

## ABSTRACT

*Workplace volunteer councils (WVC) are associations of representatives from the public, private, and non-profit sectors working together to enhance grassroots volunteerism. By forming meaningful partnerships within the community, council members can recruit large numbers of volunteers as well as gather other resources from the workplace and focus them on key community issues. Volunteer administrators can play an integral role in supporting partnerships formulated through a WVC by providing volunteer opportunities and the volunteer management expertise necessary to ensure that the experience is positive for the volunteers and the workplace supporting them.*

# Bridging the Sectors: Developing an Effective Workplace Volunteer Council

Keith Seel

## INTRODUCTION

A workplace volunteer council (WVC) is a collaborative group of representatives from diverse organizations who mobilize volunteers from the workplace for the benefit of the community, the employer, and the employees themselves.

As an organization, a WVC typifies the resurgence of a community acting on its own behalf for its own purposes as championed by advocates such as John McKnight. The WVC is an example of what McKnight would call an "association" that he defines as "a group of citizens working together ... an amplifier of gifts, talents, and skills" (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993).

At its heart, a WVC inspires the imagination of individuals and organizations who have already reached the conclusion that working together on major issues is more effective than trying to find solutions on their own. This kind of organization offers a number of strengths: the ability to pool resources and broaden perspectives on community issues, the opportunity to build upon the work and activities of other members, and a strong voice with which to advocate for community involvement by other businesses,

non-profits, or governmental agencies.

Some form of a WVC exists in many major cities in North America. In Canada, Volunteer Centres have been the primary catalyst for bringing together interested representatives from major businesses in the community, large non-profit and charitable organizations such as universities or social service agencies, and government. In the United States, corporations have been the leaders in forming WVCs; the Points of Light Foundation has supported these efforts by creating a network of councils and a coordinating committee of WVC chairpersons.

## THE WORKPLACE VOLUNTEER COUNCIL AS AN ORGANIZATION

The WVC is the most recent step in the evolution of an idea originating in the United States. American corporations took the lead in forming what has been known as either a corporate volunteer council (CVC) or business volunteer council (BVC). The choice of title often depended on how the members of the council defined themselves—whether as "corporations" or "businesses." Most consider these titles to be synonymous.

Corporate volunteer councils were

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formed through the inspired vision of corporate leaders interested in moving beyond the "begging hand" imagery that symbolized traditional relationships between business and the charitable sector. While non-profit organizations in communities with a CVC often were supporters of its activities, they were rarely members of it. With the creation in the United States of the Points of Light Foundation in 1990, a solid focal point for the coordinated development of corporate volunteerism and community service was established. In drafting *Principles of Excellence in Community Service* (Points of Light Foundation, 1993), the foundation established an action strategy for the business community and its employees to engage in "meaningful community service." The core principles, known as A Plan To A.C.T., are:

- *Acknowledge* that the corporation's community service involvement and its employee volunteer efforts contribute to the achievement of its business goals.
- *Commit* to establish, support, and promote an employee volunteer program that encourages the involvement of every employee and treat it like any other core business function.
- *Target* community service efforts at serious social problems in the community.

Associated with these core principles are numerous action statements that define the kinds of initiatives that will guide a business towards tangible results.

This action strategy forms what appears to be the first comprehensive plan to inspire and direct businesses to participate in community service in ways beyond simple financial donations. The Points of Light Foundation widely promoted the idea that community service was directly related to business goals. Up to this point, the usual business understanding of philanthropy was one-dimensional: to be a "responsible corporate citizen" a company should give back a per-

centage of corporate profits to the community. In 1995, when the Points of Light Foundation formally changed the name of one of its guiding committees to "Workplace Volunteer Council," the evolution of the CVC concept took a distinct step forward.

Over the years of experimenting with various CVC structures and activities, the primary learning has been that corporate volunteer councils can expand to include members from workplaces beyond private business, such as government, military, and health care. Many different workplaces can effectively and productively come together in a council format to begin to:

- discuss ideas about improving the community and mobilize employees and the workplace;
- problem-solve community issues and prioritize needs;
- determine common and individual workplace priorities for community involvement;
- learn from each other and share experience and resources;
- mobilize a total resource portfolio, including money, time, expertise, services, products, gifts-in-kind, and many other valuable and needed tangibles and intangibles such as political influence;
- address priority community needs in a concerted manner;
- be the catalyst for cross-sector partnerships; and
- aspire to something different than traditional donor-receiver relationships.

Early efforts demonstrated that the model being developed in the United States could not be duplicated in Canada. At least three fundamental differences between Canada and the United States had to be accounted for:

- While relatively young and quite small in the United States, Volunteer Centres are among the more established

charitable agencies in many Canadian cities. For example, the Volunteer Centre of Calgary is more than 40 years old and has an annual operating budget of more than \$800,000 (Canadian).

- Many of the issues being addressed by American corporations through their community WVCs were already established social programs in Canada. Different approaches to solving community needs had to be developed in Canada.

- The call from two American presidents (Ronald Reagan and George Bush) for increased business and citizen involvement in solving social problems was taken up by many prominent business leaders in America. In Canada, no such call was ever made and senior business leaders have not materialized to champion the cause.

Ideally a workplace volunteer council is an enclave, a safe forum where discussion and learning can occur among members. If a WVC cannot create a safe environment for frank discussion, it is very difficult to attract and retain businesses that want to: explore alternative kinds of resource-giving without being asked for donations; non-profit organizations that want to learn how to work effectively with corporations without being asked to sell their solid reputation for community service to promote a product; or employees who want to meet real community and corporate needs in their own way without feeling pressured by their employer or special interest groups.

## MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDING

An effective council should state what it intends to achieve in the community and have a plan of action for achieving its goals. A strong statement of purpose is a powerful tool for a WVC, especially to recruit new members. As an example, the Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council (CWVC) has a charter. The 10 founding members of the CWVC devoted nearly a year to developing the charter. It serves both as a reference document and a

recruitment tool. The charter provides basic information on the functions of the CWVC, its structure, the relationship between the CWVC and the Volunteer Centre of Calgary, and the services and resources to be provided by the CWVC to its members (Seel, 1995a).

In the case of Calgary's workplace volunteer council, the development of the charter helped the founding members come to a consensus about the values and vision that have since guided their work on the council. Over the year that it took to create their charter, members explored individual perspectives on corporate philanthropy, volunteerism and community development, as well as their own needs and expectations.

The business sector typically has the most representation on a WVC with charities and various government agencies rounding out the membership. Strong business involvement is key to the success of a WVC since the private sector usually is the largest employer in a community and has the capacity to grant flex-time during the day for employees to volunteer as part of community investment or corporate donations programs. In practice, however, representation from the three sectors varies depending on who are the largest employers in the community.

Recruiting and retaining representatives on the WVC is a key activity for the council which requires a commitment of time and resources by existing members. While new members actively may be recruited by existing council members, self-referral is not uncommon.

The funding of councils varies widely. In Canada and the United States it is not uncommon for members of a WVC to pay a membership fee to cover operational and service costs. Depending upon the WVC, various levels of membership may exist from which prospective members can choose depending upon their needs and ability to commit to the council. Membership rates vary from under \$100 (Canadian) to several thousand dollars. A few charge thousands of dollars to cover

staff time, program development, and other expenses. In most cases, member donations or a community Volunteer Centre pay for services such as photocopying and/or mailing costs. However, membership fees may or may not constitute a significant funding resource for the activities of the WVC. At the Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council, a foundation provided the start-up grant to cover anticipated expenses.

## CONSTITUENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The partnership projects undertaken by a workplace volunteer council with which a volunteer administrator can become involved often are complex. It is important to understand the project from the perspective of the non-profit organization that will utilize volunteer talent, the employees who will be volunteering, and the businesses where the volunteers work. Central to planning is understanding who the constituents and stakeholders are and the different needs and expectations they have.

*Stakeholders* are external to the WVC while those who make up the council itself are its *constituents*. Another difference is that constituents of a WVC tend to be individuals representing an organization. Stakeholders may be individuals, but more commonly are organizations or groups of organizations such as non-profit agencies working with a particular high-needs group, educational institutions, or business affiliations such as economic development authorities or the local Chamber of Commerce. In each community the constituents and stakeholders will vary according to its predominant kinds of businesses and community services and the expressed interests of employees. Table I gives examples of the constituents and stakeholders of a typical WVC.

Keeping in mind the different roles and expectations that stakeholders and constituents have relative to the WVC, it is especially important during the forma-

tion of a council to recognize its goals and expected outcomes.

It should also be mentioned that as soon as a WVC member undertakes a partnership project in the community, theretofore unknown stakeholders likely will make themselves known. Stakeholders who were not partners in the project will want to know how to become a partner or may want to know why they were not selected by the WVC to be a partner. There are many sensitivities within the stakeholder group that vary with each community and may emerge as the work of the WVC and its constituents begins.

The constituents of a WVC have their own interests and concerns usually represented to a greater or lesser degree in the partnership projects members undertake with the community. Table II outlines the basic constituent interests and concerns associated with a corporate/employee volunteer program.

## IMPACTS OF A WVC

A WVC can have a tremendous impact on encouraging and enabling volunteers from the workplace. As a result, a number of expectations exist about the role and impact of a WVC. These expectations, stated or unstated, have an effect on the volunteer activities being undertaken and therefore require the attention of volunteer administrators.

To begin with, stakeholders and constituents each have a perspective on what impact a council should have in the community and in the workplace. The results will vary depending upon how the WVC focuses its activities. Formative activities need to include open discussions between potential constituents as well as with the community or key non-profit agencies. Several crucial development questions need to be addressed in order to maximize the impact of the WVC. These questions have a thematic and practical aspect as outlined in Table III.

Stakeholders and constituents also have individual expectations about their involvement in volunteer programming.

**TABLE 1.**

**Examples of Constituents and Stakeholders in a Typical WVC**

Constituents	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual business representatives</li> <li>• Individual non-profit representatives</li> <li>• Individual government representatives</li> <li>• Individual school board representatives</li> <li>• Individual representatives from affiliated groups such as the conference board, institutes researching philanthropy, etc.</li> <li>• Individual consultants, academics, and other professionals in the field of philanthropy and volunteerism</li> <li>• Individual representatives of the host organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The non-profit sector in the community</li> <li>• Subsets of the non-profit sector by issue area such as, poverty, counseling, health, education, seniors, youth, recreation, etc.</li> <li>• Board of education</li> <li>• Economic development authorities</li> <li>• Chamber of commerce or board of trade</li> <li>• Federal, provincial, state, municipal government</li> <li>• Business by industry type, such as oil and gas, transportation, service, manufacturing, etc.</li> <li>• Employees/retirees</li> </ul>

**TABLE II.**

**Common WVC Constituent Groups, Their Interests and Concerns**

Constituents	Constituent Interests/Concerns
<p><b>Company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shareholders</li> <li>• CEO/COO</li> <li>• Senior managers</li> <li>• Department managers</li> <li>• Branch managers</li> <li>• Plant managers</li> <li>• Allied companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can the employee find time to do his or her job and volunteer?</li> <li>• Will the employee's volunteer work cost the company anything?</li> <li>• Will the company get any benefit from the employee's involvement, such as publicity, skill enhancement, and community relations?</li> <li>• Should the company support the employee through grants or flex-time?</li> <li>• Will the community be healthier or safer as a result?</li> <li>• Will the company see a positive bottom-line return?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Employee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social clubs</li> <li>• Employee groups</li> <li>• Unions</li> <li>• Department staff</li> <li>• Branch staff</li> <li>• Plant staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Am I doing something meaningful for my community?</li> <li>• Am I learning new skills that will help me in my work?</li> <li>• Am I making new connections and expanding my network?</li> <li>• Am I making a difference?</li> <li>• Am I improving the skills that I have?</li> <li>• Can I have fun?</li> <li>• Can I do this with my family?</li> <li>• Can I volunteer with some of my friends as a group?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-profit agencies</li> <li>• Social service agencies</li> <li>• Community associations</li> <li>• Neighborhood groups</li> <li>• Politicians</li> <li>• Government Agencies</li> <li>• Funders</li> <li>• Citizens</li> <li>• Religious groups</li> <li>• Educational institutions</li> <li>• Advocacy groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we have the resources in place to meet the needs of our volunteers, clients, and staff?</li> <li>• Are we building strategic alliances between our agency, the business community, and other agencies in the community?</li> <li>• Do we have the skills necessary in our human resource base to provide an effective and efficient service to those who need it?</li> <li>• Will a partnership with a company mean that we have to change our mission statement and values?</li> </ul>

Adapted from Seel, 1995b

These expectations vary depending upon whether it was the company that initiated the program or the employees who took the initiative. Table IV outlines the expectations associated with a corporate volunteer program initiated by corporate management and an employee volunteer program initiated by its employees.

By considering and addressing the range of interests and expectations of stakeholders and constituents, a WVC can initiate programs, services, and activities that will create an impact in the commu-

nity. A planning process that solicits information from constituents and stakeholders about their expectations is key to generating impacts as well as developing a sense of cohesion around the council. Key points about impacts are that:

- They will vary depending on role, vision, available resources, community, stakeholders, and constituents;
- They need to be measurable, including quantitative results and statistics, qualitative results and cases or examples,

**TABLE III.**  
**Key Business Planning Considerations for a WVC**

Key Questions	Planning Considerations
1. Why do we want to form a WVC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before going through the effort of creating a WVC, is there strong support and sufficient resources to sustain it for a minimum of three years?</li> </ul>
2. What is the purpose of the WVC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What achievements do constituents and stakeholders envision?</li> <li>• Is the primary purpose to learn how to mobilize employee volunteers, collaborate on special projects, develop partnerships, strategically address key community issues, and/or provide the basis for a tactical marketing initiative for a business?</li> </ul>
3. What products or services will be offered to achieve that purpose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will we create key tools or models for employee volunteer involvement?</li> <li>• Will we focus on providing consulting expertise to the members?</li> <li>• Who will develop or provide these tools or services? Do they have credibility?</li> </ul>
4. Who are the customers of the WVC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will we address potential customers: constituents, non-members, businesses, community agencies, other stakeholders?</li> </ul>
5. How will the products and services be funded or paid for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will members pay sufficiently to cover the costs of product and service development or delivery?</li> <li>• If the WVC's operational costs are subsidized by members or by an external funder, will this create an impression that the WVC's services should be free or available at minimal cost?</li> </ul>
6. What is our three-year plan for resource and service or product development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do constituents and stakeholders want us to produce or provide as tools?</li> <li>• What evaluation tools are in place to collect information on what has been done and what needs to be done?</li> </ul>
7. What market research needs to occur prior to and following the launch of the WVC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the most likely members and why?</li> <li>• What community issues most fit the interests, capabilities, and needs of the members?</li> <li>• What marketing message will attract new members and encourage existing members to stay?</li> </ul>
8. How will the council be marketed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What marketing and communications tools are needed?</li> <li>• What are the key messages that need to be communicated to recruit, to sell, to promote?</li> </ul>

**TABLE IV.**

**Sample Stakeholder/Constituent Expectations Associated With Corporate and/or Employee Volunteer Programs**

Sample Expectations Associated with a Corporate Volunteer Program

Sample Expectations Associated with an Employee Volunteer Program

	Sample Expectations Associated with a Corporate Volunteer Program	Sample Expectations Associated with an Employee Volunteer Program
COMPANY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The employees' allegiance to the company will supersede allegiance to the volunteer activity.</li> <li>• Resources will be allocated to short-term events only and not to long-term program development.</li> <li>• Evaluation will assess changes in public awareness of the company as a result of the sponsorship.</li> <li>• Events and programs will fit within the company's donations policies.</li> <li>• The community will acknowledge and recognize corporate participation in the event.</li> <li>• The public image of the company will be improved and new customers reached.</li> <li>• Corporate liability for events will have been considered and approved.</li> <li>• A cost/benefit analysis will be conducted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost to the company resulting from employee involvement, such as the time away from work, will not be excessive.</li> <li>• Cost of any required supports will be funded.</li> <li>• Program goals will align with business goals and values.</li> <li>• The program will be open to all employees who want to participate.</li> </ul>
EMPLOYEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees will be consulted about the kinds of programs and events the company supports.</li> <li>• Release time from work will be given by the company for employees to volunteer at the sponsored events and programs.</li> <li>• Sponsorship will meet a business objective and a community need.</li> <li>• A good time will be had by all.</li> <li>• Employees will be recognized by the company for their participation.</li> <li>• The program and the company will receive positive coverage by local media.</li> <li>• Job security will be enhanced by participating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees will guide the development of the program through an advisory group.</li> <li>• Community agencies will be willing to help as partners.</li> <li>• A need in the community will be met.</li> <li>• New skills will be developed.</li> <li>• A good time will be had by all.</li> <li>• People will feel better at work.</li> <li>• Employees will be recognized for their volunteer work.</li> <li>• Upcoming events and program updates will be included in the company's newsletter.</li> <li>• The program will be evaluated to improve and enhance its impact on employees, the community, and the workplace.</li> </ul>
COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program will be sponsored and/or utilize employee volunteers.</li> <li>• The program will be well received by the target group.</li> <li>• A client group will receive better service.</li> <li>• The company and its employees will be appropriately recognized.</li> <li>• An evaluation will be conducted showing cost/benefit and outcome.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program will be sponsored and/or utilize employee volunteers.</li> <li>• The program will be well received by the target group.</li> <li>• A client group will receive better service.</li> <li>• The company and its employees will be appropriately recognized.</li> <li>• An evaluation will be conducted showing cost/benefit and outcome.</li> </ul>

Adapted from Seel, 1995b



formative evaluations or benchmarks, summative evaluations or milestones, and critical evaluations assessing equality of partnerships and changes in power;

- The expectations of constituents and/or stakeholders need to be balanced against what is achievable given the resources of the council and its membership.

Additionally, although assumptions about the scope and scale of the impacts should be stated ahead of time, there should be an acknowledgment that the impact that happens may not be what was planned for.

It must be understood also that very little accepted research exists to prove such intangible workplace impacts (often called "benefits") such as creating "healthier communities," improving relations with community/government, improving employee morale, attracting better employees, or improving employee retention.

#### PRIMARY TECHNIQUES USED TO CREATE IMPACT

Creating a meaningful and valued impact in the community is a goal and a challenge a WVC and its members must address. Foremost in achieving this goal is communication. A WVC depends upon constant and ongoing constituent and stakeholder feedback to evaluate past activities and partnerships and determine the best strategies to implement given existing and emergent community needs. It must ensure that the outcomes are widespread and positive for everyone involved, and establish a foundation for future activities.

There are many approaches that a WVC can take to create real impact in the community, on the volunteers from the workplace, and on the company or workplace itself. The Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council (CWVC), for example, has developed a range of strategies and services that enhance each member's ability to encourage and enable volunteer activities. These strategies and services include (Seel, 1995a):

- **Agency Awareness and/or Recruitment Fairs.** A promotional tool used to recruit and/or recognize employee volunteers.

- **Professional Development Series.** A planned series of workshops or lectures designed to meet specific constituent needs such as flex-time policies, project selection criteria, partnership strategies, etc.

- **Consulting.** One-to-one consultations with members including customized or general research into relevant issues, trends, topics, etc., to meet constituent needs; support to develop an employee or corporate volunteer program; recruitment and referral services; partner matching and evaluation; and research and support in writing policy for matching grants, employee or corporate volunteer programs, partnerships, etc.

- **Promotion of Member Activities to Media.** Promoting the impact and activities of the CWVC and its members through media contacts.

- **Library.** Collecting examples of corporate programs, statistics, issues papers, etc., from across North America.

- **Weekly Volunteer Opportunities.** This publication includes all new volunteer opportunities in Calgary for the week. The format is suitable for posting on employee bulletin boards in the workplace.

- **Institutes and Symposia.** Open sessions designed to bring stakeholders and constituents together. These activities build alliances and market and raise awareness in the community about the CWVC.

- **Facilitate Gifts-In-Kind.** The coordination of large gift-in-kind donations to the non-profit sector in the community.

Strategies to promote WVCs' activities and the activities of its members and enhance the capacity of volunteer administrators can include hiring a part-time staff consultant to work with members and the community and volunteer management courses. A 3 1/2 day entry-level



course in volunteer management was developed by the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg and brought to Calgary by the CWVC. The course trains more than 70 new and experienced volunteer administrators per year in the fundamentals of volunteer management. Volunteer administrators in non-profit agencies have become important participants in nearly every successful partnership.

The CWVC also identified an issue that would be a focus area: youth at risk. Working with non-profit agencies addressing this issue, the CWVC established a number of partnerships for itself and its members.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

Being able to provide high quality services and measurable impact is a challenge especially since many councils are under-resourced. Quality is a subjective measure requiring constant definition by the stakeholders and constituents of the council. For example, consider the different quality needs of a manufacturing company, a major foundation, a hospital, and a counseling agency. Given that a WVC provides products, such as manuals or written materials, and services, such as consulting in order to promote the growth of sound volunteer programs in workplaces, quality assurance becomes a significant issue. Above and beyond being experts in volunteer management, volunteer administrators in community non-profit organizations must understand the basics of a quality assurance program. This will make them tremendous resources to a partnership project between the organization and the corporate workplace.

Each constituent or stakeholder of a WVC has a different perspective on quality depending upon what it is receiving or expecting from the council. Successful WVCs have shown how attention to service and quality requirements support long-term success. An effective approach for WVC managers and staff to follow is to produce goods and services in the style with which their membership are famil-

iar. If member corporations, for example, use a particular style in producing brochures, the WVC can begin its quality initiative by working to produce materials and services that have a similar look and feel.

A community partnership must be able to demonstrate an impact on the WVC member's quality program. For example, Flint Canada, Inc., an oil field services company, wanted demonstrable gains in two areas of their quality initiative through community volunteer-based partnerships: team work and communications. The CWVC and the author were able to support partnerships with local non-profit agencies and their volunteer administrators that produced measurable gains in each area.

Being able to predict a member's quality needs comes with experience. The list below (adapted from Astbury, 1994) outlines some basic elements of a quality program.

- Ongoing communication with members about quality, services, and products.
- A clear WVC mission and explicit values.
- Long-term planning as well as short-term planning.
- Support of senior management.
- Strategies to address quality.
- Objectives that address quality.
- Knowing who the constituents and stakeholders are.
- Mechanisms in place to find out what constituents and stakeholders want.
- Clarity about roles and responsibilities for members and support staff.
- Clear descriptions of how WVC activities are conducted.
- Measurable standards for key services and products.
- Clear agreements with members about the service they are to receive.
- In place monitoring processes.
- Complaints procedure used positively.
- Corrective action taken if standards slip.

- Staff trained, supported, and motivated to meet their responsibilities.
- Regular reviews.

## CONCLUSION

Workplace volunteer councils exist in various forms across North America. Through them increasing numbers of partnerships are forming to mobilize volunteers from the workplace. By understanding how a WVC operates and recognizing the challenges it faces, volunteer administrators can plan to proactively support or even initiate a council in their own communities. By sharing crucial volunteer management information with constituents of the WVC, professionals in the field of volunteer administration can help ensure that the evolving workplace volunteer programs meet the highest standards of practice. By engaging their local WVC directly, volunteer administrators can begin a dialogue between their non-profit agencies and WVC members that can result in a partnership that mobilizes significant numbers of employee volunteers as well as other resources for their agencies.

The reality is that more and more people are spending increasing amounts of time at work. The WVC is an innovative approach to balancing work with volunteerism. A WVC does this by helping workplaces develop strategies such as flex-time that allow employees to take time off during the day to volunteer providing they make up the time at a later date. The WVC concept could evolve into one of the most important factors to ensure that volunteer administrators have the volunteers they need to provide core services to their clients and communities.

An active WVC will create the expectation in its members that volunteer administrators understand a great deal about the corporate workplace, its goals and processes. By working together, volunteer administrators, a WVC and its members, the community, and employees from a variety of workplaces can generate new and innovative partnerships based on

volunteerism that make real advances on issues facing communities throughout North America.

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