



Body of Knowledge in Volunteer Administration

The content of this document was developed by a task force of subject matter experts and approved by the CCVA Board of Directors on April 28, 2008.

A sub-set of this Body of Knowledge, appropriate for a 3-year practitioner and validated by a Practice Analysis Survey, serves as the basis for the Certified in Volunteer Administration (CVA) credential.

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Identifying a Body of Knowledge for the Profession

The practice of volunteer administration is inherently complex and diverse:

- Volunteers deliver and extend services in virtually every type of community setting -- arts and cultural organizations, prisons, places of worship, recreation centers, political parties, immigrant settlement houses, senior daycare facilities, parks and botanical gardens, police and fire departments, self-help groups, neighborhood clubs, and emergency response agencies, to name just a few.
- Volunteers are active in the full range of policy-making, direct service and advocacy roles – for example, the board room, the office, working one-to-one with the client, advocating in a court room, or making soup in a homeless shelter.
- Volunteering occurs in organizations with large numbers of paid staff, with a mix of volunteers and paid staff, and in organizations which are entirely comprised of volunteers with no paid workers.
- Individuals who practice volunteer administration come from very different backgrounds and careers, and may or may not have received formal or professional preparation for their specific role of leading volunteers.
- Individuals who practice volunteer administration may be paid, or be volunteers themselves. They may do it as their full-time responsibility, on a part-time basis, or as one of several “hats” they wear.
- Individuals who practice volunteer administration do so at the local, regional, state/provincial, national/federal, and international levels.
- Individuals who practice volunteer administration use a wide variety of job titles – volunteer coordinator, manager of volunteers, volunteer resource manager, community outreach coordinator, team leader, chairperson, coach, board member, project manager, event coordinator, etc. *(For the purposes of this document we have chosen to use the term “Administrator of Volunteers” to refer to anyone who has responsibility for mobilizing and supporting volunteer involvement.)*

Despite this extensive variety, breadth and depth of activity, there is a set of common elements and core competencies which forms the foundation for effective volunteer administration. The CCVA Body of Knowledge speaks to the full scope of practice -- not to a small segment of the profession. It aims high, and offers a comprehensive look at the dimensions of sound practice. Our intent is to provide a document which:

- helps new practitioners understand their management and leadership role
- offers more experienced administrators guidance about their possible professional development trail

- assists executives and top management in supporting and strengthening the function of volunteer administration within their organizations
- provides educators with a tool for ensuring curriculum development consistent with real-world practice

Volunteers are a unique human resource for accomplishing organizational missions, healthy communities, and social change. Skilled and competent leadership based on the CCVA Body of Knowledge ensures that results and impact are achieved, and that the spirit of volunteering is sustained.

CCVA Core Competencies

Five core competencies serve as a foundation for the profession of volunteer administration, regardless of where or how it is practiced:

Ethics	The ability to act in accordance with professional principles.
Organizational Management	The ability to design and implement policies, processes and structures to align volunteer involvement with the mission and vision of the organization.
Human Resource Management	The ability to successfully engage, train and support volunteers in a systematic and intentional way.
Accountability	The ability to collect relevant data and to engage in meaningful monitoring, evaluation and reporting to stakeholders.
Leadership and Advocacy	The ability to advance individual, organizational and community goals, advocating for effective volunteer involvement inside of the organization and in the broader community it serves, through the investment of personal integrity, skills and attitudes.

The following pages identify specific performance expectations for competent volunteer administration in each of the five core competency areas.

Ethics: The ability to act in accordance with professional principles.

1. Understand and commit to CCVA core values and ethical principles for volunteer administration.
2. Recognize the need to honor professional ethics over personal values in fulfilling the role of Administrator of Volunteers.
3. Apply the principles of professional ethics to all aspects of volunteer management.
4. Practice ethical decision-making when confronted with situations involving clients, customers or service recipients, volunteers, and staff who supervise them.
5. Assist beginning practitioners, staff supervisors or leadership volunteers with resolution of ethical dilemmas involving volunteers.

Organizational Management: The ability to design and implement policies, processes and structures to align volunteer involvement with the mission and vision of the organization.

A. Strategy

1. Apply the concepts of strategic planning as they relate to volunteer involvement.
2. Participate in the development of a vision, mission and goals of the organization.
3. Integrate volunteer activity to achieve organizational vision, mission, goals and priorities.
4. Solve organizational problems by deploying volunteers creatively.
5. Collaborate broadly within the organization on projects of mutual interest, seeking to develop strategic internal relationships.
6. Understand and apply effective change management.

B. Operations

1. Apply the principles of operational planning in the design and delivery of volunteer activities.
2. Recognize the culture and norms of the organization in the design of programs and projects.
3. Develop and revise policies and procedures that reflect best practice in the management of volunteers.
4. Apply the concepts and tools of project management.

Human Resource Management: The ability to successfully engage, train and support volunteers in a systematic and intentional way.

A. Staffing

1. Collaborate with management and program staff to design volunteer positions that are mission driven, satisfy agency needs and appeal to potential volunteers.
2. Market the agency, the needs of the client, and volunteer opportunities to build awareness, both internally and externally.
3. Recruit and engage volunteers for assignments that match their skills, interests, abilities and time availability.
4. Interview, screen, and assign volunteers within the organization
5. Design and implement orientation and training to meet the needs of volunteers and staff supervisors.

B. Support

1. Direct and coach the effective supervision of volunteer activity.
2. Apply the principles of problem solving and conflict resolution management.
3. Solicit and manage volunteer input and feedback.
4. Apply discipline and dismissal procedures that are fair and equitable.
5. Apply the concepts of team building and group process.
6. Apply the principles of motivation to acknowledge and reward volunteers and their staff partners
7. Plan and lead effective meetings.

Accountability: The ability to collect relevant data and to engage in meaningful monitoring, evaluation and reporting to stakeholders.

A. Fiscal Management

1. Make fiscally responsible decisions related to budgeting, purchasing and staffing.
2. Comply with sound business practices, organizational policy, and relevant jurisdictional legislation related to fundraising and organizational assets.
3. Apply the principles of effective resource management to maximize efficiencies.

B. Data Management

1. Comply with all relevant employment, safety and human rights legislation when collecting data.
2. Adhere to legal requirements, regulatory requirements and best practices regarding confidentiality and privacy of record keeping, data storage and reporting.
3. Collect, analyze and disseminate information about volunteer activity and program to appropriate stakeholders.

C. Evaluation and Outcome Measurement

1. Develop appropriate tools and processes to measure the impact of volunteer involvement.
2. Design and implement a volunteer performance appraisal process.
3. Develop feedback mechanisms to inform volunteers of the results of their activity.

D. Risk Management

1. Understand general legal concepts and comply with specific laws relevant to volunteers and volunteer-based organizations.
2. Design and implement volunteer risk management policy, procedures and tools consistent with the organization's risk management program.

E. Continuous Improvement

1. Apply the concepts of continuous improvement to maximize the impact of volunteer involvement and ensure a positive experience for volunteers.
2. Align improvement initiatives with those of the organization.
3. Apply the results of evaluation to improve future volunteer activity.

Leadership and Advocacy: The investment of personal integrity, skills and attitudes to advance individual, organizational and community goals advocating for effective volunteer involvement inside of the organization and in the broader community it serves.

A. Organizational and Community Engagement

1. Articulate and sustain a vision for excellence in volunteer involvement.
2. Create a climate of mutual respect and inclusion, recognizing diversity.
3. Engage volunteers in decision making, listening carefully to the opinions and concerns of others.
4. Commit to coaching/mentoring others, acting as a role model of superior performance.

5. Share resources and responsibility for moving projects forward.
6. Implement activities that serve the community beyond the walls of the organization.
7. Develop strategic alliances with other organizations to meet shared community needs.

B. Professional Development

1. Develop and implement a focused self improvement plan with goals, action steps and timelines, based on a self-assessment.
2. Participate in formal and informal learning opportunities, integrating learning for personal mastery and program improvement.
3. Seek professional credentials.
4. Design and deliver professional development for peers and colleagues in volunteer administration.

C. Advocacy

1. Advocate through appropriate channels for adequate resources (human, technical and financial) to support volunteer behavior.
2. Develop and implement appropriate advocacy strategies to influence decisions and actions related to positive and effective volunteer involvement within the organization.
3. Develop and implement appropriate advocacy strategies to positively influence the community's attitudes and behavior related to volunteering.
4. Participate in individual and group activities to advocate for the profession of volunteer administration.