

VISION OF THE VALLEY OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL, INC.

The Vision of the Valley Opportunity Council, Incorporated (VOC), is to be the highly effective, visible, and respected central catalyst, coordinator, and voice of the Chicopee-Holyoke Area's effort against poverty. It is to be more than a provider of services to the poor, for to merely feed, clothe, and shelter the poor is to insure the presence of fed, clothed, and sheltered poor who remain poor. It is to be both a direct and indirect provider of *opportunity* for those who are poor to no longer *be* poor.

VOC's vision is of a *just* community in which the loss of any individual's *or* family's economic means is always *temporary*, and insured by community support against traumatic, debilitating, and lasting effects. It is a vision of a community which cares about and responds to the needs of underprivileged people with distributive and social justice, and of people accepting that justice with both dignity and confidence in their ability to achieve not only self-sufficiency, but their place among the *contributors* in the just community.

VOC's vision is of a community *united* in the effort against poverty, an effort not fractured by social, economic *or* political rivalries, but focused on the mission of relief to the oppressed, means to the deprived, and opportunity to the hopeless. It is of a community of caregivers whose only competitive spirit is in the quality of service to this mission. VOC's mission is both to work for the actualization and support or such focus and to share in the work or the mission.

VOC's vision is of a community effort against poverty that is a *model* in the Western Massachusetts region, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the nation -- searching, experimenting, and leading in the development of solutions to the national poverty epidemic. It is a vision of a local anti-poverty effort respected sufficiently in ascending governmental levels and bureaucracies to cultivate attentiveness to the localities where both need and needed wisdom arise.

VOC's *internal* vision is of itself as an organization centered in a common culture of *community service* with professional devotion to *continuous improvement* in the quality of that service. It is of a family of employees, volunteers, and supporters whose personal and professional needs are met by organizational structures, processes, and resources in maximum fulfillment of its mission. It is a vision of a quality workplace where administrative rules, offices, and processes are dedicated in support of service programs and personnel, where organizational and process performance in the support of mission service is the sole evaluation standard, where the mission contributions of workers are acknowledged and justly compensated, and where there is job security and personal fulfillment.

VOC's vision is of certain circumstances almost certain to prevail in its operating environment in the foreseeable future. Unemployment will continue, some legitimately due to the inability of firms to make new hires or carry current personnel levels. Poverty is not unemployment, or even the lack of money (on a short-range basis); it is the inability of people to survive the period without money, and various dynamics precluding some from basic employment opportunity -- the reason VOC's functional vision is of itself as a catalyst and provider of both basic services and opportunity.

VOC's vision is also of explosively advancing technology, not only as a factor in changing employment levels, but also as a facilitator of agency effectiveness. Such advances are in both physically manufactured products and in various behavioral and management processes. Among the behavioral/management phenomena are those of industry's Quality Revolution and the spinoff dubbed by some as the "Re-invention of Government". External to VOC, these phenomena have been incorporated into the politics of governmental reform and will be reflected to varying degrees in the language, form, and actual operations of both granting and governing agencies. VOC's vision is of itself as a continuously re-inventing

and quality-focused agency, studying evolving technologies and techniques to shape an internal culture with members committed to service quality and empowered by supportive tools and systems.

As part of the envisioned continuance of current political processes, the VOC Vision is also of general reductions in government grant availability and, consequently, both strengthening its position in grant competition and initiating new strategies for alternative sources of support for needed programs -- the reason VOC's functional vision emphasizes "highly effective, *visible*, and respected ... effort against poverty" (above, opening statement). Here again, the VOC Vision is of technological application, both in the demonstrated program effectiveness and in the process of demonstration.

Envisioned overall is an era of unprecedented and continuous change and, with it, the traditional obstacles to organizational change. Strategies must be developed for overcoming the fear of change, tendencies to protect "turf", and unwillingness to learn what is being discovered beyond agency walls. Administrative restructuring is likely to incorporate, accommodate and exploit technologies and methods for the support of programs and development of the above-mentioned quality workplace.

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VOs of the VOC VS

The Visual Objects (VOs) of the VOC Vision statement are the things that are "seen" in the described vision. They are of three general types, (A) desired objectives, (B) incidental circumstances and (C) obstacles.

(A) Desired Objectives

- 1.1 highly effective, visible, and respected central catalyst, coordinator, and voice of the area effort against poverty.
- 1.2 direct and indirect provider of *opportunity* for those who are poor to no longer *be* poor.
- 2.1 a just community.
- 2.2 a caring community.
- 2.3 dignity of service recipients.
- 2.4 self-sufficiency and social contribution.
3. community united in anti-poverty effort.
- 4.1 model anti-poverty community.
- 4.2 upper-level attentiveness to local need and wisdom.
- 5.1 internal quality culture.
- 5.2 organizationwide programmatic support.
- 5.3 quality workplace.

(B) Incidental Circumstances

1. Continuing unemployment.
2. Advancing Technology.
3. External emphasis on reform and re-invention.
4. Reduction in Federal grants.

(C) Obstacles

1. Fear of change.
2. Turf protection.
3. Inadequate administrative technology.
4. Inadequate funding.

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