

It should be noted that, in addition to provisions which directly prescribe administrative standards, the bill includes a variety of features which should help in eliminating red tape, bolstering administrative resources, particularly in rural areas, or otherwise facilitating greater efficiency in operations. Some of these are described below in connection with amendments relating to the delineation of program purposes, State participation, increased private involvement, and improved coordination.

3. *A clearer delineation of specific program objectives.*—For all its apparent generality, the Economic Opportunity Act is in fact a complex enactment establishing a number of major programs which are themselves complex—complex in what they seek to do and in the number and variety of problems with which they must deal. There has been—inevitably—debate over the precise paths these programs should follow. This is not undesirable to the extent it involves shaping a program to the realities of what *can* be done as opposed to theoretical and untested notions of what *should* be done. But unnecessary debate can confuse needlessly, impair effectiveness, result in undue delays and contribute to a kind of inefficiency which defies even the best organization chart.

A clearer spelling out of purposes can help minimize this kind of problem. As in the case of improved administration, the problem of program purpose is probably most obvious in the case of community action. For a good local community action program must involve not just one but a number of essential elements; it cannot be all this or that; it must maintain a balance. This is a characteristic easily lost sight of by people seeking, not unnaturally, easy or simple—and sometimes flatly inconsistent—solutions to very complicated problems. One of the objectives of the amendments is to make this characteristic—the need for balance—explicit in the law and, by so doing, to help local agencies to develop programs that will reflect with increasing precision all that the community action concept requires.¹¹

But the spelling out or refinement of purposes or basic program standards is not confined to the community action provisions of the bill. Many parts of the amendments, including for example Job Corps provisions specifying more precisely the group to be served and establishing criteria and objectives for center programs and center community relations,¹² would be similarly characterized. They speak to and are designed to reflect programs which have now moved away from initial experimentation and are acquiring a structure which requires more attention to securing the maximum results from established policies than to what those policies should be.

4. *A greater emphasis on coordination as a means of assisting State and local agencies to overcome specific, practical barriers to more efficient operation.*—The better coordination of all anti-poverty programs has been a basic objective of the Economic Opportunity Act. It is, however, probably too easy to view coordination as something which requires only a few, simple decisions by one or more Federal officials from which all kinds of good and desirable things follow with little additional effort. In practice, coordination is much more apt to involve continuing attention to a lot of hard details, generally uninteresting in themselves, but cumulatively capable of creating real barriers to efficient and cooperative efforts. These barriers are sometimes best seen—as their consequences may be most keenly felt—not by Federal agencies but by people at the State and local level who have ultimate responsibility for translating Federal laws and regulations into measurable and meaningful results.

The coordination and information center provisions of the bill are designed to give greater emphasis to a pragmatic approach that focuses upon the hard, if sometimes grimy, details, and upon the operating problems encountered by State and local agencies in trying to do things a little more effectively and efficiently in the midst of a complicated network of laws, rules, conditions, guidelines and instructions.¹³

In addition—

(a) The Work-training provisions of the bill are designed to make it easier for localities to construct programs that pull together different authorities now scattered in different parts of the Act, without having to secure separate grants or contracts covering the different activities which a project fully responsive to local needs and opportunities may require.¹⁴

¹¹ New title II (sec. 103 of the bill), sec. 201; also, sec. 212(b) of that title.

¹² New title I-A (sec. 101 of the bill), secs. 103, 105, 108(a) and 111.

¹³ New title VI-B (sec. 105(e) of the bill).

¹⁴ New title I-B (sec. 102 of the bill), sec. 122.