

MERIDIAN PROJECT

1. Project program includes voter registration (and Reregistration, since Meridian has recently changed its precinct distribution and all voters must reregister), Freedom School and Community Center. Also, a "Steering Committee", made up of our most active people, which is in the process of merging with the FDP.

The Steering Committee plans projects such as requesting the removal of the "white" and "colored" signs from plumbing fixtures in the County Courthouse, the distribution of welfare goods, testing the Civil Rights Bill, collecting money for a permanent bail fund, establishing a PTA for the one Negro school that doesn't have one, setting up a conference with laundromat owners to get them to desegregate all at once...etc. There has been talk of beginning a maid's union, and we also hope to start a newspaper.

2. EQUIPMENT

One 1961 station wagon, in good condition. This car is a donation from a group in Pittsburgh and only arrived a week ago. It left immediately for Washington, so we hope it will be in good shape when it gets back. Another station wagon is promised from Boston, but hasn't arrived yet.

We have no community cars at our disposal, although one community car took a group to Washington. No trucks at all.

We rent two places: 5 rooms at 2505½ 5th Street - Community Center \$40/mo.  
2 large rooms at 513 25th Avenue - office and Freedom House \$50/mo. in this building, we also have limited access to the very large room upstairs, although we pay no rent for it. We use this room for welfare clothes.

Three male workers live in the Freedom House; the rest live with members of the community. The Freedom house has its toilet in a shed attached to the back of the building (perfectly adequate), but no hot water or bathing facilities. Baths are available in the community, however. Average monthly expense per person is about \$20/mo.

We have a mimeo machine which works well, one really functional typewriter and about four broken typewriters. We are completely out of mimeo paper and are using letterhead stationary from an aluminum company in Pittsburgh. One stapler; stamps we buy out of project money as needed; file folders, paper clips are in good supply. We use about ~~four~~ reams of mimeo paper a month. ~~xx~~  
We buy supplies out of project money and whatever contributions drift in from the North.  
We could use a push broom and two more mops and lots more energy. We have one file cabinet, plenty of maps etc. and would like a desk with drawers, but are doing OK without it.

Our Freedom School uses the top floor of the local Baptist Seminary and needs at least one large blackboard. We are up to our ears in books of all descriptions. Reference included. We are very short of pamphlets, posters and leaflets. The few we have were supplied by the Jackson office.

We have lots of canned beans, saurkraut and peas.



Our welfare program is handled through the steering committee, which makes some effort to investigate need and has begun insisting that welfare recipients make an attempt to register to vote.

The program is sporadic...goes into action only when clothes arrive, usually from New York, New Jersey, and one from Dayton, Ohio. Storage already described.

The Community Center has a couple of sewing machines in dubious working order and recently acquired leather working equipment, which we are told can be repaired.

4. NEEDS

mimeo paper, ball-point pens, CHAIRS (preferably folding), another bed, desk with drawers, a hot water heater (we may have one lined up locally), and permission to keep the car coming from Boston. Also, typewriter ribbons and "magic markers" in colors, and some large paper for posters.

5. PHONES

We now have one phone (485-9286). It is a pay phone and the rate is a guarantee to the phone company that the machine will receive 39¢ a day. If it doesn't, we have to pay the difference, but it almost always does. We get occasional refunds, suggesting that the phone company refunds anything in excess of the 39¢ a day, but this is difficult to believe. We hope to get a regular phone with a "secret" number so that local calls won't cost us so much; secret, so that no long-distance calls can be accepted or made.