

VOLUNTEER SERVICES IN THE HALF-WAY HOUSE SETTING

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Introduction

TALBERT HOUSE, located in Cincinnati, Ohio, is a non-profit, private agency organized in 1965 to aid the returning offender in his adjustment back into the community. From its inception, it has been a voluntary service. At the time, it was recognized that a facility to provide professional guidance during the transition from prison to community-living was desperately needed. Too many offenders were leaving prison with \$20.00 and a suit of clothing and were inadequately prepared both emotionally and financially to rejoin the mainstream of societal living.

The half-way house program is geared to meet the needs of the offender on an individual basis. "Mass Treatment" has proved ineffective as witnessed by the failure of prisons to rehabilitate criminals. Individual capabilities, interests and motivation keynote the program.

Vocational counselling and job placement, psychiatric and psychological consultation, small group interaction, planned and informal recreation are but a few of the services provided by the half-way house. Probably the most important ingredient is the interest and concern shown by the Staff toward the ex-offender as he makes his transition.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES to any social service organization can and should be a worthwhile experience to both the volunteer and the client. In the half-way house setting, the voluntary worker should expect to spend much more time than just visiting. The people he works with are not confined, nor physically disabled, but instead are out on the street most of the time. These clients are not well adjusted and a return to community living

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from the prison is oft times a bewildering development. The clients are often impulsive and aggressive, easily frustrated and quite manipulative.

Budgeting of money is a major problem for the returning offender. Prior to his incarceration financial planning was limited to where he could get his next beer or pack of cigarettes or where he could find an easy touch for a few bucks. More often than not, employment was temporary and unskilled, with relatable low pay. Most of the money earned was spent on pleasure or clothes—with no concern about meals, living quarters and other normal necessities.

Even after weeks and months of counseling things do happen that put strain on the rapport and relationship of advisor to client.

An example of this type of behavior goes as follows:

Joe Smith has been a resident of the house since January 1, 1969. He is 23 years old and has three previous arrests for serious felonies. He is an orphan, having been brought up in institutions most of his life and living off the streets for the past several years between incarcerations. He obtains a job shortly after arriving at the house and after six weeks of stable employment, quits because he "just doesn't like it anymore". Several weeks pass before employment begins again, meanwhile his bills are piling up. Pressure to find the job prompts a desire to move from the house but funds prevent it.

Once employment is again started the first two paychecks total: \$109.00. They were spent as follows:

Haircut:	—	\$ 3.00	
Laundry:	—	8.00	
Cleaning:	—	12.00	(mohair trousers \$40 ea.)
Lost:	—	30.00	(a thief in the house?)
(3) mind you (3) Shirts:	—	54.00	for a
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		\$107.00	

total of \$107.00 of \$109.00 earned - spent. He sees nothing wrong with these expenditures since he "needed", repeat "needed" (3) \$18.00 shirts. How many \$18.00 shirts have you bought in the last two weeks?

His response to question about paying room and board went something like this—"Man, you're telling me to go out and steal to pay my bills!"

A volunteer worker in this instance (who built up a meaningful relationship with this individual) could have been a big help since, in many instances, the paid Staff are looked upon as "cops".

In the half-way house setting, volunteer services take two major forms—those from the community and those from the Staff.

The community provides first of all—a board of trustees for an agency like ours. These boards generally are made up of interested citizens. More often than not these boards are composed mostly of people in upper middle class situations with a sprinkling of the cleric and working class people. This is not a negative criticism but only a picture of what a board may look like. Let's face it—you need some blue ribbons in order to open doors very often. You also need these people to lend stability and a success history to your organization. In football you don't hire a coaching staff that has a constant losing record—if you want to win games!

The board of trustees provides consultation for contracts negotiated with agencies both public and private for financial assistance. In some instances, the board has been supplied with the bases for contracts from its professional staff.

Individual services from the community comes basically in three forms. Interested citizens willing to give time to some cases provide the opportunity for the ex-con to re-socialize with "square-johns" (the prison name for non-prisoners). This can be an invaluable contact since it presents the opportunity for the resident to meet and make new acquaintances and friends he may benefit from knowing.

Probably the most famous volunteer worker was a young lady who wished to help out part-time on week-ends. She eloped with one of the residents—after three weeks of service. The marriage is still going—so perhaps all was not lost after three weeks!

People in the professions of psychiatry, psychology, social work and others have freely given of themselves in order to be of service. Naturally, they also benefit from their experiences in that it gives them the chance to study close at hand the ex-prisoner. In many instances they have provided not only the motivation but also the therapist in treating individuals who require special attention.

Former clients and residents have provided much help to the agencies in several particular ways. They are not “cops”, “hacks”, “shrinks”, and-what-have-you to the ex-con. They are brothers in a very special bond who once released from the institution have made it. Job searching and sensible use of time are probably the most frustrating experiences that happen shortly after leaving prison. These ex-offenders—that have made it— did it some way but quite often only they can put it in terms that more recent arrivals can understand. Perhaps confidence plays a major role since the most outstanding change, if you want to call it that—is an air of self-confidence which they lacked when first released.

Probably the most significant and in the long run beneficial volunteer service comes from the professional and non-professional staff of the agency. This is not a self pat-on-the-back but instead is a real obligation on the part of the Staff to perform their jobs in the best manner possible. This is not an obligation because they are paid for their services—this is an obligation because they are in the business. People in the correctional field—as professionals—should be there because of interest to perform worthwhile service; concern for those human beings, who, for whatever reason, are not functioning in the mainstream of socialization and dedication to an idea that the ex-offender can return to accepted norms of behavior.

In many instances the ex-con is living in a world of almost daily crises involving employment, budgeting, and personal relations. These personal relations probably are the main area which presents conflicts to the ex-con. In almost every instance he needs someone he can relate to—to “rap” to. This person necessarily must be someone whom he trusts and has confidence in. In the half-way house setting these relationships can become intense in a very short time—mostly due to the nearness of the residents and the Staff. I think it can be easily said, and many times criticized, that the so-called “therapy” of the half-way house violates all the ethical codes of client - counselor relations. I accept the criticism. It’s probably true. The criteria is, however, “does it work”?

Fortunately (or unfortunately) as the case may be, the crises that arise do not always poke their heads between 8 A.M and 5 P.M. It would be beautiful if they did!

I think we in the half-way house business and to a great extent in any other corrective business must be prepared to put in other hours over and above the so called “minimum 40”. Why? Perhaps an example will explain. How often has a parole officer, probation officer or any other corrections worker not felt justifiably guilty about losing a client because of a violation. There is always that twang of pain about what more I could have done or perhaps prevented had I responded to a late-night phone call or investigated that last anxious phone call from a mother or wife. How did I miss all the signs of the impending trouble? I’d venture a guess that our most important events happen between 6 P.M. and 8 A.M.—the next morning.

How do we in the half-way house handle this? Mostly by concentrating our efforts toward the evening hours and on week-ends. A 60- or 70-hour week is not uncommon—in fact, a 50-hour week is probably falling short of possible effectiveness.

I’m not suggesting that the twelve-hour day is completely filled with strenuous counseling or hard work involving taxing

activities—instead, I'm suggesting making yourself available at times when a crisis or problem arises.

I believe that there is another benefit also that is valuable to the resident and also the community. The effort is being made to meet these ex-offenders as people and in many respects to meet them as friends. This friendly relationship has two beneficial results. First—it provides a close relationship for the resident. Many of these people cannot or have been unable to tolerate a close relationship. This relationship opens many inroads to the personality-structure of the resident and helps to give clues to the counselor as to means by which adjustments can be made. Secondly—by establishing a good relationship with an authority-figure the anxiety and fear connected with law-enforcement is somewhat alleviated.

To build solid relationships with these individuals takes sincere effort and a willingness on the part of the counselor to give of himself in order to aid.

The building of good, normal, healthy relationships with the ex-offender goes a long way in giving him exits for his problems.

So that's about it, my view-point on volunteer services—it's not the ordinary conception of them but I think that it is probably the best form.

The services that you give of yourself as a paid correctional worker over and above the paid routine can be the most valuable to your client and to yourself.

MOBILIZATION OF NON-POOR VOLUNTEERS IN COMMUNITY ACTION

Theodore M. Berry*

Introduction

The CAP mission statement issued last summer reaffirmed the community action basic purpose of mobilizing resources, and spelled out the types of resources to be mobilized. This part of the CAP mission has become increasingly important since OEO

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fiscal resources available to Community Action Agencies have been, and for the foreseeable future, will probably remain limited.

As CAAs improve their capacity to mobilize resources in their local communities to accomplish their legislative mandate, they have turned increasingly to non-OEO fiscal resources and to non-fiscal resources from public and private sources. They have particularly begun to report to OEO their successes in utilizing volunteers from the non-poor community, especially skilled volunteers, who demonstrate a wide range of knowledge, talents, energies and commitment to the elimination of poverty. Entire programs have been developed and run by volunteers.

In some communities, however, the non-poor constitute a still largely untapped volunteer resource. Since CAAs and limited purpose agencies must often operate with very limited fiscal resources, it becomes imperative that they make full use of the volunteer potential in their communities.

This paper is intended to point out some of the potential of the non-poor volunteers. It is *not* intended to indicate that use of volunteers is to be restricted to the non-poor. As has been proven over the past four years, target area residents constitute one of the best sources of volunteers in community action activities. Their contribution to Community Action Programs, including Head Start and Health Services, is well documented. Other guidance pieces which will follow this one, will document still further the contribution which is being made by target area residents through citizen participation and volunteer activities.

The following information is designed to report to CAAs how other CAAs have successfully utilized the services of non-poor volunteers, to the benefit of the CAA programs and to the satisfaction of the volunteers; to indicate some sources of volunteers which may not be generally known, and to identify some techniques for volunteer recruitment, placement, direction and orientation.

WHY USE VOLUNTEERS?

CAP Director, Theodore M. Berry, indicated in a recent

speech that "volunteers are the backbone of the Community Action Program." There are three reasons why this so:

1. Volunteers constitute a resource in most communities which can greatly enrich the quality of the CAA efforts and of the programs which it plans and operates. Indeed, the *concept of volunteerism* is built into the very structure of the CAA, since all Board members are, in effect, volunteers, whether they are representatives of the public sector, or are poor or non-poor. The time which they spend in board and committee activity, since it is apart from their usual working time, certainly must be considered as volunteered time. (See OEO Instruction 6802-1, as referenced, for limitations on counting volunteered Board time toward non-Federal-share.) The degree to which they commit that time and the level of commitment to the goals of community action, will, to a very large extent, determine the success of the community action program in a given community. Numerous examples of this commitment exist. In Caddo County, Oklahoma, (Council on Community Concerns, Anadarko, Oklahoma) a Board member, non-public and non-poor, has worked very closely with the CAA director in setting up a co-op to farm and market a new crop, in persuading the Department of Agriculture to build a storage and warehouse barn and in attracting training programs from the State.
2. Volunteers become enthusiastic supporters of community action—action that results in betterment for all sectors of the community. Such volunteers can effectively communicate with the non-poor community, carrying the goals of the program to previously uninvolved individuals and groups. In Eddy County, New Mexico (Eddy County Community Action Corp., Carlsbad, New Mexico), for example, the mayor of Carlsbad, who serves on the CAA Board, is the chairman of the Public Relations Committee.

3. Individuals and groups throughout the country *want* to be involved in the problems of poverty, in inner-city target areas and sparsely settled rural areas. CAAs can capitalize on that desire for involvement. Motivations of individuals may vary from a desire to be "where the action is" through a sense of duty to satisfaction in working with new people and new situations. Whatever the initial motivation of the volunteer, his activities should ultimately lead to the satisfaction that comes from being involved with target area residents, in working with them to develop, plan, conduct and evaluate the programs and activities which will enable those residents to become self sufficient. Psychologists call this satisfaction "psychic income", i.e., the substitute which volunteers accept for their efforts in lieu of salaries. Community action is exciting and rewarding. Volunteers *want* to be a part of it.

All CAAs which utilize volunteers will have to recruit, train, place and supervise them. In the following sections are examples of ways in which CAAs have carried out these functions. The examples are drawn from onsite visits made recently by Headquarters and Regional Office staff, from local newsletters and from MIS narratives. In many cases the name and location of the CAA has been given so that direct contact may be made with the CAA for further information.

HOW TO UTILIZE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have a special role to play in community action, both in their time spent in activities and in the enthusiasm which they take back to their own communities and which helps to build a supportive climate for community action. While volunteers must be willing to serve the needs and priorities of the CAA, not simply their own interests, they must be provided a degree of freedom not always given to paid staff if they are to continue to be motivated. A recent statement by VITA personnel sums up the role which is best played by volunteers. "A minimum of control and a maximum of independence in decision-making is required if the volunteer spirit is not to be stifled." (VITA is ex-

plained later on in this guidance.) The spirit and morale of volunteers, fostered by the professionals with whom they will be working, will greatly increase the effectiveness of community action.

In most CAAs, volunteers will be trained and placed in programs which have been developed either by residents of target and/or CAA service areas or by staff and Board members. Programs will vary widely from community to community. Some examples of utilization of skilled volunteers follow:

Organizational Volunteers

In Brockton, Massachusetts (Self-Help, Inc.), more than 10 colleges and universities have assigned students to do field work with one CAA in return for supervision from CAA staff. The CAA has received the benefit of services from psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, social workers and speech and hearing specialists, by providing them with field training placements in CAA projects, with CAA staff supervision and evaluation.

Several hundred CAA Boards contain representatives of the League of Women Voters. Local Leagues across the country provide assistance to CAAs and neighborhood organizations in citizenship education, in holding elections for CAA and neighborhood action council boards, in providing information on political structures and agencies through local publications and in providing speakers' training, discussion leadership training and research assistance. One CAA recently asked a local league for assistance in holding neighborhood advisory council elections in a medium-sized city. Previous elections, even for local, state and national offices, had not elicited much turnout from the target areas. The league held candidates' meetings for each of the neighborhood centers, drew up sample ballots containing the names of those running and also containing a list of questions about local issues: schools, garbage collection, government control of poverty programs, on which residents could indicate their preferences, and then the league demonstrated voting procedures.

In a southeastern city, a Quaker organization sponsored trips by college students from northern colleges into the community. The students volunteered their services in repairing and rehabilitating existing private dwellings in the target areas. The white college students worked successfully with black target area residents. In turn, the earlier resistant white community began to relate directly in a more positive way to the black members of their own community.

Teachers across the country frequently participate in CAA activities, but in one northwestern community, in which a neighborhood corporation (one of seven) was unable to persuade the school district to provide a GED (General Equivalency Diploma) program because the corporation was too far away from the school, teachers from the school system have volunteered their off-hours and have conducted GED classes on their own. Seventeen students have already received their diplomas.

Individual Volunteers

Individuals who volunteer in the community action effort may have technical areas of expertise or specialized skills, which the CAA can particularly use. Other individuals may not have technical skills, but may have special abilities and general skills at working with small groups. The examples of individual volunteer activity contain both kinds of volunteers—those with technical skills and those with general skills. Some examples of volunteers with technical skills follow:

The city of East St. Louis, Illinois (Economic Opportunity Commission of St. Clair County), decided to get a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a neighborhood facility. A neighborhood center of the CAA formed a fund-raising committee, with the help of a local minister. The committee persuaded an architectural firm to contribute its services for design of the neighborhood facility free of charge.

In another community the CAA, a neighborhood council, and a local union established a senior citizens' center. Members of

the union provided time and skills in making cabinets and in plumbing.

A sister from a local convent gave several hours per day during a summer program for a "Fun With Music" activity for pre-teen and teenage boys and girls on the streets in an Ohio city. The sister who was a skilled musician, developed the entire program.

In one CAA, 103 local lawyers are providing free legal services through the auspices of the County Bar Association. They maintain nine offices in target areas.

There are also numerous examples of volunteer activity among CAAs by individuals who have general skills to offer and who wish to participate generally in community action projects. A few examples follow:

In one southern CAA a local businessman has served as volunteer director of the Neighborhood Youth Corps (CAA-administered) and as director of a community-staff credit union on almost a full-time basis.

Hundreds of tutoring and recreation programs exist in which women, informed of the opportunities available for volunteer time and energy through their organizations (Young Women's Christian Association, AAUW, National Association of Negro Women, etc.) participate as individuals.

In Fayette County, Tennessee (Fayette County Economic Development Corporation Commission), two men active in the CAA—a local attorney and the mayor of one of the towns in the rural area CAA—have devoted many hours of volunteered time to improving the economy of the area, through designing an educational project in truck-crop production and packaging vegetables. They have worked closely with the CAA staff which has succeeded in attracting over \$5 million in EDA loans for commercial purposes, sewer and water facilities and industrial parks.

WHEN TO UTILIZE VOLUNTEERS

Skilled volunteers can be particularly useful to CAAs and anti-poverty activities in the planning and action stages of a program. During the planning phase, volunteers may be able to provide information, assist in helping neighborhood and community participants to make priority decisions and serve as a link between existing resources and proposed use of those resources.

The use of volunteers during program operation has been highlighted above, by the examples of contributed time and services based on particular skills.

In general, CAAs indicate that volunteers have been particularly useful under the following conditions:

1. When assistance is needed in planning.
2. When specific skills are needed for particular programs.
3. When the CAA is anxious to build community support for its program in the non-poor community and can absorb unskilled, but committed and enthusiastic volunteers, who will communicate their satisfaction at being involved to others in the non-poor community.
4. When a need for assistance to the CAA because of staff turnover or a short-term increase in activity is felt.
5. When approached by particular groups with offers of specific skills or programs which the groups want to apply in poverty areas, and where the CAA knows that those skills or programs can be absorbed.

As a CAA demonstrates effective use of volunteers in its programs and projects, it can expect to attract increasing numbers of both skilled and non-skilled individuals and groups. It should begin to develop a plan for their absorption, orientation and use, if it is to maintain a reputation for providing satisfying and meaningful outlets for volunteer activity. If a CAA has issued a general plea for volunteers for a particular activity, it should be prepared to absorb *all* of the volunteers who respond. This will

require planning and development of a strategy which provides immediate jobs for volunteers to do. Failure to develop such a strategy may generate frustration in volunteers and decrease the CAA's effectiveness in recruiting in the future. Contingency plans for use of unforeseen volunteers should also be developed. They may include projects and programs which the CAA would like to see undertaken at some time and for which insufficient staff and time has been available.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Many CAAs in the country already have strong contacts, both with groups and with individuals, who contribute time and commitment to Community Action. However, for those CAAs which have just begun or are considering mobilizing volunteer resources, the following steps are presented.

1. Appoint or designate a staff member to serve as a Volunteer Coordinator.
2. Prepare a listing of volunteer organizations within the community which contains: (1) the name of the organization, (2) the purpose and program of the organization, (3) the name and numbers of active volunteers within the organizations.
3. Analyze and list program areas and activities where volunteers can be effectively utilized.
4. Develop *specific* jobs for utilization of volunteers, and describe those jobs.
5. Design, develop or designate an orientation and/or a training program for the volunteers.
6. Recruit volunteers and match them to jobs described.
7. Provide for follow-up contact with the volunteers on a regular basis.

The American National Red Cross has prepared a leaflet called "Starting from Scratch to Organize Volunteers" which has further information. We suggest you contact your local chapter for a copy of the leaflet.

HOW TO FIND VOLUNTEERS

Ways of locating volunteers vary as much as communities vary. Following are some of the ways in which CAAs have recruited volunteers.

Media

Public media will often provide time and space, as part of their legally required public services efforts, to requests for volunteers for specific program activities. In Washington, D. C., for example, the Sunday edition of one of the major dailies regularly carries a feature on a poverty and/or service-related program, lists the name of the agency staff person to be contacted and the telephone number where he can be reached. Recent coverage has included requests for CAA-related programs and for VISTAs.

In Long Island, New York, *Newsday*, a tabloid type wide-circulation newspaper, ran a week-long series analyzing the problems of poverty on Long Island in May of 1968. Special pleas were made for doctors, carpenters, housewives (for tutoring, reading, home care), police officers, etc. The entire series of five articles was published in a specially issued weekend edition of the newspaper, which reached millions of people and was distributed far beyond Long Island.

Communities will also benefit from the national coverage given to anti-poverty activities by the major television networks. Head Start and Job Corps regularly advertise, in one-minute spots, for volunteers and recruits. Where local television stations exist, contact with the Director for Community Activities may result in five-minute, half-hour or hour-long documentaries in which requests for volunteers can be made.

Local radio stations also provide public service features, frequently on "good music stations" as a regular Sunday or non-prime time activity. Contact with station directors may result in interviews of CAA staff or Board members, or in human interest stories about CAP participants which will elicit volunteers. Morning programs frequently provide "community events" news, and radio station personnel often welcome descriptions of anti-

poverty activities and may permit broadcast of appeals for volunteers. The appeals should be specifically stated, with clear definitions of the jobs anticipated by the requesting group.

When public media are used for recruiting volunteers, the CAA should carefully define the nature of the volunteer services requested, explain the scope of the job and whether the volunteer's time will be needed for a short-term project or on a continuing regular basis. Many organizations use Speakers' Bureaus for recruitment purposes. Speakers may themselves be volunteers, and it may even be possible to set up a Speaker's Bureau totally staffed and run by volunteers.

Volunteer Bureaus

Other sources generally available in urban areas include Volunteer Bureaus (OEO will mail shortly a list of those cities which contain local bureaus), Directors of Volunteer Services for Health and Welfare Councils, and some college or university-affiliated clearinghouses for volunteer services. Other organizations which regularly offer volunteer services may be found in Appendix A. Not every city will contain all the sources listed, but CAAs should be able to locate some of the agencies listed.

Board and Staff

Board members representing the private sector are good sources for obtaining volunteers, particularly when those Board members serve as representatives of local businessmen's groups, trade unions, fraternal and civic associations, women's clubs and churches.

CAA directors may serve on the boards of other community organizations. In Little Rock, Arkansas (The Economic Opportunity Agency of Pulaski County, Inc.), for example, the CAA director is chairman of the Chamber of Commerce orientation committee. He is also brought into frequent contact with representatives of other organizations, including professional and union groups, and is able to elicit volunteer support from them.

Directors of Volunteer Service

Many CAAs use Directors of Volunteer Services, either on a

paid staff or on a volunteer basis. The function of these Directors is to recruit, train, place and evaluate volunteer activity.

In the newspaper series mentioned above (*Newsday* on Long Island) the CAA Director of Volunteer Services was listed as the contact person for one of the articles in the series—a multi-page article on the role played by volunteers, the types of volunteers sought by the CAA and ways in which they might serve. The two CAAs on Long Island, Nassau and Suffolk County CAAs, have had notable success in recruiting professors from the several universities, students, members of civic associations, accountants, physicists from Brookhaven Laboratories (atomic energy) and engineers from the research and development “space-age” industries.

High Schools and Colleges

Some suburban high schools are organizing groups of students who will serve as volunteers, either in their own communities or in central cities. In Montgomery County, Maryland, a group of college and high school students was formed by several returned Peace Corps volunteers to work, initially in a tutoring and enrichment program on a one-to-one basis, with children in the inner city. The young volunteers have since turned their attention to the poverty pockets in their own wealthy suburban community. Although they are attracted to the program without special skills, they frequently become quite expert in construction, community contact and working with children. Thanks to careful direction from CAA and delegate agency staff, no friction has arisen between assigned target area workers and volunteers. The job for each is clearly defined. Volunteers mainly serve in program capacities and do not become involved in the administration and operation of the agencies to which they volunteer their services.

Rural

Organizational sources of skilled volunteers in rural areas are often limited. However, rural CAAs across the country report great success in attracting the time and skills of individuals

for program purposes. Carpenters build cabinets, shelves and whole rooms in rural service centers. Teachers tutor when they are not in class. Doctors offer their services at well-baby clinics and church members volunteer to assist the doctors in record-keeping and amusing small brothers and sisters.

In Rock Hill, South Carolina, a four-county CAA, (Carolina Community Actions), each of the four county coordinators made contact with local newspapers and radio stations which provided advertising space and spot announcement time about the CCA's need for used clothing. Churches and civic clubs were contacted and CAA Board members helped to organize volunteers who collected clothes in their communities. Eight clothing banks are now located in each of the four county coordinators' offices, Head Start centers and local churches, and are operated by approximately 25 volunteers who donate a minimum of two hours per week. Transportation is provided also on a volunteer basis to families who would otherwise not be able to get to the clothing banks. The entire clothing bank program is operated at *no* cost to the CAA. The CAA hopes eventually to see the clothing banks taken over entirely by volunteer groups. One is presently being run by a local church in a rent free office. Church members completely run the store, mend and clean the garments donated. In this rural community, the clothing bank activity has been well received.

In Bath, Maine (Merrymeeting Community Action) the CAA director, in response to a request from a low income resident, contacted a number of local businessmen who agreed to establish a volunteer screening committee to develop a project based on the National Big Brothers program. The committee has also developed a training program for volunteers who will participate as Big Brothers in the program. The CAA assists by providing background information and meeting space for the screening committee.

This CAA has also been successful in making a former home for the elderly into a Day Care Center, through the efforts of volunteers. The CAA includes a city within its boundaries, so it

has been able to contact some established groups, primarily churches, in that city. Each group, including, besides the churches, the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women and a college fraternity, has undertaken the redoing of a room in the Center. Individuals, including one CAA board member and some friends, have also redone a room.

VITA

There will shortly be a new source of skilled volunteers available. OEO has signed a contract with VITA (Volunteers for International Technical Assistance), to provide voluntary private technical consultant services to public and private poverty programs. Funds provided under the contract will cover staff and office expenses and travel costs for volunteer specialists. Headquarters for VITA is in Schenectady, New York. Several chapters of the organization, which has approximately 6,000 volunteers, are located throughout the country. Further information on the VITA contract is attached as Appendix B.

HOW TO TRAIN VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will frequently need orientation and training in community action, its mission and objectives, and its emphasis on working with poor people. Plans should be made to provide orientation and training, possibly through workshops and conferences. In Lawrence, Massachusetts, Commonwealth Service Corps volunteers (participants in a program developed and operated by the Massachusetts State Economic Opportunity Office) are trained in these ways before they begin working with neighborhood groups. Sensitivity training and training in race relations, community cultures and community problems may also be valuable.

If skilled volunteers are assisting CAAs in specific tasks directly related to their skills and are expected to be assisting the CAA for a brief period of time, it may not be necessary to set time aside to train them in the goals and concepts of community action. This is particularly true if the volunteers are working

directly with CAA staff. However, they should at least be provided with materials contained in the orientation kit discussed below.

If, however, skilled volunteers are working with target area residents and/or are planning to be volunteering on a consistent, long-term basis, some form of training will heighten their usefulness to the community action program and increase their commitment and enthusiasm. The benefits of this increased commitment and enthusiasm will be felt throughout the non-poor community, as the volunteer relates his experience and satisfaction to others. This will, in turn, increase receptivity to community action goals and increase the supply of volunteer resources.

Training may take a number of forms. A number of CAAs use their newsletters (available to both target area groups and community leaders) to dramatize their objectives and the problems of their communities. Assistance in developing newsletters is available in a number of State Economic Opportunity Offices and CAAs are urged to make contact with their SEOOs and to seek such assistance. Placement of existing and potential volunteers on a local newsletter mailing list will assure a continual and gradual understanding of community action mission and goals.

Orientation

Similarly, it may be productive for CAAs and their communities to develop an orientation kit composed of some of the following:

1. Locally compiled statements of objectives, goals and strategies of the local community action program. (One CAA recently attached such a statement to its MIS quarterly narrative report).
2. Lists of staff members, board representatives and community organizations which deal either directly or indirectly with the CAA.
3. A description of the particular activity in which the volunteer will participate, including the types of individuals who will be

reached, the time and place of the program or activity, the name of the staff or volunteer person who is in charge of the activity, etc.

4. Locally compiled information on target areas, their residents, problems, community leaders, etc.
5. Statement of CAP Mission and Objectives.
6. OEO/CAP Policy issuances relating to resident participation, standards, etc.

Local CAAs will be able to add to, or subtract from this list as they wish. What is most important is assuring that volunteers enter into their activities with some briefing and some sense of their responsibilities. If the kits are attractively assembled (they are frequently informal—manila folders with identification printed with magic markers), and if the name of the volunteer is affixed, they can be used to establish the volunteer's quick identification with the program. (See Appendix D for examples of materials.)

Other Training Methods

Other forms of training are also extremely useful. A number of large cities have begun to hold regular "sensitivity training sessions" for volunteers as well as staff and board members. These very frank, open and often informal meetings permit participants to explore their own reasons for becoming involved in community action activities and their feelings toward other members of the group and toward the target population they hope to serve. Resources for these sessions may exist in local colleges and universities, training groups established by private civil rights and community organization agencies and OEO-funded training centers. These sessions should always be under the professional guidance of people familiar with the technique of sensitivity training.

Some labor and business groups will provide training for boards and neighborhood groups upon request. One particularly successful source of community action oriented trainers has been the University of West Virginia which has for several years

trained labor union representatives who are members of community action agency boards in their Labor Leadership Training Course. The labor union representatives have, in turn, assisted CAAs in training residents of target areas and communities in the Ohio and Mississippi River Valley areas and in training board members, poor and non-poor, in the principles of community action.

Some local Chambers of Commerce schedule seminars on Community problems and programs as a part of the national Chamber of Commerce Forward Thrust program. (This program outlines ways in which communities can form broadly-based community task forces to set priorities on common problems and plan for action programs.) If the CAA has an existing relationship with the Chamber of Commerce or its counterpart, or if it can build one, it may be able to suggest that seminars be adapted to community action concerns and training may be structured through the seminars or similar meetings.

SUMMARY

As the Community Action Program increases and expands its activity in local communities, it will generate additional demands for funding and people resources. This guidance, has focused on ways in which those additional demands can be met by the services of volunteers, particularly skilled volunteers.

As this guidance has pointed out, use of volunteers by CAAs permits development of two-way communication and relationships between CAA staff members, board members, poor and non-poor community residents. Benefits accrue to all participants in these relationships to the degree that the activities provided for their development also are planned and carefully carried out. There can be no doubt that interest in volunteerism is increasing. There can also be no doubt that successful volunteerism is difficult to achieve. However, CAAs *have* achieved it across the country. Those CAAs which have not yet attempted to use volunteers may wish to begin doing so as a result of the success of others. The benefits to the Community Action Program across the nation can be very great indeed.