

Civil rights workers in the South are constantly being arrested for trumped-up or obviously unconstitutional charges, such as running non-existent Stop signs, "unlawful assembly", "disorderly conduct", or "vagrancy." While in jail, at the mercy of hostile sheriffs and jailors, they are frequently denied medical attention; beds, blankets, water, adequate food and ventilation. For example, prisoners in Selma had to sleep on cold, wet concrete floors in the overflow of stopped-up toilets for eight days. And civil rights workers are always in danger of beatings from the authorities or from fellow prisoners. It is therefore vital that people in the movement be bonded out of jail as soon as possible.

After four months experience trying to raise bail from the North from SNCC workers and local people arrested down South, it seems to me that the most effective method of assuring adequate funds quickly is the following: Each Northern support group should set up its own bail contributors fund. Specific details on this later.

If desired, a support group could make special arrangements-- for example, it might want the money in its bail fund to be used only for volunteers from its area, or only for arrests in a specific project or state. From experience, I think it is preferable for all money to be available for everyone, however.

Each group should begin trying to raise money and setting aside funds for bail immediately. As this is being done, please send the following information to the SNCC Bail Coordinator in Atlanta:

1. Name and phone number of person in your group to be contacted when need for bail arises (this is your group's bail contact).
2. Any special arrangements regarding use of money.
3. Approximately how much money you expect will be raised for your bail fund (\$100-\$500-\$1000, etc.)

When a need for bail arises, your bail contact will be phoned by Atlanta. He will be told who was arrested, where, what the charge is, and how much money is needed. He will be given the name, address and/or telephone number of a person in the South, and will be asked to wire the money immediately by Western Union money order (this is the fastest and most efficient way). The bail contact will later be notified that the money has been received, and will be informed as to the status of the case.

(Unless a volunteer whom you know from your area has made arrangements with you beforehand about asking you for bail money directly from the field, you should not send any money--for bail or any other purposes--to the field unless OK'd by Atlanta first.)

TECHNICAL DETAILS OF SETTING UP A BAIL FUND

Since Western Union will accept only cash, American Express Travelers Checks made out to Western Union, or cashiers checks made out to Western Union, it is suggested that the money in the bail fund be converted into Travelers Checks of, say, \$50 denominations. The appropriate number of checks can then be wired when needed. (Check with your local Western office about details.) This will

solve the problem of finding cash at night or on weekends.

On how to raise money for a bail fund, the Boston Friends of SNCC suggests specific fund appeals or drives for bail money. Donors are informed that they will be giving a non-interest-bearing loan which should be returned anywhere within from a few months to 2 years. (If they want to give money outright for bail, that is fine, too.) The bail donor should be asked to give his contribution to the Friends of SNCC office in Travelers Checks made out to Western Union. (If he prefers to give a pledge of bail money to the office, and keep the money himself until needed, he should be explicitly informed of the necessity for having cash or Travelers Checks on hand so bail can be wired immediately.)

A file should be kept by the Office with a card for each bail donor. On the card, record the donor's name, address, phone number, date and amount of money donated. As money is wired South, note on the card how much of that contributor's money was sent, the date of wiring, where it was sent, for whom, and any other information known about the case. This information should be kept accurately, and preferably in duplicate, to assure proper return of funds when the case finally comes to court and the money comes back. After the summer, we will ask for a copy of all bail records in order to make sure our own records are correct.

Two notes: Needs for bail can range from \$50 for one person arrested on a charge of speeding, to several thousand dollars in case of mass arrests of demonstrators or marchers. If there is an average, it may be something like \$500 per incident.

If the money in your bail fund is all loaned, be sure to use other funds to pay the charges for wiring bail money. (This is approximately \$10-15 per \$500 wired.)

Send all questions, information, etc. to
Barbara Brandt
SNCC Bail Coordinator
360 Nelson SW
Atlanta, Ga. 30313 404-688-0331

P.S. With the recent growth of the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union, expansion of summer projects in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Georgia, and anticipated action by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (such as demonstrations in Jackson today, which resulted in 500 arrests), we can predict a great need for bail money this summer. Please get to work now!