

3-7-66

CONFERENCE ON HOUSING FOR THE POOR

HUD and OEO would invite twenty of the most knowledgeable people in the field of housing the poor, to a two-day conference. The meeting is for consultation and the public will not be invited, although other Federal agencies will send observers.

The purpose of this conference is to evaluate the feasibility of providing an estimated 3.3 million additional standard housing units within the next five years, at prices the poor can afford. We are seeking from this conference (1) a summation of what we do and do not know about how the poor are housed, in physical, economic and social terms; and (2) identification of alternative programs or combination of programs and implementation strategies, that might make decent housing available for the 3.3 million poor households that would otherwise occupy substandard or overcrowded units by 1970.

More specifically there will be an identification of the obstacles involved with mounting a total housing program for the poor, and advice on how to overcome these problems. Immediate and long-range research and their priority will be outlined.

The conference will be centered around five issues:

1. Present housing conditions of the poor. The extent to which rehabilitation and/or clearance are needed; the costs involved; capability of occupants to pay; present locations of substandard units; composition of occupants by race, age, size, family composition.
2. Technical Issues. The type of housing required, its location and the availability of land; architectural and city planning concerns; the technological problems and opportunities of a large-scale building and rebuilding

program; the abilities of existing or proposed institutions (finance, construction, building, development, government) to implement the programs.

3. Economic Issues. The effect on the economy of a multi-billion dollar program: (1) to achieve the contemplated volume in five years, and (2) when the program begins to phase out; the effect on the total housing industry and construction costs; the effect on the values and condition of existing housing and neighborhoods; efficiencies that might result from a reevaluation of the economics of the housing industry; alternative means of financing the programs.

4. The Social Issues. The questions of ghettoizing or decentralizing the poor and particularly the non-white poor; the supplemental educational, counseling and back-up services required; the problems of installing a means test and establishing priority criteria; the attitudes of poor and non-poor to this housing.

5. Program Issues. The types of programs required to meet the objective; expansion or redirection of existing programs and the invention of new kinds of programs; the number of units to be developed from each program; the phasing and the mix of programs over the five-year period.

To make this a worthwhile conference, so that all participants are talking from knowledge of the situation to be dealt with, background papers should be prepared and distributed in advance on the first four issues.

One two-hour session will be devoted to each of the first four areas of concern, and a half-day will be left for the Program Issues discussion. One participant in each field would outline and chair each session. The moderator of each panel will be expected to subsequently prepare a summary.