

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL COALITIONS

The Emergency Convocation of The Urban Coalition has issued an urgent appeal to all concerned American citizens to join with the Coalition in efforts to fashion a new political, social, economic, and moral climate that will make possible the breaking of the vicious cycle of the ghetto. Action at the community level must now follow.

As leaders in your community, your commitment and ingenuity are now called upon to muster the support and involvement of your fellow citizens for a massive reordering of priorities and programs in the face of the urban emergency.

The national Steering Committee of The Urban Coalition is already at work developing strategy and programs to achieve the goals it has set for itself. But its focus is primarily on national decision makers and national priorities and programs. This will not be enough. There must be complementary action at the local level where ultimate responsibility rests and where urban problems are most clearly perceived.

The Urban Coalition therefore looks to you to initiate formation of a local coalition in your city or metropolitan area to work in concert with the national Steering Committee in pursuit of common objectives.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the August Emergency Convocation, The Urban Coalition adopted a comprehensive Statement of Principles, Goals and Commitments. It is this document which charts the course for our mutual efforts. (A copy of the Statement is enclosed).

You will note from the Statement that the Coalition has identified seven specific areas of urban affairs calling for consideration and

action by the Coalition and the country. Emergency Task Forces have been created reflecting these problem areas through which the substantive efforts of the Coalition will be channeled. They are:

1. Emergency Task Force on Public Service Employment
2. Emergency Task Force on Private Employment
3. Emergency Task Force on Educational Disparities
4. Emergency Task Force on Reconstruction Investment &
Urban Development
5. Emergency Task Force on Equal Housing Opportunities
6. Emergency Task Force on Communications
7. Emergency Task Force on Local Coalitions

The designated urban concern of each Task Force demands immediate attention and action. But while such a division of tasks is essential for efficient organization of the Coalition's endeavors, the very real functional inter-relationships between the major urban problems must not be overlooked.

It is the position of The Coalition that given current urban American conditions, the key to resolving these inter-related problems is a massive emergency work program of at least one million new public service-type jobs, developed and financed by the Federal Government, including new training opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed. The elements of such an emergency work program are described in the Statement.

Such a program is a prerequisite to the restoration of economic health to our cities and hope to the lives of millions of urban Americans. Equally important is the fact that in the absence of such a governmentally-generated emergency work program even the most enlightened and massive efforts to improve public education, housing, and health and welfare services will meet with failure. The pervasive social and economic costs of continued high levels of unemployment and underemploy-

ment in our cities can spell sure disaster to our society. The alternative is to implement a crash national employment program of the character The Urban Coalition proposes.

The business of The Urban Coalition is to induce a complete revision in the allocation of talent, time, money and resources to meeting the basic needs of America's cities. While special emphasis has been given in The Coalition's Statement to the basic need for full employment, this is not to minimize the urgent needs for new capital investment, revitalized public education, substantial increases in the housing supply, more and better urban services and facilities, and enhanced equal opportunity in housing. The Statement states that the "next order of business...shall be the development of a broad program of urban reconstruction...including the goal of rehabilitation and construction of at least one million housing units for lower-income families annually."

All sectors of American society have a role to play in accomplishing the goals The Urban Coalition has proposed. Awakening those sectors to the emergency at hand and mobilizing them for appropriate action is the immediate task. Essential to The Urban Coalition's performing that task is the formation of local coalitions which, we hope, will first, pledge their support of the Statement of Principles, Goals and Commitments, and second, work in concert with the national Steering Committee, with all resources available to them, to accomplish these goals.

STRATEGY AND AGENDA FOR LOCAL COALITIONS

As an initial target, the Steering Committee of The Urban Coalition is responding to the requests of communities in at least fifty major urban areas for assistance in the formation of local coalitions by November 15, 1967. In each of the fifty communities, a small organizing committee of local leaders is being called together. As is the case with the Steering Committee, the local organizing committee will

be made up of representatives from the community's business, organized labor, religious, civil rights, educational, local government, and communications leadership. It is important that the sectors represented correspond with those represented on the national Steering Committee so as to be broadly representative of the life of the community. In some cases, it may be that coalitions have already been formed around such issues as jobs, schools or housing. These groups may wish to identify with and work with The Urban Coalition.

The local organizing committee and other existing coalition groups are being invited to designate representatives to attend a one-day Local Urban Coalition Planning Session to be held on Tuesday, October 17 1967 in Chicago, Illinois. The planning session, convened by the national Steering Committee, will deal exclusively with organization and programming of local coalitions. Further information will be furnished to you shortly on the subject of the planning session.

In no event, however, should the organization of local coalitions be deferred pending the Chicago planning session. Time is of the essence.

Where a general, as contrasted to a single issue, coalition is being formed the first order of business for the organizing committee is to round out representative participation on a local Steering Committee. Secondly, the Steering Committee should develop a draft Statement of Principles, Goals, and Commitments which endorses the national Statement and broadens it to include major local concerns. Next, convening of an emergency convocation of the local coalition to review and adopt a Statement of Goals and develop plans for implementation might be undertaken. This convocation, patterned after the national Emergency Convocation held in August, should be called as soon as possible, hopefully, no later than mid-November. In those cities where several single issue coalitions already exist, they may wish to jointly convene such a convocation.

It is strongly recommended that, both in the initial organizational phase as well as the post-convocation phase, where new coalitions are being formed, the local organizing committee arrange for at least one staff person to work full time on the local coalition. It is expected that this staff person could be borrowed from the staff of one of the participating leaders.

THE LOCAL EMERGENCY CONVOCATION

The local convocation will serve to bring together the significant community leadership and will serve both as an organizing device as well as a vehicle for arousing and educating the community to the urban emergency.

The convening of the convocation and the endorsement of a Statement of Principles will have local and national significance to the extent that the convocation enjoys the participation of the community's leadership representing the same constituencies represented in the organizing committee. This is an enterprise requiring as much citizen support as possible so that community leadership involvement must be broad and numerically substantial.

The convocation can be focused on the problems of a single city or on the problems of the metropolitan area in which it is located, whichever is feasible and appropriate. It is fully expected that the local coalition and the convocation will involve representatives of major employers and unions whether their constituents and/or functions are in the city or the suburbs.

While the national Urban Coalition is not able to offer any financial assistance to local organizing committees, it will provide the assistance in preparing and convening the local convocation. In this regard, the October 17th planning conference in Chicago will offer orientation and counsel on a range of factors pertinent to successful

local coalitions.

In addition, the Steering Committee has accepted an offer by the National Institute of Public Affairs to furnish, where desired, technical assistance to local organizing committees in programming of the local convocation and subsequent seminars and workshops. The national Steering Committee will also provide speakers, where needed and requested, in any or all of the substantive areas under consideration by The Urban Coalition Task Forces mentioned earlier.

A necessary outcome of the convocation is endorsement of a minimal organizational structure to pursue the goals and commitments adopted. With respect to newly-formed local coalitions, the local structure should include a steering committee and a minimum of three task forces to deal with legislation, expansion of private employment, and public information, respectively. Beyond the substance of these three task forces, local groups may set up other work groups. The national Urban Coalition, however, is presently going through program development with its other task forces and will be prepared to coordinate other local task force action areas in the near future.

Finally, it is contemplated that the local coalitions will participate in and help shape the programs of The Urban Coalition.