

The Making of a VOP*

(*Volunteer Orientation Portfolio)

By Richard W. White

AT WOMEN IN COMMUNITY SERVICE (WICS),* our employees and volunteers are continually recruiting and orienting new volunteers. Over the years, we've produced brochures, pamphlets, posters, newsletters and flyers just for these purposes. We even updated a slide show that had shots of women sporting beehive hairdos, horn-rimmed glasses and mini-skirts, and of men with flat tops and white socks! Yet, we continued to hear these common complaints regarding our volunteer recruitment and orientation materials:

"We need something that we can show to someone who wants to volunteer."

"It takes too long to set up the projector for a slide show for just one person."

"Brochures are great, but they don't give the individual a complete picture."

There obviously was a need for a new material or tool that would be comprehensive, specific but not wordy, attractive, durable, easy to update and expand (particularly for local purposes), inexpensive to produce and reproduce, and economical to mail.

During a recent national staff meeting, it was agreed that prospective volunteers were "falling through the cracks" because they often were not getting a clear picture of what WICS is and exactly what WICS wants its volunteers to do. Spending an hour or two reading through back issues of our newsletter and brochures was not enough.

"What about the slick portfolios that

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salespeople and real estate agents use when making presentations?" someone asked. "Why not?" another responded, "we are salespersons in a sense. We try to sell people on WICS and the projects we need volunteers to help us with."

A few weeks later, the "VOP" was born. VOP is the acronym for Volunteer Orientation Portfolio, a 60-page, three-ring binder with the WICS logo silk-screened on the cover.

Except for a few pages with halftones (photographs) and artwork printed at an instant print shop, the entire VOP was produced "in-house," using clip and line art, an IBM Selectric typewriter, transfer lettering, and a photocopier.

The unique feature of the VOP (and the least costly) is the last section, an index of 40 volunteer jobs preceding corresponding one-page job descriptions in numerical order. The job descriptions are brief and to the point, which is why they are so popular.

Printed at the top of the index page are the words, "We Need Someone to . . ." followed by a list of 40 job titles. If, for example, a volunteer was interested in Job No. 28, he/she would turn to page 28 and read: "We Need Someone to Help Us Take Corpwomen on Career Exploration Trips," followed by the job description:

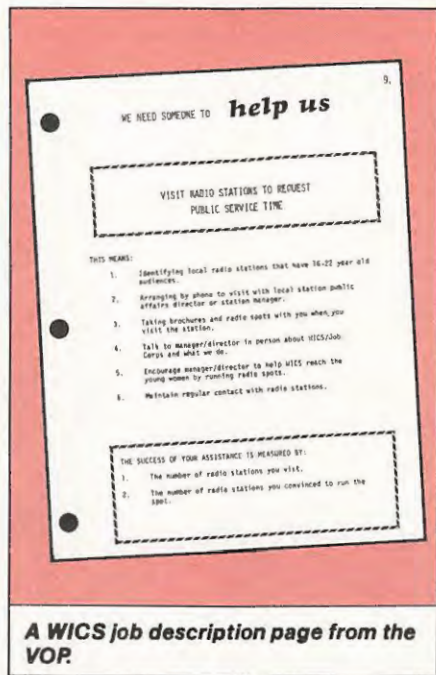
This means:

1. Taking Corpwomen to community job fairs or career exploration fairs, with permission of the Job Corps center.
2. Taking Corpwomen to visit various industries and businesses to learn about career training they require and/or offer, and career opportunities they have available.
3. Visiting our local Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Development office, etc., to obtain information and brochures on current and projected career needs of your area.

At the bottom of each page is a box explaining in a few words how the volunteer will know when the job has been completed successfully:

The success of your assistance will be measured by:

Your providing at least three career exploration opportunities to the Corpwomen you agreed to help.



A WICS job description page from the VOP.

*WICS is a private, independent, nonprofit coalition of five national organizations—the American GI Forum, Church Women United, and the National Councils of Negro Women, Jewish Women and Catholic Women. WICS volunteers help young women improve their lives through education and job skills training. A major WICS emphasis is on acquainting youth with the education and career opportunities available through Job Corps.

The job description page can be removed from the VOP by a volunteer recruiter, who can make a photocopy for the volunteer, then return it to the VOP.

Each of the VOP's first 20 pages are protected inside a clear plastic 8½" x 11" pocket page with a side opening. The three holes are pre-punched on a margin outside the pocket to avoid punching holes in the material to be inserted. This type of plastic page is more expensive than some on the market, but it is worth it. For instance, one of the pages contains our newsletter. Each time a new newsletter is published, the people in our field offices simply remove the old one and slide in the new one.

From page one leading to the index, the VOP is designed to give the individual an overview of our organization—who we are, where we are, what we do, and how we do it—by using photographs, artwork, graphs, maps, and sample promotional materials.

Those 20 pages offer a variety of information, such as:

- Three photos of Washington, D.C. landmarks to establish location of WICS national headquarters
- Photo of national headquarters
- Logos of five national organizations

that make up the WICS coalition

- Quote from bylaws explaining purpose of the organization
- Organizational chart
- United States map with two acetate overlays showing locations of WICS' 156 field offices
- Extractions from original Congressional Act creating Job Corps
- United States map identifying locations of Job Corps centers
- Six photos of Job Corps centers with Job Corps logo
- Five photos of Job Corps center life
- Flow chart showing importance of volunteers nationwide
- Three WICS brochures
- Three photos of WICS volunteers at work
- Six photos of WICS volunteer projects
- Four photos of volunteers in various types of training situations
- Newsletter
- Montage showing how we recognize our volunteers
- Certificate of volunteer recognition

To provide a complete volunteer orientation, the interviewer/orientator must supplement the VOP with a running commentary, elaborating on topics

generated by the visuals and answering questions.

The cost was \$15 to produce each VOP in quantities of 200. Here is a breakdown of the costs of materials per copy:

3-ring binder	\$3.80
plastic pages	6.65
offset printing	3.50
photocopying paper	.65
2 acetate overlays	.40
	\$15.00

The versatility of the VOP recently was tested when the WICS national headquarters moved, which made the old office building photo on page 2 obsolete. A photo of the new office was taken to the printer, a few hundred copies were made on 8½ x 11 paper, and one was sent to each of our field offices. The field staff simply slipped out the old page and inserted the new one.

The VOP works for us. Many of the ideas incorporated in our portfolio can be adapted by organizations with similar needs. For further information, contact Women in Community Service, 1900 N. Beauregard St., Suite 108, Alexandria, VA 22311. ♥



WICS volunteers and employees use the newly developed Volunteer Orientation Portfolio (VOP) in 156 field offices around the nation to recruit new volunteers, orient them to the program, and describe the specific jobs for volunteers.