

According to a senior CAC official, there has been controversy over the matching funds from the Community Chest agencies. A school official pointed out, however, that the agencies had hitherto been able to make up its 10 percent largely from services. "The new 20 percent requirement," he said, "will be a real problem to some of the voluntary agencies, particularly those that have no financial resources except the Community Chest. The Chest hasn't committed itself to providing funds for the local share. Some private agencies will be unable to provide the necessary matching funds and will have to close their CAC projects."

The increase in the matching contribution hit the Cincinnati Board of Education at a bad time. As a labor leader explained: "The matching contribution has become a bone of contention in the Board since defeat of the special tax levy. The Board claims it was putting up its share in cash and must withdraw its support in order to trim its budget." The respondent personally disagreed. "I feel that this is largely untrue—that the School Board's contribution has been largely in kind. In any case the community can certainly do more."

There is sharp disagreement among the respondents as to how much the city of Cincinnati had done to make up the local contribution. A CAC official described the city's share as a "pittance" and a former Congressman declared that "local government had put no cash into the matching fund." A newspaper reporter went into more detail. The city or county put up no money "except for the Citizens Commission on Youth, which uses city money for the dropout portion of the Neighborhood Youth Corps."

A far different picture of the situation was given by an elected member of the city government. He reported that there had been very stormy discussions of the local contribution. "I feel strongly that the city should not give CAP unrestricted funds to use as they judge best. I believe that too much is spent on the Neighborhood Centers and not enough on the service programs. As a result I initiated long discussions in the City Council on the subject. Until this year the Council had voted the 10 percent. This year OEO funds were cut so some programs will have to be reduced . . . It is clear that OEO is asking the very people it has been criticizing—the Welfare Department, Board of Health and so forth—to pick up the OEO program."

(CAC officials report that Clermont County had been generous in contributing space and services—utilities, auditing, disbursement. The County also paid cash for alterations to the health clinics, while doctors provide medical services for the in-kind contribution to the clinic project. It has not yet proved necessary to figure in the time of volunteers to make up the required local contribution.)

PROGRAM ANALYSIS

Neighborhood centers and services

The Neighborhood Centers and Services Program is clearly regarded by the respondents as the heart of the Community Action Program in Cincinnati. Some three-fourths of the community leaders, more than endorsed any other project, listed it among the most valuable CAC programs. Its support was broad: it simultaneously drew praise from all the businessmen and all the civil rights leaders interviewed. Yet, at the same time, the neighborhood programs drew some of the most sharply critical comments.

To a senior CAC official, the Neighborhood Centers and Services "exemplify the bases of community action"—the decentralization of services into the target neighborhoods and the involvement of the poor themselves. "Lasting change in the poor depends on their learning to help themselves," he said. "To do this they must organize and must improve their ability to communicate with each other and with other groups in the community." The programs started in each target area by the Neighborhood Centers help the people to do both. "People can't learn to organize and communicate in the abstract," he declared, "they must do it through a concrete program."

Besides encouraging the target area residents to organize into meaningful patterns that enable them to help themselves, he said, the Centers provide a vital link between the people who need help and the resources that can provide it. At the same time, the neighborhood programs themselves provide major services missing in urban poverty areas.

(There was no Neighborhood Centers program in Clermont County at the time the survey was made.)