



VANNO Voice

November 21, 2008

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Greetings! We are pleased to bring you the November 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. You can also read past issues on the VANNO website at www.vanno.org.

VANNO Updates

Virginia's Nonprofit Sector: An Economic Force In September, *Virginia's Nonprofit Sector: An Economic Force* was released detailing the significant fiscal impact of the nonprofit sector on Virginia's economy.

[Download the report](#)

The next information session and community dialogue on the report will be Thursday, November 20 from 9am-11am at the L. Douglas Wilder Building at VSU. Online registration is available at www.connectsouthside.org/rsvp. VANNO is committed to helping nonprofits effectively use the information in the report. If you are interested in having a workshop locally, please contact us at info@vanno.org.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Free! New Online Mini-Courses on Redesigned Form 990 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.

Public Policy Impacting Nonprofits

Public Hearings on Virginia Budget

Concerned about what the Governor's Budget Amendments mean for your nonprofit? The Virginia House Appropriations

- Volunteer Administration
 - Year-End Fundraising Tools - Upcoming Idealware Seminars
 - VANNO Member Benefit: Save Money with SunRX Partnership
 - VANNO Member Benefit: Save on MyBackgroundCheck.com
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- and Senate Finance Committees have scheduled a series of public hearings around the state to address the amendments to the 2008-2010 state budget. Those wishing to speak 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
- Nonprofit Policy Priorities for the New Federal Administration**
The Johns Hopkins Listening Post Project released their most recent survey and analysis on October 22, focused on the concerns and interests of the nation’s nonprofit sector. A top concern outlined in the survey was the impact of the economic crisis on the sector, along with the hope that the new federal administration will increase funding and grant opportunities, expand charitable giving tax deductions and reform of medical reimbursements. [Read more here.](#)
- Final Regulations Issued Implementing College Loan Forgiveness Provisions for Nonprofit Employees**
The Department of Education has published final regulations for the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 ([CCRAA](#)). Information about this program can be found at [www.ibrinfo.org](#). This Act provides for loan forgiveness for full time employees of “public service organizations,” including 501(c)(3) organizations, and was supported by VANNO in partnership with the National Council of Nonprofits. Nonprofit full-time employees (at least 30 hours a week) making monthly college loan repayments can count each month of nonprofit employment towards the 120 months of payments needed to

Evaluation
Effectively, Part II

- From Principle to Practice

qualify for forgiveness of the remaining loan balance, beginning with payments after October 1, 2007. The effective date applies to payments, and thus existing nonprofit employees with outstanding student loans of more than ten years future duration can benefit from this provision.

New Resource for Nonprofit Advocacy

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.

Best Practices Model: Richmond-Area Nonprofits To Develop Agenda for Mayor

There is currently an organized effort to design a "nonprofit agenda" to deliver to Richmond's new mayor. The report will identify the top priorities of the new administration from the perspective of the nonprofit sector. To learn more about this effort or how nonprofits in your area can pursue similar action, earning a seat at the table, contact VANNO at info@vanno.org

Training and Networking Opportunities

Early Registration Open for 2009 Nonprofit Congress

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. Early bird registration is now open, so start planning and budgeting now! To learn more and register for this fantastic gathering, visit the National Council of Nonprofits [website](#). In addition, VANNO is beginning to plan and organize town hall meetings for the spring of 2009 to coincide with the Nonprofit Congress. Stay tuned for more information!

VAFRE's December 9th meeting: Nonprofits as Leadership Labs

The speaker for this information and networking session will be Sandra Peart, Dean, Jepson School of Leadership Studies. It will be held at the Jefferson Lakeside Country Club, 1700 Lakeside Ave. in Richmond. \$18 for members and \$25 for guests. To learn more or to register, visit the VAFRE web site at www.vafre.org.

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

The election is finally over...but year-end fundraising has yet to begin! 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 fall 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:

- Getting Started with Online Donations – Wednesday, 12/3
- Considering Social Media for Your Organization – Wednesday, 12/10
- Introduction to Website Analytics – Thursday, 12/11

VANNO Services and Benefits

As members of VANNO, you can receive discounted benefits and services through our partnership with the National Council of Nonprofits. Two new benefits were just announced:

VANNO Member Benefit: Save Money With SunRX Partnership

Through this partnership, you, your staff, your members, and their families can save 15% to 75% on prescription medication costs. Getting started is simple. There is no signup process. All that anyone needs to do is visit [SunRX](#), select the VANNO from the dropdown menu and print out their card.

Pricing information and participating pharmacies are readily available on the site and include many local pharmacies and national chains. Members present their prescription identification card at a participating pharmacy. No coupons or claims forms are required just instant savings. Direct your members to the SunRx site so they can print their discount card and begin saving today.

VANNO Member Benefit: Save on MyBackgroundCheck.com

Ensuring the safety and security of those we serve is the top priority for all organizations. To meet the specific requirements of volunteer and nonprofit organizations, myBackgroundCheck.com has developed a comprehensive and

cost effective volunteer and employee background screening program that provides community protection and valuable risk management features at the local, regional, or national levels.

Through this new benefit, state associations and their members can have access to standard volunteer screening services for \$6.95 per screen. This service includes a social security trace, U.S. criminal search, and national sex offender registry search. This is 72% off MyBackgroundCheck's regular rate and 13% off their normal nonprofit rate. Standard employment screenings are available for \$20.95, which is 53% off regular rates and 16% off nonprofit rates, and include all features of the volunteer screening, plus previous employment verification and education verification.

FREE Delivery of The NonProfit Times!

Get a FREE subscription of The NonProfit Times for one year. The NonProfit Times is the most respected source for news and editorial in the nonprofit community. It provides insightful special reporting that has been hailed by industry leaders as "a great resource." With huge financial reform looming on the horizon, isn't it about time YOU received The NonProfit Times? The Nonprofit Times is offering a free, one year subscription to eligible VANNO members. With your subscription you will receive:

- 22 issues delivered the way you like them – print or online.
- Notices of upcoming events and webinars that you can view from the comfort of your own office, avoiding a costly trip to a seminar.

[Click Here](#). Get Your Subscription to The NonProfit Times Today!

VANNO Members Also Access Benefits with the Society for Nonprofit Organizations

As a part of your VANNO membership, member organizations receive a free subscription to the bi-monthly newsletter *Nonprofit World* (a \$59 value), monthly issues of *Funding Alert*, a subscription to the on-line funding database GrantStation (a \$599 value) and a weekly email newsletter, *Grantsation Insider*, discounts for the Learning Institute and many additional online archival resources and recruitment tools.

Resources and Opportunities

Community Tax Law Project Offers Technical Assistance and Support for Nonprofits

The Community Tax Law Project (CTLP), through its Tax Resource Center for Nonprofit Organizations, provides pro bono

legal assistance to potential and existing nonprofit organizations in Greater Richmond and Central Virginia whose primary mission is to assist low income populations. CTLP services include, in addition to brief advice during the start-up phase

- assistance with drafting articles of incorporation and bylaws
- applying to the IRS for tax-exempt status, and maintaining tax-exempt status
- education and training, including workshops and informational materials
- and, as resources allow, assistance with more complex tax issues

CTLP also has available for purchase a limited number of the manuals:

Starting and Operating a Nonprofit in Virginia

Written primarily for newly-forming organizations and individuals considering forming a 501 (c)(3) organization. Factors to consider in deciding whether to pursue nonprofit tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, including pros and cons, writing a mission statement, choice of business model, overview of federal application process, state and federal legal requirements and restrictions, and more.

Avoiding Ethical Pitfalls of Nonprofit Board Service

Written primarily for attorneys and other professionals serving on nonprofit boards. State and federal legal standards of conduct, limits on liability, and ethical considerations for professionals serving as nonprofit organization directors and officers, including a set of hypotheticals with answers.

For more information, please contact Mirna Hernandez at mhernandez@ctlp.org or call (804) 358-5855.

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.

VANNO Congratulates the Cameron Foundation

The Cameron Foundation, a nonprofit organized to provide support for programs and activities in Petersburg and the surrounding area, was honored with the Foundation Philanthropist of the Year award at this year's Philanthropy Day on November 12 held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. The event was presented by the Association of Fundraising Professionals – Central Virginia Chapter and Dominion.

Other honorees at this year's Philanthropy Day included St. Gertrude High School (Youth Philanthropist of the Year), James T. Napier (Spirit Giving Award), Rebecca C. "Becky" Massey (Volunteer of the Year), Bank of American (Corporate Philanthropist of the Year) and Dr. Frank S. Royal, Sr. (Individual Philanthropist of the Year). Congratulations to all award winners!

Cameron Foundation Presents Recognition Awards

The Cameron Foundation recognized four organizations at this year's Grant Awards Ceremony on October 23, 2008. The James House Intervention/Prevention Services was honored with the Cleveland A. Wright Award for Outstanding Community Service. The Southside Virginia Emergency Crew, Inc, Virginia's Gateway Region and Pathways also received recognition.

The awards are the results of two annual recognition programs for nonprofit organizations with the Foundation's service area of Petersburg, Colonial Heights, Hopewell and the counties of Dinwiddie, Prince George, Sussex and the portion of Chesterfield County lying south of Route 10.

Is your Organization Right for AmeriCorps?

The Virginia office on Volunteerism and Community Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service Virginia State Office are sponsoring a series of orientation sessions for organizations interested in acquiring AmeriCorps members and administering an AmeriCorps State of VISTA program. Hampton Roads November 20, Danville December 4 and Richmond December 5. Visit www.vaservice.org to register for a session and take short assessment to find out if your organization has the capacity for successfully competing for an AmeriCorps grant.

Uncovering the Value Proposition for Your Nonprofit: Utilizing Evaluation Effectively, PART II

By Trina Willard, Transformation Systems, Inc.

Does Your Program Need Evaluation?

In a word, yes. Many nonprofits continually search for ways to respond to greater accountability demands, as well as increasing demands for more and better services. However, most have not designed a process to collect information in simple and meaningful ways. Consequently, many nonprofits do not effectively maintain the data that they need to attest to the impacts achieved or to make knowledgeable decisions about program operations and strategy. Proactive leaders understand that even programs that are considered ahead of the curve have room to grow through continuing examination and enhancement. Practical organizations also understand that being able to provide significant information to interested parties means the organization is more likely to successfully compete for those valuable resources of clients, funding, human resources, and media attention.

Specifically, program evaluation enables your organization to:

- Understand, verify or increase the impact of services on clients served
- Improve delivery mechanisms to be more efficient and less costly
- Confirm that strategies, policies, and procedures are being implemented as intended
- Facilitate organizational goal setting
- Produce verifiable results to be used for public relations and promoting services in the community
- Generate valid comparisons between programs to demonstrate the value of programs and protect them from possible budget cuts

Creating the Investment

Investing in useful evaluation activities requires an organizational commitment to continued development, including clear support from management and staff buy-in. In most circumstances, fiscal resources are also needed to engage external assistance because program staff typically does not have the capacity, technical training, or objectivity to manage evaluation efforts. Mechanisms to cover the costs of evaluation can include:

Integrating evaluation costs into budget for funding requests as a percentage of program costs,

Justifying the costs of evaluation through the increased funding

opportunities that result from the availability of program progress and results information, and
Creating a systematic environment that supports continual organizational improvement by specifically incorporating evaluation costs into the organizational budget.

If current budgetary constraints hamper obtaining outside help for the duration of the project, the organization can still learn a great deal by applying the methods and analyzing results themselves. However, in doing so, programs must be sensitive to the need for unbiased review, to ensure that strengths and weaknesses are interpreted objectively. Consequently, nonprofit professionals strongly suggest that a third-party be brought in to examine and determine evaluation results to ensure the evaluation process meets its objectives.

For more information on how evaluation can support your nonprofit organization, please contact Trina Willard at Transformation Systems, Inc. (tw@transformationsystems.com or 804-370-4095).

From Principle to Practice

What do your Form 1023 (the application to the IRS for federal tax exempt status), your IRS determination letter, and your annual Form 990 all have in common? They are all public documents, and your organization has a duty to make them publicly available. Should someone, any one, request to see any of these documents, your organization is required by law to make them available for inspection. This requirement does not go so far as to require you to reproduce or deliver copies of the documents. Many organizations' annual 990 returns already exist within the public domain, via Guidestar (see www.guidestar.org). While Guidestar and other charitable watchdogs have made charitable filings more accessible, they do not mitigate this on-going public disclosure requirement for federally tax exempt entities. The requirement is one way the IRS promotes transparency among charitable organizations, which enjoy that special status of tax exemption. Another way your organization can become more transparent is to make these documents available in PDF format on your organization's website. For more information on public disclosure requirements for federal tax exempt entities, visit www.irs.gov and click on "charities and nonprofits".

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!