

FEDERAL PROGRAMS RESEARCH WORK

1. Before going to the field, a committee should contact leaders of all the major civil rights organizations, the National Sharecroppers Fund, the American Friends Service Committee, and similar national organizations doing field work in the South to determine which Federal programs (See Appendix) they think are most appropriate for study.

2. The programs to be analyzed should be selected by this committee, after consulting with civil rights groups. Included as criteria for selecting programs should be the following:

- a. The extent to which the program, if properly run, will benefit low-income groups, e.g., its relationship to problems of rising unemployment among unskilled agricultural workers.
- b. The lack of awareness in Southern Negro communities of the existence of a program which might benefit them.
- c. The potential political leverage of a program; i.e., certain programs are either more popular to the existing electorate or more important to the power structure than others. Pressure applied where discrimination is found in these programs may be tactically more advantageous than if applied to relatively "unpopular" programs.
- d. Whether any Federal or private alternative is available if a state withdraws entirely from a program under criticism.

3. A researcher located in a given area (which may include more than one state) should study and investigate no more than three Federal programs during the summer, and preferably one program.

4. Researchers should study their programs intensively before going into the field. Materials may be gathered by writing or visiting the Federal agency or agency involved. Ask for annual reports, program statistics for the states to be visited, state plans submitted to the Federal agency (where appropriate), all relevant statutes, program regulations, program handbooks and other informational materials.

5. A researcher should then plan to spend one or two days in Washington, D.C. interviewing Federal officials responsible for the program to clarify uncertainties and possibly obtain contacts with Federal and state officials in the field. While in Washington, arrange to visit F. Peter Libassi, head of the Federal Programs Division of the Civil Rights Commission, for information on the program being studied.

6. Visit Federal officials responsible for the program at the regional (generally in Atlanta) and state levels (generally in the state capital) for whatever information they have which might be useful.

7. Visit officials working for state and local bodies which administer the programs at their respective levels and arrange for repeat interviews. Very frequently, program statistics compiled by the state are the sole source of a breakdown of the program's operation by race, e.g., the vocational education program in Mississippi.

8. Prepare interview outlines and questions and design an over all research plan, sending one copy to the chairman of the research committee for his information and suggestions.

9. After taking the above recommended steps, a researcher should be thoroughly prepared for what should be his basic objective--to determine whether the broad purposes of the program sought by Congress are actually achieved, as seen through the eyes of the intended ultimate beneficiary of the program, and if not, why not.

10. The researcher should conduct extensive interviews with civil rights leaders, law students doing field work in the area, and with Negroes potentially eligible or actually receiving program benefits. Where programs are not available or are administered in a way which discriminates against Negroes, try to determine the source of the problem. Try also to ascertain whether Federal and state administrators have ever attempted to contact Negro leaders regarding the programs.

11. Read the local newspapers, especially ones from the capitals of the states being studied, for information on Federal programs.

12. Prepare a report and recommendations and submit copies to all agencies concerned, the Commission on Civil Rights, and to all other interested persons and groups. Be factual and give accurate source citations.

13. See para. 4 under legal apprenticeship program.

14. See general comments and suggestions.