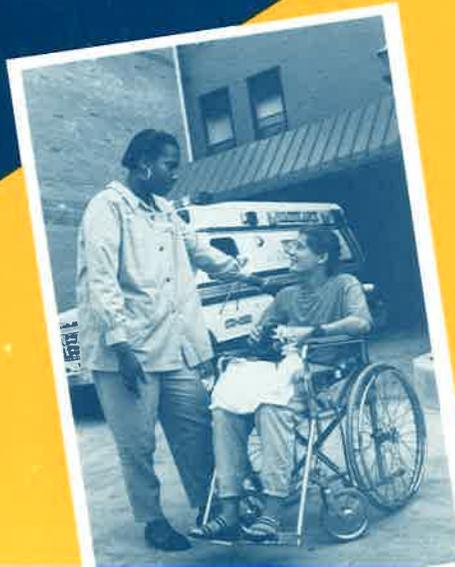


ACTION ANNUAL REPORT 1989





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

President Bush's inaugural speech contained a statement that those of us at ACTION can easily embrace: "From now on in America, any definition of a successful life must include serving others."

Since ACTION opened its doors in July 1971, "serving others" has been our mandate and our privilege. By gathering federal domestic service programs under one volunteer umbrella, ACTION has reached the abused child in a crowded city and the frail senior in rural America, the homeless family in the Northeast and the functionally illiterate in the Southwest. Our volunteers touch the needy in more than 1,000 communities throughout the nation.

In the past decade, ACTION volunteers have addressed every conceivable service need within their own neighborhoods. Each year, their expertise and dedication grow. Each year, they become increasingly convinced that working together, change is possible.

Fiscal Year 1989 marked another year of assistance gladly given—by teenagers in the Student Community Service Program to the most senior of Foster Grandparents. The concept of a successful life through service is reflected in the faces of ACTION volunteer clients across the country—and in the sense of satisfaction enjoyed by more than half-a-million ACTION volunteers themselves.

This Annual Report documents ACTION's commitment to making America a better place to live—for all of us—but especially for the disadvantaged among us.

Interesting facts in FY 1989 include:

- If the service provided by RSVP were valued at the minimum wage, RSVP volunteers' 72,500,000 hours of service represent an estimated value of \$243 million.
- Fifteen ACTION/RSVP grants for \$5,000 each will place an additional 300 RSVP volunteers in public libraries throughout the country. Volunteers

and children will work together in drama, music, travel, arts and crafts and computer programs.

- Forty-six percent of RSVP's non-ACTION funds comes from the local private sector; 32 states appropriated funds in their budgets for RSVP; state funds total almost \$5 million.
- Nearly 27,000 Foster Grandparents contributed 28 million hours to 72,000 children with special or exceptional needs.
- During the past six years, non-ACTION funding support for the Senior Companion Program grew from \$4.4 million to \$13.2 million.
- In FY 1989, VISTA began its 25th year, producing 2,615 volunteer service years in nearly 600 projects; 21 percent of VISTA volunteers are aged 55 and older; the median age is 36.
- Thirty-five new Student Community Service projects were funded and 87 were renewed. Through these projects, more than 23,000 students will provide one million hours of service to their communities.
- ACTION's Program Demonstration and Development Division (PDDD) awarded 94 grants, totalling \$4,350,000. In addition, projects receiving these monies were supported with \$2,773,000 in non-federal contributions. More than 27,000 volunteers provided 812,000 hours of service through PDDD-funded projects.

VISTA

During FY 1989, VISTA began its 25th year of helping low-income people become self-sufficient, producing 2,615 volunteer service years in nearly 600 projects. More than half the program's resources focused upon alcohol/drug abuse, illiteracy, unemployment, hunger and homelessness. An additional 335 volunteer service years and 85 projects were also funded through the Literacy Corps.

All VISTA projects are encouraged to generate private sector support and to recruit part-time local volunteers who will continue the activities of the volunteers after the VISTA funding cycle is complete. VISTA creates working relationships among the VISTA project sponsor, the community and the private sector in order to secure the long-term effect of VISTA's efforts. Full-time, full-year VISTA Volunteers assist low-income communities in establishing methods for meeting basic human needs/methods that can be replicated by others facing similar problems.

VISTA Volunteers are assigned to a variety of public and private non-profit organizations throughout the nation. Today, most VISTA Volunteers are recruited by their local project sponsor and many are residents of the low-income community being served. VISTA Volunteers are recruited for the commitment, skills and experience they bring to the project. Twenty-one percent of all volunteers are aged 55 and older. The average age of volunteers in FY 1989 was 36 years old.

Project Examples

- **Chicago, Illinois:** Centro Para Desarrollo Comunitario Y Liderato (Center for Community Leadership Development) serves impoverished Hispanic communities in the West Town, Humbolt, Logan Square and Rogers Park areas of Chicago.

The VISTA project focuses on:

Illiteracy—VISTA Volunteers have developed two GED classes with an average participation of 28

students (aged 16–35) per class. Sixty-five percent of the enrollees graduated and continued their education at Junior Colleges.

Homelessness—VISTA Volunteers have established two shelters for women and children through the Humboldt Park United Methodist Church. As a result of the project's efforts, Humboldt Park Infant Mortality Prevention Project contributed funds to the shelters. A grant from the federal government's Emergency Food and Shelter Program for emergency rent and utility assistance to aid the homeless in transitioning to a more normal arrangement was also obtained.

Hunger—The project created 10 new full-service food pantries and received donations from the Humboldt Park Infant Mortality Prevention Project.

- **South Bronx, New York:** Highbridge Community Center is located in the South Bronx. This section of New York City has one of the highest





poverty rates in the country. The VISTA project focuses on literacy: One VISTA Volunteer raised funds from a variety of sources, including New York State, private individuals and corporations, for the support and expansion of Highbridge's literacy programs.

Other volunteers have been active in outreach and recruitment efforts. In six months, the number of persons enrolled in classes increased from 130 to 230—with another 100 students recruited by VISTA Volunteers waiting for available space. Volunteers have also designed a new program, "Literacy on the Road," which provides reading material for shut-ins. Another VISTA Volunteer has set up computer literacy classes and has solicited donations of three word-processing machines to be used in the computer classes. VISTA Volunteers have developed an agency newsletter for contributors, students and others in the Highbridge area.



• **Porterville, California:** The Tule River Tribal Council serves a community of 550 residents on the Tule River Reservation as well as 2,600 Indian residents in Tulare County. The VISTA project focuses on the development of a group home for "at risk" Indian youth—the first group home in California based on a reservation for the purpose of counseling, training and providing shelter. VISTA Volunteers, who are themselves Native Americans, have researched information related to certification and standards. They have also organized fund-raising projects to develop community pride as well as to obtain resources for the establishment of the group home. To date, VISTA Volunteers have assisted in raising funds toward construction costs. They have organized a Boy Scout troop for the tribe and have arranged events around holidays and Indian cultural activities to create an awareness of the project and to raise funds.



FY 1989 VISTA Volunteer and Project Statistics

Number of Projects*

Youth	296
Illiteracy	234
Unemployment	139
Hunger	94
Substance abuse	107
Homelessness	119

Number of Volunteers*

Youth	1,251
Illiteracy	1,193
Unemployment	607
Hunger	293
Substance abuse	483
Homelessness	375

*These numbers exceed actual number of volunteers and projects since multi-component projects are double-counted.

