



Capitalize on Volunteerism and Citizen Participation

The Legislature should create a volunteerism office in the new Texas Commission on Commerce and Labor Agency to more effectively channel volunteer resources and citizen participation.

Background

According to public sector volunteerism expert J. L. Brudney: "The consideration of alternative methods for the delivery of public services reflects a growing spirit of entrepreneurship and innovativeness among local officials. Volunteer personnel are an important element of this approach. While contracting out has attracted most attention as an alternative to the standard model of service provision through public employees, *volunteers offer a highly potent means to limit the size yet increase the effectiveness of government.*"¹ (Emphasis added.)

Volunteers represent the largest and most cost-effective work force available to the State of Texas. More than half of all U.S. adult residents volunteer an average of 4.2 hours per week.² Although a great majority of volunteers report working for the nonprofit sector, public agencies enjoy a significant amount of volunteer labor. In 1985, 23 million people—one in every five volunteers—contributed their time to a public agency at the local, state or federal level. That same year, the International City Management Association estimated that 72.6 percent of cities with populations of 4,500 or more involved volunteers in at least one service area.³

Nationwide, governmental bodies face severe fiscal constraints, while the need for public services continues to escalate. Financially strapped governments find citizen participation an attractive option to augment their capacity to deliver services and to reduce dependence on a salaried work force. A Virginia legislator, defending the state's office for volunteerism stated: "We're not talking about saving money—we're talking about providing services with money we do not have."⁴ There is a need for organized, directed volunteer service.

Volunteerism in the public sector builds on an impressive foundation of altruism. According to the survey, "Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1992," Americans contributed 15.2 billion hours of service nationally.⁵ The report goes on to say that "being asked" is a prime motivator for giving as well as for serving. People who are asked to contribute financially are more than twice as likely to do so than those who are not asked. People who are asked to volunteer their time are more than three times as likely to do so than others. Of those who were asked to volunteer, 86 percent did so, compared to just 24 percent of those who were not asked. A massive volunteer work force is clearly available and waiting to serve.

State Support of Volunteerism

Approximately 30 states maintain offices to foster volunteerism, and several others have contact persons with this responsibility. In a 1991 survey, the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism found that about 324,000 persons volunteered over 15 million hours for an estimated value of \$174 million. Out of that work force, 86,304 persons contributed more than 6.2 million hours of service to public agencies, valued at over \$70 million. The Division of Volunteerism concluded their study with this summary:

The use of volunteerism has a significant impact among state and local organizations. Volunteers help bridge the gap between decreasing revenues and increased demand for services. Without these citizens giving of themselves, many requests for assistance would go unanswered.⁶

General Government

Arkansas estimates that it would have needed an additional \$2.8 billion of taxable personal income in order to have paid almost 324,000 statewide volunteers. Arkansas' economy would have had to have grown an additional 8 percent in 1991. (The state's 1991 economic growth rate was only 4.9 percent over 1990.)

State offices designed to foster and support citizen participation perform many vital functions.

Technical Assistance

Volunteers working within state government have the right to work in well-organized and thoughtfully directed programs, which provide meaningful service opportunities. Professional liability and automobile insurance (for work-related travel) are basic requirements safeguarding the gratuitous work force. Through the efforts of offices supporting volunteerism in the states of New York, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Minnesota, volunteers working in state agencies have liability insurance coverage to the same extent as paid workers using umbrella policies. Minnesota's volunteerism office aggressively tackled the problem by gathering experts to recommend ways to reduce exposure to negligence and liability issues.

In Texas, state agencies, hospitals, schools and community centers that use volunteers purchase liability policies from private insurers. The premiums range from \$350 to \$6,000 per year. Texas lags behind other states in charitable immunity legislation. Securing liability coverage on an agency-by-agency basis is duplicative, costly and may discourage some agencies from initiating volunteer ventures—in spite of the potential for an increased ability to deliver services.

Empowerment

Volunteerism has been an American tradition based on a fundamental ethos of empowerment. Dating back to colonial days, we have been a nation of self-help organizations. We created our own health care institutions, community betterment groups and youth service organizations. Through community ownership, citizens have moved from a reactive stance to a proactive position of confronting issues and solving problems.

With the support and guidance of the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism, a network of 53 Unified Community Resource Councils (UCRC) has been developed. The Division of Volunteerism provides ongoing technical support and assistance in forming the councils and in networking. Each UCRC is made up of local people who work to share community resources and coordinate efforts to help meet community needs. Each UCRC is community owned and operated independent of state or federal agencies. Operating as a nonprofit entity, the UCRC acts as a problem solver that can receive assistance, donations and grants for the benefit of the community to meet the problems of that community. Volunteer personnel contributions to the UCRCs in 1991 totaled \$6.2 million.

Operating through the Department of Administration, the Minnesota Office on Volunteerism relies heavily on its community-based advisory committee. Composed of representatives from government, foundations, businesses, higher education and all facets of the volunteer community, the board has been instrumental in forming nonpartisan alliances and developing partnerships to address significant community concerns. Legislators regularly call upon the office to explore innovative approaches to community participation. Volunteerism is no longer seen as an addendum to significant issues of governance—it has become an integral part of the solutions to concerns facing the state.

Texas can boast about its community participation supporting social needs. Through volunteer-service councils authorized under the Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), both the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TxMHMR) and the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) gain valuable volunteer and monetary contributions to augment their programs. Operation Bootstrap, organized by the Department of Aging, has successfully created permanent funding sources to underwrite many senior centers across the state. Each effort is laudatory and should be supported.

Creative models demonstrate the potential to empower communities. In this technical age, citizens with firsthand experience with community problems need help to navigate the legal and bureaucratic systems in order to address and solve community concerns.

General Government

Training

In *Reinventing Government*, David Osborne and Ted Gaebler assert that bureaucracy has undermined the confidence and competence of citizens and communities. "We create dependency," they argue. Likewise, our system of big government agencies too often revolves around maintaining control and sustaining the power of the professionals and the bureaucrats. Working cooperatively with citizens who believe in their power to act and are committed to solving their own problems is a new and revolutionary way of "doing" government. Training is imperative, and new reward systems are critical.

State offices of citizen participation provide training. Through its Certified Volunteer Manager Program, the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism, in cooperation with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, prepares managers for all facets of volunteer administration. Minnesota achieves comparable results by encouraging university sponsored programs and offering training programs. Virginia operates a network of conferences which provides valuable volunteer management education for state agency and nonprofit personnel.

In Texas, the chiefs of volunteer services in state human service agencies have developed a regional network of training events. The cooperating parties include the Department of Human Services (DHS), TxMHMR, Texas Department of Health, the TYC, the Attorney General's Child Support Enforcement Division Office, the Department of Aging and the new Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (DPRS). The Governor's Office on Volunteerism sponsors an annual conference, a one-day event in December, which includes training and the presentation of the Governor's Awards for Volunteer Service. The conference and awards presentation are important functions, yet neither adequately addresses the massive need for preparing officials in state government to effectively collaborate with citizen groups.

The Texas University System, the Governor's Leadership Program and the Governor's Management-Training Program each present valuable opportunities to reeducate state officials to rethink citizen participation and to explore creative options for shared leadership.

Truly integral citizen participation in the business of government is a radical departure from traditional administrative practice. Not only are volunteers capable of solving problems and expanding service delivery beyond fiscal restraints, but they represent the capacity to leverage scarce resources. For TxMHMR alone in fiscal 1990, every dollar appropriated by the Legislature for volunteer services netted a \$3.59 return in goods and services.⁷ DHS and DPRS together estimate a 20:1 ratio of services leveraged for state dollars expended.⁸ No other program offers greater fiscal impact or long-term potential benefit.

Expertise

A commonly misapplied definition of "volunteer" is amateur. The term volunteer, like the term amateur, may reflect a salary status, but no aspect of the definition should be confused with skill level, dedication or expertise.

For example, the loaned executives supporting the work of Texas state government illustrate the impact of these skilled volunteers. Governor Richards' office benefits from the services of an executive on loan from Xerox. The original Texas Performance Review team encompassed private sector volunteers, and the Comptroller's *Renaissance Project* has used the expertise of executives on loan from private sector firms.

Loaned executives and volunteer consultants greatly enhance the work of the public sector. The Fellows Program in the Office of the Mayor of Chicago matches the skills and expertise of private sector executives with short-term public projects needing special assistance. United Airlines trained all of the city's telephone operators and their supervisors in customer service techniques. IBM helped public health nurses reduce the time devoted to paperwork through a hand held computer system, freeing nurses for additional patient contact. A marketing plan is being developed for a new recycling effort. A local bank developed an integrated accounts receivable program for the city. Both the Benefits Office and the worker's compensation system are being overhauled. All of these projects have been leveraged through the director of the program and the two voluntary advisory committees with whom she meets.

A conflict of interest statement signed by the company prevents it from bidding on any contract work that may emanate from a service assignment and safeguards the integrity of the volunteer and recipient. The Benefits Office has not

General Government

computed actual dollar savings because funds were never available for these projects, and while the projects added value, their existence was a bonus of creative resource utilization and corporate responsibility.

Developed in response to the curtailment of federal funds to city, county and state governments, the Volunteer Consultant Services Program in Arkansas enlists volunteer consultants with professional skills so "regular services can be maintained and new projects undertaken." About 230 projects have been undertaken in the program's eight-year history. Volunteer consultants have planned water and sewer systems, fire stations, drainage and street paving projects, municipal purchasing systems, traffic flow projects, personnel policies, pension plans, street numbering, computer networking, historic renovation and handicap accessibility work. Architectural and engineering firms have called to request opportunities to provide service. One out-of-state company has offered its expertise. (A slightly dated fiscal analysis finds that every dollar in state funds leverages a \$10 return in professional services.)

Retirees are a valuable resource to the Arkansas plan. The legal department of the Department of Human Services requested and secured the services of a retired state employee to read and highlight the *Federal Register* on a weekly basis. The gentleman and his wife pick up the *Federal Register* each week and return an annotated version when they pick up the new issue.

Texas has benefited from the expertise of volunteer consultants as well—in a less systematic and comprehensive manner. Over 300 people helped rebuild Mother Neff State Park on a volunteer work day in August 1992 after the park was damaged by a flood. Dr Pepper bottling company provided drinks, and the Lions Club fed the volunteers. McLennan County Electrical Cooperative used their equipment to trim dead limbs from trees. The Department of Parks and Wildlife uses volunteer park hosts each summer.

The Added Expertise of the Retirees

There is phenomenal potential in the retiree work force. Retirees in any sector of the economic community represent a storehouse of knowledge, skills and abilities honed through a lifetime of work. As Dr. Ken Dychtwald says in *Age Waves*, "Maybe one of the purposes of aging is to have the time, the longevity, to make the world better . . . there is so much that needs to be done . . . why not create elder corps?"

Corporations across the country are doing just that by actively helping their retirees organize volunteer services. The Honeywell Retiree Volunteer Project now has 1,250 active volunteers. Dr. Jim Renier, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Honeywell, shares part of the company's rationale for encouraging and supporting retiree volunteerism:

We don't do it just because it's a good thing to do; it's very self-serving. Look at the taxes and burdens corporations bear due to the problems of our society. Those costs are packaged into the products we sell worldwide.

When we help our communities, we help reduce society's problems, and that can help us reduce the cost of our products and become more competitive. Some studies estimate that we spend in excess of \$700 billion addressing societal ills. If you could reduce that amount by even 10 percent, the cost savings would be enormous. Retiree volunteer programs are an effective way to reduce social costs.⁹

This same logic applies to state government. As of September 1992, there are 5,000 full-time classified Texas state employees over 60, each averaging 14 years of state government experience, and an additional 3,034 full-time higher education employees over 60, each with an average of nearly nine years experience. If on retirement, the state could enlist 25 percent of those persons each year in creative volunteer opportunities, the wealth of expertise and wisdom would greatly enhance the state's power to undertake new endeavors and sustain existing projects. These recruitment projections may be low. We know that 72 percent of persons 55 and older are volunteers, and we know that 40 percent of American retirees would rather be working but with flexible, part-time hours.¹⁰

Productivity does not stop at some arbitrary age. There is an unprecedented demographic shift in this country. We must understand this new population distribution and respond to this resource with opportunities to match the skills, education

General Government

and good health of this rapidly growing group. Organizations, such as the National Retiree Volunteer Center, assist companies in harnessing the retired volunteer work force. The State of Texas should enlist the appropriate expertise to capitalize on the ability and interest of the "elder corps."

Networking

Effective state offices on volunteerism develop extensive networks within their state by establishing important relationships and learning the key concerns of their constituency. A solid knowledge base is essential to capitalize on opportunities, support creative endeavors and to be prepared to act on grants and contract opportunities. The distribution of funds from the National and Community Service Act illustrates this point. States with established, functioning divisions of volunteerism are the most successful in the competitive grants process.

Pennsylvania, with its PennServe operation, secured \$1 million in *Serve America* funds as well as \$2 million to support existing service corps and another \$5.8 million over three years to set up new service corps. Arkansas was identified as the grants administration center for the three-state Delta Service Project, a model national service corps program. In fiscal 1992, \$3.4 million were allocated for this demonstration grant plus additional funding for the Department of Education and its *Serve America* thrust. Minnesota received three times its state allotment in *Serve America* funds, Vermont two times its allotment. Each of these states was well positioned, had key working relationships established and had mechanisms for comprehensive planning efforts.

A centralized office supporting volunteerism, working in cooperation with the governor's initiatives, could reap substantial benefits for Texas.

Support Youth Service

Under the heading "Differences Between Generous Volunteers and People Who Don't Volunteer," the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported these findings from the survey *Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1992*:

Statement	Percent of generous volunteers	Percent of generous non-volunteers
Personally saw someone they admired helping others when they were young	63.0	32.6
Belonged to a youth group or something similar when they were young	65.9	35.2
Did some kind of volunteer work when they were young	60.9	29.1

Youth service is unequivocally a predictor of adult service. We must encourage youth service. Although isolated school districts in Texas do encourage service, there is an untapped potential waiting to be mobilized.

The national focus on youth community service must be harnessed and brought to Texas in a planned and organized way if we are to assume our responsibility for developing new generations of citizens concerned for their country. PennServe has had considerable success in mobilizing youth through directed attention to school districts. Texas should study this model closely.

General Government

Recommendation

A volunteerism office should be established in the new Texas Commission on Commerce and Labor.

Another recommendation in this report consolidates many work force development functions within various state agencies. This volunteerism office could be established within the new agency or another appropriate agency. The office's emphasis should be in three main areas: loaned executive/volunteer consultant programs, retiree corps and youth corps. Three staff members would be required to start up the executive/volunteer and retiree corps office: a program director, a professional level person with expertise in volunteer or related programs and an administrative assistant. The director should be a knowledgeable and experienced manager in volunteerism with a national perspective and solid contacts in the volunteer community. This office should be responsible for supporting city, county and state agencies in meeting service needs using the expertise of loaned executives and volunteer consultants. The office should work with the federal government and private firms to obtain funding to administer the state program and to distribute grants to local government and private nonprofit organizations. Duties should include establishment of a loaned-executive program, a retiree corps of volunteers and a youth corps of volunteers. The office should use the expertise of the National Retiree Volunteer Center to establish the retiree program.

The volunteerism office should coordinate closely with the governor's efforts and collaborate with other state agencies and community groups that need volunteers and conduct volunteer efforts within their agencies. The office should be required to consult with top-level government and community personnel as well as volunteer administrators in other state agencies to ensure the best use of the state's resources. Top-level government and community personnel should advise retirees of significant government initiatives that need support.

State volunteer program personnel should research statewide liability coverage and charitable immunity protection for volunteers working in all aspects of state government and recommend such coverage to the 74th Legislature. In addition, the report should include an assessment of the volunteer services staffing in state agencies and recommend better ways to coordinate and leverage the state's volunteer resources.

Every effort should be made to harness the volunteer potential of youth. Attention should be given to supporting existing service corps programs within the state, to starting new programs and to encouraging guided community service projects through the schools.

Funds in the amount of \$168,000 should be set aside from the Advance Interest Trust Fund (the balance in this fund cannot be used for its original purpose). Another recommendation in this report proposes using the remaining fund balances as grant funds for youth corps programs. That recommendation proposes additional staffing to monitor these grants.

Implications

Volunteers leverage scarce resources and maximize the expenditure of public dollars.

A volunteerism office provides the state with an avenue to directly access the expertise of the private sector. Having the functions discussed above consolidated in one office will result in the state being able to bring together youth, private sector executives and retirees to accomplish common goals. While these programs—volunteer loaned executives, retiree volunteers and youth—may be separate, there are benefits from having one director oversee all functions.

Fiscal Impact

The costs associated with a volunteerism office are offset by its ability to leverage resources and to add value to government services. Equivalent worth should be ascribed to volunteer output, yet one must remember the phantom nature of these dollars. Services provided by volunteers are often beyond the purchasing capacity of the government; however, the assistance provided can generate enormous cost savings. Likewise, there are non-quantifiable components to service in terms of goodwill and positive customer relations. No dollar value can be placed on these intangibles, yet

General Government

their existence greatly enhances government and maintains a positive relationship between the taxpayer and the public institution. Further, the volunteers may gain a sense of worth by contributing time and energy to make things better.

The cost to the Advance Interest Trust Fund consists of salaries, benefits and other standard FTE costs for the three staff members.

Fiscal Year	Cost to Advance Interest Trust Fund 935	Change in FTEs
1994	\$168,000	+3
1995	168,000	+3
1996	168,000	+3
1997	168,000	+3
1998	168,000	+3

The Volunteer Consultants Project in Arkansas can document a 10:1 ratio of resources leveraged for each public dollar. They manage approximately 25 projects a year each averaging \$13,000 in professional services rendered (total benefit = \$325,000). Intangible benefits to the state can be calculated by applying Arkansas' statistics as a basis for the Texas program. Assume Texas generates 60 percent of Arkansas' professional services rendered in the first year and 100 percent in subsequent years.

In Texas, the various human services agencies document a high return on their administrative investment on volunteer resources. This return can be enhanced through the elimination of unnecessary duplication, centralized promotion and grant administration, coordinated training for staff and volunteers, coordinated policy management and support for new volunteer efforts. The office could be instrumental in establishing close working relationships between the economic sectors and finding creative ways to enhance the quality of life for all Texans.

Endnotes

- ¹ J. L. Brudney, *Fostering Volunteer Programs in the Public Sector* (San Francisco: Bass Publications, 1990), p. 10.
- ² K. A. Goss, "Economy's Legacy: A Big Drop in Giving," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 20, 1992), pp. 14-17.
- ³ S. Duncombe, "Volunteers in City Government: Advantages, Disadvantages, and Uses," *National Civic Review*, vol. 74, no. 9 (1985), pp. 356-364.
- ⁴ S. Milliard, "Voluntary Action and the States: The Other Alternative," *National Civic Review*, vol. 72, no. 5 (1983), pp. 262-269.
- ⁵ K. A. Goss, "Economy's Legacy: A Big Drop in Giving," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 20, 1992), pp. 14-17.
- ⁶ "Economic Impact of Arkansas Volunteers - 1991," *Involvement*, vol. 92, no. 7 (September 1, 1992), p. 10.
- ⁷ "Report of Gifts, Grants, Contracts and Donations Received During FY 1990," Office of Strategic Planning, TxMHMR, 1990.
- ⁸ Interview with Susan Smith, DHS and PRS, Austin, Texas, November 24, 1992.
- ⁹ "At Honeywell Corporate Responsibility Makes Good Economic Sense," *NRVC Roundtable*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1992).
- ¹⁰ "The Nation's Great Overlooked Resource: The Contributions of Americans 55+," *NRVC Roundtable*, vol. 3, no. 3 (June 1992).



Establish a Texas Youth Corps

Texas should establish a service and conservation youth corps for out-of-school, unemployed youth.

Background

In 1991, Texas had about 200,000 unemployed young people between the ages of 16 and 24. Youth aged 16 to 19 experienced a 20 percent unemployment rate and accounted for 93,000 of the total. Another 113,000 youth aged 20 to 24 also were unemployed with an 11 percent unemployment rate.¹

More than 40 cities and counties and 18 states have established youth service and conservation corps to provide an alternative to youth unemployment, gangs and youth crime.² A youth corps gives communities needed services and provides educational and job opportunities, work and life skills, improved self-esteem and the satisfaction of community involvement to unemployed youth.

Youth corps members work on service projects, such as making public facilities accessible to the disabled or serving in nursing homes, senior centers, child care centers, schools, law enforcement agencies and literacy centers. They also work on conservation projects to improve wildlife habitats, parks and recreational areas, energy conservation and recycling. Some corps are involved in housing rehabilitation and low income minor home repair that teach specific job skills.

Communities receive needed services not otherwise available, and unemployed youth, who might otherwise become involved in gangs, drugs, crime or other social ills, are placed in gainful activities that can lead to a productive life. The program can provide an opportunity for youth to serve as role models for other people, which instills a growing commitment to community.

The concept of youth service and conservation corps began with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established in 1933 as a New Deal program to combat unemployment in the United States during the Great Depression. In 1935, 2,600 CCC camps had an enrollment of 500,000 nationwide. The CCC was abolished in 1942.

The basic concept was revived again in the late 1970s with the energy crisis when several corps were established across the country. In the late 1980s, more states and localities established corps in response to problems of youth unemployment, gangs and youth drug abuse. The National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC), established in 1985, is the national association for youth corps and has more than 70 corps organizations representing more than 20,000 corps members.³

While youth corps across the nation vary somewhat according to mission, funding sources, benefits and ages of youth served, they all have certain common features. Youth corps generally serve out-of-school, unemployed youth, usually between the ages of 16 to 24 for six months to two years.

Corps members work on projects in teams or crews of 6 to 12 under the guidance of a staff supervisor who provides assistance but challenges them to learn new skills. Corps members are usually paid minimum wage or provided a stipend if they are considered a volunteer. Some programs offer members a tuition scholarship, cash grant or savings certificate of up to \$5,000 when they complete their time in the corps.

Corps teams work on both short-term and long-term service and conservation projects that have tangible results in the community. Corps members receive ongoing educational opportunities, intensive orientation, including team building, outdoor physical training and exercises in learning through service.

Education

The Peace Corps and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) programs are a source of assistance to youth corps programs, usually through returning Peace Corps volunteers or locally based VISTA volunteers. The federal Job Corps, which is often confused with youth service and conservation corps, is a separate program that provides specific job skills in a residential setting for unemployed youth.

A few youth service and conservation corps, such as Florida's and California's, also provide residential services, but most corps are urban-based and transport crews or teams to project sites from a central base. State-operated corps are usually conservation-oriented and work on the state parks system. States also give grants to support local corps. State programs usually have an advisory board composed of representatives from unions, education, employment and volunteer organizations and the general public.

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 established the Commission on National and Community Service, which gave \$21.5 million in grants to states for conservation and service corps in fiscal 1992.⁴ Texas applied for a grant but was not selected. Funding for fiscal 1993 is also \$21.5 million and will be enough only to sustain corps that currently have grants. However, another \$22.5 million will be available in February for demonstration grants, and Texas could apply for one of these.

Although Texas was not selected for a youth corps grant, the state did receive a \$1.1 million grant for *ServeAmerica*, which is the student volunteer part of the Commission's enabling legislation, and some funds for higher education volunteerism.

Texas Programs

Texas has two local youth corps operating in Dallas and El Paso that could benefit from federal and state grants, and other Texas cities also have expressed interest in starting programs. The Dallas Youth Service Corps serves 50 youth corps members on a regular basis and more in the summer and has a waiting list of 123 applicants.

The El Paso Service and Education Labor Force (SELF) is a small program that serves 15 members. The Dallas and El Paso corps began operating in 1991 from a joint effort of Public/Private Ventures, Inc., and NASCC, which provided grants to start 12 urban conservation and service corps across the nation. The Dallas Corps receives annual funding of about \$1 million, and the El Paso corps receives about \$500,000, both from a variety of sources.⁵

A Texas Youth Corps could be administered by the Texas Commission on Commerce and Labor recommended in another part of this report.

Program Costs

The estimated average cost of operating a youth corps program is about \$15,000 per youth corps member per year, which includes a full-time wage or stipend at approximately minimum wage, a scholarship of up to \$5,000 and administrative costs. Besides general revenue, some states also use oil overcharge funds, lottery revenue, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) funds, park fees and hunting and license fees to fund corps programs. California uses "bottle bill" revenue to fund the recycling portion of their state and local corps.⁶ State programs that give grants to local corps can also require local match.

Besides the sources listed above, local programs often use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, city, county or school district funds and private funds, such as foundation, corporate, individual and in-kind donations. Some corps charge a fee for service to fund their programs or to use as local match for state or federal sources.

Boston's "City Year" youth corps program uses an annual Serve-a-thon to raise much of its funding. The Serve-a-thon attracted 4,000 people in 1991 and raised \$435,000 for the program. The Serve-a-thon works much like a walk-a-thon, but instead of walking, people are sent to sites around the community to paint, clean vacant lots or plant community gardens. Each corps team also has a corporate sponsor.⁷

Education

Most state programs are small, serving about 300 to 500 corps members, but the California Conservation Corps serves 1,800. Additionally, many urban areas in California also maintain corps. The size of corps often grow in the summer when JTPA Title IIB funds become available to hire youth in the summer.

Recommendations

- A. **The Legislature should establish a Texas Youth Corps that would provide competitive grants to entities at the state and local levels to establish or sustain youth conservation and service corps. The Corps should be placed in a state agency whose mission is consistent with work force development. In this case, the program would appropriately fit in Texas Commission on Commerce and Labor recommended in another part of this report.**

The Texas Youth Corps should also have an advisory council composed of representatives from unions, businesses, education organizations, employment services, human services, volunteer organizations, conservation programs and job training programs.

The Texas Youth Corps would need to provide both competitive grants to start up new programs as well as sustaining grants for existing programs. The Corps also should provide statewide training, technical assistance and grant monitoring to youth corps receiving grants. The state corps program should be allowed to provide training and technical assistance to other corps in the state not receiving grants. The program would need a director and sufficient administrative staff to provide training, technical assistance and monitoring services to state and local entities receiving grants. The program would also coordinate grant applications submitted to the federal government.

- B. **The Texas Youth Corps should be funded on a two-year trial basis from the balance of the Advance Interest Trust Fund 935. An appropriation of \$9 million each year of the biennium should be made to the Texas Commission on Commerce and Labor, which is recommended in another section of this report, or another appropriate agency, to fund the Corps.**

The balance in Fund 935 cannot be used for its original purpose, which was intended to cover interest payments to the federal government when Texas was forced to borrow money to pay unemployment compensation. Due to changes in the way Texas now manages Texas Employment Commission's (TEC) federal funds, the state will no longer have to borrow money from the federal government in the future for this purpose. The source for the fund was a surtax of one percent that was paid by employers and collected by TEC. The balance of the fund as of November 15, 1992 was \$26.6 million. Since the funds came from employers, it is reasonable to spend the fund on a purpose that is employment-related, such as the Texas Youth Corps.

- C. **The Legislature should mandate that the Texas Youth Corps present a report to the 74th Legislature on the progress of the program's implementation.**

Implications

A Texas Youth Corps grant program would maximize the number of young people in the program by leveraging state and local dollars and by matching federal dollars should they become available. The Corps would create meaningful opportunities for employment, training, education and service for unemployed youth. It would also provide them with improved self-esteem, a sense of belonging to their communities and leadership qualities. A Texas Youth Corps would also provide communities with needed services they could not otherwise afford.

The proposed funding source for the Texas Youth Corps, the balance of Fund 935, provides a two-year start-up fund for the program. Some employers could object to the balance of the fund being spent for a purpose other than its original one; however, the fund can no longer be spent for its original purpose. The state has a responsibility to ensure that available funds are spent for needed services. The Texas Youth Corps is an employment-related program that provides job training and other services to youth and the community and would benefit employers.

Education

The Texas Youth Corps would need to ensure that youth employed in these programs do not take jobs away from people currently employed. State and local corps generally place a union representative on their board and ensure in legislation that corps projects will not take jobs away from current workers.

Fiscal Impact

It is not possible to calculate the cost savings of this recommendation. However, state grants of \$8.5 million per year would pay for 1,133 corps members at 50 percent local match.

The fiscal impact information listed below assumes \$8.5 million each year would be provided in grants, and \$500,000 would be spent annually on administrative costs for the program. The program would need eight FTEs to provide technical assistance and training to local youth corps, apply for federal funding, monitor grants to local corps and to represent the state with other state and federal organizations affiliated with youth corps.

Fiscal Year	Cost to the Advance Interest Trust Fund 935	Cost to the General Revenue Fund 001	Net Cost	Change in FTEs
1994	\$9,000,000	\$ 0	\$9,000,000	+8
1995	9,000,000	0	9,000,000	+8
1996	0	9,000,000	9,000,000	+8
1997	0	9,000,000	9,000,000	+8
1998	0	9,000,000	9,000,000	+8

Endnotes

- ¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, unpublished data, 1991.
- ² National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, *Membership Directory* (Washington, D.C., June 25, 1992).
- ³ National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, *Membership Directory* and "What is NASCC?" (Washington, D.C., 1992).
- ⁴ Commission on National and Community Service, "Summary of Subtitle C Grants" (Washington, D.C., August 1992). (Draft.)
- ⁵ Dallas Youth Services Corps, Letter and budget document from Mary Eggemeyer, July 22, 1992 and Public/Private Ventures, Inc., "Urban Corps Expansion Project Profile - El Paso SELF," August 1992.
- ⁶ Interview with Bruce Saito, Assistant Director, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Los Angeles, California, August 13, 1992.
- ⁷ Interview with Virginia Gold, Serve-a-thon Co-director, Boston City Year, Boston, Massachusetts, August 28, 1992.