

Digital 7th Tradition

Virtual Meetings: Best Practices for a Digital 7th Tradition

Although passing the 7th Tradition collection basket is straightforward for in-person meetings, what about collections for groups meeting virtually as required during the pandemic? This flyer summarizes information gathered on our fellowship's experience with digital payment applications for 7th Tradition collection at AA meetings. See the references at the end of this document for more information on the materials reviewed.

Virtual Meetings – Why Continue 7th Tradition Collection?

Groups meeting virtually may continue to incur expenses. Even where group expenses are low, however, the fellowship's supporting service organizations and committees, including districts, local intergroups (e.g., Northern Virginia Intergroup/NVI), area committees (e.g., Virginia Area Committee/VAC) and the General Service Office and General Service Committee (GSO), will continue to incur operating expenses during the pandemic. Examples of such expenses include:

Groups:

- Monthly cost of virtual meeting platform (e.g., Zoom)
- Banking or PO Box fees
- Cost of books, chips and other supplies once the group can meet again in person
- Rent/utilities for meeting facilities. If a group's meeting facility relies on the group's rent to pay expenses, the group may want to contribute to support the facility through the downturn.

AA Service Organizations (Districts/NVI/VAC/GSO):

- Phone services (NVI provides phone service for 24x7 Hotline)
- Websites (maintained by various districts, NVI; VAC and GSO)
- Operating expenses (rent/utilities/insurance/employees)

Support of Fellowship Needed During the Crisis

Even where groups' expenses are low during the crisis, the AA fellowship continues to incur expenses that cannot be avoided if the fellowship is to continue providing services once the crisis is over. These service organizations, such as the districts, intergroups, area committees and GSO, provide critical support and information to groups to help them carry the message of AA to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Incorporating a Digital 7th Tradition

Our review of our fellowship's experience suggests a three-step process: Review Need, Banking Determination and Group Conscience Approval. See the references at the end of this document for more information.

Review Need.

- Review current expenses, as well as contributions to AA's supporting organizations
- A poll of members to determine support for digital payment platform and which platforms members currently use, if any.

Banking Determination – Group Account vs. Personal Account.

- Review group's financial set-up
- Consider election of treasurer if none serving
- Determine what bank account to use with digital payment application. Most digital payment platforms require link to existing bank account or debit card.
- Unless group has its own bank account, review pros and cons of opening a group account or allowing group treasurer, as a trusted servant, to link his/her personal bank account to group's digital payment platform.

Group Conscience Approval. In keeping with the 2nd Tradition, the overall decision of incorporating a digital payment platform is up to the group conscience.

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Incorporating of Digital Payment Platform

Once the decision is made to incorporate a digital payment platform, the next steps are to select and set up the platform(s). (This section copied with permission from Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Northern California, <https://aasfmarin.org>)

Select Digital Payment Platform.

Options include [Apple Pay](#), [Cash App](#), [Google Pay](#), [PayPal](#), [Stripe](#), [Venmo](#), and [Zelle](#)

Groups can select one or multiple payment platforms

Compare costs and benefits of each platform, which vary on fees and ease of use. (See attached table for a comparison of various digital payment platforms)

Set Up Digital Payment Platform

Username. Choose an easy and intuitive group username for group. If username is an email address, avoid using personal email if it reveals individual's full name.

Password. Create strong password. Consider enabling two-factor authentication for added security

Privacy. Learn payment application's privacy settings. Some digital payment platforms have social components that you may want to disable to protect anonymity. (For example, with Venmo, you can set the Default Privacy Settings to Private (visible to sender and recipient only) to ensure that all group payment information, regardless of the sender's settings, will remain private).

See *Digital Contribution Platform Table below*

References (alphabetical):

- The A.A. Group Treasurer, F-96, General Service Office (updated July 2019), accessible at https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-96_theaagrouptreasurer.pdf.
- Digital Payment Best Practices. See <https://aasfmarin.org/online-contributions-your-digital-7th-tradition-guide-to-best-practices>. NVI thanks the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, California, for generously allowing NVI to copy the information on digital payment best practices for this flyer.
- Self-Support: Where Money & Spirituality Mix, F-3, General Service Office (updated June 2019), accessible at (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-3_selfsupport.pdf)
- Updates on Coronavirus (COVID-19) (including the SMF-223, *FAQ on Practicing the Seventh Tradition at Virtual Meetings*), General Service Office, accessible at https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus.

Platform	Ease of Use *	Overview	Setup	Support	Security & Privacy	Notes
Apple Pay / Apple Cash	Easy	Apple Pay Overview	Setup Apple Pay	Apple Pay Support	Apple Pay Security & Privacy	Requires Apple hardware.
Cash app (Square)	Moderately Easy	Cash App overview - select vertical navigation bars upper right, next to sign in	Download Cash App to get started. Limited Support.	Cash App Help	Cash App Security	
Google Pay	Easy	About Google Pay	Google Pay Setup	Google Pay Help	Google Safety Center	All you need is an email address (doesn't have to be Gmail) or a phone number.
PayPal	Moderately Easy	PayPal Home	PayPal Setup	PayPal Help Centre	PayPal Safety & Security	Cannot transfer a personal PayPal account. You can only transfer PayPal business accounts.
Stripe	Difficult, geared for business	Stripe Homepage	Stripe Getting Started Support	Stripe Support	Stripe Integration Security Guide	Geared toward business.
Venmo	Easy	How Venmo Works	Venmo Signup	Venmo Help	Venmo Security	Due to policy change, PayPal (which owns Venmo) wants groups to use PayPal for these kind of transactions.
Zelle	Moderately Easy	How Zelle Works	Getting started with Zelle	Zelle FAQ	Zelle Security	Easy to use with affiliated bank or financial institution, which Zelle recommends in the Getting Started. Many people are not aware they already have this option.