



2014 Group Building Grant from RPCVs of WI-Madison: Online Member Group Resource Library

Interim Report

Summary: The NPCA Affiliate Group Resource Library is now live on the NPCA website. This report outlines the resources contained within the Resource Library and the ongoing plans to continue to enhance the page as additional resources and needs are identified. We will officially announce the new Resource Library towards the end of August 2015, following a “soft launch” targeted toward a select few group leaders for testing, feedback, and final adjustments.

As the Resource Library will always be an ongoing initiative, we refer to this report as “interim.” We respectfully request extension and reallocation of the remaining funds designated for conference calls and videos, as outlined below.

Status of Grant Goals:

– Establish Steering Committee –

Over the course of the past year, the Affiliate Group Network (AGN – formerly Group Leaders Forum, GLF) Coordinator established a Steering Committee, which met in person, by teleconference, and by email. In recent months, due to changes in the NPCA bylaws, the GLF Steering Committee has transformed into the Affiliate Group Network Advisory Committee. This Advisory Committee has an expanded charge to oversee the AGN Annual Meeting, communicate concerns and suggestions from the Affiliate Groups to the NPCA Board of Directors, and identify and uphold criteria for attaining, renewing, or revoking official NPCA Affiliate Group status. In the NPCA community, the Advisory Committee is the key connection for NPCA to achieve the goal of enabling affiliate groups to thrive. AGN Coordinator Maricarmen Smith-Martinez is currently finalizing the new committee membership for ongoing support of this and other group-building initiatives.

– Gather information –

To help us better support other affiliate group models, the NPCA convened a meeting of representatives of current and developing workplace affinity groups, which took place on July 29, 2015. At this stage, all groups represent government agencies (e.g., RPCVs@State, EPA, GSA, FEMA, USAID, CDC, and Commerce). As a result of that meeting, we are creating a targeted group application and support materials to best fit this workplace affinity model, as it is very different from our typical geographic or country of service group model. Through these discussions, we aimed to learn:

- The requirements affinity groups must meet to gain formal recognition within their respective agencies (which grants these groups special benefits and privileges), and how the NPCA might be helpful in this process
- The role affinity groups can play to champion hiring RPCVs with non-competitive eligibility (NCE) status and what resources the NPCA can provide to facilitate this
- What other facets of the dynamic between the NPCA and this type of group might differ from the traditional model and how the NPCA can continue to offer support

Based on other conversations and outreach to NPCA staff on behalf of interested parties, other potential models for development include:

- Issue-based groups (e.g., Health Justice for Peace Corps Volunteers, RPCVs for Environment and Sustainable Development)
- Philanthropic country of service support groups (e.g., Peace Corps Nigeria Alumni Foundation and Friends of Nigeria), exploring and defining the relationship between a supportive group and an official country of service group

– Generate and post resource materials –

NPCA staff and interns have been compiling and updating a number of resources for inclusion in the Resource Library. The outdated Group Leaders Handbook has been redesigned into smaller, more manageable toolkits, focused into topics that are targeted to achieve specific group goals. The toolkits cover core topics critical to group management, as outlined below.

The Purpose Driven Group Capacity Building Series is another key element of the new Resource Library. The sessions themselves, and the corresponding summaries (posted online in the Resource Library), expand upon the information provided in the NPCA toolkits. As we see it, the best resource for a group leader is the network of fellow group leaders, who have practical, first-hand knowledge of the intricacies of maintaining and strengthening a group. The Purpose Driven Group series begins to capture some of that knowledge, which is then housed on the Resource Library for the benefit of other leaders.

Tutorials and other resource materials stored on the Affiliate Group Network Community Builder group (which has shown declining use) have been updated and migrated into the new Resource Library.

The framework for the Resource Library website is attached as an appendix to this report. The temporary link to the page on the NPCA website is <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/affiliate-group-resource-library>. (Please note that the link will change when the page is officially launched.) We invite RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison to share input at any point, particularly in this final revision stage before the end-August launch.

This page will be updated periodically with additional content as the need arises. For example, as a result of the recent meeting with representatives of workplace affinity groups, we brainstormed a preliminary list of resources and materials that these groups would find useful. These documents and resources would provide clarity and guidance as they formally affiliate both within their own agencies and with the NPCA. These include:

- **A fact sheet detailing the benefits of formally affiliating within the RPCV group's agency.** For example, CDC offers a set number of work hours to be used on volunteer work. Other agencies offer funding opportunities for activities (RPCVs@State secured funding to send a group member to Peace Corps Connect – Berkeley). There are many other benefits that, together with the leaders of these affinity groups, we can compile in a single document. This information would allow group leaders to energize their members and encourage them to be supportive of and engaged in the process to gain formal recognition by their agency. It also gives each group leverage to campaign for benefits that might not be available at their specific agency.
- **A subsection within the Resource Library specific to workplace affinity groups.** This would contain a collection of workplace affinity group by-laws and other charter documents, providing newly forming groups with material to use as a starting point.
- **Webinars led by well-established groups,** such as RPCVs@State or the CDC group. Groups in the process of formation stated they would welcome the opportunity to attend a webinar hosted by a well-established affinity group that would walk them through the various steps they will need to take during the affiliation process

The Resource Library will continue to evolve over time, as groups request new issues to be addressed and as future capacity building sessions are held. We incorporated a feedback form on the Resource Library page to allow for direct input from affiliate groups.

– Build off of new resource materials in 2015 Group Leaders Forum -

The Steering Committee was the driving force behind the content and structure of the Purpose Driven Group Capacity Building Series, which in turn generated the course of discussion in the 2015 AGN Annual Meeting (formerly the Group Leaders Forum). The webinars, transcripts, and discussions captured during these sessions not only provided material to include in the Resource Library but also identified key issues for continued discussion. In addition, the sessions and participant feedback provided further insight about the wealth of knowledge that group leaders stand to gain from one another, which structured the AGN Annual Meeting into group roundtables focused on specific challenges such as member recruitment, leadership engagement, communications strategy, fundraising, and more.

The ongoing discussion will continue to drive the conversation forward, both with live webinar interaction and recorded materials for the Resource Library, capturing the knowledge and spreading the reach of best practices from past experiences.

Financial Report

	Expenses	Budget	Remaining Funds
Materials development and project management	\$3,500	\$3,800	\$300
Conference Calls for Steering Committee		\$100	\$100
Software for production of videos		\$100	\$100
Total	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$500

Final steps:

As indicated above, we see this Affiliate Group Resource Library as an ongoing effort. Documents will be regularly updated and added as needed and/or as suggested from affiliate group feedback.

As detailed in the financial report, we have some remaining funds. We switched to FreeConferenceCall.com for our teleconferences, saving the funds allocated for that purpose. We may still invest in video production software, but the next grant proposal includes GoToWebinar, which may better meet our needs for recording resources.

The NPCA website template allows for easy updating by staff, but the layout and formatting is dated and not the most user-friendly for visitors to the website. We respectfully request to reallocate the remaining funds towards working with technology experts in our community to better format the online Resource Library within our existing template by the end of 2015. Collaborating with a user experience designer will increase the utility and effectiveness of the Resource Library, allowing for a more sustainable product and increase group leader engagement. Down the road, we envision the development of a completely new microsite, but that initiative is beyond the scope of this grant and budget.

Thank you to the RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison for your support of our capacity-building resources for affiliate groups, helping us in our efforts to enable affiliate groups to thrive!

Appendix: Affiliate Group Resource Library Framework

Welcome to the National Peace Corps Association's Affiliate Group Resource Library, your Affiliate Group's one stop shop for resources to enable your group to thrive.

- Getting Started
- NPCA Affiliate Group Network
- Legal Considerations
- Membership
- Communications
- Financial Management
- Advocacy
- Activities

This Resource Library will be regularly updated as needed and based on your input. Share your feedback and ideas here.

Getting Started

Questions Addressed

Who is the NPCA? Why affiliate with NPCA? How do we affiliate? What makes a successful affiliate group?

Step-By-Step Guide

- Getting Started Toolkit

Relevant Documents

- Applications For Affiliation
 - Geographic Groups
 - Country of Service Groups
 - Workplace Affinity Groups (COMING SOON! In the interim, contact us to express your interest in starting a group.)
 - Topical or Interest Groups (COMING SOON! In the interim, contact us to express your interest in starting a group.)
- Fact Sheets and Benefits of Affiliation/Membership (COMING SOON!)
- Don't fit into any of those models? Contact us!

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NPCA Affiliate Group Network

Questions Addressed

What is the NPCA Affiliate Group Network? How do we use the AGN to connect with and learn from other groups?

Information Guide

- NPCA Affiliate Group Network Information Guide

Relevant Documents & Internet Links

- NPCA Affiliate Group Network on Facebook
- NPCA Affiliate Group Network on Community Builder (NPCA's Ning-based network)
- All NPCA Affiliate Groups
- Purpose Driven Group Capacity-Building Series
- Affiliate Group Network Annual Meeting Minutes 2005-2015

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Legal Considerations

Questions Addressed

What are bylaws and how should my affiliate group write them? What are articles of incorporation? How can my affiliate group apply for and achieve 501(c)(3) tax-exempt Status?

Step-By-Step Guides

- Legal Considerations
 - Bylaws
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Filing for Non-profit 501(c)(3) Status
 - Mailings: Non-profit Standard Bulk Rates
 - Filing Form 990-N (E-Postcard)

Relevant Documents & Internet Links

- Roberts Rule of Order for conducting business meetings
- Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status (IRS Publication)
- FAQs for filing form 990-N (e-postcard) for small tax-exempt organizations (IRS website)

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Membership

Questions Addressed

What are the NPCA membership categories? How can my affiliate group expand its membership? What are the best practices for managing my affiliate group's members? How can partnership with NPCA benefit the members of my affiliate group?

Step-By-Step Guide

- Membership Management Toolkit

Relevant Documents

- Seven Reasons to Join the NPCA
- NPCA Membership Types
- Membership Management in the NPCA Database
- Membership Data Sharing Agreement
- Membership and Donation Form for NPCA and Affiliate Groups

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Communications

Questions Addressed

What are the best means for your affiliate group's leadership to effectively communicate to its members? How does my affiliate group utilize internet social networking? How does my affiliate group create, promote, and maintain a website?

Step-By-Step Guide

- Communications Toolkit

Relevant Documents

- Ning Social Network Handbook
- Press Release Template

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Financial Management

Questions Addressed

How do we budget? How do we transfer membership dues between NPCA and your group? What are the basic responsibilities for financial management?

Step-By-Step Guide

- Financial Management Toolkit

Relevant Documents

- Form for the Transfer of Dues to the NPCA
- Form for Group Payments to NPCA by Credit Card

- ACH Payment Authorization Form

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Advocacy

Questions Addressed
(pending)

Step-By-Step Guide

- Advocacy Toolkit

Relevant Documents

- (Documents pending)

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Activities

Topics Addressed

Generally the most successful Affiliate Groups are ones with clearly-defined activities and goals. For what is your group known? Why do people join or support your group? How can you best carry out the Third Goal of the Peace Corps? These links below offer some toolkits and resources to help you make your activities a success and strengthen your group.

Relevant Documents

- Event and Online Invitation Tools
- Next Step Travel Flyer
- Learn about the NPCA International Film Series with Gathr (and download the sample social media posts)
- Apply for an Education Small Grant to support your Third Goal efforts

Historical Documents

While these documents are quite dated, the general content could be helpful for logistics and planning purposes. The toolkits may be replaced with updated documents over the coming months.

- Third Goal Report - This report, researched and compiled in 2008 in response to the question "How is the Peace Corps' Third Goal implemented by NPCA Affiliate Groups?" may offer some ideas for your group!
- Opening Windows On The World: A Cross-Cultural Film and Lecture Series Guide - This guide, written by Northern Ohio Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, was prepared as part of a development education grant from NPCA in 1986.
- Event Planning Toolkits (originally created in 2011 for Peace Corps' 50th Anniversary)
 - Event Planning - Archives
 - Event Planning - Cocktail Nights
 - Event Planning - Concerts
 - Event Planning - Food
 - Event Planning - Fundraising
 - Event Planning - General Events and Programs
 - Event Planning - Registration and Admission
 - Event Planning - Reunions
 - Event Planning - University-Based Seminars
 - Event Planning - Venues

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