

The National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship, 1976

Guidelines for Your Participation

An Official Bicentennial Activity
of the
National Center for Voluntary Action
Washington, D.C.

The National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship, 1976

1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

Toll Free Number: (800) 424-8630

Hon. George Romney, *Honorary Chairman*

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JANUARY, 1976



AN OFFICIAL BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITY
OF THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION



RECOGNIZED BY
AMERICAN REVOLUTION
BICENTENNIAL
ADMINISTRATION

YOU—AND THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

Introduction

Throughout the history of our country the voluntary activities of individual citizens like yourself, arising out of a spontaneous, private effort to promote or advance some aspect of the common good, have made an incalculable contribution to our quality of life. Today, as the voice of the individual appears to be lost in the size and increasing complexity of our society, the expression of citizen concern and voluntary action in the solution of major national problems is of greater importance to the future of our society than ever before.

What does this mean to you?

The National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship, 1976 (NCVC, '76), an official Bicentennial program, will provide an opportunity for you, and other like-minded citizens, to speak out and be heard on matters which concern you—on local problems and national problems, on how you think they can be solved, and what you, as a citizen volunteer, can do about them. The agenda of The National Congress will be derived from what you and other citizens contribute.

The Plan

By your participation you will be initiating a process which begins with Local Forums, proceeds to Congressional District Forums, and culminates in The National Congress on November 19–23, 1976. But the process does not stop there. Plans for action and their implementation are as important as deciding what the problems are. So, following The National Congress, there will be State Conventions to consider what action is needed, and how you, as a concerned citizen, can be an effective voice for change. The following diagram shows how this process will work.

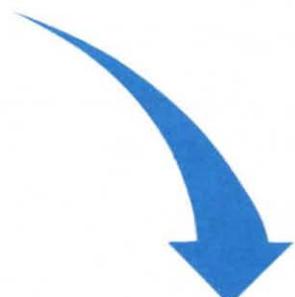
Greatest progress is made when areas of substantial agreement are identified and controversial matters deferred for further exploration and discussion. It is hoped that Forums will not bog down in disagreements, but will concentrate on searching out areas where positive future plans utilizing citizen volunteers can be made.

The Outcome

The unique genius of this undertaking, never before attempted on such a scale, is the continued active involvement of citizens like yourself in the study of concerns, problems and issues as you see them, and in formulating action plans to solve them. Specifically, this may mean, in communities like yours, the development of groups of citizen volunteers, a focus on the solution of community problems through the efforts of citizen volunteers, and legislative changes which will give recognition to and encourage volunteerism.

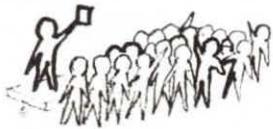


LOCAL FORUMS
(by April 15, 1976)

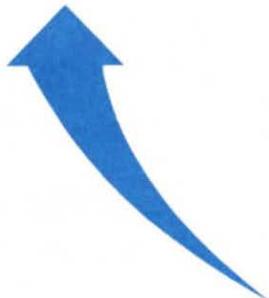


**CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICT FORUMS**
(May 15–August 15, 1976)

NCVC, '76



STATE CONVENTIONS
(March 1–May 31, 1977)



NATIONAL CONGRESS
(November 19–23, 1976)



NCVC,'76 OFFICIAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LOCAL FORUMS

by April 15, 1976

This is where it all begins. Local Forums will afford you and other citizens an opportunity to meet together to identify problems, and to determine how voluntary action by citizen volunteers can contribute to their solution. (See page 4 for agenda and ground rules.)

Deadline for Congressional District Forum Convener Nominations April 1, 1976

Final date for receipt of reports of Local Forums¹ April 23, 1976

Announcement of the Congressional District Forum Conveners April 26, 1976

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT FORUMS

May 15–August 15, 1976

This is the second step. Attendees at these meetings will review the recommendations of Local Forums and make recommendations, including a listing of priorities, to The National Congress. Attendees will also elect an official delegate to The National Congress. (See page 7 for agenda and ground rules.)

Final date for receipt of reports of Congressional District Forums² September 15, 1976

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS ON VOLUNTEERISM AND CITIZENSHIP, 1976

November 19–23, 1976

Elected delegates will meet to discuss concerns and recommendations received from the Local Forums and the Congressional District Forums, and to formulate recommendations, resolutions, and proposals for action.

Publication of Proceedings of The National Congress February 1, 1977

STATE CONVENTIONS

March 1–May 31, 1977

These meetings will review the recommendations of The National Congress and formulate plans for citizen implementation and action at the national, state and local levels.

Final date for receipt of reports of State Conventions July 15, 1977

Publication of summaries and findings of the State Conventions September 1, 1977

Beginning of second National Congress process September 15, 1977

¹Reports received after this date will not be a part of the Congressional District Forum Agenda.

²Reports received after this date will not be a part of the National Congress Agenda.

LOCAL FORUMS

What is a Local Forum?

A meeting, formal or informal, which brings together local citizens to discuss local interests, concerns and needs on the basis of citizen responsibility.

Who may attend a Local Forum?

Any interested, concerned citizen prepared to subordinate political, economic or other secular interests as required may attend. In order to encourage wide participation and the expression of diverse points of view, Local Forums should be open to as many citizens as possible.

When and where may a Local Forum be held?

A Local Forum may be held in any community throughout the nation through April 15, 1976. (This cut-off date is necessary to allow time for Congressional District Forums, and preparation for The National Congress.)

Who may convene a Local Forum?

Meetings may be convened either by individuals or organizations as long as citizen attendance is not restricted. The greatest possible flexibility is encouraged. The following are three examples among many possibilities:

1. An interested individual may bring together informally a group of citizens in his or her own home.
2. An established or informal organization (local block or civic groups, self-help organizations, service clubs, churches, chapters of voluntary organizations) may wish to hold a Local Forum in connection with a regular meeting.
3. A concerned organization may call together a "community forum" to include individuals and representatives of organizations from a wide spectrum of the entire community.

Thus: There may be more than one Local Forum in a community. You may convene a Local Forum, you may co-convene one with someone else, or you may encourage your organization to do so! However a Local Forum is planned, it is important that its Convener notify the NCV, '76 office of its planned date as soon as possible so that the appropriate materials can be forwarded to the Convener.

[NOTE: As a participant in a Local Forum you are expected to express your own views on subjects under discussion, not those of organizations you happen to be a member of or represent.]

What will be the agenda of a Local Forum?

The agenda will have three parts: the first identifies problems and concerns which the participants raise; the second concerns questions relating to individual involvement and influence; the third includes a short questionnaire on current issues relating to citizen volunteers to which each participant is asked to respond.

1. **Problems and Issues.** You are invited to discuss problems and issues affecting your community. Examples: need for a day care center; pollution of a stream; crime; racism; the allocation of revenue sharing funds. These are only examples—each Local Forum will select the *five most important* for its report to the Congressional District Forum. Don't worry about whether your community problem is big or small, local or national. Sometimes a small local problem, replicated in 100 other local communities, is really a national problem.

The main thing is that you identify, for each of your five most important problems, *what you think citizen volunteers like yourself can do about them*. How can you, and other like-minded citizens, contribute to their solution?

2. **Individual Involvement and Influence.** You are invited to discuss the following three questions:
 - What should be done to strengthen the role of individuals as volunteers and informed citizens?
 - Is there a need to encourage citizenship above partisanship? If so, how should this be done?
 - What institutional changes, public or private, are desirable to encourage greater individual involvement of citizen volunteers?
3. **The questionnaire.** Because many of those attending Local Forums will be citizen volunteers, The National Congress seeks to learn their opinions on several issues of current importance to volunteers. Respondents are asked to vote "yes" or "no" on the questions included on the separate reporting form. (*Please see Appendix 1, page vii*). All questionnaires will be tabulated and the results made available to the National Congress.

[NOTE: Participants may choose to discuss any or all of those items mentioned above. To further planning and goal-setting in organizations concerned with volunteerism, however, it is hoped that all participants will complete the questionnaire which deals with issues of volunteerism.]

May a Local Forum meet more than once?

It is expected that the Local Forum will be ongoing and will move from problem identification to program implementation.

What will a Local Forum cost?

Expenses for conducting Local Forums are expected to be minimal. For example, most organizations hold regular meetings or have access to meeting places where Local Forums may be held. NCVC, '76 will provide publicity kits, posters, news release samples, and *Guidelines* at no charge, upon request, but cannot assist with out-of-pocket expenses of a Local Forum.

What will happen next?

The next step in the process is the Congressional District Forum. In preparation for this event each Local Forum is to designate one official representative (the Convener or anyone else selected by the participants other than a declared candidate or elected public office holder) to present the views and recommendations of the Local Forum. Participants in the Local Forum are invited to attend and participate in the deliberations of the District Forum.

What are the special responsibilities of the Convener?

1. The Convener is expected to notify the NCVC, '76 office of the Local Forum at least two weeks prior to its actual date.

[NOTE: "Tips on Preparing for a Local Forum," a sample agenda and a publicity "how-to" kit will be sent to the Convener upon receipt of the Notification Form attached, Appendix 2.]

2. Publicity, including the Forum's agenda, date, time and place, should be released at least three weeks prior to the date of the Forum in the available media: newspapers, radio or television.
3. The Convener is responsible for completing the report of the Local Forum on the attached form, Appendix 1. These reports should be sent to the NCVC, '76 office within two weeks after the Forum is held.

[NOTE: In all cases, reports from Local Forums must be received in the NCVC, '76 Washington office not later than April 23, 1976. Reports received after this date will not be a part of the District Forum agenda.]

The Convener may wish to designate a member of the Local Forum to serve as a recorder of the proceedings and to assist in completing the above report to NCVC, '76.

APPENDIX 1

Reporting Form for Local Forums

The following pages contain the reporting form to be completed by the Local Forum Convener. The form has been designed to gain information about your Local Forum. To aid the NCVC,'76 Washington, D.C. office, please fill out each of its parts completely.

Upon completion of the form, remove the blue pages, fold and staple as indicated, affix postage (13¢) and mail to the NCVC,'76 office. Please retain a copy of the completed form for your files.

Reporting Form for Local Forums

Please Print

CONVENER'S INFORMATION

Name: _____
(If group or organization is the convener, list the name and the name of a liaison person.)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

U. S. Congressional District: _____
(number)

Primary Voluntary Affiliation of Convener (if an individual) _____

LOCAL FORUM MEETING INFORMATION

Date Local Forum was held: _____ Time: _____
(i.e., 7:30-9:30 p.m.)

Place held: _____
(i.e. Civic center, convener's home, Red Cross building, school, church, etc.)

Location of Local Forum: _____
(City or Town, State, Zip Code, Congressional District)

Chairperson or moderator of Local Forum (if other than Convener):

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

U. S. Congressional District: _____
(number)

Voluntary Affiliation (if any): _____

The Volunteer Recorder of the Local Forum was: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

U. S. Congressional District: _____
(number)

Voluntary Affiliation (if any): _____

Number of participants attending the Forum: _____

Please attach separate sheet with Roster of Participants. Include the following information:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i> (City, state, zip)	<i>Telephone</i> Number(s)	<i>Primary Voluntary</i> <i>Affiliation (if any)</i>
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The representative selected by the Local Forum to officially represent its participants at the District Forum is:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

U. S. Congressional District: _____
(number)

Telephone Number: _____

Primary Voluntary Affiliation (if any): _____

Part I of the Agenda: Problems and Issues

What are your five most important issues, problems or concerns?	What action do you believe is needed?
<p><i>(Examples)</i></p> <p><i>Need for a community day care center for pre-school children</i></p> <p><i>Pollution of our river</i></p>	<p><i>Organize individuals and groups to improve</i></p> <p><i>Determine what or who is polluting it;</i></p>

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

iv

ded to solve this problem?	By whom?
<i>investigate ways of setting one up.</i>	<i>Interested citizens; Department of Social Services; Council of Churches</i>
<i>organize cleaning campaign</i>	<i>Citizens for a Cleaner River; League of Women Voters; approach City Council</i>

Part III of the Agenda: The Questionnaire

The Local Forum participants expressed the following opinions on the volunteer issue questions: (insert *number* of positive and negative responses in appropriate boxes)

Government Funding

- | | Yes | No |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Should government money be used to support and encourage local volunteer bureaus and voluntary action centers? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. Should private voluntary organizations receive governmental money to assist them in developing volunteer programs? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. Should increased funding be sought for federal programs in this general area, such as VISTA, Foster Grandparents, etc. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Tax Issues

- | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Should a volunteer be allowed a tax deduction or a tax credit for volunteer time? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. Should individuals be allowed a tax deduction for the amount paid for dependent child care services (baby sitting, day care) to enable that person to serve as a volunteer? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. Should volunteers receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses in connection with their volunteer service, such as meals, transportation, parking costs, etc.? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Employment Issues

- | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Should volunteers receive school, college or employment credits for volunteer experience? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. Should volunteers continue to work during a strike of paid staff? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. Should volunteers take on duties of striking paid workers? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 4. Should there be laws or regulations requiring minimum insurance and other liability protection for volunteers serving in public or voluntary organizations? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

In addition to the questions listed, the following issues facing citizen volunteers were also discussed: (Attach a separate sheet listing the questions and responses as above.)

Give a brief description of how the Local Forum was conducted: (i.e., Did the entire group discuss each item? Was the group split into smaller work groups which dealt with individual topics, then reported back to the larger group?) *Please attach a separate sheet if needed to complete your description.*

As Convener of this Local Forum, I am submitting this report to the National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship, 1976.

Signature: _____

Position: _____

(i.e., Convener, Volunteer Recorder, etc.)

fold here

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

The National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship, 1976

1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20036

staple here

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT FORUMS*

What is a District Forum?

A District Forum, the second step in the process, brings together citizen volunteers to review and discuss the reports from the Local Forums held within the Congressional District, make recommendations to The National Congress and elect a delegate and alternate delegate to The National Congress.

Who may convene a District Forum?

An Official Convener for each District Forum will be designated by the Steering Committee of NCVC, '76 in consultation with Local Forum representatives. Nominations for District Forum Conveners will be welcomed from individuals or from Local Forum Conveners and/or participants. Conveners should be residents of the District in which the District Forum is to take place and the actual location of the District Forum must be within the U.S. Congressional District where it is to be convened.

Who may attend a District Forum?

The official representative of each Local Forum held within the District plus attendees of Local Forums may attend a District Forum. Interested citizens, unable for any reason to attend a Local Forum, are also welcome to participate. Each Local Forum represented has only one vote in the delegate selection for the National Congress.

When and where may a District Forum be held?

District Forums should be held between May 15–August 15, 1976, in order to allow ample time for preparation of National Congress materials. A District Forum will be held in each of the 435 U.S. Congressional Districts and the District of Columbia. (Details for participation of Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Trust Territories will be forwarded at a later date.)

***NOTE:** Hereafter, Congressional District Forums will be referred to as District Forums.

What are the special responsibilities of the Convener?

1. The Convener is expected to notify the NCVC, '76 office of the date and place of the District Forum at least three weeks in advance of the event. Where possible, NCVC, '76 will appoint a non-voting consultant to attend the event and to assist the Convener, as appropriate.
2. The Convener is expected to publicize the District Forum at least three weeks prior to the event, using available media: newspapers, radio and television. Publicity materials should include the agenda, the date, time and place of the Forum.
3. The Convener is expected to arrange for a moderator to chair the meeting. The moderator should be experienced in the conduct of meetings of various kinds, in eliciting full participation from those attending, and in dealing with differences of opinion, should these arise. In some situations, the Convener may moderate the meeting.
4. The Convener is expected to arrange for a suitable meeting place, for necessary materials, and for volunteers to assist with registration and other necessary functions.
5. The convener is responsible for assuring that the report from the District Forum reaches NCVC, '76 within two weeks after the District meeting. This requirement is necessary in order that materials may be made ready for The National Congress. A reporting form will be provided by NCVC, '76 and will include the required information regarding official delegates, participants, etc.

[NOTE: In all cases, reports from District Forums must be received in the NCVC, '76 Washington office no later than September 15, 1976. Reports received after this date will not be a part of The National Congress agenda.]

What will be the agenda of a District Forum?

The agenda for the District Forum will be developed from reports and recommendations of the Local Forums which will have taken place in each U.S. Congressional District.

However, participants in each District Forum are encouraged to add items to the agenda, as the group may decide.

In addition, each District Forum must also elect an official delegate and alternate delegate to The National Congress.

Who may be elected a delegate or alternate to The National Congress?

Any citizen volunteer attending the District Forum and a resident of the U.S. Congressional District may be elected as an official delegate or alternate with the exception of a declared candidate or an elected office holder.

May a District Forum meet more than once?

With the concurrence of its participants, a District Forum may meet more than once during the specified dates if convenient or necessary.

[NOTE: As with the Local Forums, if there is more than one District Forum session, the report submitted by the District Forum should reflect its *final* deliberations and decisions.]

What will a District Forum cost?

As with a Local Forum, it is expected that the cost of convening a District Forum will be minimal. Conveners are encouraged to seek contributed facilities and materials from individuals, organizations, and groups in the community where the District Forum is to be held. Although NCVC, '76 cannot assist with expenses of a District Forum, the same materials available to Local Forums will be available to District Forum Conveners without cost upon request.

What will happen next?

The next step in the process, to which the ideas and recommendations of the Local and District Forums will be directed, is The National Congress, to be held in Washington, D.C. on November 19-23, 1976.

The National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship, 1976

What is The National Congress?

The purpose of the National Congress in November, 1976, is to discuss the concerns and recommendations transmitted from the Local Forums and the District Forums, and to formulate resolutions and recommendations for action.

Who may attend The National Congress?

One official delegate (or an alternate if the official delegate is unable to attend) selected by the District Forum will attend The National Congress. In addition, observers (i.e., State Coordinators of Volunteerism, representatives of national organizations, and other interested citizens) will be invited to attend.

Each delegate is expected to take an active part in all sessions of the Congress, to represent the views and recommendations of the District Forum, and to vote on all resolutions and recommendations put before The National Congress.

When and where will The National Congress be held?

The National Congress will be held at the Marriott Twin Bridges Motor Hotel in Washington, D.C. on November 19-23, 1976.

How will The National Congress work?

The National Congress will take place in three steps:

1. Delegates will first meet in statewide caucuses to determine if there is substantial agreement on issues, and, if so, to determine how these views can best be advanced in the Seminars and in Plenary sessions.
2. Seminars will then be held to discuss the specific issues which have emerged from the District Forums, and to find general agreement on each of the matters under discussion.
3. Plenary sessions of The National Congress will receive the reports from the Seminars, delegates will hear resolutions and recommendations on the issues, and will vote upon all resolutions and recommendations.

Will any funds be available to assist Delegates with their expenses?

Scholarships *maybe* available to assist with delegates' costs of attending The National Congress. NCVC, '76 is working with groups to secure funds for this purpose. If funds become available, they will be allocated on the basis of need.

What will happen next?

A summary of the proceedings of The National Congress, including decisions and recommendations for action, will be available to all official participants. The next step will be the citizen action State Conventions. Where recommendations call for national action, such reports and recommendations will be sent to appropriate governmental officials and national voluntary organizations.

STATE CONVENTIONS

What is a State Convention?

A State Convention is intended to convert the resolutions and recommendations of The National Congress and local issues within the state into citizen action plans tailored to the needs and conditions of each state and locality. The action plan should be carried out to the fullest extent possible through existing organizations or their chapters.

Who may attend a State Convention?

Official delegates, alternate delegates and observers to The National Congress; citizen participants of Local and District Forums; members of voluntary organizations and other interested citizens may attend.

Official delegates who have attended The National Congress will, by virtue of their experience at the Congress, have particular responsibilities for leadership at the following State Conventions.

When will State Conventions be held?

State Conventions may take place at any time between March 1 and May 31, 1977.

Who will convene the State Conventions in your state?

NCVC, '76 will designate a Convener in each state.

NOTE: A model convention plan, giving details about participants' roles, voting procedures, etc. is being developed and will be forwarded at a later date.]

NATIONAL CONGRESS ON VOLUNTEERISM AND CITIZENSHIP, 1976

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The National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship, 1976

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