



# VOLUNTEER FACT SHEET

## THE NATIONAL CENTER

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### SOME BASIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CVCs

#### *What does CVC mean?*

CVC generally stands for "Corporate Volunteerism Council", which has come to be the generic term to describe a coalition of business corporations which have active programs in employee volunteer involvement or an interest in initiating such programs. In different areas of the country, CVC "translates" as Corporate Volunteer Council, Corporate Voluntarism Council, Corporate Volunteer Coordinators Council (CVCC) and even Business Volunteer Council (BVC). This variety reflects primarily a difference in preference for names, not a difference in the basic purposes and operation of the group.

#### *What are a CVC's purposes?*

Basically a CVC is formed for three purposes:

1. To exchange information about corporate employee volunteer programs among companies which are operating them and to give those companies in the community which are considering initiating such programs assistance in doing so successfully;
2. To provide a forum for member companies to learn about needs for employee volunteers and resources in the community. This is usually accomplished when a CVC invites a community agency or organization to present information and their needs for volunteers during a regularly scheduled CVC meeting;
3. To provide a way for member companies to work jointly on a community need or problem which has been identified and which is too large or complex for one company to handle alone, and/or to initiate a community-wide recruitment or recognition event for corporate volunteers;

Depending upon the need in the CVC's local community and the make-up of its members, the group may define only one of these as their main purpose, may expand that one purpose to encompass the other two as the need/opportunity arises, or may choose to take on these purposes "in stages".

#### *What are the benefits of a CVC?*

Currently operating CVCs describe the benefits gained from their "networking organization" in a variety of ways:

- promotes corporate volunteering
- communicates information about the design and implementation of employee volunteer programs

- provides education and training opportunities for its members
- promotes professional development of the individuals responsible for company program
- provides recognition to corporate volunteers
- improves understanding of the community and of the company's "stakeholders"
- assists in recruiting volunteers and providing corporate resources to the community
- helps to coordinate responses to community needs and problems among member companies
- promotes communication and partnerships between the business and volunteer communities

### ***How did CVCs get started?***

The idea for a CVC began in the early 1970's when several company representatives in New York City who were organizing their own corporate volunteer programs decided to meet informally to exchange ideas and information. The informal meetings of half a dozen corporations gradually became regular monthly meetings of the first Corporate Volunteer Coordinators Council and by 1980, when other such groups began forming across the country, it involved over 30 corporations.

### ***How many CVCs are there?***

As of 1987, there are operating CVCs in 30 communities and developing CVCs in an additional 10 communities across the country.

### ***Who makes up the membership of a CVC?***

Corporate Members: Since one of the main purposes of a CVC is to provide mutual support to and exchange of information among ***administrators of corporate employee volunteer programs***, primary membership in a CVC is drawn from corporate representatives in those positions, or from corporate representatives interested in starting such programs. Generally, one representative per corporation becomes a CVC member. In those companies that divide or spread the responsibility for the employee volunteer program among several people, more than one person from each company can join a CVC.

Associate Members: Several CVCs have established an "associate member" category to include non-profit organizations that serve as "clearinghouses" for volunteering in the community and which promote volunteering. Volunteer Centers are the most common associate members; other associate members could include state or Governor's Offices on Volunteerism, Junior League Associations or the United Way. The nature of the associate member category varies, however, and is decided upon by the corporate membership of individual CVCs.

### ***How large are CVCs and how often do they meet?***

Currently operating CVCs range in size from 15 to 60 corporate members and from one to ten associate members. Often CVCs divide their membership between "active" members -- those who regularly participate in meetings, projects and programs -- and "list" members, who receive ongoing information about the operation of the CVC but do not regularly attend CVC functions. The average "active" corporate membership ranges from 10 to 30 company representatives.

Most CVCs meet on a monthly basis, rotating the location of the meeting among their members. Several of the currently operating CVCs meet bi-monthly.

***How does the CVC work with the community?***

In addition to providing information and support to their corporate members about the initiation and maintenance of employee volunteer programs, CVCs also assist community agencies and organizations by offering their non-cash resources and employee volunteers for specific needs or programs. Often these needs or opportunities to involve employee volunteers in community projects are communicated to the active CVC membership during their regular meetings. An agency or organization is invited to make a brief, formal presentation of its needs for employee volunteers and/or non-cash resources and to distribute information to corporate members. This practice increases communication between the businesses and non-profits about needs which may affect both of them. It also is an efficient way for the companies to learn about specific needs and for the agency/organization to solicit a number of companies at one time for non-cash/volunteer resources.

If the CVC has a program committee, it is responsible for screening and inviting agencies to make presentations. Suggestions also are initiated by the Volunteer Center or by individual corporate members. Unless specifically requested by CVC members, monetary needs should not be included in the presentation. Generally only one agency presents per meeting, although that agency can be a representative of a subject area (i.e. health) and present the volunteer needs of a number of related groups in addition to its own.

***Is there a national CVC?***

No, although the National Council on Corporate Volunteerism (NCCV) division of VOLUNTEER - The National Center helps to link local CVCs.

***What role does a local Volunteer Center play in a CVC?***

The role of a Volunteer Center (also known as Voluntary Action Centers in some communities) in the development and operation of a CVC has proved to be an integral one in almost every currently operating and developing CVC in the country. Volunteer Center staff and board members have been among the founders of most CVCs, have participated on the steering committees and assisted with the group's planning, have provided staff support to assist it in "getting off the ground" and serve as advisory or associate members once the CVC is fully operational.

In all cases where Volunteer Centers are fully involved in initiating a CVC, they generally limit their roles to a "behind the scenes" facilitator, assisting the corporate members of the CVC to take on leadership positions in the group. This allows the Volunteer Center and the CVC to form a mutually beneficial partnership, while maintaining the CVC as a "corporate-owned and led" organization. In some cases, once the CVC is operating, the Volunteer Center takes on the role of providing administrative support and staffing for the group.

***Are there resources which help CVCs develop?***

In addition to organizations at the local level, such as Volunteer Centers, the NCCV division of VOLUNTEER, provides a variety of services to assist with the development and successful implementation of CVCs. These include information-sharing about the activities of other CVCs; technical assistance and availability of speakers and workshop leaders. VOLUNTEER has also published a booklet, *Developing A Corporate Volunteer Council: Some Guidelines for Success*. This is available from the Volunteer Readership Catalog for \$4.95 plus postage and handling.

***For further information...about currently operating and developing CVCs and VOLUNTEER, contact:***

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\*VOLUNTEER-The National Center is the only national voluntary organization whose sole purpose is to stimulate and strengthen volunteer citizen involvement in addressing human, social and environmental needs. As a part of its overall mission, VOLUNTEER also works to build stronger partnerships between non-profit and business communities. Its NCCV division is the primary national resource supporting corporations and businesses seeking to involve their workers in the community as volunteers.

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