

*Don't forget
This should be our
Guide!*

GRANTEE: City of Atlanta (Georgia)

AMOUNT: \$23,000

PURPOSE: To assist the Mayor of Atlanta to staff and organize the office of the Mayor better to develop a strategy and action to mobilize the city's forces to attack the problems of the slums and improve the condition of the people now resident there.

Foundation funds will be used to pay the salary of a special assistant to the Mayor experienced in urban affairs, capable, with the Mayor's political leadership, of meshing the resources and energies of the disparate elements of the community in concerted action, and knowledgeable about securing outside resources to help with the task.

This will be an experiment and demonstration of the value of such a staff and function in the Mayor's office of a southern city with a "weak mayor" system. If the demonstration warrants such action the Mayor will attempt to establish the staff and function as a permanent feature of his office. The U.S. Conference of Mayors will observe the experience and report on it to other cities in similar situations.

BACKGROUND
AND

RATIONALE In coping with the crisis problems of cities and, even more important, developing and implementing policy and strategy for healthy urban development that will obviate the crises, the mayor's office is the key command post. Only the mayor has comprehensive responsibility. Other functionaries have restricted concerns for education, housing, welfare, public safety, etc. Elected representatives have comprehensive concern, but are limited to policy formation through legislation. Only the mayor is concerned with policy formation and execution.

Without strong and capable leadership from the mayor's office and the mobilization of internal and external resources by him the inexorable forces tending to break down the economic and social order of the city are not likely to give way.

What this means is that the modern mayor must be a "system analyst" and operator. He must view the city as a system made up of interacting sub-systems and impinged upon by regional and national systems. The trick for the mayor is to mesh these systems so that their own "rules-of-the-game" and self-serving objectives are to the greatest degree possible induced to serve the purposes of the general welfare and development of the community. How can the mortgage banking system better produce low cost housing?

How can the customs, leadership patterns and aspirations of the low income Negro community best be mobilized to push constructively for upward mobility? How can the needs of industry for skilled personnel be made a force to speed up the training of unskilled people? How can the resources of federal agencies and foundations be marshalled to support orderly and equitable development? Most cities now exploit only a fraction of the outside resources potentially available to them because they don't know how to go after them or to use them efficiently.

All of this takes know-how. To be deployed most effectively that know-how must be in, or close to, or at the beck and call of the mayor's office.

Atlanta is one of the bellwether cities of the south with outstanding leadership in the Mayor's office. The general climate in the city is such that well reasoned and executed policies and programs have a favorable environment in which to confront the complex problems of today's cities.

These circumstances make it an opportune time and place to try to improve the capacity of the Mayor's office to perform the dynamic role it should and for the experience to be visible and hopefully influential elsewhere.

The plans for the project were developed jointly by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Southern Regional Council, and the Mayor of Atlanta.