

December 1, 1966

SUMMARY REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT  
BY THE TASK FORCE ON THE CITIES

INTRODUCTION

The Task Force was convened on October 28 to give consideration to issues and proposals in four areas: (1) neighborhood centers, (2) homeownership by the poor, (3) Urban Development Corporation, and (4) landlord-tenant relations.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Neighborhood Centers: A federal inter-agency program should be initiated on a demonstration basis. But the goal should be to shape the total service system of a city, so that it effectively meets needs from the individual's viewpoint and not just to test out different kinds of "models" as though neighborhood centers are ends in themselves rather than the delivery arm of the city's service system.

Homeownership by the Poor: Is a good idea and well worth trying on a pilot program basis. But it is no panacea. It should be made part of a larger neighborhood improvement program. It should make ownership possible outside the slum as well as in it. Dwellings should be rehabilitated prior to assumption of ownership. Low interest loans and rent supplements or other subsidies from owners will be necessary.

Urban Development Corporation: As a means of stimulating technological and other cost-saving innovations, it is an attractive idea. But it must be done on a large enough scale if it is to have any impact. A number of risks are involved. Firm commitments on the availability of low-interest loans and rent supplements must be made.

Landlord-tenant relations: The federal government has present authority, and can issue additional administrative regulations, to help tenants by requiring vigorous code enforcement as a condition of federal assistance. In addition, consideration should be given to using welfare payments as leverage to correct serious code violations by landlords. HUD's aid program for code enforcement should be used in slum areas. A National Institute of Urban Housing Law should be established.

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