

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: National Service

Series/Staff Member: Eli Segal

Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 1295

FolderID:

Folder Title:

Service Organizations: Commission on National and Community Service (Catherine Milton)

Stack:

S

Row:

66

Section:

2

Shelf:

8

Position:

1



File

COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

MEMORANDUM

To: Michele Cavataio, Assistant to the Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

Cc: ✓ Eli Segal, Director, Office of National Service
Shirley Sagawa, Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

From: Catherine Milton, Executive Director, Commission on National and
Community Service

Subject: K-12 Service-Learning Background Material

Date: March 22, 1993

This package includes background material on K-12 service-learning that I hope will be useful to you. In addition to the following descriptions of key Commission activities, I have enclosed our 1993 report to Congress, What You Can Do For Your Country, a collection of articles on service-learning from the Phi Delta Kappan, June 1991, a report called Assessing Citizenship, prepared by the Goal 3 Technical Planning Subgroup on Citizenship, and a special report, Principles of Good Practice For Combining Service and Learning. While these will provide you with an overview of the field, I encourage the Secretary and Undersecretary to experience this innovative teaching and service approach first hand. The Commission has model programs in just about every State. We would be pleased to arrange site visits for you wherever and whenever your schedule permits.

Serve-America: Overview of FY 1992 Grants

Serve-America, one of the Commission's four major grant programs, supports programs sponsored by schools or nonprofit community-based organizations that involve school-age youth in service-learning activities and involve adult volunteers in the schools. A key focus of Serve-America is to build a sound foundation for service-learning in the curriculum of every school in America.

Service-learning is an innovative teaching strategy which engages students in community service, accompanied by conscious and thoughtfully designed opportunities for planning and reflecting on the service experience. The most effective service-learning programs link service and academic learning; provide concrete opportunities for youth to learn new skills and think critically; make real contributions to the community within or outside the school or sponsoring organization; include preparation and reflection; involve youth in the planning stages; and provide skilled adult guidance and supervision.

Typically, formula grants are distributed to the States, which then provide competitive subgrants to local schools, school districts and community based organizations. In FY 1992, the Commission made 57 awards totaling \$16.3 million to help fund service programs in 47 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico. In addition Serve-America grants were awarded to five local organizations in Connecticut and Alaska, and three Native American Indian tribes. Grant amounts range from approximately \$7,000 to \$1.6 million. Attached is a list of Commission awardees and the names and addresses of our key contacts. (Attachment #1)

Serve-America Leader States

Of the 49 States that received Serve-America grants in FY 1992, eight achieved Leader State status based on the quality of their State applications. the purpose of the Leader State network is to 1.) identify exemplary models; and 2.) organize and implement activities that will advance to national service-learning field. Leader States each received a share of \$1.2 million in supplemental funding. Current Leader States are Colorado, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and West Virginia. Descriptions of their State Serve-America projects and field enhancement plans are attached. (Attachment #2)

K-12 Serve-America Clearinghouse

The Commission is in the process of selecting an entity that will function as a K-12 clearinghouse. The Serve-America Clearinghouse will be the central element of the Commission's K-12 knowledge transfer/technical assistance delivery system. As a major disseminator of technical advice on service-learning programs and practices, the Clearinghouse will identify and distribute key information--including instructional materials and program descriptions--through various media, including on-line and print databases, and a 1-800 telephone number. In addition the Clearinghouse will assist the K-12 service-learning community by facilitating access to a network of peer consultants and experts in the field. We began soliciting proposals in December 1992 and will make an award by May 1993. A copy of the Clearinghouse solicitation is enclosed. (Attachment #3)

If you would like additional information, please contact me or Ruby Anderson, Program Officer for Serve-America, at (202) 724-0600.

File

February 24, 1993

TO: Eli Segal

FROM: Catherine Milton

After hearing you say last week that you are uncertain whether to continue the White House Office of National Service, I thought it might be helpful to jot down some of my thoughts on structure for the national service initiative. You have also referred several times to the early days of launching the Peace Corps. While there are some lessons to be learned, the situation is so different now that it is also important to highlight those differences.

This memorandum states four guiding principles and a set of recommendations based on those principles.

I. Some Guiding Principles

Multitude of Functions/ Multitude of Players. The key is an approach that releases energy, not attempts to control it. This approach needs to be emphasized by all the national leaders, including the President. We need to encourage initiative, entrepreneurial spirit; not make people think that they need to wait for permission to launch an effort, or wait to get the blessing of Federal money. There is always a potential danger that when the Federal Government tries to encourage grass root efforts it actually results in less service.

Encourage Coordination But More Important: Keep Focus. My experience in the nonprofit field and in government has led me strongly to believe that the most successful initiatives are those which are carried out by groups of people who clearly understand their roles and have a driving mission. When purposes and goals become too diffuse then there is a lot more talk than action. I think that this is also the message in Tom Peters' new book, *Liberation Management* -- the big corporate approach doesn't pull the best out of people as does the smaller more focused effort which empowers people, liberates them to get the job done. I am convinced this is why the Commission has been able to get so much accomplished in such a short time, with so few resources, and in a way that has resulted in better customer satisfaction. The same holds true for the Peace Corps. And on the flip side, this is why ACTION has never captured the imagination of the public or the field and why I believe we need to be very careful about compounding that mistake.

Need to Share Ideas/ Encourage New Initiatives that Might Work. There are a lot of good ideas in the Federal Government and in the nonprofit, state, and grass root communities. It helps everyone if there can be attention drawn to those good ideas, and good people. The President has a special role here and a lot of

the techniques that have been used, or I have heard you mention, ought to be nourished such as awards, speeches in the states which highlight local initiatives, special attention by the President to a Cabinet member who has successfully launched an initiative, town meetings, MTV, etc. It is also important for the Federal Government to help fund clearinghouses, sponsor newsletters, etc. which help get the information out at the grass roots level. I also think that a special White House summit on national and community service would be a valuable tool as would be targeted-White House meeting which bring together a group of constituencies to discuss community service (e.g., summit of business leaders; religious leaders; educational leaders). In addition, it would be extremely helpful to have the White House put national service on the agenda of other gatherings as it did during the economic summit (for example, a meeting on homelessness or urban revitalization or job skills readiness could include representatives from a service perspective).

Need to Coordinate Federal Initiatives and Be A Model for States. Actions taken at the Federal level have the potential to pave the way for the states and local communities, so careful attention needs to be paid to structure. President Clinton could encourage every governor to play a key role in his or her state — to appoint a special assistant to the governor for service, to appoint a volunteer board that will help to shape policy, to have a lead state agency that will help to distribute and generate funding for local efforts and several agencies that will play operating roles. This approach is obviously predicated on the assumption that the same kind of coordination will need to be played out at the Federal level. Also, the more that President Clinton could encourage the governors to play an active role the more likely is that service will be woven into the fabric of all Americans (a summer of service in 50 states next summer, youth service awards from the governors, etc).

II. Recommendations.

1. Keep a White House Office of National Service. It's an issue of clout and proximity. I am convinced that all of the above goals will be more likely to be accomplished if someone in the White House reports directly to the President with the following kinds of responsibilities:

- Liaison with the President

Keep Presidential interest high on national service. Connect him directly with those doing service; keep him briefed on options.

Build service into the President's schedule, engaging him in a direct service or recognition opportunity weekly.

- **Leader of Federal Agencies**

Get service on the agenda of Cabinet members (ranges from innovative use of excess DOD military base capacity to service for unemployment compensation benefits, to building a service component into the Job Corps and Food Stamps programs).

Strive to make Federal Government a model employer through improved personnel policies, community outreach, employee service opportunities.

- **Mobilizer of the nation -- people and private institutions**

Claim the issue of service as the President's own defining domestic agenda item.

Speeches, ceremonies, awards (bully pulpit).

Solicit financial resources from private institutions (foundations, for-profits).

Through your counsel and participation, make certain that there are available both governmental (i.e. Commission) and private national organizations (i.e. foundations) capable of securing the leadership necessary to support effective voluntary sector infrastructure.

- **Outreach to Capitol Hill**

Secure from Congress legislation that will support both governmental and private national and community service activity and that will enable citizens to be involved who lack necessary financial resources (but in a manner that will not undercut unpaid voluntary service).

Convince Legislative team to review legislation for potential service components.

2. **Have a Federal Agency that steers and not rows.** While I know that you are considering a range of options to administer the programs and that I may be considered a bit biased, I do think that we have learned a lot in the past year that is worth sharing with you. I think that Congress, when it created the Commission, saw the value in having a Federal agency whose primary purpose is to encourage the national and community service initiatives. Another option you may be considering would be to have ONS to administer the grants, but this would be unprecedented. I believe Congress will feel strongly about exercising control and oversight over grant making functions which will simply not be possible if done through the White House as opposed to a separate agency. Also,

the closer the association with the White House, the more difficult it is to generate bipartisan support.

Another option you may be considering is to create a super agency that combines the steering and rowing function. I believe this runs counter to the principals of good management and would call into public dialogue charges of creating a new bureaucracy at a time when the public wants less not more government. Key functions of a steering agency would include:

- *helping to set the policy guidelines for the field so that national and community service can flourish at the grass roots level;
- *investing Federal money in the best initiatives, conducting comparative evaluations, steering money to the most successful and sharing information on what works and what doesn't;
- *funding experimental model demonstration programs;
- *helping to build the infrastructure to lead the field through training initiatives, technical assistance, etc. both by use of Federal funds and by building collaborative relationships with private foundations and nonprofits;
- *providing another connection to the grass roots with the Office of National Service in the White House; and
- *helping to carry out Presidential initiatives while insulating and protecting the President from criticism from unsuccessful grant applicants.

The changes that could easily be made include a more explicit broadening of the focus from youth to include cross-generational efforts (in fact, the Commission is funding hundreds of these already).

. The advantages of a voluntary board include:

- * national service as envisioned by the President needs to be a partnership effort with the public institutions, private institutions and the nonprofit community: a voluntary board representing all sectors helps to make that partnership a reality;
- *utilizes strengths and expertise from many people--achieves diversity at the top, and adds value;
- *is a model of how to reinvent government --- saves money and attracts an outstanding caliber of volunteers, many of whom would never agree to

serve in the government at less than Cabinet rank, fits into a more populist less bureaucratic vision of government;

*is a model for the states --- governors can capture the talent in the private and public sectors to help to drive this movement forward;

*some key members of Congress came up with the idea and have been pleased with the way it works so why abandon it;

*Board members can help to sell the President's ideas through their constituents;

*it is a structure with which the nonprofit world is very comfortable and makes government seem more approachable and open to collaboration;

*it is the best way to make sure that money is given out to the best in the field without heavy political influence;

*a bipartisan board encourages bipartisan support and longevity; and

*provides a valuable conduit for private funds;

The influence of the White House/President over the Commission comes in several important ways:

*President (with the Director of ONS playing the key role) appoints the Board;

*Director of ONS participates in Board meetings and make views clearly known in public and in private;

*Impact of ONS on the day-to-day operations of the Commission as is the case with other Federal agencies (budget, size of staffing, legislative and regulatory changes, etc. all have to be cleared through OMB and therefore through ONS.

3. Keep VISTA and PEACE CORPS as the key rowers of Federally operated programs. Frankly, I think that a number of the national service models that the Commission is funding under Subtitle D are better models than VISTA, but on balance it would probably be a political mistake to eliminate VISTA. Of course, another option would be, rather than launch a new program, the ONS could do a total rehaul of VISTA to make it Clinton's signature program. The heads of these two independent agencies would report to the President through the ONS and the Director of ONS would convene regular meetings between these two Directors and the Executive Director of the Commission. ONS could

also encourage the development of national service efforts integrated into the work of other agencies such as HHS, Interior, Agriculture, EPA, etc.

4. Unanswered questions --- what about rest of ACTION? I know the question of whether one needs state and regional offices has been tossed around but one cannot answer that question until the details of the national service program are worked out. But in the meantime, I think it is important to focus on key functions and try and break apart a very complicated structure.

First, recognize that ACTION has at least three key roles --- running VISTA, staffing the funding programs, and operating and staffing some of the key programs for the elderly. Put the steering functions with the Commission and keep the rowing functions separate or with the states:

- *decide how many people you need to staff VISTA (and compare the costs per participant with what it costs the states to run the subtitle D programs);

- *consolidate the funding program responsibility with the Commission. The commission has managed to cut out most the red tape bureaucracy that has plagued ACTION's funding programs --- we have a much leaner staff and so my guess is that there would be a considerable saving by making this step; and

- *consider giving the funds to the states to operate foster grandparent and other senior programs and keep a few staff at the Commission to monitor/stimulate in much the same way the Commission staff does now for k-12, national models, corps. Again, this would save money and positions. These programs have very strong support from powerful groups and so there needs to be consultation soon with AARP, etc.

I would appreciate having the opportunity to discuss these views with you at your convenience.