

JOIN CVSA

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action

Serving grassroots organizations that are responding in action to the basic needs of people and the planet

Bringing together leaders in the independent volunteer service and action movement

Publisher of the *INVEST YOURSELF— A Guide to Action, The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities*

Promoting nongovernment voluntary service and action programs for over 70 years.



Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA)
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The *Voluntary Service and Action* Movement

Across the United States and the world there are thousands of nongovernmental organizations striving to meet the needs of their communities and build systemic approaches to caring for people and the planet that are more just and effective than current official practice. These organizations are built by people daring to tackle serious problems such as access to health care for all, education, legal justice, food, water, jobs at living wages, care for the elderly, affordable housing, disaster relief, environmental protection and more. Some also focus on

organizing access to cultural opportunities and sports. Many build avenues for fellowship and solidarity, breaking isolation and discrimination, building the collective voices of those who otherwise have none. Others work to reverse the destruction of our environment and the root causes of poverty. Those that welcome and rely on volunteers to carry out this important and necessary work to build a better world are part of the voluntary service and action movement.

The scourges of poverty, disease and inequality are growing rapidly in the United States, as in other parts of the world. We have seen control of the world's resources concentrated into fewer and fewer hands, budgets for social services drastically cut and incomes for the majority of working people decline.

More than ever, organizations and individuals doing the serious work of serving people in need and building systemic solutions to these problems must have the ways and means to work together, learn from each other and own methods for effective involvement for more volunteers to strengthen the voluntary service and action movement.

CVSA IS...

CVSA is an all-volunteer coordinating and consultative body of nongovernment volunteer service organizations founded in 1945 to promote, expand, and strengthen voluntary service programs that serve people in need and are organizing for change. We carry out activities to inspire and compel more people into action as volunteers involved in service to others and organizing to build a better world. We provide supportive services on a mutual assistance basis to our members, which are independent organizations based primarily in North America as well as others around the world.

◆ **CVSA publishes and distributes the biennial *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action***, a comprehensive catalogue of full- and part-time volunteer opportunities with nongovernment and community-based organizations which is distributed nationwide and internationally.

◆ **CVSA conducts community education campaigns** and volunteer recruitment outreach to promote and distribute *INVEST YOURSELF* and to expand general awareness, support for and involvement with independent volunteer service and action organizations.

◆ **CVSA works to protect the fundamental right of individuals to freely associate with others** and participate in voluntary service activities that stand independent from the domain of narrow private financial interests or failed government programs and maintain accountability to the needs of the people and communities being served, providing examples of how best to serve people and care for the planet.

◆ **CVSA has long recognized and promoted the special role of full-time volunteers** in all movements for progressive change and in service to others, especially those who have been marginalized.

◆ **CVSA promotes genuine, independent voluntary service** to those in need, without strings attached in exchange for the service given. CVSA does not promote schemes that exploit "volunteers" as free or cheap labor replacing former union-wage workers in government agencies or private corporations; or in which student "volunteers" work off their loans at minimum wage jobs that perpetuate conditions of poverty.

◆ In 2013 CVSA gained **Special NGO Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** of the UN, having had NGO status associated with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the UN since 1946.

◆ **CVSA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.** We operate with an entirely volunteer staff led by full-time volunteer organizers and part-time volunteers. All contributions are applied to operating and expansion expenses. No salaries are paid. We accept no funding that imposes constraints on our ability to serve our membership and the people they serve.



CVSA Membership BENEFITS:

1. Free catalogue listing describing your organization in *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action*, the catalogue of volunteer opportunities includes a descriptive listing of your organization and the full- and part-time volunteer roles available, with photos. Published every two years, *INVEST YOURSELF* is distributed to colleges, churches and other places of worship, libraries, schools, professional associations, community centers and individuals across the country and the world. You may also choose to post your organization's volunteer opportunities on CVSA's website with contact information and link to your site.



2. A complimentary copy of each biennial edition of *INVEST YOURSELF*, with membership discounts on bulk orders to distribute in your own community and through your networks and outreach.

3. The CVSA quarterly membership newsletter, *ITEMS*: Members are encouraged to contribute articles to *ITEMS* about information, news, achievements, experiences of success or failure that offer valuable lessons to be shared with other members. *ITEMS* also features information and analysis on national and international developments affecting your community and organization as well as news from other member organizations.

4. Consultations by CVSA staff with your organization through a site-visit or in a group work session with other CVSA member organizations seeking to address similar issues such as how to build operating systems for sustainability and best practices with volunteers.

5. Training in methodology, tactics and strategies of organizing to reach specific organizational goals. For example, how to recruit and incorporate more volunteers, build support systems for full-time volunteers, build a stronger base of support and participation from the community, stay independent of funding with counterproductive restrictions and other areas of organizational concern. CVSA draws from the collective experience of many organizations as well as its own 70-year history of organizing.

6. Information Exchange and Resource Referrals related to volunteer service or grassroots organizing as well as issues that arise from your work in the community. Members can call CVSA to speak directly with staff on questions they have or to connect with other member organizations to share expertise relating to the member's concerns.

7. CVSA Speakers Bureau: Members can participate in CVSA's nation-wide speakers bureau made up of leaders available to speak on one or more of the many issues that CVSA member organizations address, about volunteer service as a

vocation and about the growth of the independent volunteer service and action movement.

8. Representation in the United Nations through CVSA's NGO Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): CVSA promotes the important work being done by member organizations that relate to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, submits proposals and reports to ECIOCSOC and its subsidiary bodies and organizes events at the UN in order to advance the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the U.S. as well as the rest of the world, builds allies and fosters international solidarity among the people and nations of the world.

9. Annual CVSA Membership meeting: Members are invited to attend the annual CVSA membership meeting held on or around December 5th to coincide with the annual International Volunteer Day (IVD). The agenda for the meeting, speakers, workshops and other activities are determined by October each year, based on suggestions from member organizations and needs that have been expressed in the course of the year.

* The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs were adopted by all 193 member nations of the UN in September 2015.

Join CVSA to reach people looking for the best way to invest their time and skill and make a real difference.



Join CVSA to add your voice to the voluntary service and action movement.



Join CVSA to strengthen your organization's ability to achieve its goals.



How Members PARTICIPATE:

Participation by CVSA members and member organizations is voluntary and varies with their time and resources. There are many ways to contribute to the effort. We use a mutual assistance approach to organization. CVSA's full-time and part-time volunteer staff coordinates the work of administrating CVSA's benefits program and will talk with you about how you can advance the movement for service and action.:

- 1. Promote and distribute the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue through your networks and in your community.**
- 2. Share experience, knowledge and expertise with other organizations pursuing similar goals with submissions to CVSA's newsletter *ITEMS* or in CVSA organized membership forums and workshops.**
- 3. You and members of your staff are encouraged to volunteer on CVSA field committees, campaigns and projects; help produce the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue and *ITEMS*; mailouts to members, our Speakers Bureau and more.**
- 4. Contribute voluntary annual dues of \$45 per year. Dues help support CVSA including production of our newsletter *ITEMS* and the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue and mailings of these publications to members. Dues are voluntary – no one is denied membership if they cannot contribute. Those with greater resources are encouraged to give more.**
- 5. Members can sponsor display ads in CVSA publications with personal or organizational messages. Members can generate support from others they know in academic, professional, faith and business communities who can also sponsor displays in CVSA publications.**

CVSA Field Committees:

Ad Hoc Ways and Means Committees can be formed to address specific needs and requests from CVSA member organizations to mobilize people and resources around a particular area of work and service, for example, environmental, health care, people with disabilities, etc.

UN NGO Communication and Liaison Committee which coordinates CVSA's work to support the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs): compiling and submitting reports and proposals on social and economic problems to UN bodies; updating CVSA member organizations on these activities; monitoring UN meetings relating to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other UN activities appropriate for CVSA's participation in line with our Special NGO Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

CVSA's roots

CVSA was founded in 1945 by progressive church leaders as an inter-denominational council to coordinate and promote opportunities for American volunteers to spend their summers helping citizens of war-torn Europe rebuild homes, water systems and schools, distribute food and establish health and community centers. The original vision was to undermine the causes of the scourge of war and oppression by building international fellowship among all people and to promote volunteer service as a means of bringing people together working to end poverty, discrimination, exploitation and disenfranchisement as well as war. From the beginning, CVSA's program was carried out independent of the U.S. Marshall Plan or other U.S. government funding. It was a people-to-people program based on the principle that volunteer service programs could exemplify government policy as it should be. CVSA began publishing the annual brochure *Invest Your Summer* in 1946.

By the early 1960s, CVSA shifted its attention to volunteer projects addressing the poverty and disparities throughout the U.S. — as well as abroad. In 1965 the well-known brochure of summer opportunities became a catalogue entitled *INVEST YOURSELF: Involvement and Action*, offering year round, part- and full-time volunteer opportunities with both faith-based and secular community-based volunteer organizations throughout the U.S. as well as internationally. In 1983 CVSA incorporated and became an independent organization, and *INVEST YOURSELF* continues to this day to be used as the most comprehensive catalogue of nongovernmental voluntary service opportunities by colleges, libraries, faith communities, schools, professional associations, community centers and by individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

Our future

Since the turn of the 21st century, we have seen many previously impoverished developing nations make great social and economic advances for their people through regional alliances around equitable trade, sharing of sustainable technology and collaborations that build solidarity instead of exploitation and war.

Volunteer-based organizations within and among countries can also make alliances that collectivize their experience and knowledge to advance toward achieving mutually beneficial shared goals in solidarity towards building a better world.

CVSA has provided that caliber of forward-thinking leadership and accumulated that kind of organizing expertise over the past 70 years with an entirely volunteer staff, community support, in-kind donations of materials and services and a very modest budget.

Current conditions and needs call for all of us to do so much more. Together we will grow, treat these challenges as opportunities and truly build a better world. Join with us! See form on the back.

How to Join:

CVSA membership is available to nongovernment organizations that involve volunteers in their work of materially aiding people and communities in need, as well as to organizations that support or place volunteers with such efforts. Membership is also available to individuals with personal or professional involvement or interest in the voluntary service and action field.

Just as an organization is stronger than an individual, the collective experience of many organizations with common interests is more powerful than any single individual or organization.

Call CVSA about becoming a member, or fill out and send in the form below.

CVSA will call you to discuss your particular interests and needs, and send you an enrollment form.

People helping people is not just a slogan — it is a way of life.

Thank you for being part of this important movement.

Please contact me about:

Information on becoming a member:

I represent an organization, I would like to join myself

Volunteering with CVSA: __full-time, __part-time

I am particularly interested in volunteering with and learning more about the following areas of CVSA's work: _____

I have the following skills I can offer towards the work of CVSA:

Having a CVSA speaker come to my school, organization, place of worship or association.

Ordering copies of the *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action* catalogue of volunteer opportunities; Helping distribute the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue.

I have enclosed a tax deductible contribution of \$ _____ to support the ongoing work of CVSA.

Your Name: _____

Organization: _____

Position: _____

Your or your Organization's Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Country _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Send to CVSA, 22-19 41st Avenue, 2-C, Long Island City, NY 11101