

G.P.S. Program

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What is the G.P.S. Program?

It is a robust communication tool that addresses multiple needs and issues. The G.P.S. program was launched as a key component of Past Grand Master Thomas M. Maxwell's plan for renewed solidarity. The Special Committee that was formed and the use of the program has continued under the leadership of Most Worshipful Grand Master Charles Yohe. It is a straightforward and purposeful communication process. Through the utilization of a simple online form, the G.P.S. program effectively engages and draws upon the collective intelligence of the Craft. It does so in a manner that allows the Grand Master to remain informed of the ideas, concerns and sentiments of the Craft; and equally important, *enables the Craft to know the collective opinions of its members.*

What do the initials G.P.S. represent?

The G.P.S. acronym was initially rolled out to describe the **Grand Master's Plan for Solidarity**. The initials also serve as a reminder that Lodges may **Generate Positioning Statements** by which their **Grievances, Proposals and Sentiments** can be heard.

How can I learn more about this program?

There are many ways to learn about the program.

- The best way is to visit the GPS landing page and review the materials.
- A **presentation** is hosted online.
- District Deputies can address questions.
- Invite Committee members to visit your Lodge.
- The Master and Secretary of your Lodge will have collateral material and information.
- An audio version of the presentation is also available by telephone (203) 302-3727

My Lodge does not have internet access, how can we learn more?

Lodges without internet access may request a presentation. Their District Deputy and a member of the G.P.S Committee will visit with equipment so that the presentation can be seen. Also, an audio version of the original presentation can still be heard by phone for those brothers who do not have internet access. The recording commences and ends with some music and the instructional portion is nine minutes long. **Simply dial 203-302-3727 at any time.** We suggest that your phone volume be turned down to about 50% to avoid speaker distortion.

How do brothers participate in this program?

First they learn about the program by watching or listening to the presentation. It will also be discussed in Lodge. From time to time, if a brother has a sentiment or idea they wish to share, they bring it before their Lodge. If the Lodge concurs that the sentiment or idea should be submitted to the G.P.S Committee, the Master and Secretary have the authority to authenticate and submit an online form. Your Worshipful Master has the final word on the matter and it is he who also determines if the submission is private unto the Grand Master or available for public viewing by the Craft.

What if my Lodge does not want to submit a G.P.S. form?

Participation is completely voluntary. Your Lodge may feel that an individual sentiment or idea does not concur with the collective voice of the Lodge. Some sentiments may simply be determined to be a Lodge (only) related matter and no form will be submitted. If a brother wishes, they may also bring their sentiment or idea before their Blue Lodge Council as a second opportunity to be heard and have a G.P.S. form submitted. If your sentiment or idea is still not considered, you can always call upon the Grand Master who will always listen to any brother. Keep in mind the process is designed to streamline the communication of *collective sentiment*.

Who can submit a G.P.S form?

Lodges, Blue Lodge Councils and Permanent Voting Members can submit a G.P.S form to the G.P.S. Committee. The goal of the program is to understand the *collective sentiment of the Craft*. Instructions as to how the process works are contained in the original G.P.S. presentation, which can be reviewed as often as needed. District Deputies will provide the Master of the Lodge and the President of Blue Lodge Council with clear instructions. If you need additional help you may call Bro. Joe Porco at 203.826.3335 and either he or a GPS Committee Member will return your call.

Will the entire Craft be able to review GPS comments?

If the Worshipful Master or Blue Lodge President elects the written comments to be public to the Craft, they will be. In the case of a polling question by the Grand Master the count results will always be public. This allows brothers to verify that their Lodge sentiment was recorded properly. The written comments will appear based on the aforementioned. Individual comments submitted by Permanent Voting Members remain private, though their tally count response to a polling question will be listed and viewable. If a Permanent Voting Member wants their written comments viewable they must go through their Lodge or BLC like any other brother.

What is a Member Sentiment form?

This is an additional form your Lodge can send to brothers who find it difficult to attend Lodge for a number of reasons. It's a great way to stay in touch with the sentiments of distant or travel restricted members and reinforces that their opinions matter. This form can be mailed to them and is available in the collateral material section on the GPS landing page. Member Sentiment forms are submitted to the Master or Secretary of your Lodge. They provide an opportunity for brothers who cannot attend a Lodge meeting to express their desire for a particular G.P.S. to be considered by their Lodge. It's another good communication tool. We hope you use it.

Can a Member Sentiment form be submitted directly to the G.P.S Committee?

No. They are sent to the Master or Secretary of your Lodge. If your Lodge concurs with your sentiment, the Lodge as a whole expresses its desire to your Worshipful Master to submit a G.P.S. form to express its collective sentiment. Remember the goal of the program is to measure collective sentiment.

How will brothers know the State-wide collective sentiment of all Lodges?

The program is designed with full transparency. The G.P.S. section of the Grand Lodge Website will contain a section providing the statistical count of sentiments expressed for all trending topics. Brothers without internet access will have alternative options to stay informed.

How will brothers who can't attend Lodge participate?

Collateral material is available. An optional letter has been drafted for every Master or Secretary to send out to their members who are part of the "no internet" demographic or simply can't attend Lodge. The letter nicely introduces the program and its purpose and also provides a phone number to listen to the audio version, for those without internet.

Every Worshipful Master can print a hard copy information package that they can mail out. The package would include a cover letter, a copy of the FAQ(s) and several copies of a **Member Sentiment form**. A brother can simply fill out the short form and mail it to their Lodge **any time** they wish their sentiments to be known. The hope and intent is that brothers will have their sentiment read in lodge. The same letter encourages the member to contact the Master for further questions. Once a brother knows about the program, they can call any Lodge brother to stay updated regarding the program.

What is the overall goal of this program?

To thoroughly understand the program, brothers will need to watch or listen to the presentation. We suggest that everyone take advantage of the accessibility of the presentation and review it several times. The G.P.S. Program has been designed in keeping with core belief that *“All members deserve the dignity of knowing their voice will be heard.”* To that end, the program provides a mechanism to ensure that the voice of the Craft can and will be heard. The program draws upon the collective intelligence of the Craft. It is an established fact that organizations are empowered by processes which continually take a deep look at their present functioning and membership sentiment. **Such organizations are better positioned to maintain harmony.** Additionally, by design, the G.P.S. Program presents a great opportunity for Lodge officers to stay in touch with members who might feel isolated or forgotten.

I understand Worshipful Masters, Secretaries and BLC(s) have codes.

What are they? How do they get them? Do the codes change each year?

Each year, authentication codes are provided to the Worshipful Masters, Secretaries and BLC(s). These codes are distributed to the District Deputies for delivery. The previous year’s codes are not valid. These codes ensure that the G.P.S. submission is genuine. Worshipful Masters, Secretaries and the BLC President and Secretary can submit a G.P.S. If the Master of a Lodge has not received, loses their code or feels it has been compromised, they should contact their District Deputies and a new code will be generated by the G.P.S. Committee. BLC Presidents should contact the G.P.S. Committee directly: jp@mostcents.com

The one exception to submissions (regarding codes) is that with the new enhancement to the G.P.S. system, Permanent Voting Members can now submit a G.P.S. They log onto the secure portion of the Grand Lodge site in the usual manner, navigate to the G.P.S. landing page and click on the form created for them. They authenticate their submission with their dues card number and password. The system has an authentication list key to verify their submission as a Permanent Voting Member. If you are not a Permanent Voting Member the form will not process. We are able to utilize this mechanism because their data remains constant while the identity of the Worshipful Masters, Secretaries and the BLC President and Secretary change each year.

Additional G.P.S. Process Questions:

Question: It is difficult for us to have the Master and Secretary on location (together) to fill out an online G.P.S. Submission form. Can the Master and Secretary share their codes and one of them submit the form?

Answer: Yes of course, if they agree to share their codes. The separation of codes was designed as a check and balance that some Lodges desire. There are circumstances where the Lodge, Master and Secretary desire this dual authentication and other Lodges which do not. Lodges manage their affairs in the manner they see fit. Nonetheless, for a G.P.S. to be submitted, both codes are needed.

Question: Is the G.P.S. Program just a glorified suggestion box?

Answer: No, far from it. It is much more. It is a straightforward and purposeful two-way communication process that addresses grievances, proposals and sentiments. Through the utilization of a simple form, it effectively engages and draws upon the collective intelligence of the Craft. It does so in a manner that allows the Grand Master to remain informed of the ideas, concerns and sentiments of the Craft; equally important, it enables the Craft to know the collective opinions of its members. By design, G.P.S. enhances communication, gathers collective intelligence, measures sentiment and can aid in conflict resolution before a sentiment crises escalates.

Data is archived, sorted and *trending sentiment is statistically measured* and reported back to the Craft. Utilization will help maintain harmony, tap into the collective intelligence of the Craft and will address the six process benefits outlined in the presentation. The pillars of organizational psychology have studied and tested the importance of membership sentiment and similar processes have been proven to be invaluable to other organizations. In time, with additional enhancements to the G.P.S. system, numerous far-reaching benefits to the Craft will be realized. Communication, awareness, respect of varying opinions and collective intelligence is invaluable to any organization.

Question: What if Lodges want to see additions or modification made to the program?

Answer: Simply submit a G.P.S. proposal. By design, that's the beauty of the program. It's all about collective sentiment. Those that want changes simply submit a proposal via the G.P.S. online system. Enhancements and adjustments have already been made based on the Craft's input. G.P.S. submissions can be about anything, including a G.P.S. about the program itself. The voice of the Craft will be heard.

Question: Will our written sentiment be viewable by everyone? What if we don't want that?

Answer: If your Worshipful Master wished written sentiment to be private unto the Grand Master, it is not posted. Only the statistical figures of trending topics will be reported as a number (%). In fact, Lodges may put the word "**Private**" at the beginning of their written sentiment and the G.P.S. will be sorted that way. While the statistical figures of trending topics will be reported, that particular G.P.S. written comment will not be available to read by the Craft at large.

Question: Which Committee Member is assigned to our Lodge? Is there oversight?

Answer: Lodges are not currently assigned to any specific Committee Member per se. There are seven Committee Members. Each Lodge and BLC has a group number (1 through 7). That group number simply routes the submission to one of the seven Committee members, with a master list redundancy Cc to the Chairmen. All submissions come into a central hub and are time stamped and saved, then simply segregated to Committee Members to share the work load in preparation for the quantitative tallying of trending sentiments. Each G.P.S. is reviewed by the entire Committee. No submissions can be

deliberately or inadvertently ignored. All Committee Members, the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master have viewable access to every submission that comes in. The role of the Committee *is neither qualitative nor subjective*. There are multiple layers of oversight built into the program to ensure the integrity of the program. All submissions are shared at the Committee level, data is imported in full view of all Committee Members and a report is run.

Question: If I have an unresolved question, who can I contact?

Answer: Contact your Worshipful Master first or the District Deputy for the Lodge. If required, you may call R.W. Bro. Joseph Porco at 203.826.3335 or email him at jp@mostcents.com