

4102 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

9. *Services*

It has been mentioned previously that actual individual services are provided with the Center staff acting as intake and referral agent. Information regarding employment, welfare, and housing problems is extended to clients and they are then referred or accompanied to the appropriate agency for service. When a client is provided a service by the Center, it is the policy of the staff to follow-up with the agency and/or the client until his problem has been solved. At this point, he is to be encouraged to return to the Center and participate in a broader sense by acting on a committee or attending meetings. The staff indicated a sincere desire to provide such an excellent quality of service to these clients that they would act as liaison agents to their friends and encourage their participation. In their view, the personal approach is the only effective one in attracting this hostile population.

The most important service to clients, as viewed by personnel of every echelon, is the service of providing a location for activities—a place where the citizens may congregate. To accomplish this purpose and attract people to the Center, a variety of group activities have been made available. In an effort to counteract problems of juvenile delinquency and the school drop-out rate, many services are geared to the youth of the neighborhood. There are recreational programs, such as team sports and dances; there is a study center to provide academic assistance; and jobs are available through the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

Services for adults are not so varied and activities for them consist primarily of community meetings and a number of classes to provide information basic to their daily lives, e.g., homemaking and consumer education.

An informal service is provided by some staff members who are called upon by the police and courts to come to the aid of an arrested client. The service may involve procuring the assistance of an attorney, providing bail or just an offer of transportation.

10. *Community Action*

A discussion of community action in this center area will be a reiteration in order to emphasize further two points previously mentioned. First, it appears that policy-making, program formulation, and even funds are now the responsibility of the poor and there is no outside force to preclude them from availing themselves of these opportunities. Second, the poor of this area feel that they have been held in contempt by social welfare agencies for so long that they doubt the sincerity of any new promises by any new group. This attitude is hardly conducive to positive action and, therefore, even minimum progress in that direction should be viewed with optimism.

11. *Participation of the Poor*

The discussion here will involve a reiteration of the *quality* of participation of those of the poor who have been responsive to the Center activities. It is the contention of CAA staff members that these people are operating as board members and staff members in the most effective way possible in view of their limited education and supervisory experience. The Center is viewed by the CAA as a paragon of inefficiency but these officials also recognize the fact that an indigenous staff is the only group that could communicate to the target population. As a result, the CAA patiently suffers the bureaucratic inconveniences of this method of operation and goes to great lengths to remain in the background in an advisory capacity. Center staff workers voice the occasional complaint that their duties are not clearly defined and that the Center Director is lacking in administrative ability but the fact remains that somehow things do seem to be accomplished at the Center. The neighborhood board feels that their participation has been effective and that they have been instrumental in setting up programs to combat area problems. The Center staff members feel that their efforts too have been effective and that they are doing a difficult job as best they can in view of the hostile attitude of their potential clients. These two groups point with pride to a number of programs and services that they themselves have made operational, and they feel that the Center belongs to them.

CENTER "L" (I)

1. *History and Origins*

During 1962 and 1963, a number of the poor of this large city dramatically called the attention of the entire nation to their plight through a series of marches and demonstrations. They demanded entry into the affluent society and a chance