

January 3, 1968

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Steering Committee

FROM: The Task Force on Local Coalitions

The Emergency Convocation, held in August, appealed to communities across the country to form counterpart local coalitions. This appeal was predicated on the knowledge that achievement of the goals adopted by The Urban Coalition is dependent upon the degree to which active support for those goals develops in a significant number of urban communities.

The Urban Coalition also recognized that merely issuing an appeal for formation of local coalitions would not be sufficient. The Task Force on Local Coalitions was created to assist communities in establishing coalitions.

As of December 31, 1967, nineteen local coalitions had been created. A minimum of ten more and possibly as many as twenty may be formed in January 1968. An organizing committee, to prepare for convening the newly authorized National Council of Urban Coalitions, is scheduled to meet in Washington on January 29, 1968, at the Mayflower Hotel.

The response to the Convocation call for counterpart coalitions was overwhelming, measured by the volume of requests from community leadership across the country for organizing and programming assistance. The number of such requests was beyond the capacity of the small national coordinating staff to service. The decision was therefore made to convene three regional conferences for community leadership interested in mobilizing coalitions. To date, two such conferences have been held, one in Chicago, in October, and a second in San Francisco, the end of November.

The aggregate attendance at these two meetings represented over ninety different cities in the west and mid-west. A third conference for the eastern part of the country will be held on January 12th in New York City.

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Our second approach to assisting communities is in the form of Guidelines, which have been carefully developed by a Task Force working group and the coordinating staff. The Guidelines, a copy of which was recently sent to each of you, have now been printed in pamphlet form. The pamphlet will serve not only to explain the nature and purpose of The Urban Coalition, but to counsel community leadership on possible approaches to community mobilization.

The need for action task forces as the working arms of local coalitions has been stressed both in the planning conferences and the Guidelines. As these local task forces emerge, mutual benefit will result from working relationships with the counterpart national task forces.

Once the regional conference schedule has been completed, the task force will meet to evaluate progress to date and to map plans for future action. We expect to intensify efforts to stimulate organizing efforts in specific communities in many of which mayoralty campaigns, this fall, precluded coalition formation. In effect, this means a shift from a wholesale to a retail approach which will have to be selective because of the very limited staff and funds now available. However, we anticipate assistance in these mobilization efforts from all those organizations and constituencies represented on the Steering Committee and, importantly, from the ranks of already operative local urban coalitions.