

"LEGAL PEACE CORPS"

1. Work at the grass-roots level with local civil rights groups.
2. Investigate complaints, prepare investigation reports, help prepare notarized statements for complainants, and advise on the forwarding of complaints to appropriate agencies. Select and train a permanent staff within the community to carry on this work. Bear in mind, complaints written so that the facts are clearly set out and relevant will invariably get much faster action than those that are not. Unquestionably, many valid complaints are ignored because the complainant is unable to communicate his problem.
3. Send a copy of all types of civil rights complains to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington 25, D.C., irrespective of their nature and the parties involved, including those involving discrimination in Federal, state, or local programs.
4. Send a copy of complaints dealing with violations of Federal civil rights law to the Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. Where violence against civil rights workers is anticipated, contact the local and state police (regardless of whether they in fact will take any affirmative action), the local FBI office, and, when appropriate, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.
5. Send a copy of complaints involving a program within the state administered by a Federal agency or involving employees to the appropriate agency. Use a copy of the Government Organization Manual for reference [See Appendix for types of programs involved.]
6. Send a copy of all complaints to the regional or national offices of civil rights organizations working in the area.
7. Advise on bringing appropriate complaints to the local press and national wire services (but only after getting permission from complainants or their families so as not to bring them additional problems.)
8. Advise on bringing appropriate complaints and reports to the attention of friendly Congressmen, and private groups (e.g., all groups interested in civil rights, national church groups, unions, student groups), but, again, only after getting permission from the complainants or their families.
9. Visit schools, welfare agencies, and other nearby state, local, and Federal offices and attempt to become acquainted with responsible officers and the operation of their programs.

10. Attempt to become acquainted with persons from all groups within the Negro community, including the so-called "Uncle Tom's".

11. Advise persons of their rights, help them fill out forms, and refer them to public and private agencies that can help them with their problems.

12. Become acquainted with Federal programs available to communities so that all possible benefits can be made available to Negroes. [See Appendix; also booklet, "Federal Aids to Communities," prepared by Area Redevelopment Agency of the Department of Commerce.]

13. Attempt to assist persons having difficulties with local officials. Sometimes, the problem stems from a failure to fully communicate their needs to these officials. Other times, the limitations of the agency are not fully made known to the party seeking help. In these cases, an intermediary can sometimes bridge this communications gap. An effort in this area will be often frustrating but may also be the most rewarding part of work in the field. Where problems cannot be resolved at the local level, request assistance from the appropriate state agency, and, if it still cannot be resolved, to the appropriate Federal agency. If everyone claims that there is no authority to deal with the particular problem, get the ball rolling to see that such authority is provided. Frustration thus may become the force behind new and ingenious programs.

14. Attempt to encourage Federal and state officials to visit Negro civil rights leaders to learn of the needs of the Negro community and to acquaint these leaders with available programs.

15. Assist in organizing and conducting citizenship classes for potential voters.

16. Subscribe to local newspapers, especially one from the state capital.

17. In general, attempt to resolve problems if at all possible and try to produce a permanent channel of communication between white and Negro leadership so that future misunderstandings can be aired and possible conflicts avoided before they get out of hand.

18. See para. 4 under legal apprenticeship program.

19. See general comments and suggestions.