

# ACTION

September 30, 1980

# update...

*James Gee, President-ACRA  
Bart Crivella, Director-Equal Opportunity  
Mary King, Deputy Director-ACTION*



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## ACTION/PC Supports Minority Business by Increased Procurement

**“It is the policy of this administration to promote the development of minority business enterprise.”**

**---President Jimmy Carter**

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## **Bringing Minorities into the Economic Mainstream . . .**

ACTION/PC has increased its contracts with minority businesses by 80 percent in less than three years.

“ACTION/PC is second only to the State Department in increasing its procurement through minority firms,” says ACTION Deputy Director Mary King, “We deserve to be proud of that record. Although ACTION employees and Peace Corps staff tend to be highly attuned to the concerns of the socially and culturally disadvantaged, as well as to poverty communities, all our people deserve a pat on the back for their efforts to respond to the initiatives of the President.”

Fiscal year 1979 procurement from minority-owned firms tripled over FY 78, and at the end of FY 80, ACTION/PC exceeded its twelve-month goal of \$1.7 million in minority grants and contracts by one million dollars.

King, who serves on the Interagency Council for Minority Business Enterprise, explains, “This administration has taken minority business very seriously, both as a matter of substance based on the belief that to improve our nation’s economic future we should have more sensitivity to the minority business community, and because it is concerned with equity and fairness.”

The Council, made up of under-secretaries and deputy directors of 25 federal agencies and representatives of the White House and Office of Management and Budget, was charged by the President in 1978 to triple the amount of federal procurement from minority businesses. The objective is to provide equal opportunity for these firms to bring minorities into the economic mainstream.

Specifically, the Council’s major functions are to:

- coordinate federal activities in support of minority business development;
- promote increased federal participation in the development of minority businesses;
- develop and implement federal policy in support of the minority business development;
- ensure key individual points of contact within each agency for program support; and
- establish and oversee the operation of substantive action elements which address specific program areas.

Bart Crivella, head of the Equal Opportunity division of the Office of Compliance, who assists King in her work on the Council and ensures that ACTION/PC meets and increases minority procurement goals, says, “Typical of an 8(a)-minority-contract, is Peace Corps’ training contract with James A. Lowerie and Assoc. in Chicago. They provide language, cross-cultural and technical training to PCVs in Chile. And on the domestic side out of the ten audit contracts in each ACTION region, nine are with minority firms.”

In Washington, D.C. Associate Control Research and Analysis, Inc. (ACRA) a minority-owned firm, is working under a \$1.2 million ACTION/PC contract to provide logistical support, staff and technical assistance to the Peace Corps CAST training program.

James Gee, president of ACRA, says, “The relationship we have with Peace Corps and ACTION staff is most unusual from a contractor’s point of view.

“They have given us every opportunity to discuss problems and work out together how we could solve them. They listen to our suggestions and criticisms...it’s a mutually supportive exchange,” he adds.

Mary King emphasizes that, “the endeavor to bring economic parity to the minority business community is an on-going one. We will not let our successes slow us down... we will continue to increase our work with minority firms—especially women-owned businesses—in all parts of the agency.”

# AID Administrator Bennet: PC Helps Improve U.S. World Image

Compared to the situation that existed just a few years ago, United States relations with the Third World are "in pretty good shape," U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Douglas J. Bennet, Jr. told a staff gathering at Peace Corps headquarters September 10.

In a shirtsleeves session with about 100 Peace Corps staffers, Bennet credited the nation's record on human rights, and a foreign assistance program that has become more responsive to basic human needs, with polishing up the United States' image overseas.

But, he added, to be able to "press our advantage" means continuing our effort—and a "reaffirmation that the world's problems are manageable" if we are to "escape the trap of the 'Global 2000' Report" (the State Department's recent gloomy assessment which foresaw, given present trends, a world "more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically and more vulnerable to disruption.")

The AID Administrator said he has been "pushing hard" within his agency and the umbrella International Development Cooperation Agency, which

oversees U.S. development efforts abroad, for such an ongoing program. As Bennet sees it, this would include U.S. development assistance funded in increments of about \$1 billion a year (which represents 10 to 11 percent of present U.S. foreign aid) and challenging "other donors"—business, private organizations, etc.—to invest three or four times that amount.

Crucial to public support of such an effort, Bennet said, is an informed citizenry. He said that AID has a public information officer assigned the primary task of informing the public about the Third World.

Another important public education resource, Bennet added, is the growing number of men and women with a Peace Corps background. He said, "I get a big hand when I go around giving speeches by reminding Americans they have an asset that no other country has. Instead of a bunch of retired colonial officers, or international businessmen come home to settle, we've got almost 100,000 people who have been through the Peace Corps (staff or volunteer) experience" and who can share

(cont. page 8)



# VISTA Supplemental Monies Fund New Grants

The \$4 million in supplemental funds awarded VISTA last July has made it possible for additional projects across the country to receive new volunteers. Out of the supplemental monies, VISTA awarded \$451,000 in grants to a total of four projects in Regions III, IV and VI. Volunteers will work with agencies that deal with energy, social services, independent living, and community and economic development.

As of September 23, the following organizations received 15-month grants that include a three-month planning period:

Mississippi Institute for Small Towns, Jackson, \$134,000; New Mexico Senior Coalition (NMSC), Santa Fe, \$118,000; Council of Hispanic Organizations, Washington, D.C., \$83,000; and Department of Human Services (DHS), Washington, D.C., \$116,000.

In this article, we will highlight two of the new VISTA grants—DHS and NMSC.

## DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Volunteers with DHS will work with groups of low-income people in Washington, D.C. Program manager Darryl Saabs, says DHS will recruit and train 14 volunteers over the next three months in the use of local government benefits and services—food stamps, medicaid, aid-for-dependent children and energy assistance.

After training, the volunteers will work with low-income groups, informing them of the services they are entitled to and showing them how to apply for and utilize these services.

"Those individuals who work with the volunteers will hopefully inform other low-income people of how to apply for needed benefits," says Saabs. "So it should be a continuous and expanding process."

"About two-thirds of the people in D.C. who are entitled to special benefits don't use them," he

continues. "Or too often, people wait until a situation reaches crisis proportions, such as being evicted from their homes, before doing anything. The grant should help alleviate this situation."

The main criteria for the volunteers, according to Saabs, will be "sensitivity to and empathy with the people they are helping to help themselves."

## NEW MEXICO SENIOR COALITION

In Region VI, 26 elderly volunteers, many of them Spanish-speaking, will be recruited and trained by the New Mexico Senior Coalition (NMSC), an advocacy organization for senior citizens, concerned with independent living, energy conservation and consumer protection for low-income persons.

According to New Mexico State Program Director George Ellis, NMSC was formed nearly two years ago by a group of senior citizens who felt the need to be independent from any state organizations. "They are not dependent on the state for funding," he says.

The volunteers will work in locations all over the state, recruiting and mobilizing other seniors to work part-time with the handicapped-elderly in or out of nursing homes, and create an independent living program for them. They will also assist in performing energy surveys and developing energy saving and weatherization techniques.

"We particularly want to reach the rural elderly, many of who are not helped by statewide programs, and about half of whom are minorities," Ellis says.

He points out that there are few nursing homes in New Mexico because the family structure in that state is "an extended one in which members traditionally help each other. But the reality is that many elderly have nowhere to turn. Our volunteers will mobilize people, who in many ways will take the place of the family."



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## Dela Rosa Named Peace Corps Regional Director for Latin America

"I am concerned that so few Hispanic-American volunteers serve in the Peace Corps," says Edward Dela Rosa, 45, of Arlington, Va., who has been named Latin American regional director by Peace Corps Director Richard Celeste.

"We are broadening our horizons and looking at alternative ways to recruit Hispanic-Americans," says Dela Rosa, who oversees Peace Corps programs in 21 Central and South American and Caribbean countries. "Many potential Hispanic-American volunteers," he adds, "are unaware of the career opportunities created by Peace Corps service."

"One thing that excites me about Latin American programs," continues Dela Rosa, "is the opportunity to find one's roots. For Hispanic-Americans, public school systems often do not make one proud of one's ethnic ties. Two years' experience in Latin America," he explains, "can be very enriching for Hispanic volunteers. We learn of ongoing civilizations that existed long before colonists arrived and which are part of our heritage."

"In most Latin American countries," he notes, "Hispanic volunteers have no problem in language and easily adapt to the cultures."

Dela Rosa came to PC from the International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA), where he served one year as principal officer on policy and budgetary matters for the Overseas Private



Investment Corporation and the Organization of American States.

From 1971 to 1979, he worked with the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) as director of community liaison, implementing joint development programs between North and South America. Dela Rosa also served IAF as regional director for South America and for Central America.

From 1969 to 1971, Dela Rosa was VISTA's regional administrator in Austin, Texas. He also served as director of evaluation for VISTA at headquarters from 1967 to 1969, and as special assistant to the VISTA director from 1966 to 1967.

A native of Austin, Texas, Dela Rosa attended Austin High School and is a 1963 graduate of the University of Texas in Austin.

# PC Fellows, Valuable Management Resource

Getting qualified recently-returned Peace Corps volunteers into the agency's upper management levels is the goal of the Peace Corps Fellows program, which enters its third year in October.

The program puts the Fellows through a year's training in a cross-section of Peace Corps offices for an orientation to headquarters operations, followed by a 2½-year management assignment, usually as Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs) overseas.

The Fellows program "gave me a chance to see how all the pieces of the agency fit together," says Denise Conley, a former volunteer in the Philippines, who recently completed Fellows training and is now a health-sector specialist in the Office of Programming and Training Coordination. "I don't think anyone else in the agency gets that opportunity."

The Fellows determine their own training progression to a certain extent, reflecting what they see as their own strengths, weaknesses and interests. For example, 1980 Fellow Susan Caporaso, a former volunteer in Honduras, spent her first six weeks of training in Peace Corps' North Africa, Near East, Asia and Pacific Regional Office to get an overview of regional administration. She then spent another six weeks as a recruiter, a month in the agency's staff training office, and three weeks in the placement division. She is now finishing a three-month stint as Peace Corps/USAID liaison, promoting collaboration between the agencies' field projects, and is about to leave for three months as a trainer in Latin America. When that's over, Caporaso will be assigned an APCD job in a yet-to-be-determined Latin American country.

Caporaso feels one of the strengths of the Fellows program is that it "ensures involvement of newly-returned PCVs in a steering role in the agency." The recent returnees have "a concept of what's needed in the field that management needs to consider," she says. Ex-Fellow Conley shares this view of the value of Peace Corps' self-pollination. She is "amazed at the distance" between Washington staff and the volunteer in the field, a

distance she feels someone with the Fellow's dual perspective can help shrink.

Qualified PCVs about to leave service are nominated for Fellowships by their country directors on the basis of leadership qualities, adaptability and other factors. Each country may nominate one candidate for every 100 PCVs in service.

Although no quotas or restrictions are set, country directors are encouraged to nominate women and minority group members "This is an affirmative action program," says program director Nancy Graham. "At the APCD level we have relatively few minorities or women. The Fellows program is a good outreach device."

But the emphasis on minorities and women is "simply to increase the pool" of these candidates, Graham continues. "Once the nominations are made, everyone's on the same footing" when it comes to final selections.

Around 70 nominations are expected for the 1981 program; of these, seven will be finally chosen as Fellows.

Some country directors (CDs) reportedly have resisted accepting Fellows as APCDs once they have finished training--ironic, perhaps, since it is the CDs themselves who nominate their most promising volunteers for the program in the first place. Conley thinks it's the "90-day-wonder" syndrome -- "The CDs can't believe last year's volunteer can make a good APCD after only a year's training in Washington," she says.

Nevertheless, early returns from the field indicate high satisfaction on the part of both CDs and Fellows alike; any lingering doubts are likely to fade. And Peace Corps Director Richard F. Celeste calls the Fellows program "an excellent way to identify and develop the talent that exists among our volunteers. With it, we have the ideal blend of PCV commitment and sensitivity with top-notch managerial skills."

Though suffering somewhat from budgetary restraints--the seven Fellows to be trained during 1981 is down from nine in 1980--the Peace Corps Fellows program looks healthy. And it seems to be paying off for all concerned.

# Accountants in ACTION Provide Financial Counseling

"It's a unique program. It provides professional financial counseling to countless small, low-budgeted organizations – and its real strength lies in its volunteers," says Bill Sabatino, director of the Philadelphia branch of Accountants for the Public Interest (API) which provides free accounting services to non-profit organizations in 10 U.S. cities.

Sabatino was describing the Accountants in ACTION component of API. Accountants in ACTION is financed by a three-year \$77,000 grant from ACTION's Office of Policy and Planning.

Beginning in 1978, the grant enabled the agency to join forces with API in Providence, R.I. and Philadelphia, Pa. to expand accounting services to many agencies and individuals unable to pay for them. It also enabled API in those cities to finance a recruitment program for retired accountants.

"The project represents ACTION's first large scale effort to recruit volunteer accountants," says ACTION grant manager Leo Voytko. "It is also API's first organized attempt to recruit retired volunteers. With the program's help, both organizations have substantially increased the involvement of the private sector – through accounting firms and their employees – in the nitty-gritty of grassroots community problems and problem solving."

In September, 1979 the program was expanded to affiliates in Portland, Ore. and Miami, Fla.

Through Accountants in ACTION, volunteers primarily provide management and accounting assistance to small, non-profit organizations, but they also provide financial counseling to people living on fixed incomes and financial analyses of public issues. Under the program, approximately 300 active or retired accountants have provided services to over 300 agencies.

"The major idea is to help small organizations become more efficient and effective by providing them with the necessary training and technical assistance to help themselves," Voytko says.

The nature of agencies receiving help is diverse – legal service organizations, agencies assisting handicapped workers, community development groups, school programs for low-income children, art and theatrical groups, civil-and-women's right organizations, and groups dealing with solar energy alternatives – "the variety is endless," says Voytko, adding that the grant is financing a recruitment program in Providence, R.I. geared to student interns in the accounting field.

Sabatino says the ACTION grant has substantial-

ly enhanced API service in Philadelphia. "Before, we were able to operate only in inner-city Philadelphia," he says, "and we could only provide help to those organizations with an annual budget of \$60,000 or less."

"In addition to enabling us to actively recruit retired accountants, the grant has also allowed us to expand our services into Delaware and southern New Jersey," he says, "and to provide service to those agencies with annual budgets of up to \$100,000. This involves quite a few new agencies."

William Sullivan, 74, was one of the first retired volunteers under Accountants in ACTION, joining the Philadelphia affiliate in 1978. He worked with the United Labor Center for Unemployment Information, which provides information and research on unemployment benefits, setting up a bookkeeping system and instructing participants on its use.



"Bill provided some badly needed assistance," says Ann Schwartzman, the center's director. "He coordinated our bookkeeping and payroll systems. IRS owed us money from an overpayment. Bill discovered the problem and helped us deal with it."

Voytko stresses that the program is not an ongoing bookkeeping service, however. Rather, it involves intensive training to help small organizations become self-sufficient.

He expects to see the program expanded over the next several years, to affiliates in other cities. "And when the grant runs out, after three years of operation," he says, "we hope to see funding provided by local and federal agencies involved in community development."



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## KUDOS TO:

**GEORGE KREINER**, employee health coordinator for ACTION, and **JOE BASS**, Office of Policy and Planning, Youth Community Service Demonstration, who were honored at a Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) awards ceremony for "outstanding assistance in the public service." They received a plaque in recognition of the fact that they trained over 30 FMC staff in life-saving cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) techniques and assisted that staff in developing an in-house CPR program. Since February 1978, Bass and Kreiner along with other ACTION trainers, have taught CPR techniques to 275 federal employees, including over 190 ACTION staff.

**EVA MALCOLM**, administrative officer in DO Region V, who was recognized as ACTION Woman of the Year for that region. Malcolm received her award at the third annual Women's Day Conference in Chicago. The award, sponsored by the Federal Women's Program, honors women who have demonstrated excellence in relationships with and support of other employees.

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### **BENNET** (*from page 3*)

their experience with others.

The Peace Corps' impact has been felt strongly within Bennet's own agency: At last count, nearly 500 Peace Corps alumni were employed at AID. Commenting on the growing influx of former volunteers and staff, Bennet noted "there's not a single one of our 55 AID missions that hasn't been 'infiltrated' by at least one former Peace Corps person. That's been great for us...our capacity for dealing with the countries we're supposed to be helping is infinitely greater because of the Peace Corps people we've got."

Asked what he saw as Peace Corps' principal contribution in its 20-year-history, Bennet answered, "awakening."

"In every Peace Corps country I've seen, Peace

Corps is doing a fantastic job getting people alerted and participating--doing things for themselves, realizing things could be done that they didn't think possible," Bennet said. "The other part of the awakening is what (Peace Corps) has done for this country. Imagine what the U.S. would be like today if we didn't have that infusion of former volunteers into the American public--my God, it would be like the 1940s and 50s."

Bennet, 42, was sworn in as AID Administrator in August 1979, after serving as Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Affairs. Previously, he was the staff director of the Senate Budget Committee. In the 1960s he served in India under Ambassador Chester Bowles--along with the present Peace Corps Director, Richard F. Celeste.

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### **ACTION UPDATE**

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