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NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER PILOT PROGRAM

I. Introduction

A. Purpose of the pilot program

On Friday, August 19, the President in his Syracuse, New York, speech asked... "the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to set as his goal the establishment -- in every ghetto in America -- of a neighborhood center to service the people who live there."

Accordingly initial steps toward fulfilling this goal were taken when, under Executive Order 11297, the Department of Housing and Urban Development convened a meeting on August 30, 1966, of Federal agencies to develop a report to the President and initiate a program of action to meet the President's request.

As a result of a series of inter-agency meetings a plan for a program of pilot projects, which would become the first step toward the President's goal, has been developed. This program will be designed and carried out along the following lines.

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II. Purposes of a Neighborhood Center

A neighborhood center should facilitate the deliverance of services to people in low-income neighborhoods and provide a broad range of health, recreation, social and employment services.

More social, health, employment, recreation, and education services are needed in the poverty areas; these services need to

be decentralized to such areas to be most effectively used; and these services should be provided to the greatest extent possible in the context of One-Stop or Neighborhood Center. Such a center would provide adequate delivery of these services in a coherent, coordinated manner, reach the uninformed, the isolated and alienated and provide a forum where the needs of the neighborhood can be expressed.

III. Criteria for a Neighborhood Center

Many variations are possible in the design of neighborhood centers; and local conditions, resources, needs, choices, and programs will determine specific solutions. To be considered a neighborhood center for this pilot program, however, the facility must provide at a minimum a program for the following services:

1. Information on citizens' rights and on how and where to get services and assistance.
2. Diagnosis of problems and referral to service agencies.
3. Follow-up or outreach for continued counseling and services.
4. Co-ordination among agencies (Federal, State, local-public and private) supplying services to the neighborhood.
5. Involvement by the neighborhood residents.

Whenever feasible the program for these minimum services should be expanded to include other types of services and activities, depending on the needs of the particular service area. Among them are:

1. Social services.
2. A broad range of active and passive recreational facilities.

3. Employment information, referral, counseling and training facilities.
4. Housing assistance.
5. Activities directed to the needs of senior citizens.
6. Health services including examination and consultive services.
7. Cultural enrichment.
8. Non-curricular and remedial education.
9. Decentralization of many City Hall service functions to the neighborhood.

The physical size of the neighborhood center will depend on the scope of the service program it is to house. In addition to the concept of the neighborhood center as a single building, consideration may be given, where the neighborhood is small in area but dense in population, to the concept of a structure having many services supported by other offices or structures providing supporting services.

IV. A Neighborhood Center Example

Although a center will have many components, such a facility must be organized and administered in a coherent fashion. This would require that:

1. Reception, referral, diagnosis, follow-up, outreach, and related generalized services be performed through a common reception and administration system.
2. All or most of the community's social service agencies providing services of need to the neighborhood should be located in one building or within walking distance of each other.

- 3. If smaller information, and referral or service centers are located in the neighborhood, they should be related to the larger one-stop service center.

A center would be designed in a flexible manner so that the space can be utilized to the optimum and space areas would be designed to serve multi-functions. The space would include meeting areas, offices for counseling services, specialized service areas, and recreational facilities. A neighborhood center might contain:

- 1. A CAA program component which would focus on the organization and participation of the residents of the neighborhood. It would be responsible for insuring that the other components of the Center work to the benefit and satisfaction of the neighborhood. Local CAPs might also provide services such as legal aid.
- 2. Recreation services and facilities. This might include a small outdoor recreation area, with a swimming pool when warranted, and a multi-purpose gymnasium which could also be used for large gatherings, including theatrical productions.
- 3. A preventative program of health services which might include a prenatal clinic, a well-baby clinic, a mental hygienic clinic and an ambulatory health services clinic.
- 4. An educational and cultural component which would include a pre-school program of the Headstart variety, adult literacy, special adult classes as well as special library, music, art and drama programs.

5. Employment services would be an integral part of the Center. Information would be provided on the job opportunities; testing services and limited job training services should be available. In addition, special job oriented programs such as the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and the Work and Training Program for public assistance clients might also be coordinated through this part of the Center.
6. Assistance with respect to housing and relocation should be provided in the Center. Information should be available on relevant local housing programs, and assistance should be offered to clients on how to improve their homes, how to secure adequate financing, and the availability of public housing and integrated housing.
7. Family services and home management is another important component. Public welfare case workers might operate from the Center and provide advice and counseling to the neighborhood. Family and marital counseling might be offered as well as consumer education, money management, and homemaker services.