



Enhancing Volunteerism
in Ohio

A Project of the
Volunteer Action Center of Franklin County

360 South Third Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

May 1, 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

I. Report Summary

- A. Major conclusions
- B. Description of an Appropriate Model for Ohio
- C. Implementation Recommendations
- D. Volunteer Venture '82 Report

II. Study Findings

- A. Priority Needs and Concerns
- B. Participant Response
 - 1. Support for Process, Models
 - 2. Interest in Participation
- C. Possible Models for Statewide Structures -
Advantages, Disadvantages

III. The Design Process -- Project Activities

- A. Regional Meetings
- B. Study Package
- C. Analysis and Recommendations

Regional Map

IV. Participants

- A. Design Group
- B. Regional Convenors
- C. Organizations

Appendix List

PREFACE

The first Ohio conference on volunteerism, VOLUNTEER VENTURE '81, was held in Columbus on April 8-10, 1981, with 318 participants. On the final day of the conference the following resolution was adopted by the conference body:

- 1) "AN AD HOC COMMITTEE BE FORMED TO EXPLORE OPTIONS WHICH WOULD ENHANCE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF VOLUNTEERISM IN OHIO, E.G., A STATE OFFICE OF VOLUNTEER COORDINATION, A STATE ASSOCIATION OF CITIZENS CONCERNED WITH VOLUNTEERISM, AN ASSOCIATION TO PLAN AND CARRY OUT A YEARLY CONVENTION.
- 2) THE VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTER OF FRANKLIN COUNTY BE ASKED TO ESTABLISH AN AD HOC COMMITTEE WITH BROAD REPRESENTATION ACROSS THE STATE TO EXPLORE THE BEST VEHICLE FOR ENHANCING AND PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM IN OHIO."

Volunteer Action Center accepted the request of the conference and appointed a special committee to develop a process to explore the feasibility of a **statewide vehicle**.

The committee, formed in June, 1981, was composed of conference participants, representatives of various types of voluntary service and the following organizations: ACTION, Ohio Citizens' Council, United Way of Franklin County and of Licking County, and Junior League of Columbus. (Please see page 15 for a list of committee members.)

Since its formation, the local design committee has met at least monthly. Ad hoc sub-committees have formed around specific assignments and tasks to carry out the following activities:

- 1) Research existing types of statewide structures;
- 2) Determine the process and develop a "study package" to use at six regional meetings around the state;
- 3) Assist regional conveners in designing and carrying out study meetings in their areas;
- 4) Analyze findings and prepare this report.

The local design committee has operated with donated staff support from the Volunteer Action Center of Franklin County, the voluntary hours of the committee, a financial contribution from the Junior League of Columbus and the resources of participants from all over Ohio, especially the Volunteer Action Centers who organized and conducted Regional Meetings.

It is with appreciation to all those who have made it possible that this report is presented.

The Enhancing Volunteerism Design Group

I. Report Summary

A. Major Conclusions

The main question the design group sought to answer through its regional workshop plan, as described in the Preface of this report, was whether a need exists for a statewide vehicle to support and enhance volunteerism. The respondents to the workshop questionnaire said, "Yes." Percentages, found in Section II-B of this report, show at least 79% in favor of pursuing this idea, and all but 1% willing to consider it.

Of the three models (state office, association, and network) described in Section II-C of this report, the workshop respondents chose the association as the preferred model, with state office running a close second. These figures appear in Section II-B. Among those who indicated "other" as their choice, the suggestion was made that some existing organization with a statewide presence, such as United Way or Ohio Citizens' Council, should serve as the vehicle for a state volunteer support program. Some of those who felt uncomfortable with any statewide approach expressed apprehension regarding the remoteness of a state office, the difficulty in obtaining dependable funding, and the danger that a state organization might fall into the arena of partisan politics.

Another major concern of the design group, in conducting this information gathering exercise, was to determine whether a definite set of needs which might be served by a statewide approach could be identified. The response to individual balloting, after using the Nominal Group Process to establish group priorities, indicated that needs could be identified and agreed upon in several distinct areas. These areas of need are described in Section II-A of this report.

Though the number of participants in the regional workshops was only a small sampling of the state's population, it is the opinion of the design group that it was representative of active volunteers and geographically diversified. The similarity of concerns which emerged at the various workshops seemed to point to common problems. This implies the possibility of common solutions.

The conditions which the design group feels are important to the success of the formation and implementation of a state vehicle to support and enhance volunteerism in Ohio are as follows:

1. The model must provide a structure that promotes clearly perceived functions and the ability to perform consistently and effectively. Its services must be accessible and responsive to local needs.

2. A model should be developed to fit the needs of Ohio with linkage, support and advocacy of volunteerism as major functions. Existing models from other states can be used to formulate such a plan.
3. A stronger system of grass-roots support, participation and input must be developed. Specifically, the design group is anxious to find a more satisfactory means of soliciting the support and participation of those directly involved in the activities of volunteer agencies and organizations.
4. Volunteer Venture '81 and this study have already resulted in the establishment of an informal "network" similar to model descriptions from other states. If we are to grow to a more developed form of state organization we will need a supportive climate provided by friendly governmental, corporate, and private policies; involvement of leading citizens; and stable funding sources.

In summary: From the regional contacts that were made over the past year, the design group has concluded that there is definite interest in a statewide volunteer support system, but the feasibility of forming and maintaining such a system may still be open to question. The group recommends that some further steps should be taken toward devising and implementing a model for Ohio.

B. Description of An Appropriate Model for Ohio

An Ohio structure needs

- identity and visibility,
- people and money to address needs,
- strong regional linkages and support, and
- a plan for development.

It will support efforts at local levels rather than build and maintain existence for its own sake.

The Model: A State Association with

Membership

- volunteers
- volunteer administrators
- persons and organizations committed to promoting volunteerism
- organizations that involve volunteers and citizen participation groups
- representatives of state and local governments

An office in an accessible, visible location

Funding that is diversified

Staff support... paid and unpaid

A governing board composed of regional representatives

C. Implementation Recommendations

Establish a statewide steering committee and convene its first meeting on July 15, 1982.

1. Elect a Convenor for the first meeting from the Volunteer Venture '82 conference body.
2. Create an ad hoc Selection Committee in each of seven (7) regions.
 - a) Volunteer Action Centers will be invited to take the responsibility of bringing together an ad hoc selection committee of five (5) persons; the committee should be geographically and organizationally representative of their region.
 - b) Each ad hoc Selection Committee will
 - publicize the opportunity for steering committee appointment throughout the region;
 - solicit applications;
 - review and select representatives for the region:
 - 1 volunteer leader
 - 1 volunteer administrator
 - 1 "at large" member ... one who represents citizen participation or can contribute to the purpose and activity of statewide effort.
 - c) The Selection Committee will send names of their representatives to the Convenor by July 1, 1982.
3. Hold the organizational meeting of the Statewide Steering Committee.

Date: July 15, 1982 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Participants: Convenor
Three (3) representatives from each of seven (7) regions
Two (2) representatives from the Design Group
Total - 24

Objectives: The Steering Committee will

- develop its structure and operational plan
- design and implement the plan/process to form a state association by July, 1983
- mobilize local interest and support for the association
- develop its operating structure
- publicize activities
- undertake a task that will demonstrate value and benefits of statewide effort

D. Volunteer Venture '82 Report

II. Study Findings

(Please see Appendix List, page 18, for detailed reports from each of six regional meetings.)

A. Priority Needs and Concerns

In each region, participants identified a long list of ways to improve voluntary services in their organization or community. A number of their ideas involved only internal or local resources and changes ... and a "dividend" of each meeting seemed to be the opportunity to share these specific concerns.

For the purpose of this study, however, the question of WHICH, IF ANY, PRIORITY NEEDS TO IMPROVE VOLUNTARY SERVICES CAN BE PRODUCTIVELY DEALT WITH AT THE STATEWIDE LEVEL was important as well. In region after region, such common concerns were described with suggestions for statewide action. Following is a list of priorities:

- TRAINING for staff, governing boards and volunteers to help them understand and do their particular job better. This might involve broad subjects such as recruitment, recognition, commitment, etc., and some very specific skills such as record-keeping, funding, or needs assessments.
- A Statewide Structure could provide conferences and seminars, a skills or resource bank of persons available for training and other programs that have been successful, a newsletter to share useful and creative ideas.
- MARKETING and public relations, information and education. High quality of both materials and skill in presentation are required to assist the general public and targeted groups understand volunteerism and learn its opportunities.
- A Statewide Structure could assemble resources and professional assistance to produce media "spots", PR packets and workshops, obtain area and statewide coverage to promote voluntary services, act as a clearinghouse for successful local PR projects.
- BENEFITS and support systems for volunteers. Tax incentives, child care, transportation, stipends may all help broaden the base of potential volunteers and assist in their retention.

A Statewide Structure is necessary to maximize advocacy of changes in state and federal laws to increase tax and other incentives for volunteers. It could provide an exchange for innovative solutions to the ever-present child care and transportation problems.

NON-TRADITIONAL sources and kinds of volunteers. The support of business and industry in recruiting the employed volunteer, involvement of the younger or the older or the minority volunteer were identified activities.

A Statewide Structure could work with corporations and schools on an areawide basis and, again, serve a training, resource and clearinghouse function.

NETWORKING itself was seen as a need and a means of support for local voluntary service groups.

A Statewide Structure could help start and provide continuing support for Voluntary Action Centers, co-ordinate long range planning and research, enable professionalism and certification of volunteer directors and coordinators, provide the resources previously mentioned... newsletter, skills and program bank, workshops and conferences, coordination of advocacy and public information efforts.

B. Participant Response

1. Support for Process and Models

Of those who participated in regional meetings, 115 completed written evaluation sheets. Following is a tabulation of their responses:

The workshop today was:

	clearly presented					not sure I understand it			confusing	
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Respondents*	17	31	35	22	5	4	4	1		
Percentage	15%	26%	30%	19%	4%	3%	3%	1%		

I support the idea of a state-wide volunteer project:

	a great idea					has possibilities			I don't support it.	
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Respondents*	44	18	15	11	4	10	4			2
Percentage	40%	16%	13%	10%	3%	9%	3%			1%

Rated models, number one being first choice, number two second choice, etc.

	1	2	3	4
State	37	34	24	5
Association	52	40	23	5
Network	14	27	18	6
Other	15	0	3	21

* These figures do not necessarily add up; some of the participants circled more than one response or did not indicate a preference at all. Also, these figures do not necessarily represent the number attending the workshop, but people who filled out response forms.

2. Interest in Participation

Participant commitment to a statewide structure was also indicated by willingness to undertake specific support activities. These figures represent only responses from those who were able to make a commitment for themselves or their organization; a high percentage felt that they needed the endorsement of the group they represent. The following tabulation represents the response of 88 participants.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Number of respondents willing to undertake</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Letter of endorsement	58	66%
2. Provide a mailing list	38	43%
3. Provide a mailing to other voluntary organizations and volunteers in your region	25	28%
4. Local publicity (news articles, letters to your own volunteers, etc.	52	59%
5. Participate on a regional committee	56	64%
6. Chair a committee	12	14%
7. Financial contributions	5	6%
8. Seek Funds	7	8%
9. Other	3	3%

C. Possible Models for Statewide Structures - Perceived Advantages and disadvantages

The State Office

General Information: State offices exist in 26 states. A state office is created either by the State Legislature or by Executive Order of the Governor. Initial funding comes from ACTION with increasing percentages of State money in successive years. The State Office has paid staff and office space and usually is guided by an Advisory Council.

Activities include expanding volunteer programs in state agencies, providing training and technical assistance, serving as a resource center, statewide recognition events, publishing newsletters, and advocacy. Some also include direct service programs.

Example: California has a State Office, created in 1977 by Executive order of the Governor. It has a budget of \$166,667 (\$91,667-state, \$75,000-ACTION), a paid staff of 5 and an Advisory Council.

ADVANTAGES

Easy transferral of information
Permanence
Quality assurance
Political
Pool of resources
Broader clout
More stable funding
Broader visibility
Gives official stamp of recognition to project
Better utilization of limited funds
Part of a bigger picture
Key political support
Access to other key people
Office space/equipment
Potential in-kind services
Statewide structure in place
Induces private sector to cooperate
Ability to negotiate with businesses
No membership dues

DISADVANTAGES

Difficult to get information
Patronage in staffing
Lack of flexibility
Could be affected by a change in political climate
Local resentment of government control
Political football
Control by legislature
Not close to grassroots
May not fit every local need
Funding questionable, may depend on political climate
Restrictions on red tape
Too comfortable and easy to accept
Might tend to give preference to state in-house projects or special interests
Risk for continuity
Voters might ask how tax dollars being spent
Dollars could be spent that wouldn't do any good
Slower
More expensive
Would be in Columbus, away from rest of the state

The Private Non-Profit State Association

General Information: Associations are membership organizations with elected officers. Funding is obtained from memberships primarily, although other sources, i.e., grants are possible. The number of paid staff varies. Activities include newsletters, workshops, and other activities to benefit and serve members. The Design Group could not determine how many States have associations related to volunteerism.

Example: Minnesota has a state association - the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Directors (MAVD). It is a professional organization for paid or unpaid volunteer administrators. MAVD provides workshops, conferences, a newsletter, a job bank, a members' Skillsbank and a forum for dialogue on issues related to volunteerism. MAVD is organized by regions and governed by an Executive Board composed of 4 Officers, 5 regional directors and chairmen of 7 Standing Committees.

ADVANTAGES

- Efficient use of staff
- Flexibility while preserving centralism
- Image developing
- Member control
- Efficiency cost/time
- Policies determined by members
- Out of political arena
- Possibly less bureaucratic
- Might require less staff
- Continuity of office
- May tap resources others can't reach
- Non-political
- No restrictions and red tape
- Possibility better access to private funding
- Continuity of staff
- Camraderie support
- Dues guarantee incoming money
- Freedom to establish multiple funding sources
- Needs established well - but selfishly
- Dues necessary for voting membership
- Strength in members
- Non-taxpayer dollars
- Volunteers
- More ownership
- More involvement

DISADVANTAGES

- Harder to cooperate
- Accessibility
- Less cohesive
- Paid staff?
- Need large cross representation
- Might be limited to only members
- Look within/not without
- Doesn't objectively identify needs
- Funding difficulties
- Time frame for organizing
- Dues
- Large staff needed to find funding sources
- Not objective
- Needs time frame because not structured
- Requires more time and expertise for fund raising
- May not meet every agency's need
- No guaranteed funding
- No access to ACTION grant
- Less available manpower
- Too expensive
- Costly to individual agencies
- Visibility
- Charge dues
- Possibility of autocracy

The Volunteer Network

General Information: A network is an interrelated, interconnected group, often very loosely structured. There is a designated leader, usually elected but no staff/office/minimum funding.

Example: Maryland has a Volunteer Network which it defines as a statewide coalition of volunteers and voluntary organizations. It is guided by a chairwoman, 2 vice-chairs, a secretary and a treasurer. It appears to concentrate its efforts on advocating for legislation on behalf of volunteers. The network has a post office box mailing address.

ADVANTAGES

Use existing resources of area members
Allows for local diversity
Can find out what other parts of the state are doing
Small foundation already set up
Camaraderie
Autonomy
More appealing to grassroots
Respect of autonomy
Very little funding needed
Not beholden to any group
Availability to anyone
More creative
Could be started today with no grantors and no state agreement
Not so many restrictions in setting up

DISADVANTAGES

Couldn't do it
Insufficient staff
Too nebulous
No commitment
Possibility of problems with standardization
Informal/loose
Lack of continuity
Too loose
Not sure to develop quality programs
Identify needs of association not state
Need large group/staff
Lacks enforcement
Burnout
No built-in funding
Source depends on good will
Less identity
Manpower
No clout
Lack of structure
Money
Lack of central office
Difficult for this group to lobby

III. The Design Process -- Project Activities

A. Regional Meetings

The design committee determined to gather information from those who actively work with volunteers and/or are volunteers themselves in Ohio communities. It was felt that their concerns and experience could best indicate whether a state-wide vehicle would be of value and, if so, give clues to the most practical structure to improve volunteerism in Ohio.

To this end, Ohio was divided into six regions. (See map.) Each of the six regions contains a Volunteer Action Center, a Junior League and several United Way offices, all considered potential contacts for their regions. Because representatives of the Volunteer Action Centers attended Volunteer Venture '81 and were familiar with the project, it was decided to ask them to serve as the regional contacts and to convene meetings within their regions to assess needs and interest in a statewide structure. All persons asked to serve as regional contacts agreed. Information on organizing a regional meeting, suggested participants, a sample invitation and a tentative agenda were provided to each contact person.

B. Study Package

The program for each regional meeting included:

- Background on the project and the purpose of the day.
- Identification and prioritization of "needs" and "wishes" of voluntary organizations/volunteers through use of the Nominal Group Process in small groups.
- A presentation of the information gained from researching structures existing in other states.
- Participant analysis of the capabilities and limitations of the various models presented in meeting the needs identified by the group.
- A discussion of the kinds of support needed from local groups to develop a statewide structure.
- A written assessment of the regional meeting, a rating of models, and an indication of personal interest in a statewide structure from each participant at the conclusion of the day.

It was felt important that each design committee member participate in at least one regional meeting. In fact, most members were able to attend two or three.

C. Analysis and Recommendations

After all of the regional meetings had been conducted, committee members, working in teams, collated and analyzed the information that had been collected. (Study materials had been prepared so that findings were returned to the design committee in written form; see Appendix List.) Each team presented their analyses to the whole design committee, who worked together to formulate the description of the recommended model and suggested plan for implementation.

LEGEND

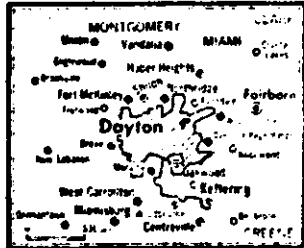
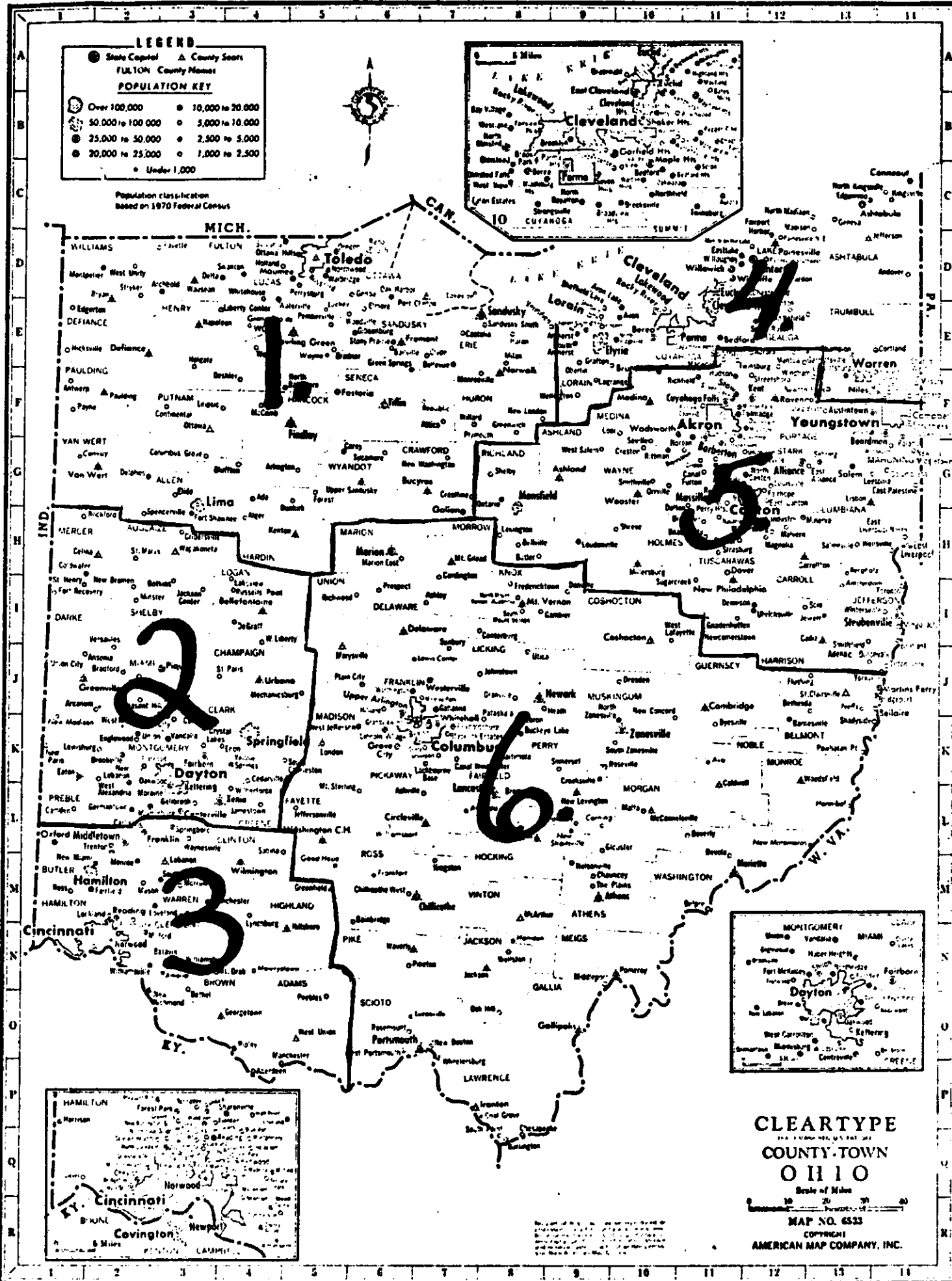
● State Capital ▲ County Seats

FULTON County Names

POPULATION KEY

- Over 100,000
- 50,000 to 100,000
- 25,000 to 50,000
- 20,000 to 25,000
- 10,000 to 20,000
- 5,000 to 10,000
- 2,500 to 5,000
- 1,000 to 2,500
- Under 1,000

Population classification based on 1970 Federal Census



CLEARTYPE
 COUNTY-TOWN
 OHIO

Scale of Miles
 0 10 20 30 40

MAP NO. 6533
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IV. Participants

A. Design Group

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B. Regional Convenors

Region 1	Voluntary Action Center	Toledo, OH
Region 2	Voluntary Action Center	Dayton, OH
Region 3	Voluntary Action Center	Cincinnati, OH
Region 4	Community Information Service/ Volunteer Action Center (C.I.V.A.C.)	Cleveland, OH
Region 5	Voluntary Action Center	Akron, OH
Region 6	Volunteer Action Center	Columbus, OH

C. Organizations Represented at Regional Meetings

Region 1: (Northwest - Bowling Green - Toledo)

American Red Cross - Crawford County Chapter
American Red Cross - Toledo
Arthritis Foundation
Community Services (United Christian Fellowship)
Epilepsy Center
Flower Hospital
Girl Scouts - Appleseed Ridge
Greater Toledo Community Chest
Lucas County Adult Probation Department
Lucas County Board Mental Retardation
Lucas County Juvenile Court
Lutheran Social Services
Northwest Ohio Development Center
Parents Plus (Toledo Public Schools)
Retired Senior Volunteer Program
Sight Center
Tiffin Area Volunteer Bureau
Toledo Mental Health
United Way (Toledo)
VIA CLUBS of Erie County, Inc.
Volunteer Action Center (Toledo and Bowling Green)
Volunteers in Progress
Wood County Senior Center
YMCA - Joy of Living

Region 2: (West - Central - Dayton)

Arthritis Foundation
Buckeye Trails Girl Scout Council
City of Kettering
Legal Aid Society of Dayton
Miami Valley Council on Aging
Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation
Montgomery County Community Action Agency
Montgomery County Nutrition Project
Preble County Service for the Elderly
VIPs, Dayton Board of Education
Visiting Nurses Association Mobile Meals
Voluntary Action Center of Dayton
Western Ohio Radio & Development Service and Tape News for Blind

Region 3: (Southwest - Cincinnati)

Beech Acres General Protestant Orphan Home
Bethesda Hospital
Cincinnati Area Senior Services, Inc.
Hamilton Volunteer and Information Center
Junior League of Cincinnati
Longview State Hospital
Together, Inc.
Voluntary Action Center of Cincinnati
Warren County Volunteer Center
YMCA Protective Shelter for Battered Persons and their Children

Region 4: (Northeast - Cleveland)

Center for Human Services
Christian Childrens Society of Cleveland
Federation for Community Planning
Junior League of Cleveland
United Way, Lorain County

Region 5: East - Central - Akron)

Akron City Hospital
Akron General Medical Center
4 County Nursing Home Ombudsman Program
Junior League of Akron
Medina County Organization of Volunteers
Rehabilitation Service of North Central Ohio
Summit County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental
Disabilities
United Way of Summit County
Voluntary Action Center of Summit County
Widowed to Widowed Volunteers

Region 6: (Southeast - Columbus)

Area Agency on Aging, Region 9
Association for the Developmentally Disabled
Central Ohio Mental Health and Guidance Center
Columbus Public Schools
Junior League of Columbus
Newark Catholic Social Services
Office of the Mayor, Columbus
Ohio Citizens' Council
Ohio Department of Mental Health
Ohio Youth Commission
United Way of Franklin County
United Way of Licking County
Volunteer Action Center of Franklin County

APPENDIX LIST

I. Regional Meetings

- A. Organizing a regional meeting
 - 1. Correspondence
 - 2. Instructions
 - 3. Invitations
- B. Study package
- C. Findings
 - 1. Worksheet A
 - 2. Ballot
 - 3. Analysis-summary of regional conclusions
 - 4. Analysis of participant response by region
 - 5. Key to participant response sheet indicating commitment to project
 - 6. Comments on models
 - 7. Workshop comments

II. Design Committee Operation/Activities

- A. Resolution and program from Volunteer Venture '81
- B. Minutes/correspondence
- C. Research on models
- D. ACTION proposal
- E. Interim report

The above material is available upon request from:

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