

## Phone Service Volunteer Information

Thank you for volunteering to support the GA Hotline. Please familiarize yourself with the following phone service procedures and recommendations:

### How the phone service works:

When a caller dials the Gamblers Anonymous Hotline they will be prompted to choose one of three features:

1. Speak with a Volunteer
2. Obtain times and locations of group meetings
3. Leave a voice message and receive a callback

If the caller selects the option to speak to a volunteer, the phone service will automatically dial your number during the prearranged times you volunteered. You will have 30 seconds to answer the call (approximately six rings).

- If you can accept the call, you will press 1.
- On a rare occasion, you are unable to answer the call, press 2. The call will rout to the next volunteer.

The phone system will attempt to connect the caller with a total of six volunteers before the call is disconnected. When a caller is disconnected, they can be left frustrated, angry, or confused as to where to go to find help. They may never attempt to reach out again.

### Best Practices:

- **Enter the GA Hotline number (888-548-2790) into your personal phone contacts.** Having the number in your phone ensures you know it is a Hotline call and make it a priority to answer. You may also want to give it a distinct ringtone, too.
- **Be available for the days/times you volunteer.** Time slots should be in 4-hour increments. Choose days/times you know you can answer a Hotline call. This is much better than requesting to take calls 24-hours, 7-days a week, which may not be realistic. Anytime your availability changes, send an email to [phoneservice@gachicago.org](mailto:phoneservice@gachicago.org) with your update.
- **Keep a meeting list handy.** The goal of the phone service volunteer is to get a troubled gambler or concerned family member to a meeting. We should not act as a counselor or therapist.
- **Additional phone numbers and resources to have available.** Many calls we receive come from distraught family and friends looking to help the Gambler. If the Gambler is not seeking help, we strongly encourage the family/friend to attend a Gam-Anon meeting to get the help and support they need to deal with the situation. Our meeting lists include the Gam-Anon Hotline and meeting information.
  - Chicagoland Gamblers Anonymous Hotline **888-548-2790**
  - Chicagoland Gamblers Anonymous Website: [www.gachicago.org](http://www.gachicago.org)
  - Chicagoland Gam-Anon Hotline 708-802-0105
  - National Suicide Lifeline number 800-273-8255:
    - Strongly suggest that a caller dial 911 or the Suicide Lifeline if they speak about suicide.
  - United Way supports 211 calls, a free and confidential service that helps people across North America find the local resources they need 24-hours a day, 7-days a week with prevention and crisis resources, and immediate shelter needs
  - Clinical help and resources 800-Gambler

What you do makes a difference. Please let us know what additional questions you have.

Sincerely,

Peggy H. & Ellen Z  
Chicagoland Phone Service Chairs  
Email: [phoneservice@gachicago.org](mailto:phoneservice@gachicago.org)