

The letter-of-credit mechanism for orderly and timely flow of grant monies to recipients, designed to achieve Federal savings on interest, is being reviewed by an interagency group composed of the Bureau, Treasury, HEW, and the GAO. Recent experience indicates that grantees have been drawing funds down too fast, without corresponding expenditures. Procedures to tighten the timing of funds are being studied. The interagency group is also exploring other programs in which the introduction of the letter-of-credit might be beneficial.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND STATISTICS

Bureau staff have participated in a task force representing State and local government associations and the ACIR which has identified intergovernmental problems in the efficient use and management of information systems. A final report of the task force proposes, among other things, a Budget circular setting out guidelines for Federal agency cooperation in the intergovernmental use and management of information systems and statistics. A draft of the proposed circular is already being considered by Federal agencies, and has been sent to States and local governments under A-85 consultation.

1. Compatibility of data which the levels of government collect and use.
2. Coordinated development of common information systems.
3. Joint utilization of automatic data processing facilities.
4. Federal agency criteria for considering grant applications for information system assistance.

The Bureau, together with the ACIR and the State and local government associations, sponsored a National Conference on Comparative Statistics on April 4-5, 1968 in Washington. The Conference considered the final report of the task force noted above, and examined problems and progress in intergovernmental statistical cooperation.

Additionally, Bureau staff have worked with the Census Bureau in the development of seminars for State and municipal officials acquainting them with Federal statistical series and services. The first cycle of seminars, concentrating on State officials, has been completed, and a second cycle—for municipal officers—was begun this Spring. One result of the Census Bureau work with the States is the inauguration of a joint cooperative program with 30 States to develop annual population estimates by county using common procedures and methods. The States will prepare the figures and the Census Bureau will publish them.

The Bureau of the Budget has established a system for the reporting of Federal outlays by geographic location. The Office of Economic Opportunity Information Center, which had previously developed the "Summary of Federal Social and Economic Programs," operates the system for the Bureau, with data being provided to OEO by all departments and agencies. The Federal outlay information which is being developed will add greatly to the abilities of State and local jurisdictions to plan adequately with knowledge of specific Federal funds and programs working in their areas. Under procedures set forth in Bureau Circular A-84, figures by county and by municipality of 25,000 and above will be published on a quarterly basis. The first report is expected in June 1968. (It should be cautioned, however, that this system is still in a developmental stage and that methods are being developed to improve the accuracy, reliability and usefulness of the data.)

The Information Center has also been working with several States in the development of State systems for reporting State financial outlays by governmental subunit. OEO provides limited technical assistance (a small team) and the States provide all other resources. Assistance has been provided in 11 States so far, and several others are anxious to initiate such systems with OEO assistance.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Under the leadership of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal interagency field teams worked with 14 municipalities to develop pilot neighborhood centers. A key aspect of the effort is the integration into the center of *existing* programs and activities now being carried on in the neighborhood—or being carried on in the city and susceptible to being decentralized into the neighborhood. Bureau staff have been active team members in Washington on the Interagency Review Committee (WIRC) and in the field in each of the 14 municipalities. Initial planning grants were made to seven cities, and combined grants for planning and early "core services" organizations were made to the