

PROPOSAL FOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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I. The Problem

Many young people who work on civil rights programs in the South have not been able to complete their formal education, either because of their full-time commitment to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or because of economic and cultural deprivation. There are approximately 95 full-time workers for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee who have either not begun or not finished their undergraduate training. A larger number of students who have been involved in various protest movements throughout the South are denied opportunities for higher education because they lack money, encouragement, and adequate preparation for many colleges. Still another group of young people are college students, particularly Southern Negroes, who wish to participate in SNCC's summer programs, like the Mississippi Summer Project, but are reluctant or unable to do so because summer employment is necessary to meet college costs for the coming year.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee realizes the importance of both practical training and formal education in the total learning experience of those who must direct and carry out the programs for a better society in the South. SNCC feels responsible in helping to provide and insure educational opportunities for those who have committed themselves or are willing to commit themselves actively to civil rights work in the South. A program is needed, therefore, that would provide encouragement and financial assistance to help such students take advantage of college opportunities.

II. The Program

A. There is an immediate need of scholarship money for college students, who, by participating in the Mississippi Summer Project rather than getting summer employment, will be short of funds in the coming school year. In the past, many Negro college students in the South have not been able to participate actively in the civil rights movement for financial reasons. To allow this to continue is to deny the South's future leaders a very essential part of their training. These students are the very ones who will have to assume positions of leadership in the South's changing society and should have first hand, practical experience with those forces which underlie and shape a changing society.

The Mississippi Summer Project calls for at least 500 workers to man comprehensive programs of freedom schools, community centers, and voter registration. Funds should be available for at least 100 Southern college students who by participating in the Mississippi Summer Project will have a gap between college costs and financial resources. Applications are now being received and the response from Southern applicants is good. One staff member is currently informing Southern college students about the project and recruiting volunteers. Two staff members would receive and process the applications from those students expressing financial need. The need and qualifications for aid would be determined and awards would be made with the approval of a scholarship committee composed of trustees of the fund, if any, the executive

secretary and chairman of SNCC, and one of the SNCC advisors. The awards, payable to the college would be about \$300 each, equal to the amount that the average college student can earn toward college during the summer.

B. Scholarship funds are needed for those 95 students presently working for SNCC, who have not completed undergraduate training. These students did not complete their schooling in many cases because they committed themselves to SNCC. The operation of SNCC's program has been possible only because of their commitment. The present size and composition of SNCC's staff will now permit some of these students to return to school full time. The nature of SNCC's programs and the greater demands on its workers to man these programs now require that all have at least undergraduate training. Community centers, freedom schools, and research projects call not only for staff who are willing to receive on-the-spot training, but also staff who in an academic setting have increased their store of knowledge, refined their skills in reading and writing, and have exposed themselves to a rigorous and meaningful exchange of ideas. Formal college training will serve to sharpen the worker's tools for analyzing the field situation and putting together, again, the necessary elements that make for a creative program of action in a changing society.

Funds should be available for use in the '64-'65 school year for at least 30 of these staff members to return to school full time. These scholarships should attempt to meet the student's full need after the student has exhausted all means of financial support in the form of college scholarship and work, non-college scholarship, and family contribution. Funds would be administered by two staff members upon the approval of a scholarship committee composed of the trustees of the fund, the Executive Secretary and Chairman of SNCC, and one of the advisors of SNCC.

C. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee has come in contact with many Negro students involved in local protest movements throughout the South, who because of economic and cultural deprivation are unable to attend college. Their poverty makes them unable to pay the cost of college. The inferior training they have received in high school and their cultural deprivation make them unprepared for college requirements, or unable to compete for admission and financial aid at most colleges. These conditions are deliberately maintained by the power structure of the Southern political system, and serve to close to these students all avenues of opportunity and mobility within their society.

There is no organization which has directed itself adequately to the plight of the Southern Negro students, whose poverty and inferior schooling not only deprive them of a higher education, but, before that, also kill their incentive to achieve and break out of a vicious circle. An organization is needed, therefore, similar in program to the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, but focused in the South and dealing exclusively with the economically and culturally deprived.

First of all, such a program should recruit or identify those students involved in local protest movements in the South, who should be attending college. Secondly, a comprehensive counseling and referral program would provide information on opportunities for college admission and financial aid; refer the students to the appropriate colleges and sources of aid; alert and interest colleges in possible candidates for admission and aid. Thirdly, a fund would provide scholarships for these students who, because of their poor academic training and cultural deprivation are not able to compete for scholarship aid at many institutions.

For the first year, two staff members would work full-time recruiting, counseling and acting as liaison between the students and the appropriate colleges. These two people could also administer the scholarship fund upon the approval of a scholarship committee, composed of the trustees of the fund, the Executive Secretary and Chairman of SNCC, and one of the advisors of SNCC. Scholarship awards should attempt to meet the full need of a student, after the student has exhausted all sources of financial aid (family contribution, college grant, work, non-college grant). Approximately \$25,000 should be available the first year to provide aid for 25-30 students.

III. Finances

100 scholarships for Mississippi Summer Project participants @\$300..	\$30,000
30 staff scholarships@ \$1,000.....	30,000
25 scholarships for protest movement students approx. @ \$1,000.....	25,000
Travel to colleges and recruitment.....	500
TOTAL	<hr/> \$85,500