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GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN RURAL JOB CORPS CENTERS. FINAL REPORT.

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DESCRIPTORS- *DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH, *RURAL EDUCATION, *VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, FEDERAL PROGRAMS, POVERTY PROGRAMS, *PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT, COUNSELING GOALS, *GUIDANCE COUNSELING, RESEARCH PROJECTS, JOB CORPS,

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE 8-WEEK PROJECT WERE TO CLARIFY AND FURTHER DEFINE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING NEEDS OF CORPSMEN IN RURAL JOB CORPS CENTERS, UNDERSTAND AND DESCRIBE ONGOING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROCEDURES IN RURAL CENTERS, AND IDENTIFY WAYS IN WHICH GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING COULD BE IMPROVED. INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED THROUGH SITE VISITATIONS TO FOUR RURAL CENTERS, TWO URBAN CENTERS, THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN WASHINGTON, D.C., AND DISCUSSIONS WITH PERSONNEL FROM TWO ADDITIONAL URBAN CENTERS AND A WOMEN'S JOB CORPS CENTER. ALTHOUGH JOBCORPSMEN HAD THE SAME KINDS OF DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS AS OTHER PEOPLE, THEY WERE GENERALLY UNABLE TO SATISFY THESE NEEDS WITHOUT CAREFUL ASSISTANCE. APPROXIMATELY 80 PERCENT OF STAFF-CORPSMEN INTERACTIONS IN THE JOB CORPS CENTERS WERE EITHER COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE OR AT LEAST POTENTIALLY GUIDANCE-ORIENTED EXPERIENCES. RESIDENT COUNSELORS WERE OVERWORKED AND UNDERPAID, AND PROCEDURES AND MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR USE IN COUNSELING WERE INADEQUATE. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM INCLUDED (1) DIRECT SERVICES FOR CORPSMEN IN THE AREAS OF SELF-UNDERSTANDING, ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION, SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT SKILLS, PERSONAL DECISION MAKING, AND PROBLEM SOLVING, (2) AN INFORMATION SYSTEM AS THE BASIC COMPONENT OF THE PROGRAM, (3) A COMPREHENSIVE INSERVICE PROGRAM FOR COUNSELORS AND OTHER STAFF MEMBERS, AND (4) OPERATIONAL PACKAGES OF PROCEDURAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS TO ASSIST IN RECURRING TASKS IN THE CENTERS. (PS)

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
IN RURAL JOB CORPS CENTERS

John W. Loughary

Final Report

Contract # 509

United States
Office of Economic Opportunity

OREGON STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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TEACHING RESEARCH DIVISION

**Oregon State System
of Higher Education
Monmouth, Oregon**

September 15, 1965

7928

Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Objectives	1
Procedures	1
Section I	
Counseling Needs of Corpsmen	2
Developmental Needs Classification	5
Summary	9
Section II	
On-Going Guidance Procedures	10
A Guidance Model	10
Environmental Information	11
Personal Information	13
Facilitating Skills	14
In-Center Adjustment Needs	14
Organizational Aspects	15
Summary	19
Section III	
Recommendations	20
Objectives of Guidance Program	21
Corpsmen Information System	23
Communication	25
In-Service Training Program	25
Materials and Systems Development	26
Other Projects and Issues	27

7929

INTRODUCTION

Objectives

This report culminates an 8-week project concerned with guidance and counseling in Rural Job Corps centers. The project had the following three objectives: (1) clarify and further define guidance and counseling needs of corpsmen in Rural Job Corps centers, (2) understand and describe on-going guidance and counseling procedures in rural centers, and (3) identify ways in which guidance and counseling could be improved. The major outcome of the project is a set of recommendations intended to aid the further development of guidance and counseling programs in the Rural Job Corps Division of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The main body of the report consists of three sections. The first deals with the counseling needs of corpsmen, and the second describes on-going guidance procedures. The third section presents recommendations for the further development of a guidance and counseling program for Rural Job Corps centers.

Procedures

Information was obtained through interviews with Job Corps staff and corpsmen, and study of available OEO documents regarding guidance and counseling. All interviews were conducted by the writer. Site visitations were made to four rural centers (Welfleet, Massachusetts; Grants, New Mexico; Ouachita, Arkansas; Crab Orchard, Illinois) and two urban centers (Gary, Texas; Kilmer, New Jersey) and the OEO Office in Washington, D.C. In addition, discussions were held with key counseling personnel from two additional Urban Job Corps centers (Tongue Point, Oregon; Camp Parks, California) and with personnel from the Women's Job Corps center in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Sections of the American Personnel and Guidance Association Statement of Policy, "The Counselor, Professional Preparation Role"³ and a list of questions developed after consultation with members of the OEO Job Corps Staff in Washington D.C., were used as a general frame of reference for the project. Most of the interviews and discussions held at Job Corps sites were tape recorded and studied after the visitations.

Section I

COUNSELING NEEDS OF CORPSMEN

"Counseling needs" of corpsmen (or anyone else) is a kind of professional shorthand referring to needs which can be met best through those procedures which are within the general area of counseling and guidance. It is in this sense that the term "counseling needs" is used here. There is no exclusive claim made by guidance for certain corpsmen needs. Rather, it is asserted that many corpsmen needs can be met in varying degrees by a variety of guidance and counseling procedures. However, it is generally true that those needs with which guidance and counseling are most concerned tend to fall into the non-academic area of camp life.

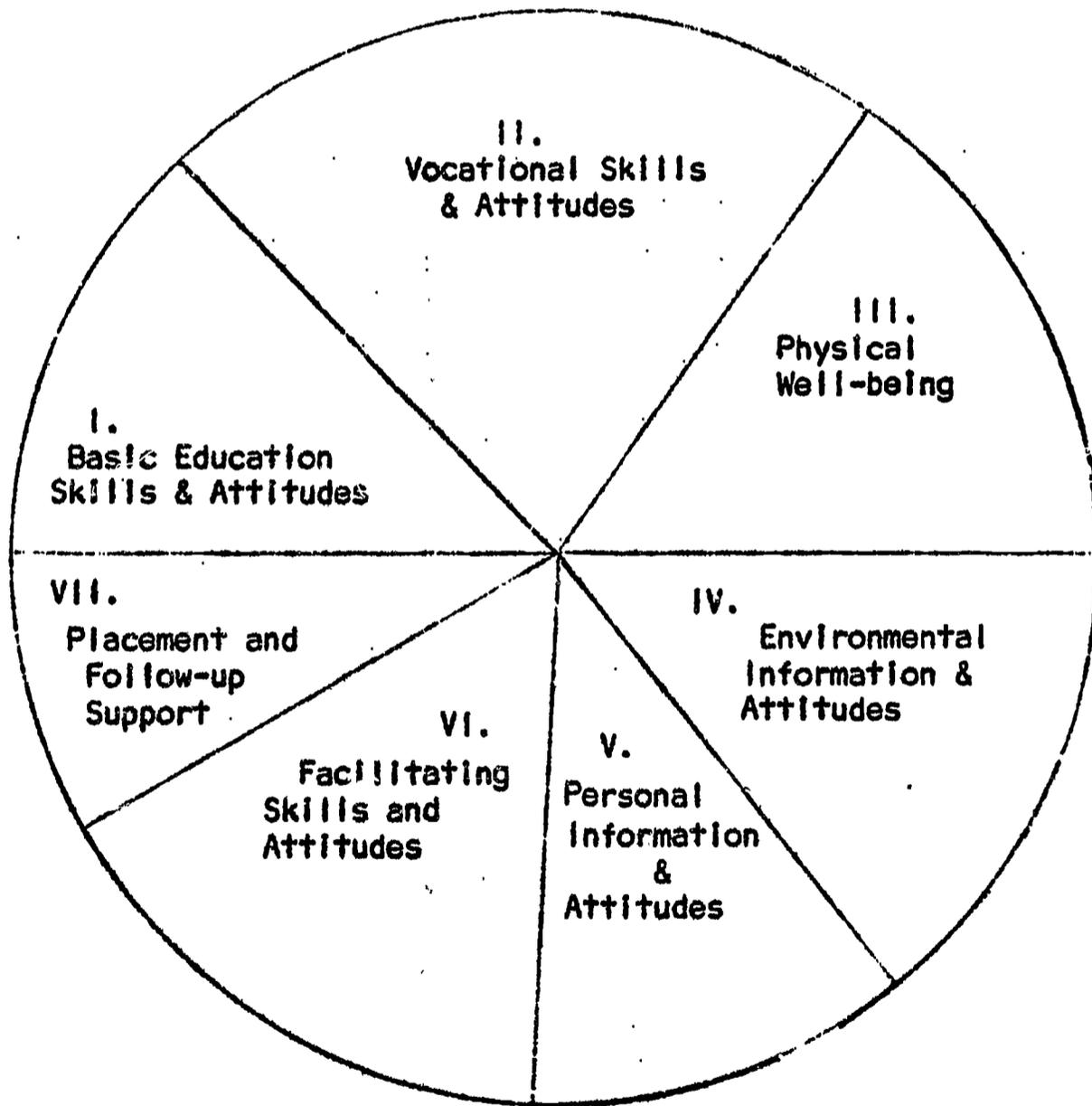
There is general agreement among Job Corps staff members and others familiar with the Job Corps population that corpsmen have a number of counseling needs which distinguish them from "middle class" youth. These needs, however, have not been specified in great detail. The general counseling need, as stated in existing Job Corps documents, appears to be one of assisting corpsmen develop greater self-motivation through increased self-understanding. The scope of the Job Corps program extends beyond basic educational skills and occupational competencies.

A corpsman must somehow integrate new behaviors in these two areas into his total personality if they are to be operationally beneficial to him in the real world. Existing Job Corps documents indicate that guidance and counseling is primarily concerned with the process through which educational skills and vocational competencies become integrated and effective.

The importance of becoming more specific regarding counseling needs is paramount to the success of the Job Corps program. Interviews with staff and corpsmen helped identify many specific needs and problems, including, for example, loneliness, how to relate to peers and staff, how to get a job, how to get further training, etc. The needs mentioned and revealed during the project were consistent from center to center. It is apparent that additional experience by staff in the centers will contribute to greater and more accurate specification regarding corpsmen needs.

It should be helpful at this time to employ several need constructs as an aid to providing some orderly way of studying and using the observations being made by staff members. The following diagram conceptualizes corpsmen needs in seven general areas of behavior with which the Job Corps program is concerned. It is reasonable to assume that within areas one through six at least some modification of behavior is desirable for each corpsman, if he is to be better equipped to survive and succeed in society after leaving the Job Corps. The seventh area, Placement and Follow-up, is of less immediate concern, but in the final analysis includes the operational criterion behavior for corpsmen. Obviously the areas are not entirely discreet. There is also overlap from the perspective of staff assignments. Every staff member is concerned with many kinds of corpsmen needs, even though each position clearly gives emphasis to one or two areas.

Figure 1
Schematic Presentation of Areas
of Corpsmen Needs and Behavior



It is suggested that guidance and counseling functions are most concerned with needs in the following areas: (IV) Need for Environment Information, (V) Need for Personal Information, (VI) Need for Facilitating Skills, and (VII) Need for Placement and Follow-up Support. Seeing these four areas as the general domain of counseling, it is possible to begin identifying the actual desired corpsmen behaviors involved in each area of need. Finally, given such behavioral definitions of needs, it becomes possible to specify the counseling and guidance materials and procedures intended to bring about the desired corpsman behavior, and to test the validity of the materials and procedures.

The basic advantage of this approach to defining corpsmen needs and describing staff behavior, is that staff behavior is viewed as a means, and not an end. Unless staff behavior is facilitating one or more kinds of corpsmen needs, its justification is questionable.

The following outline follows the scheme just described and includes the major kinds of corpsmen counseling needs identified during this project. The lesser points in the outline merely illustrate the kinds of needs in each category.

The scheme encompasses both developmental and problem-oriented needs. More will be said about this later in the discussion.

Developmental Needs Classification

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION (Corpsmen need information regarding their environment in order to understand and thus better survive and deal with the situations which they will encounter after leaving the camp.)

A. Vocational Information

1. Basic characteristics of jobs
2. Job families
3. Entry occupations and job progressions

7934

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- 4. Union Implications
- 5. Apprenticeship and on-the-job training concepts
- 6. Sources of job opportunity information

B. Educational Information

- 1. Kinds of available training
- 2. Costs of training
- 3. Specific sources of training information
- 4. Expectations of training programs

C. Psychological Information

- 1. Common adjustment problems of beginning workers
- 2. Importance of vocational and personal planning
- 3. Critical sources of environmental and personal stress
- 4. Ways of dealing with day-to-day adjustment problems
(frustrations, discouragement, obstacles, prejudices)

D. Personal Maintenance Information

- 1. Sources of housing information
- 2. Financial information (banking, budgeting, time payments)
- 3. Legal responsibilities (taxes, drivers licenses, marriage laws)

V. PERSONAL INFORMATION (Corpsmen need certain information about themselves in order to make realistic plans and decisions regarding both their vocational and personal lives.)

A. Relative Abilities and Achievements

- 1. Predictive information
- 2. Relative importance of compensating factors

B. Interests**1. Measured Interest****2. Importance of Interests****C. Personality Strengths and Weaknesses****1. Functional descriptions****2. Use of in planning****D. Sources of Assistance****1. Kinds of assistance****2. What can be expected**

VI. FACILITATING SKILLS (Given information about his environment and relatively accurate assessment of himself, the corpsman needs certain skills and attitudes in order to use this information effectively in adjusting to and surviving within his environment.)

A. Vocational**1. Job search skills****2. Job application skills****3. Job assessment skills****B. Personal****1. Personal decision making skills****2. Goal setting abilities****3. Self assessment skills****4. Internalized motivation****5. Personal and group relationship skills****6. Adjustment to stress skills**

C. Social

1. Securing housing
2. Dealing with prejudice
3. Affiliating with formal groups

VII. PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP (Corpsmen need assistance in finding initial job placement and getting settled in a community. In addition, many need varied amounts of follow-up support in order to capitalize on their growth and development during their stay in the Job Corps center.)

This brief outline of developmental needs can serve as a foundation for developing operational definitions of desired behavior. For example, it is possible to begin indicating specific behaviors which constitute "job search skills" and thus provide a basis for determining when a corpsman has achieved adequate "job search skills."

An alternative basis for defining corpsman needs is to use the perspective of in-center adjustment needs. This is essentially a problem-oriented view of guidance and counseling, and while counseling is concerned with such problems, its total concern and contribution is much greater, as suggested by the use of a developmental perspective. Problems such as homesickness, stealing, absenteeism, hostility, etc., often need immediate attention in terms of protecting the total center program. In regard to the corpsmen with the problem, however, it is entirely consistent to conceptualize his "problem" behavior in terms of the developmental needs construct discussed above. There is reason to believe that doing so will provide the counselor with a potentially more useful perspective than viewing the corpsman's problem behavior as an isolated event.

A point of emphasis is worth brief mention. Staff members working with corpsmen continually refer to (1) the relative lack of vocational and personal

adjustment skills, and (2) the even greater lack of basic education skills for, and attitudes toward, learning itself. While the former cannot be ignored, it would appear that the greatest long-range pay-off for the corpsman and society will come from an emphasis on acquiring effective learning skills and attitudes. It is in this way that the corpsman differs most significantly from his middle class brother, and it is this difference in prerequisite learning skills and attitudes, rather than a difference in desired terminal behavior, which necessitates a different counseling and instructional approach in Job Corps centers.

Summary

In summary, jobcorpsmen have the same kinds of developmental needs as everyone else. They differ most in their general inability to satisfy these needs without careful assistance. Some have developed adjustment behavior which will be most ineffective in a middle class environment, and in this sense have "counseling problems." The most important idea regarding counseling needs which evolved during the project, is the importance of an operation framework for identifying the individual needs of each corpsman, and for determining specifically what can be done to satisfy the needs. Staff members are relatively skillful at describing isolated needs of individual corpsmen, and general group needs. They are aware of the short attention spans and shortsightedness of corpsmen. What should be provided is a method for relating and synthesizing these observations in such a way that they provide a clear basis for developing individual programs for each corpsman.

Section II

ON-GOING GUIDANCE PROCEDURES

The Job Corps Counseling Manual indicates a counselor-counselee ratio of 1:100, and advises that counselors spend about fifty percent of their time in counseling per se, and about fifty percent in non-counseling guidance tasks such as corpsman appraisal and staff consulting. The Civil Service Position Description for Job Corps counselor lists the following major duties.

1. Initial study and determination of corpsman placement in the Job Corps program.
2. Responsibility for continuing interpretation evaluation of enrollee progress and consultation with staff regarding desirable changes.
3. Act for the Deputy Director of Education in his absence.
4. Provide technical orientation and program familiarization to all members of the center staff, and in addition, provide direct supervision to VISTA.

The last item implies clearly that the guidance and counseling program is to involve staff members in addition to the counselor, and this is reflected in all centers visited during the project. The nature of involvement, however, varies extensively among centers. To the writer's knowledge, there is no general guide for organizing guidance and counseling programs in centers.

A Guidance Model

All staff members interviewed agree that in some way each staff member is involved in guidance and counseling. This is a valid assertion, even though many would take issue over whether one can provide professional counseling without professional preparation. Putting this question aside for the moment, it is fair

to grant that most staff members are involved to varying degrees in providing kinds of help to corpsmen which might be included under the general category of guidance.

Guidance and counseling involves both content and process. Section I dealt mostly with content -- that is, the substance of guidance. Process, or how the substance is achieved, is of equal importance. One method of describing the on-going guidance and counseling procedures is to compare them with a general model which suggests the functional relationship between guidance and counseling goals (in terms of corpsmen needs) and various guidance and counseling procedures. This model is presented in Figure 2. The model includes a general suggestion of whether functions should be performed by counselors, other staff, or both. A (X) indicates primary responsibility. The top section of the chart refers to guidance and counseling functions involving primarily direct contact with corpsmen, and the bottom section deals essentially with supporting procedures.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Thus it can be seen from column 1 of the chart that counseling needs for environmental information should depend mostly (at least in terms of the underlying values of the model) on group discussions by non-counseling staff members (instructors, work supervisors, and resident workers), and on group counseling sessions held by counselors. More limited assistance in this area should be expected from vocational and educational counseling and some extent by outside referral sources. The non-counseling guidance function most important to meeting the environmental information needs, as indicated on the bottom section of the chart, are suggested to be in-service training and the maintenance of an environmental information collection.

Figure 2
Model Relating Counseling Needs
to Guidance Functions

Guidance and Counseling Functions	COUNSELING NEED AREAS									
	Environmental Information		Personal Information		Facilitating Skills		In-Center Adjustment		Placement & Follow-Up	
	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S
Counseling Soc/Adj			(X)	X	X	X	(X)	X		
Counseling Voc.	X		X		X				X	
Counseling Educ.	X	X	X		X				X	
Group Counseling	(X)		(X)		(X)		X			(X)
Group Discussions		(X)		(X)		(X)		(X)	X	
Referrals	X				X		X			X
Staff Planning & Consulting	X		X		X	X	(X)			
Staff Supervision										
Appraisal			(X)	(X)			X	X		
Outside Liason									(X)	X
Program Evaluation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
In-service Training	(X)		(X)		X		X			
Environmental Info. Maint.	(X)	(X)							X	

C = Counselor - S = Other Staff X = Source - (X) = Primary Source

7941

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The pattern suggested in the model regarding environmental information needs is apparent to some extent in the centers visited. Group discussions lead by non-counseling staff members appear to be the primary means of providing environmental information to corpsmen. The greatest demand in this area, in the writer's view, is increased attention to in-service training and the maintenance of environmental information sources. Currently existing material should be collected, and additional materials developed in terms of the characteristics of the Job Corps population. Finally, a systematic in-service program in regard to use of the materials should be implemented.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

One of the most significant obstacles to meeting personal information needs of corpsmen, according to staff members interviewed, is the lack of existing valid appraisal information, and a system for collecting appraisal data during a corpsman's tenure in a center. Appraisal data currently consists primarily of feedback from initial testing and screening. Counselors suspect the validity of much of the standardized test information in regard to a large percentage of the corpsmen, and also indicate that the turn-around time for receiving appraisal data is so great as to inhibit the usefulness of the information.

Completely lacking, at least in the centers visited, was a sophisticated and practical system for collecting measures of corpsmen behavior after they enter the center. In no case was something comparable to a cumulative folder in existence. With the exception of some reading achievement feedback, the personal information area receives minimal attention from the staff. An interesting and probably significant source of personal information in some centers is the group discussions held in dorms. These often include resident workers, but frequently

7942

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do not. The feedback can be a negative verbal assault on a corpsman by his peers regarding some disturbing behavior, but more often consists of an objective and helpful evaluation of his progress by his dorm mates.

FACILITATING SKILLS

The corpsman's need for developing facilitating skills appears to be handled largely on an informal basis, and primarily through relatively unstructured group discussions, and brief discussions between a corpsman and his resident worker or work supervisor. As suggested on the chart, systematic group counseling and guidance procedures would be of equal importance in regard to meeting facilitating skill needs of the corpsmen. Such things as simulation, role playing, outside visitors, and out-of-center projects should be developed as means for corpsmen to develop and test these kinds of skills. The cooperation and involvement of the total staff is basic to such procedures, and thus the importance placed on staff planning and consulting in the model. An important reason for lack of attention to this area to date is undoubtedly the immediate pressures of implementing instructional and work programs.

IN-CENTER ADJUSTMENT NEEDS

The counseling need area receiving the most systematic treatment is probably that of in-center adjustment needs. These needs are more dramatic in nature than developmental considerations, and failure to meet them disrupts a total center immediately. Clear cut procedures for dealing with such problems, including discipline and referrals, have been established. The model suggests that primary responsibility for meeting these needs should rest with personal counseling from both the counselor and other staff workers, and from group counseling by the counselor. The extent to which a corpsman receives personal help in the process

7943

of solving a problem from the camp perspective depends upon the involvement of the total staff in the guidance program.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

Extensive agreement exists among counselors, resident workers, instructors, work supervisors, and administrators interviewed regarding the importance of counseling and guidance in the Job Corps program, both in regard to the individual development of each corpsman and the facilitation of other aspects of the program. There is also general concern regarding the difficulties of facilitating many aspects of the counseling and guidance program.

The major characteristics of program organization are given below. This concern for the organization and administration aspects of the program should not be interpreted as a preoccupation with structure at the expense of content. While developmental work in substance aspects is important and needs immediate attention, guidance and counseling services to corpsmen could be increased dramatically through immediate attention to the guidance and counseling program. In addition, a stronger, more systematic program would facilitate the development of additional innovations.

The following points characterize the guidance and counseling procedures as seen in the centers visited.

COUNSELING:

1. At least sixty percent of the personal social counseling burden is born by the resident workers.
2. Group discussions of some kind are held on a relatively regular basis in most centers.

7944

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3. Scheduled developmental counseling sessions (i.e. seeing each corpsman every two or three weeks for general review and discussion of program and goals) has not been implemented on a systematic basis.
4. Counselors identify special adjustment needs from informal references and through various staff reports.
5. Counseling requests exceed available counselor time.
6. The most frequent counseling problem is "homesickness."
7. Counseling follow-up is most often the responsibility of someone other than the counselors, frequently the resident worker.
8. Corpsmen tend to seek counseling at the time they feel a need for it, and the resident worker is most often the staff member available and to whom they turn.

APPRAISAL:

1. Continuous and systematic educational and psychological appraisal of corpsmen development is not provided for in most centers.
2. In-center appraisal, with exception of achievement, consists primarily of informal staff observations, which are not usually recorded.
3. Cumulative records of corpsmen are not maintained.
4. With the exception of counselors (and in some cases Deputy Superintendents for Education and Instructors) staff members are relatively untrained in psychological and educational appraisal procedures and the use of appraisal data.

SUPERVISION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING:

1. The relationship between counselors and resident workers is informal, with counselors having no official supervisory responsibility for resident workers.

2. The counselor is generally viewed by staff as the psychologist in the center, having consulting and supervisory responsibilities in many aspects of the program. Counselors feel the lack of concomitant supervisory status in the table of organization.
3. While generally interested and sincere in providing counseling services to corpsmen, resident workers, with some exception, lack professional training in counseling. The importance of this should not be overlooked, because it is the resident workers in most cases to whom corpsmen turn for counseling.

SUPPORTING SERVICES :

1. Clerical assistance for guidance is not provided in most centers.
2. Counselors do not have specific operational budgets for purchase of tests, vocational information, special guidance material, etc.
3. Adequate private counseling space for resident workers and counselors is not available in some of the centers.

There are several additional issues reported by counselors and other staff members which are important and need to be mentioned.

1. Counselors tend to feel professionally isolated in some of the centers, and feel a need for greater professional communication, if not within the center, then between counselors in other centers.
2. Resident workers are often discouraged because of their lack of career advancement opportunities. The resident worker position can allow anything from straight custodial to extensive counseling and guidance work. Most of the resident workers are anxious to do a variety of counseling and guidance jobs.

7946

3. Counselors, and to a lesser extent resident workers, are seriously dissatisfied with the in-service training. Several experienced and professionally trained counselors were interviewed after returning from the Springfield program. They felt that the program was unrealistic, and in large part irrelevant due to an underestimate of the counselors professional background, a complete lack of awareness of the Job Corps environment on the part of some of the training staff, and the failure to involve counselors in planning the training program.

SUMMARY

It should be helpful, before moving to the series of recommendations regarding the counseling and guidance program in the Rural Job Corps centers, to summarize the current status of the program.

First, it is estimated that approximately eighty percent of staff-corpsman interactions in the Job Corps centers could be classified as either counseling and guidance, or at least potentially guidance oriented experiences. In this sense, every staff member from cook to superintendent has some guidance function.

Second, the counselor, as the single professional guidance staff member, has a tremendous task in attempting to capitalize on this situation. Concomitantly, the more effort and time he devotes to assisting other staff members and to program development, the less time he has for providing direct counseling services to corpsmen.

Third, guidance and counseling currently is more accurately characterized by a variety of procedures, rather than a comprehensive program. This means, among other things, that the non-counseling aspects of the counselor's work must be done without the assistance that a program can provide.

Additional strong points include the following.

1. Staff are generally aware of the importance of counseling and guidance although seldom in terms of specifics which could be achieved.
2. Resident workers, instructors, and work supervisors, due to the flexible organization of centers, are in a unique and excellent position to use an individualized guidance approach to corpsmen.
3. Staff members, particularly resident workers and instructors, are interested in providing guidance and counseling assistance.
4. Administrators are in general willing to try new approaches to facilitating guidance and counseling.
5. Corpsmen are generally eager to receive the help guidance and counseling services can offer.
6. Counselors are experienced and generally well prepared professionally.
7. There is a growing awareness of the importance of guidance and counseling among Washington, D.C. staff members, and a growing interest in facilitating the program development.

Additional weak points include the following.

1. The counseling demands of a Job Corps center far exceed the ratio of 1:100, assuming direct services by counselors.
2. Resident workers are in many cases significantly overworked and underpaid, with resulting fatigue and morale problems.
3. The extent of counselors center-wide responsibilities for guidance and counseling is not matched with appropriate supervisory authority.
4. Procedures and materials needed for guidance and counseling programs surpass the developmental resources of any single center.

7948

5. The communication system for sharing best practices and innovations among centers is inadequate.
6. Insufficient provision has been made for guidance and counseling program development and coordination at the national level.
7. Recruitment officers apparently are misinformed regarding Rural Job Corps programs, and often mislead corpsmen regarding expectations of the center.

Section III

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural Job Corps centers are unique in many respects among institutions with related purposes. It would, therefore, be inappropriate to model the Job Corps guidance and counseling program after guidance and personnel service programs in public schools, colleges, correctional institutions, or the armed forces. While aspects of such programs can be profitably encompassed in the Job Corps guidance and counseling program, the basic program should reflect the requirements of the Job Corps population and be sensitive to the unique environment.

Program development efforts in guidance evident so far have been based on this belief, and have resulted in a number of useful guidance practices in the centers. Perhaps the two strongest features of the Job Corps guidance effort are, (1) each center staffed includes at least one professional counselor, and (2) a general staff awareness of the potential importance of guidance to the personal development of each corpsman.

It is essential, however, to move ahead in program development. The remainder of this report outlines one kind of program which we believe is both consistent with the organization and nature of Rural Job Corps centers, and practical in

regard to implementation and further development. There are five general conditions which must be accounted for when conceptualizing a comprehensive Rural Job Corps guidance program. These are:

1. There is a shortage of professional time, in the sense of staff-corpsman ratio. This is especially critical in regard to counselors and resident workers. Their time must be used with great care and economy.
2. Because of the complex interaction of many staff members with individual corpsmen, there is a need for continuous staff orientation regarding all aspects of the program, and of individual corpsman development.
3. The individualization of corpsman programs places critical demands on two kinds of information, (1) corpsman appraisal data, and (2) counseling and instructional resources.
4. Due to the dynamic nature of Job Corps centers, an effective control or scheduling system is essential.
5. Each center, because of its staff, locale, and corpsman population, will be unique in many specific respects.

These conditions, plus the three general objectives listed below, have served as a guide for the recommendations presented in this section.

Objective of Guidance Program

It is recommended that the Rural Job Corps guidance program have the following three objectives or functions:

First, the counseling and guidance program should provide direct services to corpsmen in the areas of self-understanding, environmental information, social adjustment skills, and personal decision making, planning, and problem solving assistance.

7950

Second, the guidance and counseling program should facilitate each corpsman's development by contributing to other aspects of the Job Corps program, primarily basic education, work experience, group living, and vocational training.

Third, the guidance and counseling program should provide a continuous information base for total program evaluation.

The scope of responsibility suggested is extremely comprehensive. The suggestion is not that a counselor should control a center, but rather that he maintain a system which will enable staff members in all areas to achieve more precise control and effectiveness with their work with corpsmen.

A Job Corps center is a complex institution, maintained twenty-four hours a day. Extensive and sophisticated coordination is essential if the goal of individualized treatment of each corpsman is to be obtained. Without an efficient monitoring and control system, needless duplication of effort and waste of both corpsman and staff time will occur.

It is suggested, therefore, that the basic component of the guidance and counseling program be conceptualized as an information system. Information is essential to meeting each of the three objectives, as well as to accounting for the five conditions listed. Obviously, the availability of information alone is no solution. But every counseling and guidance procedure, all of the procedures implied in the second objective, and certainly program evaluation cannot take place without information. The question is not whether to have information or not, but what kind and how good shall the information be.

It is recommended that a basic guidance and counseling information system be developed for all Job Corps centers. The system should be stable in that similar objectives and policy are common to each center, and flexible in that a variety of alternative procedures are available to use according to the unique requirement of each center.

It is suggested therefore, that the basic component of the counseling and guidance program consist of an information system, and that other parts of the program be built on this foundation. In addition to the corpsman information system, the guidance program should include a division or major effort devoted to: Professional Coordination and Communication; In-service Training; Materials and Systems Development; and Program Development and Evaluation.

The program in each center should be center oriented, in that it reflects the particular needs of its corpsmen, and uses its staff resources. The major coordination and facilitating responsibility should be assigned to the Washington, D.C. staff. More is said about specific responsibilities and projects below.

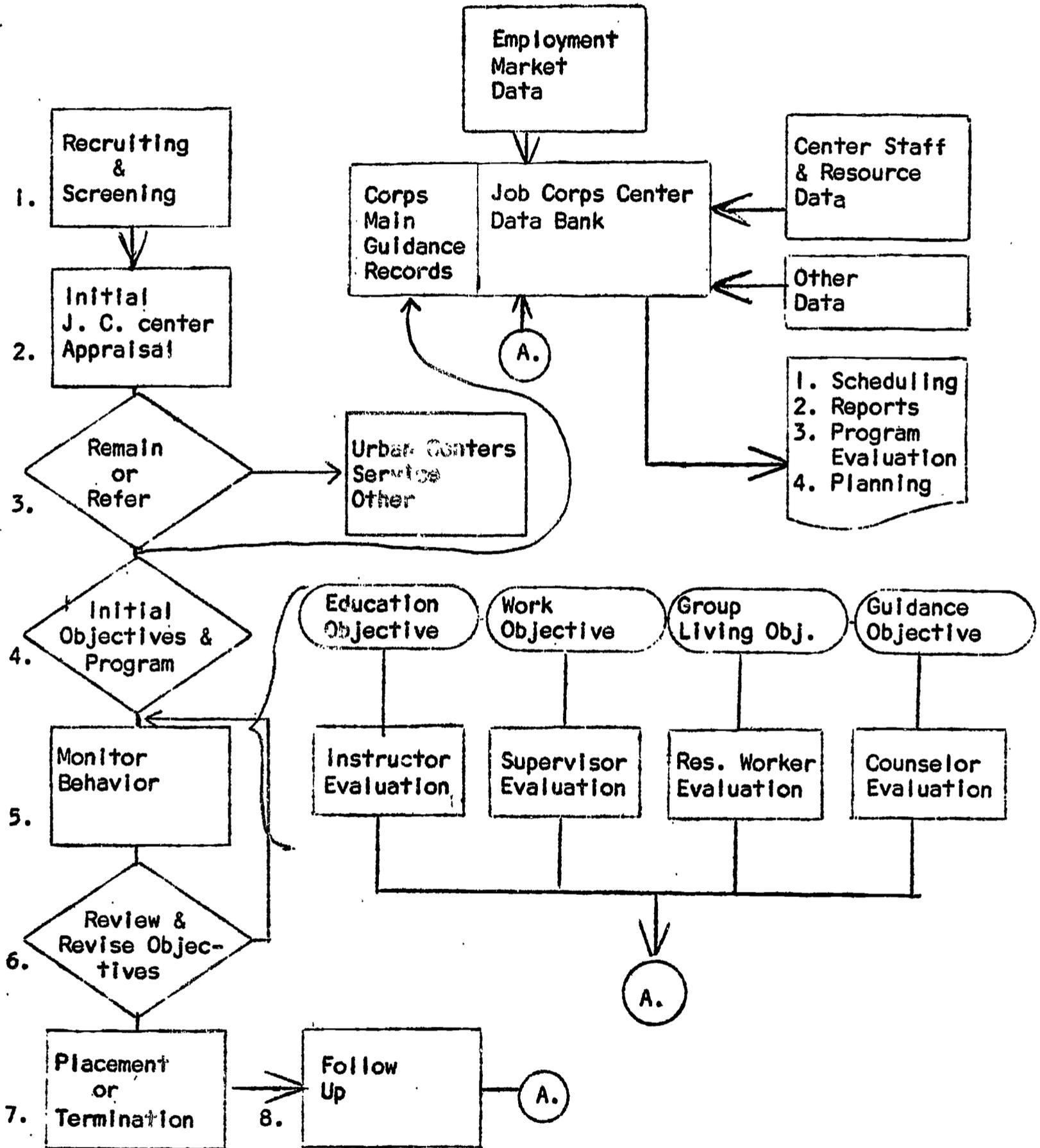
Corpsmen Information System

Figure 3 illustrates the general operation of the proposed corpsmen information system.

Data from recruitment and initial screening would be the initial input to the corpsman guidance folder, and with additional appraisal data collected during the corpsman's first week at camp, would be used to aid in planning his initial program. Throughout the corpsman's career, staff would input observations and evaluations of his behavior and progress in terms of the initial and eventually revised objectives. This would permit a systematic monitoring of the corpsman's behavior while at camp. The system would be sensitive to progress, or a lack of it, and in addition, would be sensitive to a number of signs of possible problems.

The corpsman guidance folder would provide a cumulative record of his behavior at the center in terms of his own goals. As such, it would serve as a basic coordinating device for the various staff members working with the corpsman. Input to the camp data bank would facilitate scheduling, program evaluation, and other functions noted on the chart.

Figure 3
Information Flow - Corpsmen Information System



7953

The system could, and probably should be initiated on a relatively simple manual basis and would involve the following steps: (1) determination of cumulative record contents and format; (2) development of observation and evaluation of tools and procedures; (3) design of operational procedures for input-output monitoring and individual corpsman review; (4) field testing in two or three centers; (5) revise in terms of field test results; (6) plan program of staff orientation and orient center staff to the system; and (7) install the system in camps. Eventually the system might be automated.

It is critical that the system be developed with the assistance of experienced staff members.

Communication

The remaining parts of the recommended guidance program entail expanding the professional guidance and counseling staff in the Washington, D.C. Job Corps Office, in order to provide the leadership and resources for program development.

A system providing regular communication between Washington, D.C. and the counseling staffs in the various Job Corps centers should be established. Such a system would facilitate the exchange of ideas, the rendering of policy decisions, and provide for professional recognition among counselors. It should also pay off in terms of stimulating creative thinking among counseling staff members. Another chief value to the Washington, D.C. Office would be input regarding problems and developments in the centers.

In-Service Training Program

A comprehensive in-service program should be developed for counselors and other staff members providing guidance services. It is critical that the program development involve staff members in Job Corps centers. In addition to in-service materials and packages which could be used by counselors in specific centers,

provisions should be made for off-center seminar-type meetings for counselors from various regions.

It is also recommended that two kinds of advisory boards be established. First would be a professional board made up of counselors and head resident workers in the centers, OEO personnel from Washington, D.C., and one or two non-OEO counseling professionals. The second type of board would consist of representatives from the various agencies administering Job Corps centers. The primary function of the second board would be public relations and improved interpersonal and interagency relations.

Materials and System Development

It is recommended that a number of operational packages be developed for assisting in important and recurring tasks in the Job Corps centers. Examples of such packages would be a basic scheduling system, simulation packages for teaching facilitating skills, group work procedure kits, environmental information materials, and programmed vocational information manuals.

The Washington staff, in cooperation with its Board, should develop a list of program development priorities and begin contacting contractors to undertake such projects. While not the direct responsibility of the counseling program, it should cooperate in the development of extended vocational training packages and programs in the Job Corps centers. These need not be programs as extensive as those found in the urban centers, but there is an apparent need for specific skill training beyond that offered in the centers. The main guideline in such training should be corpsman employability rather than camp maintenance.

Other Projects and Issues

Given an adequate size central staff, and initial work on the program just outlined, it would be well to examine several additional issues which were mentioned frequently during the project.

1. The use of resident workers varies considerably from center to center, and while this is to be expected, the variance appears unreasonable. It is recommended that the pay, responsibilities, promotional opportunities, and requirements for resident workers be examined carefully, as a means of assuring fair treatment of these key personnel.
2. Because of his camp-wide responsibility, the counselor, who might be more accurately described as guidance director, needs supervisory status. It is recommended that careful consideration be given to establishing the counseling position at Deputy Director level, and placing the resident workers under his direct supervision.
3. Counseling as a profession has grown rapidly in recent years, and one of its growing concerns has been the use of partially trained or sub-professionals in positions where professional counselors should be employed. The use of sub-professionals is inevitable in the Job Corps. Therefore, it is recommended that immediate contact be made with APGA, and particularly the chairman of its professional preparation and standards committee and the president of the ACES Division, regarding their assistance and involvement in this area.

References

1. Job Corps Counseling Manual, PM 400-4.
2. Katz, Milton S., Memo Regarding Goals and Functions of Curriculum Development and Evaluation for Federal and State Operated Job Corps Conservation Centers, 8/23/65.
3. Loughary, John W., Counseling, A Growing Profession, APGA, 1965, p. 78-79.