

WATER AND SEWER

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Four Federal agencies make water and sewer grants and loans under the following jurisdictions:

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) communities of all sizes in urban or urbanizing areas (except waste treatment).

Farmers Home Administration (FHA) of Department of Agriculture—Rurally oriented communities of under 5,500 people.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)—Department of Commerce—Specified economic development areas regardless of community size, where the project will have long-range economic impact.

Federal Water Pollution Control Administration (FWPCA), Department of Interior—First consideration of all waste treatment projects, although FHA and EDA may also fund such projects.

Several new laws in 1965 expanded the program to such an extent that an Interagency Coordinating Committee was set up to coordinate the efforts of these four agencies. In addition to processing improvements generated through this Committee, each agency has been active for a number of months in improving its individual program through such techniques as extensive on-site analysis of regional processing and visits to applicants.

RESULTS

Efforts by the four agencies working individually and in concert through the Interagency Coordinating Committee generated decisions which will reduce processing time by 57 per cent over the initial base period (Table IV). Significant actions to achieve this reduction include:

Developing a simple referral form for applicant inquiries. This permits filing an inquiry with any of the four agencies, with jurisdiction determined by the Government.

Combining this referral form with the basic application to eliminate or reduce repetitious information and requests for more data during the preliminary review and rating process. The new form also applies to several other programs of the four agencies.

Clarifying and expediting jurisdiction determinations between HUD and FHA; between HUD and EDA to cut down unnecessary referrals; and between FWPCA and the other three agencies to expedite processing of referrals for waste treatment plants.

Unifying auditing, bidding and similar practices between the four agencies, before exploring the feasibility of developing standard forms for the supplementary technical data required for full project reviews.

Revising internal processing procedures by:

Installing an attrition system to keep backlogs at workable levels and expediting information to inquirers on project disposition.

Eliminating technical review in Washington.

Streamlining press release procedures.

Combining fund reservation and project approval processes.

Developing a standard engineering contract form.

Providing design criteria and other guide documents to engineers.

Developing guidelines for field staff use in uniform assembly of loan and grant dockets.

Revising and simplifying processing instructions.

Releasing a standard construction contract.

Improving instructions to applicants for preparing project submissions.

Conducting training meetings for state office personnel.