

# AVA SURVEY ON EMPLOYER RECOGNITION

A Report to the Membership

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## BACKGROUND:

At the 1988 AVA National Conference on Volunteerism, Phase I of the AVA Task Force on Higher Education marked completion of its mission: to implement the first formal survey of colleges and institutions in the United States and Canada which offered courses or programs focused on volunteer administration. Although two validating surveys were to follow in 1989, it was time for the Task Force to move on to next steps toward new objectives. As Chair of Task Force I, I welcomed Sarah Jane Rehnborg, Ph.D., as Chair of the next phase. Dr. Rehnborg's academic credentials and track record in designing the AVA Performance-Based Certification Program ideally suited her to carry forward with Task Force II its mission of connecting the academic institutions identified by Task Force I, with the practitioner field represented by AVA. The prospective benefits which could come from the cooperation of those two potential ally groups, should they join as mentors of professional development for volunteer administrators, were exciting to contemplate!

Concurrently, some of us who had been engaged in the earlier Task Force began discussing another constituency, still unexplored but critical to the success of AVA programs in professionalization. This was the segment of employers of volunteer administrators, without whose understanding and approbation full professional development for the members of our field might be hampered, if not quelled.

Therefore, with AVA's approval, we formed a Subcommittee on Employer Recognition, to explore informally the attitudes of

the workplace, as represented by those persons identified by volunteer administrators as their "employers", to determine their effect on the administrators' professional development. Drawing on the invaluable expertise of a volunteer task force consisting of academic representatives, CVAs, and practitioners from a variety of work settings and "vintages", we devised a plan for an assessment survey with a four-pronged approach, its questions to be modified in each segment to suit the four recipient categories we had selected. All of the survey questions were developed from Subcommittee recommendations and were prepared for incremental processing.

#### DESIGNING THE SURVEY:

The main purpose of the overall survey, which we entitled the "AVA SURVEY ON EMPLOYER RECOGNITION" was to discover what influence the attitude or involvement of the employer of a volunteer administrator might have in the decision of the administrator to pursue professional development or Certification in our field. If, as we projected, employer support were an important factor, we wanted to hear from the respondents how AVA might assist them in achieving that, and also, as the survey title implies, in obtaining "employer recognition" for the growing profession of volunteer administration.

The survey divisions were designed as follows:

#### Survey I - CVAs:

The first survey increment would be sent to all persons listed on AVA's computer rolls as of May 1, 1989, as having been awarded the CVA - Certified in Volunteer Administration. They would be asked questions relating to the employer's support (or lack of it) at the time of their entering the Certification process, during it, upon receiving CVA, and afterward. The CVAs would be asked to name "supportive" employers, if they were willing, whom we could then contact for further information, and to recommend "non-supportive" employers, if they wished to have us assist those employers by providing them with further information on professional development in volunteer administration, in the future. As in all of our survey increments, the respondents were to be given the option of returning them anonymously, if they chose.

#### Survey II - Employers of CVAs

From the responses to the first survey, we planned to take the names of all employers identified by the CVAs as "supportive" and send them a questionnaire designed to find out why each had chosen to support the volunteer administrator in the process, what their general attitudes on professionalization were, what the consequences of CVA had been for their organizations, and

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what they felt might be future benefits, for CVA recipients. Most important, we wanted to identify CVA employers who were willing to give testimonials for the CVA process or professional development for a volunteer administrator, and those who would be interested in working with AVA to educate other employers to the benefits of such professionalization.

#### Survey III - Non-CVA Volunteer Administrators

We next planned to tackle the largest but perhaps most important survey grouping. By surveying volunteer administrators who had taken no identifiable steps toward AVA Certification, we felt we would get to the heart of negativism quickly, again seeking to determine the role of the employer figure in the volunteer administrators' professional development plans, but also (especially with this group) to find out what their view of themselves as professionals might be.

We determined to obtain the largest manageable cross-section of non-CVA AVA members as possible, drawing from a full mix of type and size of employing organization, and from every state and province in which AVA members were listed.

Again, we would ask for the names of "supportive" and "non-supportive" employers, if the respondents were willing to share them, so that we might give them follow-up information from AVA. The respondents were to be given the opportunity to be anonymous, or to identify themselves for further contact by AVA.

Recognizing that AVA-sponsored programs, particularly for this group, probably would not be the primary source of their professional education, and certainly not exclusively so, we sought to identify the experience and priorities of this group within their own career development tracks. We wanted to learn what had been most satisfying and successful for them, as well as what still was missing. Of course we especially wanted to find out why they had not "come aboard" AVA's Certification process, since none had taken the first step, according to AVA records, of buying the Certification packet. If the employer attitude were a key factor it was important for us to find out.

#### Survey IV - Corporate Volunteer Administrators

Finally, we decided to take a slight diversion in order to get a perspective on a category of volunteer administrator which seemed to have eluded us, in previous assessments. These were the persons in that role, or comparable, within for-profit organizations: corporate volunteer administrators.

Taking advantage of our attendance at a VOLUNTEER Conference in 1989, we met with several representatives of the co-locating

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national Corporate Volunteer Council meeting, to explore their willingness to take part in the survey. It was finally determined that the attendance list from that conference was an appropriate one to draw from, to create a balanced list of geographically scattered, mixed-type company representatives.

Although the survey document for this group was nearly identical to the one to be administered to the Non-CVA, non-profit volunteer administrators, we felt it could be revealing of the differences, if any, between the two groups and how they looked at professional development, with or without "employer recognition".

#### PROCESSING THE SURVEY:

Recognizing that for all our combined editorial expertise, the resulting survey necessarily would be an informal, unscientific effort, the Subcommittee on Employer Recognition, "in the name of goodness" and for the good of the field of volunteer administration, embarked on our assessment adventure in May of 1989. The results were as follows:

##### Survey I - CVAs

Mailed to all 64 persons listed as having received Certification in Volunteer Administration-CVA, as of April 1989

Mail date: 1 May 1989

Return date: 15 May 1989

Surveys returned: 39

Return rate: 61%

##### Survey II - Employers of CVAs

Mailed to 22 employers of CVAs, all those who were named by CVA respondents in Survey I as "supportive" of their professional development and Certification.

Mail date: 30 June 1989

Return date: 15 July 1989

Surveys returned: 11

Return rate: 50%

##### Survey III - Non-CVA Volunteer Administrators

Mailed to 225 AVA members who had not purchased Certification packets as of May, 1989, and thus had not given indication of intent to pursue this credential.

(Note: survey sampling was sent to between 2 and 5 mixed type agencies and work settings within the 47 states, 4 Canadian provinces and two military APO areas in which AVA members were listed on the 1988-9 membership roster. 15 hospitals represented the largest agency segment, but the full range of types were represented in the sampling.)

Mail date: 17 July 1989

Return date: 15 August 1989

Surveys returned (including late returns): 98

Two of these were returned uncompleted by respondents who said they had bought packets, so chose not to answer questionnaire  
Surveys tabulated: 96 (the return figure used for our statistics)  
Return rate: 42.6%

Survey IV - Corporate Volunteer Administrators

Mailed to sampling of 50 corporate volunteer program directors taken from attendees roster of the VOLUNTEER Conference of June, 1989. (Note: we had access to the list as participants and had discussed the survey with representatives of the Corporate Volunteer Council, prior to mailing.)  
Mail date: 1 August 1989  
Return date: 15 August 1989  
Surveys returned: 18  
Return rate: 36%

Combining all four parts of the survey, the total number of questionnaires sent was: 361  
The total number of returns received and tabulated: 164  
Overall survey return rate: 45.4%

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS AND STATISTICS:

Because the number of survey returns received represents, in our view, a reasonably healthy statistic, we believe the response results are worthy of serious attention. However inadequate our methods, we feel that they at least gave this representative group of our professional colleagues the opportunity to share its thoughts and concerns with us. We would like to believe that there is enough solid, thought-provoking material in these survey responses, to give AVA planners guidelines on which to build positive future programs.

Taken individually, the following are statistical highlights we felt were significant of the four survey groups:

Survey I - CVAs:

The most prevalent current job title of CVAs (14=22%) is "Director of Volunteer Services" (or a title with both "Director" and "Volunteer" in it). As we went on to process the other survey increments, such details became important, since we found that "Coordinator" (perceived as a title with less clout) was much more prevalent with non-CVAs, while the corporate volunteer administrators rarely had the word "Volunteer" in their title. Of the 14 responding CVAs, only 1 was entitled, "Volunteer Administrator".

Most of our CVA respondents were in the hospital or health-care field (10=25.6%) which is in track with our sampling. State and county social services agencies were the next most designated category (7=18%). All other category types (library, museum,

church, college, youth, elderly, etc.) were represented by 1-2 responses.

31 CVAs (79.4%) are in full time positions. They have been in their present positions for from 1 to 28 years. 8 CVAs (20.5%) assumed their position in the decade 1960-69; 12 (31%) in 1970-79; 15 (38%) in 1980-89. The year in which most assumed their current position was 1987 (5 - 13%).

Respondents to this survey increment received their CVAs in the following years:

1982 (5 -13%)

1984 (2 - 5%)

1985 (8 -20.5%)

1986 (8 -20.5%)

1987 (10-26%)- the same year as most current job assumptions

1988 (4 -10%)

2 did not indicate year of CVA award

Of the 39 responding CVAs, 12 (31%) have experienced a job change since receiving their certification. 4 (10%) moved to a different type of agency. 7 (18%) have changed job titles, moving in what appears to be an upward direction, from "Coordinator" to "Director", "Director" to "Executive Director", and "Executive Director"(in retirement) to "Consultant".

Although we failed to ask this group the specific question, we deduced that where the person now the "employer" had a different title, after the respondent acquired the CVA, it was a level higher (as "Senior Vice President" or "CEO"). A related statistic, however, was evidence of as much job turbulence with the employers as with the volunteer administrators. 12 responding CVAs (31%) declared that the person to whom they had reported during the CVA process was no longer with their organization, even though the CVA was!

32 (82%) of the respondents said they informed their employers that they were undertaking the CVA process. 14, or less than half of those who shared their intentions with their boss, reported that the employer was "lukewarm" or not interested. Of those who indicated that their employer was supportive of their steps toward professionalization, 14 indicated that the employer provided financial support and 10 said "emotional support" for the process was provided.

All but 5 respondents indicated that they received some recognition from their employers for achieving the CVA credential. Most were in some form of public notice, but in most cases only within the organization (as in a company newsletter, or announcement by the Board of Directors). One CVA reported an immediate financial reward: a \$350 bonus.

CVA was given credit by 26 (67%) for some positive impact on their employment, including the following:

Raise in pay: 8 - (20.5%)  
 Job change or promotion: 8 - (20.5%)  
 Increase in status: 6 - (15%)  
 Increase in responsibility: 5- (13%)  
 "Outstanding rating" - 1 (2.5%)

8 other respondents (20.5%) saw no impact on their employment, but 3 of these noted "personal satisfaction" as their reward.

Of the 5 who had not received any recognition and did not see any impact on their employment, 3 had not shared with their employers that they were undertaking the process of certification. (Presumably, the first those employers heard of it was when AVA wrote them a letter telling them that their employee had received that credential.)

Since receiving their CVA, these respondents report continuing personal involvement with professional development. Almost all regularly attend professional seminars and do personal reading in the profession. 2 (5%) have sought and received additional certifications, 2 have earned Master's degrees, 2 currently are working on advanced degrees, and 4 (10%) are teaching or training in the field.

As for supports for these efforts, 23 respondents (60%) reported that improved performance appraisals have accompanied them, and 25 of the 39 (64%) indicated that some form of funding was provided, at least for workshops or seminar attendance, by the CVA's employer.

22 (56%) of the respondents provided the name and address of a "supportive employer", for our survey. 14 (36%) nominated that employer to be a spokesperson for CVA or the professional development of a volunteer administrator, at an AVA-sponsored presentation or event.

34 CVAs identified themselves by name. These represent locations in 15 states and 3 Canadian provinces.

#### Survey II - Supportive Employers of CVAs:

Of the 11 employers responding to the survey we sent, after they had been unveiled as "supportive to a CVA" in Survey I, 5 (45%) declined to take credit for this, indicating that the CVA recipient in their employ deserved the credit, for personal initiative in pursuing Certification even before employer encouragement was given.

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9 employers (81%) endorsed the professional skills of the CVA as benefiting their organization, although 2 (18%) said they were still evaluating the benefits.

2 of the responding employers indicated some embarrassment for their under-recognition of the CVA at the time of the award. 8 (73%) said that CVA would or could be "preferred" in future job descriptions, for volunteer administrators in their organization. Most (81%) said they would expect of the CVA strong experience, knowledge of the field, and full professional expertise in operating volunteer programs. 5 (45%) said they thought the organization should maximize the skills of the incumbent CVA, by extending that person's responsibilities throughout the organization, to the outside community, and beyond the volunteer program. (6 other employers - 54.5% - were vague about just how they would utilize theirs differently, now that they had the credential.)

6 of the responding employers acknowledged that merit increases or raises would follow a change of the volunteer administrator's job description, due to the new "professional credential".

When asked if an explanation of the CVA process, written especially for employers, would be helpful, 6 said it would, and suggested it include what was required of a candidate for CVA, what would be expected of the employer, the standards for CVA achievement, and its benefits to the employer or the organization.

5 (45%) employer respondents forthrightly declared their willingness to endorse the AVA Performance-Based Certification Process for other CEOs or employers. (2 others said "maybe", and one asked to give testimonial "by telephone, please".)

As for support for general professional development, or its specific learning opportunities, 9 employers (81%) said their organizations would provide full or partial tuition reimbursement for job-related training or workshops, and 5 (45%) said they would provide funds, full or partial, for non-credit university courses and for the Certification packet or process. 4 (36%) would provide funding toward college credit courses in job related subjects, to include Volunteer Administration. 4 of the 9 employers who promised funding of some sort to professional development also said it was in the organization's budget.

10 of the 11 respondents would allow time off from the job for attendance at professional development training or instruction. One respondent did not answer the question.

Only 1 respondent said that educational endorsement by AVA would



help persuade them to approve a professional learning or training opportunity, for the volunteer administrator.

5 employers (45%) said that a Master's degree would benefit the role of volunteer manager, and 2 others said a Bachelor's degree would be of benefit.

When asked for advice to potential CVAs, on how to persuade their employers to endorse their professional development undertakings, 4 (36%) advised that the volunteer administrators demonstrate their own initiative and motivation to their employer by their resolve to become professional, without employer support. 3 suggested that the administrator have his/her employer talk with others, such as themselves, to hear positive experiences as reinforcement.

9 of the 11 employers would call the attention of the CVA candidate's employer to the potential benefits to the organization, to encourage the employer to support the process.

The 11 responding employers represented 2 hospitals and 9 various other types of nonprofit organization, located in 7 states and 1 Canadian province.

#### Survey III - Non-CVA Volunteer Administrators

Of the 96 responses tabulated, 34(35%) were returned anonymously. The 70 who did identify themselves represented 42 states, 2 Canadian provinces, and 2 APO military locations overseas. 1-3 returns were received from each of these locations. 32 separate categories of agency were identified in the return representation, with the largest number, 15 (16%), from hospitals, and the next, community services (8 - 8%). Again, this generally paralleled our survey selection, as did the remainder.

29 (30%) currently are Coordinators of Volunteer Services (or a title with both "Coordinator" and "Volunteer" in it) and the same number are "Directors of Volunteer Services" (or a title with both "Director" and "Volunteer" in it. 67 (62.5%) are full time employees (2 said, "and more"), with the others declaring from 3 hours to "80%" employment.

Most respondents have been employed in their current position since 1988 (22 - 23%); 19 (20%) since 1987; 19 (20%) since 1986; 12 (12.5%) since 1989. This means that 75% responding in 1989 had been in their present situation three years or less. The longest current employment was represented in two respondents who had held their present position for 20 years.

50 respondents (52%) said this was not their first employment

as a volunteer manager. 28 (29%) first were employed in this role after 1980, 1982 being the year most assumed that position (10 - 10%). The earliest hiring as a volunteer manager was reported as 1958, by one respondent.

In the job changes subsequent to first employment as a volunteer administrator, only 8 (8%) shifted within the same type of agency. 20 (21%) reported changing into another type of organization or service. In the move, 31 (32%) appeared to be reporting to a higher level employer than in the previous position, while 8 (8%) seemed to be reporting to a lesser authority.

Of the 96 respondents, 4 (4%) said they have purchased an AVA Certification packet since May, 1989. (2 said they had purchased one 4 or 5 years ago, although AVA records did not confirm this.) 13 (13.5%) said they would not purchase a packet in the future. 27 (28%) said they were undecided. Only 7(7%) said they planned to purchase a packet within the next year. 2 were unfamiliar with the packet and requested more information.

9 (9%) said they would not pursue Certification in the future, but 25 (26%) said they did plan to do so, 12 (12.5%) within the following 12 months. 17 (18%) are still undecided about whether to undertake the Certification process.

Of those 26 deciding not to seek CVA, or still undecided, the reasons for this included the following -

- °Is not recognized or valued by the employer/organization: 11
- °Respondent is pursuing (or has) a degree which is more beneficial: 7
- °Respondent is planning to change fields: 7
- °Time constraints: 6
- °Budget constraints: 5
- °Not enough information:4

92 of the 96 respondents to Survey III (96%) said they had taken workshops or courses during company time, but only 62 (64.5%) said they had done so on their own time. 54 (56%) of the respondents (all of whom are AVA members) say they have attended AVA conferences (26 - 27% - in 1988). 60 (63%) cite other (non-AVA related) conferences they have attended, including the following sponsorships:

- DOVIAS
- ASDVS
- State Governors' Conferences
- VOLUNTEER
- U. of Colorado (Marlene Wilson)

14 respondents (14.5%) report having attended non-credit courses under college auspices; 10 (10%) undergraduate courses; 16 (17%) graduate school. 13 (13.5%) have completed or are completing

a B.A. or B.S. in Education (3), Economics, Marketing, Public Administration, Library Science, History, Sociology, and Psychology (1 each).

23 (24%) of the respondents report having completed (or presently completing) graduate degrees in the following disciplines, since becoming volunteer administrators:  
M.Ed. (5), MSW (4), MPA (3), MA English (2), MS - undesignated (2), MBA - Human Resource Development (1), MS - Psychology, Preventive Medicine, Biology (1 each), Master's in History, Mental Health and Human Services (1 each). One of these respondents is now a Ph.D. candidate

Of all the learning experiences listed, the most beneficial to the role of volunteer manager, according to the respondents were:

- Workshops (all types relating to the job) - 18 (19%)
- Conferences (AVA was cited most frequently) - 16 (17%)
- Graduate studies - 7 (7%)
- Undergraduate studies - 3 (3%)
- DOVIA meetings - 3 (3%)

University of Colorado workshops were cited by 7 respondents as particularly helpful to them. Other colleges and universities singled out for mention (by one each) were: U. of Iowa at DesMoines, U. of Connecticut, Norwich University, U. of Nebraska, and Metro State University.

37 respondents (38.5%) said they informed their employer of their professional learning pursuits. 30 said the employer was "supportive" of these, 7 said they gave "qualified support". Only 5 (5%) said the employer or organization paid none of the costs for their courses or training programs. The highest dollar support by the employing organization reported in the survey was \$2000 a year for a college course. Most often covered by organizational dollars were workshops and conferences.

36 of this responding group (37.5%) said that their employers were unaware of AVA's Certification Program. 10 (10%) said they did not know if the employer were aware of it, but 43 (45%) said their employers did know of the program. 18 of these (19% of all respondents) said their employers approved of the program and encouraged it. 8 (8%) said their employers were neutral or apathetic about the program, and 5 (5%) said their employers did not think it valuable to pursue. 9 of the 43 who said their employers knew of AVA Certification did not know what the employer thought of it.

23 of the 36 whose employers are not informed on Certification say they wish the employer would take an interest in it. 4 of the 36 say they do not want the employer to take an interest in it at this time. 6 do not think it would be of interest to

the employer. 6 have not decided on this question. 2 believe funding constraints would prohibit employer interest. 1 respondent said he/she did not understand the AVA Certification Program enough to make a judgment.

23 respondents (24%) say they would be encouraged to seek CVA if the employer took an interest in it. 4 (4%) repeat doubts that the employer would see its benefit, and 4 others said they would not be interested in CVA, even if the employer favored it.

55 (57%) said financial support from the employer would improve their ability to seek certification or professional development. 57 (59%) said they would be helped by time off, 27 (28%) by emotional support, and 16 (17%) by coaching help. Only 3 (3%) would want resulting salary compensation promised, before undertaking CVA.

If AVA Certification had been required for their present job, 66 (69%) say they would have sought to initiate the process. 12 (12.5%) would not have sought the job under that requirement. However, if their current job description were changed to require AVA Certification, 63 (66%) say they would seek to comply, while 6 (6%) say they would change jobs rather than do so. The rest of the respondents were ambivalent on the question.

21 (22%) said that both a college degree and AVA Certification should be hiring expectations for the job of volunteer administrator. 23 (24%) said that a degree (management, human resources, psychology, and education were cited) should be required. 13 (13.5%) said that in the future CVA should be expected, 8 (8%) thought experience was enough, and 2 (2%) through other certification (such as U. of Colorado's CVM) would be acceptable as the expected credential.

The skills these non-CVA respondents valued most, in their roles as volunteer administrators, were: Communications (including interpersonal relations, public speaking, motivational skills and training) cited by 63 (66%), Management (including administrative and organizational abilities) 45 (47%), and Volunteer Experience (as a volunteer or working with volunteers), mentioned by 18 (19%).

Only 26 of the 96 (27%) saw a significant difference between work in the corporate sector and that of a volunteer manager in the non-profit sector. Those cited improved salary, focus on profit, and no responsibility for fundraising for the corporate volunteer administrator, as the major perceived differences.

75 (78%) of the respondents said they considered they were members of a "true profession", as volunteer administrators.(12

underscored this opinion with underlines, exclamation points, and words such "absolutely"! Just 9 respondents (9%) said they thought theirs was not a true profession. Others were ambivalent, but stressed its lack of stature outside of the field.

51 (53%) of these respondents said their employers considered them to be professionals, but 26 (27%) had qualifying or doubtful replies, such as, "yes, sort of...". 6 (6%) said their employers did not think they were professionals.

The most cited single indicator of professional status having been achieved was "inclusion in the management team", recognized by full participation in meetings, conferences, budgeting and decision-making, on par with other managers. 29 (30%) cited this specifically. Other status indicators mentioned by respondents included: staff title, increased responsibility, independence, salary compensations, community representation, support for professional development and recognition of AVA conferences as accepted staff training.

31 respondents (32%) named their employers as "supportive" and asked that AVA send them further information on professional development programs and Certification. 8 employers were named as "not appreciative" of CVA or the professionalization of the volunteer administrator, with the naming respondent asking that the employer receive information from AVA.

62 non-CVA respondents (64.5%) identified themselves with names and addresses, for further contact by AVA.

#### Survey IV - Corporate Volunteer Program Directors

Of the 18 directors of corporate volunteer programs who responded to our survey (all but one of whom is a full-time employee) few had identical designations. Only 2 had the word "volunteer" in their title (1 Employee Volunteer Program Administrator and 1 Volunteer Program Coordinator), but 7 had titles including the word "Community". "Manager" and "Coordinator" were the common power terms (4 each), but there were 2 Vice Presidents and 2 Program Officers. Only one title from this group of respondents included the word "Director", now apparently the title of choice among non-profit volunteer administrators.

The types of organizations represented in our corporate responses included: Manufacturing (6 - 33%), Banking and Utilities (3 each - 17% each), Communications and Engineering/Technical (2 each - 11% each), Service (Hotels) and Fraternal (1 each - 5%).

14 of the corporate respondents (78%) said this was their first position as a volunteer director. 5 (28%) were hired for it in

1988, 3 each in 1981, 1984 and 1987. 4 were hired prior to 1980, the earliest in 1952. 4 (22%) said they previously had worked as volunteer administrators in the nonprofit area. 2 of these had worked for Hispanic organizations, one of them in political campaigns, neither typical of the general volunteer administration sector.

In present employment, the title of the person most volunteer program directors report to is "Manager" (9 - 50%), while 5 (28%) report to Vice Presidents and 4 (22%) to Directors.

None of these respondents had purchased a Certification packet. 1 said she had heard of Certification, but not of the packet. None said they would order a packet in the future. 6 indicated a complete lack of knowledge about it. "What is it?"

1 respondent planned to pursue AVA Certification, but 4 were unsure because of its unfamiliarity. 1 respondent said he would pursue Certification "as soon as I receive some information telling me about CVA".

Those who did not plan to seek CVA said that was because:  
The program was unfamiliar, or required more information (4 - 22%)

It seemed of no value (2 - 11%)

AVA has not provided information or support to corporate volunteer coordinators (2 - 11%)

Working on a Master's - 1

Completed MPA geared to volunteer management - 1

Relies on VOLUNTEER to provide support - 1

16 (89%) have taken workshops or courses as volunteer administrators during company time.

69 (33%) have attended AVA Conferences (one time each, in 1980, 1983, 1988.)

10 (55.5%) have attended VOLUNTEER conferences, 3 "several times".

5 (28%) have attended graduate schools and completed degrees since becoming volunteer administrators. (Named were MS, MPA, MS Chemistry, BA Public Relations, and MA)

Of the learning experiences the corporate respondents listed as most useful to their professional role as volunteer administrator, 7 (39%) named the VOLUNTEER Conference, including the Corporate Volunteer Council sessions co-located there, and 1 cited a degree in Chemistry, related to the company's business, not volunteer administration.

12 (67%) corporate respondents said they shared their professional development steps with their employers. 16 (89%) said their organization paid for the learning opportunities,

all or in part. 1 said, "3/4 of my MPA Master's program." 16 (89%) said their employers were supportive of programs professionalizing their role as volunteer administrator.

9 respondents (50%) said their employer was not aware of AVA's Certification program. 2 said the employer was "probably not" aware of it, 3 said they didn't know if the employer was aware of it or not, and 2 (11%) said their employers were aware of the Certification program and thought it o.k. as an option, but not a necessity.

5 respondents (28%) said they would like their uninformed employers to take an interest in CVA. 4 were not sure, saying they needed to know more about it themselves. 4 other said they did not want the employers to take an interest in CVA at this time.

10 respondents (55.5%) said that financial assistance from the employer would improve their ability to seek Certification. 7 (39%) said time off would help. 8 (44%) said "emotional support" would help, and 4 (22%) said coaching in the process would help them.

Had Certification been specified as a condition of present employment, 13 (72%) would have initiated it, 3 (17%) say they would not. Other respondents were non-committal. Were the job description for their present position changed to require Certification, 11 (61%) say they would comply. Others did not answer.

6 (33%) of the corporate respondents said "experience" and "corporate skills" were more important than degrees, in their present role as volunteer program directors. 6 others said they thought degrees in relevant subjects would be helpful.

Almost identically to the nonprofit respondents, the corporate group agreed that the most important qualification for volunteer managers in the business world is communications skill (written and verbal), with ability to deal with people in the corporate sector. They suggested this was helped by prior work with corporations in joint ventures, such as fundraising and volunteer projects.

This group confirmed the perceptions of the nonprofit respondents, that a major difference between nonprofit and corporate volunteer manager roles is that in the corporate, there is no fundraising responsibility. More than that, all resources (including volunteers) are internally generated, stronger management and communications skills are required, the volunteer administrator works with top management, not with the Board of Directors, and the mission of the corporation

prevails. Significantly, several respondents noted that volunteer management is only part of the corporate job responsibility of a volunteer program manager.

7 corporate respondents (39%) said they considered themselves part of a "true profession", as a volunteer administrator, but 7 others said they were professionalized by other parts of their job, such as communications or public relations. 4 said they did not consider themselves part of a true profession, one saying that "a profession calls for specific academic training."

11 (61%) said they thought their employer considered them a professional, as a volunteer administrator, but 5 (28%) qualified this: "A professional, yes; a professional volunteer administrator, no." 2 (11%) said their employer did not consider them a professional, in this role.

Only 3 (17%) of the corporate group listed conditions which would indicate that professional status as a volunteer administrator had been received. The indicators listed were:  
°Change of job title, upgrade of position (from "program manager")  
°If AVA were geared to corporate business needs  
°If individual skills, experience, track record prove it

Where the respondent's employer had given evidence of acknowledging the status of the volunteer administrator as professional, this was:  
By improving administrator's title, place on organizational chart (4 - 22%)  
By improving administrator's salary, compensations (4 - 22%)  
By improving administrator's responsibility, authority - (3-16%)  
By creating the job in response to program importance - (1)  
By allowing the volunteer administrator to attend the "National VOLUNTEER Convention"- (1)

Supportive employers were commended by the corporate respondents for implementing the ideas of the volunteer manager, by giving resources to the volunteer program, and by publicly backing the concept and the volunteer manager.

8 respondents (44%) gave the names of their supportive employers whom they wanted sent information from AVA on professional development opportunities for their volunteer administrator. 1 respondent named a non-appreciating employer, also to receive those mailings from AVA.

13 corporate respondents (72%) gave their names and addresses, for later contact from AVA, to include information on Certification.



## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS:

After wading through the necessary numerical data compiled in a survey of this type, one is tempted to let the numbers speak for themselves. Nevertheless, it is also true that with an assessment instrument which allows for expanded answers (or which gets them without asking), subjective impressions are hard for the reviewer to avoid.

Taking author's license, then, here are some of my own impressions, relative to this survey:

°First, there is reason for celebration in the field of volunteer administration, because its members are finally beginning to see themselves as professionals! Certainly, this is strongest in those who have put themselves to the test, either in undertaking CVA, or in embarking on an independent effort to build their professional credentials. Unfortunately, many feel that their employers do not agree with them. Still, an important finding is that when the volunteer managers take their determination out of the closet and give evidence that they are willing to be responsible for their own initiatives in professionalization, the employers sit up and take notice, and frequently surprise them with supports.

°The opinion of the employer is very important to timid volunteer administrators, but these too often are leaving the employer in the dark about their professional ambitions. When they do not bother to find out what the employer thinks about Certification or professional development, they cannot expect that boss to divine the worth of it. Neither can they be perceived as professional persons if they do not act as though they believe themselves to be!

°There is strong evidence of the interest by the volunteer administrators in higher education, but as much in other specialties and disciplines as in volunteer administration. The latter appear to be well-covered by the popular workshops and conferences (some sponsored by academic institutions), which nearly all attend and for which employer support seems easier to obtain. Some of the breadth of academic subject interest must evolve from the healthy desire of the practitioners to stretch their horizons beyond the strict professional specialty. However, the pragmatic probability is that they want to insure their marketability, by diversifying their knowledge and capabilities, "just in case".

°There is certainly an invitation here to AVA, to improve its marketing of Certification and professional development. The respondents are open to persuasion, in most cases, to the worth of both, and want help in educating their employers to their benefits.

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"All necessary supports" is the critical point. One of our Subcommittee members undertook a piece of personal research, interviewing her employer-supervisors at two levels of authority above her. She asked both of them to give her their criteria or expectations for a Director of Volunteer Services. Although they were being interviewed by the well-qualified incumbent herself, the product of full field experience, with both professional and academic credentials to commend her, the employer-figures ignored all that, in listing their priorities. "People skills", "speaking ability", "personality", all came before either business skills or academic qualifications. Ability to function independently (certainly not "included in in the management team") was considered a positive. CVA? A nice thing to have, enriching but not necessary to the hiring or retention of their volunteer manager. For those employers, and too many others, the image of the "nice, smiling lady in a smock" remains, blurring the stereotype of yesterday's volunteer with the still-faceless public image of today's volunteer administrator -- who in 1990 may even be a man with a Ph.D.!

In sum, the AVA Employer Recognition Survey presents us with ample evidence that the time is ripe for enlightenment. The opportunity to gather employers of volunteer administrators into our exciting movement forward toward professionalism is here, right now. Let us not waste any time in getting started!

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A SAMPLING OF RESPONSES  
from the AVA Employer Recognition Survey

from CVAs...

Q. When you began work on your CVA, did you share with your employer that you were undertaking the process? If not, why not?

A. I keep my AVA activity pretty quiet and make sure it is done on my own time.

Q. If you did share that information, did your employer have or receive from you full knowledge of the AVA Performance-Based Certification process and its benefits to your organization?

A. No. He values my other skills which help him do his job more than he values my experience in volunteer administration, despite the fact that we have 1200 volunteers in 50 locations. Because they do not work in (this) office, they are not visible to him.

A. No. He was given by me an explanation of the process, but he simply wasn't the kind of employer who cared. He could not understand why people worked for, as he put it, "zilch".

Q. Was your employer supportive of your involvement with the CVA process? If not, what were the objections?

A. Yes. He came and questioned me about it to a great extent, when he received the letter from AVA to the supervisor of those receiving the CVA.

A. He was not. The CVA process was, in his opinion, solely my concern and was not important to my role as Director. None of the work was accomplished during working hours. It was prepared on weekends at home, and all secretarial help was paid for by me. I do not regret this.

Q. If your employer was supportive, what form did that support take?

A. He was almost in awe of the kinds and amount of work I turned out. His word to me in our first supervisory session was, "Just keep doing what you have been doing and let me know if I can help!"

A. She gave me encouragement to proceed with the process and

supported my efforts verbally. I paid for my CVA. She did not coach or read my material.

A. He set CVA as a performance goal. Funded the process, read, and edited my narrative, encouraging me to claim even more credit for my role in the projects than I had. (Most were projects he and I had shared.)

Q. How was your CVA recognized by your employer/organization at the time you received it?

A. Recognition at a board of trustees meeting and recognition in local and hometown newspapers.

A. Letters of congratulations from president, vice-presidents, and other staff. My achieving the CVA was printed in the hospital newsletter.

A. Nothing much said. I asked that it be added to my personnel file.

A. "Oh!"

Q. Since that time, what impact, if any, has the CVA had on your employment?

A. I'm not sure there was direct impact, but the job description does "prefer" CVA.

A. My salary has increased, I seem busier than ever, I feel more self worth and competence in my job.

A. Got me my new job!

Q. If your employer was/is not supportive of your CVA process, what do you wish he/she had done to make the process easier for you?

A. My wish would be to be able to work freely and creatively and to have, as my support, an understanding administration.

A. Supportive or not, the process has to be done on your own -- the employer has no bearing on it. However, recognition and "fanfare" would have been appreciated, as everyone welcomes acknowledgment for an accomplishment.

from Employers of CVAs...

Q. What led you to encourage your volunteer administrator to embark on professional development and credentialling?

A. Her own initiative to do so.

A. She provided the leadership. She stated clearly what she wanted/needed. I supported her goals and plans.

Q. What value have you found in being supportive to your volunteer administrator's professional development?

A. People do a better job when they feel good about themselves. She returns from AVA conferences with new ideas and renewed enthusiasm and sometimes new or improved skills.

A. Professional development benefits the institution, volunteers and the individual. Being supportive helps improve employee morale.

A. Having a professional leading the program has led to more long-term planning, better organization of staff and volunteers, and less need for high-level problem solving.

Q. To what extent was the support you gave the CVA a cause or effect of the achievement of CVA?

A. The real motivation was within the DVS.

Q. Beyond the letter credential itself, what would you expect in a CVA that you would not expect in a non-certified volunteer administrator?

A. A higher standard of professional awareness and continuing education.

A. High levels of performance, increased status among other administrators and the volunteer group.

A. I would expect a CVA to already know what needs to be done and how to do it, and to need very little direct supervision in managing the volunteer program.

Q. How could an organization maximize the skills of a CVA, once that person has been credentialed?

A. Our organization maximizes the skills of our CVA by using her skills throughout the agency -- not just in the management of the volunteer program.

A. By extending volunteer management to the community.

A. It would encourage continuing to pursue professional development.

Q. Will CVA be built into any future job descriptions for your volunteer administrator?

A. "Preferred" but not "required" as too few are available.

A. I think it will be listed as highly desirable.

A. Already has been.

Q. Should a volunteer administrator anticipate reward for the attainment of CVA status?

A. We have changed our position description from clerical to professional.

A. Yes, if other similar jobs are rewarded. Not likely, as social workers receiving ACSW are not rewarded.

A. I would expect credentialled CVAs to be recognized by salary increases.

Q. Do you think a descriptive explanation of the AVA Performance-Based Certification process, written especially for employers would be helpful, If so, what would you include in it?

A. Yes -- you know better than I. Make it brief.

A. Yes, absolutely: What specific requirements are needed to achieve it? What are the benefits to the employer? What kind of commitment does the employer need to make?

from Non-CVA volunteer administrators...

Q. If you do not intend to seek CVA, why not?

A. It is not a priority for me, because I need to strengthen other skills first. I'm not sure I can support myself on the salary of a volunteer coordinator. I may have to look to the private sector for future employment, so I need to develop those skills.

A. In our area, the certification does not carry and "weight" as far as advancement within agencies or financially. I plan to pursue other options.

A. I do not feel it would further my status in my present job as no one at (my agency) knows what CVA stands for.

A. I am completing my Master's degree program and that means more to me than a certification program. Plus, I see a certification program as a lot of work for nothing. In my current position there is no increase in status or money for certification.

Q. Of steps you have taken as a volunteer administrator toward professionalizing your role, which were the most beneficial?

A. Most beneficial in the profession was giving workshops and attending AVA conferences -- for networking. My graduate degree in Adult Education helped by giving me training experience and credentials.

A. AVA Conferences help me to network, keep updated on latest in field.

A. AVA Conference put me in touch with professionals who assisted in setting up our whole approach to volunteer administration.

A. National AVA Conference. There were excellent speakers and trainers -- very motivational and educational.

A. AVA Conference most helpful. The networking opportunities were a great way to learn.

A. AVA Conference emphasis on professionalism.

A. My master's degree will advance me further in my career, however I have been able to use more quickly what I learned from AVA Conference.

A. Most beneficial have been AVA Conferences, then workshops and other professional conferences. I have, with some

exceptions, been impressed with the variety and quality of the AVA Conference workshops. Also, it's an excellent opportunity to communicate with a peer group outside of (my specialty) as well as within it.

Q. Is your employer aware of AVA's Certification Program? If so, what is the employer's opinion of it?

A. Aware -- not informed.

A. Only from what I have told her. Not so much "opinion" as "quizzical". Mostly ignorant as to the depth of the field and progress in volunteerism.

Q. If your employer is not informed on AVA's CVA process, would you like him/her to take an interest in it?

A. Maybe, but my employer is not interested in anything that will specifically advance "my" career.

A. Don't think he'd care. It's not important to his business.

A. Absolutely!

Q. If your employer were favorably inclined toward the CVA process, would you be encouraged to undertake it?

A. Yes, if employer paid, but based on my understanding it is personally gratifying but not all that helpful to my employer.

A. I want to do this on my own.

A. I do not believe so. I really would like to put my extra time and energy into a program that would be broader and give me more of an opportunity for employment in human services other than as volunteer administrator.

Q. Would supports from your employer improve your ability to seek certification or further professional development?

A. Financial assistance, time off, emotional support, coaching in the process, substantially increasing staff salaries to a level which recognizes our professionalism, skills and worth. And making a commitment to keeping them at par with other similar positions.



A. At this time I don't see this certification as incentive -- rather as time-consuming, reiteration of what I've accomplished. Please enlighten me.

Q. If your job description were changed to include Certification as a condition of your present employment, would you seek to comply?

A. If proper support from management existed. I would want management to be totally "sold" on the idea.

A. Until volunteer administrator certification and/or degree programs become more available and people can have different options as to what they would like to do, I don't believe a degree or certification will be expected.

A. I looked at the AVA Certification process in 1984. I did not feel that it would offer me anything except many hours of hard work. I am still not convinced that the hard work would benefit me in the end.

A. If my employer made it worth my while to comply, I would; otherwise I would change jobs.

Q. As you see the role of volunteer administrator today and in the foreseeable future, what if any degrees or certifications do you believe should be expected of the person hired?

A. Today I think an appropriate degree (MS,MA, MSW) with additional training in volunteer management is sufficient for most volunteer managers. However, as we demand more professional recognition, additional course work and certification will be necessary to keep pace with those demands. The big drawback I see is that employers in all three sectors do not see the necessity of training, ongoing development, and certification, devaluing our work and keeping salaries low. Certification will not change that attitude and problem.

A. I am very much in favor of a degree program where a person could graduate with a degree in Volunteer Management. If certification were more broadly recognized by organizations, businesses and volunteer managers, then this tool could be most helpful in professionalizing this field.

A. My understanding of CVA is that you can't get it without already having worked in the field -- not much help to a potential volunteer manager.

Q. What major differences do you see between your position and a similar one in the nonprofit sector?

A. Corporate would have more core funding, probably require more structure and constant proof of accomplishment.

A. We in nonprofits can learn so much from corporate world, i.e., how to document in real terms our programs.

A. I don't know. This is a very rural area. Never stopped to think about the corporate world.

Q. Do you consider you belong to a true profession, as a volunteer administrator?

A. I am ambivalent about this. Within my peer group of hospital volunteer directors, I feel a professional. In the outside community I am not so sure. I feel professional, but others not familiar with my work may not see me as such.

A. Yes. I feel our biggest problem is not how we are perceived, but what we project. This is especially important for me, since I am not a paid volunteer administrator. If I am apologetic, defensive or intimidated, I've lost it, and rightfully so.

A. Absolutely! Does the administration of the institution for which I work? By no means.

A. Not quite yet, but it is moving that way rapidly. Public perception is not of a profession.

A. Yes - I am getting a stronger sense of this each year, especially through networking with other volunteer managers and coordinators and through conference attendance.

A. I can see it more...after attending AVA Conference.

A. Yes...but I'm not sure other people consider this a profession. That is why I support your efforts to increase awareness and education in this field. I would be most interested in assisting you (AVA) in this worthwhile project.

A. No - many people think as a volunteer administrator you volunteer and do not have the overall education/experience needed to be paid. And most people do not understand what a volunteer administrator does or what they have to have for education and skills. Most volunteer administrators are not paid very much, which says to corporate America and nonprofit administration that volunteer administrators are not considered professionals and are not of value.

A. Yes - although it is still emerging and yet to be fully recognized.

Q. Does your employer consider you a professional, as a volunteer administrator?

A. No - thinks I'm a glorified secretary.

A. Professional in that things get done...but whether that's as a volunteer administrator?

A. My boss yes - the CEO and the agency, no.

A. Only when I shock them by behaving as one. Then it's more as a threat than as a professional.

A. Yes -- rewriting my job description for change in GS rating.

Q. If not, what conditions would indicate you had achieved professional status and stature in the organization?

A. Department head status. Inclusion in ranks of "Management" in house conferences and meetings.

A. Increased treatment equivalent to other administrators rather than other line staff.

A. Acceptance as a full professional with commensurate skills.

Q. If your employer does acknowledge you as a professional, how does the organization give evidence of this?

A. Independence, "autonomy", increased responsibility, in most cases, to decide direction of program.

A. Considered part of management team for hospital support services. Attend general management meetings, etc.

A. Certainly not in my paycheck. I am involved in the planning and budgeting for my program and my department as a whole. My title as manager.

A. I am given freedom to make decisions without hassle. They respect and accept the many changes I have instituted and realize the volunteer situation is more organized now than before I took this position.

A. A statement that my resignation for any reason but moving or death is 'not an option'.

A. Total support (financially and personally) for continued education and specific training.

A. Appointment to senior management rank, serving on outside agency and community boards and committees. Executive responsibilities in the absence of the executive director.

A. Salary is commensurate with professional position.

A. Perks!

from Corporate Volunteer Administrators...

Q. If you do not intend to seek CVA, why not?

A. AVA has not provided information/support for corporate volunteer coordinators.

Q. If your employer is not informed on AVA's CVA process, would you like him/her to take an interest in it?

A. They should have an option to become aware/familiar with it.

A. Can't answer till more is known about the process.

A. What is the benefit to Certification?

Q. If Certification had been specified as a condition of your present employment, would you have sought the job and initiated the process?

A. Yes, but I don't think corporations know about this program. I never hear it talked about with my peers at other companies.

Q. What qualifications would you consider most important for a volunteer manager from the non-profit sector, seeking a position in the corporate world?

A. Understanding the corporate view as well as the nonprofit one.

Q. What aspects of your position are different from that of a nonprofit volunteer administrator?

A. Currently, I hold additional corporate relations responsibilities. This is very common in companies. A company climate is different. You carry out these support programs according to and for the purpose of the mission and philosophy of your industry's public relations. Whereas nonprofits have volunteers at the heart of their existence.

A. I made this transition and didn't find the corporate sector to be so different in terms of managing volunteers. You have different structures to work with internally, some different motivations/concerns with working people, etc., but I think there is too much mystique about the difference.

Q. Do you consider you belong to a true profession, as a volunteer administrator?

A. Probably not, as defined. Profession calls for specific academic training.

A. My job involves much more than volunteer administering. My profession is communications.

A. No, it is more of a corporate/public relations profession.

A. Yes! I am always conscious of the need to professionalize this field. Volunteer managers have an image problem, some of which I feel is rooted in a sexist bias that is historical. Women still predominantly hold positions in this field and since it is "women's work", it is not seen as serious, still.

Q. Does your employer consider you a professional, as a volunteer administrator?

A. Yes --but I believe the other aspects of my job make me more professional.

A. Probably not now as a volunteer administrator, but I brought it with me.

A. A professional, yes; a professional volunteer administrator, no.

Q. If not, what conditions would indicate you had achieve professional status and stature in the organization?

A. If AVA were geared to corporate business needs.

Q. If an employer for whom you have worked as a volunteer administrator is a positive example of support for you as a professional, please tell why:

A. My ideas are implemented, I'm given resources to do the job in a professional manner, I can attend conferences as I see appropriate, I have a great deal of freedom to make decisions, etc.

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