

Council of Federated Organizations  
1017 Lynch Street -- P.O. Box 2896  
Jackson, Mississippi

Dear Summer Volunteer:

We have taken an unexpectedly long time to tell you about the research program that the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) has designed for people accepted in the summer project who indicate an interest in research. We have not written you sooner about the research program and what it entails because the planning of it was not in the final stages until a couple of days ago. We found that instead of doing what we originally had in mind, we ought to attempt to gear the research project to those who would be doing the research, in order to get maximum results.

Briefly, the COFO research program will take the following form:

1. Problem areas: COFO has selected 17 "problem areas" with which it is concerned. We have hopes of developing a number of meaningful remedial alternatives for these problems; remedial alternatives that can be put into effect by local people without too much expense. Therefore, COFO is going to ask a number of summer research people to study the particular "problem areas", investigate the underlying causes of these problems, and finally recommend a number of remedial alternatives.

For example: One of these "problem areas" is the high rate of infant mortality among Negro rural people. We know some of the causes for the high rate of infant mortality. We know we cannot be certain of all the causes. We know also that there is a correlation between low income levels and high rates of infant mortality. This knowledge is not enough; what we want is information on the diet of rural Negro women during pregnancy, duration of employment during pregnancy, clothing, baths taken, amount of care given to the breast and teeth, activity during the lying-in period, who delivers the baby (mid-wife or physician), etc. We have designed an interview questionnaire which will be used by an interviewer (one of the summer project research people) and this person will work in a designated area (in most cases a county) to obtain the information desired. As stated before, there will be approximately 17 such studies undertaken. Needless to say, the ingenuity, creativeness and other assistance the interviewers lend to the study will be more than appreciated. After the questionnaires are completed, the interviewer will be expected to write up his interpretations and present "solutions" to the "problems".

2. Attitude surveys: COFO is interested in organizing the Negro communities throughout the state. It will not be able to do an effective job until we know more explicitly what the Negro people actually believe and think in Mississippi. We have questionnaires which we feel will elicit information about the beliefs, values and valuations of Negroes who live in Mississippi.

3. Substantiating COFO's assertions: COFO workers often make general and blanket statements about Mississippi policies and treatment of Negroes. For example: "Negroes don't have access to library facilities" or "Welfare officials discriminate against Negroes!" etc. COFO wants studies undertaken to obtain factual data to determine on a statewide basis the extent to which these assertions are justified.

4. Existing structure studies: Lastly, we feel that more information on the institutional structure, the policies of the institutions, the political machinations should be looked at more closely from the viewpoint of low income people, and we intend to do such with the summer research people.

This should give you an idea of what we have in mind. You have been selected to work in a particular area, but we would like to hear a word from you about which of

Research program memorandum, page 2

the four areas interests you most. If you have no preference, say so. Send this information to Jesse Morris as soon as possible.

1017 Lynch St.  
Jackson, Mississippi.

lease read the attached sheet about theorientation very carefully. Much of the organizational work for the research program will have to be done at the orientation session.

Thanks very much; sorry for the long delay in writing to you.

Sincerely yours,

*Jesse Morris*

Jesse Morris,  
Summer Research Program