

PEACH CORPS • VISTA
FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM
STUDENT CORPS OF RETIRED
EXECUTIVES • ACTIVE CORPS OF
EXECUTIVES • RETIRED SENIOR
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

ACTION

Region VI
1100 Commerce Street
Dallas, Texas 75202

March 6, 1972

Dr. Hector P. Garcia, Founder American GI Forum
1315 Bright St.
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

Dear Dr. Garcia:

Thank you for your letter of support for Mrs. Ninfa Rodriguez and Mrs. Beatrice Perez. As you are aware, VISTA, a component of the Federal Government, is a volunteer manpower program delegated to community sponsors such as the Nueces County Community Action Agency. The manpower is made up of two types of volunteers: the National Volunteer who is nationally recruited, usually from college campuses, and assigned to a sponsor upon request; and the Community Volunteer who is locally recruited by the sponsor to accomplish a specific task in the sponsor's program.

This office, as a branch of the government, has certain responsibilities in the employment of this volunteer manpower: we must screen, select, train, and support (financially and medically) this manpower. The sponsor must program and supervise this manpower. To the Community Volunteer, however, the sponsor has an additional responsibility. Both National and Community Volunteers enroll for one year and may re-enroll for a second if their performance merits it and they remain in good health. After their term(s) of service, National Volunteers go on to job or back to school; Community Volunteers remain in their home town. It would be tragic if the Community Volunteer after serving their people and country for two years, were allowed to join the ranks of the unemployed. Therefore, in programming for Community Volunteers the sponsor must develop the Community Volunteer's abilities and marketable skills within the term of service, whether that be one or two years. This is usually done in four ways: (1) having a meaningful job in which the performance naturally develops the individual; (2) encouraging the Community Volunteer to enroll in GED, vocational or college courses for a few hours each week; (3) providing in-service training to the Community Volunteer or making it possible to attend seminars or conferences; (4) helping the Community Volunteer find a job once his term of service is completed. It has been our experience that if the sponsor has accepted his responsibility to the Community Volunteer, the Community Volunteer is ready and capable to work with agencies such as CAP, Red Cross, SBA, Drug Abuse, Surplus Commodities, and most other social service programs and agencies.

It should now be apparent why we rarely let a Community Volunteer serve more than two years: by having a complete turnover every two years, other capable community people can have the privilege of joining VISTA and serving their community while improving their skills toward employment. We want to make sure that as many people as possible are given this opportunity to serve, learn, and become gainfully employed. We recognize that Mrs. Rodriguez and Mrs. Perez have done an exceptional job as VISTA Volunteers. During my visits to their projects I have seen that their skills have been developed to a point that they would make excellent employees with any of the agencies I mentioned above, and I would not hesitate to give them excellent references. They have served the sponsor well, the sponsor has kept its responsibilities to them, and now they are prepared to serve in another manner while two others take their places in VISTA, hopefully to go through the same process.

You may be pleased to know, however, that until new Community Volunteers can be recruited and trained, we are examining the possibility of extending Mrs. Rodriguez and Mrs. Perez' terms of service so that the continuity of the Corpus project can be preserved. Final approval will come from the National Office in Washington. If an extension proves possible, the project and the volunteers will be so notified.

Thank you again for your letter. It is gratifying to know that the Corpus project and its volunteers have the support of the community and its leaders. If you have other questions or need additional information, please feel free to call upon me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ernesto Ramos".

ERNESTO RAMOS
Program Officer