

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

PART I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

1. Objectives

The purpose of Federal assistance to community action programs is to help urban and rural communities to mobilize their own resources to combat poverty. The objective of every community action program is to effect a permanent increase in the capacity of individuals, groups, and communities afflicted by poverty to deal effectively and on their own initiative with their social and economic problems.

2. Operation

Community action programs are conducted by local "community action agencies." These are normally either public or private non-profit agencies organized under local initiative on a city, county, or multicounty basis. The community action agency applies for grants (generally on a 90-10 matching formula) through one of seven OEO regional offices. The grants can be approved at the regional offices up to a certain amount for each type of community action activity—the highest amount being \$500,000 for conduct and administration. Larger grants are reviewed at the regional level and then sent to OEO headquarters for approval by the Director.

Additional information on the operation of the community action program is included in volumes I and II of the Community Action Program Guide.

3. History

The community action program began operating in November 1964 when the first grant was made under the program to the Atlanta-Fulton County Economic Opportunity Authority for development and administration of a program providing for neighborhood service centers and a summer school program. At the end of fiscal year 1965, grants had been made to 220 community action agencies throughout the country for conduct and administration of local programs. In addition, more than 200 other communities had received program development grants and were engaged in preliminary studies prior to submission of requests for grants to carry out local programs. In the summer of 1965 more than half a million children received preschool training in some 11,000 centers throughout the country under Operation Headstart.

4. Level of operations. (See table 3.)

Program: Community action program.

Department or agency, and office or bureau: Office of Economic Opportunity;
Office of Research, Plans, Programs, and Evaluation.