

VANNO Voice

January 7, 2009

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Happy New Year! We are pleased to bring you the January edition of the VANNO Voice – your link to news and resources for Virginia’s nonprofit sector!

VANNO Voice is arriving a little early this month as we gear up to follow the activity of the 2009 General Assembly, which convenes on January 14. Throughout the session, we will be keeping you informed about relevant legislation through our Legislative Alerts.

We encourage you to forward this valuable information to your colleagues, both inside your organization and throughout your community. You also can read past issues on the VANNO website at www.vanno.org

VANNO Updates

Visit VANNO’s website at www.vanno.org to access “Recommendations to the Presidential Transition Team” submitted by the National Council of Nonprofits, which collectively represents VANNO and the other 40 state associations at the federal level. Members of VANNO are automatically members of the National Council of Nonprofits. Members of the President-Elect’s Transition Team recently asked the National Council of Nonprofits for almost immediate input on four topics. State nonprofit associations from across American, including VANNO, helped the National Council develop, review, and refine this package in just four business days.

The package responds to the Transition Team’s request for a one-page summary about specific items, plus it adds several one-page explanations to provide important background. Offering 27 specific recommendations, the package as a whole serves as a great resource for several issues and shows how we can tell our story. This effort showcases how when Virginia’s nonprofits come together through VANNO and then through the National Council of Nonprofits, we amplify the voices of nonprofits and the people they serve. If your organization is not yet a VANNO member . . . [join now!](#)

Still time to Register for VANNO's “Just in Time”

Nonprofits

- Nominations Open for Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards
- Hampton Roads Institute for Nonprofit Leadership Conference
- Seventh Annual Government and Public Service Job Fair February 20 at the University of Richmond
- From principle to Practice...Making the 501(h) Election

Conference Call Seminar Series for Nonprofit Leaders

Responding to the current economic downturn, VANNO has scheduled a special series of conference call seminars with leading consultants across the state. These one-hour seminars will touch on some of the most urgent issues facing many nonprofits and provide new tools, techniques and ideas for managing your organization through a challenging time. These workshops are just \$25 per workshop for members; \$35 per workshop for non members.

[Click here](#) to register online. Read the full workshop [descriptions here](#).

Thursday, January 8 – 3:30pm

Forming a Powerful Fundraising Partnership with Your Board
Presented by: Katherine Morrison, Morrison Nonprofit Transitions

Tuesday, January 13 -- 3:30pm

Creating & Leveraging Corporate Strategic Alliances
Presented by: Kristy Hall, Universal Synergy Group, LLC

Thursday, January 15 – 12noon

Executive Leadership in Uncertain Times
Presented by: Jane S. Kornblut, M. Ed., Third Sector Services, LLC

Wednesday, January 21 – 3:30pm

Strategic Planning in Challenging Times
Presented by: Gail Merridew, Nonprofit Management Solutions

Tuesday, January 27 – 12 noon

Successful Fundraising in Tough Economic Times
Presented by: Keith Curtis, President & CEO, and Wendy McGrady, Vice President, The Curtis Group

Thursday, January 29 – 3:30pm

Still Money for Good Projects but You Can't Rush the Process
Presented by: Brownie Hamilton, Ph.D, The Hamilton Group

Tuesday, February 3 – 3:30pm

Operating Efficiently - How to Make the Most of What You Already Have

Presented by: Deborah Coleman, The Coleman Group, LLC.

Thursday, February 5 – 12 noon

Brand: The Single Most Important Word for Every Nonprofit
Presented by Burton Glass, Hairpin Communications

Tuesday, February 10 – 3:30pm

Sustainability Strategies for Challenging Times

Presented by: Katherine Morrison, Morrison Nonprofit
Transitions, and Katherine Gekker, Strategic Solutions

VANNO in the News

["Ensuring We All Get What We Need,"](#) *Commonwealth Conversations*, December 2008. VANNO makes the case to the statewide audience of public policy makers for continued support of Virginia's nonprofits.
<http://commonwealthconversations.com/inside>

VANNO to Represent Nonprofit Sector at Public State Budget Hearings

This month, VANNO will be presenting testimony on behalf of Virginia's nonprofit sector at the Virginia House Appropriations and State Senate Finance Committees public hearings in early January. The joint committees will be addressing the amendments to the 2008-2010 state budget and the impact of the current economic downturn. If you are interested joining VANNO in support of the nonprofit community, write to info@vanno.org. Those wishing to speak on behalf of their own organizations may register at each hearing site no earlier than one hour prior to the start of the hearing. For more information, go to the [VANNO](#) website.

Alexandria

Thursday, January 8, 2009 at 10 am

Northern Virginia Community College – Rachel M.
Schlesinger Concert Hall

Newport News

Thursday, January 8, 2009 at 12 noon

Christopher Newport University – Performing Arts Center

Charlottesville

Thursday, January 8, 2009 at 12 noon

Piedmont Virginia Community College
V. Earl Dickenson Humanities and Fine Arts Building

Lynchburg

Friday, January 9, 2009 at 12 noon

Central Virginia Community College

Richmond

Monday, January 19 at 1 pm

General Assembly Building, House Room

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Final 2008 Forms 990 and 990-EZ Available

The 2008 Forms 990 and 990-EZ [information returns for tax-exempt organizations](#) are now finalized, along with schedules and instructions for filing in 2009.

[StayExempt.org](#), which provides online IRS educational resources for tax-exempt organizations, now features five [new online mini-courses](#) on the redesigned Form 990.

These mini-courses provide information on preparing to file the new Form 990 as well as a walk-through of the entire form and frequently used schedules.

Retirement Plans for Public Schools and Exempt Organizations Get Extension on Time to Complete Written Plans

The IRS has issued a notice announcing relief for certain retirement plans that do not have a written plan in place by January 1, 2009. The new guidance is for retirement plans – referred to as 403(b) plans -- covering employees at public schools, colleges and universities, and other tax exempt organizations. The IRS will not treat a 403(b) plan as failing to satisfy the requirements and the final regulations during the 2009 calendar year, provided that: (1) on or before December 31, 2009, the sponsor of the plan has adopted a written § 403(b) plan that is intended to satisfy the requirements of § 403(b) (including the final regulations) effective as of January 1, 2009; (2) during 2009, the sponsor operates the plan in accordance with a reasonable interpretation of § 403(b), taking into account the final regulations; and (3) before the end of 2009, the sponsor makes its best efforts to retroactively correct any operational failure during the 2009 calendar year to conform to the terms of the written § 403(b) plan.

This extension will give plan sponsors additional time to put their plan documents in place. Read more by downloading this [IRS notice](#).

Public Policy Impacting Nonprofits

Serve America Act Gains Momentum for Quick Action in Next Congress

The Act, sponsored by Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Orin Hatch (R-UT), proposes a Commission on Cross-Sector Solutions that would study ways in which the federal government and businesses can more effectively collaborate with nonprofits and foundations to address pressing challenges, and would include study of nonprofit capacity building needs. A Volunteer Generation Fund program would award competitive matching grants to states and nonprofits to increase the availability and capacity of volunteers to address state priorities. The bill also authorizes many other new programs – service-learning for youth; a Community Solutions Funds Pilot Program to replicate or expand proven solutions to specific community challenges; several fellowship programs; a ServeAmerica Corps to promote clean energy, education, healthy futures, and use of skilled seniors; and a nationwide Call to Service Campaign. Read more about the [Serve America Act](#), and [learn more about VANNO's efforts](#) to support cross-sector collaboration with Virginia's elected officials.

GetReady for the 2009 General Assembly Session

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation recently launched "[Effective Advocacy at All Levels of Government](#)," a new online tool to help nonprofits more effectively engage in the public policy process. Developed by the [Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest](#), it is a plain language approach that includes sample strategic plans and case stories from a wide range of charities.

Training and Networking Opportunities

2009 Nonprofit Congress Registration Open: VANNO to Schedule Regional Town Hall Meetings Across Virginia

The 2009 Nonprofit Congress is coming up in just a few short months! From May 14-16, 2009, nonprofit leaders from across the country will gather in New Orleans to exchange knowledge, plan for action, and celebrate our collective strength. To learn more and register for this fantastic gathering, visit the National Council of Nonprofits [website](#). Need funding to attend? [Check out and download](#) a sample funding proposal to assist you in seeking grant funding.

In addition, VANNO will be planning and organizing a series of town hall meetings in March and April 2009 to coincide with the Nonprofit Congress. Stay tuned for more

information!

Earn a CVA – Certified in Volunteer Administration

Do you mobilize and manage volunteers? Are you looking for a way to strengthen your professional credibility? If so, now is the time to consider earning the CVA (Certified in Volunteer Administration) credential, originally developed by the Association for Volunteer Administration and now sponsored by the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration. The deadline for registering for the next cycle is March 1, 2009. Learn more at www.CVAcert.org

Year-End Fundraising Tools – Upcoming Idealware Seminars

Turn your attention to learning about the software that can help you raise money- maybe even in time for this year's appeal. Idealware has a great line up of online seminars about the software that can help your organization. VANNO members receive a discount for Idealware seminars (usually \$40 each). Learn more and register for the below seminars by [clicking here](#). Upcoming seminars:

[Choosing Broadcast Email Software](#) -- Wednesday, 1/7, 1:00 - 2:30 EST.

[Building An Effective Email List](#) -- Thursday, 1/8, 1:00 - 2:30 EST.

[How to Build or Edit a Website without Technical Skills](#) -- (Introduction to Content Management Systems) -- Thursday, 1/15, 1:00 - 2:30 EST.

[Considering Social Media for Your Organization](#) -- Wednesday, 1/21, 1:00 - 2:30 EST

[Choosing a Low Cost Constituent Database](#) -- Thursday, 1/22, 1:00 - 2:30 EST.

VANNO Services and Benefits

Looking to Save Money? Members of VANNO receive discounted benefits and services, some of which include:

- Affordable Directors & Officers Liability Insurance through Monitor Liability Managers,
- Easily accessible and affordable audio and web conferencing services through Ready Talk, and
- Discounted credit card processing services through Custom Credit Card Processing.

Visit VANNO's website today for more detail on our

[discount partners](#).

Looking for a Consultant or Vendor to meet your organization's needs? Visit VANNO's on-line [Yellow Pages](#) for a complete listing of our Corporate and Consulting Partners.

Resources and Opportunities

You Need It? Surplus Property Just Might Have It

Is your organization in desperate need of office furniture, chairs for a meeting or office equipment? Or how about a vehicle, refrigerator or storage shelves? You may be eligible to access these items and other surplus property through the **Virginia Office of Surplus Property Management**.

The Federal Surplus Property Program is available to "donee members" only. A donee member includes some qualified (tax-exempt) nonprofit organizations. The only cost to your organization is a service and handling fee. The cost for property is generally 10-35% of its original cost. A complete list of available property, including some with color pictures and descriptions, can be found on the [Surplus website](#). The website also has downloadable application forms. Once your application is approved, most property can be viewed in person at 2 convenient distribution centers located in Richmond or Wytheville (Southwest Virginia).

To find out if your organization is eligible to become a "donee", submit an application or contact our offices at statesurplus@dgs.virginia.gov or call 804-236-3662. Applications and other information are available online at <http://surplus.dgs.virginia.gov>.

IdeaEncore Network Set to Launch Online Resource for Nonprofits

IdeaEncore makes it easy for nonprofits to find what they need and to see (and even compare) the quality, content and style of the information they seek no matter where they are located or how small or large they may be by sharing plans, articles, templates and other resources. Unlike single-sector or functional-role focused online libraries, listserves, or broad internet searches, using IdeaEncore results in more relevant content being shared more broadly and more efficiently. IdeaEncore Network is planning to launch the public phase of its rollout in January. For more information, go to

www.IdeaEncore.com.

Announcements

Nominations Open for Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards

On behalf of Governor Tim Kaine, the Governor's Advisory Board on National and Community Service, Virginia Corps, and the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service are working together to recognize the significant contributions of Virginia citizens to the life and welfare of the Commonwealth and its people. In April during National Volunteer Service Week, awards to recognize these exceptional contributions will be made at a reception in Richmond. Awards will be presented to organizations, businesses, families, and individuals whose volunteer and community service efforts focus on building and strengthening the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For more information or to nominate a person or group, visit <http://www.vaservice.org/go/volunteer/award/>, call 1-800-638-3839 or e-mail info@vaservice.org. The nomination period ends at 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 2.

Hampton Roads Institute for Nonprofit Leadership Conference

The Hampton Roads Institute for Nonprofit Leadership Conference will be hosted VOLUNTEER Hampton Roads on February 6 in Norfolk in partnership with local foundations and leadership organizations. This conference brings the caliber of speakers and sessions offered at a national convention with the economy and convenience of a local symposium. The goal of the conference is to deliver knowledge and tools to assist nonprofits in better serving their organizations and community. Learn more and register by [clicking here](#)

Seventh Annual Government and Public Service Job Fair February 20 at the University of Richmond

Government and public interest legal employers are invited to participate in the **7th Annual Government and Public Interest Job Fair**, to be held at the University of Richmond campus on Friday, February 20, 2009. You will be able to interview first- and second-year law students from the University of Richmond, The College of William & Mary and Washington and Lee University for summer 2009 positions, and May 2009 graduates for entry-level positions. [Click here](#) for more information.

From Principle to Practice

From Principle to Practice: Making the 501(h)

Election The federal government, including Congress and the Internal Revenue Service, supports lobbying by 501(c)(3) nonprofits. Lobbying and nonpartisan voter engagement are not only legal, but essential to building high-impact organizations. People sometimes confuse the words "lobbying" and "advocacy." Lobbying is one form of advocacy, comprising efforts to influence specific legislation with legislators and their staff. Advocacy covers a much broader range of activities such as influencing executive branch actions to implement the laws and public education. One way of differentiating between the two terms is to understand that lobbying always involves advocacy but advocacy does not necessarily involve lobbying. There is no limitation on the amount of advocacy your organization can engage in except in the narrowly defined arena of lobbying. And lobbying activity is merely limited, not prohibited. The IRS has provided specific guidance on how an organization can go about measuring its lobbying activity to ensure it complies with IRS regulation. The easiest way is to take the 501(h) election, which requires organizations to limit their lobbying activity to a specific dollar amount based on the organization's exempt purpose expenditures. In other words, until the organization spends money, the activity is not measured as lobbying activity under the 501(h) election. The IRS provides further explanation in a [letter](#) it wrote to the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest

VANNO believes in the power of its growing and diverse membership that includes nonprofits throughout Virginia. VANNO makes available a wide range of benefits to Virginia's nonprofit sector including group purchasing discounts, technical assistance, news, research, and advocacy. If your organization is not a member, JOIN NOW at www.vanno.org!