



I've been contacted by numerous DCM's and GSR's to make recommendations to AA Groups that have temporarily suspended their meetings in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The answer for many AA Groups nationwide has been to embrace technology by conducting their meetings ONLINE utilizing Video Conference technology. Please make sure to pass this information on to your groups and district committee members.

My recommendations regarding Video Conference software include:

1) My firm, TechnologyWest is an authorized reseller for GoToMeeting that has offered Non-Profit Organizations (which includes Alcoholics Anonymous groups, districts, central offices, areas and GSO) a free 90 day trial for GoToMeeting Professional Edition. Cost after 90 days is \$12 per month/per host. GoToMeeting Professional Edition allows for hosting for up to 150 participants with NO Meeting Time Limits (This is a KEY difference vs Zoom's Free Version that limits video conference meetings to 45 minutes). There is also an upgrade path to Business and Enterprise editions of the software. The software also integrates with GoToRoom where camera and phone are supplied to conduct meetings from a conference room environment for a nominal additional monthly subscription cost.

Each group or district would be assigned an account and that account would be shared by meeting chairpersons for groups that run meetings, district officers for district meetings and committee chairs for district committee meetings, intergroup chair and vice chair and committee chairs for Central Office, Steering Committee and Intergroup meetings. Meeting Host would forward email link with URL to join meeting with Meeting ID and Phone Number to join the Meeting. Participants would receive email from host and would join by phone or computer. If joining by phone only a non-descriptive icon would appear in the video conference vs. live video for participants logging in via computer with webcam.

Additional details on pricing plans and features can be found at:
<https://www.gotomeeting.com/meeting/pricing>

2) TechnologyWest is also an authorized reseller for Zoom. Zoom Free Edition limits video conference meetings to 45 minutes which doesn't meet most group's, district's or central office needs where meetings run 1 hour to 2 hours. Cost for Zoom's Professional Edition Pro Edition is \$15 per month/per host with no trial period. Zoom Professional Edition allows for hosting for up to 100 participants with meeting duration limit of 24 hours.

Each group or district would be assigned an account and that account would be shared by meeting chairpersons for groups that run meetings, district officers for district meetings and committee chairs for district committee meetings, intergroup chair and vice chair and committee chairs for Central Office, Steering Committee and Intergroup meetings. Meeting Host would forward email link with URL to join meeting with Meeting ID and Phone Number to join the Meeting. Participants would receive email from host and would join by phone or computer. If joining by phone only the phone number and non-descriptive icon would appear in video conference vs. live video for participants logging in via computer with webcam.

Additional details on pricing and features can be found at:
<https://zoom.us/pricing>

3) FreeConferenceCall is a free conference call service without use of webcam video for participants. Its a viable option for groups that may object to use full face webcam video of hosts and participants. I don't recommend this option for districts, central office and intergroup online meetings.

Each group would be assigned an account and that account would be shared by meeting chairpersons for groups that run meetings. Meeting Host would forward email link with Phone Number and Meeting ID to join the Meeting. Participants would receive email from host and would join by phone. Participants and host would only need a phone to conduct online meetings.

Additional details on features can be found at:
<https://www.freeconferencecall.com>

GoToMeeting and Zoom will require a credit card placed on file for monthly subscription billing.

My suggestion is to do a trial run outside your regular group, district, central office or intergroup meeting to test how each works before making a final decision on which video conference software to use and before publishing online meeting details.

In conducting online meetings via Video Conferencing software there are additional considerations that individual groups, districts and central offices might want to consider. The meeting chairperson will need to have a computer with video conference software installed and access to the internet to conduct online meetings if meetings are conducted from home.

If an online meeting is being conducted from the meeting itself, chairperson will need to have a laptop or tablet to conduct the meeting along with access to the internet. Districts and Central Offices may also want to purchase microphones, cameras, projectors, screens and conference phones to enhance their online meeting experience. I'm available to make additional recommendations and assist with purchase of additional hardware via several different distributors that I have relationships with.

I'm happy to answer any questions you or your group or district may have.

--

Gene Fourney
Technical Advisor
Central Office of Western Colorado

TechnologyWest
750 Main St.
Suite 1500
Grand Junction, CO
Phone: (970) 579-1585
Website: <https://technologywest.io>