

of involvement. Usually each center has an information service. And then finally, the very important ingredient or function of training, both inservice training of personnel as well as the development of specific training programs that might be needed by those who are seeking the services of the center. These we call core services. These are funded as a basic part of any neighborhood center for which funding may be sought.

In addition, the center usually provides a comprehensive range of component services to residents. Many of the services are provided through referral to existing services. Where these services do not exist in a community, particularly in a rural or small urban area, where these services do not exist or are not presently available, the center itself provides the services.

These may include manpower training services, legal services, health services, a variety of social services, housing, homemaking services, and consumer counseling services. Consumer counseling service provide the poor with an awareness and understanding of how their dollars may be stretched and how they may protect themselves against unfair consumer sales practices or consumer debtor practices.

Adult literacy and child development services may also be provided. In many centers these services are either housed in a facility or under the direction of the center maybe outstationed in an ancillary facility in close proximity to the center itself. And if there is a legitimate need, that need is met by the center and not postponed, delayed, or excused if it all can be provided.

The center's role is to relate to a person's total needs at one place or at least at places which are in convenient proximity to the point of intake and referral. The center is to bring to bear a coordinated system of high-quality human development services for the whole person or family in the same manner that the Department of Defense uses a weapons system approach to its problems.

Another salient feature of the centers is the opportunity for neighborhood residents to work together as a community to identify and act on common problems and needs.

In an earlier presentation we pointed out one of the areas that the poor or their representatives are involved in is the resident advisory council. This is their first point of volunteer, noncompensated participation in community development. Some 30,000 are serving on advisory boards throughout the community action agencies and many of them in connection with the neighborhood center programs that have been generated in their communities.

The residents are encouraged to participate in the development and operation of the neighborhood center system through a board representing the residents in the neighborhood area.

Through such participation the poor develop competence as a community and also assure that the neighborhood center program is relevant to their needs.

The last, but probably the most significant, characteristic of the center is its capacity to serve as a center for self-help. Centers train and employ the poor from the neighborhood to carry out the functions of the center program. We are learning that for many the center provides a takeoff point in that it provides first-time employment in career development under professional guidance.