

MEMO TO ALL STAFF
RE: JACKSON OFFICE SITUATION
FROM: MURIEL TILLINGHAST, JACKSON OFFICE MANAGER

As of my arrival in Jackson, the office staff and I have attempted the reorganization of this office. Undoubtedly, some changes are slower than others. We are having some difficulty in a) deciding what functions are vital to the central coordinating office (what persons and jobs are necessary); b) systematizing the financial structure of the State; c) getting shipments distributed throughout the State; and d) handling the problems of personnel. You as the staff should feel free to make any recommendations you see fit; it would, however, greatly facilitate matters if these recommendations were in writing and noted -- Jackson Situation --.

One of the tasks that JACKSON SHOULD NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH IS THAT OF ACCOMMODATING MEMBERS OF THE STAFF WHO DRIFT INTO JACKSON for one reason or another. All appointments (for the sake of having grievances satisfied) should be made over the WATS line; and time to check appointments with the persons necessarily involved in Jackson. Moreover, appointments should be made early enough so to allow YOUR RETURN TO YOUR PROJECTS BEFORE DARK. Anyone who wishes to remain in Jackson overnight and who has intentions of staying at one of the Freedom Houses must see me. It must be remembered that the Jackson Office Staff resides at the Freedom Houses and therefore, can only take in a few "extra" people at a time.

It may be important that you start thinking of your District Offices as the centers to which you take unique problems. That is, with respect to the five district offices, there would swiftly come about the decentralization of the Jackson Office. Then whatever tasks can not be fulfilled by them, we could then do in Jackson. Think about this so we can discuss this at the next staff meeting (or before in the district meetings. /

There is very little money coming into the State. This means that each person within the project must be prepared to work with less money. Even though many projects are currently being supported from the North, as we move closer to the Congressional Challenge, they too will dry up. There is a fact that we have spent entirely too much money -- AND HAD WE SPENT IT WISELY, WE WOULDN'T BE IN THIS SITUATION NOW! Many projects are paying for Freedom Houses, offices, Community centers, etc., plus PHONE BILLS, GASOLINE BILLS, CARS (repairs), MEDICAL BILLS, FOOD BILLS, BEER BILLS, AND PERSONAL EXPENSES SOME PEOPLE THINK THE PROJECT SHOULD BEAR. Things don't have to be this way. Money coming in from the North doesn't negate the fact that WE ARE LIVING WAY BEYOND OUR MEANS!

Bills should not be created if you do not have the money to pay for them. And it is totally against policy for projects to solicit for money outside the State. There are ways that debts created to date can be cut down, for example, working in a gas station towards reducing the gas bill. You can think along those lines to resolve your financial and working situations.

EACH PROJECT MUST SEND INTO JACKSON A MONTHLY BUDGET TO JACKSON. What would be even better is that a general budget including January through May be sent in, with breakdowns by the month.

As to personnel --- there is to be no additional persons entering the State. Please do not ask anyone to come here. Several groups of people have met several times here in Jackson and it is their feeling that ~~no~~more people come.

I am asking you to respect that decision. We neither have the money to support people; we also do not feel that additional people to already existing projects is an answer to the work-rut some projects find themselves; nor can the emphasis of placed on Mississippians doing the work be facilitated with additional Northerners. Please think about this carefully.

You have very valid complaints about many things "gone wrong" in Jackson. However, some of your complaints are not valid and you must consider this before you make generalizations or over-generalizations. It is true that the WATS line is not running very smoothly. And I would strongly urge anyone to come in from the field area to learn the technique of the WATS and work it effectively. If no one is willing to do this, the situation with the WATS is liable to remain the same... and the fault therefore is not ours, but yours. There is not the most effective way of handling mail, nor of managing money, nor paying "must" bills... But if three persons were interested in helping the Jackson situation, then some things could be straightened out immediately. If workers don't come from the field (and you are being sought out as a final resort), then Jackson will (with out ~~any~~ question,) remain the same. I do reserve the right to ask that people who have worked here before NOT COME BACK to work. Moreover, I want people who can function in an office-type situation and are not personality problems themselves.

Projects should not be paying for cars that are junk. All cars driven by COFO workers should be insured -- if not the liability is the individual's nor the organization's and we will refuse legal and financial aid. No one should drive a car without a license (our refusal to assist is the same). And if you have violated traffic laws while driving -- YOU PAY THE BILL 'CAUSE WE WON'T! Jackson must have a complete list as to what cars are actively used on projects -- including local cars -- and the detailed status of them, i.e., make, model, insured by whom, principal drivers, owner, frequency of usage, etc. This must be in Jackson by January 1st.

We must also have a list of all the workers in the project, how long they are staying, etc. Some projects have already done this -- many more have not.

I hope that you will discuss these points in a meeting of both projects and districts very soon.