

# Our Collective Future

## AVA Board of Directors

*Imagine a world where the voluntary sector is an equal player with the public and the private sectors ... where the voluntary sector "lens" is applied to the decision making powers of both government and corporate sectors.*

*Imagine citizen engagement being a penetrating value in global societies.*

What does this rather lofty thinking have to do with AVA and our profession? **EVERYTHING!**

We are the facilitators of citizen engagement. We are the ones who, through our expertise and our belief in social good, open the door to the people of our communities to become involved. It is through this role that people learn that reaching out to others not only helps to make their community healthier, but also themselves. Increased and effective citizen engagement will strengthen the voice of volunteers and of the voluntary sector.

The mission of AVA speaks to this as it strives to strengthen leadership in volunteerism and to promote the profession — globally!

*... Think about the impact of a membership 10 times larger than it is today, representing communities from around the world, all working toward the strengthening of volunteerism and the sector.*

*... Think about a globally recognized certification program in which the core competencies set the high standard of excellence for our profession.*

*... Think about the heightened awareness we will gain about the issues affecting our profession and the rich sharing of solutions.*

We are in a profession that is positioned to help shape our societies. **AVA is positioned to support, strengthen and grow that profession.**

The future of AVA is dependent on having the capacity to respond to its members — on continuing our search for strategic collaborations and knowledge — on keeping an open and inquiring mind to the diversity and challenges of today's reality — and primarily on its members through whom AVA's mission can be achieved.

The future of AVA is rich with challenges, and we are poised to meet them through the force generated by a diverse and committed membership. Here is our vision for what lies ahead.

### OUR VISION OF AVA

*In order to thrive in the years ahead, AVA must be...*

- Able to meet the needs of the full spectrum volunteer administrators, from the new and inexperienced to the highly skilled and experienced
- Flexible and responsive
- Accountable to our members
- A repository and advocate for the basic competencies, ethical principles and best practices of the profession
- International in our thinking, words and action.
- Open to many models and definitions of volunteer administration
- A resource for linking people to each other in order to find the answers to challenges they face in their work — in all types of settings and organizations.
- A willing, proactive partner with other organizations.

## Whom Do We Serve?

We serve those who share a commitment to the effective utilization of volunteer resources. We serve members and non-members, the experienced and inexperienced, in all types of settings and organizations, around the globe.

## Why?

*Our work is important to organizations, communities, and the entire world because we...*

- Strengthen organizational capacity to utilize volunteer resources;
- Prevent the ineffective involvement of volunteers;
- Enable volunteerism to realize its full potential;
- Mobilize and sustain citizen engagement in their communities;
- Empower volunteers to solve problems and serve the people of the world.

**OUR STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE**  
*On behalf of the entire profession, AVA is committed to these priorities:*

## Equip, Support, and Challenge Our Members

### 1. *Identify and meet member needs*

- Gather data on the challenges that members and non-members face in their work
- Identify or develop products/resources/services to address these challenges
- Create multiple opportunities for members to obtain resources or information when they need it
- Create and maintain many opportunities for member dialogue with AVA leadership
- Communicate with members frequently, clearly and responsively

### 2. *Facilitate dialogue and networking among members and practitioners*

- Engage members in discussion of issues related to our profession and take appropriate organizational action
- Encourage and support mutual problem-solving
- Support and develop affiliated networks of professionals

### 3. *Advocate for the role of volunteer administration*

- Articulate the value of our work and disseminate these messages widely
- Equip colleagues with the skills and tools to advocate for the work they do
- Collaborate with other organizations committed to competent leadership of volunteers
- Conduct relevant research

## Develop and Promote Standards of Excellence and Competence

### 1. *Promote the ethical principles of volunteer involvement*

- Increase awareness of the importance and relevance of ethical leadership
- Equip leaders to deal with ethical dilemmas in their work
- Seek multinational consensus on the AVA Statement of Ethics

*"Open dialogue is the key, and AVA is striving to provide as many opportunities for discussion as possible.*

*This dialogue in turn challenges the board of directors, and can result in business being done differently.*

*Thus, we remain truly member-driven."*

*Teresa Gardner-Williams, CVA,  
Director at Large*

**2. Expand and enhance the AVA Credentialing Program**

- Develop and implement a user-friendly, effective process/format
- Partner with existing certificate and education-based programs
- Aggressively promote credentialing as valuable professional development

**3. Promote best practices in volunteer management**

- Provide information on standards and sources of best practices
- Recognize individual and organizational examples of excellence
- Influence curriculum development for emerging leaders and professionals
- Identify existing standards in various nations and explore multinational consensus

**4. Develop multiple ways to transfer knowledge and skills to inexperienced leaders**

- Offer local/regional mentoring opportunities for members
- Facilitate international exchange among volunteer administrators
- Identify and publicize existing opportunities for learning
- Develop materials about the profession where there are gaps

*"An organization is only as strong as its foundation. Prudent fiscal management, careful allocation of resources, and wise governance ensure that we operate from a position of strength. With that in place, all else is possible!"*

*Katie Campbell, Executive Director*

**Actively Seek and Promote Inclusivity**

**1. Support professional development for all practitioners of volunteer management**

- Publicize and/or provide professional development opportunities for leaders in all types of organizations and specialties
- Reduce economic barriers that inhibit access to AVA activities and resources
- Eliminate communication barriers

**2. Learn to be global in our thinking, language, attitude, and action**

- Reflect inclusive content and language in all publications
- Establish relationships with professional associations in all countries
- Offer AVA materials in several languages
- Identify and develop diverse leadership within AVA

*"The products we create are not the ends.*

*They are just the beginning, as we seek multinational consensus on best practices and ethics, promote the use of these resources, and develop new connections.*

*While geography may define us in some ways, it is we who have the opportunity as colleagues to define the future excellence of volunteer administration globally."*

*Arlene Cepull, Vice President for Professional Development*

## Maintain Operational Effectiveness

### 1. *Ensure fiscal responsibility*

- Monitor revenue and expenses
- Focus aggressively on membership recruitment and retention
- Implement long-term investment strategies
- Solicit grant funds and comply with grant reporting requirements
- Conduct annual fundraising event and annual giving campaign

### 2. *Ensure appropriate staff resources*

- Conduct annual assessment of Executive Director
- Conduct annual assessment of staffing resources and needs

### 3. *Practice participatory and responsive governance*

- Coordinate work of Bylaws Committee
- Coordinate work of Nominating Committee
- Maintain high level of diversity among board members
- Develop & implement multi-year strategic plan

### 4. *Manage operations in a consistent, professional and responsive manner*

- Adhere to policies and procedures, revising as needed
- Develop efficient internal systems
- Maintain high level of customer service
- Update technology as needed

*"On the waves of civic engagement, volunteering is a hot issue around the globe!*

*We must see the diversity of organizational, sectoral and cultural contexts in which it is happening, and embrace them.*

*If AVA can actively seek and promote diversity, both within its own membership and through outreach to organizations and nations, we can play a leading role in shaping the future!"*

*Lucas Meijs, Director at Large*

## OUR VALUES

These principles guide our work, both within AVA and our home organizations. As a membership association, we seek to establish a productive, enjoyable work environment. We do so while remaining committed to the vision and mission of our organization and acting in a fiscally responsible manner. We do so with respect for the following values.\*

### I. CITIZENSHIP AND PHILANTHROPY

We accept responsibility for the perpetual development of a personal, coherent philosophy of volunteerism and for helping create a social climate through which human needs can be met and human values can be enhanced.

### II. RESPECT

We promote the involvement of persons in decisions which directly affect them and empower them to perform the work once assigned.

We promote understanding and the actualization of mutual benefits inherent in any act of volunteer service.

We develop volunteer programs and initiatives that respect and enhance human dignity.

We respect the privacy of individuals and seek to safeguard information received as confidential.

We work with individuals from a diversity of backgrounds, thus gaining a greater understanding and respect for the full range of human potential.

### III. RESPONSIBILITY

We develop volunteer programs that enhance and extend the work of the organization's paid staff.

We contribute to the credibility of the profession in the eyes of those it serves. We are reliable, careful, prepared, and well informed in all aspects of our work.

We pursue excellence even when resources are limited and will seek to overcome obstacles when presented.

We commit to improving our knowledge, skills, and judgments.

We commit to reflective decision making with the intent of advancing the long term greater good.

### IV. CARING

We are kind, compassionate, and generous in all actions to minimize harm.

### V. JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

We maintain an open and impartial process for collecting and evaluating information critical for making decisions.

We have impartial and objective standards that avoid discriminatory or prejudicial behaviors.

We treat all individuals with whom we work equitably.

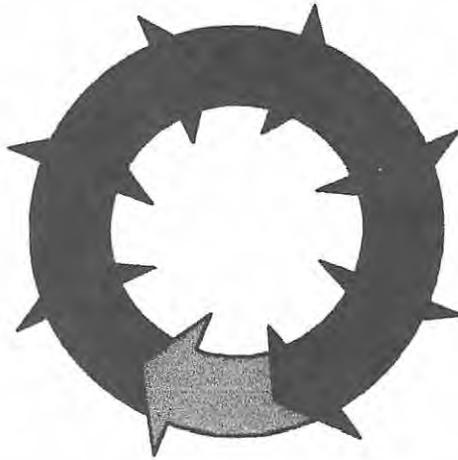
### VI. TRUSTWORTHINESS

We are committed to truth based on the premise of open and honest interaction. We operate sincerely and non-deceptively and promote this principle throughout the organization.

We are committed to fairness and forthrightness.

We are reasonable, realistic, and professional in determining the appropriateness of expectations or requests.

*\*Based on the AVA Statement of Professional Ethics in Volunteer Administration, © 1999.*



*In order to better serve its members and to be more inclusive in recruiting new members, the AVA Board of Directors formed a Pluralism Strategy Committee to help direct the organization in reaching out to volunteer managers from communities not active in AVA. In January 1998 the board adopted the following Statement of Inclusiveness to help guide the organization into the next century.*

#### **STATEMENT OF INCLUSIVENESS**

**The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) embraces a philosophy that recognizes and values inclusiveness and openness. It is committed in the broadest sense to diversity reflecting the demographics of the communities in which its members serve. This principle applies to the involvement of people as members, to leadership roles, and to the promotion of the profession.**

**AVA will promote professionalism and strengthen leadership in volunteerism and provide opportunities for all segments of our profession to work together to identify the needs of the profession.**

**AVA has a responsibility to educate and to learn from the international community about issues/problems that affect the profession as well as to seek their participation in finding solutions.**

**AVA works in partnership with local professional organizations in a spirit of cooperation, mutual trust and respect.**

**AVA defines diversity in broadest terms. AVA intends and desires to be inclusive of all individuals regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, physical or mental disability, socio-economic status, political affiliation or geographic location.**