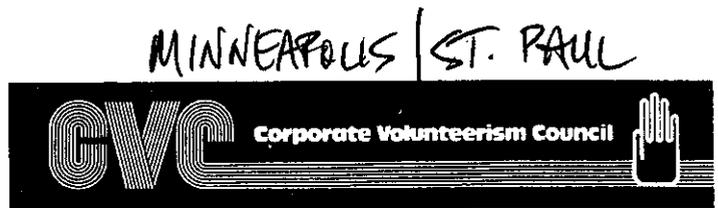


**Title:** Corporate Volunteerism Council  
**Concept Adopted:** 1980



## THE CONCEPT

The Corporate Volunteerism Council (CVC) was formed to help mobilize corporate human resources to meet increasing community needs. The purpose of CVC is to:

- promote corporate volunteerism by emphasizing its value to corporations and the community;
- serve as a communications vehicle between corporations and the non-profit sector to promote a public/private partnership;
- identify developments in the field of employee involvement and new opportunities for employee volunteers, and
- serve as a resource for companies expanding and developing programs;
- develop cooperation and communication among member organizations to realize common objectives and find solutions to common problems;
- assist in the professional development of corporate volunteer coordinators.

Corporate volunteer programs are relatively new to most companies and non-profit agencies. CVC has stimulated the development of new ideas and facilitated the exchange of basic information—both essential ingredients to the development of corporate volunteer programs.

## CREATION OF THE CONCEPT

CVC began in the spring of 1980 as an informal meeting of corporate representatives interested in the way corporate volunteerism was developing in the Twin Cities. Responding to a need to exchange information about corporate volunteer programs, CVC established a dynamic organization to develop resource materials for local corporations.

CVC experienced unique growth from the beginning because it involved representatives from the non-profit sector as well as from corporations. In turn, this nucleus recruited new members. Informational letters were sent to chief executive officers of major Twin Cities corporations and articles describing CVC appeared in the local and national media. Monthly meetings were planned around information pertaining to different aspects of corporate volunteer programs and community needs.

The growth of CVC and the success of its programs are due to the contributions of many Twin Cities corporations and organizations. Significantly, the development of CVC did not depend on a heavy financial commitment but on in-kind investments by 21 different corporations and organizations. Each made available employee time, meeting facilities and in-kind services such as design, printing, and mailing. Moreover, the partnership between corporations and the non-profit sector has insured that CVC programs address community needs on a priority basis.

## ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONCEPT

Representatives from the corporate and non-profit sectors enthusiastically supported the development of CVC. They recognized that CVC addressed the following needs:

### Community Needs

The non-profit sector has always depended on volunteers to facilitate their programs. Because of recent severe social and economic change in the country, the need for corporate volunteers with technical or managerial expertise has become even greater. Corporate volunteer assistance is vital to the survival of many community services.

### Corporate Needs

Corporations are responding to national and local appeals for increased volunteer involvement. Many Twin Cities corporations have expanded existing employee involvement programs. Whether corporations have an established or an emerging program, they share common needs for:

**Information Exchange on Program Development** - With the growth in corporate volunteer programs comes a basic need for increased communication and coordination. In most cases, the corporate volunteer coordinator position is relatively new, with few resources available for establishing programs. A most valuable resource is other corporate volunteer coordinators. No matter how sophisticated the corporate volunteer program, coordinators can learn a great deal from each other. This interchange results in better quality programs for all involved.

Issues Forum - Corporate representatives need a forum for discussing community needs and workable solutions to common problems. There is a need to understand current issues and to anticipate future problems.

Promotion of Volunteerism - To better respond to requests from the community for help, corporations must benefit from an organized effort to promote corporate volunteerism within the Twin Cities.

Shared Needs - Corporations and non-profit organizations share a common desire to build bridges between the sectors. They must develop a mutual understanding of the opportunities and limitations of corporate volunteers to better understand the differences in working between the two sectors. Corporations and non-profit organizations need a forum to exchange ideas, and a mechanism to tap resources for their mutual goal of increasing volunteerism and developing tools for successful recruitment, placement and recognition.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCEPT

Since its inception in the spring of 1980, CVC has grown from six corporate representatives to over 50 corporate and associate members. It is one of the largest councils in the country and is a founding member of the National Council on Corporate Volunteerism.

The formal organization developed gradually over the first year and presently includes:

Officers: Chair, Co-Chair/Treasurer, and Secretary  
Committees: STEERING committee composed of the officers and chairs of each standing committee.

STANDING committees including Membership, Program and Communications. The Membership Committee, besides promoting membership in CVC, encourages active participation in the organization. The Program Committee provides information to facilitate the development of corporate volunteer programs. These include programs that address specific aspects of volunteerism and special projects or workshops that promote development of corporate volunteer programs. The Communications Committee facilitates the flow of information on volunteerism within the membership and to the general public through a monthly newslet-

ter and a resource book on corporate volunteerism. These publications underscore the impact of corporate volunteerism in the Twin Cities community through the media. All members are encouraged to serve on a standing committee.

Membership - Corporate members already have a company employee volunteer program or are interested in developing one. Associate members are organizations with a primary function of promoting volunteerism and assisting CVC in promoting corporate volunteerism. Associate member organizations provide recruitment and referral of volunteers to at least 25 agencies and organizations and assist in communicating principles and information related to volunteerism to a broad audience.

Organizations not meeting the criteria for associate membership can become members with the consent of the Steering Committee. Any organization that provides resources of value consistent with CVC's goals and objectives may apply for membership.

## IMPACT OF THE CONCEPT

CVC has successfully promoted corporate volunteerism in the Twin Cities area and around the country by helping to increase openness and encouraging a willingness to share experiences between corporations and the non-profit sector. Members are encouraged to call each other for help, and time is provided at monthly meetings for informal exchange of ideas. Interaction with the non-profit sector has resulted in new directions for the corporate and non-profit sectors. Voluntary Action Centers are developing special services to assist corporations, and corporations are responding to non-profit sector needs by investigating ways to direct corporate programs to meet those needs.

CVC has provided new channels of communication in corporate volunteerism through monthly meetings, published newsletters and brochures. The increased awareness through the broad range of corporate programs results in a better understanding of how to effectively work with the non-profit sector, and creates awareness of new developments and issues affecting volunteerism. CVC's new resource book "Volunteering Corporate Style" offers a comprehensive collection of background information and case studies on different aspects of corporate volunteerism from starting a program to evaluating the result.

CVC received special recognition from VOLUNTEER, the National Center for Citizen Involvement, for "dedication to promoting corporate volunteerism and building an organization which serves as a model for other cities across the country."

## CONTINUATION OF THE CONCEPT

CVC plans to continue as an advocate of corporate volunteerism by developing educational programs for volunteer coordinators and promoting exchange of ideas and resources between the corporate and non-profit sector.

**Promotional Activities:** Expanded membership drive to include more small and medium sized companies. Twin Cities' recognition event and National Volunteer activity during National Volunteer Week.

**Monthly Programs:** Discussion of current issues and resources pertaining to corporate volunteerism.

**Training Sessions:** Special workshops designed to meet the needs of new program coordinators.

**Intersector Partnerships:** Continued dialogue between the sectors to help insure understanding and optimum use of volunteer resources.

Response from other corporations and the non-profit sector reaffirms the original assumptions that CVC fulfills a community need and that the Council will continue to grow. CVC leadership believes that corporations can increase citizen involvement by promoting employee volunteerism, making employees aware of volunteer opportunities and recognizing their contribution both to the community and to the corporation. The future of many community services may depend on volunteers provided by the private sector. For that reason, CVC will continue to work to increase the number and the success of corporate volunteer programs, to explore new initiatives and to promote cooperation between the private and the non-profit sector to meet community needs.