

# FACTS

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## Economic Opportunity Atlanta

### National Background

The 1960's were a turning point in public awareness of large numbers of poor, living in the midst of a prosperous United States. The '60's were also important in terms of Federal involvement, seeing the greatest amount of anti-poverty legislation since the New Deal.

The previous decade affected the mood of the nation. The Korean War ended, releasing resources for domestic needs. The Civil Rights movement and the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision emphasized equal opportunity for all persons. The labor market began to feel the effects of automation which eliminated many unskilled jobs. The nation discovered rural (often, regional) and urban pockets of poverty where families had experienced persistent unemployment and poverty through several generations.

New attitudes towards poverty arose. The new goals were to lift people out of poverty and change the quality of their lives instead of providing custodial care for them. Attitudes of the poor had changed, too. In the past, many poor knew poverty as a temporary state. Today, many poor persons see no way out of poverty, regarding it as a permanent state for themselves and their children.

The 1960 census provided the statistical information for definition of the extent of poverty in the United States. In 1963, Michael Harrington in **The Other America** stated that if the poverty level was between \$3000 and \$3500 for an urban family of four, approximately 50-million persons would be living in poverty. Leon Keyserling, former Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors and author of **Poverty and Deprivation in the United States** (1962) estimated in 1963 that 34-million persons would be defined as poor using Government criteria, which at that time were \$3000 per year for a family of four and \$1500 per year for an individual. He felt that these were conservative estimates enormously below the Department of Labor's "modest but adequate" budget in 1963: \$6,000 for families and \$2750 for individuals. Keyserling estimated that more than 66-million persons, 35½% of our population in 1963, were living in poverty or on the verge of poverty in "deprivation".

### Inception of EOA

Atlanta also was involved in studying the characteristics and needs of its growing population. In 1962, the Community Council of the Atlanta Area, an independent social planning body, completed a study of the city which ranked each census tract on a socio-economic scale and determined which areas were

found to be poor then, according to Federal criteria for poverty, and many of these poor lived in areas adjacent to Atlanta's Central Business District. Thousands were unemployed, under-employed, functionally illiterate, poorly housed, lacking adequate medical care. The Community Council with foundation assistance began a year-long pilot project, a demonstration service center in one of the neighborhoods. This project demonstrated the need for realistic services for individuals living in poverty—based on their own suggestions—and the need for coordination on the neighborhood level of all existing public and private services.

Armed with this knowledge and anticipating passage of the Economic Opportunity Act, Atlanta's Mayor, Board of Aldermen, and the Fulton County Commissioners passed a joint resolution in mid-August, 1964, establishing the Atlanta-Fulton County Economic Opportunity Authority. Major provisions of the resolution were:

1. Establishment of the Authority, composed of 13 unsalaried members, six appointed by the Mayor, six by the Chairman of the Fulton County Commission, with a 13th appointed by both to serve as chairman.
2. Provision for subsequent incorporation of the Authority under Georgia laws as a non-profit, charitable, educational, and philanthropic corporation.
3. Authorization to hire an Executive Director and other staff.
4. Appropriation of City and County funds for organization prior to receipt of Federal funds.
5. Authorization to apply for, receive, expend, or dispose of governmental funds.
6. Establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee of representatives from local government and community organizations.
7. Establishment of a Citizens' Participation Committee of residents who are or have been adversely affected by existing socio-economic conditions.
8. Implementation of a program mobilizing and utilizing all public and private resources to combat poverty.

With assistance from the Community Council, the Authority prepared an application for Community Action Program (CAP) funds under Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 which it submitted on November 16, 1964. Atlanta was among the first urban areas funded; the initial grant was announced on November 23, 1964. This grant provided \$1,080,000 in Federal funds, to be matched by \$120,000 in local funds, and covered the period from November 23, 1964 to September 1, 1965.



In June, 1965, as directed by the resolution, the Authority was rechartered as a private, non-profit corporation and renamed Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc. The articles of incorporation stated, "The purpose of the corporation shall be to mobilize and utilize all public and private resources . . . toward the elimination of poverty through developing educational and employment opportunities, improving human performance, motivation and productivity, and bettering the conditions under which people live, learn, and work . . ."

### EOA's Board of Directors

When the policy-making Board was first created by the joint resolution mentioned earlier, it was composed of 13 appointed members. Enlarged to 15 members, in June, 1965, as a condition of OEO's 1966 CAP grant to Atlanta the Board was enlarged, in late Spring, to include four representatives of the poor, to be elected by and from residents of low-income neighborhoods qualifying for EOA programs.

On February 15, 1967, the Board again amended the charter to change the composition of the Board to its present form. (See organization chart) The Board has retained its original members and added more representatives of the areas served by EOA (1/3 of the members now are from these areas).

### Advisory Committees, Block Organizations

Originally, two advisory committees existed: the

Citizens Participation Committee—50 persons affected by poverty, who would provide information on needs of the poor and help plan; and the Technical Advisory Committee—50 representatives of local agencies concerned with poverty, to help coordinate and plan programs and to prevent duplication.

In 1966, elections were held in the neighborhoods to choose representatives to serve on neighborhood and city-wide advisory committees and the EOA Board. Each EOA target area is divided into 20 or more "area blocks". People living within these blocks are encouraged to participate in organizing block clubs, electing officers, and determining their own agenda. The goals include involvement of more residents and citizenship education. In 1967 11,528 persons voted in EOA neighborhood elections. Each block organization chose one representative to serve on its Citizens' Neighborhood Advisory Council. Each CNAC selected three representatives to serve on the Citizens' Central Advisory Council (CCAC), which replaced the Citizens' Participation Committee, and one to serve on the EOA Board of Directors. The Technical Advisory Committee exists unchanged.

### EOA Administration

The administrative staff is in the process of changing its organizational structure. Its present structure is shown in the organization chart which follows:

## ORGANIZATION OF Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc.

under Office of Economic Opportunity  
National - Regional - State

**Policy-Making Board** in accordance with Feb. 1967 charter amendments would consist of 42 members with 1-yr. terms:

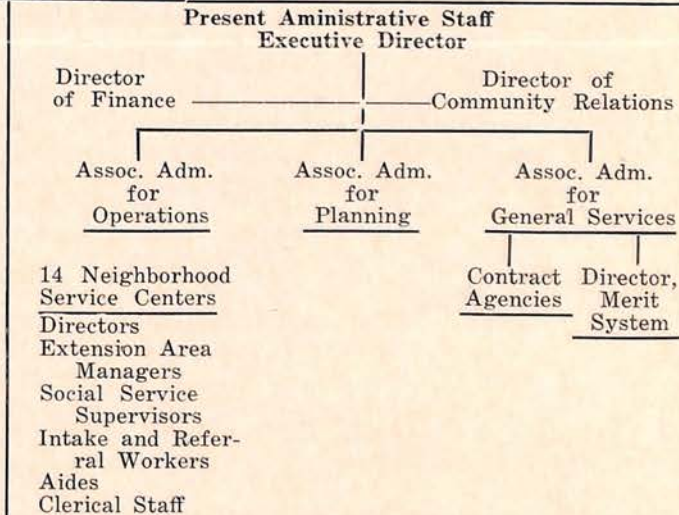
- 12 members or 1/3 of total Board to be elected by democratic procedure from target areas;
  - 12 representatives of Atlanta/Fulton County community groups and major public agencies concerned with poverty;
  - 12 representatives of Atlanta/Fulton County poverty-concerned groups, such as organized labor, businessmen's associations, major religious, minority, racial, and ethnic organizations and private social service agencies;
- [Selection of representatives is made by the groups or agencies; designations of groups and agencies to be represented is by the Mayor of Atlanta and the Fulton County Commission Chairman, in consultation with EOA.]
- 3 representatives each from Gwinnett and Rockdale Counties—one to represent county officials and public agencies, one representing major community groups, and one a resident of area served, to be selected democratically.

(Plus any other counties which choose to join EOA)

EOA's administration has had the reputation of being consistently strong and dynamic. Mr. C. O. Emmerich served as Executive Director until his unexpected death in June, 1967. Mr. Thomas "Jim" Parham was chosen by the Board as the new Executive Director. A small administrative, planning, and clerical staff is located at 101 Marietta St. NW.

### Program

The heart of EOA's program are the Neighborhood Service Centers, where existing services and programs are coordinated at locations within the low-income neighborhoods. Fourteen Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC) were established during EOA's first two years. Two of these are the Gwinnett and Rockdale County offices; the other 12 are located in Atlanta and Fulton County. They are: Central City, East



Central, Edgewood, Nash-Washington, North Fulton, Northwest (Perry Homes), Pittsburgs, Price, South Fulton, Summerhill-Mechanicsville, West Central, and West End. NSC staff members conducted approximately 33,000 interviews during the first two years, and according to EOA figures, had held a total of 142,305 interviews at the end of August, 1967.

The centers provide as their major service an information and referral service which finds people who need help and gets them to the appropriate services. They offer limited general counseling, community participation and organization through block groups, neighborhood EOA elections, neighborhood committees working to solve problems; and some employment as Neighborhood Aides (214 before 1967 budget cut, 145 now). Aides find families in need of help, direct them to the Center, and maintain contact with them.



The needs of residents who come to the Center are determined through counseling, and they are referred or taken to the appropriate service. The three main categories of service offered to citizens by the NSC are Employment (Manpower) Services, Education, and Social Services. Of all individuals coming to Neighborhood Centers in Atlanta, 72% wanted jobs. In

addition to services offered by the NSC staff, other programs are channeled through the Center, and other agencies in the city have representatives in the Center, either on a voluntary or contract basis. A number of EOA's programs are contracted by EOA to other groups or agencies in the city, and then administered by these contracting groups.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS

### I. Administered by EOA:

**Neighborhood Service Centers:** Coordinate EOA services in neighborhoods served.

**Neighborhood Youth Corps (out-of-school program):** Job-training, employment for youths 16-21.

**Men's Job Corps (recruiting):** Job-training at training centers for out-of-school unemployed boys 16-21. Recruiting from 8 counties.

**VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America):** Domestic Peace Corps.

**ACEO—Atlanta Concentrated Employment Program:** New program designed to train and place 2,500 consistently unemployed or under-employed people in permanent jobs during the next year. Businesses, agencies, are to provide jobs.

**Parent and Child Center:** Planning grant received to design a parent education program for low-income families, including planned parenthood, parent-child relationships, household skills, and use of community facilities. (EOA planning)

**Price Area Health Center:** New center to provide complete medical services, except hospitalization, for 22,000 people in Price neighborhood. (Now being organized by EOA, Fulton County Medical Assn., Emory School of Medicine, and 15 health and planning agencies working to establish center.)

### II. Contracted by EOA to other groups or agencies:

**Headstart:** Summer program for pre-school children from low-income homes (Atlanta Board of Education and private pre-schools)

**Day-Care Centers:** Supervised care for children in order to release parents for job training and job opportunities (Private organizations)

**Manpower Placement:** Counselor in each Neighborhood Service Center to provide job placement and referrals to other services (Georgia State Employment Service)

**Atlanta Employment Evaluation and Service Center:** A centralized service, first of its kind in the nation, to diagnose and evaluate work potential and training needs of difficult cases and follow up job progress (Vocational Rehabilitation)

**Legal Services:** Previously, Legal Aid lawyers worked part-time at Neighborhood Service Centers. Presently, a central Legal Assistance Center is located in the Fulton County Court House; two new Legal Aid centers operate in low-income neighborhoods (Legal Aid Society)

**Planned Parenthood:** Family planning service (Planned Parenthood Assn.)

**Multi-Service Centers for the Aged:** Recreation, social service, and day care for families living in the three high-rise apartments for the aged built by Atlanta Public Housing Authority (Senior Citizen Services of Metropolitan Atlanta)

**Foster Grandparents:** Provides children in institutions with adult affection and companionship while giving older citizens useful, satisfying jobs. (Senior Citizen Services of Metropolitan Atlanta)

**Neighborhood Youth Corps (in school):** Training and employment of low-income high school youths to provide work experience and money to enable them to remain in school (Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education)

**Project Enable:** Group education for low-income parents to increase self-help motivation (Atlanta Urban League)

**Research Programs—1)** Evaluation: 18-months evaluation of Atlanta's CAP, under contract to OEO (Emory University Center for Research in Social Change)

**2)** Electronic Data Processing Program: Pilot study for automated accounting and financial work (Electronics Data Systems Corp.)

### III. Independent Cooperating Programs:

**Youth Opportunity Center:** Counseling, testing, referral to other agencies for remedial education or training; for employment needs of youths 16-21 (Georgia State Employment Service)

**College Work Study Program:** Part-time employment to keep youths from low-income families in college (8 Atlanta area colleges)

**Project Upward Bound:** To reduce drop-out rate of 11th and 12th graders by providing remedial and interest classes and encouraging them to seek further education (3 colleges: Morehouse, Morris Brown, Emory Univ.)

**Women's Job Corps:** Job-training at training centers for out-of-school, unemployed girls 16-21; local recruitment (WICS—Women in Community Service)

**Crime Prevention:** Police work in each Neighborhood Service Center to become friends with residents and help them with their problems (Atlanta Police Department)

**MDTA—Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962:** Job training for needed skills (Georgia State Employment Service and Atlanta Board of Education)

**Project Hire—Help Initiate Renewed Employment:** Employment service for the worker 50 and over (Georgia State Employment Service)

**Golden Age Employment Service:** same as above (Atlanta section, National Council of Jewish Women)

**Adult Basic Education:** Instruction in reading and writing for adults over 18 who are unable to function on an 8th grade level, to improve their employment potential (Atlanta Board of Education)



Programs discontinued due to lack of EOA funds: Project Bees-Biz, community schools, homemaker services during emergencies, home management train-

ing, four Public Health nurses, recreation programs conducted by Recreation Technicians at Neighborhood Centers, Small Business Development Center, Volunteer Task Force.

**Total FUNDS administered by EOA (figures from EOA\*)**

	Federal	Local	Total
12-1-64 thru 12-31-66 (2 years including initial CAP grant)	\$11,504,109	\$1,904,042	\$13,408,151
1-1-67 thru 12-31-67 plus funds to mid-1968 for some programs	15,699,248	1,994,626	17,693,874

\* All OEO grantees are required to have a CPA-approved accounting system and to submit regular professional, independent audits.

Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc. suffered a 38.2% budget cut in 1967, due to Congressional reductions. A 32% budget cut is expected for 1968 due to changes in the way appropriations are handled even if Congress provides adequate funding.

**Evaluation**

The Center for Research in Social Change at Emory University is under contract to OEO for an in-depth 18-month evaluation of Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc. — one of seven such evaluations in the nation. Research has not been completed, no final judgments have been made, and the report itself will be confidential until released by Washington OEO. In August, Dr. Fred Crawford, Principal Investigator, released a short review of his first year's work in which he stated that Atlanta's Neighborhood Service Centers have had some impact in the community, particularly in changing the lives of individuals by enabling them to participate more fully in our socio-economic system. One of EOA's strongest accomplishments is involvement of residents of poverty neighborhoods in the activities of the centers, including their representation on the EOA Board. He also emphasized the importance of citizens becoming interested in exercising their voting responsibilities and registering to vote.

The evaluating staff has given its suggestions for changes for greater efficiency and effectiveness to EOA, and the changes are being implemented. Dr. Crawford stated, "Viewed in terms of transition and growth, EOA is making progress toward accomplishing the goals established under the War on Poverty. . . . EOA should be continued, refined, and expanded to maximize its efforts to reach the total poverty population in this metropolitan area."

**Conflict**

Poverty causes complex problems and attitudes. In the initial enthusiasm created by anti-poverty efforts, many persons expected immediate and dramatic solutions and have been impatient with slow progress. OEO and EOA provided a structure within government which gives the poor a voice. Conflict has

often resulted with existing agencies over programs, funds, and personnel. Some established institutions and political groups have regarded the participation and the votes of the poor as threats. Controversy has resulted from direct Federal funding of local agencies, which has left the program relatively free of strong political influence up to the present. Criticism often has been aimed at administrative costs, although these are comparable with those of similar organizations. For instance, the national Office of Economic Opportunity spends 3% of the entire OEO budget for administrative costs — less administrative "overhead" than the National Red Cross or the Salvation Army.

**Benefits**

EOA has enjoyed good community relations and support, and good press coverage. The Mayor of Atlanta supported adequate funding, stating that EOA was a major factor in keeping communications open and preventing rioting here last Summer.

Many of the poor have registered to vote for the first time, thus finding a voice in the political process. Fulton County launched a permanent year-round voter registration program, including Neighborhood Service Centers among the 35 new registration centers.

The EOA staff is selected without discrimination and is well integrated racially at all levels. The Board is integrated racially, economically and socially, with all its members sitting down together on an equal basis to discuss community problems.

EOA has served as a structure through which the city has accepted many federal grants. The economy of the City of Atlanta has received a significant boost from the over \$25-million in federal money which EOA has brought into the city over the past three years, not to mention the economic "multiplier" effect which touches off additional rounds of employment and subsequent spending.

**STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION**  
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Total Distribution	1,862	2,113

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

FRANCES H. ROSSMAN, Editor