

TO: Mary Ann Lawson, CAVS
AAVS Membership Chairman

FROM: Ivan Scheier, Region VIII, AAVS

DATE: August 23, 1978

RE: Involving Local and State Volunteer Director Associations with AAVS.
A Position Paper.

A. RESOURCES

1. At the end of this memorandum I have attached a listing of specific resources used in its preparation for anyone else who might wish to examine them as background.
2. The thoughts expressed in this memo are based largely but not perfectly on these resources, plus other more general experience I have had in the volunteer leadership field.

B. ANALYSIS OF OVERALL SITUATION

- ✓ 1. AAVS is the only generic national membership association of professionals in the field of volunteer administration and leadership.
2. As such, it has a unique role to fulfill in volunteerism.
3. This role demands that AAVS be strong and representative now, or in the nearest possible future. This is because vital issues affecting the future of volunteer leadership are in process of decision now. In our increasingly dynamic field, time and tide can quickly pass us by these days.
4. AAVS is not sufficiently strong and representative today. A 1975 census sample, estimated the total number of Volunteer Directors in the United States as 60,000 - 70,000. Hat Naylor's rich experience agreed with that estimate at that time. If we assume AAVS interest in a Canadian constituency, and moderate growth in both U.S. and Canada since 1975, we are now talking about 70 - 80,000 Volunteer Directors today, and maybe more.
- ✓ AAVS has 1% or less of its total defined constituency as members.

I have never heard of a national professional association doing a satisfactory national job with less than 15-20% of its total constituency. The more successful ones range from 50-90%.

4. AAVS has made some highly significant decisions in the past three or four years. Its membership can take satisfaction in that, and some of its members may feel its time to stop for breath and take stock. In ordinary times, and out of internal organizational considerations, that might be so. But I strongly believe our field is so dynamic and changing today, that she/he who stands still, falls behind, and within a quite limited time, irrevocably so.

C. OPTIONS CURRENTLY OPEN TO AAVS

1. Take immediate effective steps decisively to increase its constituency.
2. Remain a relatively small, comfortable, personal organization, thus satisfying to much of its own membership; but relatively ineffective in serving its identified professional constituency on a nationally-impacting scale.
3. Succumb:
4. Collaborate far more closely, consolidate, or actually merge with another organization or organizations.

I personally reject Options #2 and #3 as highly undesirable from the viewpoint of our field as a whole. Option #4 may be unfeasible as an immediate prospect, and has its own dangers, at any rate.

I will therefore concentrate on Option #1.

D. OPTIONS FOR DECISIVELY AND RAPIDLY INCREASING AAVS CONSTITUENCY

1. Lower dues, and hope to attract an at least offsetting increase in membership thereby.
2. Get a good-sized grant.
3. Provide a more attractive service package for individual membership, within our present budget limitations. The Region VIII pilot test of an Employment Listing is a hopeful example of this. This includes a marketing plan.
4. Find some way to attract to some form of AAVS affiliation, the vast job

probably increasing majority of Volunteer Directors who today affiliate with state and local associations of volunteer directors, and not with AAVS. I personally endorse all four options as worthy of AAVS consideration and effort. However, #2 is something of a long-shot, so far as I know, #1 and #3 may take some time to mature in their positive effects. I favor #4 as the most immediately promising option.

E. FOCUS OF THIS POSITION PAPER, WITH BRIEF COMMENTS ON OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. This position paper will concentrate on incentives, services, "lures" if you will, which might prompt a local or statewide association of Volunteer Administrators to affiliate in some fashion with AAVS, and strengthen it, in return for services which it is within AAVS' capability to provide. I don't feel any competency to deal with any other matters, and will only comment on them briefly below.
2. Administrative arrangements necessary for a group membership or some other form of group affiliation, are well beyond my ken. I nevertheless believe they can be handled, especially in the competent hands of Mary Ann Lawson (see references). I particularly like her designated refunds idea.
3. I understand that the AAVS decision-making process is broadly democratic and deliberate. I am nevertheless alarmed at current indications that any significant group membership plan is unlikely to receive approval at or by the time of the 1978 annual meeting in Toronto. This means, probably, an approved plan no earlier than 1979, and effective implementation no earlier than 1980. As suggested previously in this paper, I strongly feel this is too late.

If by-laws changes are what's slowing it, and/or anxiety about dilution of individual membership, I would ask: Is there any way AAVS could move now to offer some form of mutually beneficial affiliation to these local or state associations, which

a. does not involve official by-laws changes (mainly re-interpretation

of present by-laws) or serious ones, and

- b. is different than and non-threatening to the status of individual membership??

F. THE CASE FOR EFFORTS TO AFFILIATE LOCAL OR STATE ASSOCIATIONS WITH AAVS

1. There are large numbers of Volunteer Administrators who are members of local or state professional associations, but not members of AAVS. In a previous memo (July 10 to Carol Moore) I laid out reasoning for assuming there are between 250 - 350 of these local or state associations with a total membership of between 8000 - 9000 Volunteer Administrators who are not members of AAVS. I've bounced these estimates off several people since, and the consensus is that they are conservative. See particularly reference number 9 on this. My inferences from this AVB survey are as follows! About 2/3 of the VAC's/VB's sampled reported having DOVIAs. Assuming about 300 VAC's/VB's in the US. and Canada, this would mean about 200 local associations. One would add to that, communities which do not have VAC's/VB's but might have a local association.
2. An attractive group or association membership or other affiliation in AAVS would:
 - a. Increase AAVS Constituency. Moreover, some of these associations seem particularly effective in local and state advocacy as well as having national advocacy potential.
 - b. Augment AAVS revenue base.
 - c. If done right, encourage individuals to transition from group to individual membership in AAVS. This can be done by emphasizing services which are:
 - (i) Somewhat distinct from individual AAVS membership services.
 - (ii) Where not distinct, "incipient", in the sense of giving a partial pilot appetite-whetting experience of valuable AAVS services.Point (c) is obviously an item needing intensive study. I can only say my impressions from contacts with AAVS individual members, and analogous NICOV experience, lead me to expect a net positive impact on individual AAVS membership.

G. INCENTIVES

As far as I can see, the first question is: What is it that (a) AAVS can provide (b) that local or state associations or their members need, and (c) which it is difficult or impossible for them to get anywhere else? If that question can't be answered affirmatively, AAVS by-law changes will be supernumerary, and administrative arrangements for group membership plans will have nothing significant to work on.

I've worked and talked with a large number of local association people in the past few years, and all the suggestions below came mainly from that experience. They sometimes conform to the results of the co-location surveys (Resources #6 and #7 listed later); other times they do not. Remember that most of these people were members of AAVS, AVB, or NICOV, not local association members.

Other introductory points: there will be differences at least of emphasis between the needs of local and statewide associations, and in either case, between those closely associated with a parallel resource center, and those who are not. For example, my impression is about a half to two thirds of the local associations have close working relationships with their local VAC/VB. There will be other conditions affecting needs; for example level of organization, size of community and membership, etc.

Fairly frequent common characteristics seem to be a great deal of pride in their bootstrap operation, and some feeling of independence from national organizations. To me, this suggests that in any relationship with such associations, the national organization should be low-profile.

Finally, like most associations of this type, relatively few people usually carry most of the ongoing work burdens, as volunteers.

I believe the natural variations in need between this large set of associations can be handled in a group membership or affiliation plan, in this way. This would

be a core set of services or privileges each affiliate would get. Beyond that they could select among a range of additional optional services. This would complicate bookkeeping, but the advantages of flexibility more than offset that, I believe.

Here then are some of the main incentives or attractions.

1. An association lending library, particularly if they are not closely associated with a VAC/VB. Many aren't, and many VAC/VB's don't have such libraries, anyhow. This speaks to the need for news, information and ideas from elsewhere. A related advantage is: members can review books, pamphlets, journals before deciding whether or not to purchase them.
2. In that connection, the group membership might also include 2 or 3 copies of VAL, Volunteer Administration and the AAVS Newsletter.
3. Speakers Bureau Clearinghouse. Many local or state associations really don't know how to go about getting the most appropriate speaker or consultant, within their budget, for their annual- or semi-annual workshop etc. (frequently the main event of the year for the association). They often don't even know how to connect to the NCVA trainer network, NICOV training capabilities (these two are in process of consolidation, and AAVS's own skillsbank, etc. Any such clearinghouse should be more than a simple listing of names, addresses, phone numbers. It should briefly describe the background and areas of expertise of each trainer/consultant listed, also provide addresses of phone numbers of groups who have recently used their services.
4. Related. local associations often really need the "workshop register" kind of services. What relatively nearby workshops are coming up; when; what do you know about the experience and track record of the convenors; how much, etc.? Building the workshop register would be vital for these clients and virtually everyone else in our field; people nowadays tend to have only precious few dollars to invest in workshop attendance. AAVS, AVB, AFV, AVAS and NICOV developed a prototype register collaboratively in Boulder. But its upkeep

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and suitable expansion requires more effort than we've presently been giving it.

- 10.00 5. Educational opportunities listings and information, of the type on which AAVS and NICOV are already collaborating.
- 25.00 6. AAVS evaluating their workshops for certification credit.
- 10.00 7. Opportunity for all local association members - via group affiliation, to amass certification credits, membership experience and progress on all other certification criteria, which can be retroactively applied if and when they become AAVS individual members.
- 10.00 8. Employment Listing bulletins for their local library, or similar information from AAVS office , on call.
- 9. Various benefits for members of local or state associations, related to purchase of individual AAVS memberships. These can include:
 - (a) Discount on purchase of their (first?) AAVS individual membership ~~how definite~~
 - or
 - (b) a portion of their individual membership fee returned to the local or state association's treasury.
- 10. Possibly, AAVS services in convening regional or national meetings for representatives of each local or state association to discuss common concerns, and exchange information or ideas. This could be done as a separate conference, or more likely as a special workshop day at AAVS national or regional conferences.
- 11. Possibly some discount on individually purchasable AAVS services, and/or conference fees. I'm not at all sure about this; the bookkeeping could be prohibitively difficult. Moreover, it gets us into worry over whether the individual is a bona fide member of the local or state association. Please note that most of the above incentives avoid that problem by delivering services to the association rather than to its individual members.
- 12. The possibility of AAVS endorsement of positions advocated by the local

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or state association, upon their request. I think there are many cases in which local or state associations feel it would be useful to have the additional prestige of national endorsement of their positions. AAVS would have to set up careful review processes and conditions for this; for example, a standing committee to review such requests, always joined by at least one individual AAVS member from the association requesting such endorsement.

25-00

13. Some opportunity for input to AAVS. Group affiliation or membership would make an association's President or other representative, eligible for election to an AAVS national advisory council of associations. For when they might convene, see point 10 above.

See 10

14. Possibly, AAVS publication of a special newsheet or newsletter specifically designed for exchange of information and ideas nationally among local and state associations. I think this service would tend to be valued highly. It's placed far down on the list only because it's a totally new service development for AAVS; moreover, it's an AAVS service which would ultimately make local and state associations need AAVS less. (?) not if included in reg. newsletter

insert in National
See notes

15. Management support services for organizations; such as fiscal accounting and control, legal/liability matters, etc. I think these are very important to many of them, but I am not sure this is classically an AAVS kind of service.

consultation
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arranged

16. Most state and local associations are highly motivated to increase their memberships. While most of the above services would be delivered to the associations as a whole, rather than their individual members, the net impact is to make local or state association membership far more attractive. This point should be emphasized in marketing the group affiliation plan. It is also to AAVS' advantage, provided the plan also encourages transition from local to AAVS individual membership (See for example, point 9 above).

H. RESOURCES

1. This began independently with Ivan Scheier's memorandum to Carol Moore, dated July 10, 1978, in which Carol Moore was asked whether or not she

wished Ivan to work on a group membership plan, on behalf of AAVS. The memo was entitled: "AAVS Group Membership: A First Analysis". Carol approved this as a suitable involvement for Ivan's AAVS work, setting certain conditions, and expectations on the work, (please see number 2 below).

2. Letter of August 1 from Carol Moore, AAVS President, to Ivan Scheier.
3. Copy of Carol Moore's late July, 1978 memo to the AAVS Board, entitled: "Group Membership, State and Local Organizations".
4. Discussions with Mary Ann Lawson, AAVS Membership Chairman, on August 11, 1978.
5. Copy of Mary Ann Lawson's August 10 letter to Phyllis Acker, especially the part about designated refunds to "back home" groups of Volunteer Directors.
6. Co-location membership survey summary tabulations: AAVS only.
7. Co-location membership survey summary tabulations: AAVS, AVB and NICOV combined (AVAS not included).
8. Copy of Rocky Wade's June 17, 1978 letter to Norma Johnson, plus "GAVA" notice.
9. Mary Ann Lawson's April 16, 1977 letter to Jack Maguire, reporting on an AVB survey of DOVIAs in the U.S. and Canada.
10. Proposed AAVS Restructure Plan, 2/10/78.