PILOT RESEARCH DESIGN FOR HUD PROJECT

Introduction

The National Academy of Public Administration is undertaking, for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a study intended to uncover concrete factors and relationships which facilitate or hinder urban program performance. The objective is to identify the critical elements in decision making and action systems by which HUD programs for local governments are put into effect, and to suggest ways of maximizing the favorable and minimizing the unfavorable elements. This study is a reflection of the concern of HUD and others with the difficulties of implementing national programs which have their impact at the local level. The links between program origin and program performance have appeared long and tortuous.

This study design represents one approach for the analysis of program performance from the perspective of the local level. The Academy will study four HUD programs — non-profit sponsored new housing under 221(d)(3), turnkey housing, basic water and sewer facilities grants, and inner-city open space — in six or seven cities.

The Approach

Although substantive questions and information will vary from city to city, there are certain conceptual items which must be considered in analyzing the programs in each of the cities studied. The assumption

is that there are multiple forces and factors which impinge on critical decision-making in regard to particular programs in particular cities. What we are viewing is the allocation and mobilization of city and other resources which are directed toward definite urban programs. The reason why resources are more successfully mobilized in one city as opposed to another, or in one program as opposed to another, leads us to investigate these factors.

In brief, the first assumption is that the basic item to be viewed is program performance, and the second assumption is that in analyzing program performance, one must look at the relationships of certain factors to program performance.

The multiple factors which impinge on the mobilization of resources for program performance may be best viewed by means of an action (or inaction) system for each program for each city. The action system can be viewed as a process which responds to and, in turn, influences other factors.

The Action System

In brief, the action process includes several critical points: (1) the definition of the issue; (2) the identification and gathering of resources and the involvement of the community; (3) development of a plan of action and program administration; (4) assignment of management and operation of programs; (5) coordination with other levels of government; and (6) evaluation of the program and feedback.

This brief statement of the action system can gain added meaning by now asking questions which relate to each step in the action system. These questions will reflect two types of phenomena. The first type concerns factors which are reflective of the intergovernmental nature of these HUD grant-in-aid programs.

The second type of questions which are incorporated concern characteristics of the city which may impinge on the action system for urban program performance. These questions concern the following types of city characteristics: (1) jurisdictional adequacy; (2) legal authority; (3) financial resources; (4) trained manpower; (5) public concern; (6) leadership; (7) bureaucratic rivalries; (8) governmental form (including pluralism and fragmentation); (9) concurrent problems and programs; (10) demographic characteristics; and (11) indices of problem areas.

Questions Concerning the Steps in the Action System

1. Identifying and defining the issue and problem:

(a) What critical events led to recognition of the problem?
(b) Who participated?
(c) How much participation in this step was there on the local/state/federal level?
(d) What was the nature of the federal, state, and/or local initiative?
(e) What was the nature of the official interest in and support for the program in the embryonic phase?

(f) How much involvement was there from the private sector?
(g) What bearing did the favorable, apathetic, or unfavorable attitudes of identifiable segments of the public have upon initiating action?

(h) Did the presence or absence of personal leadership affect the initiation of action?

(i) What type of technical information and general information was available about the problem and programs?

(j) From whom was it available?
(k) How available?
(l) Was it clear or obscure?

(m) How was the problem and the program perceived by the various parties?
(n) Was there any divergence here?
(o) Did these perceptions change during the various stages of the programs?
(p) Was there any divergence?

2. The Identification and Gathering of Resources and the Involvement
        of the Community:

(a) Were interested and qualified personnel available to initiate, plan,
    and carry on the action?
(b) Political or professional and technical personnel — were they available?
(c) In reference to certain programs, were civic, industrial and commercial
    groups available?
(d) And other parts of the community?

(e) How were participants persuaded as to the rightness of the goals
    of particular programs?
(f) Were other segments of the community opposed to the program?
(g) How did this affect the mobilization of resources and the eventual
    program performance?

(h) How was a determination made in regard to the technical requirements
    for preparing proposals?

(i) How were attention and interest built up to make the problem an
    action issue?
(j) Who made this an issue — private citizens, interested organizations,
    political parties, public officials, local/state/federal officials?
(k) At what stage, and how, did the Mayor and other executives and
    council become involved?

3. Development of a Plan of Action and Program Administration:

(a) How much federal (including regional administration of HUD), state,
    or local contribution was there in the development of ideas concerning
    a plan of action?
(b) Who contributed how much to the decision?
(c) Was it a single individual or a small group within the community?

(d) How much general public discussion and participation was there?

(e) How much were interest groups, private sectors, and political parties
    responsible for the decision?

(f) What alternatives were considered?

(g) How was the choice among alternative policies made?

(h) Was there, in fact, any real alternatives given characteristics of the city and other factors?

(i) Was the decision viewed the same by all parties to the decision, or was it viewed as the same program with different goals and allocating various rates of benefits to different groups?

(j) How clear was the decision made not only within the city but to other levels of government?

(k) How difficult was it to gather data concerning the program?

(l) Where does this data come from?

(m) How much did the data influence the development of the program and the program administration?

(n) How was it handled?

(o) What were the factors in deciding the significant elements of discretion such as choice of site, timing, schedule, and magnitude of the program?

(p) How were these decisions made and over what type of time span were they made?

(q) Did the city government have the technically qualified personnel to proceed?

(r) Was this a limiting factor?

(s) If so, how was it overcome, or was it?

(t) Did the city government have the financial resources to support the program?

(u) Did the city have the jurisdictional adequacy and the legal authority to perform the program?

(v) How long did it take to formulate the program?

4. Assignment of Management and Operation of Program:

(a) What factors were responsible for the decision as to where to place responsibility for administration and operation of the program?

(b) How was this decision made?

(c) Did the city government have the technically qualified personnel to proceed?

(d) How long did it take from program approval to first action in project construction?

(e) How long did it take to full scale effort?

(f) What accounts for length of time such as fast or slow start?

(g) Were there especially difficult organizational or technical problems?

(h) Did the program keep on schedule?
(i) What accounts for deviation?

(j) Was the effort large or small as related to the size and seriousness of the problem?

(k) Was there continuing official and public interest in the program?
(l) Was the change of personnel and elected officials relevant to the program?
(m) How available were qualified personnel throughout the program?

5. Coordination With Other Levels of Government:

(a) What were identifiable difficulties in securing state and/or federal approval (in the regional office or at headquarters)?
(b) What type of action was initiated to secure approval?
(c) Was it chiefly through administrative channels or was it at professional levels or political executive levels?
(d) Did party officials get involved, such as members of the Senate or House?

(e) How long did it take to secure approval?
(f) What consideration was given to other related programs in the process of program building and approval?
(g) Was revision of the program required by state or federal officials?
(h) Was the need for coordination perceived?
(i) By whom?
(j) What steps to coordinate were taken?

(k) Were the stipulated procedures clear, simple, direct and functional, or were they neutral or dysfunctional?
(l) Did the procedures change during the life of the program?
(m) What was the nature and effect of the change?

(n) Were direct personal interdepartmental and intergovernmental lines of communication open?
(o) Were they used and how effectively?

(p) When decisions or clearances consumed much time, to what extent was the time cost attributable to high volume of paperwork, shortage, of qualified personnel, internal opposition, and/or outside pressures, indecisiveness or unknown causes?

(q) When programs were formulated and approved, was there delay in funding?
(r) What were the limiting factors in funding?
(s) What sources were considered?

6. Evaluating the Program and Feedback:

(a) Were activities routinized?

(b) Were performance standards devised by which the level of routine activities could be measured?

(c) Was a formal reporting procedure developed?

(d) Was there adequate feedback from operating experience to program review and revision?

(e) What had been the achievements of the program measured by the basic problem as now perceived?

(f) Have there been any beneficial or detrimental byproducts of the program?

(g) What are the principal judgments about the program by local officials, state officials, federal officials, and others?

(h) What is the private judgment?

(i) Has opposition to the program continued, increased, or decreased?

(j) Looking back on the effort, would city officials undertake it again in the same way or differently?