

Some Concerns Growing out of

Early Experience of the Model Cities Program

The Comprehensive City Demonstration Programs submitted to date show that the Model Cities effort is off to a promising start. The submissions reflect months of hard work, wide community involvement and a strong commitment to attack the problems of the model neighborhoods.

In a new program like this, however, we are all learning as we go along. This is to share with you our sense of the importance of the involvement of the Mayor in the local Model Cities program together with some more specific suggestions as to how submissions might be improved:

1. City government responsibility. In general, we note a very direct correlation between the quality of the plan and the degree to which the city or county government as a whole has been involved in the planning process and in hammering out the program which is submitted to the Federal Government. We have characterized the Model Cities program as a partnership between the local government and the residents of the model neighborhood. But a partnership does not function well if both partners do not fully participate. We hope that you will share our concern for developing such a partnership and making it work.

2. Program scope related to available resources. Your program for the first action year, and each succeeding action year should be based upon resources which can reasonably be expected to become available. Each city has received a target for supplemental grant funds. HUD regional offices are in a position to define for each city other HUD resources which can be made available during the action year for which planning is underway. HEW has set aside a limited amount of funds for model cities; and cities should work with the HEW regional offices with respect to potential HEW funds. Close contact should be established and maintained with regional staffs of other Departments. HUD staff will help you in this respect. As early as possible in the planning process the staff of existing city agencies in concert with the CDA should be working with appropriate State and local agencies to determine what State and locally controlled resources can be made available from those sources for the action year. Indeed the time is now in most cases to work with State departments and agencies to arrange for allocation of funds they control for local programs to start in FY 1970. Most states are now showing a willingness



and desire to participate and assist, but they can most effectively help only if included as a participant at the outset.

We strongly recommend against projecting expenditures during the first action year substantially beyond resources likely to become available. In cases where an important project or activity is clearly needed but funding seems unlikely during the first year, the city should schedule "start up" during the second year but indicate the desirability of an earlier start if funds become available. Although some over-programming may make sense to provide for contingencies and to identify the highest priority items, the action plans for each year should reflect realizable goals.

3. Coordination of local institutions and resources. The Model Cities program depends heavily on the success you and other local officials have in mobilizing the resources of local, county, State and private institutions and resources whose programs and services affect model neighborhood residents. Our experience indicates that the program submissions which have been least satisfactory to date are those in which city government has not responded to this necessary administrative and policy making responsibility. Where local institutions such as the school board, the police Department or health, welfare, community action, renewal, housing, or manpower agencies have not been adequately involved in planning, project proposals affecting these areas tend to be unrealistic or not feasible of prompt implementation.

Local Model Cities plans are expected to include experimental approaches and activities. They should not represent simply an expansion of traditional programs which in some cases have not been fully effective in meeting needs and in which the people of the target neighborhood lack confidence. Cities should strive for institutional change wherever appropriate to make programs more responsive to neighborhood needs; and, they can also include projects and activities to be carried out by new organizations such as neighborhood corporations. But cities must also take advantage of accumulated competence and expertise, and therefore, should coordinate existing services and rely on capable existing institutions, in most cases, for new, changed or expanded projects or activities. Only the chief executive officer of the city has the capacity to assure that this mobilization of all available resources occurs. The creation of new institutions for activities that existing institutions can perform effectively and well tends to create unnecessary problems. Use of supplementary funds to bargain out changes in policy and practice of existing institutions could result in getting changes that will make programs more effective and responsive to neighborhood needs.



4. The CDA role in program execution. In a number of the early comprehensive plan submissions the local Model Cities agency and/or the citizen participation unit have been assigned major roles as project operators. These roles have ranged from the job of running a manpower program, which has traditionally been operated by the State employment service, the local CAA or a voluntary agency to the jobs of preparing comprehensive physical development plans or acquiring land for low-income housing -- tasks again that traditionally have been handled by local planning or renewal agencies.

HUD's policy is that local City Demonstration Agencies (and their Model Cities staff and citizen participation arms) are not intended to serve as program operators. CDA Letter No. 6 specifically states that "The CDA is not meant to be a multi-functional operating agency."

CDA's are expected to coordinate the activities of the various existing agencies whose new or existing functions impact on the model neighborhood. CDA's are expected to use their supplemental funds to influence and persuade these existing agencies to modify present practices, priorities and programs and to undertake new efforts that will deal effectively with the problems identified and goals established as a result of Model Cities planning.

Where there is no appropriate existing agency to carry out a new program which has been planned as part of the Model Cities effort, the city can certainly organize a new operating agency - such as a nonprofit corporation. The CDA or its citizen board should be a program operator only as the last resort and then only as a transition matter. If the CDA becomes a program operator, your Model Cities program could easily become just another local program competing for scarce resources and incapable of effectively performing the coordination, resource allocation, and institutional change role for which it is intended.

The Model Cities program is not intended to be a substitute for local institutions. Rather it is intended to make them more responsive to the needs of the community and to improve their capability. Institution building, not institution substitution is the rule.

5. Concentration on a few priority programs. Many first year action programs include so many projects and activities that city administrators may well have a difficult time managing the program. In some cases it appears that the need to set priorities has not been recognized. While the five-year program must be comprehensive in the sense that it deal with all major problems, we suggest that the city's attack on these problems may well be more efficient and more effective



if the city concentrates first on a relatively few high priority programs rather than spreading energies and available resources over a large number of desirable but perhaps not quite so critical projects and activities.

6. Length of submissions. Parts I and II of the program submissions are too long. We believe the city would benefit by the development of a concise statement that concentrates on the most important matters rather than submitting what in some cases seems like relatively raw, undigested material. A tightly organized 75 page problem analysis, goal statement, strategy, and five-year forecast would probably be a much more effective document, locally and for the Federal Government.