



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Conference President Skills and Attributes

The Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Presidents as Servant Leaders

The Rule 3.11: Following Christ's example, the Presidents at all levels of the Society endeavour to be servant leaders. They provide an encouraging atmosphere in which the talents, capacities and spiritual charisms of the members are identified, developed and put to the service of the poor and of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The president of the Conference or Council will have special responsibility for promoting Vincentian Spirituality.

Purpose

The following information covers some of the key responsibilities, expectations and qualities of a Conference President. This information is not inclusive of everything as each President will be required to respond to the individual needs of their Conference and the people with whom they serve.

Responsibilities

Conference Presidents play an important role in encouraging an atmosphere in which the talents and capacities of members are supported and everyone is encouraged to contribute in meaningful ways.

In addition, the President will:

- Continually promote the responsibility of managing the Society resources with care and prudence within the spirit of generosity to help those in need.
- Identify and respond to any issues that can cause harm, discomfort, or risk to members and those we serve.

Skills and attributes

For the well-being and effectiveness of the Conference it is important the Conference President can:

1. Positively and effectively communicate
2. Create a welcoming and friendly environment
3. Motivate and encourage others
4. Delegate to other members
5. Encourage reflection and faith development of the members
6. Engage and work with a diverse group of people
7. Respond to changing needs
8. Ensure ethical and accountable decisions are made on behalf of the Society
9. Ensure compliance regarding any legal or Society policies and procedures
10. Encourage communication with other internal networks and external agencies where required
11. Seek assistance and support from Society staff and members on human resources, financial, and administrative matters where required.

Refer to the information below for further explanation.

1. Positively and effectively communicate

The Conference President is proactive in effectively conveying relevant information about the Society's activities and policies. They encourage dialogue that is open, honest, relevant and productive.

2. Create a welcoming and good working environment.

Every person is welcome to participate in the work of the Conference and is encouraged to feel safe,

supported and cared for. The President facilitates a harmonious and inclusive community among the members through role modelling and encouraging respectful collaboration.

All members are inducted into the Society and made aware of their rights and responsibilities, informed of the wider Society and the range of services offered. Presidents ensure new members' induction and training is completed prior to starting their volunteer work. The President may delegate this task to others but has ultimate responsibility for compliance in this matter.

3. Motivate and encourage others

Conference Presidents are encouraged to continually motivate and encourage others. Motivating members involves supporting new ideas, sharing positive stories, encouraging a variety of spiritual development opportunities, networking with other people to share their experiences and positive encouragement towards all members.

4. Delegate to other members

Delegation of responsibilities across the membership is an important aspect of the role of the President. Each member should be encouraged to contribute to the work and life of the Conference in meaningful ways.

The President encourages and supports others in sharing responsibilities for the betterment of the members and the people they serve.

Mentoring, offering encouragement and acknowledging others' input and ideas are critical to retain members and encourage new and fresh ideas.

5. Encourage reflection and faith development of the members

The President works in collaboration with the Spiritual Advisor, parish priest or other Society representatives to nurture and support the faith and spiritual growth of the Conference members. Active and dynamic spirituality and faith development that integrates the experience of helping and serving the most vulnerable is encouraged. Spiritual development that is welcoming to members of different faiths and backgrounds whilst retaining the Catholic ethos of the Society should be considered.

6. Engage and work with a diverse group of people

The Society welcomes people of all ages, ethnicity, gender and faiths to participate in the work of the Society and the President should be encouraging and supporting of new members and new ideas.

The President ensures everyone has a clear understanding of their role, what is expected of them, and the variety of avenues of services within the Society.

The President always encourages members to collaborate with local community groups or agencies who may have expertise or resources that will benefit the people we visit.

7. Respond to changing needs

The President encourages new ideas and activities that assist the members to respond to the changing needs of the people they visit. Improving the work of the Conference is encouraged by holding regular reflections.

Reflection may lead to new strategies or action plans that may include:

- Flexibility of meetings time and place; to meet changing needs of the members
- The impact of local issues/trends
- Faith and spirituality – reflections, retreats, discussions etc
- Sharing roles or responsibilities
- Resources for the Conferences – recruiting new members, fundraising, attending Society events/meetings.

8. Ensure ethical and accountable decisions are made on behalf of the Society

The President is accountable for managing the Conference. This may include dealing with complaints, risks, behaviour of members, appropriate use of resources and supporting the broader decisions and actions of the Society and State Council directives.

At all levels across the Society everyone has a moral and legal obligation to act in a manner that:

- Is respectful of others
- Is undertaken in a manner of charity and goodwill to others
- Does not put other people or the organisation at risk
- Uses the resources – donations, money etc in a proper manner
- Promotes and reflects a positive representation of the Society.

9. Ensure compliance regarding Society policies and procedures and legislation

Conferences have a level of autonomy in which they can conduct their service to those in need and good works. The President ensures the members conduct themselves and adhere to all policies, procedures and practices of the Society.

Presidents support and assist members through organising training and regular information to update their knowledge and skills. Presidents are encouraged to utilise the skills of staff, volunteers, Regional Presidents or existing people in the organisation.

10. Encourage communication with other internal networks and external agencies where required

The Conference President, along with all Conference members, are encouraged to maintain regular communication with people across the Society who can offer support and guidance. This may include relevant staff, volunteers, Council Presidents or members of neighbouring Conferences.

Presidents benefit from attending regular regional meetings to represent their own Conference members and engage with others across the region to share concerns and successes, learn from each other and be supported in their mission. Benefit can also come by maintaining relationships with external organisations or community groups who share a similar mission to the Society.

11. Seek assistance and support from Society staff and members on human resources, financial, and administrative matters where required

The vitality, success and ultimate effectiveness of the Conference is dependent on each person's contribution being meaningful and valued. When individuals in the group feel positive and are supported in their role this

will reflect in the life of the Conference. Utilising the skills and knowledge of people within the organisation to assist in a range of areas to help members will help the Conference to continue to be current, vital, and effective:

- Financial information – treasurers, gift cards, accounts
- Fundraising
- Administration- correspondence, resources, vouchers
- Donations and bequests
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Induction and training of members
- Recruitment and member support
- Human resources – conflict management, mediation, policies and procedures
- Special works – update on services, referrals etc.