

## **The CVA Credentialing Program: Current and Future Status**

### **March 12, 2006**

When it became clear that AVA was in trouble and might be forced to dissolve as an organization, efforts began to preserve the CVA (“Certified in Volunteer Administration”) credentialing program and find a way for it to survive this crisis. A number of options were discussed with several individuals who have a strong vested interest in the program. Now that some fundamental decisions have been made, we are pleased to share the following details of steps being taken regarding ownership of this program.

#### **Step 1: Transfer Ownership to a Temporary, Short-Term Sponsor**

In order to continue the program without interruption, the CVA Credentialing Council and AVA Board of Directors have requested that the Northwest Oregon Volunteer Administrators Association (NOVAA) based in Portland, Oregon become the temporary sponsor of this program. The NOVAA Board is working closely with the CVA Program Manager, CVA Council Chair, and AVA Board on the specific terms of this agreement. The goal is to complete the legal transfer by then end of March, pending legal review by all parties.

#### **Step 2: Explore Long-Term Options**

Once the program is safely housed with NOVAA, a task force will be formed to determine the best possible permanent home for the CVA program. All CVAs and current candidates will have the opportunity to participate in this discussion and/or serve on the task force. A number of models will be considered, and we will look at how other professions have structured their certification programs. The task force will most likely begin its work in May, and continue during the summer of 2006.

#### **Step 3: Transfer Ownership to a Permanent Home**

Obviously, the decision on a permanent home for the program will be based on a number of factors. But the most important requirement is this: The entity awarding the CVA credential in the future must be viewed as highly credible, must be totally committed to its long-term sustainability, and must be strongly connected to volunteerism and our profession. It may end up to be a single entity that already exists, or it may be a new federated entity that is created for this purpose. It is not a decision to be made quickly. But the longer we wait the more we risk eroding the existing value of the credential. Therefore, our goal is to transfer the program to its permanent new home by the end of 2006. This will enable those candidates in the 2006 cycle to have their credential awarded by the new sponsor.

#### ***How can AVA transfer ownership of the program if the office is now closed?***

As stated by President Ellen Didimamoff in a recent message to members, AVA will not cease to exist as a legal entity until after the 60-day period of voting for dissolution. Thus, the Board can continue to perform any legal function until late April. Ellen will sign the transfer of ownership document on behalf of the Board. This document will also state the intent of moving the program to another, permanent home by 2009 at the latest.

#### ***Will the CVA name change during the transition to NOVAA and a permanent new home?***

There is absolutely no reason why the name “Certified in Volunteer Administration” should ever change. In fact, the CVA name and brand is essential to maintaining the credential’s value. Changing the CVA name would negate the whole point of this effort to preserve the credential.

***Why was NOVAA selected as the temporary sponsor?***

- With a consistent membership of 140 plus, NOVAA is a former AVA affiliate with a long history of strong professional development activity and leadership
- It has a proven track record of financial stability and capacity to serve as fiscal agent
- NOVAA currently manages several programs successfully: annual conference with 100 attendees; well-attended monthly membership programs; CVA study group; and partners locally to conduct a two-day Volunteer Management 101 training.
- It has 501-c-3 nonprofit tax status since 1984 when it legally incorporated. (AVA bylaws require that assets be transferred to this type of entity)
- NOVAA has a three year history of hosting large CVA support groups of its members, serving as a model for other regions and DOVIAs
- It currently has 22 members who are CVAs and 7 who are pending award.

***How will the program be governed while housed with NOVAA?***

- A new position will be created on the NOVAA Board of directors to liaison with the CVA program. (Holly Denniston, CVA, will serve in this position).
- The NOVAA member (Holly) will also sit on the CVA Credentialing Council to facilitate communication and operational decisions.
- As in the past, the CVA Credentialing Council will function autonomously regarding procedures of the program. Any policy recommendations will be brought to the NOVAA Board (just as was done with the AVA Board.) Comprehensive program policies and procedures are already in place which will ensure consistency and continuity; these will be revised to remove references to AVA and reflect the relationship with a new sponsoring organization.

***Who will be managing the day-today operations of the program?***

- Katie Campbell will continue in her role as CVA Program Manager (as a volunteer). A revised role description will be developed for her position and she will submit regular reports to the NOVAA Board representative. Sue Wood will also continue in her role as Credentialing Council Chair through 2007, to ensure continuity of leadership through the transition to a permanent home. Jacqueline Callahan will continue to serve as technical consultant to the program (as a volunteer).
- All committees that support the program (about 50 CVA volunteers) remain intact and will continue to do the work they have always done related to the exam, the portfolio and candidate support.
- A new P.O. box has been set up in Richmond, Virginia where Katie will continue to receive program-related mail.

***How will CVA-related finances be managed during 2006?***

NOVAA will serve as the fiscal agent for the program based on these agreed-upon terms:

- NOVAA will establish restricted line items for CVA fee income and related expenses in their current budget. No CVA funds will be spent on NOVAA activities.
- NOVAA will not be responsible for spending any money other than the restricted CVA income on expenses related to the CVA program.
- Checks and invoices will be sent by the CVA Program Manager to the NOVAA treasurer or designated bookkeeper.
- NOVAA will provide monthly fiscal reports to the CVA Program Manager.
- A mutually-agreed upon budget will be developed for the CVA Program, in accordance with current NOVAA policies.

***Will anyone still want to be credentialed, now that AVA is gone?***

Absolutely -- There are now 116 people registered for the 2006 cycle! Despite the news of AVA's demise, individuals have continued to register. The March 1 deadline was extended an additional 2 weeks in order to accommodate all those who wished to register once they learned that the program was continuing. We have communicated with dozens of CVAs and new candidates who have expressed their strong confidence in the program and their desire to see it be preserved as a critical component of our profession. If we are diligent about moving the program to a highly visible and credible permanent home as soon as possible, there is no reason why the CVA's value or meaning should erode. The standards for excellence and professionalism upon which it is based remain the same.

***What is happening to CVA candidates from 2005 who are still in the process of completing the program?***

Current portfolios are being read and scored. The goal is to award as many CVAs as possible under AVA's name before it's final dissolution in late April. Those 2005 candidates wishing to re-take the exam in May 2006 will do so. Individuals earning their CVA before the transition to the permanent credentialing entity will probably be given a choice about receiving it from NOVAA or waiting for the permanent entity to make the award. (This issue needs further discussion by the Credentialing Council, and those candidates being affected.)

***Have all the details been resolved?***

Most definitely not. We realize there are many questions and issues still to be addressed, such as the logo design, pin and certificates that must be redesigned to remove references to AVA. Those involved with the program will continue to deal with new questions that arise, and promise to be as responsive and open in our communication as possible. And we appreciate your patience and suggestions as we keep figuring out the best possible solutions.

***Thank You***

We are especially grateful to all those who have expressed their support for the plan to preserve the CVA program, and who have offered to help. Now that we have a game plan for moving forward, there will be plenty of ways to participate in the special task force, existing committees, and the general discussions to come. Collectively, we will sustain the momentum built during the past few years, and keep the spirit of our profession burning brightly.

We hope this information has provided helpful clarification and reassurance to all our colleagues, and look forward to continued dialogue.

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