

OPPORTUNITY

A Publication of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity

H. Ralph Taylor, assistant secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, said last month the Demonstration Cities legislation of 1966 is the first "joint venture" response to the critical need for new approaches to urban problem-solving.

Speaking at the conference on Poverty and Housing, sponsored by NJOEO, Taylor reviewed what President Johnson indicated to be three major thrusts of the proposal:

- ▶ To concentrate all available resources in planning tools, housing construction, job training, health facilities, recreation, welfare programs, education — to improve conditions of life in urban areas.
- ▶ To coordinate all available talents and skills.
- ▶ To mobilize local leadership and private initiative so that local citizens will determine the shape of their new city freed from the constraints that have handicapped their past efforts and inflated their costs.

Coordination, Planning Is Emphasized In N.J. Manpower Development Plan

A major advance in planning and coordinating all manpower programs is reflected in the New Jersey Manpower Development Plan for fiscal year 1967, submitted this month by Edward J. Hall, director of the State's Division of Employment Security, to the United States Department of Labor.

In the words of the Plan, "Governor Hughes called John C. Bullitt, NJOEO director, to convene a meeting of representatives of the Division of Employment Security, N.J. Department of Education, U.S. Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, N.J. Rehabilitation Commission, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and the N.J. Department of Institutions and Agencies for the purpose of forming the New Jersey Manpower Development Coordinating Committee, whose mission would be to develop policies and machinery for the rationalization and use of all federal, State and private manpower development resources available to the State, particularly as they affect its disad-

vantaged groups. Bullitt was designated by Governor Hughes as chairman of this Committee".

In addition to the Committee, local manpower development coordinating committees have been created to work with the parent committee in developing a State-wide manpower program, calling on all federal, State and local training resources.

Governor Hughes established these committees, recognizing that the growing variety of training programs need better coordination. He also recognized that a greatly improved State and local planning effort is required if the manpower needs of New Jersey's employers and the training needs of citizens are to be effectively met. Creation of this policy planning and coordinating mechanism also recognizes that a continuing joint review of policies and programs is required if the objectives of Governor Hughes' Executive Order No. 21 — the Governor's Code of Fair Prac-

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Antipoverty Heads Oppose EOA Shifts

Antipoverty officials of state and local agencies this month told a committee of the U.S. Senate that local initiative and innovation in the war against poverty would be seriously hampered, if proposed amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act were passed by the Congress.

The amendments in question have been recommended by the House Committee on Education and Labor which has proposed, in effect, a strict limitation on the flexibility of community action agencies to plan and create programs to combat poverty on a local level.

The House Committee recommends, for example, that a substantial proportion of federal monies heretofore available to community action agencies be channeled, instead, into the already established programs of Head Start and the Neighborhood Youth Corps. It also recommends that the 90 to 10 ratio of federal to local contributions to support local antipoverty programs be changed in the next fiscal year to 80-20.

Among those who testified several days ago against the House Committee's proposals were John C. Bullitt, director of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity, and Mitchell Sviridoff, director of Community Progress, Inc., in New Haven. Sviridoff also is president of the National Association for Community Development, and Bullitt is chairman of the NACD's program committee.

Sviridoff, accompanied by Bullitt, told the Senate Committee that he believed that Congress, in creating the USOEO and the local community action agency, sought to create mechanisms through which federal, state and local agencies could unite their vital interests into creative, working relationships.

"If this is to be meaningful," he said, "people will have to stop

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Training Institute Will Promote New Jobs For Hard-Core Poor

The New Jersey Community Action Training Institute has developed training programs for almost 2,000 people involved in urban and rural antipoverty activities in all parts of the State during its first six months of operation.

The Institute began working on the first statewide demonstration of community action training on December 1, 1965. By the end of June, it will actually have trained more than 400 antipoverty workers and will be prepared to launch a series of programs that will offer training opportunities to 1,500 more people.

New careers for the poor and the training of non-professionals have been built into the Institute itself and into every possible phase of the new programs. An effort will be made to reach into the human service professions and provide a catalyst for retraining and redistributing responsibilities. Hundreds of new jobs will be created for New Jersey's hard core unemployed. And hopefully, the Institute will provide a model that public and private agencies can use to revise their employment structure, to create new job opportunities for qualified unskilled residents of poverty areas, and to establish new career ladders in the human service professions.

Trainees involved in the completed or on-going programs include CAP and Neighborhood Service Center staff workers; Head Start teachers; and the field staff of the New Jersey Rural Manpower Development Program. The new programs will add to the list of trainees such groups as CAP board members; CAP directors, interns, fiscal and training officers, senior citizens, and many different kinds of nonprofessional workers.

Seminars will be conducted for CAP directors and board members. They will provide a meeting place or forum for antipoverty administrators and policy makers. Trainees will be given the opportunity of exchanging ideas and discussing problems concerning staff, program development and general management.

Training programs will also be held for CAP fiscal officers, and for CAP staff people involved in Program Development. The Institute will make a statewide effort to build a training capability into each CAP by conducting a program for local CAP Training Officers. Each funded CAP will be invited to appoint one staff person to serve as a training officer. He will be responsible for developing training programs that meet the particular needs of the CAP he represents and for administering as well as evaluating his own training efforts.

Two intern programs will be conducted in English and Spanish for some 50 CAP staff workers or board members involved in local community organization and development. The training will provide Spanish-speaking CAP personnel with the skills needed to develop organizations and projects within Spanish-speaking urban and rural communities. Emphasis will be on community organization and manpower employment opportunities.

A CAP Employment Center will be established to provide a statewide recruiting, training and job referral service to all CAPs. The Center will create a personnel

talent bank of professional antipoverty people for CAPs. It will find, evaluate and refer the best qualified candidates to agencies sponsoring urban and rural projects.

The Institute began its assignment by surveying the training needs of all funded CAPs in the State. It launched a series of crash programs that provided immediate assistance to 13 CAPs and offered training opportunities to more than 400 antipoverty workers, most of them from low income areas. Among the on-going or completed programs are: An Adult Education Demonstration for neighborhood workers; two Job Counselor Programs for CAP vocational and employment counselors; Neighborhood Service Center Staff Training Programs for CAPs in Paterson, Jersey City; in Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth, Mercer and Ocean Counties; and in the southwest region of the State.

The initial phase of the Institute program has been devoted to establishing a central training headquarters for New Jersey antipoverty workers and to creating the staff and administrative organization that was needed to develop and administer a statewide training program. As a private, nonprofit corporation, the Institute assembled a broadbased membership of 130 representatives of CAPs throughout the State. To oversee the program, a 21-member Board of Trustees was elected from participating CAPs, target area residents and major public and private organizations. The Institute has also enlisted the support, cooperation and participation of State departments, of statewide professional organizations, universities and other agencies involved in antipoverty activities.

For further information about new programs, please write to Barry A. Passett, Director, New Jersey Community Action Training Institute, 413 West State Street, Trenton.

The Green Thumb of 'Oldtimers'

Attribute to a group of "useless, old, castoff, country fellows" the roadside beautification that stretches today for long reaches of State highways in four New Jersey counties.

The description of these men may well have applied to them a couple of months ago. It doesn't now.

In glare jackets and bright helmets, they are clearing out accumulated undergrowth, trimming, planting and bringing a fresh new look to a long-neglected landscape. They are part of Project Green Thumb, a new antipoverty demonstration designed to give useful work to older low-income men, supplement their financial resources and bring purpose into their lives.

New Jersey is one of four states in the nation where Green Thumb is being put to the test.

"I think it's a wonderful idea," said Charles Sharp, 70-year-old field representative who directs the work of 22 men in Burlington and Gloucester Counties.

"This crew of fellows is the best bunch I've ever seen. They are able and good workers and there isn't one of them who doesn't like the work.

"The men need the work, and the work needs to be

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thinking of the community action agency as the creature of a new unit of federal government and think of it rather as a broad, local agency created by government at its highest level to relate the activities which affect the poor in a comprehensive way.

"We are not talking that way today. The stage is not being set for establishment of strong human resource planning agencies at the local level. If this remains a goal—and as I have clearly indicated, I think it the most important—I urge this Committee to take note of it and to look at the projected economic opportunity legislation from this perspective."

Following Sviridoff's reasoning, antipoverty officials told the Senate Committee that the bill reported out last month by the House Committee fails to recognize the need for local human resource planning agencies. They argued, in fact, that the bill would seriously hamper efforts to achieve it because:

▶ It weakens coordination at the federal level at a time when it should be strengthened.

▶ It severely limits local initiative and clearly detracts from the prestige and ability of community action agencies to become a vital force.

▶ It limits the possibility for innovation at a time when antipoverty leaders are praising the innovation which has already been brought about.

Speaking about specific recommendations, Sviridoff testified against raising the local share to 20 per cent at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

"Experience clearly shows that one of the reasons our communities have not been able to fight poverty effectively is the lack of adequate resources. Those programs which

require substantial non-federal contributions are the least widespread. If we are to reach the hard core of poverty, we are talking about those communities whose tax base is least able to produce the revenues necessary to meet local share requirements," he said.

Another provision strongly criticized was the House Committee's recommendation to reserve at least 20 per cent of community action funds for agencies independent of community action organizations.

"If the purpose of this provision is to make sure that community action agencies do not act in an arbitrary manner, I wholeheartedly concur, but this provision is in no sense an appropriate response to that possibility," Sviridoff said.

"This amendment, if adopted, could not help but greatly undermine the role of the local community action agency. Its wording seems calculated to cut the ground out of any possible cooperation. It is, if you will, a form of forced counterinsurgency and it would come at a time when it is clear that the projected level for funding all community action programs will fall far short of the reasonable demands of existing community action agencies, let alone those which should be initiated in the coming year. The inevitable failure of momentum will be apparent before half of the fiscal year is gone," Sviridoff testified.

The NACD president also was severely critical of the House Committee's recommendation to restrict community action salaries to be paid from federal funds to \$12,500.

"Probably the most objectionable aspect of this provision," he testified, "is that it singles out antipoverty personnel for a special kind of treatment which is not given to personnel under any other federally funded program.

"It can only be interpreted as a declaration that community action programs are not as worthy of competent people's attention as are housing programs, air pollution programs, highway programs, or any other federal program that can be mentioned. It says in effect that if you are interested in developing human resources and in assisting

the disadvantaged to become self-sufficient, you must sacrifice or be less competent than someone who wishes to work in a 'more respectable area.'

"This is an archaic philosophy which has held down our capability to deal with social problems for too many years and should be eliminated. The complex human problems of our communities are worthy of the best talent that we can get. Dedication alone will not solve them. We must compete for brains in this area as much as in any other and every member of this committee should realize that such an arbitrary limitation will lead only to mediocre programs."

In general support of community action effort, antipoverty officials emphasized to Senate Committee members that the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was meant to be far more than an additional source of federal funds aimed at the alleviation of poverty. Explicit in the Act, they said, were three concepts of great importance.

One was that the Act represented a new approach to the problems of poverty. It promised a comprehensive attack on its roots, one which focused on self-help rather than alleviation of suffering.

The Act also emphasized local action, officials pointed out. In contrast with many pieces of federal legislation, the Act recognized that there is no broad national solution in this area and allows for a maximum of planning and discretion on the local level.

Finally, the Act called for "the maximum feasible participation of the poor." In the 18 months in which antipoverty programs have operated under the Act, officials said, there has been significant activity in the United States and far more success than could have been hoped for.

During his testimony, Sviridoff said there have also been mistakes.

"I am afraid, however, that in reacting to these mistakes or frustrations of the first year, we may eliminate or hamper those things in the Act which have the greatest potential for a lasting effective impact on the disadvantaged of our country," he said.



*John C. Bullitt,
NJOEO Director,
heads manpower
coordinating unit.*

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tices — are to be met. Article VII
states, in part:

"All educational, counseling, and vocational guidance programs and all apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs of State agencies or in which State agencies participate . . . shall be conducted to encourage the fullest development of the interest, aptitudes, skills, and capacities of all students and trainees, with special attention to the problems of culturally deprived, educationally handicapped, or economically disadvantaged persons. Expansion of training opportunities under these programs shall also be encouraged with a view toward involving larger numbers of participants from those segments of the labor force where the need for upgrading levels of skill is greatest".

The Manpower Development Plan was put together in a crash effort by cooperating federal, State and local agencies, to meet a June 15 Labor Department deadline. Accordingly, the Plan states that:

"The State Manpower Development Coordinating Committee in concert with local committees will, following the submission of this Plan, undertake a review of all manpower programs in New Jersey with a view to (1) establishing priorities for training; (2) developing effective links between different federal, State and local programs to assure that comprehensive training is provided; and (3) assessing the effectiveness of such programs in achieving their stated objectives. Specifically, this review will include programs under the Manpower Development and Training Act, the Economic Opportunity Act, the Vocational Educational Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the Social Security Act, the Economic Development Act and other legislation providing manpower services.

"In addition, this will include a review of the projected MDTA training areas for fiscal year 1967 as contained in Table A of the State Plan in order to: (a) expand the projections to include integrated programs using other training resources such as Titles I and V of the EOA, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, etc.; (b) specify the

particular occupations for which training programs are needed and establish priorities among these occupational areas; (c) identify the special administrative and programmatic problems related to training the disadvantaged; and (d) develop methods and specific programs to meet priority needs, where appropriate, on a state-wide basis".

"This phase will be completed for submission to the Manpower Administration and other relevant federal agencies within ninety days after submission of the State Plan."

In recognition of the fact that few programs provide the full range of services which trainees require:

"Governor Hughes has asked that the Coordinating Committee assure that the variety of training programs funded through various sources are administered so as to provide the full range of services, to the extent such services are necessary, to meet the multiple personal, social and skill problems of the disadvantaged, and other workers. This includes recruitment, evaluation, basic education, pre-vocational training, health, skill training, guidance, job counseling, job placement and follow-up.

"The Committee will accordingly develop and recommend policies and procedures to effectively link all federal and State funding sources so as to assure the availability to all persons of a comprehensive range of manpower services".

Recognizing the priority needs of the disadvantaged, the Manpower Development Plan provides:

"Persons referred by the Neighborhood Youth Corps and Title V sponsors, the Rehabilitation Commission, welfare agencies, and other disadvantaged persons referred by community action agencies, shall be given preference in the selection of trainees for MDTA institutional and on-the-job training programs. In order to effectuate the above, local coordinating committees shall develop mechanisms for joint decisions regarding procedures for the selection of trainees, specific training courses, the form and extent of basic education, the kinds of additional pre-vocational training services that will be provided and the means of effecting logical progres-

sion from NYC, Title V and other work experience programs to institutional and on-the-job training".



RONALD OSSMAN, BCCAP Director

Views In Burlington

To Ronald E. Ossmann, executive director of the Burlington County Community Action Program, Inc. (BCCAP), the antipoverty campaign is like a newly-planted seed.

"We've just begun to plant seeds that may not blossom for 10 years. First, the ground must be kept fertile. Then, we have to hope and pray there is the right amount of rain and sun. And, of course, we have to protect the growing plant from weeds and other parasites."

As antipoverty director of the State's largest County in size and second largest in population growth, Ossmann feels the analogy illustrates the enormous task of reaching a growing and transient urban-rural poor scattered throughout nearly 820 square miles of land.

Burlington stretches 85 miles from Bordentown, a small urban town of about 6,500 outside Trenton, southeast to New Gretna, a rural municipality near the Atlantic coast.

"The County is classified as urban because most of its people live in towns along the Delaware River crescent in the County's northwest section," Ossmann explained. "But geographically and economically, the County is rural. People in the southern townships, our forgotten land, are far from services; transportation is a real problem and incomes are low.

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done. They have pride in their work and appreciate doing something useful," Sharp said. He was talking about men whose average age is 68.

One member of Sharp's crew, now working along Route 70, is Walter Harrison, 69, and, like Sharp, a resident of Beverly.

"A man works all his life," Harrison said, "then, suddenly, there's nothing to do; nobody wants an old fella, and today you're old at 45.

"Now this Green Thumb; this is something. There is no problem at all with absenteeism. We all enjoy knowing this work is needed. We'll live longer, I'll bet you that. We have appetites, for a change, and something worthwhile to occupy our minds and hands."

Green Thumb also cultivates in other ways. Training is one example. In spite of the fact that all the workers have some agricultural experience in their backgrounds, one of the Program's prerequisites, many of the men have not been active for a number of years. A large number of them are on Social Security.

Besides the instruction they receive upon entering the Program, they get special training in landscape gardening and related subjects so that when they leave the project, they could be placed in better jobs.

"We intend to make a concerted effort at the end of the season to place these men in other work," said Samuel Lipetz, State director of the New Jersey Farmers Union, Green Thumb project.

"There are many possibilities," Lipetz said. "Nurseries, tree farms, the State Highway Department, public parks. Some of the men may want to go into their own small business—gardening work—for example. If so, we will try to help them get a loan through the Farmers Home Administration or the Small Business Administration."

Green Thumb began in New Jersey two months ago with a grant of \$175,000 from the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity to the National Farmers Union and a \$150,000 contribution from State agencies, including the Highway Department, which assigns work areas in Mercer and Hunterdon Counties, as well, and provides equipment and plantings.

The Department sees to it that all applicants, who have to be at least 55 and have poverty-level incomes, receive medical examinations. If they fail the medical, the N. J. Commission on Rehabilitation takes over and attempts to correct their problems. After introductory training, including highway safety and first aid instruction, they go to work at \$1.50 an hour, four days a week. During the life of the program, funded until the end of December, the men can earn up to a maximum of \$1,500; a limitation that was built into the project partly to avoid conflict with Social Security benefits most of the men receive.

"I think the State Highway Department is very pleased with the work that has been done. We were only allowed to hire 70 men this year, but I understand



A GREEN THUMB crew on Rt. 70

that the Department could use 500 men around the State," Lipetz said.

"The work these fellows are doing machinery can't do; it's all hand work. They're doing a great job. I hope we can extend the Green Thumb program into other counties next year," Lipetz remarked.

Jack Lloyd, State highway landscape supervisor, agrees. "Yes, I can see a program next year. It's a very good thing and the men are doing a wonderful job. There is a great future for them. Perhaps, sometime, they can move over into the interstate system," Lloyd said.

Scouting Reaches Poverty Boys

New Jersey has the only Specialty Explorer Scout Post to be sponsored by a community action program in the United States, because Arthur Stannard, unit manager for Northwest New Jersey Community Action Program, wanted to give boys from disadvantaged homes the opportunity of "learning and earning the advantages of scouting."

Stannard, an Eagle Scout himself who has devoted 16 years to the movement believes scouting has bypassed the boy from the low-income family. He feels participation in scouting can give security and a sense of purpose to many boys whose disoriented home lives denies them such assets.

Based on these convictions, NNJCAP requested and received a charter for a Specialty Explorer Scout Post in April, and Stannard became Explorer advisor to the 14 boys who enrolled as members, many of them with backgrounds that included difficulty with school and trouble with local law enforcement agencies.

In their new Post, the teenage boys meet every third

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Of the nearly 51,000 families living within the County's sprawling confines, more than 11.2 per cent earn less than \$3,000 a year; 2.28 per cent earn less than \$1,000 annually. About 4 per cent of the County's 266,000 people are unemployed persons 14 years old or over. Burlington also has 3.27 per cent of the State's dilapidated housing.

As a result, BCCAP is striving to overcome geographic liabilities which keep the poor, more than usually, hidden and inaccessible. Noting that the County's most pressing needs are for industry, transportation and education, Ossmann said BCCAP hopes to provide assistance through mobile service centers in poverty areas throughout the County.

"Poverty cannot be eradicated overnight. In fact, most of the initial results are intangible, because we're trying to affect people's lives and provide incentives for the poor," he said.

"There are many problems yet to solve and the war on poverty should serve as a catalyst. The work is slow and the real results are unglamorous; it is dramatic only by providing long-range opportunities for people."

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Thursday evening of the month in the Oddfellows Building in Frenchtown. Stannard and Harvey Rossnagle, NNJCAP area representative in Hunterdon County, transport the boys to and from the meetings.

The program of the Post has been designed along lines prescribed by the national scouting organization. Like other members of scout troops, the boys in Stannard's Post will work up the ladder of scouting achievement, from Tenderfoot to Eagle Scout.

In the area of study, however, Stannard has made one departure from the normal scouting program. To prepare the youngsters for future careers, he has arranged for them to work not only at advancement in scouting, but also in special fields of interest such as automobiles, soil and water conservation and law enforcement. He believes the emphasis on pre-job training will make scouting an even more meaningful experience for a disadvantaged youth.

Because no antipoverty funds are being used for the program, the boys will earn money themselves to buy their own uniforms. They will begin working soon on money-making projects designed by the George Washington Council for Scouting in Hunterdon County.

Stannard says he is surprised and delighted by the response members of his Post already have shown.



SCOUTING: "A sense of purpose"

"Their attitude toward adults seems to have changed even after a few meetings," he said. "They seem to have more respect as a result of the attention which is being paid to them."

If the Post succeeds, Stannard hopes to establish more like it throughout Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren Counties, so all disadvantaged boys in the area, who want to, can experience scouting.

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