...does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes...” – keep it simple – policies outlined in our FAQ
- **Board**
 - Elected by membership to 3 year terms
 - Officers: President (Chair), Treasurer, Secretary
 - Meets Quarterly (+members’ meeting and conversations on the forum)
 - Establishes by-laws, policies, budget, approval of expenditures, etc
- **Any member can volunteer/stand for any job**
 - Rotation is encouraged
- **Legally, and for tax purposes, TIAA-FORUM is a IRS-501(c)(3) non-profit organization**

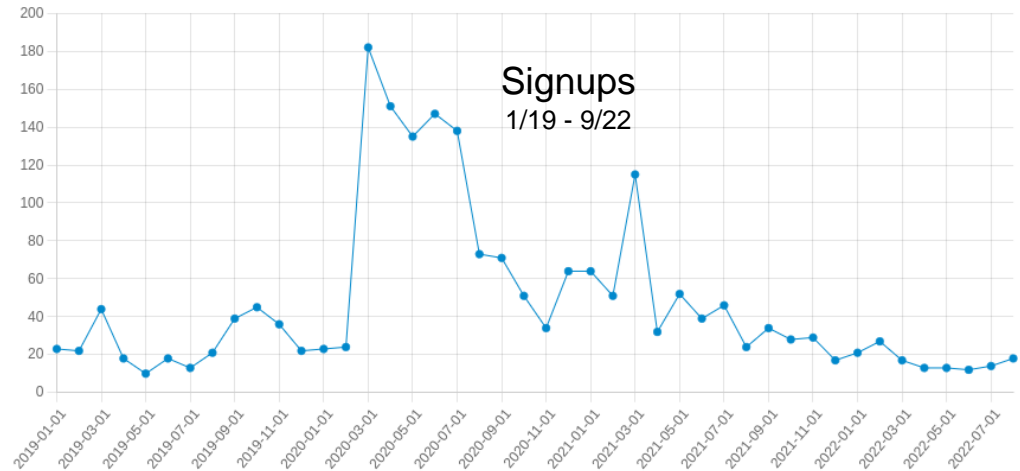
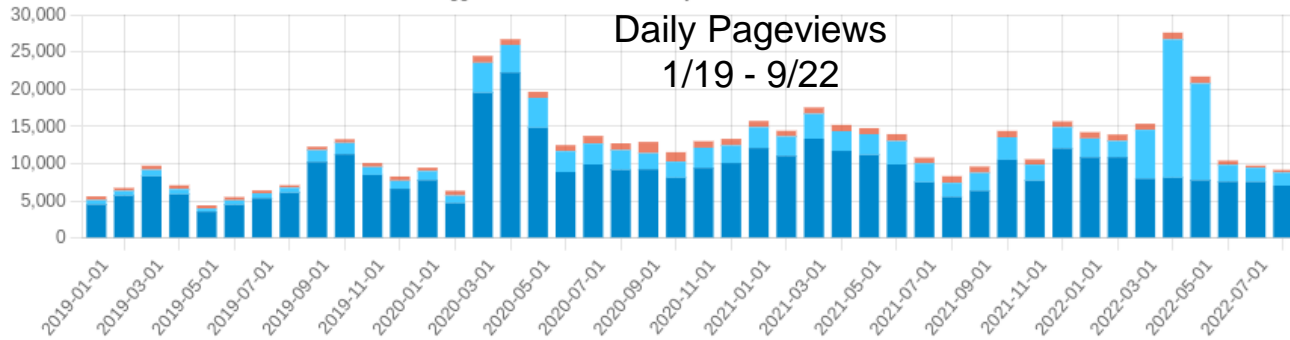




Supported Through Our Own Contributions...

- The forum leverages the same principles of financial governance as the AA program - there are no dues or fees, but we do have a Contribute button
- All support staff are volunteers, with regular rotation of responsibilities
- The annual budget is drafted by the Admin and Board teams, and reviewed and approved by the membership at an annual meeting
- Members can contribute as they wish and can, but there is no requirement
- The major costs are software and hosting
- There is no financial affiliation with GSO, or any other AA entity
- For tax purposes, the forum is registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity.

Growth of tiaa-forum.org





What's new and coming?

- Moved from self-hosted to Discourse.com managed service on 6/15/22
 - (mostly) transparent to our members
 - Managed service removes administrative vulnerabilities
- A refresh on our WordPress front end
 - A change we're calling "Forum 2.0"
 - Place some "hot topics" outside of our private forum
 - Information that could be useful to the fellowship about common items of discussion
 - Improved SEO, new theme/look, more utility for our community and beyond
- Growth
 - Adding a new "interest group" for people supporting AA Archives work
 - Communicate more with people who might find utility in our forum
 - Intergroups, Districts, Areas, Groups, Workshops and Conventions, etc.
- Continuous improvement
 - New Member Guide developed
 - Improved security
 - Videos, new and improved features and tools



(shameless) Plug for help..

- **Join!!! Participate!!! Contribute!!! Tell Your Friends!!! Volunteer!!!**
- Participate in 2022 Annual Members' Meeting
- Admin Team
 - Community Management Team
 - Platform team
 - Front-end design / UI experience
 - WordPress experience
 - Rails/Ember/Docker programming and support experience
 - Community development and support
- Board



Thank you!!!

- Forum Board
 - Ross (chair) – Doug, Lisa, Mike, Sam (treasurer), Scott, Shap (secretary)
- Forum Admin Team
 - Lew (lead) – Adam, Dave, Lois, Mike, Tim
 - Admin Platform Sub-team
 - Tim (lead) – Adam, Dave, Lew
 - Admin Community Management Sub-team
 - Lois (lead) – Jeanine, Mike, Shap, Ross

...but, most of all, our wonderful members – all of you!!!!

Questions?

