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THE EMERGING ROLE OF VOLUNTEER BUREAUS  
AS SEEN THROUGH THE OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES  
OF COMMUNITY WELFARE COUNCIL EXECUTIVES

Summary of Findings

Special Report Series No. 6

Research Department  
Health and Welfare Council, Inc.  
Philadelphia, Pa.

July 1960



INTRODUCTION

With the continuing growth of population leading to a demand for more health and welfare services, the increasing importance of the volunteer is evident, particularly at a time of mounting shortage of trained professional personnel. While social planning has drawn heavily upon the data of population change and movement it has neglected relating such facts to the present and future activities of the Volunteer Bureau.

What is the role of the Volunteer Bureau in the light of a growing demand for health and welfare services? This is the key question considered in this survey.

It is hoped that the findings reported here will be helpful to planning councils and to individual Volunteer Bureaus in that a greater awareness of common concerns may be helpful in future planning.

A brief questionnaire designed to elicit certain attitudes and opinions of welfare council executives concerning volunteer services was sent to 49 localities. Those selected for participation in this survey were felt to be representative in terms of geographical distribution as well as having established and professionally staffed Volunteer

Bureaus (See Appendix for list of cities included). Forty-four cities were included in the final tabulation of responses which represented 90% participation.

1. Current Need for Volunteers (See Table 1)

Thirty-six of the 44 responses to this question (82%) indicate that there is a greater need today than ten years ago for administrative volunteers. Opinion was almost identical concerning service volunteers. Only 5% of the respondents indicated less need for both types of volunteers than ten years ago.

TABLE 1

Current Need for Volunteers as Compared to Ten Years Ago

	Administrative Volunteers	Service Volunteers
Total Responses	44	44
Greater than 10 years ago	36	39
Less than 10 years ago	2	2
Same as 10 years ago	6	3

Summary of Comments

Selected comments offered by respondents citing greater need are to the effect that:

- (a) Embryonic volunteer programs have grown making community more volunteer conscious;
- (b) Great population increase has augmented need for all services;

(c) Volunteers are now used in new ways doing some jobs previously done by professionals;

(d) Growth of new programs and services.

Comments from those seeing less need were:

(a) If agencies knew how to use volunteers more would be used;

(b) Too much involvement of same persons.

2. Need for Volunteer Services During Next Ten Years

(See Table 2)

Approximately 93% of all responses indicate that the need for both administrative and service volunteers will increase in the next ten years.

TABLE 2

Need for Volunteers During Next Ten Years

	Administrative Volunteers	Service Volunteers
Total Responses	44	44
Increase in next 10 years	40	42
Decrease in next 10 years	1	1
Remain the same	3	1

Summary of Comments:

(a) Growth of population and services plus greater appreciation of what volunteers can do.

(b) Future development of broad volunteer programs by public agencies. Public agencies can use an unlimited number of service volunteers. Will try to encourage greater use of administrative volunteers in public agencies.

(c) Growing budget limitations and availability of staff will call for re-evaluation of job descriptions making greater use of qualified volunteers.

3. What is Likely to Happen to Agencies in Need of Volunteers?

(See Table 3)

Eighty-seven percent of respondents were of the opinion that agencies in need of volunteers would seek leadership through the volunteer bureau. It might be noted that somewhat fewer responses (39) were offered to this question than the previous two, perhaps indicating some uncertainty about the usual channels of volunteer leadership.

TABLE 3

Experiences of Agencies Seeking Volunteer Leadership

Total Responses	39
Seek leadership through volunteer bureau	34
Seek leadership through other voluntary agencies	2
Continue to exist without necessary services	1
Other	2

Summary of Comments:

- (a) More agencies will develop volunteer corps as hospitals have done in recent years and turn to volunteer bureaus for consultation, coordination and special recruitment.
- (b) Greater utilization of volunteer bureau for service volunteers. Need to stimulate more utilization for administrative volunteers.
- (c) Agencies will increase own recruitment activities. Agencies undertaking volunteer programs for first time, and smaller agencies, will rely heavily on volunteer bureau.
- (d) Such leadership will continue to be sought if volunteer bureau is developed with central services.

4. Attitudes Toward Use of Volunteer Bureau (See Table 4)

Regarding administrative volunteers, approximately 56% of respondents' (VII and VIII cities) <sup>1/</sup> opinions on the use of volunteer bureaus were to the effect that the bureaus were "only one of many resources for citizen participation in health and welfare activities." Of the remaining sixteen

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<sup>1/</sup> Size VII and VIII cities raised \$1,000,000 or more during their last campaign.

replies to this question, ten stated that the bureaus had "less than average recognition" as a resource for citizen participation, while six indicated that the bureau was the one best opportunity.

A somewhat smaller proportion (53%) of responses from "VII and VIII" cities indicated that volunteer bureaus were only one of many resources for service of volunteers. In contrast to opinions regarding administrative volunteers, there were no opinions that volunteer bureaus enjoyed "less than average recognition" for service volunteers. Instead, 47% of the replies stated that the volunteer bureau "provides the best opportunity for citizen participation in health and welfare activities."

Attitudes toward the use of volunteer bureaus in communities classified other than VII or VIII were virtually all to the effect (5 administrative, 4 service) that the volunteer bureau provided only one of many opportunities for citizen participation. One respondent stated that the bureau had less than average recognition in handling administrative volunteers.



TABLE 4

Attitudes Toward Use of Volunteer Bureaus in VII and VIII Cities

	Administrative	Service
Total Responses	36	38
Provides best opportunity	6	18
Only one of many resources	20	20
Less than average recognition	10	0

Summary of Comments:

- (a) Bureau never intended to be only resource but recognizes equally important job of stimulating other agencies.
- (b) Bureau has never been thought of as a source of administrative volunteers.
- (c) Board members are primary source for securing new members.
- (d) Many bureaus encourage agencies to secure their administrative volunteers from present service volunteers.
- (e) Volunteer bureaus offer the best opportunity to survey the field community-wide.

5. Opinions Concerning Order of Importance of Functions of Volunteer Bureaus in General (See Table 5)

"Recruitment, interviewing, and referral of volunteers" was more often ranked first in order of importance than any other function (22 times). Its closest rival for number one ranking was "coordination of volunteer services" with eight first place rankings. "Operational services for the council" was most often given last place, ranking with "consultation to council staff, etc." following. It should be noticed that not one of the 41 rankings given to "consultation service to council staff etc." were at the top three levels, while 66% of all rankings of this function were in the bottom three orders of importance.

6. Order of Importance of Function and Purposes Currently Found in Volunteer Bureaus (See Table 6)

Certain similarities and differences may be observed between the level of importance attached to functions of volunteer bureaus in theory and in practice. In both theory and practice, "recruitment, interviewing, and referral" was given the greatest number of first place rankings. Twenty-three of 36 respondents stated that this was their bureau's number one function. The largest number of last place rankings on the scale of relative importance of functions went to

TABLE 5

Number of Rankings in Order of Importance of Purposes and Functions  
of Volunteer Bureaus in General (Nine Point Scale)

Purposes and Functions of Volunteer Bureau (Question No. 5)	Total	Ranking								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Consultation service to agencies	43	7	9	7	11	2	2	2	3	0
Consultation services to citizen organizations	41	2	5	11	9	8	2	2	1	1
Consultation services to council staff, etc.	41	0	0	0	4	2	8	7	12	8
Coordination of volunteer services in community	44	8	11	9	6	3	3	3	1	0
Sponsoring or stimulating the sponsoring of educ. programs	42	1	2	4	4	5	8	6	5	7
Promotion of recognition for volunteers	43	0	3	6	3	6	8	8	4	5
Resource of leadership for the community	43	3	5	4	4	3	6	5	9	4
Recruitment, interviewing and referral of volunteers	44	22	8	2	4	4	0	2	1	1
Operational services for the council	41	1	0	2	0	9	6	5	5	13

TABLE 6

Number of Rankings in Order of Importance of Purpose and Function of Own Volunteer Bureau

Purposes and Functions of Volunteer Bureau (Question No. 6)	Total	Ranking								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Consultation service to agencies	35	5	9	7	3	4	3	2	2	0
Consultation services to citizen organizations	36	1	8	13	7	3	1	1	2	0
Consultation services to council staff, etc.	35	0	0	0	2	3	4	9	6	11
Coordination of volunteer services in community	35	5	6	0	5	4	5	5	3	2
Sponsoring or stimulating the sponsoring of education programs	36	0	1	5	1	4	5	9	5	6
Promotion of recognition for volunteers	36	0	6	2	3	12	5	2	4	2
Resource of leadership for the community	36	1	1	1	4	2	8	6	9	4
Recruitment, interviewing and referral of volunteers	36	23	4	1	5	1	0	1	1	0
Operational services for the council	34	1	1	8	7	3	3	1	2	8

"consultation services to council staff, etc." A similar ranking was given for volunteer bureaus in general.

7. Differences Between Theory and Practice in Ranking the Order of Importance of Functions of Volunteer Bureaus (See Table 7)

Table 7 indicates some of the differences in theory and practice in ranking functions and purposes of volunteer bureaus. "Coordination of volunteer services" had 64% of its rankings falling within the highest three levels of importance in theory, whereas only 31% of rankings indicated that such a high level of importance was actually accorded this function. Another example of this discrepancy may be found regarding the ranking of "operational services for the council, etc." Respondents indicated that in theory this function should be rated relatively low (56% in bottom third) while in practice such a low level of importance was given by 33%.

8. Relation of Volunteer Bureau to Functions of the "Federation Movement."

Of the three broad functions of "fund raising", "planning", and "public relations", "planning" was most often ranked first (25 of 43 respondents), "public relations"

TABLE 7

Ranking of Functions and Purposes of Own and Volunteer Bureaus in General

Purposes and Functions of Volunteer Bureaus	Volunteer Bureaus in General			Own Volunteer Bureau		
	Highest Third	Middle Third	Lowest Third	Highest Third	Middle Third	Lowest Third
Consultation service to agencies	53%	34%	12%	60%	28%	11%
Consultation service to citizens organizations	44	46	10	61	30	8
Consultation services to council staff, etc.	-	34	66	-	26	74
Coordination of volunteer services to community	64	27	9	31	40	29
Sponsoring or stimulating sponsoring of educ. programs	17	40	43	17	28	55
Promotion of recognition of volunteers	21	39	39	22	55	22
Resource of leadership for the community	28	30	42	8	39	53
Recruitment, interviewing and referral of volunteers	73	18	9	78	17	5
Operational services for council	7	37	56	29	38	33

was most often ranked second (19 of 35 respondents), while "fund raising" was a clear cut case of number three ranking (32 of 38 respondents).

TABLE 8

Order of Ranking of Three Broad Functions of Volunteer Bureaus of all Respondents

Function	Ranking		
	First	Second	Third
Fund Raising	2	3	32
Planning	25	13	3
Public Relations	16	19	3

Among the six of forty-four respondents who were of the opinion that the volunteer bureau should not be administratively a part of the community welfare council, "planning" and "public relations" each received three first place rankings. Two respondents in this group gave "planning" a third place ranking, however. Since "public relations" received no third order rankings, a slight edge in preference is indicated for this function among those who do not see the volunteer bureau as administratively part of the council.

Only six of the 44 respondents (16%) in this survey were of the opinion that the volunteer bureau should not be an administrative part of the community welfare council. In size, these communities represented four "VIII cities," one "VII city," and one "VI city."

A P P E N D I X

Volunteer Bureaus Participating  
in Survey

Questionnaire



VOLUNTEER BUREAUS PARTICIPATING IN SURVEY

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles	Volunteer Bureau Welfare Planning Council Los Angeles Region
Oakland	Volunteer Bureau - Alameda County
San Diego	Volunteer Bureau San Diego Welfare Council
San Francisco	Volunteer Bureau of San Francisco
San Jose	Volunteer Bureau of Santa Clara County, Inc.
San Mateo	Volunteer Bureau of San Mateo County Community Council of San Mateo County

CONNECTICUT

Bridgeport	Volunteer Bureau
Hartford	Volunteer Bureau of Greater Hartford

DELAWARE

Wilmington	Volunteer Bureau Welfare Council of Delaware, Inc.
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Volunteer Department  
Health and Welfare Council of  
the National Capital Area

FLORIDA

Jacksonville	Community Volunteer Office
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HAWAII

Honolulu	Volunteer Service Bureau
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ILLINOIS

Chicago	Volunteer Bureau Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago
Peoria	Central Volunteer Bureau

INDIANA

Indianapolis	Volunteer Service Department Health and Welfare Council of Indianapolis and Marion County, Inc.
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KENTUCKY

Louisville	Volunteers' Bureau Health and Welfare Council
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LOUISIANA

New Orleans	Community Volunteer Service
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MICHIGAN

Detroit	Central Volunteer Bureau United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit
Grand Rapids	Kent County Central Volunteer Service, Inc.
Lansing	Volunteer Bureau Community Services Council

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis	Volunteer Service Bureau
St. Paul	The Volunteer Bureau, Inc.

MISSOURI

St. Louis	Volunteer Service Bureau Social Planning Council, Inc.
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NEBRASKA

Omaha Volunteer Bureau

NEW YORK

Rochester Department of Volunteers  
Council of Social Agencies

Schenectady Volunteer Bureau

Syracuse Volunteer Center, Inc.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Volunteer Community Services  
United Community Services

OHIO

Akron Volunteer Service Bureau  
United Community Council

Cincinnati Volunteer Bureau of Cincinnati  
and Hamilton County

Cleveland Central Volunteer Bureau  
Welfare Federation of Cleveland

Columbus Volunteer Service Bureau  
Community Chest and Council of  
Social Agencies of Columbus  
and Franklin County

Toledo Volunteer Bureau  
Toledo Council of Social Agencies

Youngstown Volunteer Service Bureau, Inc.

OREGON

Portland Central Volunteer Bureau

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh Volunteer Bureau  
Health and Welfare Federation  
of Allegheny County

TENNESSEE

Memphis                      Volunteer Service Bureau -  
Department of Health and Welfare  
Planning Council

TEXAS

Dallas                        Volunteer Service Bureau  
Council of Social Agencies of  
Dallas

Fort Worth                    Volunteer Center  
Community Council of Fort Worth

Houston                       Volunteer Community Services

VIRGINIA

Norfolk                       Volunteer Service Bureau

Richmond                     Volunteer Service Bureau  
Richmond Area Community Council

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston                    Volunteer Service Bureau  
Kanawha Welfare Council

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee                     Volunteer Bureau  
Community Welfare Council of  
Milwaukee County

HEALTH AND WELFARE COUNCIL, INC.  
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QUESTIONNAIRE RE - VOLUNTEER BUREAUS

1. In your opinion, which of the following best describes the current need for volunteers in your community:

	<u>Administrative Volunteers</u>	<u>Service Volunteers</u>
a. Greater today than ten years ago	( )	( )
b. Less today than ten years ago	( )	( )
c. About the same as ten years ago	( )	( )

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. In your opinion, will the need for volunteer services:

	<u>Administrative Volunteers</u>	<u>Service Volunteers</u>
a. Increase in the next ten years	( )	( )
b. Decrease in next ten years	( )	( )
c. Remain about the same for next ten years	( )	( )

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. In your opinion, which of the following is most likely to happen to agencies in need of volunteers in your community?

a. Will seek leadership through the volunteer bureau	( )
b. Will seek leadership through other voluntary agencies	( )
c. Will continue to exist without necessary services	( )
d. Other (specify)	

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which of the following best typifies your attitude toward the use of the volunteer bureau:

	<u>Administrative Volunteers</u>	<u>Service Volunteers</u>
a. Provides the best opportunity for citizen participation in health and welfare activities	( )	( )
b. Is considered to be only one of many resources for citizen participation in health and welfare activities	( )	( )

	<u>Administrative Volunteers</u>	<u>Service Volunteers</u>
c. Has less than average recognition as a resource for citizen participation in health and welfare activities	( )	( )
d. Other (specify)		

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Rank the following functions in the order of importance as you see them for any volunteer bureau:

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9

(see attached statement of Purpose and Functions for explanations)

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| Consultation service to agencies  | ( ) |
| Consultation service to citizen organizations   | ( ) |
| Consultation service to Council staff and committees, relating to agency studies, research projects, leadership resources, etc. | ( ) |
| Coordination of volunteer programs in the community   | ( ) |
| Sponsoring or stimulating the sponsoring of educational programs  | ( ) |
| Promotion of recognition for volunteers   | ( ) |
| Resource of leadership for the community  | ( ) |
| Recruitment, interviewing and referral of volunteers  | ( ) |
| Operational services for the Council (e.g., Christmas bureau, speakers' bureau, etc.)   | ( ) |
| Other (specify)   |     |

6. If you have a volunteer bureau, rank the same functions in the order of the emphasis being placed upon them in your volunteer bureau:

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| Consultation service to agencies  | ( ) |
| Consultation service to citizen organizations   | ( ) |
| Consultation service to Council staff and committees, relating to agency studies, research projects, leadership resources, etc. | ( ) |
| Coordination of volunteer programs in the community   | ( ) |

- Sponsoring or stimulating the sponsoring of educational programs ( )
- Promotion of recognition for volunteers ( )
- Resource of leadership for the community ( )
- Recruitment, interviewing and referral of volunteers ( )
- Operational services for the Council (e.g., Christmas bureau, speakers' bureau, etc.) ( )
- Other (specify)

7. Assuming three broad functions for the "federation" movement, indicate in 1-2-3- order to which of these the volunteer bureau, in your opinion, is most closely related:

- Fund raising ( )
- Planning ( )
- Public Relations ( )

8. In your opinion, should the volunteer bureau be administratively a part of the community welfare council? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain (obviously your answer to #8 will be closely related to your answer to #7)

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