

July 25, 1969

Mr. Arnold R. Weber
Assistant Secretary for Manpower
U. S. Department of Labor
Washington, D. C. 20210

Dear Mr. Weber:

Thank you for giving the Urban Coalition Action Council the opportunity to comment on the second draft of the General Description of the Public Service Careers Program.

The Urban Coalition Action Council strongly advocates an extensive public service employment program. At its Emergency Convocation in August 1967, the Coalition called for the creation of one million jobs in the public sector at the earliest possible moment. The Convocation Statement urged that a public service employment program should contain certain essentials such as:

- 1) An extensive program at all levels to assure that meaningful and productive work is available to everyone willing and able to work;
- 2) Funds for employment to local and state governments, and nonprofit institutions able to demonstrate their ability to use labor productively;
- 3) Operations keyed to specified localized unemployment problems and focused initially on those areas where need is most apparent.

As we have studied the Department of Labor proposed Public Service Careers Program, we find that your analysis of the present employment picture is in basic accord with the Coalition's. The concept of Public Service Careers has merit, but the main shortcomings are in the implementation. Therefore, we offer the following comments in the hope that you might see fit to broaden your proposal.

- 1) In not providing for wage supplementation, the program fails to realistically face the present financial crisis of most of our cities. Although cities desperately need more people to fill public service jobs, they nevertheless lack the financial resources to add these individuals to existing payrolls. The Action Council considers wage supplementation an essential ingredient and would urge

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its addition to the final draft. Without wage supplementation, we believe the program is marked for failure.

- 2) We would strongly favor a more extensive program. The \$50 million appropriation is so small as to be ineffectual. If we read page 30 correctly, the present allocation is only \$28-million of fresh money, as some funds were already budgeted for New Careers in fiscal year 1970. The need for such an employment program far exceeds the approximate 17,500 jobs that would be provided.
- 3) Clearly the program is experimental in nature. It is the Action Council's position that we are beyond the experimental stage. There is already an excellent precedent in the JOBS program for the hire-first and train-later concept. Relying on Department of Labor and National Alliance of Businessmen statistics, it would appear that the concept and program have been well received. The practical effect of such experimentation will delay moving toward an extensive, well-funded program in the public service career area.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to amplify any of our comments.

Sincerely,

Lowell R. Beck
Executive Director