

**REPORT OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
VOLUNTEERISM ON**

# **Establishing a Volunteer Service Corps**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



## **House Document No. 27**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
1988**



**"Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve."**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

This report results from the 1987 General Assembly request (HJR 334) to study the feasibility of establishing a Virginia volunteer service corps. The Department of Volunteerism conducted the study which included research on service programs throughout the country, a review of relevant literature, and a survey of various state and local program administrators and staff within Virginia who might be affected by a service corps. The resulting report and recommendations are hereby submitted for consideration.

1                                   **HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 334**  
2                                   **AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**  
3                                   **(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules on**  
4   **February 8, 1987)**  
5                                   **(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Grayson)**

6 *Requesting the Department of Volunteerism to study the feasibility of establishing a*  
7 *Virginia Volunteer Service Corps.*

8       **WHEREAS**, throughout the history of the Commonwealth and this nation, volunteers  
9 have played a major role in the building of our society; and

10       **WHEREAS**, there are numerous opportunities to improve the quality of life for  
11 Virginians through volunteer activities; and

12       **WHEREAS**, even as there are many committed volunteers of all ages in Virginia, many  
13 young people are absorbed in their own interests, which results in a lack of sensitivity to  
14 the broader needs of the community; and

15       **WHEREAS**, community service experiences could assist individuals in developing greater  
16 empathy, tolerance, and understanding of those who are different from themselves; and

17       **WHEREAS**, volunteer conservation corps and community services programs exist in  
18 more than twenty states; and

19       **WHEREAS**, the establishment of a volunteer service corps in Virginia would provide a  
20 pool of volunteers, foster a spirit of cooperation, and reinforce the obligations of  
21 citizenship; now, therefore, be it

22       **RESOLVED** by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of  
23 Volunteerism is requested to study the feasibility of establishing a Virginia Volunteer  
24 Service Corps.

25       The Department shall determine (i) the extent to which service opportunities are  
26 available in the Commonwealth, (ii) the eligibility, focus and source of funding of such  
27 opportunities, (iii) the need for volunteer services, (iv) incentives to encourage  
28 participation, and (v) the appropriate structure and administration for such corps. The  
29 agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance as deemed appropriate by the joint  
30 subcommittee.

31       The Department shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and  
32 recommendations to the 1988 Session of the General Assembly.

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## I. THE SERVICE CORPS CONCEPT

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Large-scale community service is a phenomenon which has seen a pendular history: the Romans expected it, Americans of the '60's idealized it, in the 70's they rejected it, and in the 80's it is again gaining popularity. During the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt developed the Civilian Conservation Corps to put unemployed men (2.9 million nationwide) to work doing worthwhile, needed jobs in the country's parks and recreation areas. Many of the log shelters, bridges, firetowers, trails, and walkways built by these men are still used today.

But the benefits of the original Civilian Conservation Corps went beyond the tremendous amount of work completed and the much-needed paychecks provided to the workers. What was awakened in the Corps members was a feeling of self worth and a sense of ownership for their country. It is these same virtues--accomplishment of necessary meaningful work, opportunity, cooperation, and increased self value--that have made the Civilian Conservation Corps a model for the current service movement. The CCC experience demonstrated that bringing citizens together in a shared experience, especially one which is physically and mentally challenging, develops an esprit de corps and pride in one's community that can lead to substantial results.

The Kennedy administration brought the creation of two more model service programs, the Peace Corps and VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America). Shortly thereafter the Youth and Young Adult Conservation Corps (YCC and YACC) were created. These programs generated a great deal of activity, mobilizing thousands of individual volunteers, until federal funding cuts in 1981 drastically reduced their size and scope. In addition, the Experiment in International Living, the American Friends Service Committee, and several other private nonprofit organizations have proven the value of offering opportunities for individuals to volunteer full time.

Now, more than ever, students are flocking to volunteer service as well. This year, for the first time in a major U.S. city, all seniors in Atlanta's public high schools will have performed a required 75 hours of community service. ACTION, the federal agency, is funding an effort to organize all Minnesota colleges into a mass movement of student volunteers. The Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), a Washington-based group begun by two recent college graduates, is advising student volunteer programs in 300 colleges. Brown and Stanford Universities have scholarships available for students who choose to take time away from school to do community service full time. And in California, the state legislature appears close to passing a bill for a "Human Corps," which would make community service an expected part of every public university student's education in that state.

In recent years the idea of national youth service has been proposed by national legislators in various forms. Current bills pending in Washington include options such as partially forgiving student loans in exchange for public service, and establishing a national conservation corps. Former Virginia Governor Charles S. Robb has hailed national service as a way to "foster a new spirit of citizenship and patriotism."

## CURRENT PROGRAMS

In addition to efforts at the federal level, communities and states have started their own service corps programs. While most of these have been conservation programs, many are now expanding their focus to meet human service as well as environmental needs. At present there are nearly 40 state or local service corps programs which vary significantly:

- administration may be at the state, regional, or local level;
- the corps may operate year-round or summer only;
- participants may be housed at a residential site by the corps, or live in their own homes and commute to the work site;
- a corps may involve from 10 to 3000 volunteers;
- incentives for participation in a corps program include job training, educational opportunities, scholarships, cash stipends and bonuses;
- most programs are youth-oriented, with participants between the ages of 14 and 26; only the Maryland Service Corps includes volunteers of all ages;
- annual budgets range from \$37,000 to \$44 million;
- funding sources include state appropriation, fees for service, foundation support, local match funds, federal Job Training Partnership Act monies, and Community Development Block Grants.

Three existing service corps programs are briefly described below to provide further information on the variety of approaches that have been developed to meet the particular needs of a state or locality:

- Washington Service Corps (WSC)

Background: Established through the Washington Youth Employment and Conservation Act in 1983, the WSC's mission is to provide young adults with meaningful work experience and skills training while also filling unmet needs in the community.

Design: About 300-400 youths, ages 18-25, are individually placed each year in public and nonprofit agencies. Enrollees must be unemployed and out of school. Projects last six months and create a spectrum that includes working with the elderly, teaching independent living skills to the mentally disabled, computerizing police records and assisting small museums. Project sponsors are responsible for training and supervision.

Funding: The WSC is funded by a state appropriation of 1.1 million dollars. In addition, sponsoring agencies pay the WSC a fee of \$750 for each enrollee. The state pays the corps member \$450 a month and provides medical and life insurance.

- Community Service Volunteers (CSV)

Background: Founded in 1984, CVC emphasizes both youth development and service to the city. All projects must provide needed services that would otherwise go unmet.

Design: The CVC has approximately 650 volunteers, ages 17-20, working in crews from 10 to 16 members on physical improvement and human services projects throughout the city of New York. Volunteers receive a weekly stipend of \$81 to cover lunches, transportation and uniforms. They can also continue their education with free college credit courses. If they are not high school graduates, CVC enrolls them in GED preparation, literacy training or English as a Second Language classes. After a year of service, volunteers receive a \$5000 scholarship or a \$2500 cash allowance. Project sponsors are responsible for training the volunteers and for providing task supervision along with the CVC team leader. Projects generally last four months or less and include rehabilitating housing, improving parks, assisting the elderly and handicapped, caring for hospice residents and tutoring.

Funding: The program has an annual budget of 10 million dollars, most of which comes from the City of New York.

- Community Service Volunteers (CSV)

Background: Founded in England in 1962, CSV is a national network with offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Its mission combines training for its volunteers with a commitment to creating social change by influencing patterns of care in the community. CSV has a policy of non-rejection: everyone who applies is accepted. In addition, there are programs aimed at drawing volunteers who are "in special circumstances", i.e. youth serving the final month of a prison term, youth with physical disabilities, and homeless young people in the Greater London area.

Design: Volunteers, ages 16-35, serve from four months to a year. All work in face-to-face contact with people in what are termed "personal service projects," dealing with the physically and mentally disabled, the elderly, the ill or the homeless. Each year more than 2000 volunteers are individually placed in projects that are most often away from home, although CSV recently began a program in which participants can work in their home communities. Volunteers have some control over the kind of project and the location in which they are placed.

Funding: Project sponsors support the volunteers by providing room, board, a small weekly stipend and fare to and from the project at the beginning and end of their placement. Funds for administering the program come from a variety of government grants and private donations.



Despite the differences in program design, scope and emphasis, all successful service corps programs have in common certain key elements:

- strong, energetic leadership
- built-in incentives which meet the needs & interests of the volunteers they seek to attract
- continuous, creative marketing to maintain high visibility
- "quality" work assignments which have real long-term impact
- on-going recognition and group activities which foster a sense of corps unity and mutual support.

## II. VOLUNTEERISM IN VIRGINIA

Virginia has long been a national model in its support of volunteerism. Through the establishment of a state agency devoted to promoting volunteering, several pieces of legislation which create incentives for volunteering, and the newly created Governor's Awards for Volunteering Excellence, the Commonwealth has developed a strong tradition of citizen participation in both the public and private sectors.

### THE DEPARTMENT OF VOLUNTEERISM

Established over a decade ago, this agency provides information, training and technical assistance to leaders of volunteer programs in all types of settings. Specific services include:

- Public Workshops on volunteer program management in various locations around the state.
- Training On Request, as needed by public or private agencies.
- Annual Statewide Conference on Volunteerism, bringing together over 450 volunteer program coordinators.
- Individualized Consultation on specific aspects of volunteer management.
- Resource Library (the most comprehensive on the East Coast) containing materials easily accessible to both staff and the public at large.
- Newsletter ("Volunteering Virginia"), mailed to over 6000 programs and individuals.
- Research & Materials Development to fill identified gaps in the knowledge base of the field of volunteer administration.
- Governor's Award for Volunteering Excellence (G.A.V.E.) to recognize the outstanding efforts of approximately 60 individuals and groups from both the public and private sectors. (This program is totally funded by private contributions.)
- Intensive Support in volunteer programming to both the Department of Social Services and the Youth Services Division of the Department of Corrections, via special interagency contracts.

The Department acts a clearinghouse on volunteerism and is an active link of communication among volunteer program administrators in Virginia, keeping them in touch with each other and with national issues which affect them. Although small in terms of staffing (5 FTE), the Department maintains a strong commitment to excellence and has a reputation for providing very high quality service to its constituents.

## **LOCAL VOLUNTEER CENTERS**

There also exists in Virginia a network of 16 local Volunteer Centers. (See complete list in the Appendix.) These Centers are independent nonprofit organizations, many funded by United Way, which serve as local clearinghouses. Historically, these Centers have played an important role in linking individuals who wish to volunteer with agencies and organizations that need volunteers. Often they have also sponsored local recruitment and recognition activities. While there is no official relationship between these Centers and the Department of Volunteerism, they work closely together to accomplish mutual goals and support each others' efforts.

There is great disparity in the size and scope of services offered by Virginia's Volunteer Centers. Their staffing levels vary from one half-time person (Loudoun County) to a staff of 7 (Virginia Peninsula). Most are located in urban areas.

## **STATISTICS ON VOLUNTEERING**

While there are few statistics available for Virginia itself, the 1985 Gallup Survey on Volunteering provides some helpful information as to the quantity and quality of volunteer activity in the United States. There is good reason to assume that the national trends hold true for Virginia, especially given the strong tradition of citizen participation in the Commonwealth. Highlights include:

- Volunteer activity remains a pervasive activity. In 1985, nearly half of all Americans 14 years or older volunteered.
- Volunteers contribute an average of 3.5 hours per week in 1985, a significant increase over the 2.6 hours per week contributed in 1980.
- A substantial proportion (40%) report that they are volunteering more hours than three years ago.
- The primary reasons people give for becoming volunteers are: they want to do something useful to help others (52%), they have an interest in the work or activity (36%), or they enjoy doing the work (32%).
- There is a clear relationship between contributing volunteer time and giving money. A higher proportion of volunteers give more money to charitable organizations than persons who do not volunteer.
- The dollar value of volunteer time is estimated at \$110 billion annually.
- All types of people volunteer, and for all types of activity, as shown in the tables below:

Volunteers: Proportion Volunteering  
Past 12 Months by Selected Demographic  
Characteristics

| Characteristics                    | October 1985 | March 1981 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| All                                | 48%          | 52%        |
| Sex                                |              |            |
| Male                               | 45           | 47         |
| Female                             | 51           | 56         |
| Age                                |              |            |
| 14-17                              | 52           | 53         |
| 18-24                              | 43           | 54         |
| 25-34                              | 53           | NA         |
| 25-64                              | 51           | 55         |
| 35-49                              | 54           | NA         |
| 50-64                              | 44           | NA         |
| 65 and older                       | 38           | 37         |
| 65-74                              | 43           | NA         |
| 75 and older                       | 26           | NA         |
| Color                              |              |            |
| White                              | 49           | 54         |
| Black and<br>other races           | 38           | 41         |
| Marital status                     |              |            |
| Married                            | 52           | 53         |
| Single                             | 39           | 58         |
| Divorced/<br>separated/<br>widowed | 39           | 42         |
| Employment                         |              |            |
| Full-time                          | 49           | 55         |
| Part-time                          | 62           | 65         |
| Not employed                       | 44           | 45         |

NA = Not available

Continued

Volunteers: Percentage of Volunteers  
by Activity Area in Past 12 Months

| Area  | 1985<br>October | 1981<br>March |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Percent of population<br>that volunteered     | 48%             | 52%           |
| Percent of volunteers in:                     |                 |               |
| Health  | 19              | 23            |
| Education                                     | 27              | 23            |
| Religious organizations                       | 48              | 37            |
| Social services and<br>welfare                | 15              | 10            |
| Civic, social, and fraternal<br>organizations | 17              | 12            |
| Community action                              | 8               | 12            |
| Justice                                       | 2               | 2             |
| Recreation                                    | 21              | 13            |
| Arts and culture                              | 8               | 6             |
| Work-related<br>organizations                 | 8               | 10            |
| Political organizations                       | 8               | 12            |
| Informal-alone                                | 40              | 44            |
| General fund-raisers                          | 23              | 12            |
| Other   | *               | 2             |

\*Less than one-half of one percent.

## **OTHER TRENDS**

In addition to these national characteristics, research indicates the following trends to be true in Virginia:

- Volunteering in state government agencies continues to increase steadily, and there is growing interest on the part of local governments in establishing county or city-wide volunteer programs. Local officials can benefit from additional training in how to creatively involve citizens.
- Rural areas need more intensified assistance in mobilizing volunteers. Often there are fewer communication networks in place, and economic depression may influence the degree to which citizens feel able to contribute to their communities. While there are certainly basic principles of volunteer management which apply to all types of geographical areas, there are some unique considerations related to rural areas which need to be understood. (Many of the same techniques are applicable to small neighborhoods within large urban areas.)
- As financial resources remain constant or decrease and new social problems need solving, there is increasing pressure to "do more with less." Volunteers are often seen as the solution to this dilemma without adequate attention given to planning and supporting their efforts. There is no question that volunteers can play a large role, but community planners must avoid duplication of existing services and be daringly creative in developing roles for citizen participation.
- The majority of volunteering currently done is by individuals who give a few hours per week or month to a particular agency, organization, or project. While this type of activity is extremely valuable, and certainly should not be reduced or discouraged, there are certain types of tasks or needs which can better be addressed by a more time-intensive team approach. Community leaders and program administrators need help in identifying their priorities for this type of high-impact project, and assistance in mobilizing teams of volunteers to do the job.

## **ANTICIPATED SERVICE NEEDS**

The Report of the Governor's Commission on Virginia's Future and other recent state-level initiatives indicate that future priority should be given to issues such as:

- Equal access to high quality education
- Reduction of illiteracy
- Greater emphasis on preschool and adult education
- Preservation & effective management of natural resources
- Increased housing construction and/or renovation for the homeless population, the elderly, and the disabled
- Increased indigent health care services

- Increased outreach to connect existing services with those who need them
- Respite care services for families of disabled children, dependent adults, and children at risk of abuse or neglect
- Greater use of the contributions of older adults, especially through intergenerational activities

As diverse as all these needs are, there is one common denominator which can connect them all: volunteerism. There are ways in which citizen volunteers can participate in achieving each of these goals, not as the only answer but in partnership with paid staff and as sources of new energy, ideas, and perspectives. Not only will substantial, necessary work be accomplished, but there will be additional intangible benefits such as community cooperation, civic pride, and a blurring of lines between the "givers" and the "takers".

### III. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research for this study consisted of the following:

- Information and materials on existing state service corps were gathered from a variety of sources.
- Interviews were conducted with the directors of the Maryland and Washington state programs, and with the Human Environment Center in Washington, DC which monitors service corps programs across the country.
- A visit was made to Public/Private Ventures, Inc. in Philadelphia, an organization which conducts training and research on service corps programs.
- The State Program Director of ACTION was interviewed in order to determine how a Virginia corps could be designed so as to complement the existing VISTA program.
- A telephone survey was conducted to gather information from program coordinators and agency administrators across the state who might be affected by the creation of a service corps. The survey is described in detail on the following pages of this chapter.

#### **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The survey sample was selected from the Department's contact lists. It consisted of 36 individuals who are experienced in managing volunteers or who work in various settings in which volunteers can be utilized. The individuals interviewed were representative of state agencies, local satellites of state agencies, local governments, and non-profit organizations. (A complete list of respondents is in the Appendix.). Thus, although the sample was non-random, it was objective and diverse.

The interviews began with a description of a tentative concept of how a Virginia corps might be structured and administered. It was characterized as a way to serve the needs of a community by involving teams of volunteers. Following this description, the respondent was asked a series of questions designed to evoke initial opinions about the corps concept. These questions frequently led to more complex issues concerning the feasibility of establishing a corps. The average interview lasted 25 minutes.

Below is a summary of the survey results. Items 1-7 summarize the responses to the initial series of questions. Items 8-12 are the results of more detailed discussions about the administration of a corps. Direct quotes are included where possible to better illustrate the various responses.

## 1. Need for a Service Corps

When asked if they could envision utilizing a Corps team of volunteers to fill their unmet service needs, the majority of respondents answered affirmatively and enthusiastically. Of the four service sectors, non-profit organizations and local satellites expressed the most enthusiasm. This is probably because these two sectors are more apt to deliver services directly to clients, thus creating a greater need for labor. As the volunteer coordinator for a local board for the aging stated, "We use 200 volunteers currently, and we could use another 200 if we could get them."

Local satellites in rural areas expressed particular interest in the corps concept. In these areas, social service agencies are limited by budget and personnel constraints, yet they must provide service to a large geographic region. In addition, these areas are experiencing an increasing proportion of elderly and disabled individuals in their populations, thereby intensifying the need for more personnel to deliver services. With respect to Virginia's natural and recreational lands, the state parks are increasingly needing volunteers to conduct maintenance, education, and conservation projects. A volunteer coordinator involved with Virginia's state parks stated, "We are desperate for manpower since the federal conservation activities are being cut back."

In a few cases, respondents indicated that Corps teams would not be needed or appropriate for use by their agencies. Emergency services (rescue squads) volunteers, for example, undergo months of technical training and make a commitment for three years. Coordinators from a large Virginia city and an extensive county library system indicated that they administer programs for which volunteers are plentiful and Corps teams could not be utilized. Such cases, however, represent a minority of the possible opportunities for Corps volunteers.

In fact, the possibilities for Corps enrollees depends to some extent upon the ability of volunteer coordinators to think in terms of longer term projects (six months to one year) which can fully utilize the manpower provided by a team. Thus, the Corps team would be most effective in initiating projects which require intensive labor needs in their start-up phases. The Corps staff would have to assist volunteer coordinators to design such projects.

## 2. Examples of Possible Corps Projects

The following is a partial list of possible Corps team projects suggested by the respondents:

- establish a local recycling center
- trails improvement and maintenance in state parks
- establish a respite care program for the elderly or for children
- expand social service agency outreach efforts into the community with door to door visits
- landscaping and support at nursing homes and residential facilities for the handicapped



- assist in running regional retreats for writers, actors, and artists
- provide recreational and escort services at nursing homes and residential facilities for the mentally retarded
- rehabilitate the housing of low-income residents
- establish an Elderly Reassurance program by making door to door visits in outlying areas
- establish and run a shelter for the homeless

### 3. Advantages of Volunteer Teams

The respondents were asked to describe what advantages the team concept brings to volunteer management. Less than half of the respondents possessed experience with volunteer teams. Yet almost all the respondents speculated easily, and the responses for the sample as a whole were very similar. Of the respondents lacking experience with volunteer teams, most were interested in trying the concept if given the opportunity.

The following were the most frequently mentioned advantages of a team arrangement:

- it prevents volunteer "burnout" by allowing individuals to switch and diversify tasks with other team members
- teams are more productive per volunteer since being on a team adds incentive for each volunteer to work harder
- when on a team, a volunteer does not feel alone if facing a new situation.

### 4. Disadvantages of Volunteer Teams

Respondents were then asked to describe any disadvantages associated with the use of volunteer teams. The necessity of increased supervision was cited as the primary disadvantage, but in most cases the respondents indicated that the advantages of the team concept outweigh the disadvantage of increased supervision. In a few cases, however, this could be a barrier to using a volunteer team, such as in the case of a mental health residential facility where the coordinator expressed concerns about the difficulty in coordinating team members working simultaneously in different areas of the facility.

### 5. Feasibility of Intergenerational Teams

Respondents were asked to consider the feasibility of matching young adults with senior citizens for service on the same team. The respondents were almost unanimous in support of the concept. They maintained that older volunteers not only excel at organizational and supervisory tasks, but often enjoy some period of mildly physical work. However, if the concept is to be successful, careful screening and matching is vital.

The following were the most frequently mentioned advantages associated with an intergenerational team:

- breaks down young people's stereotypes about older persons
- seniors lend credibility to the team
- expands the team's capabilities
- advantageous when providing services to people of all ages.

#### 6. Service Period

Respondents were asked which service period (six months or one year) would be best for completing Corps projects. The majority of the coordinators responded that if possible, the volunteers should be enrolled for a nine-month to one year service period. This would allow time for the team to "gel" in its work patterns. It would also allow an adequate start-up time for teams that are establishing new programs.

#### 7. Work Time Per Week

Similarly, respondents were asked how many hours per week (20 hours/week or 40 hours/week) would be best for Corps volunteers. Almost every respondent regarded the 20 hour/week schedule as preferable. This part-time schedule would not be taxing for older, retired volunteers and would allow some enrollees to hold a part-time job in addition to service work if necessary.

#### 8. Target Groups

One of the most complex and uncertain issues associated with establishing the Corps is ascertaining the type of individuals who would be attracted to enroll in it. This is largely determined by the type of time commitment required. However, based on survey responses and the experience of volunteer corps in other states, the following individuals are potential enrollees:

- persons retired from full-time employment
- high-school and college graduates in transition into the work place
- part-time students at community colleges
- unemployed mothers with small children who are interested in volunteering for daycare programs
- mentally and physically disabled persons who need greater interaction with non-disabled persons
- unemployed or part-time employed persons receiving welfare assistance

Motivations to join the Corps would probably include the desire to interact with other people, the development of job skills, and the satisfaction of helping others. These motivations may vary somewhat according to geographic location within the state. For example, in southwest Virginia,

where job training opportunities are more limited, volunteers could approach the Corps with skill development as a strong motivation. In northern Virginia, however, opportunities for developing job skills are more numerous; thus, enrollees from this area may be motivated primarily by the desire to interact with others and the satisfaction of service.

#### 9. Overlapping Programs

Several respondents reflected upon the degree to which the Corps might duplicate the efforts of already existing programs. In particular, they considered the roles of the federal RSVP program, the Volunteer Centers throughout the state, and various job training and placement programs. Most concluded that the Corps would present new and important opportunities for volunteering in Virginia's localities. A local government volunteer coordinator remarked, "I see tremendous potential in it. Federal programs are no longer growing (the Foster Grandparents program, for example). It would be great to see increased state involvement."

In addition, it appears there would be little or no overlap with the federal VISTA program. VISTA depends largely on local agencies to propose projects and recruit their own local volunteers. All projects must be focused on fighting poverty. Furthermore, current funding levels allow for only about 50 VISTA positions a year. Experience indicates that there are individuals who contact VISTA wanting to volunteer, but cannot be placed because there is no federal project to match them with. These individuals could easily be referred to a Virginia Corps program.

#### 10. Building a Local Service Coalition

It was explained to the respondents that one of the Corps goals might be to facilitate coalition-building within the communities utilizing Corps teams. These coalitions would be composed of individuals from federal, state, local, and non-profit agencies who could periodically assess the needs for services within the entire locality. Respondents were almost unanimous in their support of this concept.

The volunteer coordinator of one nonprofit organization related that she had been sponsored to convene such a local coalition in Lynchburg. She successfully increased collaboration among a variety of government and nonprofit agencies, and her activities exemplify the role which the Corps could play in other localities throughout the state.

#### 11. Stipend and Cash Match

The advantages and disadvantages associated with providing Corps volunteers a small stipend to offset travel and personal expenses were discussed in detail. A few respondents objected on philosophical grounds, maintaining that to pay a volunteer anything is a contradiction in terms. However, the majority of respondents considered the stipend as advantageous for the program, especially given the intensified commitment of time. A state agency volunteer coordinator commented, "Obviously, volunteers are not free labor--they are just inexpensive labor. Also the volunteer incurs many costs and should be reimbursed." Several of the coordinators, in fact, already provide their volunteers a nominal stipend for service. The volunteer coordinator for a local board for the aging stated, "I have no problem with

the stipend idea. We pay some volunteers and don't pay others, depending upon the time, personal expenses, and skills volunteered." One respondent suggested that the stipend should be non-taxable so that it not affect an individual's status for receiving welfare payments.

When asked if they would be willing to provide a small cash match to the Corps to partially offset the Corps' stipend payments (such as is done by VISTA and the Washington State Conservation Corps), the majority of the respondents maintained that such a requirement would make utilizing the Corps impossible. They are only able to provide the volunteer with in-kind items such as space, equipment, training and supervision.

## 12. Volunteer Commitment

The respondents underscored the importance of volunteer commitment. One commented that, "We train many volunteers who we do not see again. Commitment is key." The following suggestions were offered for ensuring volunteer commitment:

- projects must be interesting to the volunteers; indirect service projects like office support work should be avoided
- projects must be well designed and well supervised
- when screening volunteers, attempts should be made to discover the individual's motives for enrolling
- the terms of service should be clearly defined in contract form
- a strong sense of goals should be built into the project team

## **RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

The survey results indicate that most respondents approve of the Corps concept as proposed. When combined with information gathered from the additional research activities, the following conclusions emerge:

- The need for Corps volunteers and coalition building activities is greatest in rural localities.
- Many human service and conservation project possibilities already exist for Corps teams.
- Community leaders and agency staff will need assistance in designing long-term, intensive projects.
- Organizing volunteers in intergenerational teams has many advantages, especially when the setting and project design are arranged to minimize supervision problems.
- A nine-month or one-year service period is preferred.

- The Corps program would not duplicate the efforts of existing volunteer programs.
- A small stipend could be considered as a possible incentive for Corps participation, to offset the volunteer's expenses.
- Project design and service agreements should be carefully defined so as to ensure volunteer commitment to the Corps.

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is the recommendation of this study that a Virginia service corps be established. There are clearly many factors to consider in designing such a program, depending on desired goals and intended participation. Suggested below are some general guidelines for how such a program might be designed, and two more specific models for implementation.

##### **PROGRAM GOALS**

The purpose of the statewide Corps would be:

- to improve the quality of life for Virginians by meeting needs not currently being addressed by public or private programs;
- to accomplish high-impact projects within a relatively short period of time through the use of teams of volunteers;
- to foster an enhanced spirit of civic responsibility and commitment to the ideal of community service;
- to enable communities to solve specific local problems effectively through the use of volunteers, thus becoming more self-sufficient.

##### **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The Corps would have the following characteristics:

- Any Virginia resident age 17 or older could volunteer to join the Corps.
- Corps members would work on projects in teams (4-8 members per team).
- The emphasis would be on forming teams which provide a maximum mix of skills, experience, knowledge and leadership abilities.
- Projects could be either physical or human service in nature.
- The Corps would promote a high degree of esprit de corps among its members, and enforces high standards of conduct.
- The Corps could be administered by the Department of Volunteerism.
- An advisory Commission with diverse representation would be established to provide support in the areas of volunteer recruitment, project development and public relations.
- The primary funding would be by state appropriation, with potential in-kind contributions from the private sector.

## **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

Project proposals would be solicited from state government agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and civic groups. They may focus on either human service or physical activities. Possible projects which could be accomplished by Corps teams include:

- Human Service:
  - Distribute information on available services to isolated residents
  - Establish food bank/surplus distribution program
  - Conduct training in crime prevention
  - Establish volunteer tutoring program
  - Develop after-school program for latch-key children
  - Expand services to migrant workers/recent immigrants
  - Conduct community surveys to assist in local planning
  - Establish respite care services
  
- Physical:
  - Construction/improvement of parks or conservation areas
  - Housing renovation
  - Community beautification
  - Creation of a community recycling center
  - Weatherization projects for low-income households
  - Home repair & maintenance for elderly/disabled
  - Construction of wheelchair ramps and other modifications to allow for accessibility

## **STAFFING**

The Corps would be managed by a State Director whose primary responsibilities would be to: oversee the development of statewide policies; administer state funds; coordinate recruitment and training activities; assist with project development; coordinate motivational and recognition activities; and staff an advisory Commission. Additional support would be provided by a part-time secretary, members of the advisory Commission, and the existing staff of the Department of Volunteerism.

## **TWO MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Within this general framework there are several variables which determine more specifically how the service corps program could be implemented. Described below are two models, each combining different types of time commitment, incentives, and target groups of volunteers to create two distinct options:

- **Model A** involves recruiting and placing volunteer teams throughout the state to accomplish projects on a 40 hour a week basis; the budget includes a monthly stipend to cover living expenses, plus an incentive award at the end of the service period.
  
- **Model B** focuses on establishing community-based volunteer teams, and incorporates training for local leaders in coalition building, needs assessment and volunteer management; because Corps members work on projects in their home communities on a 15-20 hour per week basis, there is no stipend.

## Model A

Time Commitment: Volunteers would make a full-time commitment to serve in the Corps for one year (40 hours per week).

Project Assignment: Corps members would be assigned to projects in both rural and urban areas of the state, regardless of their geographic origin.

Volunteer Recruitment: The most likely candidates for this Corps would be recent high school graduates or college graduates, and college students wishing to take a year off from school to gain work experience and/or explore career options. Therefore recruitment efforts would be directed at high school counselors, college placement offices, and related career/job centers.

This service corps concept might also appeal to some recently retired individuals or those adults who are considering mid-life career changes. Information about the Corps would thus be distributed to corporate retirement programs, career counseling services.

Training & Supervision: Volunteers selected to serve in the Corps would be required to attend a 10-day residential training course. This phase would include team-building experiences, orientation to the Corps policies and procedures, training in leadership and volunteer management, information about Virginia's community service networks, and basic safety skills.

One member of each team would be designated as Team Leader, serving as the liaison between the team members, the State Director, and the on-site supervisors of the work project. Once assigned to a project, the day-to-day supervision of the team would be provided by the Project Sponsor, i.e. the agency or organization utilizing the services of the Corps volunteers. The Project Sponsor would also be responsible for providing any specific skills training needed in order to carry out the project.

Incentives & Recognition: Corps members would receive a monthly stipend of \$475 to cover living expenses. In addition, they would be covered by the Commonwealth of Virginia's liability insurance policy, and by a supplementary health insurance policy maintained by the Corps.

Upon successful completion of their term of service, Corps volunteers would receive an incentive award. Each individual who completes the program could choose to accept this in the form of \$5000 or as a \$5000 tuition credit at a state-supported institution of higher learning.

Ongoing recognition activities would be developed as appropriate and might include possibilities such as:

- Special training/educational opportunities
- Certificates, pins, awards
- Regular newsletter to all current and past Corps members
- Annual gathering of current and former Corps members



Projected Timetable for Implementation:

- Year One: ● Hire State Director and part-time secretary  
 ● Establish Governor's Service Corps Commission  
 ● Develop program policies and guidelines  
 ● Develop marketing plan and materials  
 ● Develop recruitment plan and materials  
 ● Develop training plan and materials  
 ● Launch recruitment campaign  
 ● Solicit and select 3 pilot projects
- Year Two: ● Train and assign 3 teams of volunteers to begin pilot projects in July  
 ● Continue statewide marketing & recruitment  
 ● Provide on-going support to Project Sponsors and volunteers  
 ● Solicit and select 3 additional projects to begin in January  
 ● Select and train 3 additional teams of volunteers to begin in January  
 ● Evaluate pilot projects and original Corps members

Since students or recent students are the most likely candidates for this type of Corps, the timetable for activating new projects and volunteers would largely be determined by the school year calendar, with start-up gates probably being in July and January. This would also seem compatible with the state funding cycle. Activating a "class" of three teams every six months would eventually require funding to support 40-45 volunteers per year. This proposed schedule is diagrammed below:

| Volunteers | YEAR ONE             | YEAR TWO             | YEAR THREE           |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Class A    | ████████████████████ |                      |                      |
| Class B    |                      | ████████████████████ |                      |
| Class C    |                      | ████████████████████ |                      |
| Class D    |                      |                      | ████████████████████ |
| Class E    |                      |                      | ████████████████████ |
| Class F    |                      |                      | ████████████████████ |
|            |                      |                      |                      |

Program Budget:

|  | <u>YEAR ONE</u> | <u>YEAR TWO</u> | <u>YEAR THREE</u> |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Staff Costs</b> (State Director,<br>Secretary, Fringe Benefits)                                     | \$37,300        | \$ 38,300       | \$ 39,300         |
| <b>Volunteer Expenses</b> (Pre-Service<br>Training, Stipends, Health Insurance,<br>Incentive Awards)** | 0               | 283,100         | 440,100           |
| <b>Consultant Services</b> (Planning,<br>Research, Marketing, Training)                                | 25,000          | 10,000          | 5,000             |
| <b>Travel Costs</b> (Mileage, Meals, Lodging)  | 3,000           | 3,000           | 3,000             |
| <b>Overhead</b> (Phone, Postage, Printing,<br>Photocopying, Supplies)                                  | 6,500           | 5,000           | 5,000             |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>  | \$71,800        | \$339,400       | \$492,400         |

\*\*This amount is calculated as follows:

Stipends = \$475 x # vols. x 12 mos.  
Pre-Service Training = \$30 x 10 days x # vols.  
Health/Accident Insurance = \$2 x # vols.  
Incentive Awards = 50% vols. x \$5000 cash plus  
50% vols. x \$5000 tuition credit

## Model B

Time Commitment: Volunteers would make a commitment of at least 15 hours per week for a period of nine months to one year.

Volunteer Recruitment: This service corps concept allows for participation by a wide range of individuals, including:

- Recent high school or college graduates seeking work experience or career exploration
- Part-time college students
- Adults making mid-life career changes
- Retired adults (executives, professionals, skilled, unskilled)
- Residents of group homes, halfway houses, mental health facilities, etc. who are ready for part-time work experience or skills training.
- Court-referred volunteers ordered to perform large numbers of hours of community service.

Training & Coalition Building: This Corps project would consist of a 3-phase process as follows:

(a) Using an award-winning model developed in Minnesota, community leaders would be trained in how to build coalitions, assess needs, set priorities, and explore resource options.

(b) Local agency and organization staff would then receive comprehensive training in how to manage volunteers, including recruitment and supervision techniques.

(c) Once service needs had been identified and agreed upon, one or more Corps teams would be recruited from the local community, screened and assigned.

After a community had undergone the initial training, the Corps would continue to provide a means by which teams of volunteers could be mobilized and recognized. The program would also provide ongoing support and technical assistance as needed.

### Projected Timetable for Implementation:

- Year One:
- Establish Corps advisory commission
  - Develop program policies and guidelines
  - Develop marketing plan and materials
  - Continue research on incentives and recognition options
  - Develop training and recruitment materials
  - Develop volunteer handbook
  - Conduct 6 regional kick-off conferences to explain & promote the Corp
  - Recruit and train 8-10 volunteer trainers
  - Select 7 pilot program sites (communities/counties)

- Year Two:
- Conduct 7 coalition-building/needs assessment trainings
  - Conduct 7 volunteer management trainings
  - Screen, select & orient at least 7 teams of volunteers
  - Provide on-going technical assistance as needed
  - Create incentives plan & obtain needed materials/items
  - Continue statewide awareness campaign
  - Solicit proposals for 10 new program sites
  - Evaluate activities in pilot communities

Succeeding Years:

- Conduct coalition-building/needs assessment trainings in new locations, as needed
- Conduct volunteer management training in new locations, as needed
- Screen, select and orient Corps teams as needed
- Provide ongoing recognition of participating communities and volunteers
- Continue evaluation activities

Incentive Options: In order to create and maintain a high level of interest, motivation and esprit de corps within the program it will be necessary to develop a range of incentives for both Corps volunteers and participating communities. These could be developed at both the state and local levels, and might include possibilities such as: :

- A statewide newsletter
- T-shirts, buttons, bumper stickers
- Discount coupons at local businesses
- Occasional team meals or outings
- Special training/educational opportunities
- Certificates, pins, awards
- Road signs for communities with active Corps projects

Program Budget:

|  | <u>YEAR ONE</u> | <u>YEAR TWO</u> | <u>YEAR THREE</u> |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Staff Costs</b> (State Director, Secretary, Fringe Benefits)      | \$37,300        | \$38,300        | \$39,300          |
| <b>Volunteer Expenses</b> (Health Insurance, Incentives)             | 0               | 10,000          | 10,000            |
| <b>Consultant Services</b> (Planning, Research, Marketing, Training) | 25,000          | 10,000          | 5,000             |
| <b>Travel Costs</b> (Mileage, Meals, Lodging)                        | 6,000           | 7,500           | 5,000             |
| <b>Overhead</b> (Phone, Postage, Printing, Photocopying, Supplies)   | 9,700           | 6,000           | 6,000             |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>  | \$ 80,000**     | \$71,800        | \$65,300          |

\*\* While start-up costs for Model B may be somewhat high initially due to the need for adequate planning and marketing, there will be an increasing return on the investment each succeeding year. Once the process of training and recruitment has begun, the number of Corps teams will grow steadily as communities continue to identify projects and involve volunteers. It is not expected that program costs would rise significantly for several years.

NOTE: Because the Department of Volunteerism strongly believes in "practicing what it preaches", and in keeping with the spirit of the service corps concept, it is quite likely that the budgets of either model could be supplemented by in-kind and contributed services.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Models A and B represent two versions of a Virginia service corps which could be established, each with its own unique emphasis. Clearly there are other variations which could be designed as well, all of which would produce tangible benefits to the Commonwealth. By creating a statewide mechanism for mobilizing teams of volunteers with a substantial time commitment, the role of citizen involvement throughout Virginia can be greatly expanded and enhanced.

## A P P E N D I X

- A. Directory of Local Volunteer Centers
- B. Phone Survey Respondents

## APPENDIX A: Directory of Volunteer Centers

### ALEXANDRIA VOLUNTEER BUREAU, INC

418 S. Washington St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Director: Mary LeMoyné  
(703) 836-2176

### ARLINGTON VOLUNTEER SERVICES

1400 N. Courthouse Rd., #120  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Director: Jean Berg  
(703) 558-2654

### COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY SERVICES'

#### VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER

P.O. Box 496  
Roanoke, VA 24003  
Coord.: Jenifer Price-Singleton  
(703) 985-0131

### LOUDOUN VOLUNTEER CENTER

26-C Fairfax St.  
Leesburg, VA 22075  
Director: Marilyn Dunnell  
(703) 777-4914

### SUFFOLK VOLUNTARY ACTION & INFORMATION CENTER, INC.

P.O. Box 452  
Suffolk, VA 23434  
Director: Gayle Oliver  
(804) 539-0316

### VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

P.O. Box 565  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
Director: Rhoda Janosik  
(703) 552-4909

### VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER OF CENTRAL VIRGINIA

P.O. Box 2434  
Lynchburg, VA 24501  
Director: Sandra Brooks  
(804) 847-8657

### VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE

c/o Dept. of Pub. Welfare  
P.O. Box 378  
Norton, VA 24273  
Director: Jane Fleming  
(703) 679-2701

### VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER OF FAIRFAX CC

10530 Page Ave.  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Director: Angie Carrera  
(703) 691-3460

### VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTER OF SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS

253 W. Freemason St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
Director: Lenora Mathews  
(804) 624-2400

2115 High St.  
Portsmouth, VA 23704  
(Lois Dustin)  
(804) 397-2825

### VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER, PRINCE WILLIAM AREA

9300 Peabody, #104  
Manassas, VA 22110  
Director: Don Poe  
(703) 369-5292

### VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA

1520 Aberdeen Road  
Hampton, VA 23666  
Director: Kay Bradley  
(804) 838-9770

### VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTER FOR WINCHESTER, FREDERICK & CLARKE

37 S. Cameron St.  
Winchester, VA 22601  
Director: Neysa Novick  
(703) 667-8922

### VOLUNTEER CENTER OF THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER RICHMOND

4001 Fitzhugh Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23220  
Director: Debbie Covington  
(804) 353-2000

### VOLUNTEER CENTER/UNITED WAY, THOMAS JEFFERSON AREA

P.O. Box 139  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
Director: Judd Morrison  
(804) 972-1705

## APPENDIX B: Phone Survey Respondents

### State Agency Administrators/Representatives:

Department of Social Services  
Vernon Simmons, State Volunteer Services Coordinator

Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, & Substance Abuse  
Meade Boswell, Coalition Liaison

Department for the Aging  
Betty Reams, Assistant Commissioner

Department for Children  
Martha Gilbert, Director

Division of Historic Landmarks  
Margaret Peters

Division of Litter Control  
Janice Robertson, Assistant Commissioner

Division of Parks & Recreation  
Chuck Wyatt

Department of Criminal Justice Services  
Rick Kearn

Department for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (still pending contact)  
Emmett Jones, Deaf Programs Coordinator

Department of Rehabilitative Services  
Linda Phillips, Fiscal Management

Department for the Visually Handicapped  
Kathleen Rodenburg, Coordinator of Volunteers

### Local Government:

York County  
Suzanne Ford, Coordinator of Volunteers & Beautification

City of Norfolk  
Kitty Umbarger, Coordinator of Volunteers

Arlington Volunteer Services  
Jean Berg, Director

### Local "Satellites" of State Agencies:

Sheltering Arms Rehabilitation Hospital  
Nancy Barrett, Director of Community Services



New River Valley Community Service Board  
Karen Castele, Volunteer Department

Westmoreland Department of Social Services  
Heidi Cook, Volunteer Coordinator

Division of Emergency Medical Services  
Carolyn Engel (Virginia Beach)

Prince William County Department of Social Services  
Volunteer Services Program

Department for the Visually Handicapped (Bristol area)  
Sherry Johnson, Volunteer Services Director

Bon Air Reception & Diagnostic Center  
Uta Wilbur, Volunteer Coordinator

Southwestern State Hospital  
Polly Miller, Volunteer Services Director

Norfolk Health Department  
Darlene Quiram, Volunteer Coordinator

Central VA Training Center  
Susan Sepnker, Volunteer Director

Accomack County Department of Social Services  
Richard Sterrett, Volunteer Services Coordinator

Fairfax Area Agency on Aging  
Susan Herbert, Volunteer Coordinator

Jefferson Area Board for the Aging  
Lida Pritchette-Arnason, Director

Norton Department of Social Services  
Jane Fleming, Director of Volunteers in Service

**Non Profits:**

Prince William Library  
Janice Campbell, Volunteer Program Coordinator

Shenan Arts  
Karen Cook, Director of Marketing

Friends of Norfolk Juvenile Court  
Ed Bradley, Director

Total Action Against Poverty (Roanoke)  
Dinah Lambert, Community Resource Worker

Madison House  
Hilton Hallock, Assistant Director

Elizabeth Crump Manor  
Marie Sandy, Director of Volunteers

Charlottesville Housing Improvement Project  
Bob Newman, Director

Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Ann Swanson, Grassroots Coordinator



