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# RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION OFFICE REGARDING THE YOUTH ENTERING SERVICE TO AMERICA FOUNDATION

The Youth Service America Working Group On Public Policy

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**YOUTH  
SERVICE  
AMERICA**

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE  
PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION OFFICE  
REGARDING THE  
YOUTH ENTERING SERVICE TO AMERICA FOUNDATION**

Issue Paper Number One

From The Youth Service America  
Working Group On Public Policy

January 9, 1988

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## What is Youth Service?

Youth service today operates from an expanding base of well-organized programs utilizing the energy and idealism of young people to address significant community needs. This programmatic base currently includes 50 full-time state and local youth corps; 450 campus-based community service programs; more than 3,000 junior and senior high school community service programs; additional community-based programs; and federal civilian service programs including the Peace Corps, VISTA, and the Youth Conservation Corps.

Youth service today has a tripartite mission:

- \* to provide substantive and sustained service meeting widely-acknowledged community needs;
- \* to develop young people in ways that enhance their self-esteem, education, leadership, employability and sense of caring for others;
- \* to alter policies of agencies dealing with youth to view young people as community resources.

Youth service today involves in-school and out-of-school young people from all segments of our society. While only a fraction of young people are involved in current programs, the goal is to expand young peoples' opportunities to serve until the ethic of service becomes a regular part of growing up in America for all. These opportunities should begin early in life and be reinforced through the teenage and young adult years, including part-time and full-time civilian service opportunities as well as service in the armed forces. They should include both uncompensated service and such modestly compensated service as the state conservation corps and Peace Corps.

Youth service involves a substantial commitment of a young person's life to organized activity in a structured setting to improve the lives of others.

Youth service is about citizenship and seeks to bring together young people from different backgrounds for common purposes. It changes the way society views young people and how young people view their responsibilities to society.

Youth service is integral to education in a democracy and to realizing the full potential of human development. The ethic of service nurtures a sense of social responsibility and a belief that an individual can make a difference.

Youth service is a highly effective way to supplement formal schooling with structured, real-life experience that in turn enhances life skills, employability, self-esteem, and leadership.

### **What should be the Foundation's operating tenents?**

The primary function of the Youth Entering Service to America Foundation should be to mobilize and exercise the national leadership role of the Presidency to make youth service an integral part of fulfilling one's citizenship responsibilities in our society.

The YES to America Foundation should be focused on assisting ongoing efforts to develop the established base of workable programs and program models so that increasing numbers of young Americans are involved in community service from childhood through early adulthood, generation after generation. In pursuit of this goal, the foundation should:

- \* Utilize the national leadership role of the Presidency to advocate, promote, and honor youth service.
- \* Enlist the strengths and capabilities of existing youth service organizations to build upon current national, state, and local efforts to rapidly expand the number of opportunities for young people to serve.
- \* Promote a wide diversity of youth service, including:
  - school-based programs
  - community/city-based programs
  - campus-based programs
  - state-wide and federal programs
- \* Ensure that youth from all segments of society have access to part-time and full-time youth service programs.

- \* Ensure that substantive work is accomplished and that these accomplishments are reported to the public -- including conservation, housing rehabilitation, and such human services as education/tutoring, literacy, daycare, maintaining the quality of life of elderly citizens, etc.
- \* Encourage a variety of vehicles for service, including schools, city and county governments, states, non-profit organizations, public-private partnerships, and national and federal programs.
- \* Exercise its leadership by generating funds to enable other organizations in the youth service field to conduct technical assistance, research and evaluation, training for program operators, and information exchange.
- \* Encourage innovation, creation, and long-term sustainability of youth service at all levels.
- \* Utilize its funds to leverage additional private and public support for youth service, with governors and state governments, corporations, and foundations as full partners in this effort.
- \* And finally, the Foundation should support the development of existing and additional programs in local communities and states rather than operating its own federal programs.

## **Structural Considerations**

The Youth Entering Service to America Foundation should be an independent entity with a federal charter: a Trust of the United States chaired by the President with a prominent member of the other party, such as a former President or Vice-President, as Vice-Chairman.

The Foundation's board of directors should be bipartisan, broadly representative, and reflect the diversity of American society.

The Foundation's board should include two Senators (such as Senators Nancy Kassebaum and Bill Bradley) and two Members of the House of Representatives (one from each Party) who have a demonstrated record of interest in the establishment and expansion of youth service; a substantial representation of persons who are engaged in the leadership of youth

service programs, including youth themselves; governors, mayors, and legislators who will be expected to create and fund youth service programs; Americans whose lives demonstrate the value of service in building a better nation; and leaders of private corporations, labor unions, and foundations whose partnership is critical to the realization of the YES to America Foundation's objectives. Board members should have fixed terms.

The Foundation should have an active Advisory Council reflecting the major components of youth service both by types of sponsoring organizations and kinds of service being provided.

The Foundation should have a small staff and avoid creation of another federal bureaucracy. The staff should have knowledge of, and substantial experience with, development of the current network of youth service programs and initiatives.

The Foundation should seek to encourage each state to establish a broadly representative entity encouraging state-wide youth service.

These recommendations are respectfully submitted by:

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Todd Clark, Constitutional Rights Foundation

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