

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967 4055

Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Each Center has an NAC which elects representatives to the Central Advisory Committee and formally functions in an advisory and control capacity with regard to the Center. Members of this Committee are in turn elected from neighborhood Assemblies.

Assemblies

The area of the particular Center being studied is divided into 18 assembly districts. The Assemblies consist of all interested residents in their area. The Assemblies elect two representatives each to the NAC. The function of the Assemblies is to advise and control Center operations through the NAC.

3. Organization of Center

Three formally organized departments exist at the Center: Neighborhood Development, Family Services, and Manpower. These departments each have a vertical relationship with corresponding departments at the CAA office. The Center Director acts merely as a liaison agent between the departments. In addition to these departments, there are additional personnel supervised directly by the CAA, administering such programs as the NYC, Small Business Loans, Head Start, and Consumer Education. Temporary programs such as Summer Recreation are under the immediate supervision of the Center Director.

The staff of this Center is large and includes a wide range of educational and experience levels. The staff under the Neighborhood Development Department is composed of some 30 to 55 part-time resident workers. The number is variable due to availability of funds and training time. At the time of this survey, there were thirty workers who had already undergone the training period which consists of attendance at five seminars followed by on-the-job training with a veteran worker. These people work ten to twenty hours per month. Three full-time staff members, also area residents, are employed in this division.

The Manpower Department consists of two employment counselors under CAA supervision and two counselors funded by the State Employment Service. These personnel are experienced in their field, well-educated, and not necessarily residents of the target area.

In the Family Services Department there are professional workers in the fields of Counseling and Health Service, with their efforts being complemented by the services of resident aides.

Professionals on the staff who received training prior to the employment are interviewed and hired by the CAA Director. Neighborhood workers and aides who live in the area are interviewed and screened by the Center Director who in turn refers them to the CAA Director for formal hiring.

At this point it should be mentioned that conflict along two lines exists between some of the professional members of the Center staff and the indigenous neighborhood workers. First, if the workers do not like a particular program they will not work efficiently for the program. A second unique aspect of the work patterns of the neighborhood workers is the difficulty in separating out work from private time. Their Center activities usually involve much more time than they are contracted for but the distribution of time between paid work, volunteer work, acting as resident in the community, and private time is almost impossible to untangle. They themselves do not clearly divide their time into these categories.

4. Who Actually Controls the Center?

It is generally believed that, contrary to what is said to occur in many other cities, the Mayor of this city has not interfered with the operation of the CAA. This may be due to the varied political complexion of the Board. At the same time, the staff of the Center is not immune to pressure coming from City Hall; in fact, they appear to be sensitive to any indication of direction coming from that area.

Policy specifies that residents, through the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, must approve all Center programs and may initiate requests for new programs. This policy is most effective when the desires of the residents coincide with the ideas of the CAA Staff and the Center Staff. Let the residents make a decision that Staff thinks unwise and that decision will become lost. The residents who are actively involved are very much aware of this situation.

Formal structure, policies, and practice indicate that the local CAA attempts