Field Office Operations Guide

Draft

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The Field Office Operations Guide is a revision of the document known as the LCOL Guiding Principles. The Guide will consist of two parts.

- Part One – Operations
    - Operations prescribes the recommended framework for the Local Council of Leaders to create a level of consistency organization-wide while respecting the unique differences from office to office.
- Part Two – Resources
    - A collection of documents, charts, graphs, and other materials to assist in implementing the operations outlined in Part One.

Purpose Statement:

- The Board of Directors of the American Camp Association is responsible for governing the association in partnership with the chief executive officer (CEO).
- The CEO is responsible for Association operations and delegates responsibilities to staff and volunteers.
- The Local Councils of Leaders (LCOL) lead the local implementation of core association services, programs, as well as outreach and engagement activities with the support of staff and the Volunteer Engagement Committee (VEC).
- The CEO has delegated the following operational authority to each LCOL:

1. Approval of the ACA-accreditation status (both granting and removing) of camps assigned to an LCOL's field office, as well as other standards work as outlined in the Standards Administration Manual.

2. Joint approval (with the chief financial officer) of the use of the reserves from the former Section identified with the field office. Identify priorities in the local office area to influence resource allocations.

3. Selection of the Chair of the Local Council of Leaders and other LCOL members.

4. Selection of second representative to the National Council of Leaders

5. Recruitment of volunteers to participate in the delivery of core services, programs and outreach at the local level.

6. To provide additional services (tiered services) as determined by the LCOL in alliance with the strategic priorities and vision of ACA, Inc. that serve the needs of the local area.

7. To work in partnership with the field staff to plan and deliver the CORE services to members and customers.

Core Services

1. Accreditation Services

    Ensure the delivery of the accreditation program in the assigned geographic area through the utilization of the Standards Administration Manual

2. Professional Development

    Ensure educational opportunities are available for persons with a vested interest in the success of a camp experience, based on identified needs of local geography and demographics.

    *Delivery methods may include: Partnerships with other organizations, utilizing an ACA program (i.e. New Director Orientation), online learning or locally generated conference and/or workshop.

3. Volunteer Development

    Implement and manage a volunteer development system including: cultivation, recruitment, training, support, and recognition to ensure delivery of local services.

4. Organizational Development

    Contribute to the growth of the association by focusing on individuals, camps, and business affiliate membership while building relationships and communicating the value of the camp experience with individuals and community partners.

5. Public Policy/Government Relations

    Monitor local and state laws, licensing and regulations that impact camps; and share information and educate camp professionals, community partners, and government agencies locally and nationally.

    Implement advocacy strategies in alignment with ACA guidelines

    Build relationships with local and state government agencies

While the above CORE services are required to be provided by all LCOLs, we highly encourage additional services (tiered services) based on the needs of the local areas. These tiered services will align with the strategic priorities and vision of ACA, Inc. Some examples of these tiered services include research, Emerging Professionals In Camping, etc.

LCOL Operations/Structure

1. *LCOL structure:*

The recommended minimum LCOL structure is as follows:

A lead volunteer that coordinates the work of the LCOL – Chair

A lead volunteer (chair) that coordinates the work of each of the five service areas. They will work with the rest of the LCOL, the field staff, and VEC to provide those five CORE services, ensure the tasks are met and ensure communication is happening in all levels of the field office.

Those positions would be named: Accreditation Services Chair, Professional Development Chair, Volunteer Development Chair, Organizational Development Chair and Public Policy/Government Chair.

This structure will provide some commonality across field offices to be able to provide training and networking around like positions.

Note: other chairs may be added as secondary/second tier services are added to the LCOL's work, i.e. Research chair, EPIC chair etc.

2. *Selection of LCOL chair and other chairs:*

Each LCOL position shall have a service description that includes skills and competencies necessary for the position. Using the competencies for volunteers/service descriptions, names are solicited by the rest of the LCOL and/or other representatives from the general membership. After names are solicited, the LCOL and/or other representatives will interview and select the new chair, to be approved by the LCOL. The interview process should ensure the candidate possesses the competencies and leadership for the position. This should be done in partnership with the staff regional team leader who will be working directly with the chair and the LCOL.

This process shall be the same for all chairs who wish to serve on the LCOL.

3. *Term limits:*

LCOL Chair, three-year term, with the ability to serve two terms, to coincide with training offered by ACA provided every three years. The immediate and long-term goal is to get all LCOL chairs on the same term/cycle.

Accreditation Services Chair, three-year term, with the ability to serve two terms, due to the new five-year cycle.

All other Chairs serving on the LCOL, a two-year term, with the ability to serve two terms.

The terms for all chairs should start prior to any training sessions offered by ACA. The LCOL should determine a length of time for overlap between the incoming chair and outgoing chair's terms to provide a smooth transition.

The LCOL should implement staggered terms as part of the strategic planning process to avoid complete turnover of the LCOL.

4. Selection of the LCOL representation to National Council of Leaders (NCOL):

The LCOL chair by nature of the position is the first representative to serve on the NCOL. The second NCOL representative should be an LCOL member or recent member with a good understanding of the local field office operations. The selection of the second NCOL representative shall be by majority vote of the LCOL.

Field Staff supporting the work of the local offices

This section is under development

Each region has a team of professional staff members to work in partnership with the volunteers in each local office to carry out the work of ACA.

Membership

- Serve as the concierge for ACA
- Connect members to benefits and services
- Grow and retain members and camps
- Bring camps into the accreditation pipeline

Professional Development

- Work in partnership with volunteers to plan and deliver an annual calendar of professional development opportunities with ROI that meet the needs of the local office
- Support the technical aspects of event management

Accreditation

- Work with the local office volunteers to manage the accreditation program in accordance with the Standards Administration Manual

Outreach and Engagement

- Provide support to each LCOL in the region
- Lead the regional staff team to meet the needs of the field
- Work with local volunteers to increase business support through sponsorship, regional business affiliation, and sponsorship
- Work with each LCOL to determine local offices' second tier services

LCOL task/authority

These are the tasks/authority delegated by the CEO/board of ACA to the LCOL as also outlined in the purpose statement.

1. Standards Approval

Responsibilities of the Local Council of Leaders (LCOL) are set forth by the National Standards Commission (NSC) and are defined in the Standards Administration Manual (SAM) and can be found at https://www.ACAcamps.org/about/leadership/volunteers/national-standards-commission

2. Delivery of CORE Services

All local field offices and LCOLs will provide the five core services to their local area (in partnership with ACA staff). We highly encourage LCOLs to provide additional services (secondary services) based on the local office needs, ensuring that these services align with the strategic priorities and vision of ACA.

3. Strategic Planning

In order to anticipate the needs of the field office and to plan for delivery of CORE services and other responsibilities, it is recommended that each field office work, develop and implement a strategic plan to guide the work of the field office with the support of the ACA Regional Outreach and Engagement Professional staff member.

Requirements of Local Office Strategic Plan

1. The individual Local Councils of Leaders are made up of dedicated volunteers assembled throughout the field with the following purpose and call to action:
    a. To provide local structure and delivery to further the strategic priorities and vision of ACA, Inc.
    b. To act as a conduit for communication and transfer of information to and from the local level to the ACA National Council of Leaders.

2. The three "ENDS" the Association wants to achieve in the world are currently:
    a. There will be greater public understanding of and support for the value of the camp experience.
    b. An increasing number of children, youth, and adults of all social, cultural, and economic groups, will have a camp experience.
    c. The camp experience will be of high quality.

3. The LCOL will develop a local plan that mirrors national ACA strategies and include local priorities. Once the plan has been developed, the LCOL will
    a. Develop strategies and deadlines to accomplish the tasks in the plan.
    b. Develop work groups or committees to be responsible for specific portions of the plan.
    c. Review the plan annually to determine effectiveness and changes.

4. *Fiscal Responsibilities:*

Local Office Fundraising

Local offices and LCOLs may participate in fundraising activities for the specific purpose of funding ACA initiatives. The following guiding principles apply:

1. All fundraising initiatives must be related to the mission and goals of ACA, Inc.

2. All local fundraising efforts will be identified in advance through the budgeting process and thus approved by the CFO/CEO when the annual budget is submitted/approved.

3. Compliance with local and federal laws with respect to fundraising is the responsibility of ACA, Inc. staff and therefore only staff may enter into any fundraising agreements or contracts with the approval of the CEO. Staff and volunteers will follow all fundraising and receipt of funds SOPPs as identified by ACA, Inc.

4. Funds raised for a designated purpose will be classified as "temporary restricted" until the purpose has been satisfied (e.g., monies raised to provide scholarships for individuals to attend an educational event will be temporarily restricted and only released when the money is awarded.) Fundraising efforts for these types of initiatives can span more than one fiscal year.

5. The CFO will track the balance of all temporary restricted accounts and at the end of each fiscal year (June 30) after the external audit has been completed, will provide the staff with a report of the beginning and ending balances, and the funds used for the year to share with the LCOL.

Local Office Scholarships/Camperships

Local offices and LCOLs may raise and designate funds specifically for the purpose of providing camper scholarships, and scholarships. The following guiding principles apply:

1. All local camper scholarship, scholarship, or grants initiatives must be approved annually by the chief financial officer (CFO) and serve the mission of ACA, Inc.

2. All local camper scholarship, scholarship, or grant initiatives must adhere to local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

3. All local camper scholarship, scholarship, or grants initiatives must have written, clearly defined local standard operating procedures and protocols (SOPPs) that include:

- Application process and timeline

- Eligibility guidelines

- Awards/distribution process that ensures fairness and the integrity of ACA, Inc.

- Donor acknowledgement process (complementary with ACA, Inc.'s current SOPPs on donor acknowledgement)

Definitions:

• Camper scholarships are considered monies raised/given away to fund campers to attend camp programs.

• Scholarships are considered monies raised/given away to individuals to fund their participation in an ACA event/program (e.g., to attend professional development opportunities)

Use of Reserve Funds

During the unification of the Association, section reserves (unrestricted net assets as recorded on the adjusted balance sheet) were assigned a unique account number. Those reserves of the former Sections are designated for use ONLY by the local field office. ACA, Inc. will not re-designate these funds for any other use. At the same time, any future expenditure of the local field office reserves must be approved by the appropriate LCOL and the ACA chief financial officer.

To use reserves:

1. Requests for use of funds must be approved by a majority vote of the LCOL.
2. Requests for use of funds must be submitted in writing to the CFO and include the signature of approval from the LCOL Chair.
3. The use of funds requested must meet the following criteria:
   a. Does it support ACA's Mission – Enriching lives of children, youth, and adults through the camp experience?
   b. What is the intent – Do the funds support ACA initiatives (such as education, scholarships, and other projects as defined by the LCOL that can't be funded within the budget?
   c. Is it reasonable? Was the decision for use of funds made in good faith and with a reasonable degree of care, and without any conflict of interest. The interest of the association must take precedence over personal interest of the LCOL.
4. Written requests must contain the following information:
   a. Name of LCOL reserves requested
   b. Date funds requested, and date needed
   c. The amount of funds requested
   d. Description of how the funds will be used
   e. Explanation of how this supports the ACA mission
   f. What goal or outcome is anticipated through the use of the funds
   g. Signature of the LCOL Chair and date of approval vote by the entire LCOL
5. The chief financial officer will review and approve requests. If additional information is needed, the CFO will contact the Regional Outreach and Engagement staff member for discussion. If the CFO does not approve the request, he or she will provide a written explanation to the CEO, LCOL Chair, and staff member. The LCOL may appeal to the CEO for reconsideration.
6. The CFO will track the balance of the reserve account and at the end of each fiscal year (June 30) after the external audit has been completed. The CFO will provide the Regional

Outreach and Engagement staff with a report of the beginning and ending balances, and the reserves used for the year.

NCOL Reimbursement (in development)

5. *Operational Responsibilities:*

In order to conduct the business of the local office the LCOL must schedule regular meetings to ensure tasks are completed and progress to goals is tracked. Meetings may be held via video conference, phone, or in person. At least one meeting a year should be in person.

6. *Code of Conduct*

In order to fulfill the purpose of the Local Council of Leaders, the LCOL will operate under the following Code of Conduct:

1. The LCOL Chair and Members will reveal any conflicts of interest with regard to their role on the LCOL. Individuals will recuse themselves from participating in discussions and decisions relevant to their conflict of interest.
2. The LCOL Chair and Members and other volunteers must not use their positions to obtain ACA employment for themselves, family members, or close associates. Should a member desire to be considered for employment, he or she must first resign their position. No LCOL member or volunteer may serve as a compensated staff member of ACA, Inc. or one of its Affiliates.
3. The LCOL Chair and Members and other volunteers will not disclose or discuss with another person or entity, or use for their own purpose, confidential or proprietary information gained through their volunteer work for ACA (e.g., accreditation approval issues).
4. The LCOL Chair and Members and other volunteers will not receive compensation for their work. However, volunteers can be reimbursed for expenses related to participation in meetings, and other expenses incurred for the benefit of the field office or LCOL.
5. The LCOL Chair and Members and other volunteers will not use the Intellectual Property (IP) of ACA to further any personal interests; or purport or imply ACA's IP to be their own. This includes all information in ACA's database, knowledge center products and services, logos, and any other statements or educational materials created by or for the American Camp Association.
6. Each LCOL member will sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form annually.

7. *Communications*

The local office community serves as local voice for promoting events, calling members to action and sharing knowledge.

ACA provides a number of communication options, including the local office newsletters, ACA Connect, Voter Voice, and targeted emails.

ACA has developed the following guidelines to ensure that ACA remains incompliance with the CAN-SPAM Act.

ACA Volunteer Communications to Members – Guidelines

Background

Effective marketing in today's world benefits from skill and coordination. ACA's email communications consider the following:

- Frequency – We take care that the frequency of emails from ACA isn't frustrating members. We schedule emails to prevent the feeling of being overloaded with ACA email.
- Brand – We remember that ACA's brand and reputation is at stake in every communication we send.
- Voice – Our editorial team reviews copy for grammar and word choices, but also uses a cohesive "voice" that members will recognize.
- Trust – Members have trusted us to handle the personal information they have shared with ACA carefully. We have moral, legal, and practical reasons to protect their personal information.
- Tracking – We take advantage of our email marketing tool (ClickDimensions) to ensure it is properly formatted, we use A/B testing to find the most compelling subject line, and use the built-in metrics to track opens and clickthroughs.

Volunteers sending email blasts from personal email addresses could be in violation of the Federal CAN-SPAM Act if the emails are commercial messages (see below for more information). ACA follows guidelines of CAN-SPAM Act by allowing individuals to opt out of email and mail. All commercial emails ACA sends through our email distribution system offer the recipient a way to opt out. Additionally, if ACA staff provide member contact information lists for email blasts and/or send email blasts outside of ACA's email marketing tool (ClickDimensions), they are violating ACA's own Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) database user policy.

Guidelines

Personal One-Off Emails – We encourage personalized one-off email communications to members from volunteers' personal email accounts. Contact information for new members is available on the membership and standards chairs' report portal. These one-off communications include:

- Welcome emails to new individuals or camps
- Email to new primary contacts of camps as a check-in
- Emails to camps relating to their visits, AAR, Statement of Compliance, Self-Assessment
- Emails to visitors relating to their visit assignments, AAR review assignments

Reports on Standards and Membership Chair Portals – Many reports with member contact information are available on the Membership Chair and Standards Chair portals.

- These lists can be used for personal one-off communications
- These lists cannot be used for ongoing bulk communications

Other Current Vehicles for Communication – Beyond email, ACA can support communications with all local members through four additional modes:

- Local office newsletter (typically sent every two weeks and once a month during the summer)
- Local office Facebook page
- ACA Connect – Search the Member Directory to connect with individual members
- Email blasts sent by ACA through ClickDimensions on behalf of a local volunteer or individual

Unsolicited and/or Promotional Emails – Volunteers must coordinate with ACA staff when promotional emails are desired. Staff are here to support your goals but also to ensure that ACA is following the laws and policies to which we must adhere. Staff can help with these. Promotional emails include:

- Promotion of events or networking events
- Local public policy calls to action

8. *NCOL representation – in development by NCOL*

9. *Volunteer development – in development by VEC*

Resources

Examples of resources to be included (solicit feedback for final list)

- ACA Calendar
- Specific Standards Administration Manual guidelines for LCOL - link to SAM
- Roster of staff/regional volunteers for networking
- Who to contact list
- Organizational chart
- List of terminology – ACA 101
- Service Descriptions – NCOL rep, LCOL Chair, etc.
- Nominating forms for volunteers for LCOL
- Sample chart for LCOL terms
- Sample RACI chart
- Volunteer Framework
- Reserve use forms
- LCOL self-evaluation, personal evaluation for each LCOL member
- Volunteer resources
- Strategic Planning Tool
- Volunteer Reimbursement link

This resource packet will live in the toolbox and will have links to the resources listed.