

# Voice of the Poor Regional Leader

## Role Description

May, 2019

As with all levels of leadership in The Society, a Voice of the Poor (VOP) Regional Leader is at first a servant leader to and for those we serve, both internally and externally. As such, he or she should hold the strong value that advocacy should add to the spirituality of our Society. Divisiveness is never the goal of our work.

**Appointment:** Each Regional Vice President should recommend two VOP representatives to the national President for appointment to the national VOP committee.

### Recommended skill sets for VOP Committee members

- Formed Vincentian in good standing.
- Peer leader in conference, district, or council.
- Knowledgeable about Catholic Social Teaching.
- Technical skills to maintain email alerts and advocate lists.
- Good written and oral communication skills.
- Exhibit flexibility and willingness to analyze, discuss and communicate facets of social concerns by working in the spirit of Vincentian friendship. Exhibit openness to others and their opinions.

### Time Commitment (approx. 2-15 hours per month)

- Monthly national committee conference call.
- Attend VOP meeting at National Assembly and Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, in Washington, DC.
- Any additional time commitment is driven by activities to grow and strengthen advocacy in the region. Those can be conference calls, newsletter editing, conducting workshops, organizing projects and committees. Templates for these activities are available from the national VOP web site (<http://www.svdpusa.org/members/Programs-Tools/Programs/Voice-of-the-Poor>) and are in consultation with local leadership to prioritize and implement.

### **Voice of the Poor Mission**

In the spirit of Christian love and justice, the Voice of the Poor Committee upholds Catholic values by researching, validating, documenting, advocating, and promulgating issues related to the condition of the poor and disenfranchised for the purpose of helping Vincentians to live their faith by acting knowledgeably and credibly as a unified body speaking with one voice for the purpose of building up the Kingdom of God

*If indeed “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics”, the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice”. [150] All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world. This is essential, for the Church’s social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ. (EVANGELII GAUDIUM, Pope Francis, no. 183)*

*Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good.*

*It is vital that government leaders and financial leaders take heed and broaden their horizons, working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare.*

(EVANGELII GAUDIUM, Pope Francis, no. 205)

**Responsibilities of the Regional VOP Leader** (some of these responsibilities may be done in conjunction with, or delegated to, State/Diocesan VOP Leaders where appropriate)

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1. Grow the VOP presence within their geography.
2. Work with local leadership to identify and train a VOP members and committees at all levels of the region (Councils, Districts, and Conferences).
3. Identify region and state wide advocacy opportunities and identify collaborating organizations.
4. Work with the Regional Vice President to adapt and execute the national strategic plan.
5. Seek out creative ways to involve and organize the people we serve to advocate for themselves and increase their voice in our communities.
6. Communicate progress to the region and national Vincentians on a regular basis.
7. Provide education to both grow our effort and enhance our expertise.

**Responsibilities of the National Committee** (composed of the Regional Voice of the Poor Leaders):

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1. **Support the Society's Mission and Vincentian Charism** by helping Vincentians to better understand the social teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. **Make Recommendations.** Investigate and recommend social justice/advocacy issues. Draft national position papers on key issues to educate and encourage Vincentian action.\*
3. **Collaborate** with national and local like-minded organizations. Each member should have regular contact with organizations that advocate for poverty issues. Catholic Charities and the Catholic Conference are the first places to contact but there may be others in your dioceses or community.\*\*

4. **Act as a Resource.** Provide reliable and valid background information that the National Council may use as the basis for advocacy.
5. **Educate Vincentians.** Assist and support the National President and National Council in educating Vincentians on subjects with national, regional and local implications so that Vincentians are better equipped to effectively respond to issues that affect the poor.
6. **Encourage systemic change** in our organization, and in our communities, by helping conferences, districts, and councils identify opportunities to engage those in need in advocacy and by developing and delivering tools for doing that. This is best done by facilitating local VOP committees.
7. **Grassroots Effort.** Communicate and encourage Conference members to write as individuals to their respective legislators at the federal, state and local levels on issues affecting the poor. Coordinate federal and state issues with your regional VOP chairperson.
8. **Gather information** from regions and report to the National President on social justice issues experienced in their Vincentian work.

Footnotes:

\*VOP work is political but never partisan. The Society's advocacy focus is on issues related to the condition of the poor. The Society does not support individual political campaigns. Doing so may jeopardize the Society's tax status.

\*\*The National President, alone, is the official National spokesperson for the Society. Local elected leaders are the only spokespersons for local issues. The Society should not lend its name to any effort that could have member agencies who would be engaged in any activity not supported by Catholic teaching.