



January 2006

Greetings!

We are pleased to bring you the January edition of the VANNO Voice! your link to news and resources for Virginia's nonprofit sector! We encourage you to forward this valuable information to your colleagues, both inside your organization and throughout your community. Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement of specific ways VANNO members can save time and money!

VANNO Needs Assessment Survey in Progress

If you haven't already done so, please click [here](#) to complete our very brief online survey. Your response will help determine what types of services and benefits VANNO should offer to meet your needs.

Grant Proposal Writing Workshop

When: JANUARY 17-19, 2006

Where: VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY, RICHMOND

Fee: \$595

Conducted by the Grant Training Center in Washington, DC, this intensive three-day grant proposal workshop is geared for: 1) those who wish to strengthen their grant writing skills and 2) beginners who wish to acquire and master the techniques of preparing, writing and winning proposals from various funding agencies.

The center of attention is on how to effectively tell the story that leads to funding, be it for the researcher, educator or the nonprofit professional. By focusing on one topic per session, participants receive in-depth training that relates to their specific grant needs. The ultimate goal of the workshop is for each participant to successfully begin researching and writing his/her grant.

Participants will learn how to:

- Set and determine funding priorities;
- Comprehend the diversity of the grant funding community;

- Research and identify potential funding sources;
- Create the right fit with the funding agency;
- Address the guidelines of proposals;
- Identify and effectively write the key elements of a proposal;
- Integrate each component of the grant into the final product;
- Develop focused and realistic budgets;
- Package professional grants submissions;
- Initiate contact, receive feedback and follow-up with funding agencies.

Participants will receive:

- The Professional Grant Development Certificate;
- Manual on effective academic and nonprofit grant research and writing;
- CD containing sample winning proposals from various donors, useful websites, bibliography and guidelines for federal, foundation and regional support.

[Click here to register online...](#)

Workshop on Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

When: January 24, 1:00 until 5:00

Where: Rappahannock Public Library

Sponsored by: The Rappahannock Nonprofit Center

Jill Skelton, Director of the Piedmont Volunteer Center will lead the four-hour workshop. The workshop will discuss the nature of volunteering, present a profile of today's volunteers, consider what motivates people to volunteer and assess the benefits of volunteering to both the community and to individuals. It will also look at the characteristics of successful volunteer programs, focusing on the development of recruitment strategies and the effective incorporation of volunteers as valuable members of participant organizations.

The fee for this workshop is a voluntary contribution based on the annual budget of your organization, ranging from \$20 to \$100 - to register, email Bridget Chisholm at info@rnpc.org or phone 540.987.8011. Please note that if you are unable to afford the voluntary contribution do not let that deter you from attending the workshop. All will be welcome regardless of ability to donate; however, seating is limited so please register as soon as possible.

NOTE: A second workshop series in 2006 will be training in Quickbooks Pro for Nonprofits. It will take place the last four Thursdays in March. RNPC is working with Lord Fairfax Community College to bring this workshop to the county. Other workshops are in the pre-planning stages such as strategic planning, board best practices and public speaking. Stay tuned for more details.

2006 Fellowship Program from New Voices

The New Voices National Fellowship Program is a capacity-building and leadership development grant program that assists nonprofit organizations and professionals entering fields related to human rights social justice. Official sponsored program areas include international human rights, women's rights, reproductive rights, racial justice, HIV/AIDS and migrant and refugee rights. We encourage applicants to review our website for further explanation and description.

New Voices was developed to address the following problems:

- the scarcity of substantive jobs for talented professionals at the beginning stages of their careers in the sponsored program areas;
- the need for creating additional venues through which new perspectives and innovative approaches can be incorporated into an organization's work;
- the lack of resources and systems within small nonprofit organizations to enable them to take full advantage of the contributions offered by new talent; and
- the need for diversification of leadership at all levels of the nonprofit community.

To address these needs, New Voices helps community-based and nonprofit organizations to bring innovative, fresh talent to their staffs and to cultivate and strengthen the leadership potential of these "new voices." New Voices Fellows are offered financial assistance, training, and other opportunities for personal and professional development. Their host organizations are provided salary-support grants. *The goal of the program is to help both the host organization and the Fellow realize their full potential.*

The application deadline for is February 13, 2006. Questions should be directed to Ken Williams at kwilliam@aed.org or 202.884.8972.

For further information...

Be Sure to Count All Volunteers

Are you keeping track of all the volunteer support your organization receives? Are you sure? In the course of a year, it is common for agencies to benefit from the donated services of a wide range of people, yet only those formally designated as "volunteers" are reflected in the reports of the volunteer program. This is a missed opportunity in a number of ways.

There may be people who come to your organization in a roundabout way, bypassing the procedures of the volunteer services office. There are many examples, including:

- Graduate students doing professional internships. Often the contact is made by the university program directly to the relevant department head (social work, nursing, etc.). Because these

students are just about fully trained and are called "interns," welcoming them is seen as a professional obligation or courtesy by the staff. In fact, it may seem insulting or irrelevant to treat them as volunteers.

- Groups who help the organization collectively, perhaps for one visit a year such as caroling, garden clean-up, or running a holiday party. Here the contact may come through an activity or therapy office, or even directly through administration.
- Clergy who visit under various types of chaplaincy programs. These visits frequently go beyond an occasional friendly chat. They may be regularly scheduled and the clergy person may, in turn, recruit others from a congregation to provide additional personal services. This is most often viewed as service to the client, rather than as service to the organization.
- Children of staff and board members. It is not uncommon for an agency to become surrogate child care, particularly for teenagers. "Helping out" after school or during long school holidays usually means coming in to the office with mom or dad and doing a variety of odd, generally menial, jobs. Even more frequent is bringing along one's family members (of any age) to help at a special event.
- Advisors or consultants with special expertise who donate their professional services, generally directly to the board of directors or to the executive staff.

Most organizations want to demonstrate that intangible called "community support." If the services contributed by such special category volunteers are continually under-reported, you aren't providing a true picture of how many citizens prove through their actions that they care about your work. Funding sources, politicians, and other social leaders ought to be shown the full scope of your community engagement. Further, everyone who spends time, even briefly, in your organization becomes a potential ambassador for you. This is a chance to orient and educate ever-widening spheres of influence, as different people come and go. Why not adapt existing volunteer orientation programs to interns, groups, consultants, or anyone else needing to be brought up to speed on the mission, context, and services of your organization? In light of today's risk management paranoia, it is important to ask anyone who comes into contact with clients to complete some sort of application form or at least a sign-in sheet, so that you have a record of who is in your building. There may even be a need for background checks. Given the recent publicity about clergy-related child abuse, even religious leaders ought to be cleared and approved.

All contributed work deserves thanks. Whether for one-time service or hundreds of hours, members of the community ought to be properly acknowledged by the organization in a formal way. It doesn't matter whether you set more places at the annual volunteer luncheon (though that might be nice), but anyone who has helped throughout the year ought to feel appreciated. In turn, they will have positive feelings about your organization and pass along that attitude to others they know. Here's a final note about all those relatives of staff and volunteers who are dragged into helping at a special event. Slap a button on them that says "official

volunteer," get their names, and give them some choice as to what they'd like to do (rather than being a go-fer for their relative). Afterwards, say thank you to them. You might end up recruiting some genuinely willing volunteers!

Source: Energize, Inc., <http://www.energizeinc.com/>

Fundraise with Groundspring / Network for Good

In addition to providing affordable, easy to use online fundraising and emailing services, [Groundspring/Network for Good](#) also provides free educational resources to nonprofits. The online Learning Center is a collection of materials designed to help nonprofits get the most out of their presence on the Internet, including a variety of case studies showing how nonprofits have effectively used the internet to fulfill their missions.

[Click here to access the Online Fundraising Handbook free of charge...](#)

Picking the Right Auditor

The first step for an organization in getting its money's worth from an auditor is to make sure it hires the right one. In her book *All the Way to the Bank: Smart Nonprofit Money Management*, published by the Larson Allen Public Service Group, Susan Kenny Stevens offers four steps to find the right firm or individual for the job.

- Narrow the field. Develop a list of several reputable CPS firms that have experience providing financial services to other nonprofit organizations. To narrow the list, find firms that have experience with organizations in your specific field.
- Interview potential firms. After you have received proposals, set up interviews with the firms you believe will provide your organization with the desired results. Find out about the individual who will oversee and perform the audit. Is that person willing and able to assist with questions that come up during the rest of the year?
- Evaluate costs. Keep in mind that you often get what you pay for, so don't automatically choose the lowest bid. A pro bono audit may be free but often is not timely. It may also raise concerns with funders if the accountant performing the audit does not understand nonprofit issues.
- Put the agreement in writing. Ask for an engagement letter that details the following:
 1. The work they are agreeing to perform,
 2. The price of their services, and
 3. Any other items agreed on, such as work may need to complete before the audit can begin.

Source: *NonProfit Times Weekly*, newsletter@nptimes.com

U.S. Senate Passes Charitable Reform Bill

The United States Senate has passed charitable reform legislation in the form of Tax Relief Act of 2005 by a vote of 64-33. It's a good news/bad news scenario for charities. The House of Representatives is considering its own legislation.

The good news is that the legislation includes provisions for tax deduction for non-itemizers and changes to allow IRA rollovers to nonprofits. The bad news is changes to how non-cash gifts will be valued, how charities account for property received and the receipting process. The legislation includes a new deduction for taxpayers who donate more than \$210 during a year, making it available to everyone whether or not they itemize their deductions. However, taxpayers who itemize deductions would lose some of their current advantage and be required to exceed a new \$210 floor to get a tax break.

The Nonprofit Times reports that a loose coalition of nearly 50 nonprofit organizations is lobbying Congressional leaders to drop the Universal Charitable Deduction in the Senate version of the tax reconciliation bill to be considered when Congress reconvenes this month, differing from the position of Independent Sector, which has supported the measure. Fearing that Americans who itemize their income taxes might give less as a result of a smaller tax incentive, approximately 50 organizations have signed a letter that will be sent to members of the House Ways & Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee before a vote is taken.

[Click here to read more details...](#)

Four Cool Ideas for Recruiting New Board Members

1. Form a "One-Meeting Nominating Committee." Draw up a list of twenty well-connected people of the sort you would want on the board but who you suspect wouldn't join, (but who might know someone who would be a good board member.) Call those twenty people and ask them to come to a one-meeting committee over lunch. Tell them that at the lunch they'll be told more about the organization and what it's looking for in board members. At the end of lunch they'll be asked simply for the name of one person they think would be a good board member. The day after the lunch call up each of the nominees and begin by explaining who nominated them.
2. Take out a "Help Wanted - Volunteer Board Member" ad in the neighborhood newsletter or alumni newsletter of a local college. Example: "HELP SOUTH PARK... We're looking for a few talented and conscientious volunteer board members to help us guide our childcare, teen and senior programs into the next century. If you can contribute one evening a month and have skills or contacts in accounting, publicity or special event fundraising, call Sister Mary Margaret at xxx.xxxx to find out more about whether this volunteer opportunity is right for you. We're a..."
3. Ask the executive director or the volunteer coordinator if there are two or three hands-on volunteers who would make good board members. Hands-on volunteers, such as support group facilitators,

practical life support volunteers, meal preparers, weekend tree-planters, classroom aides and others bring both demonstrated commitment AND an intimate knowledge of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. Volunteers, donors and clients should be the first place you look. You don't have to "sell" the agency - they know it already!

4. Pick four local organizations where you don't know anyone, but you'd like to (examples: NAACP, Japanese American Citizens League, Accountants for the Public Interest). Tip: Your [local Yahoo site](#) is a good place to look for lists under "Community." Ask each officer to call one of the four local organizations and ask to have coffee with the board president or the executive director. Over coffee suggest that your two organizations recommend "retiring" board members to each other as a way of establishing organizational links and strengthening ties among communities.

Source: Board Café e-newsletter, www.boardcafe.org

Looking for Sample Bylaws?

The Foundation Center website has two sample bylaw documents, one for an organization with members, and one without members. This is a very good starting place when developing a new version or revising an old one. Once drafted, have them reviewed by a lawyer who is familiar with nonprofit law.

[Learn more...](#)

Contact Information

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