

NOVN Conference Call Highlights  
May 19, 2005  
2:00 – 3:00 pm

Call participants - Mark Scott, Sarah Christian, David Chaney, HOPE Worldwide;

Michelle Labgold, United Jewish Communities; David Carrier, National Assembly, Karen Key, AARP; Sandra Barrett, AARP; Stephanie Lindner, Planned Parenthood; David Styers, Points of Light Foundation; Jim Wordelman, AARP; Cynthia Langley, AARP; Michael Oring, Travelers Aid; Tom Endres, National Council on Aging; Sherri Wilensky, American Lung Association; LaVerne Campbell, Volunteers of America, Charlie Wood, Barksdale Ballard; Jane Stenson, Catholic Charities USA; Bruce Summers American Red Cross, Kathy (Katy) Smith, Karen V. Nicholson, Argus Leader; Adam Brunner, National Center for Family Friends - National Council on the Aging, Inc.

Karen Key was the moderator for this call; she began by welcoming the participants and reviewing the agenda.

**LaVerne Campbell of Volunteers of America provided an overview of research findings on Corporate Retiree volunteer Programs (sponsored by Volunteers of America and Boston College). Here are a few highlights from LaVerne's presentation:**

Research Background Information--VOA became involved in examining the issue of retiree volunteerism through corporations due to its program called National Retiree Volunteer Coalition (NRVC).

A few highlights about the NRVC program.

- Since the 80s this project's model has been used to initiate and maintain retiree volunteer programs within 65 businesses.
- The model focuses on building retiree boards and creating self-sustaining retiree programs with modest levels of funding and support from the parent company.

Over the past decade, changes (mergers, downsizing, etc) have taken place in the business sector that directly affects the viability of these programs, their funding, and the pipeline of new retiree volunteers.

Retirement has also undergone and continues to undergo redefinition.

- Workers in their 50s/60s were displaced before they planned to retire and had to move to new employers.
- Fewer people in companies with shorter tenure broke the bonds of loyalty, mutual work history together, and weakened the identification with the workplace.

The result was these changes were impacting the current NRVC programs and there was little interest from other companies to start a new NRVC program.

Research--Volunteers of America applied for a grant from Atlantic Philanthropies to fund research to help define the thinking and behavior of corporations, their pre-retirees, and retirees regarding work and volunteerism and determine their reactions to the current NRVC model and how to revise it.

Volunteers of America contracted with Boston's College Center for Corporate Citizenship to conduct the research. The research included telephone interviews with 22 corporate executives and managers, six focus groups with employees and retirees, and surveyed 1000+ employees and retirees.

1. Corporations Findings--
  - a. Employee volunteer programs are thriving and many corporations plan to expand their activities. All companies interviewed had some sort of employee volunteer program
  - b. Pertaining to retirees, however, they see value in involving them and many have them in their employee volunteer program, but feel that the costs and return on investment is steeper with retirees
  - c. Most prefer that the retiree volunteer program not be a free standing programs like NRVC, but that they involve retirees through existing employee volunteer programs—didn't see the need for a special program
  - d. Most felt that their former employees had good feelings about their company and would like to participate in volunteer activities through their company

Some of the things companies see as the upside and downside to retiree involvement was covered on the call.

2. Pre-retirees and retirees Findings—Demographics--Most respondents worked for 16 years or more for their companies; most had at least some college and most were married, with equal #men and women
  - 6 out of 10 pre-retirees and retirees surveyed had volunteered during the past year
  - 4-5 out of 10 had volunteered through a religious organization
  - 22% of employees had volunteered through their companies; only 5% of retirees had (small sampling)

When asked how they would rate the current relationship between the company and its retired workforce—

- 1/3 rated it fair to poor
- ¼ didn't know

- A little more than ½ rated it good or higher

Asked of their interest in volunteering through their company—

- Moderate interest overall, however, current employees had a significantly higher level of interest than retirees
- It is difficult to determine if this is a generational difference and therefore, baby boomers may have volunteering rooted more in the workplace, or it reflects that interest declines over time with retirement and separation.

Big gap between those currently engaged in company volunteering and those that are interested in doing so—has a lot of room for opportunities

The retirees and pre-retiree employees groups overwhelmingly felt, as did the companies that they would prefer that retirees not have separate volunteer programs for retirees, but that they are integrated with the regular employee volunteer programs

This research may be valuable to many of you that work with corporations and/or retirees.

- Some of our ideas about separating retirees into chapters, specific volunteer positions, etc. may no longer be desired by retirees
- The changing workplace may draw retirees closer to their workplace as the point of contact for volunteering (it could be their social groups and more important than their neighborhoods), or we may see more and more decline in an employee's loyalty to their employers and a waning interest in strengthening the link between corporate volunteerism and retirees.

**David Styers – from the Point of Light presented highlights of the Points of Light Foundation research on trends in workplace volunteering. David stated that employee volunteerism is on the rise and offered some statistical information.**

**David will send a summary of his presentation to Sara**

**Agreed Upon Next Steps:**

NOVN conference calls will be held the [Third Thursday of each month from 2:00 – 3:00 pm](#)

The group decided to hold a face to face meeting on [September 9 following the National Leaders Summit in Washington, DC.](#)

LaVerne Campbell will post the executive summary of research findings on Corporate Retiree Volunteer Programs on the [NOVN list serve.](#)

David Styers will post research finding on trends in the workplace volunteering on the [NOVN list serve](#).

Tom Endres will send material about his film highlighting of skilled older Americans seeking ways to be of service after retirement from the paid workforce and to spotlighting the wealth of volunteer experience that can be tapped in innovative ways.

### **News from the field**

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Tom Endres of NCOA said that 94 stations have shown the film which offered 77% coverage across the country. Need national partners to explore with local stations to bring attention to local initiatives

Michelle Labgold mentioned a guide on strengthening volunteerism for Jewish Federations need to invest in volunteer management to reap benefits: hands on, governance, advocacy and profess expertise through management assistance.

Jane Stenson wanted to know the average hours per month of release time for EVPs

Bruce Summers mentioned volunteer resource management readiness assessment of the Red Cross chapters featured volunteer evaluation and feedback

Karen asked for volunteers to for next conference call

The call ended at 3:00.