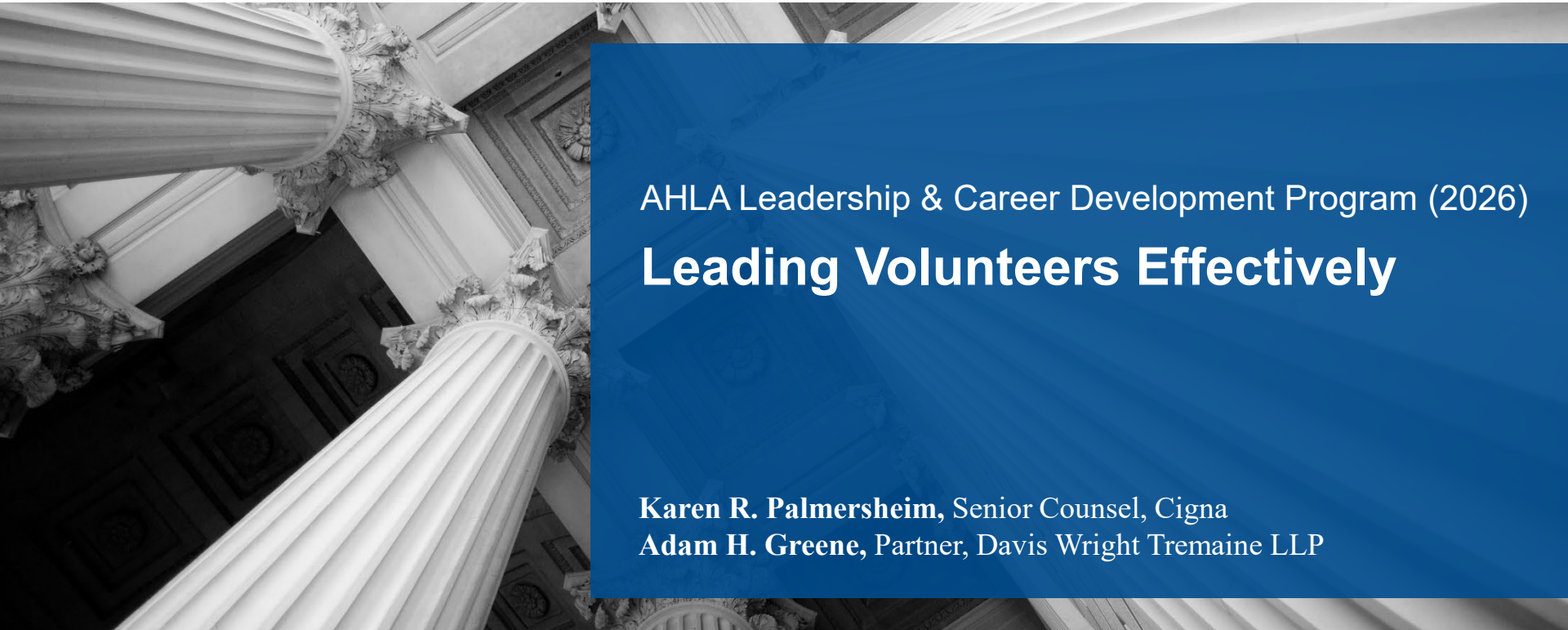




AHLA Leadership & Career Development Program (2026)

Leading Volunteers Effectively

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Speaker Introductions / Volunteer Experience

Karen Palmersheim

- AHLA: PPMC Affinity Group lead, membership Vice Chair, Planning Committee, speaker at conferences, webinars, editor of Hospital Handbook, e-alert author, mentor, Board of Directors
- Pasadena Tournament of Roses volunteer 20 years; served as Chair and Vice Chair on several committee
- Board work:
 - AHLA
 - Sycamores Child and Family Services
 - Redstone Foundation for Ageless Living
 - Barlow Respiratory Foundation
 - Leadership Pasadena
 - Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation
- Teacher at NITA for lawyers (deposition skills)
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Adam Greene

- AHLA: Chair, Health Information & Technology Practice Group (also former vice chair); frequent speaker at conferences and webinars; chapter author (Telehealth Law Handbook, Representing Hospitals and Health Systems); and author of numerous Connections articles, briefings, and bulletins.
- HIMSS Cybersecurity and Privacy Committee member, former Public Policy Committee member
- IAPP (formerly the International Association of Privacy Professionals) Program Advisory Board member, former Privacy Bar Section Advisory Board member
- Co-Chair HIPAA Summit
- Frequent speaker and writer for ABA Health Law Section and Healthcare Compliance Association

Leading Volunteers is Different Than Management

- They are not paid.
- They don't work in your organization.
- They may not share your views on goals and how to get the job done.
- They may have been “voluntold.”
- Their communication style may differ.
- You have limited leverage.
- They may feel they are doing you a “favor” and give less.
- They can easily disengage.



What Works



Recognize Volunteer Motivations

- Volunteers have different motivations.
- Knowing what motivates them may help engage them.
- What motivates Volunteers:
- **Growth** – resume, skills, leadership development
- **Connection** – belonging, friendship, networking
- **Recognition** – praise, visibility
- **Impact** – making a difference, giving back
- **Opportunity** – influence, voice, being asked
- **Experience** – fun, meaningful use of time



What Drives Volunteer Engagement

- **Purpose** – why this matters
- **Clarity** – what to do and what success looks like
- **Progress** – are we actually accomplishing something
- **Connection** – do I feel part of the group
- **Recognition** – does anyone notice my contribution



Attributes of an Effective Volunteer Leader

- Recognize others/gratitude
- Clear communicator
- Active listening
- Prepared
- Fair and consistent
- Decisive
- Builds trust
- Humble
- Respectful of time
- Inclusive
- Create progress, not just discussions
- Makes experience enjoyable/fun



First 30 Days as a Leader

- Send friendly welcome email
- Meet 1:1 with key members, returning members
- Clarify purpose and priorities early
- Set expectations on time and communications
- Deliver one early win if possible
- Recognize contributions quickly

THE FIRST
30
DAYS

How to Deal with People who were “Voluntold”

- Acknowledge reality
- Give choices where possible (role, scope, timing)
- Keep commitments small and clear
- Show early impact
- Respect time and avoid busywork
- Emphasize benefits to volunteer and/or organization on the work



Gratitude Affects Attitude!

- Be thankful
- Publicly
- Effective recognition is:
 - Timely
 - Specific
 - Linked to impact/result



Make it FUN!

- Volunteering should feel fun.
- It should not feel like drudgery/work.
- Provide opportunities for group to socialize/bond.



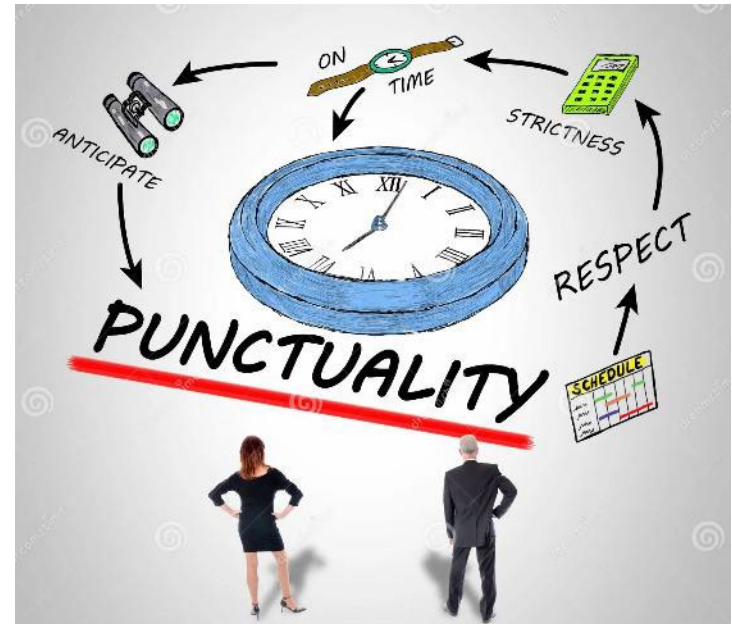
Making Assignments

- Important to match assignments with interest, skills and time commitment ability
- Describe the task before asking for volunteers
- Explain desire to match their work with their interest
- Explain why the task will be fun
- Explain why the task will have impact/be meaningful
- Identify likely time commitment and needed work product
- Use surveys to gauge interest (scale 1-5) in various tasks



Meetings: Be Prepared and Respectful of Time

- Create an Agenda
- Don't have a meeting for the sake of having a meeting
- Circulate Agenda and relevant materials prior to meeting
- Vary participation/voices with various volunteer members (makes more interesting, good for development of others, shows respect)
- Do not go over – be respectful and stick with time allotted
 - Expect volunteers to have read materials before
 - Expect volunteers to have read Minutes
 - Do not waste time going over pre-shared materials
- Wrap up with decisions made
- Wrap up with next steps/to do's
- Give prompt follow up or notes if appropriate



What Doesn't Work



What Doesn't Work

- Appearance of favoritism
- Not being open to suggestions or ideas
- Not being respectful – treating volunteers like staff
- Micromanaging
- Unproductive meetings
- Consensus paralysis
- Letting strong personalities dominate (and shy ones shrink)
- Unclear communications
- Lack of clarity on roles or expectations
- Letting things drag without progress
- Not addressing lack of engagement



Scenarios

The Lack of Follow Through

- At a monthly meeting, a volunteer has agreed to draft a briefing on a new Medicare reimbursement rule.
- After two weeks, you hear nothing from the volunteer. You check in and don't hear back.
- At the next monthly meeting, you check in. The volunteer indicates that they were sidetracked by work and family matters, but plan to have it done in the next week.
- After another three weeks, you hear nothing from the volunteer. You check in and the volunteer indicates that he is hoping to have a draft ready by end of week.
- At the next monthly meeting, you check in. The volunteer sheepishly indicates that he hopes to get it done soon.
- It's now been three months since the rule was released. What do you do?
 - Do you continue to follow up with the original volunteer?
 - Do you reassign it to a different volunteer?
 - Do you drop the briefing as no longer being timely?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time?
- At the next meeting, the group discusses another new development, and the same volunteer offers to draft a briefing. Do you assign the briefing to the same volunteer?

Because This Is The Way

- You are a master gardener and volunteer at your community demonstration garden.
- To become a master gardener, someone must intern, including obtaining 40 hours of experience hours.
- The demonstration garden is always short on volunteers.
- The head of the program does not permit interns to volunteer as workers in the garden. Instead, she believes they must gain experience hours through other activities (such as manning a “Ask the Master Gardener” table).
- The program head has maintained this policy for many years. When asked about it, she explains “This is the way it’s always been done.”
- You have been assigned to lead the vegetable garden and could really benefit from interns being allowed to assist.
- How do you navigate this situation?

The Resume Padder

- You chair a practice group and are introduced to your vice chairs for the next AHLA fiscal year.
- At the first monthly meeting, all the vice chairs attend.
- Second meeting, one vice chair emails an hour before the call and indicates that he cannot make it because of a client emergency.
- Third meeting, the vice chair attends but does not volunteer to assist on anything.
- Fourth meeting, the vice chair does not attend (without any prior notice).
- Fifth meeting, the vice chair attends but does not volunteer to assist on anything.
- What do you do?
 - Do you raise a concern with the non-contributing vice chair? If so, how?
 - Do you begin assigning things to the vice chair?
 - Do you let the vice chair continue for their full two-year term, or at some point do you recommend to AHLA that the vice chair should be removed (is that a thing?) and a replacement found?

If You Remember Nothing Else . . .

- Volunteers chose to be here
- Respect their time
- Make the work meaningful
- Create progress
- Recognize their contribution





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