



Board Handbook

A Brief History

The Vermont Council on World Affairs was founded in 1952 by Senator Warren Austin, the first US Ambassador to the United Nations, and a native Vermonter. The organization was housed or affiliated for many years with the University of Vermont, then Trinity College. From 2000-2009, it was affiliated with Saint Michael's College. In 2009, it became an affiliate of the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce and has continued its longstanding partnership with Saint Michael's. Its mission slogan is that it "brings the world to Vermont and Vermont to the world."

VCWA Mission Statement

The mission of the Vermont Council on World Affairs is to promote awareness and understanding of the world and its people, places and cultures through education and engagement.

VCWA Structure

The VCWA is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that is affiliated with the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce. The LCRCC has a number of affiliates, for whom it provides varying degrees of support. The VCWA currently receives intangible support in the form of overhead and tangible support in the form of a modest salary subsidy. The expectation is that the organization be self-sustaining.

The VCWA has independent leadership that is guided by a board that must consist of no fewer than 15 and no more than 21 members per the bylaws. Its finances are (and must be as a non-profit) separate from those of the LCRCC. The organization currently has a staff of two. Gail Stevenson, a former board member, is the Executive Director, and Eli Harrington is the Program Director, responsible for the IVLP and other fee-for-service programs that bring in international visitors.

The organization runs two sets of programs—international visitors and speakers and events. In the first category is the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP), which is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of State to provide support to bring international visitors to Vermont. There are a number of fee-for-service programs that also bring in international visitors, including the Library of Congress' Open World Program and the Community Connections Program. These programs are national in scale and the IVLP is supported by a membership organization, the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV).

The second program focus is to arrange speakers, forums, and other presentations on topics of interest to the community. The VCWA has great latitude to present programs that are of general interest to the community or of quite specific interest to targeted groups such as business or academia. The program offerings as a whole must be self-sustaining and income-generating. These activities are supported by the second national organization to which the VCWA belongs, The World Affairs Councils of America. WACA provides rosters of speakers and programs as well as access to other programs it runs nationally such as Great Decisions and WorldQuest. More on

each of these later.

The VCWA and Volunteers

Vermont has much to offer Vermonters and visitors from around the world, but we are constrained both by resources and by the lack of hours in the day. As a not-for-profit with a small staff (currently two), we are dependent upon volunteers, who are invited to contribute as much or as little time and energy as they can commit.

Volunteer opportunities include working in the office on programs or resources, serving as a host family or home hospitality host, and serving on the board.

Funding Sources

The Vermont Council on World Affairs is a member of the NCIV and is eligible to apply for a U.S. State Department (DOS)-funded Community Partnership Grant to host international visitors (see below). This ranges from \$15-\$30,000 a year and is calculated solely on the number of IVLP visitors hosted in the previous fiscal year (October 1-September 30). This funding is for administrative support and usually arrives in late April for the calendar year. In addition, the DOS pays for all visitor expenses while in Vermont—hotel, transportation and some meals. Besides this DOS funding, CIVs across the country fund themselves with membership dues, hotel commissions, corporate and private sponsorship, local and state government grants, fundraising events, and foundation grants. The VCWA currently uses corporate and individual dues and sponsorship and fee-for-service programs to fund its mission, holds an annual fundraising dinner and receives modest but critical support from the LCRCC.

Programs

I. The IVLP Program and other International Visitors Programs

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)

The IVLP brings participants each year to the United States from all over the world to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to experience the U.S. firsthand. Its emphasis is on increasing mutual understanding through communication at the personal and professional levels.

Delegations vary in size from one visitor to 24. The visitors, current or potential leaders in government, politics, the media, education and other fields, are selected by American officials overseas. Today one-fourth of the countries represented in the United Nations have an IVLP alumnus/alumna as their current head of state. Almost 300 current and former heads of state, more than 1,500 cabinet-level ministers, and many other distinguished world leaders in government and the private sector have participated in the IVLP, including:

- President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan ('87)
- President Anwar Sadat of Egypt ('66)
- President Nicolas Sarkozy of France ('85)
- Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom ('84/'92)
- Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom ('67)
- Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom ('86/'92)

The *U. S. Department of State* directs the IVLP in cooperation with national programming agencies, which are based in Washington, D.C. The program also relies on the commitment and skills of 95 community-based organizations across the country. They represent a wide range of institutions from universities to grassroots organizations with paid-staff members to all-volunteer organizations. These are known collectively as *Councils for International Visitors (CIVs)*. CIVs are associated under the umbrella organization of the *National Council for International Visitors (NCIV)*, also located in Washington, D.C., and are the official hosts of DOS visitors across the country. They prepare local programs and depend on the willingness of the community to meet with foreign dignitaries and on a membership base interested in interacting with delegates in a more informal manner. The VCWA brings the IVLP to Vermont. The only other council in Vermont is Windham World Affairs Council near Brattleboro, but it does not participate in the IVLP.

Today's IVLP was founded in 1940 when Nelson Rockefeller, then Coordinator of Commercial and Cultural Affairs for the American Republics, first invited Latin American journalists to the U.S. Since then, the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (Fulbright-Hays Act) has funded the IVLP. Despite the increased difficulties since September 2001 in obtaining visas for some participants, the number of annual IVLP visitors increased slightly from approximately 4,500 in 1999 to just under 5,000 in 2007. Of these, about 130 come to Vermont each year. The program is identified by U.S. ambassadors as the most effective public diplomacy tool at their command and enjoys bi-partisan support in the U.S. Congress.

How it Works

The national programming agencies are subcontractors of the DOS and their job is to administer various pieces of the IVLP program. Programming agency and DOS program officers work together to determine national itineraries. One program goal is to introduce visitors to the diversity of the U.S. so an effort is made to include small- and medium-sized towns as well as rural communities and cities. DOS divides the country into four regions. When participants arrive, they receive an orientation in Washington, D.C. and then usually travel to one CIV in each region. They travel with at least one DOS escort or translator and stay in the U.S. for about three weeks. The structure of airplane fares usually dictates that Vermont is either the first or the last stop on the itinerary as the group leaves from or before it returns to Washington.

CIVs do not compete for visitors nationally, but CIVs within each region, i.e., the northeast, compete with one another to offer quality programs on the themes selected by the DOS.

The VCWA promotes Vermont as a center for agriculture, commerce, culture, education and tourism in Northern New England as well as a locus of innovative thinking on the environment, green jobs, social programs, accountable governance and a host of other topics. We also host groups on border security issues. The VCWA compiles a community impact each statement each year. In 2008, for example, the IVLP contributed almost \$500,000 to the Vermont economy (hotels, transportation, meals, labor, incidentals and shopping).

Sample IVLP Program Themes

Administration of Justice	Environment	Politics & Parties
Aging Issues	Environmental Protection	Post-secondary Education
Agriculture	Federalism/U.S. Government	Preservation/Conservation
American Studies	Film	Primary Education
Anti-Corruption	Finance	Print Journalism
Arms Control	Financial Markets	Privatization
Arts & Culture	Foreign Policy	Public Administration
Arts Management	Freedom & Democracy	Public Affairs
Aviation	Gender & Women's Issues	Public Health
Biotechnology	Globalization	Public Relations
Border Control	Grassroots Democracy	Public Safety
Broadcast Journalism	Health	Publishing
Civics Education	Health Care Administration	Religion
Civil Society	Historic & Cultural Preservation	Rule of Law
Communications & Information	HIV/AIDS	Secondary Administration
Communications Policy	Homeland Defense	Secondary Education
Community Development	Human & Civil Rights	Social Issues
Community Policing	Immigration Enforcement	Social Services
Competitiveness	Immigration/Assimilation	State & Local Government
Conflict Resolution	Infectious Diseases	Telecommunications
Continuing Education	Intellectual Property Rights	Terrorism
Curriculum Development	Law Enforcement	Trade
Defense Policy	Library & Information Science	Trafficking in People
Disability Issues	Media	Transparency
Diversity & Pluralism	Military & Democracy	Transportation Systems
Drug Education, Prevention	Monetary Policy	U.S. Economy
Drug Issues	Money Laundering	University Administration
Economic & Business Development	Museum Administration	Urban Planning
Education	Narcotics Trafficking	Volunteerism
Elections	NGO Management	Water Resources
Emergency & Disaster Management	Other Security Alliances	Women's Rights
Employment Issues	Park Management	Writing & Literature
Energy	Peace & Security	Youth & Family Issues
Entrepreneurship	Performing Arts	

The Nuts & Bolts

The VCWA and its members participate in the IVLP by:

1. Actively lobbying for IVLP programs to come to the area (See sample IVLP program themes above)
2. Maintaining good relationships with local resources and stakeholders
3. Preparing 2—3 day programs of 2-3 appointments per day for IVLP participants based on national policy objectives
4. Incorporating school visits, roundtable discussions, receptions, and volunteer activities into delegate programs
5. Accompanying IVLP delegations on their professional appointments
6. Reserving hotel rooms, transportation, and cultural events for delegates
7. Preparing welcome packets for IVLP participants
8. Recruiting and coordinating volunteers to help support the IVLP programs
9. Offering home hospitality (dinners) when requested by DOS

10. Increasing the membership
11. Greeting delegations at the airport when possible.

Fee-For Service Programs

The primary fee-for-service programs are the Library of Congress' Open World Program and Community Connections, both of which focus on Russia and the former Soviet Union. These grants are awarded by national competition and include an administrative fee that covers some salary and other indirect expenses. They are a few other groups in Vermont that compete for these programs nationally, but the Vermont organizations tend to carve out discrete program areas rather than compete with one another.

The national programming agencies announce dates, countries and themes at the beginning of the year and local programmers submit draft programs to attract these groups. The Open World programs bring 5 people (plus facilitator) for 8 days and the Community Connections programs bring up to 10-12 people for three weeks. Both programs require home stays for all participants and significant volunteer involvement to host groups at meals, arrange programs and otherwise showcase Vermont.

Open World currently operates exchanges for participants from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine. Since its founding by Congress in 1999, the Open World Program has enabled more than 14,000 current and future Eurasian leaders to experience American democracy, civil society and community life and gain new ideas and inspiration for implementing change back home. The program's short but high-intensity exchanges emphasize hands-on practical activities—such as workshops, job shadowing, and site visits—related to the delegates' professional or community work. Other key features of Open World are its large size, competitive selection process, emphasis on young regional and local leaders, home stays, lack of an English-language requirement, and focus on fostering mutual learning, partnerships, and long-term results.

The *Community Connections* Program is a USAID program that offers home stay-based practical training opportunities in the U.S. for entrepreneurs, local government officials, legal professionals, non-governmental organization leaders and other professionals from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

II. Speakers and Other Programs

The second type of programming is the hosting of speakers and other presenters. There is tremendous latitude in the organization of these programs, although they do incorporate several themes and attempt to balance:

- Topical and newsworthy vs. less immediate and more in-depth topics
- Smaller vs. larger venues
- Academic vs. business vs. cultural vs. general interest programs
- Collaboration with other organizers and co-sponsorship of events as appropriate

The World Affairs Councils of America (WACA) has a speakers bureau and also offers councils the option to propose programs for speakers on selected themes at little cost to the council. Speakers and events can be stand-alone or thematic in a series. Several themes are ongoing. The *Ambassador Series* hosts serving and retired ambassadors from around the globe who

come to Vermont to meet with members from the community, business and academia. Past speakers have included Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong of China, Ambassador Yang of South Korea, former U.S. Ambassador Ronald Spiers, Ambassador Aziz Merkourar of Morocco, and former U.N. Special Envoy and U.S. Ambassador Peter Galbraith, to name a few.

The *Global Symposium* is a large event that brings big name figures to Vermont. Past presenters include New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich and Lester Brown, President of the Earth Policy Institute. These events occur every 2-3 years, are extremely time-consuming to organize, and draw an audience of 1000 participants or more.

The VCWA also presents cultural, musical and other programs, including in cooperation with other area organizations. One of the Board duties is to provide guidance for speaker program themes and priorities.

Although not every event must generate income and many are undertaken for community outreach, these programs as a whole must not only break even but also contribute substantially to the VCWA's bottom line.

Membership

Individual membership levels are as follows:

- Student \$15
- General \$35
- Donor \$50
- Sponsor \$100
- Municipal member \$500

Institutional:

- Attaché Level \$1000
- Diplomat Level \$2500
- Ambassador Level \$5000

Benefits at all levels include:

- Meet other Vermonters who embrace a global perspective
- Assist VCWA in bringing international experts and visitors to Vermont
- Personally meet speakers at private events and receptions
- Have opportunities to host international visitors
- Make global business networking connections
- Be invited to join Great Decisions discussion groups
- Receive regular updates about upcoming events

In addition, membership at the Sponsor level or higher includes the following Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce benefits:

Sponsor Level: \$100 and higher

- Access to the following LCRCC events at discounted member rates:

- Education seminars
- Legislative Breakfast Series
- Special events
- Business after Hours functions
- Leadership Champlain and EXCEL Leadership Programs
- Receipt of Weekly Legislative Reports, if requested
- Receipt of E-News, if requested
- Subscription to *60 Main St. News* at \$25.00 per year

Attaché Level: \$1000 and higher

In addition to the above:

- One ¼- page business advertisement in *60 Main St. News*
- One sponsorship of a Legislative Breakfast
- Hole sponsorship at the Chamber Challenge Annual Golf Tournament
- One ticket to the LCRC Annual Business Leaders Luncheon

Academic institutions, business and cultural organizations and citizens of Vermont who wish to promote global understanding, increase their knowledge and share Vermont with the world are all members.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Vermont Council on World Affairs consists of individuals from Vermont who are committed to the goals of the organization and who work to promote the organization’s programs and initiatives. Board members have the primary responsibility for the organization’s policies, programming and financial status and are willing and able to contribute their time, treasure and talent to the organization in varying measure. Each board member agrees to the following obligations:

Financial

Each board member agrees to be a member in good standing of the VCWA, which includes paying annual dues and actively participating in fundraising events. To ensure diversity, minimum dues for 2010 are \$35, but board members who are able are strongly encouraged to support the organization at the sponsor level and above. Board member dues invoices will be sent out in May of each year. The Board as a whole and each Board member has a fiduciary responsibility to the VCWA, either through contributions or through helping to raise money to support the organization and its mission.

Participatory

- Commit to the full three-year term of office
- Attend quarterly board meetings and agree to serve on one committee
- Be able to participate in and/or host or co-host at least one international visitor event each year (as a speaker, home hospitality host or home stay host)
- Serve as an ambassador to the community and promote the VCWA, both personally and professionally
- Cultivate potential new board members
- Attract at least three new members to the VCWA per year
- Support the VCWA’s events and encourage others to do so.

Board Activity	Approximate Date
Conduct Board Self-review	September
Fiscal year begins	October 1
Review and update policies, calendars and personnel policies	October
Final review and interview of new board members	October/November
Annual Meeting and election of new board members	Late November/early December
New Board member orientation	January
Board Retreat	February/March
Revise strategic plan and establish goals for next FY, including membership targets and board recruitment	March
Develop fundraising plan	March
Implement fundraising plan	April-September
Annual Fundraising Dinner	June
Evaluate Executive Director	July/August
Recruitment of new board members begins	July-September
Draft next year's budget	August/September