

October 22, 1959

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of Committee on Administration, S.C.L.C.
FROM: Ella J. Baker, Director
RE: Personnel Practices and Office Equipment

The need for established personnel practices and procedures has been mentioned several times before, but now it seems imperative. The office secretary began working with us, January 5, 1959, and will have completed a year at the end of December. To date, nothing has been determined regarding her vacation or other working relations. Last December 10th, when the executive board met in Atlanta, there was some discussion by a small committee on whether the then executive and associate directors should be given one (1) month's vacation or not. It was at the point when differences of opinions became evident that the director and associate were asked to leave the room. However, apparently no decision was reached since no information on this was transmitted to the executive staff.

The matter of vacations is but one aspect of the question raised here. For focus, may we list the things we consider important to the discussion:

1. Work-week (number of hours and number of days)
2. Over-time
3. Holidays
4. Vacation
5. Salary increments
6. Sick-days
7. Termination and Leave of Absence

WORK - WEEK

The practice presently obtaining in the office is that clerical personnel work eight (8) hours a day (exclusive of a lunch period), and five (5) days a week or 40 hours. It is generally accepted that the eight (8) hour day should include a lunch period, and in progressive circles, a 10 minutes rest period or "coffee break" in the morning and afternoon.

While a 40 hour week is the nominal work-week for the executive staff, the demands of the office have made it impossible to observe this. It has been necessary to work as late as 3:00 A.M., Saturdays, and even Sundays.

OVER - TIME

The validity of compensation for over-time should be recognized. Usually the worker receives either extra pay (specified in advance), or compensatory time.

HOLIDAYS

The following are usually observed as legal holidays:

New Year's	4th of July	Labor Day
Thanksgiving	Christmas	30th of May

"Good-Friday" is recognized by some agencies, and time is also granted to vote in general elections.

In the absence of a policy, we granted the secretary Good-Friday, Labor Day, and the 4th of July, largely in compensation for the great amount of extra time she had been required to work.

Usually one day is allowed for Christmas shopping.

V A C A T I O N

Two (2) weeks is considered the beginning vacation for clerical personnel after one (1) year of employment. This is usually increased to a maximum of four (4) weeks within a given period of years.

For professional personnel whose working-week cannot be confined to a given number of hours, a minimum of 4 weeks vacation is considered normal.

When a legal holiday occurs during a vacation period, it usually is not counted as part of that period. This year, the secretary has used two days of her probable vacation because of a family emergency, during the week-end of September 11.

The director has taken about 3 weeks in two periods - June 19 - 29, and August 17 - September 2. However, neither was free of organizational responsibilities.

S I C K - D A Y S

Some specified number of days are usually designated as sick-days for which pay is not deducted.

S A L A R Y - I N C R E M E N T S

It is considered good personnel practices to provide for definite salary increments at specified periods, and based on definite criteria. The advantage of this as an incentive is obvious.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Provisions should be made for leaves of absence to cover illnesses, maternity leaves, study, etc.

Notice of two (2) weeks is considered the minimum time for termination of employment; and this applies both to the employer and employee. In lieu of a two (2) weeks' notice, the employee should be paid for two (2) weeks of service. If an employee resigns without giving the specified notice, he forfeits his claim to such compensation.

If employment is terminated after one year, and the employee has not had a vacation, he should be entitled to terminal pay to cover vacation pay due him.

We know that one cannot expect to "work by the clock" in a young social-action organization like S.C.L.C., nor can one expect the working conditions that

might obtain in industry or even a unionized social agency. Yet it seems justifiable to expect that good personnel policies and practices should be an inherent part of a program like ours, and should be made available to prospective employees.

As it stands, an immediate decision is needed on the vacation to which the secretary is entitled so that it can be fitted into the office schedule.

II. OFFICE EQUIPMENT

As we move toward expansion, consideration also must be given to adequate office equipment to carry out an enlarged program.

Thus far, our equipment has been minimal, and we have been fortunate to be able to borrow from our neighbors. With the following items, we could operate with greatly increased efficiency and with definite saving of "man-hours":

Postal scale	\$14.50
Mimeoscope	39.50 - 49.50
Paper cutter (30")	6.25
Sealing tape dispenser (mailing literature packages and books)	8.25
Work table	10.00 - 12.00
Desk lamp (especially needed when typing at night)	12.00 - 15.00
Mimeo-lettering guides	
Another typewriter	
Storage cabinets	67.00 ea.
Cabinet Base for mimeograph machine	99.00

We have been borrowing a mimeoscope and scales.

The tape dispenser will do in one motion what it takes several motions to do otherwise. It dappens tape as it rolls and cuts it the desired length.

With the paper cutter, one quick pull is all that's necessary as compared to using scissors or razor blades.

Organized storage space would reduce the necessity of unstacking and re-stacking boxes when materials are needed; and would add to the neatness of the office. It may be possible to have storage shelves built for less; but a steel cabinet can easily be moved if office location is changed.

Work-table would speed up the colating and stapling of materials in large quantities, such as programs and newsletters.

Typewriters can be rented for \$7.21 a month or \$18.54 for 3 months, and can be bought for \$99.50 - up. These are Royal Standard machines, 1957 - 58 models. New typewriters can be leased for approximately \$7.00 a month, with option to buy. However, a three year lease is required. It is also possible to pick-up excellent demonstrator machines, and there is a factory guarantee on all Royal machines.

In large mailings, when extra help is needed, a typewriter could expedite the work; and we may even find some volunteer help from time to time.