

2446 North 4th Street
Columbus, Ohio

FIELD REPORT

To: Jim McCain for transmittal to George Wiley and N.A.C.
From: Mike Lesser
Subject: Activities for the period of November and December, 1964; summary of expenses and projected needs; projected activities through February, 1965; Evaluation and Comments
Date: January 24, 1965

1. Activity: November-December, 1964.

Since arriving in Ohio in September I have been attempting to visit, and spend time with each of the chapters in the state. None of them had seen a field secretary, on other than a "passing through" visit, for over a year. This task was completed during November and December including all affiliated and un-affiliated groups with the exception of Dayton, where the CORE group was disaffiliated, and Springfield, where the chapter is now defunct. Following is a list of chapters and group visited, and the amount of time spent with each group during November and December;

- Columbus CORE.....10 days
- Trumbull CTY. CORE(Warren).4 days
- Toledo CORE.....10 days
- Cincinnati CORE.....5 days
- Akron CORE.....5 days
- Kent State Univ. group.....2 days

Other activities included a state meeting of Ohio chapters in Columbus, a weekend conference of S.D.S. community action projects in Cleveland and a Regional Action Council meeting in Chicago.

Summary of chapter visits:

Columbus. After a faction fight which was very disruptive, this group has been trying to get back on its feet with a new chairman, and move into the ghetto area of Columbus. With them I have run workshops on canvassing, organizing; and advised on reorganization of chapter administration and revision of their constitution.

Warren. On visits to Trumbull Cty CORE observed operation of the chapter, and discussed finances, projects and membership with the membership in preparation for a recommendation on affiliation, which was submitted prior to Dec. 19 NAC meeting at which the group was affiliated.

Toledo. Toledo CORE is a recently re-organized chapter with new leadership and relatively inexperienced personnel. Have been meeting with each officer and committee chairman to discuss functions, and have been helping direct a project aimed at organizing neighborhoods to fight school problems they are having. Also planning an office operation in the downtown ghetto and program workshops.

Cincinnati. This chapter has been enduring faction problems, personality problems, reorganization and lack of programming. I have spent time there orienting a new chairman and attempting to help the group deal with those problems.

Akron. This is a young but stable chapter beginning to work in the ghetto community. Most of the work here is to develop program competence and content through workshops and discussions with officers and membership.

Kent State University. This is a university group which has been in existence for over a year, but is not affiliated. They have had trouble organizing on campus and are not ready for affiliation. In discussion with the leaders of the group we have worked out possible projects for building membership and support. There is some hope for them to build a useful program in their area.

II. Projected Activity.

Chapter visits:

In this area it will be necessary to do two things in the next couple of months, as well as past that time: 1. Spend more time with those chapters which have already been serviced in Ohio. As noted, most have internal problems and/or program needs, and these needs cannot be coped with effectively in one or two visits, but need periodic attention to help development. Long visits of up to a month's duration would be advantageous, but are impractical under present conditions. 2. Visit groups which have not yet been serviced. I hope, by the end of February, to have serviced the groups in Lawrence, and Kansas City, Kansas, Elkhart, Indiana, Charleston, West Virginia and Louisville, Kentucky. Also, there is reported resurgence of activity in Dayton, Ohio, and I want to get there soon.

Work-Study project:

I have had recent contact with the director of the new work-study program at Wilberforce University, and the head of the Sociology department there, with the idea of developing an internship program for Negro social science students to spend their work periods as full time employees of CORE chapters and as Summer "task force" workers with chapters in Northern urban communities in order to: 1. develop, over a period of time, professionally competent workers, and 2. fill the needs that chapters have for full time personnel. Contacts are also being made with Central State College and an Antioch College in the same area. I hope to develop a firm program by March.

Other:

By the end of February I hope to be sending out a series of mimeographed memos to area chapters on chapter operation, fund raising, programming and committee functions.

III. Expenses.

Because I am compiling this report while on a visit to a chapter, I do not have all my past expense reports, and cannot, therefore, give a complete breakdown of all expenses. I will attempt, however, to provide summary information.

Average expenses:

Working from five recent expense reports, which I do have on hand, my average expenses for one week work out as follows:

Lodging.....	\$00.00
Transportation.....	12.20
Meals.....	13.86
<u>Miscellaneous.....</u>	<u>2.56</u>
Total weekly avg.....	\$28.62

Although this average is not exact, I would think that the amounts are fairly representative.

Projected expenses:

My expenses for the next few months should run pretty much the same as above. The only difference would be an increase in travel costs when I start going to Kansas, Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia. But, because I am now driving a car instead of taking Greyhound buses and local public transportation, costs should lower accordingly-enough to compensate for the increases in distance.

IV. Evaluation and Comments.

Because I had been away from the North for almost two years when I began to work in Ohio this Fall, there was a gap in my understanding of program needs, goals and chapter operation, and I had to, in a sense, give myself a cram course in what to do and how to do it. The National Office was very little help in that regard. There was no training or orientation program, and very little literature in the office to draw upon. This I had to search out for myself, for the most part. Fortunately, experience in the South had prepared me pretty well in organizing technique. There I think we are more knowledgeable than Northern CORE groups.

In working in Ohio I find that the chapters have problems resulting from inattention by National, which could be solved if the attempt were made.

Programming and direction:

The chapters have had little direction in determining their role in the community, and almost no help in programming. For my part, aside from personal help, I have had to direct them to literature sources other than CORE for help. While it is the role of the field secretary to assist in this area, it is necessary that general direction be provided by National as well as tools, so that the field secretary has a framework to use and the chapter to follow.

Communication and responsiveness:

Most chapters I have visited feel hostility toward National for other reasons also. They have a terrible time getting the literature, buttons and other material they request, or getting letters answered promptly. Some have given up writing to National and find they can get their needs attended to only by long distance phone.

Lack of relevant literature:

In terms of developing community awareness, for fund raising and for membership education CORE literature is out of date. It does not relate to chapter activities. More topical literature is urgently needed.