

HISTORY OF AVA

The Association for Administration of Volunteer Services was founded in 1960 as the American Association of Volunteer Services Coordinators for salaried coordinators in mental health and mental retardation facilities. It is now an association for all professionals in volunteer administration, salaried and non-salaried--administrators of volunteer programs, educators, researchers, and students.

As the only generic professional association in volunteer administration, its members come from a wide variety of work settings -- criminal justice, mental health, hospitals, religious groups, universities, governors' offices, public schools, advocacy groups, clearinghouse and technical assistance centers, museums, self-help neighborhood organizations, business and industry, youth organizations, and many others. The variety of settings provide opportunity for a rich interchange among the members, the linkage which may lead to collaborative efforts among different types of agencies, and for identifying and confronting broad issues in the field of volunteerism.

It is not uncommon for the leaders of professional associations related to particular work settings to be among the members of AVAS. The current membership includes the president of the National Association of Volunteers in Criminal Justice, the president of the American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services, and the president of the National School Volunteer Program. In addition, many of its members sit on national boards of centers and organizations in the field of volunteerism. A sizeable number teach in university-based workshops and courses of study for volunteer administrators.

The purpose of AAVS is three-fold:

- to promote volunteer services administration as a profession;
- to provide for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the creative use of volunteer services;
- to promote professional education and development.

To accomplish these purposes, AAVS carries out a number of programs and services:

- AAVS national and regional educational conferences reach out to many beyond the membership of the Association. Not only do these conferences offer outstanding educators from beyond the Association, they also provide opportunities for leadership by the members in educational and administrative capacities.
- A certification program for administrators of volunteer services recognizes those who meet high standards of both theoretical knowledge and practical competency.
- Professional Ethics in Volunteer Services Administration, prepared and published by AAVS, provides a set of principles and guidelines for ethical professional behavior.

- Volunteer Administration, a professional journal, co-published with the Association of Volunteer Bureaus, and the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars, is furnished to all members. In addition, the magazine, Voluntary Action Leadership, published by the national Center for Voluntary Action, and the AAVS Newsletter, published monthly, are also sent to the members to keep them abreast of issues, events, and practices in volunteer administration.
- As a founding member of the Alliance for Volunteerism, AAVS is active in supporting collaborative approaches to influencing public policy. An AAVS Public Policy Committee speaks through the Board of Directors on legislation and public issues which affect the members, their work, and volunteerism.
- AAVS carries out an international exchange, hosting visitors from abroad and providing contacts with leadership in volunteerism in other countries for members who travel. During the coming year AAVS will co-sponsor a volunteer administration study tour to England. Other sponsors include the Nebraska directors of Volunteer Services and the University of Nebraska, which will grant academic credit.

AAVS has a long history of concern with education. As early as 1963, the Association held a conference on "The Development of Standards and Training Curriculum for Volunteer Services Coordinators", a report of which was published in Psychiatric Studies and Projects, February 1964. The educational goals envisioned in that conference were addressed under a NIMH training grant awarded jointly to AAVS and Northeastern University in 1970 which provided for three series of courses for volunteer administrators over a three year span.

In the fall of 1970, after two years of careful planning between Dr. Robert E. Lee of the Rehabilitation Institute faculty and AAVS, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale offered the first graduate course in Volunteer Administration.

During the mid-1970's AAVS was responsible for the Alliance for Volunteerism Education Task Force which concerned itself with the development of a proposal concerned with professional schools and professional associations preparation of their students and members to work with volunteers. Most recently, the AAVS Certification Chairman, Jane Rehnberg, has produced an unpublished manuscript identifying areas of competency required of volunteer administrators which will become the basis of a new certification plan and future educational activities of the Association. These publications will be available in the fall of 1979.

AAVS is currently looking at its potential role for providing the linking mechanism among the many local and state organizations for volunteer administrators. Conversations are in progress and it is anticipated that this role will be developed in the immediate future.

Since the purpose of AAVS is the professional and educational growth of administrators of volunteer services, it is interested in supporting and in collaborating with any effective efforts to advance these goals.