



Volume 10

April, 1965

Number 1

AVENUES OF COOPERATION WITH "The Poverty Program"

Public libraries may find that the Economic Opportunity Act, Public Law 88-452, passed last year by the 88th Congress, is a two-way street. Librarians can offer inspiration to the leadership, the teachers, and the social workers by helping them find practical teaching materials. They may also offer training in work skills through the employment of disadvantaged youth in local libraries. In tapping this reservoir of workers, public libraries may find that their regular personnel will be freed to work with the public. By getting them into the act, much may also be accomplished in intriguing youth with the vocational potential of libraries.

Title I YOUTH PROGRAMS

Job Corps

The federal director of the "Poverty Program," Jack T. Conway, will establish Conservation Camps and Vocational Training Schools throughout the nation. Here in West Virginia, Greenbrier County will be the site of a Conservation Camp; and an Electronics School will be located in the Kanawha Hotel in Charleston.

Work Training Program

"To provide useful work experience opportunities for unemployed young men and women through participation in state and community work-training programs, participation will be limited to those who have attained the age of sixteen but not attained the age of twenty-two."

Paul Crabtree, Governor Smith's Coordinator for Federal Programs, advises libraries who wish to work with these youth to apply to local county boards of education. Cost to the public

library will depend on the local programs. These unemployed youth, many of whom will have been school drop-outs, will need guidance; but they should be able to help with filing, typing, simple book mending, and certain janitorial duties.

Work Study Program

"To stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students in institutions of higher education who are from low income families and are in need of earnings from such employment to pursue courses of study at such institutions."

If libraries wish to use these college students on a part-time basis, they should contact the Director of Student Employment at the nearest college. Some portion of the cost may need to be met by the library. Such workers will be limited to fifteen hours work a week, but they should be able to assist in a variety of areas: typing of catalog cards, assistance with simple reference questions, helping with children's summer reading clubs and with story hours.

Title II COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS

Definition

Sec. 202 (2) a program "which provides services, assistance, and other activities of sufficient scope and size to give promise of progress toward elimination of poverty through developing employment opportunities, improving human performance, motivation and productivity, or bettering the conditions under which people live, learn, and work. (3) which is developed, conducted, and administered with a maximum feasible participation of residents of these areas and members of the groups served (4) and which is conducted, administered, or coordinated by a public or non-profit agency (other than a political party) or a combination thereof."

VISTA Workers

These are skilled workers who will serve in this country as the Peace Corps has been serving abroad. Literally translated VISTA means Volunteers in Service to America. They sign up for just one year, and they are given a four to six weeks' training program. After their training, VISTA workers are assigned to Community Action Programs.

On April 9 Congressman John Slack reported in the Charleston Gazette that forty members of this domestic Peace Corps have been assigned throughout West Virginia as follows: Clay County (18) to work with Remedial Education classes; Raleigh County (5) to help develop an arts and crafts program for aging and underemployed; Webster County (6) to teach home-making and family finance in the Cowen and Diana areas; and McDowell County (6) to work with the Council of Southern Mountains. Mineral and Hardy Counties (5) make home visits to extend health services.

Let's extend the long arm of friendship to these leaders, encouraging them to use public library resources and inviting them to bring groups to the library.

What is Project Headstart?

This is a Community Action program with a special emphasis: "to assist rural and urban communities in financing summer Children Development Centers for children of limited opportunity who will enter Kindergarten or first grade this fall." The Director in Washington is Dr. Julius B. Richmond.

Since the deadline for filing applications was April fifteenth, a blitz scheme was employed to insure broad participation by all counties. Mrs. Hulett Smith met with all fifty-five county superintendents of schools to encourage them to initiate the program in their community. The school leadership was sought since school buildings can be used for the child development centers and classroom rental provides the matching funds needed to qualify. Dr. Eugene Thoenen will be in charge of the state program.

Most of the teachers in these centers will be teachers from public schools. Groups will be kept to an enrollment of fifteen boys and girls, and several volunteers will be used to assist the teacher. They will be taken on tours of the community. Be sure the library is on the tour schedule. Of course, assistance with storytelling for these groups would be welcomed.

The West Virginia Library Commission would like to assist with Picture Book Kits for use with Headstart Programs. Details on this plan will be announced in our next Newsletter.

A REMINDER ABOUT COMPLIANCE WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

As the State Library Agency, the West Virginia Library Commission needs assurance that each library is complying with the regulations of this Act. A letter was mailed in January to all public libraries in West Virginia asking for a signed statement of their willingness to comply. If there is a complaint of alleged discrimination by a public library, the Library Commission will cooperate with the West Virginia Human Rights Commission in an investigation of the complaint. The disposition of such a case will be reported by us to the Office of Education in Washington and the public library concerned.

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK APRIL 25, 1965 to MAY 1, 1965

"Know What You're Talking About - Read" and "Open Your Future - Read" will be the twin themes of the 1965 observance.
