

We have a number of observations related to: (1) past experience in Federal assistance to relocation (2) practical questions in achieving adequate relocation assistance (3) the elements of uniform relocation assistance and (4) the role of the Federal government in relocation assistance.

PAST EXPERIENCE IN FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO RELOCATION

Under the Housing Act of 1956, a system of 100 percent reimbursement was established for relocation payments under the urban renewal program. This was extended to the public housing program in 1964. Under this system, local public agencies administering urban renewal and public housing established relocation service offices and began to disburse payments and give assistance to all those displaced. Over the period of the last ten years, payments made to displacees have universally met the standards set in the Federal statute. With the assistance of the Federal government, local public agencies have been able to gain experience and insight into the whole problem of displacement. The urban renewal program has performed a leadership role in understanding the effects of displacement and bringing assistance to those displaced. It is on the threshold of organizing even more effective relocation techniques and assistance.

The Federal Highway Act of 1962 provided for relocation assistance on a matching basis of 90 percent to ten percent. Under this system, only some 20 States have elected to avail themselves of Federal funds, and a number of these do not pay the maximum benefits permissible under the Federal statute. Moreover, the laws in these some 20 States, except for a handful of exceptions, cover reimbursement only for moving costs, and only for federal-aid highway displacement.

If experience under these two systems in the past is any criterion, than meeting the standards set in Federal statutes and moving ahead to set up effective relocation operations on the State and local level, is far more likely under a 100 percent reimbursement schedule.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS IN ACHIEVING ADEQUATE RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

As noted above, only some 20 States have established legislation which authorizes relocation assistance—and only six of these States have laws which cover reimbursement beyond moving costs and federal-aid highway displacement. Based on past experience, it is not likely that changes would or could be made in State laws, within the three year time schedule set in the proposal of the Budget Bureau, to make a shared-cost system workable. One of the important rationales in establishing a 100 percent reimbursement schedule in the urban renewal program in 1956, was doubt as to whether State constitutions and laws would permit local public agencies to extend compensation in excess of awards for property acquisition. This is still a serious constraint on a shared-basis for relocation assistance.

Conversion of the urban renewal and public housing programs to a shared system of relocation assistance at this time could be a serious set-back to the relocation progress which has been made over the past decade. Local communities, already in financial distress, would be required to find a matching contribution in most cases equal to one-third of total costs. Any inability to do so would undoubtedly result in discouragement and frustration among displacees themselves, particularly if this involved a step-back from the benefits currently being given.

THE ELEMENTS OF UNIFORM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

Two factors relate to the rationale for a uniform policy of relocation assistance by the Federal government. First, relocation assistance has come to be recognized as a unique governmental function, with an identity of its own, not basically affected by the type of improvement activity which causes displacement. Under such an understanding, it does not seem logical or equitable for the Federal government to reimburse relocation assistance in one federally-assisted program to a greater degree than in another, as would happen if the current matching formulas should be used as the basis for reimbursement: (for example, interstate highway displacement would be reimbursed on a 90-10 basis, while most reimbursement for urban renewal would be on a $\frac{2}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ basis.) A second factor is that the administrative ground-rules for reimbursement, as well as the level of reimbursable payments, should be considered in the establishment of a uniform relocation assistance program by the Federal government. Only such a system can truly be called "uniform."