

# POSITIONING THE PROFESSION

Communicating the  
Power of Results for  
Volunteer Leadership  
Professionals



ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

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**W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION**  
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With the coming of the new millennium and the world's focus on citizen involvement, AVA sees an opportunity to help re-think how we see our work and how we communicate its impact and importance.

The following materials have been developed to provide practitioners with effective messages to describe our work to others in the volunteer field, to our organizations' executives and governing boards and to our funders.

This document is a work in progress that we hope you will join:

- First, please feel free to use these materials and make them your own. Adapt them for your own use and localize them for your audiences.
- Second, please join us by participating in the continuing adaptation and refinement of messages to help us communicate what we do and why it matters. Please engage in the discussion by contacting board members or staff of AVA with your additional ideas or activities. E-mail us at [avaintl@mindspring.com](mailto:avaintl@mindspring.com). Telephone us at 804 346-2266. Or fax us at 804 346-3318.

We invite you to join us at this exciting time and we look forward to hearing from you very soon.

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# POSITIONING THE PROFESSION

## OVERVIEW

***"This is threshold thinking, the start of a revolution. "***

Robert F. Long, Program Officer  
 Department of Philanthropy and Volunteerism  
 W.K. Kellogg Foundation

### The Challenge

Despite widespread agreement that involvement of the public as volunteers is essential for the health and well being of society and community life, volunteers and the people who engage them are still largely taken for granted.

- Policy makers and funders often do not view volunteer resource development as an essential area in which to invest.
- Community boards and executives do not appreciate that volunteer involvement requires sustained, skilled management and organizational support in order to reach its potential.
- The people responsible for managing volunteer resources within organizations report that their function is poorly understood and marginalized.

### The Solution: A Major Shift in Focus

- The solution is a shift in identity, articulation and behavior.
- What is needed is a new vocabulary that emphasizes civic involvement, innovation and results.
- What's required is to search for the heart of what we do and begin using words that express our conviction and that convince others—words like “leadership,” “impact,” and “public engagement.” How much more persuasive are these than “management,” “volunteer hours” and even “volunteer” itself.

Language is messy by nature, which is why we must be careful in how we use it. As leaders, after all, we have little else to work with. We typically don't use hammers and saws, heavy equipment, or even computers to do our real work. The essence of leadership—what we do with 98 percent of our time—is communication. To master any management practice, we must start by bringing discipline to the domain in which we spend most of our time, the domain of words. (Peter M. Senge, “The Practice of Innovation,” in *Leader to Leader*, Summer 1998)

<i>We need less of...</i>	<i>More of...</i>
volunteer	civic participation, public engagement
volunteer manager/administrator	public engagement/volunteer advancement professional, volunteer resource developer
number of volunteer hours	results, impact—what changed?
ladies in hats and gloves	sleeves rolled up, work boots
little miss sunshine	community organizer
isolation	strategic alliances, inclusion
tea parties	strategic planning sessions
apologies for volunteers	advocacy for volunteers
coordination	leadership
“we've always done it this way”	creating new ways/strategies
Maintaining status quo	changing society, challenging systems

Development of a field and a profession requires that we value ourselves, see what we do as valuable and having impact, and be able to articulate and advocate for it. Given current, compelling forces in the environment surrounding volunteerism, re-positioning is critical and timely.

### AVA Takes Action

The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) has launched an initiative to re-position the profession. With invaluable initial assistance from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and The Leighty Foundation, the Association has begun to build the case for supporting the effective management of volunteer resources:

- In the fall of 1998, more than 210 AVA members and other practitioners completed surveys to identify key issues affecting their ability to be successful at the job.
- In January 1999, a group of funders, practitioners and academic leaders convened as a Think Tank to create a case statement for volunteer administration. Participants challenged assumptions, identified core beliefs and proposed key messages that force thinking about the field in a new way.
- During 1999 these messages were tested with their intended audiences in order to stimulate further discussion.

***Given current,  
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AVA continues to develop strategies to help members of the profession use these messages effectively.

How will we know the messages have been effective? What will the changed reality look like? Among the intended results of these key messages are the following:

- *belief that volunteers are a critical resource.* Evidence would include community involvement as a lifelong commitment, media coverage of public engagement.
- *understanding of what kinds of management and support are required to maximize the involvement of volunteers.* For example, articulation and honoring of best practices, budgetary support for volunteer programs, and research and development.
- *understanding of the organizational capacity necessary to manage volunteers to meet needs.* Evidence would include involvement of volunteers and professionals who engage volunteers in a mix of organizational issues, engagement of people and money jointly for maximum impact.
- *volunteer administrators create/find/keep a job, secure funding, get a raise.* Evidence would include raised salary levels of people who engage volunteers, multiple career paths for professionals.

### Core Values

While messages have been developed for specific audiences, it is important to articulate the overarching, core values that express our convictions and go to the heart of volunteerism:

- The strength of a democratic society rests on the acts of its individual members in service to the society.
- Voluntary action gets things done and produces change.
- Civic participation fills gaps in our social fabric and creates community.
- The participation of volunteers is critical to organizations for accomplishing the mission, getting results, and ensuring organizational survival and vitality.
- An organization must invest in its people resources and manage them wisely.

## SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

*A sub-group of AVA's Think Tank participants developed a survey that was distributed throughout the fall of 1998. It went to 1,600 AVA members and 800 attendees at the 1998 International Conference on Volunteer Administration. More than 210 responses were received. We have selected particularly relevant pieces and implications of the survey results to share with you here.*

- ▶ **The most significant assets provided by competent volunteer management are:**
  - Mobilization of citizens to solve a problem or meet a need
  - Engaging additional talents and skills in the work of an organization
- ▶ **The role of the volunteer administrator is described by those in the role and by their supervisors in **four different types of language:****
- Specific Task Performed** — i.e. recruitment of resources, advocate for volunteers, community liaison, scheduler and evaluator, record keeper
- Personal Characteristics** of the person in the role — i.e. committed, competent, energetic, hard worker, creative visionary, problem-solver, cheerleader, team player
- General Roles** — i.e. leader, manager, coordinator, enabler, change agent, capacity builder, role model, human resource professional, facilitator, volunteer guru, visionary, planner
- General Praise** — critical to our success, asset, vital, important, core of our program
- ▶ **Some of the language is much more effective than others in articulating the **unique nature and value of our role.** When survey respondents were asked how they best justify their role on behalf of their organizations' missions, they offered these examples of particularly effective "messages."**
  - I am the only staff member that represents a team.
  - I am an initiator of new projects and ideas.
  - I am an experienced professional whose focus is on involving citizens in the mission of the organization.
  - The organization uses me to empower people toward action on its behalf, and to keep them motivated. I am often the difference between volunteers staying or leaving.
  - By definition, my job requires that I have one foot in the agency and one foot in the community, to integrate the two so that the needs of the community, the agency and individuals are met. No position does this more effectively.
  - Matchmaker — adeptly matching needs with resources. Coach — training, guiding and counseling both volunteers and staff. Cheerleader — keeping enthusiasm for the effort visible and positive.
  - I am the guiding light that leads volunteers to their mission and illuminates their path with training, reinforcement and support.
  - My role is to expand the quality and quantity of law enforcement services to our citizens by integrating the community with the police department staff.

- I create and sustain a volunteer-friendly environment, the systems and structure to allow a large volunteer program to flourish.
- My value is to proficiently recruit, train, encourage and retain community commitment to our cause.
- I ensure a coordinated effort and structured program that fully utilizes people's abilities and spirit while empowering them to assume leadership roles.
- I provide the route and the means by which community volunteers can enhance and improve the lives of senior citizens.
- I am the manager responsible for delivering fiscal, physical and human resources to the most appropriate part of our organization.
- I offer life-long learning opportunities to citizens.
- I have a passion for community.
- I have the ability to mediate.
- I am the conduit through which volunteers help our organization achieve its mission.

**The Domain of Words...**

◆ **Committed** ◆  
**Competent** ◆ **Energetic** ◆  
**Educator** ◆ **Visionary** ◆  
**Problem Solver** ◆ **Team**  
**Player** ◆ **Leader** ◆  
**Change Agent** ◆ **Capacity**  
**Builder** ◆ **Facilitator** ◆  
**Critical to Success** ◆ **Asset**  
◆ **Vital** ◆ **Core of Our**  
**Program** ◆ **Professional**

*The survey also yielded several negative results, most of which were not surprising to many of us. However, they underscore the need to re-think the way in which we describe what we do, and the need for new messages to be directed to key constituents within our organizations.*

- ▶ 43% of the reporting organizations **do not have a written philosophy statement** about the value of volunteer involvement.
- ▶ 47% of responding volunteer managers are **NOT involved in strategic planning and top-level management deliberations** in their organizations.
- ▶ **Funders and board members** receive much less information about the volunteer management aspects of the organization than do staff and management.
- ▶ Within organizations, volunteer resource managers receive the **LEAST amount of support** or collaboration, or both, from: fundraising/development staff, financial management staff and information systems/evaluation staff.
- ▶ When asked to identify the **most significant barriers** that inhibit their work as volunteer services managers, respondents overwhelmingly cited factors related to **organizational structure and operations** — poor communication; red tape; inconsistent management styles in various departments; additional assignments other than volunteer administration; lack of support staff; lack of planning; organizational climate.

The second most cited type of barrier was **resistant attitudes and perceptions** on the part of co-workers and top management — volunteers are a low priority, not a valued position; ignorance about what I do; lack of respect from other managers; volunteers are taken for granted; feeling that volunteer management is not a **real job**.

*A REPORT OF THE COMPLETE SURVEY RESULTS IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FROM THE AVA OFFICE.*

# SIX MESSAGES FOR PRACTITIONERS\*

## Message Theme One: Self-Development

### **Key Message:**

- ▶ We help volunteers grow, develop and find satisfaction and fulfillment in their work in the community.

### **Supporting Message:**

Volunteers report high levels of satisfaction with their volunteer experiences.

- For instance, in a recent study of 767 households in the San Francisco Bay Area, 71% of people who volunteer described their volunteer experience as "fulfilling," with another 28% describing their experience as "satisfactory." Less than 1% described their volunteer experience as "unsatisfactory."

### **Supporting Message:**

Corporate volunteers report that they are able to gain experiences in their volunteer work that would take them many more years to access in their paid jobs.

### **Supporting Message:**

Youth volunteers report that they gain work experience and a chance to learn new skills.

## Message Theme Two: Growing Movement

### **Key Message:**

- ▶ We are part of a broad network of people all over the world who engage others on behalf of community efforts.

### **Supporting Message:**

From emerging democratic countries to small village and neighborhood development, we have learned that coordination of citizen involvement is necessary for strong community development.

### **Supporting Message:**

The Association for Volunteer Administration is an international organization of 2,000 members who lead volunteer involvement in communities throughout the world.

## Message Theme Three: Community Exchange

### **Key Message:**

- ▶ We help the organization and the community to help each other.

### **Supporting Message:**

We embrace all people in the community, for they bring the community into the organization.

### **Supporting Message:**

We help the community to effectively engage with the organization in accomplishing its mission.

\* Practitioners include all who facilitate volunteer involvement in the community—those new to the field and experienced managers of volunteers, the new wave of national service volunteer coordinators, municipal managers of community resources, and trainers of practitioners.

## Message Theme Four: Organizational Strength

### **Key Message:**

- Our work builds and strengthens the organization.

#### **Supporting Message:**

We build the capacity of the organization to attract and involve multiple resources from the community.

#### **Supporting Message:**

We provide a diverse, talented workforce to help accomplish the organization's mission.

#### **Supporting Message:**

We bring the voice and involvement of volunteers into the organization's strategic planning.

#### **Supporting Message:**

As strong managers, we are "at the table" contributing to major organizational decisions and directions.

## Message Theme Five: Strategic Alliances

### **Key Message:**

- We forge strategic alliances that strengthen the organization internally and in the community.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Internally, we work with fund development and human resources to increase the impact of our volunteers.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Externally we work with many potential resources that increase the community's investment in the organization: in-kind donations, technical support, executives on loan and the like.

## Message Theme Six: Career Development

### **Key Message:**

- Developing ourselves professionally helps build viable career paths.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Preparation—through credentials, certification, and academic degrees—enhances our knowledge, skills and employment opportunities.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Mastery of a wide variety of skills is required to perform this job—supervision, team building, budget management, program development, special events, research.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Our job responsibilities might more accurately be reflected in job titles such as "director" or "manager."

#### **Supporting Message:**

We are thinking in new ways about what we do and about following career paths to positions of greater influence and impact on the broader field.

## **NINE KEY IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS**

1. The story of the importance and worth of the people who mobilize volunteers is a story currently untold or told by others, while those who most intimately know the work and its value remain silent. *We must speak up.*
2. Our position as professional organizers of volunteers relies heavily on our ability to tell the story of the importance of volunteers: what they do, what difference they make, and why their involvement matters. *We must become better storytellers and advocates of volunteering.*
3. The words we use to speak of volunteers and of our work with volunteers must shift to emphasize results and impact. *We must speak of impact and results.*
4. Investment in volunteer resource development is a strategy for achieving organizational results, leveraging other resources, impacting communities, supporting democracy, and weaving together the social fabric. *We must talk about the broader impact of our work.*
5. Funders, media, nonprofit executives, and academics can become our partners in change and help us re-define the profession. *We must speak with others and create a dialogue.*
6. We as practitioners must broaden our concept of volunteer management and who is in this field. The field includes community organizers, religious congregation members who involve others, young people who organize their friends, and immigrant self-help associations. *We must broaden how we think of ourselves and reach out to others as colleagues.*
7. Environmental forces influencing the field, including the demands of a changing volunteer marketplace, require our greater effectiveness. These demands will only increase with people living longer, the retirement of baby boomers and the involvement of greater numbers of young people. *We must more effectively meet the demands of the varied volunteer market.*
8. Pressure on community-based organizations to produce results will increase pressure on the role of the volunteer resource developer. Increasingly advanced skills will be required to effectively engage community volunteers to meet organizational mission and increase agency capacity. *We must expand our competencies to meet the job demands.*
9. There are role models among us who do an impressive job engaging volunteers and telling of the impact of their work. We must tell their stories. *We must help each other showcase accomplishments of professionals in the field.*

## **TWELVE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS**

### **What You Can Do Tomorrow With This Information**

1. Put this topic on the agenda for the next meeting of your local DOVIA or network of professional volunteer administrators.
  - a. If you're not a member of the local professional network, join.
  - b. If there is no local professional network, help start one.
2. Begin reporting what volunteers do in terms of results and impact, not just numbers.
3. Convene a discussion group of people in closely-related professions, e.g., human resources, community organizers, and use this material to "spread the net wider," build a common language, find common ground, and seek shared goals and resources.
4. Seek out opportunities to work with the fund developer in your organization.
  - a. supply human interest stories
  - b. provide lists of community contacts and potential donors
5. Prepare for your next performance review by documenting the difference you make to the organization; update your job description and consider a title change to "director" or "manager."
6. Get involved in the strategic planning for your organization.
7. Schedule regular meetings with the human resources staff (or whoever fulfills that function) in your organization; identify common goals and forge strategic alliances.
8. Write a case statement for volunteers in your organization. Share it within the organization. Use the results and impact language in grant proposals for programs involving volunteers.
9. Create or refresh marketing materials using the results and impact language.
10. Schedule time to develop your skills. Create a professional development plan, read a book, or register for a course, workshop or training series.
11. Join AVA (membership starts at \$40).
12. Share professional journal articles with your supervisor and colleagues to help them better understand what you do.

# **SIX MESSAGES FOR NONPROFIT EXECUTIVES & BOARDS OF DIRECTORS**

## **Message Theme One: Critical Resource**

### **Key Message:**

- Volunteers are a critical resource to organizations—in the delivery of services to clients, to the programs which the agency provides, and in the governance and leadership crucial for organizational survival.

### **Supporting Message:**

Organizations have many finite resources, but volunteers are almost infinite.

### **Supporting Message:**

Some problems cannot be solved by money but rather by people.

## **Message Theme Two: Management**

### **Key Message:**

- Volunteers go and stay where they are managed well.

### **Supporting Message:**

"People are more likely to volunteer when they feel an organization is well-managed and will make good use of their time" (UPS Foundation, 1998).

### **Supporting Message:**

Conversely, "two out of five volunteers have stopped volunteering for an organization at some time because of one or more poor volunteer management practices" (UPS Foundation, 1998).

## **Message Theme Three: Impact**

### **Key Message:**

- Capable volunteer administrators make the critical difference in focusing volunteer resources to impact on mission, services, and safety.

### **Supporting Message:**

A competent professional in volunteer involvement will help more people to engage in the organizational mission, extend the delivery of services, and reduce the liability risk to the organization.

## **Message Theme Four: Community Support**

### **Key Message:**

- When volunteers are well-engaged with the organization, they provide invaluable community relations and tangible financial support.

### **Supporting Message:**

Contributing, satisfied and well-managed volunteers carry a positive message to the community at large; the reverse is also true.

### **Supporting Message:**

Volunteers are more likely than non-volunteers to make charitable donations. Volunteers give 2½ times as much in financial support as non-volunteers.

**Supporting Message:**

The volunteer resources manager can provide expanding lists of community contacts and potential donors, statistical evidence of community participation, and human interest stories for the organization's brochures and reports to help tell the story of the organization's work and the importance of community participation and support.

**Message Theme Five: Organizational Management****Key Message:**

- Strong volunteer administrators bring many skills to the whole organization.

**Supporting Message:**

The director of volunteer services often brings the wider diversity of the community into the organization.

**Supporting Message:**

Experienced volunteer administrators contribute overall leadership and problem-solving ability.

**Supporting Message:**

Volunteer administration requires the honing of skills useful in organization-wide planning and projects, such as teambuilding and collaboration, flexibility of approach, and problem-solving.

**Supporting Message:**

A competent volunteer administrator, working with staff to clarify volunteer-related issues, reduces confusion and resolves conflict.

**Message Theme Six: Complexity****Key Message:**

- The increasing complexity of the work requires a greater investment in the volunteer management process.

**Supporting Message:**

Proficient volunteer resource developers serve four constituencies: the clients, the volunteers, the organization and the community at large. All four are constantly changing.

**Supporting Message:**

The organizational status and pay scale of volunteer administrators should reflect the complexity of their tasks and the skill required to execute them.

**Supporting Message:**

The organization's leaders can be effective champions to promote to funders the necessity to invest in this organizational function.

# SIX MESSAGES FOR FUNDERS

## **Message Theme One: Organizational Sustainability**

### **Key Message:**

- Skillful involvement of community volunteers helps to build and sustain community-based organizations.

### **Supporting Message:**

By building an organization's capacity to skillfully involve community residents, we help ensure an organization's long-term sustainability.

### **Supporting Message:**

We must fund good volunteer resource management, so that community volunteers are focused on accomplishing organizational mission and building agency capacity.

## **Message Theme Two: Effective Management**

### **Key Message:**

- Skilled management is required to interest and retain volunteers.

### **Supporting Message:**

"People are more likely to volunteer when they feel an organization is well-managed and will make good use of their time." Conversely, "two out of five volunteers have stopped volunteering for an organization at some time because of one or more poor volunteer management practices." (UPS Foundation, 1998).

### **Supporting Message:**

Quote US News: "The efficiency of the market depends on effective management, and lack of good volunteer management is one of the consistent topics of self-criticism in the nonprofit world."

### **Supporting Message:**

There is a dismaying gap between what we know about effective volunteer management and community engagement practices, and what actually occurs in the workplace.

## **Message Theme Three: Public Trust of Resources**

### **Key Message:**

- Philanthropic institutions are stewards of the public trust, including community resources such as volunteers.

### **Supporting Message:**

Funders are responsible for leveraging the resources invested by the community for maximum impact and for assuring accountability.

### **Supporting Message:**

There is a defining moment at hand—a rising opportunity to rebuild the partnership between the community and the organizations created for its welfare.

## **Message Theme Four: Nonprofit Sector and Philanthropy**

### **Key Message:**

- Volunteerism is central to the sector and directly related to giving and philanthropy:

#### **Supporting Message:**

The involvement of human capital leads to increased giving.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Community is at the heart of the nonprofit sector.

#### **Supporting Message:**

50% of the population supports the nonprofit sector by giving their time as volunteers.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Philanthropy depends on asking people for their commitment and financial participation; both are dependent on effective management.

## **Message Theme Five: Building Community**

### **Key Message:**

- Service and volunteerism are central to building community.

#### **Supporting Message:**

Voluntary participation is an important, if not essential, delivery mechanism for weaving together our social fabric and building community.

## **Message Theme 6: Civil Society**

### **Key Message:**

- People working together through voluntary participation are essential for building a civil society.

#### **Supporting Message:**

The strength of a democratic society may be measured by the acts of its private citizens in service to the society.

#### **Supporting Message:**

In recognition of the importance of this activity, the United Nations has declared 2001 the International Year of Volunteers.

## **AVA Think Tank Participants** **January 19-21, 1999**

*AVA is grateful to the following individuals who participated fully in this project.  
Please feel free to contact them individually if you would like a workshop or  
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## SIX SESSIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

### Suggested Discussions and Exercises

You may want to involve other practitioners and colleagues in your community in this discussion about re-thinking how we see our work and how we communicate its impact and importance.

We suggest that you include the broadest group of those who work with volunteers. You may want to present the following background materials: POSITIONING THE PROFESSION The Power of Results for Volunteer Leaderships Professionals — An Overview, Survey Results, Messages for Practitioners, 9 Key Implications for Practitioners, and 12 Practical Suggestions for Practitioners.

Following are some discussion questions and exercises that you can use with your group.

#### **Imagery Exercise**

- Start with a guided imagery. Sometimes it helps to begin with the end result clearly in mind.

*“Please take a moment to sit back in your chair and take a deep breath as I suggest a brief guided imagery. You may wish to close your eyes...”*

*Congratulations! For the difference that your work has made, you are being honored with the Community Impact Award. Gathered in the audience are community leaders including elected officials, corporate and foundation executives, major donors, agency executives and board members, your work colleagues and volunteers, family and friends, and the local press.*

*You have been asked to write down key phrases for the person who introduces you to use in describing the difference you have made. Think about the work you have done and what impact it has had.*

*When you are ready, please come back to the room. Open your eyes. Write down the key words, phrases or thoughts that you would like to hear when the person who introduces you explains the nature of your work and the difference it has made.”*

- Share what you wrote with a partner.
- Have people report what they wrote.
- Identify common themes.
- Ask people to keep in mind their idea of the impact they'd like to make.

#### **Focus on Purpose**

- Write a statement of no more than 12 words describing the purpose of your work with volunteers.
- Work with a partner or small group to develop/include language that conveys results and impact.

### **Focus on Results: A Worksheet**

- How do you currently report results of your work with volunteers in your organization?
  
- Guided imagery:  
*“Volunteers and clients of your organization have been meeting to plan for the future of the organization. They started talking about what has been accomplished so far. You got to hear wonderful descriptions of the difference your work has made in their lives. Please describe what you would like to hear the clients report as the results or impacts that working with volunteers in your organization has made on their lives. Also describe what you would like to hear volunteers report as the results or impact that working as a volunteer in your organization has made on their lives. Write down what you would like to hear.”*
  
- How might you report results in the future?

### **Focus on Results: Small Group Work**

- Each person is to take a few minutes and prepare a brief description of the results of volunteer involvement in his or her organization over the past year (no more than one page or 3-4 minutes of presentation time).
- Break the audience into small groups of 3.
- Each person presents their results to the small group.

### **Focus on Customers: Worksheet and Small Group Discussion**

- Who is the primary customer of your volunteer program? (A primary customer is the person whose life is changed by the work you do.)
  
- What does the primary customer value? (How do you know, or how can you find out?)
  
- How does your program meet or not meet those customer values?
  
- Any changes you want to consider—anything to strengthen, lessen or abandon?

### **Focus on Professional Skill and Career Development**

- Ask participants to complete the Inventory of Professional Competency—Appendix F.
  
- Break into small groups based on competency areas—Program Planning and Organization, Staffing and Directing Functions, etc.—and brainstorm activities to develop those skills.
  
- Have groups report out and gather additional suggestions from entire group of participants. Record all suggestions and distribute to all participants.
  
- Ask participants to choose three professional development opportunities they will undertake in the next year. You may want to provide participants with a self-addressed stamped postcard on which you ask them to record their three commitments. Mail them the card in six months as a reminder.

## INVENTORY OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

### As a volunteer administrator, I have:

Sufficient

Some

None

#### *Program Planning and Organization*

- Knowledge of the organization, including its mission/purpose, structure and policies
- Ability to participate in planning activities that set the course of action for the organization (with appropriate knowledge of the community and organization)
- Ability to make decisions
- Ability to establish structures and procedures for smooth program operations
- Ability to delegate and coordinate activities to reach goals
- Knowledge of the customers the organization serves



















#### *Staffing and Directing Functions*

- Knowledge and ability to execute recruitment campaigns
- Capability to select appropriate persons to fill positions
- Ability to motivate, communicate with and lead volunteers and paid staff (including recognize needs and accomplishments and facilitate transitions)










#### *Monitoring/Control Functions*

- Ability to monitor, evaluate and document program results, and to use this information in future planning




#### *Individual, Group and Organizational Behavior*

- Ability to work with different segments of the population
- Knowledge of group process, social organizations, and ability to work with groups and the dynamic of change







#### *Grounding in the Profession*

- Knowledge of voluntary action (history, philosophy, trends, external regulations)
- Knowledge of the profession of volunteer administration







©AVA. This inventory is a summary of the competency statements developed by the Association for Volunteer Administration as the basis for its Certified in Volunteer Administration credentialing program.

# POWERPOINT OVERHEAD SLIDE MASTERS

Slide 1

**Positioning the Profession: The Power of Results for Volunteer Leadership Professionals**

Association for Volunteer Administration  
Fall 1999

Slide 1

Slide 4

**What We Need Is...**

- less... more of...
- volunteer... public participation
- volunteer... public engagement
- volunteer... public advancement
- volunteer... public resource development
- number of volunteers... what changed
- ladies in hats and gloves... work boots
- little miss sunshine... lady organizer
- isolation... financial institution
- tea parties... volunteer
- apologize for volunteers... apologize to volunteers
- coordination... leadership
- "we've always done it this way"
- create new strategies
- maintain status quo
- change social and political systems

Slide 4

Slide 2

**The Challenge**

- Volunteers still largely taken for granted
- Need for investment in volunteer resource development
- Sustained management and organizational support required
- Position sidelined and marginalized
- Need for response to changing market forces

Slide 2

Slide 5

**AVA Takes Action**

- AVA's initiative to re-position the profession
- Support from W.K. Kellogg Foundation and The Leisler Foundation
- Four steps
  - AVA and professional surveys
  - Think Tank development of key messages
  - test messages with practitioners
  - help practitioners use key messages

Slide 5

Slide 3

**The Solution: A Major Shift of Focus**

- Search for the heart of what we do
- Use words that express our conviction and that continue on
  - leadership, impact, public engagement, management, volunteer hours and volunteerism
  - a vocabulary that emphasizes civic involvement, innovation and results
- Creating a profession requires
  - value ourselves
  - see what we do as valuable and having impact
  - articulate and advocate
- Repositioning is critical and timely

Slide 3

Slide 6

**AVA Takes Action (cont.)**

- Key message results
  - management and support required to maximize results
  - organization structure necessary to manage volunteers
  - people in the organization
    - » jobs
    - » funding
    - » salary
    - » career paths

Slide 6

Slide 7

**Core Values**

- Strength of democracy
- Get things done and produce change
- Fill gaps in social fabric and create community
- Helps organizations
  - accomplish mission
  - get results
  - ensure survival
  - enhance vitality
- Invest in people resources & manage them wisely

Slide 7

Slide 10

**Key Implications for Practitioners (cont.)**

- We must track how we treat ourselves and others as colleagues
- We must be more selective in meeting the demands of the varied volunteer market
- We must expand our competencies to meet the job demands
- We must help each other showcase accomplishments of professionals in the field

Slide 10

Slide 8

**Messages for Practitioners**

- 1 Self development
- 2 Growing movement
- 3 Community exchange
- 4 Organizational strength
- 5 Strategic alliances
- 6 Career development

Slide 8

Slide 11

**Practical Suggestions for Practitioners: What You Can Do Tomorrow with This Information**

- Put this topic on the agenda for your next DOVA meeting
- Begin reporting what volunteers do in terms of results and impact
- Convene a discussion group of people in closely-related professions
- Seek out opportunities to work with the fund developer in your organization
- Document the difference you make to the organization; update your job description and consider a title change

Slide 11

Slide 9

**Key Implications for Practitioners**

- We must speak up
- We must become better storytellers and advocates of volunteering
- We must speak of impact and results
- We must talk about the broader impact of our work
- We must speak with others and create a dialogue

Slide 9

Slide 12

**Practical Suggestions for Practitioners (cont.)**

- Get involved in the strategic planning for your organization
- Schedule regular meetings with the human resources staff in your organization
- Write a case statement for volunteers in your organization
- Create or refresh marketing materials
- Schedule time to develop skills
- Join AVA
- Share professional journal articles with your supervisor

Slide 12

Slide 13

**Messages for Nonprofit Executives and Boards of Directors**

- 1 Critical resource
- 2 Management
- 3 Impact
- 4 Community support
- 5 Organizational management
- 6 Complexity

Slide 13

Slide 14

**Messages for Funders**

- 1 Organizational sustainability
- 2 Effective management
- 3 Public use of resources
- 4 Nonprofit sector and philanthropy
- 5 Building community
- 6 Civil society

Slide 14

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AVA has developed a Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation that includes the 14 slides shown here and notes to use in presenting the materials. AVA can send a digital version of the presentation on a diskette or via e-mail. As an alternative, AVA can provide full-sized paper copies of the slides from which overhead transparencies can be photocopied. See the **Request for Additional Materials** form to order any of these items, bulk quantities of this booklet, or other publications from AVA.

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# REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

## POSITIONING THE PROFESSION

Please use this publication as a basis for continuing dialogue about your role, both within your organization and with your colleagues. Feel free to share it with others, and to help disseminate it widely. *To order additional materials, please complete this form and send it to the AVA office.*

Please Send Me:

- Additional copies of this publication:  
Number needed: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost is \$1.50 per copy.

*Please select one:*

- Send a diskette containing the PowerPoint Presentation—examples on pages G, H, I—with notes.
- Send a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation file to me via email. *Please include your email address below.*
- Send a set of full-sized printed masters of key points, which can be used to photocopy overhead transparencies.

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How I Plan To Use these Materials: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Questions/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_



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## AVA Products for the Professional

### Professional Ethics in Volunteer Administration

Easy-to-apply format with instructions on how and when to use this guide, core values charts with corresponding ethical principles and program components plus worksheet for making ethical decisions. Helpful tool for anyone who manages volunteer resources. Valuable supplement to volunteer administration coursework. (25-page booklet) **\$25 (AVA member \$10)** Discounts available for multiple copies.

### Professional Ethics Mini-Poster

A code of ethics is like a badge of honor! Display yours in a space-saving 8 ½" by 11" poster format, framed in acrylic. Can be hung with magnet or Velcro. **\$18 (AVA member \$10)**

### Portrait of a Profession: Volunteer Administration

What does an administrator of volunteer resources do? What other job titles are used? In what settings do these administrators work? How has AVA played a role in the development of this profession? Find the answers in this publication. A must-have for new volunteer resources administrators and a great educational tool for supervisors, colleagues and board members. (14-page booklet) **\$15 (AVA member \$5)**

**Please complete the form below and send with payment (in U.S. dollars) to:**

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**The Association for Volunteer Administration  
is an international membership organization whose purpose is  
to promote professionalism and strengthen leadership in volunteerism.**