

3110 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

The senior CAC staff member most intimately concerned with the Clermont programs lists two of them as among the most effective: the CAC office itself and the Dental and Well-Child Clinics. Because none of the community leaders reached by this study came from the Clermont area, the comments that follow are entirely from the staff respondent.

1. *The Clermont Office of the Community Action Commission.*—The CAC office in Clermont is described as essentially a catalyst for bringing people together to work on the problems of this depressed rural area—"people come to us for coordination on joint projects—getting them started." The CAC office tries to build local leadership—"a slow job"—while working for the simultaneous social and physical development of the area—"you can't go ahead on a basis of just concrete and bricks and steel."

Examples of activities in this role include:

- A County Improvement Corporation to finance new industry and develop industrial parks;
- An Industrial Development Commission that initiates a variety of other programs;
- Planning for a Metropolitan Housing Authority;
- An Adult Education Council;
- A Community Attitude Commission, concerned with such improvements as clean-up campaigns;
- A Recreation Committee.

"Previously there was no attempt to unify the County through joint projects and there was distrust of neighboring Hamilton County (Cincinnati). There was no attempt at industrial development."

CAC activity led the Clermont County social service agencies to expand their efforts and join in providing information about the social services available, as well as in setting up a Volunteer Service Bureau to find people willing to give their services to social welfare programs.

There has been a marked decrease in Clermont County's welfare budget, for which CAC activity may be partly responsible.

CAC activities should not be expanded in Clermont at this time: "We are pushing as hard as we can—if we do any more we'll antagonize people."

The programs are not yet strong enough to be carried out by local resources. If CAC activities were cut "the situation would in many cases slide back to what it was before." Adult Education programs and Clermont Industrial Development activities, for example, would stop. A proposed new hospital for the County would be delayed in getting off the ground. On the other hand, housing plans for the County would continue.

No alternative sponsor, local or Federal, is seen for the Community Action program, should OEO bow out.

2. *The Clermont County Health Clinics: Dental and Well-Child.*—The Clermont clinics were established only over the opposition of the local Health Commission. Aid was received from housing and other officials in setting them up. Before these clinics were established there were no health services for poor people in Clermont County.

Most of the people who come to the clinics have never seen a doctor or a dentist—90 per cent of the children have serious dental problems. In six weeks the clinics uncovered 69 different kinds of health problems, from tuberculosis to eye tumors.

The clinics start children off in life with a strong foundation of good health—important to their ability to learn in school, their future contribution to society, and their personal happiness.

The clinics have no direct impact on local government, since they do not serve young people on welfare, who are covered by Title 19 of Medicare. The clinics do, however, work closely with the social agencies, with cross-referrals. The result is better identification of the poor who need help. So far there has been no evidence that the project has had any effect on the community's social problems budget, either favorable or unfavorable. However, availability of the clinic services might conceivably reduce pressure on parents to turn to crime to get money for family needs.

The program should be expanded—in several ways. Although it would not be practical to set up additional clinics at this time, the size of the present clinic should be doubled. There is now only enough money to run the Dental Clinic for 35 weeks a year and the Well-Child Clinic for 24 weeks. As a result appointments must be scheduled months in advance. The clinics should also be expanded