

designed to provide recreation opportunities within easy reach of home, reduce the effects of congestion and urban sprawl, and thereby help create a more livable, attractive environment favorable to human development.

2. Operation

The program provides eligible local public bodies with up to 50 percent of the cost of (a) acquiring undeveloped or predominantly undeveloped land having value for park, recreation, scenic, or historic purposes, (b) acquiring and clearing developed land in built-up portions of the city to create small parks, if open space needs cannot be met by undeveloped land, (c) developing lands acquired with grant assistance, with landscaping, sanitary facilities, minor recreation facilities, and small shelters. Federal aid may be used also for relocation assistance payments authorized for individuals, families, and businesses displaced by the purchase of land with grant assistance.

All projects assisted under the program must meet two basic planning requirements: (a) There must exist adequate comprehensive planning for the urban area, and (b) there must exist, consistent with the comprehensive planning, an adequate open-space acquisition and development program for the urban area.

Applications are processed in the HUD regional offices and approved by the Urban Renewal Commissioner.

A program of studies and technical assistance is also authorized under title VII.

3. History

The program was authorized by title VII of the Housing Act of 1961 and amended by title IX of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, which increased the level of grant assistance and extended program assistance to create small parks in built-up areas.

Since the program was initiated in 1961, up until December 1965, it had helped communities in 37 States acquire over 145,000 acres of scarce urban open-space land by means of 405 grants totaling over \$46 million. Most of the lands acquired have been in the developing fringes of the large, fast-growing, metropolitan centers of the east and west coasts, and the North Central United States. And 50 inter-governmental agreements have been signed by hundreds of local governments agreeing formally to coordinate open-space planning and acquisition on a metropolitan scale.

4. Level of operations. (See table 1.)

Program: Open-space land program.

Department or agency, and office or bureau: Department of Housing and Urban Development; Office of Urban Neighborhood Services [formerly in Urban Renewal Administration].