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DEVELOPMENT OF A
LEISURE-TIME PROGRAM
IN SMALL CITIES AND TOWNS

BY

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CONTENTS

	Page
Community planning for leisure-time activities	1
A method of initiating a community program	1
Sponsors	1
Obtaining the cooperation of local agencies	2
Recreation council	2
Planning the survey meeting	2
Gathering general information	2
Outlining the topics to be considered	2
Conducting the survey meeting	3
Graphic presentation of existing services	3
Appointment of a recreation council	6
Starting the program	6
Calling a meeting of the recreation council	6
Selecting a project	6
Enlisting the support of the general public	7
Standards for playgrounds	8
Expert leadership	8
Playground area	8
Playground supervision	9
Game courts and other playground facilities	9
Standards for other recreation facilities	9
Suggestions for further reading	11
National agencies concerned with recreation	13

Development of a Leisure-Time Program in Small Cities and Towns

COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES

Man is a doing creature. When he is released from the work he is compelled to do, he seeks amusements he can enjoy. Usually he does not put forth much effort to find pleasurable activities but accepts whatever is at hand, perhaps an amusement that is interesting his friends at the time. Because this is true, it is the responsibility of the thoughtful citizens of a community to see to it that opportunities for enjoyable, stimulating, and, at the same time, wholesome use of leisure are easily available for both children and adults.

For many years great interest has been shown in providing facilities for wholesome play for children. More recently this interest has been extended to leisure-time programs that include recreational, educational, and cultural activities for all members of the family. It is not only in the larger cities—where programs under trained leadership have been provided at playgrounds and community centers for the recreation of people of all ages—that this interest has found expression; in many towns and smaller centers intelligent cooperation has made it possible to enrich the leisure of the people through greater use of the leadership and facilities at hand.

In any city or town a number of different agencies or organizations will be found that are interested in the recreational needs of a particular group or, in some instances, of the city or town as a whole. These organizations represent a wide variety of social interests and include schools, churches, civic and community organizations, club groups of all types—especially those organized on a national basis—settlements, social groups, and special groups concerned primarily with the development of recreational activities and facilities. Any community plan must take into consideration the services and programs of these organizations in order that there will not be a duplication of work and that effort will be directed to the aspects of an adequate leisure-time program that have heretofore been most neglected.

A METHOD OF INITIATING A COMMUNITY PROGRAM

SPONSORS

It is difficult to obtain cooperation among a wide variety of groups and organizations unless a group of sponsors will assume responsibility for stimulating interest and for developing a sound plan to put this interest into

action. These sponsors must be willing to give time and thought to working out the procedure best adapted to the particular community.

OBTAINING THE COOPERATION OF LOCAL AGENCIES

It is very important that the sponsors obtain the cooperation of all agencies or organizations that are providing group recreation for children or young persons or that are interested in furthering opportunities for their cultural or educational interests. The success of the whole program will often depend on making the proper approach to the leaders or the appropriate persons in these organizations and tactfully explaining to them the significance of the plan. One carefully selected person from each agency should be invited to attend a general meeting held to survey the leisure-time activities and resources of the community. This person will come not to represent his agency in a formal way but to tell those at the meeting about the contributions his agency makes and the needs it has discovered. At this survey meeting a recreation council may be appointed and a definite organization formed.

RECREATION COUNCIL

Community planning has been undertaken in a number of localities by a recreation council that includes representatives from all the organizations actively working in this field. Such a council will have a many-sided approach to the problems and may be able to work out methods for coordinating the services and the use of the facilities provided by different organizations.

PLANNING THE SURVEY MEETING

GATHERING GENERAL INFORMATION

The survey meeting cannot be really effective unless the sponsors have carefully planned the program and have gathered together certain information that will be needed in making the survey. The number of school children, of young people, and of adults to be served will naturally affect the plans, and therefore such information should be obtained from the school census or other sources. It is important to know which areas in the community are in greatest need of recreational facilities. Juvenile-court, police, and school-attendance officers should be able to throw some interesting light on the special needs of boys and girls in particular areas. A map of the city or town, showing in different colors the areas of greatest concentration of children who must rely upon public facilities for their recreation, will give the group a clear picture of the problems that must be considered.

OUTLINING THE TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED

In order to obtain the greatest benefit from the survey meeting, each representative should be given time to prepare a report of all the leisure-time services and activities that his organization has undertaken or is

planning to undertake within the near future. It is desirable, therefore, that the sponsors send each representative an outline of the major points to be considered in the meeting. The following outline is suggested for this purpose.

As a representative of your organization at the meeting to survey the community's resources for leisure-time activities you will be asked to make a brief report on the leisure-time programs sponsored by your organization. In order that you may have the material in mind, the following list of questions has been prepared. The following age groupings will be used: Children 6 to 10 years, boys 11 to 16 years, girls 11 to 16 years, boys and girls 11 to 16 years, boys 17 to 25 years, girls 17 to 25 years, boys and girls 17 to 25 years, men, women, and whole family.

Social affairs.

How often are social affairs, such as parties, dances, picnics, held? In which age groups are those who attend? Who arranges the programs?

Games and sports.

What team games are played? Have you a gymnasium? In which age groups are those who play? Who comes to see the games? Have you facilities for other indoor and outdoor sports? If so, who uses them?

Music.

Have you an orchestra? A band? A glee club, chorus, or choir? Any other music groups? In which age groups are those who belong?

Drama.

Have you presented a play or pageant this year? Have you a dramatic club? How often are plays produced? Is there a stagecraft group? In which age groups are those who participate?

Crafts and hobbies.

Have you classes or clubs in handcraft, manual arts, or hobbies? In which age groups are those who belong?

Study groups.

Do you maintain discussion or study groups? What are the subjects and in which age groups are those who are served?

Clubs.

Do you maintain organized clubs having regular meetings and a definite program of activities, such as Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, 4-H clubs?

Facilities.

Have you buildings, specially equipped rooms such as gymnasiums, or other facilities for the use of groups with special interests? Are they used to capacity?

CONDUCTING THE SURVEY MEETING

GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF EXISTING SERVICES

The purpose of the survey meeting should be to present a general picture of the leisure-time needs of the community and of what is actually available in the way of services and facilities.

After making a statement concerning the purpose of the meeting and appointing a temporary secretary, the chairman or leader should present briefly the general information gathered by the sponsors. This may be followed by a general discussion. It is sometimes advisable to establish the limits of the area to be included in the program. The area may be bounded by the legal limits of the city or town or it may be a larger area that includes a rural district. It may be desirable to review rapidly the area's natural resources for recreation, such as good places for swimming, fishing, or winter sports, and to make a list of the available commercial amusements and consider their value for children and young persons. The next step is to obtain from the group a list of the outstanding contributions that the various agencies and organizations are making.

If this first meeting is to be effective, there must be presented a clear and vivid picture of the resources of the community and the types of service that are completely lacking or that need to be developed. Since it is difficult to keep clearly in mind and to remember in detail a number of verbal reports of many different organizations, it has been found extremely useful to place before the group a diagram on which may be recorded, at the time they are reported, the types of service given and the age groups of the people served. Such a diagram can be drawn on a blackboard or on paper, and each subdivision should be large enough for several entries that give the initials or other identifying symbol of the organization providing the services recorded in that subdivision.

A simple diagram of this type is shown on page 4. Across the top appear all the items included in the outline sent to the representatives and at the side are entered the age groups and the sex of the persons served. When a representative reports that certain activities or facilities are available, the initials of that agency should be placed in the proper space.

The value of the information obtained will depend to a great extent on the amount of pertinent discussion that can be stimulated. Significant points should be brought out; such as, whether older boys and girls have a voice in arranging their own programs; whether social events are held regularly and frequently or once or twice a year; whether all children or only a few gifted ones are encouraged to participate in certain events; whether there are membership fees and dues or paid admissions.

After each agency has made a report, one or two very definite and immediate needs probably will stand out. For instance, it may seem that the group that needs the most attention is the one composed of people 17 to 25 years of age. What agencies serve this group? It may have been observed that no provision has been made for creative activities for them and that they have very few organizations. The commercial amusements that attract them may be considered unsuitable. Where do the boys and girls go for entertainment? What would be their natural meeting places? The next step is to discuss what is to be done. Can the programs of the existing agencies be enriched to serve this group adequately? How can

the young people be drawn in? If no agency is available, should a recreation center be opened? How can it be financed and manned? How can leaders be trained? By what methods can commercial amusements be controlled? Such a discussion should show that there is a definite need and that it can be met if the group is willing to assume the responsibility.

APPOINTMENT OF A RECREATION COUNCIL

Before the survey meeting is adjourned, it may be desirable to form a definite organization—a recreation council composed of at least one active representative appointed by each agency. A chairman and an executive committee of four or five members should be elected or appointed, in order that meetings may be called and responsibilities delegated. At least two committees should be created, one to look into the possibilities of developing new projects, and one to examine the existing programs for opportunities to dovetail leadership and facilities or to make greater use of them.

STARTING THE PROGRAM

CALLING A MEETING OF THE RECREATION COUNCIL

In order to benefit from the enthusiasm and interest that usually attend the launching of a new program, it is desirable for the permanent chairman to call the recreation council together for a meeting as soon as possible, preferably not more than a week after the survey meeting was held. By this time a number of persons may have definite and clear ideas about projects to be undertaken, and it should be possible after discussion to decide upon some concrete project on which work can be started at once.

SELECTING A PROJECT

It may be well to advise against undertaking a more ambitious service than the community is ready to support. Because financial support is usually difficult to obtain and yet seems to be so necessary to the immediate growth of a program, there is danger of forgetting that it is leadership, not money, that it is the interest that goes on year after year, not this year's budget, which makes the program secure. Therefore, one project at a time successfully brought to full efficiency and used as a stepping stone to the next undertaking may mean slow growth, but it nevertheless is most likely to mean permanent growth.

The following projects are suggested for consideration:

1. Establishing social and study clubs for older boys and girls in the schools and in churches.
2. Organizing troops of Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, and similar organizations, for the group 10 to 16 years of age.
3. Developing a hobby or craft club for adolescents and adults.
4. Securing volunteer (or paid, if possible) play leaders for an after-school playground. Young men and women home from college

- and normal school will be able to give satisfactory service here and will find this an opportunity for enriching their own lives.
5. Arranging training institutes led by Scout, school, or church recreation specialists for volunteer leaders in all agencies.
 6. Putting into condition a playground, indoor center, or winter-sports area.
 7. Making plans for greater use of the school plant, obtaining especially the cooperation of the teachers of physical education, arts, and music.
 8. Stimulating public agencies to greater efficiency by help and active interest.
 9. Organizing a league or tournament in an indoor or outdoor sport, such as chess or horseshoe pitching.
 10. Arranging community celebrations of holidays, organizing a community chorus, drama groups, and so forth.
 11. Encouraging home-play programs. This can be done through backyard-playground contests, publishing plans for home-picnic grounds, through exhibits and news stories on home-made games, puppets, books, and so forth.

The frequency of subsequent meetings must depend on the vigor of the leadership and the scope of the program undertaken by the recreation council. If long-time planning is undertaken, the need for initiating new projects and reports on the progress of the plan will necessitate regular and possibly frequent meetings of the council and its committees.

ENLISTING THE SUPPORT OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The vigor of the program will be greatly enhanced by the understanding, interest, and support of the general public. Almost any achievement is possible if the community is really interested, and every effort should be made to see that the facts, the needs, the plans, and the hopes in regard to a recreation program are brought in an effective way to all community groups. This is especially important when the council begins to seek for more adequate public provision for recreation. Such provision should be a definite aim since public support through taxes not only lends stability to the program but also places the responsibility for its continuance on all the citizens. This is not such a radical departure as it may seem, because community provision of leisure-time activities is a logical extension of the public-school system of education. To insist upon the education of our children during the day and to offer evening classes to adults who wish to continue their education is considered a civic duty. To supply opportunities for education and recreation activities of every wholesome kind to meet the need for creative self-expression as well as for sport and social intercourse is also a matter of civic concern. In planning for the future growth of its program, the recreation council may well look forward to placing a major part of its responsibility in the hands of well-trained, tax-

paid public officials. However, a public recreation program will always be strengthened by the interest of an active group of citizens.

STANDARDS FOR PLAYGROUNDS

Communities vary greatly in their composition and needs. There may be greater need for play space, special recreation areas, equipment, and leadership in the crowded neighborhoods of large cities than in smaller cities or towns, but all types of communities need wholesome group activities and opportunities for the development of a wide variety of leisure-time activities, especially those of interest to young persons.

In order to assist communities in measuring the adequacy of the provision that has been made for recreation, a few standards have been assembled from published statements of the National Recreation Association, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and of other recreation authorities. These standards were developed through studies of the use of resources actually available in a number of cities and therefore apply especially to urban areas. It should be noted also that the standards outlined are those applicable to facilities which should be provided from public funds.

EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Since the leisure-time program should extend through the entire year, a well-trained man or woman should give full time to planning and developing a rounded, well-adapted program for children and adults. The employment of such a person on full time through an appropriation from public funds should be possible in cities of 10,000 or more population. In smaller communities supervision of the recreation program can be made one of the duties of a person in charge of the extra curricular classes of the schools.

The year-round worker in charge of the recreation program usually is called the superintendent of recreation. As the program develops it is frequently found necessary to employ specialists in such activities as music, drama, crafts, and sports.

PLAYGROUND AREA

At least 3 acres of land is needed for a satisfactory playground for children. To be adequate the playground must have a shelter house for boys and one for girls and space for team games and other active play. Such an area can serve four or five hundred children at a time if the program is skillfully organized. Even if the child population is less than this, the space should not be greatly reduced. If the playground is adjacent to a school building in which shelter-house facilities are available, a smaller area will serve.

Children up to 12 or 13 years of age will not generally go more than a quarter of a mile to a playground. This should be considered in selecting

sites. Older boys and girls will go a mile or more to an athletic field, but they usually prefer to play closer home even though the facilities may be less satisfactory.

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION

At least one play leader is necessary at each playground during the hours that it is in use. If a choice must be made between a play leader and equipment, choose the leader, for a trained worker produces a program even if the playground area is small and few supplies are available.

Volunteers to assist during periods of intensive use or to present special work can frequently be obtained through clubs and other organizations.

GAME COURTS AND OTHER PLAYGROUND FACILITIES

A playground for children, frequently the first development in a recreation program for the community, should include the following:

MINIMUM EQUIPMENT

Slide	Drinking fountain	Volley-ball court
Swings	First-aid kit	Shelter houses (if a school building is not available)
Sandbox	Softball field	

For a neighborhood playground for persons of varied ages and interests, the equipment should include that listed above for a children's playground and in addition several of the following types of game courts and other playground facilities:

GAME COURTS

Basketball	Bowling green	Running track
Handball	Archery	Jumping pit
Horseshoe	Clock golf	Field hockey
Tennis	Croquet	Ball field (to be used for baseball, football, and soccer)
Paddle tennis	Shuffleboard	

OTHER PLAYGROUND FACILITIES

Wading pool	Outdoor theater	Winter-sports facilities:
Bleachers	Outdoor fireplace	Ski jump
Stadium (with lockers, showers, etc.)	Tables and benches for picnics	Toboggan slide
	Bandstand	Sled slide
		Skating rink

STANDARDS FOR OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES

There should be at least one baseball field to each 5,000 population and at least one tennis court to each 2,000 population. An athletic field may include any combination of the following facilities:

Regulation baseball diamond ¹	Regulation football field
Running track	Volley-ball court
Jumping pit	Hockey field
Tennis court	Field house

¹ This field, when not being used for baseball, may be used for football or soccer.

Swimming pools and beaches should be large enough to care for 10 percent of the population in 1 day. About 150 square feet of beach is required for each person. If the bathing beach has an average width of 150 feet, this would mean one linear foot of waterfront for each person using the beach.

The American Library Association recommends an annual expenditure of \$1 per capita as a minimum for good library service. A community of at least 4,000 population is necessary to support a library on this basis.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

MAKING A SURVEY

- ***The Survey as a Starting Point.** Youth: How Communities Can Help, pp. 14-17, 69. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936, No. 18-I. Washington, 1936. 10 cents.
- Community Organization of Parent Education.** National Council of Parent Education, 60 East Forty-second Street, New York, 1936. 15 pp. Single copies, 20 cents; 10 or more copies, 15 cents a copy.
- Suggestions for a Recreation Survey.** National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, 1932. Mimeographed. 13 pp. 25 cents.
- How to Start a Community Recreation Program.** National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1201 Sixteenth Street NW., Washington, 1932. 16 pp. 5 cents.
- ***Youth: Community Surveys.** U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936, No. 18-VI. Washington, 1936, 97 pp. 15 cents.

WIDER USE OF SCHOOLS

- ***Boston's Use of Its Schools.** Youth: How Communities Can Help, pp. 54-55. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936, No. 18-I. Washington, 1936. 10 cents.
- The New Leisure Challenges the Schools,** by Eugene T. Lies. National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, 1933. 326 pp. Paper, \$1.50; cloth, \$2.
- ***Extended Use of School Buildings,** by Eleanor T. Glueck. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1927, No. 5. Washington, 1927. 80 pp. 10 cents.

LIBRARY

- Public Library Service to "Young Adults",** by Alice Louise Le Fevre. Library Journal (published at Nineteenth and Federal Streets, Camden, N. J.), vol. 61, no. 15 (Sept. 1, 1936), pp. 623-626. 25 cents.
- ***School and County Library Cooperation.** Edited by Edith A. Lathrop. U. S. Office of Education, Pamphlet No. 11. Washington, 1930. 43 pp., illus. 10 cents.
- ***Statistics of Public, Society, and School Libraries, 1929.** U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1930, No. 37. Washington, 1930. 365 pp. 50 cents.
- ***Rural Libraries.** U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1559. Washington, 1928. 50 pp. 10 cents. Single copies free from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.
- The Superintendent Makes a Discovery; the answer to the rural school reading problem,** by Lucile F. Fargo. American Library Association, 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 1931. 32 pp. Free.

BUILDING A PLAYGROUND

- Home Playground and Indoor Playroom.** National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, 1937. 9 pp. 20 cents.
- Home-Made Play Apparatus.** National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, 1929. 15 pp. 25 cents.
- ***Housing and Equipping the Washington Child Research Center,** by Mary Dabney Davis and Christine Heinig. U. S. Office of Education, Pamphlet No. 13. Washington, 1930. 24 pp. 5 cents.
- Play Areas, Their Design and Equipment.** Edited by George D. Butler. A. S. Barnes & Co., New York, 1928. 206 pp. \$3.
- ***Home Play and Play Equipment for the Preschool Child.** U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 238. Washington, 1937. 20 pp. 10 cents. Single copies free from the Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.

*For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., to whom the order and remittance should be sent directly.

PLAYGROUND PROGRAMS

***Handbook for Recreation Leaders**, by Ella Gardner. U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 231. Washington, 1936. 121 pp. 15 cents. Single copies free from the Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.

Playgrounds—Their Administration and Operation. Edited by George D. Butler. A. S. Barnes & Co. (for the National Recreation Association), New York, 1936. 402 pp. \$3.

Conduct of Playgrounds. National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, 1936. 48 pp. 25 cents.

Play Streets and Their Use for Recreational Programs, by Edward V. Norton, A. S. Barnes & Co., New York, 1937. 77 pp. \$1.

The Organization and Administration of Playgrounds and Recreation, by Jay B. Nash. A. S. Barnes & Co., New York, 1927. 547 pp. \$3.

PROGRAMS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Youth Serves the Community, by Paul R. Hanna and others. D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1936. 303 pp. \$2.

Partners in Play; recreation for young men and women together, by Mary J. Breen. National Recreational Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, 1934. 130 pp. \$1.

Mobilizing Unemployed Rural Young People for Growth Through Constructive Programs of Study and Activity. Southern Woman's Educational Alliance, 401 Grace-American Building, Richmond, Va., 1933. Mimeographed. 20 pp. 15 cents.

WHAT COMMUNITIES ARE DOING

***Youth: How Communities Can Help**. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936, No. 18-I. Washington, 1936. 77 pp. 10 cents.

***Youth: Leisure for Living**, by Katherine Glover. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936, No. 18-II. Washington, 1936. 126 pp. 15 cents.

The Arts Workshop of Rural America; a study of the rural arts program of the agricultural extension service, by Marjorie Patten. Columbia University Press, New York, 1937. 202 pp. \$1.50.

The United States Works Progress Administration, Recreation Division, 1734 New York Avenue NW., Washington, D. C., has a series of mimeographed bulletins which contain suggestions on various phases of community cooperation for leisure, the relationship of health and recreation activities, and the training of recreation leaders. A list of subjects and copies of the bulletins are available free on request.

VOCATIONAL PREPARATION AND GUIDANCE

Sources for Material on Vocational-Guidance Organizations. U. S. Children's Bureau, Washington, 1936. Mimeographed. 4 pp. Free.

***Youth: Education for Those Out of School**, by H. B. Swanson. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936, No. 18-III. Washington, 1936. 76 pp. 10 cents.

***Youth: Vocational Guidance for Those Out of School**, by Harry D. Kitson. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936, No. 18-IV. Washington, 1936. 81 pp. 10 cents.

***Youth: Finding Jobs**, by D. L. Harley. U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1936 No. 18-V. Washington, 1936. 59 pp. 10 cents.

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF RECREATION

Leisure and Recreation; a study of leisure and recreation in their sociological aspects, by Martin H. Neumeyer and Esther S. Neumeyer. A. S. Barnes & Co., New York, 1936. 405 pp. \$3.

The Theory of Play, by Elmer D. Mitchell and Bernard S. Mason. A. S. Barnes & Co., New York, 1934. 547 pp. \$2.80.

Education of the Whole Man, by L. P. Jacks. Harper & Bros., New York, 1931. 155 pp. \$1.75.

* For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., to whom the order and remittance should be sent directly.

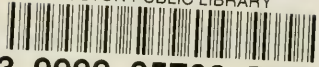
NATIONAL AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH RECREATION

- American Library Association, 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.
- **Boys' Clubs of America, Inc., 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- **Boy Scouts of America, 2 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- **Camp Fire Girls, Inc., 41 Union Square, New York, N. Y.
- Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.
- **Cooperative Recreation Service, Box 333, Delaware, Ohio.
- **Girl Scouts, Inc., 14 West Forty-ninth Street, New York, N. Y.
- **National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- National Council of Catholic Women, National Youth Committee, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue NW., Washington, D. C.
- **National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street NW., Washington, D. C.
- **National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- Southern Woman's Educational Alliance, 401 Grace-American Building, Richmond, Va.
- **U. S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, Washington, D. C.
- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Resettlement Administration, Division of Special Skills, Washington, D. C.
- U. S. Works Progress Administration, National Youth Administration, Projects Division 1340 G Street NW., Washington, D. C.
- **U. S. Works Progress Administration, Recreation Division, 1734 New York Avenue NW., Washington, D. C.

**This organization arranges institutes for the training of recreation leaders. Sometimes community groups may obtain the services of one of the field consultants of this organization. The extension division of State colleges of agriculture frequently have workers who conduct community surveys and leader-training institutes.



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