



APPENDIX A

THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

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APPENDIX A. THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

I. BACKGROUND

- Among early settlers church was key social institution, with spirit of helping others
- Industrial revolution = development of settlement house
- Early 1900's = schools of social work; Great depression of 1930's = need for help
- Fed gov & The New Deal = S.S. Program, unemployment ins and banking/labor laws

II. CREATION 1964

- Assn Pres Kennedy (Nov 1963) = Pres Johnson expands policy ideas of Kennedy
- War on Poverty born; Sargent Shriver heads task force draft legisl on...EOA enacted 1964; Sargent Shriver Director of Office of Economic Opportunity 1964-1969
- Congress passed Civil Rights Act of 1964
- EOA = employment & training, education, Job Corps, Youth Corps and VISTA

III. FORMATIVE YEARS: 1964 – 1967

- OEO leads War on Poverty & coordinate related programs w/other fed agencies
- CAA types = grassroots to community-controlled to those w/boards/profess staff; OEO provides funds
- EOA provision = poor participate in identifying problems and developing solutions; during this phase OEO hired 3,000 fed employees to manage/monitor new programs
- Regarding lack of (political) control over CAA's, mayors appeal to Congress & Pres Johnson – result = funds earmarked into “congressionally-defined national emphasis programs, reducing ability of CAA's to use funds otherwise.

IV. RESTRUCTURING PHASE: 1967 – 1968

- Late 1967 – congress passes Green Amendment requiring CAA's to be designated as official CAA of that area by elected officials.
- Congress passed Quie Amendment, requiring CAA Boards of Directors to be 1/3 elected officials, 1/3 representing low-income community and balance=private sector

V. TRANSITION YEARS: 1969 – 1974

- 1969 – many self-help programs due to OEO & CAA's = Head Start, family planning, community health centers, legal services, VISTA, foster grandparents, economic development, neighborhood centers, summer youth programs, adult basic education, senior centers and congregate meal preparation.
- Pres Nixon – transfer of several large programs from OEO to Dept of Health, Education & Welfare and DOL.
- 1973, 2nd term Nixon – no request for CAA funds, but Congress delivers; yet Nixon places Howard Phillips as Director OEO, instructs close office, don't spend the \$\$\$
- Lawsuits arise, and Fed Dist Court in D.C. rules pres cannot over rule Congress funds appropriation.

VI. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT YEARS: 1974 – 1981

- 1974, Pres Ford = Community Services Amendments passed, OEO dismantled and replaced by CSA (Community Service Administration).
- 1974-1981 – CSA funds CAA's, additionally create and support federally-funded senior centers and congregate meal sites; 1970 = Weatherization and energy programs
- Late 1970's – Pres Carter strengthens role and mgmt systems of CSA and CA's; this local spirit and leadership came to quick end with Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act of 1981

VII. BLOCK GRANT YEARS: 1981 – PRESENT

- Pres Reagan – strong movement to reduce fed govt support for social programs; proposes consolidating human service need programs into several large general purpose block grants, reduce funding by 25% and give states authority over
- Congress creates 8 new block grants consolidating 200 fed programs, reduced core funding and gave authority to states, but did not eliminate CAA funding
- Sept 1981 – CSA abolished and EOA rescinded, but new CSBG ensured funding of eligible entities – CAA's, migrant programs and other orgs funded under CSA

FDR and the New Deal

Background

Following the Great War, as the only major western nation not devastated by that conflict, Americans felt pretty good about themselves. The continued economic growth, political conservatism and general absence of concerns over foreign affairs led Americans to think of themselves as "having it made." Proof of America's spirit and achievements seemed to be personified by Charles Lindberg's historic flight from New York to Paris in 1927. But the 1920s also saw deep divisions in the country despite the "roaring" atmosphere brought about by bathtub gin, speakeasies, flappers, women voting, jazz, sports and all the rest. Then at the end of that self-satisfied, raucous and somewhat grumpy decade, when the expectations of many Americans knew no bounds, the stock market crashed and the Great Depression hit.

The depth of the Great Depression is difficult for us to fathom in these times of prosperity in the early 21st century. Recent recessions, upheavals in various sectors of the economy, layoffs, bankruptcies and other casualties, as trying as they may be for those who suffer them, cannot compare with the massive losses of the 1930s, not just in terms of wealth, but in terms of human dignity, hope, promise and a sense that "this too shall pass." It did not pass for a long time, and for some there seemed no way out but suicide. So frequent were the suicides that newspapers actually ran cartoons or comments on the phenomenon, perhaps in an attempt to cheer people up. It did not work—the depression went on, and on, and on. Many Americans never got over the shock.

[More on the Great Depression](#)

Into that troubled world came Franklin Delano Roosevelt—to this day one of the most controversial Presidents in our history and yet by almost any definition one of our greatest. Like his predecessors in office—his cousin Theodore, and Woodrow Wilson, whom he served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for eight years—FDR saw government as an instrument for helping people. In 1914-1918 government organized the economy to meet the emergency of World War I; in 1933 Franklin Roosevelt came to Washington determined to use government to organize the economy again—this time against the enemies caused by the Great Depression: unemployment, poverty and hopelessness. His goal of easing suffering is for most unquestioned; his methods remain the source of controversy. Whatever one decides, it is clear that the legacy of the New Deal is still with us in a powerful way.

[The Rise of Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#)

The Election of 1932: The dispirited Republicans renominated Hoover, but it was hopeless. FDR had used the governorship of New York to experiment with anti-depression programs, but regardless of his record, he was almost sure to win. FDR got 22,809,000 votes and 472 electoral votes to Hoover's 15,758,000 million popular and 59 electoral votes. President Hoover was humiliated and the landslide of 1928 was reversed.

The New Deal Spirit

Most Americans know the phrase from FDR's first inaugural address, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." But in addition to those encouraging words, his address contained much more, much of it couched in words that evoked military action:

I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require. These measures, or such other measures as the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom, I shall seek, within my constitutional authority, to bring to speedy adoption.

But in the event that the Congress shall fail to take one of these two courses, and in the event that the national emergency is still critical, I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.

That last sentence earned the loudest applause from the inauguration crowd. Serving under President

Woodrow Wilson during the Great War, Roosevelt had watched President Wilson organize the economy to meet the emergency of World War I; in 1933 Franklin Roosevelt came to Washington determined to use government to organize the economy again—this time against the enemies caused by the Great Depression: unemployment, poverty, and hopelessness. His goal of easing suffering is for most unquestioned; his methods remain the source of controversy. Whatever one decides, it is clear that the legacy of the New Deal is still with us in a powerful way.

When Franklin Roosevelt moved into the White House, he brought with him a remarkable attitude. Those who knew Roosevelt well found him unfailingly pleasant, optimistic, and good-natured. As the New Deal progressed, Roosevelt's manner disconcerted some, for in any conversation he always gave the listener the sense that he agreed with or was at least sympathetic to everything his interlocutor had to say. Thus a number of visitors learned the hard way that while Franklin Roosevelt seemed agreeable to their proposals, that did not mean he was necessarily going to follow up on their suggestions.

Those who knew Roosevelt well found him unfailingly pleasant, optimistic, and good-natured. What came out of Franklin Roosevelt's White House via his fireside chats, his regular meetings with the press (Roosevelt held more press conferences than any president before or since), and reports of those who dealt with him on a regular basis was a sense that something good was happening. Roosevelt always began his fireside chats with the greeting, "My friends," and many people had a sense that he was their friend.

As the New Deal progressed, however, Roosevelt's manner disconcerted some, for in any conversation he always gave the listener the sense that he agreed with or was at least sympathetic to everything his interlocutor had to say. Thus a number of visitors learned the hard way that although Franklin Roosevelt seemed agreeable to their proposals, that did not mean he was necessarily going to follow up on their suggestions. Yet even as his political enemies found much to criticize—and Roosevelt developed many political opponents on both the right and left—millions of Americans felt that at long last the government was finally hearing their cries for assistance. The huge outpouring of major legislation in the first hundred days of his administration was unprecedented; but Roosevelt himself knew that whatever talents he might possess, he was no miracle worker: the problems were too vast and deep. But he gave people hope.

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Those who believed that Franklin Roosevelt was doing more harm than good seemed to bear a particular animus toward him because, as his old headmaster from the Groton School, Endicott Peabody, put it, Roosevelt had betrayed his class. A cartoon in *The New Yorker* magazine early in the New Deal years showed a group of obviously prosperous, upper-class people emerging from a posh restaurant. Out for an evening of entertainment, one of them offered the suggestion, "Let's all go down to the movie theater and hiss Roosevelt." In those pre-television days, people got their visual news in movie theaters from newsreels, and Roosevelt quickly came to dominate them.

In the family of this writer lived a genteel old lady whose father had been named for Henry Clay, the famous Whig. My grandmother rarely uttered a bad word, but she was quickly provoked by that patrician Hudson Valley voice. "Damned jackass!" she would mutter over and over whenever FDR was on the radio. As his landslide victory in 1936 showed, however, millions of Americans approved of what he was trying to do.

The Hundred Days

The first one hundred days of Franklin Roosevelt's administration constitute one of the most remarkable explosions of legislation in the history of the Congress. The long lame-duck session meant that Roosevelt was not inaugurated until March 4 (the last time that occurred, as the 20th Amendment soon moved inauguration day up to January 20). Between Roosevelt's election and inauguration thousands of banks closed their doors; many people had withdrawn their money and stuffed it under their mattresses for safe keeping, which only made matters worse.

President Roosevelt immediately called a special session of Congress to deal with the banking crisis. On March 9 he sent an Emergency Banking Act to Congress, where it was passed and then signed by the president that

day. The act gave the president broad discretionary power to regulate financial transactions, and he immediately called a national bank holiday. The Treasury Department granted licenses for banks to reopen, and the act also prohibited the awarding of gold, and so on. Then Roosevelt went on the air with his first fireside chat, explaining his actions to the people "in terms even a banker could understand." His precipitous action checked the money panic.

On March 20 the president signed the Economy Act, which sought to balance the budget by reducing government salaries 15 percent. It also cut private pensions and reorganized government agencies for greater economy; in the end it saved about \$243 million.

The Democrats had promised an end of Prohibition, and with passage of the 21st amendment, Congress passed the Beer and Wine Revenue Act of March 22, which taxed alcoholic beverages to raise federal revenue.

On March 31 Congress passed the Civilian Conservation Corps Reforestation Act, which established the Civilian Conservation Corps and provided 250,000 jobs for males ages 18–25. Wages were \$30 per month, part of which was to go to dependents. (A family could eat on a dollar a day in those hard times.) Under the act, work camps were built and run by different federal departments to work on conservation projects such as planting trees to combat soil erosion; to improve national forests; and to create fish, game, and bird sanctuaries. By 1941 two million young men had served in the CCC, and many of their works are still standing in America's forests.



Within less than a month of FDR's inauguration four major bills had been passed, and more was to come. On April 19 the United States officially abandoned the gold standard, which some have called the "most revolutionary act of the New Deal." This meant that paper money would no longer be redeemable in gold. The value of the dollar soon declined abroad, which stopped the drain of American gold to Europe. The government fixed the value of gold at \$35 per ounce, and it became illegal

for citizens to own gold, except in jewelry and other artifacts. At the same time the government purchased large quantities of silver, and silver certificates continued to be redeemable in silver, generally coins. (The "Washington Quarter" was mostly silver in content until 1964.)

Additional measures of the Hundred Days included:

The May 12 **Federal Emergency Relief Act** created the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, funded at \$500 million, one half of which was to go to the states for direct relief. The remainder was to match state funds for unemployment relief at a rate of \$1 for 3. Harry Hopkins was appointed relief administrator.

Under the leadership of Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace, Congress pulled out all the stops to help farmers, passing the **Agricultural Adjustment Act**, the Emergency Farm Mortgage Act, and the Farm Credit Act. The acts provided for the elimination of surplus crops, establishment of parity prices, and the reduction of crop production by paying farmers to allow land to lie fallow. In the process, animals were slaughtered and crops plowed under, which Secretary Wallace himself called a "shocking commentary on our civilization."



On May 18 the **Tennessee Valley Authority** was created as an "experiment" in social planning. The TVA was given authority to build dams and power plants and to develop the entire region economically by selling power, and so on. The TVA, a pet project of FDR's, which he visited several times, became a yardstick for evaluating the operation of power companies, establishing fair rates, and so on. Nine dams were built and existing dams were acquired by the TVA. During World War II power from TVA dams was used to produce munitions and support operations at Oak Ridge, which were part of the Manhattan (atomic bomb) Project.

FDR signs the TVA Act.

On June 16 the Banking Act Of 1933 (the Glass-Steagall Act) created the **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)**, which protected all bank deposits up to \$5,000 and widened the power of the Federal Reserve Board over member banks. The act separated commercial and investment banking, and forced banks to get out of the investment business, restricting the use of bank deposits for speculative ventures. Today the FDIC insures all bank deposits up to \$100,000.

The National Industrial Recovery Act of June 16 created the **National Recovery Administration (NRA)**, probably the most controversial of the New Deal measures. The act established fair trade codes and provided for industrial self-regulation with government supervision. The act included restrictions of plant operations, the establishment of a minimum wage, prohibition against child labor, and limited the work week to forty hours. The NRA symbol was the Blue Eagle—which businesses could display after "Signing the pledge." The NRA also created the Public Works Administration (PWA), budgeted with \$3.3 billion to be spent on public works construction to provide employment, raise purchasing power, promote welfare, and contribute to the revival of American industry.

Additional acts included new laws to control information on new securities being offered to the public; to make paper legal tender; to establish a federal employment service to help people find jobs; to make loans for people to pay taxes, make repairs on homes, and refinance mortgages; to improve efficiency of railroads by reorganization and creating a federal coordinator of transportation.

That huge outpouring of legislation brought the hundred days to an end, but the New Deal continued to expand government activity throughout 1933 and into 1934 and '35. Although the New Deal measures were considered radical by many at the time, the social and economic reforms introduced by Roosevelt had been common in Europe for some time. In addition, beginning with the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, the government has increasingly adopted policies that tended to abandon the idea of "laissez-faire" capitalism. Progressives led by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson had continued the process.

The most remarkable aspect of the New Deal, especially in its early days, was the speed with which it was put into practice. The model legislation produced in the first hundred days of Franklin Roosevelt's first term was comparable to the entire amount of major business legislation passed during the Gilded Age. Just as remarkable, the New Deal suddenly brought millions of average Americans an awareness of government that they had never had before. Government now became a part of people's daily lives.

Many of Roosevelt's critics have charged him with creating a welfare state, but Roosevelt continually supported programs designed to put people back to work. The Civil Works Administration, created in November 1933, provided jobs as diverse as ditch digging and highway repairs and teaching.

The troubles of the American farmer were exacerbated by the great drought that began in 1931, creating what was known as the "dust bowl." Severe storms blew clouds of dust raised from plowed fields and dried out prairies across the southern Great Plains. The storms destroyed crops and equipment, and people and animals suffered. Close to a million people, sometimes called "Okies," left Oklahoma and other areas of the Midwest during the 1930s and 1940s and headed for California. (Their trials are chronicled in John Steinbeck's classic work, *Grapes of Wrath*.) When the AAA was declared unconstitutional, four additional programs were instituted, and by 1940 millions of farmers were receiving subsidies under federal programs.

Still the Depression lingered on, and the social dislocations resulting from extended periods of unemployment that kept thousands in abject poverty took a grave toll on substantial portions of the population, especially in areas such as Appalachia and in manufacturing regions where heavy industries had been brought almost to a standstill. Marriages were delayed, birthrates plummeted, and a federal bureau determined that approximately 20 percent of all American children were underfed. Armies of men, women, and even children rode the rails in search of employment or any opportunity to improve their poverty-stricken lives.

The Hundred Days: Summary

- March 4 FDR inaugurated, calls special session of Congress to deal with banking crisis, then holds them in session to meet with other crises. Goals are relief, recovery and reform.
- March 9 EMERGENCY BANKING ACT is introduced, passed, approved in one day. Gives President broad discretionary power to regulate financial transactions. Treasury Department grants licenses for bank reopenings; gold hoarding prohibited, etc. Checked money panic.

- March 20 ECONOMY ACT. Sought to balance budget by reducing government salaries 15%; cut pensions, reorganized government agencies for greater economy. Saved about \$243 million against FDR estimate of \$500 million.
- March 22 BEER-WINE REVENUE ACT. 3.2 beer, wine, etc., taxed to enhance federal revenue.
- March 31 The CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS REFORESTATION ACT establishes the Civilian Conservation Corps and provides 250,000 jobs for males ages 18-25 with wages of \$30 per month, part to go to dependents. Work camps built, run, by different departments. Two million young men serve by 1941.
- April 19 U.S. officially abandons gold standard—the "most revolutionary act of the New Deal." Dollar declines abroad; stopped drain of gold to Europe. Value of gold fixed at \$35 per ounce. It becomes illegal for citizens to own gold, except in jewelry, etc.
- May 12 FEDERAL EMERGENCY RELIEF ACT creates FERA. \$500 million, 1/2 for direct relief to states, rest to match state funds for relief \$1 for 3. Later increased to \$% billion. Harry Hopkins appointed relief administrator. For unemployment.
- AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ACT; EMERGENCY FARM MORTGAGE ACT. Every major device applicable to farm relief. Elimination of surplus crops. Establishment of parity prices. For reducing crops, allowing land to lie fallow, farmers paid "rental." Slaughtered 6 million pigs, authorized cotton plow under, etc. Cleaning up the wreckage of unbalanced production. Destroying crops a "Shocking commentary on our civilization." AAA established, run by Wallace. Refinancing farm mortgages. Amendment to the act also provided for currency inflation through silver coinage, paper, etc.
- May 18 TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY. "Experiment" in social planning. Government had previously built power plants at Muscle Shoals, Ala., but unable to dispose of. Bills for government operation vetoed. FDR has big plans, visits site. TVA has authority to build dams, power plants, develop region economically, sell power, fertilizer. "Yardstick" for fair operation of power companies, rates, etc. 9 dams built. WWII power for munitions, Oak Ridge, etc. Humane (graves, etc.)
- May 27 FEDERAL SECURITIES ACT. Full disclosure of all information on new securities being offered. Registration with FTC.
- June 5 GOLD REPEAL JOINT RESOLUTION. Cancels gold transactions, makes paper legal tender.
- June 6 NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM ACT. U.S. Employment Service. Works with states to place people in jobs.
- June 13 HOME OWNERS REFINANCING ACT. HOLC can make loans, advance cash for taxes, repairs, etc. Refinance mortgages.
- June 16 BANKING ACT OF 1933 (GLASS-STEAGALL ACT) Creates FDIC. Deposits up to \$5000 covered. Strengthened, widened power of FRB over banks. Separates commercial and investment banking, makes banks get out of the investment business, restricts use of bank deposits for speculative ventures. Fixed situation that went back to wildcat days of Jackson era.
- FARM CREDIT ACT. Refinancing based on credits for production.
- EMERGENCY RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION ACT. Sought to improve efficiency by reorganization, etc. Reduced overlapping services, etc. Federal Coordinator of Transportation created.
- THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RECOVERY ACT. Creates NRA. Fair trade codes—industrial self-regulation with government supervision. Plant operation restrictions, minimum wages \$12-13 per week, no child labor, limited week to 40 hours, etc. Blue Eagle—"Signing the pledge. The Act
- PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION established to build roads, public buildings, etc. Also included white collar jobs—writers, artists, etc.

End of the 100 Days: The New Deal Continues, 1933

October 18 COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION. More relief for farmers; support for farm prices.

November 8 CIVIL WORKS ADMINISTRATION. Outgrowth of FERA. Provides emergency unemployment relief. Creates 4 million federal, state, local make-work projects.

1934

- January 30 GOLD RESERVE ACT OF 1934. President controls value of dollar, impound gold stocks, etc. Fixed gold value of dollar at 60 cents
- January 31 FARM MORTGAGE REFINANCING ACT. Established Federal Farm Mortgage Corporation.

- February 2 EXPORT-IMPORT BANK. Encourage overseas commerce.
- February 15 CIVIL WORKS EMERGENCY RELIEF ACT. \$950 million for use by FERA for relief—leads to WPA.
- June 6 SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT. Established Securities and Exchange Commission.
- June 19 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS ACT creates FCC.
- June 28 National Housing Act establishes FHA. Covers mortgages, farms, small business properties, etc.

1935: The Second New Deal

- April 8 EMERGENCY RELIEF APPROPRIATION ACT establishes WPA—over 3 million by June 1936.
- May 1 Resettlement Administration. Moves poor families to "Greenbelt" towns.
- May 11 Rural Electrification Administration (REA) established. Electrifies the rural South.
- June 26 National Youth Administration created under WPA. Relief work for youths 16-25 from relief families.
- July 5 NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT ("Wagner-Connery Act") made labor more powerful; guaranteed collective bargaining rights. Created NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD. Salvaged some of NLRA.
- August 14 SOCIAL SECURITY ACT. Partial response to Townsend-Long coalition. Unemployment compensation; old age and survivors' *insurance*; *old-age pensions*; relief for blind, homeless, crippled, etc. Payments very low (\$10-40/month.)
- August 30 REVENUE ACT OF 1935 (WEALTH TAX ACT). FDR: "Unjust concentration of wealth and power." Called "Soak the rich act." 75% on highest incomes—estates, gift taxes, excess profits. More graduated rates established for business.

A New Deal for the Indians

In 1924 all American Indians had been granted citizenship as American citizens. For over a century the development of Indian and white relations had centered around one basic dilemma: Should the Indians be "Americanized" and separated from their cultural surroundings to become everyday American citizens? Or would the Indians be allowed to remain on reservations or in other protected areas so that they could continue to live according to their cultural traditions? The answer, of course, is that for much of American history Indians have followed both paths. Some have become assimilated, and some have resisted assimilation. The topic remains controversial within Indian cultures, and it must be kept in mind that even today, the existing Indian cultures are quite diverse.

An example of a cultural issue that reflects Indian diversity is the ongoing debate over Indian "mascot" names. Many tribes object to the use of Indian names or symbols by athletic teams. On the other hand, the Seminole Tribe in Florida has no objection to the use of their name by Florida State University. As is true with most cultural issues, there are various sides to the story.

Many people assumed that the granting of citizenship to Indians would complete the process of assimilation. But many Indians continued to live on reservations and were more dependent than ever upon the government for much of their welfare. Forced assimilation had proved destructive to Indian cultures and did not provide a suitable economic basis upon which Indians could live their lives.

Franklin Roosevelt appointed Indian reformer John Collier as Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian affairs. Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes said, "Collier was the best equipped man who ever occupied the office," as Collier had worked as an Indian reformer for some time and was familiar with many of the problems of Native American culture. Collier hoped to be able to preserve Indian culture and heritage and resolve the complicated issues of Indian lands and Indian government.

The focal point of Collier's program was the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA). The purpose of the act as stated in its preamble was "to conserve and develop Indian lands and resources; to extend to Indians the right to form business and other organizations; to establish a credit system for Indians; to grant certain rights of home rule to Indians; to provide for vocational education for Indians; and ... other purposes." Collier's chief aim was to return Indian lands to tribal control, while at the same time continuing to allow individual use of the lands and to maintain inheritance rights.

Along with the IRA, Collier used various other New Deal programs to assist the Indians, including the Public Works Administration and the Civil Works Administration. He established an Indian Civilian Conservation Corps, and oversaw the construction of schools and hospitals as well as various training programs. Collier continued to work for the acquisition of new land for Indians and to establishment self-government for those tribes who lived on reservations. He continued his services throughout World War II, finally resigning in 1945. Accepting Collier's resignation with regret, FDR praised his services and commended him for having reoriented government policies toward the Indians.

Most observers feel that John Collier's motives were of the highest and that he sincerely wanted to help the Native American populations. But more recently a number of historians have criticized the Indian Reorganization Act and Collier's administration of it on various grounds. Today there are over 570 federally recognized American Indian tribes in the United States. Those tribes have a formal relationship with the U.S. government, referred to as a government-to-government relationship, based on the fact that the organized Indian tribes living on reservations now possess a sovereignty that is higher than that of the states. In addition to relationships with the federal government, many tribes have special relationships with the states in which they are located.

Generally, the governing authority on Indian reservations is the tribal government. That means, for example, that if one is on the Navajo reservation in Arizona, one is subject to Navajo law. Indian governments on reservation areas include the full spectrum of generally recognized government agencies, from presidents or chief executives to legislative bodies, courts, administrative and police agencies.

Read the sources and decide what you think about FDR.

- [Commonwealth Club Address, 1932](#)
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt: First Inaugural Address](#), March 1933
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt: Fireside Chat--1934](#)
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt: 2nd Inaugural Address](#)

Documents on the Great Depression and the New Deal

- [Crash!](#)
- [A View of Poverty](#)
- [The Depression and Self-Esteem](#)
- [The Depression in Chicago](#)
- [Radio Address by Harry Hopkins](#)
- [Senator Huey Long's Share Our Wealth Program](#)
- [The Social Social Security Act](#)
- [The National Industrial Recovery Act](#)

The following points are relevant:

FDR had no coherent blueprint for what he wanted to do. He was willing to experiment, to bend his own Constitutional authority, to wheedle and cajole Congress, to send apparently conflicting messages. Assaulted from both left and right, he was probably more conservative and more radically liberal than his opponents on either side would have admitted.

The New Deal did not end the Depression. FDR's programs improved life for millions and gave hope to many others, but it did not end or repair the underlying causes of economic problems. The massive government spending during World War II was what finally revived the economy.

During FDR's Administration American voting patterns shifted dramatically. African Americans began to feel the hand of government lifting them up rather than pushing them down, and they shifted from voting about 80% Republican to 80% Democratic.

The Democratic Party became the majority Party and dominated the White House, Congress or both down to the present. For only a handful of years since 1933 have Republicans controlled the White House and Congress

War on Poverty

[US History Encyclopedia](#): War on Poverty

Stemming from a decision made in November 1963 to pursue a legislative agenda that economic advisers to President John F. Kennedy had planned, the War on Poverty consisted of a series of programs in the areas of health, education, and welfare that Congress passed in 1964 and 1965. When President Lyndon Johnson declared an "[unconditional](#) war on poverty" in his 1964 State of the Union address, he referred to federal aid to education and medical care for the elderly as important parts of that war. Although these measures passed in 1965, an [omnibus](#) act, prepared by a special task force of President Johnson's Council of Economic Advisers, became the legislative vehicle most closely associated with the War on Poverty. The House Education and Labor Committee began to consider this legislation, known as the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), in April 1964, and the measure passed Congress that August.

The Office of Economic Opportunity

Run as part of the Executive Office of the president and directed by Sargent Shriver, a brother-in-law of President Kennedy, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) served as the [bureaucratic](#) center for the war. Shriver's Office of Economic Opportunity contained assistant directors for each of the three most important components of the Economic Opportunity Act. The [Job Corps](#), the first of these components, based on New Deal models such as the [Civilian Conservation Corps](#), recruited 10,000 people by 30 June 1965 to receive vocational training in urban training centers, frequently located on abandoned military bases, or in smaller conservation camps managed by the Agriculture and Interior departments. The conservation camps stressed the value of discipline and physical labor in rural settings such as forests and recreational areas.

By the end of 1966, the Job Corps encountered serious opposition in Congress. Training inner-city youths for [meaningful](#) jobs turned out to be an expensive and difficult task. The fact that some Job Corps trainees committed crimes and that a riot erupted at one Job Corps training center added to the negative publicity. Nonetheless, the program survived as a public-private partnership run by the Department of Labor. Between 1966 and 2000, the program served more than 1.9 million disadvantaged young people.

The [Community Action Program](#), the second of the important components of the Office of Economic Opportunity, functioned as a grant program from the federal government to local Community Action Agencies. These local agencies, either private or governmental organizations, had the assignment of mobilizing the resources of a given area and using them to plan and coordinate an attack on the causes of poverty. Part of their mission was to involve local residents in the decision making process. After urban riots in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts in the summer of 1965, Congress began to question the [efficacy](#) of the Community Action Program. President Johnson also began to distance himself from the program, particularly after receiving complaints from local politicians that local Community Action Agencies were operating as centers to organize political movements in opposition to the incumbent mayors and city council members. In 1967, Representative Edith Green (D-Oregon) helped to save the Community Action Program by offering a successful amendment that placed all of the more than 1,000 community action agencies under the control of local or state governments.

Although the Community Action Agencies were intended to function as local laboratories for reform, the [OEO](#) fostered "national emphasis" programs, designed to be adopted across the country. The most influential of these programs was [Head Start](#), launched in the summer of 1965. Head Start grew into a permanent program with its own funding stream and provided education, health, and nutritional services to more than 18 million low-income [preschool](#) children. Begun as a six-week summer program with a budget of \$96 million, Head Start became a nine-month school-year program with an allocation of nearly \$5.3 [billion](#) in fiscal year 2000.

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), the third important part of the OEO, resembled the Peace Corps that had been established in the Kennedy administration and, like the War on Poverty, headed by Sargent Shriver. The program allowed the federal government to recruit, train, and fund volunteers who would spend a year living among the poor and working on antipoverty projects in both urban and rural areas. By June 1968, 5,000 VISTA volunteers were in the field, working on 447 projects in every state except Mississippi. As with Head Start and the Job Corps, this program survived, so that between 1965 and the end of the century some 120,000 Americans performed national service as VISTA volunteers.

Other War on Poverty Components

Beyond these three core programs run by the OEO, the Department of Labor administered the Neighborhood Youth Corps, authorized by the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964 and designed to keep [needy](#) students in school by offering them such incentives as a [stipend](#), work experience, and "attitudinal" training. Another part of the War on Poverty, run by the Department of Agriculture, provided for loans to low-income farm families for business initiatives and attempted to improve the living conditions of [migrant](#) farm workers. Still other components of the [EOA](#) were designed to [mesh](#) with the rehabilitation services offered to welfare beneficiaries and authorized by the 1962 Public Welfare Amendments.

The most important and effective measures of the War on Poverty, not included in the EOA, provided federal funds for the education of children in low-income families (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) and for the medical care of elderly individuals and individuals on welfare ([Medicare and Medicaid](#), created by the [Social Security](#) Amendments of 1965). These programs, the [outgrowth](#) of legislative battles that had raged throughout the 1950s, enjoyed more support in Congress and received far more funding than did the programs authorized by the Economic Opportunity Act. Significant expansions of the Social Security program in 1968 and 1969 worked far more effectively to lower the poverty rate among the nation's elderly than did all of the components of the Economic Opportunity Act combined.

Even by 1966, it became apparent that legislators in Congress favored certain programs, such as Head Start, over other antipoverty programs, such as the Community Action Program. As a consequence, Congress earmarked funds for Head Start at the expense of Community Action and the Job Corps. During the second Nixon administration, Congress replaced the Office of Economic Opportunity with the Community Services Administration and hastened the process in which favored parts of the antipoverty program were exported to established executive agencies, such as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In 1981 the Reagan administration abolished the Community Services Administration, leaving only individual programs such as legal services and Head Start as the bureaucratic survivors of the War on Poverty.

Three years later, Charles Murray, an analyst in a conservative think tank, published *Losing Ground*, in which he argued that the antipoverty programs of the 1960s ended up increasing the rate of poverty, rather than eradicating poverty. Murray's book [precipitated](#) a national debate over the efficacy of the War on Poverty and [Great Society](#) programs at a time when the Reagan administration made concerted efforts to cut government spending for social welfare purposes. President Ronald Reagan himself distinguished between the programs of the New Deal, which he deemed effective, and the programs of the Great Society that featured a War on Poverty in which, according to Reagan, poverty won.

The creators of the War on Poverty had hoped to create a flexible approach that would allow local communities to experiment with what worked best. Although such an approach failed to materialize, the Office of Economic Opportunity sponsored important research into the causes of poverty and the best means of alleviating it. The economists in the Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation viewed the poverty legislation as an avenue for policy evaluation and research. Hence, it seemed natural to them to test the notion of a guaranteed income that would be paid both to the working and the nonworking poor, to families headed by women, and to "intact" families that contained both a father and a mother living at home. In a remarkable development, the economists secured approval to conduct one of the largest social experiments in the nation's history, undertaken in the late 1960s and 1970s and known as the [Negative Income Tax](#) Experiments. These experiments yielded valuable data on the effects of social programs on people's behavior and in particular on how the [receipt](#) of income from the government affected labor supply and such crucial life decisions as whether to marry.

The War on Poverty, then, failed to end poverty and raised questions about the federal government's ability to provide effective social services. At the same time, it spawned several programs, notably Head Start, that have withstood the test of time and been evaluated as an effective means of improving educational performance. Furthermore, the era of the War on Poverty witnessed the passage of programs such as Medicare that have become enduring parts of American life and improved the access of Americans to health care and other vital services.

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History Dictionary: War on Poverty

A set of government programs, designed to help poor Americans, begun by President Lyndon [Johnson](#) in 1964. The War on Poverty included measures for job training and improvement of housing. Top

Wikipedia: War on Poverty



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(November 2008)

The **War on Poverty** is the name for legislation first introduced by [United States President Lyndon B. Johnson](#) during his [State of the Union](#) address on [January 8, 1964](#). This legislation was proposed by Johnson in response to the difficult economic conditions associated with a national [poverty](#) rate of around nineteen percent. The War on Poverty speech led the [United States Congress](#) to pass the [Economic Opportunity Act](#), a law that established the [Office of Economic Opportunity](#) (OEO) to administer the local application of federal funds targeted against poverty.

As a part of the [Great Society](#), Johnson's view of a federally directed application of resources to expand the government's role in social welfare programs from education to healthcare was a continuation of [Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal](#) and [Four Freedoms](#) speech from the 1930s and 1940s.

The concept of a war on poverty waned after the 1960s. Deregulation, growing criticism of the [welfare state](#), and an ideological shift to reducing federal aid to impoverished people in the 1980s and 1990s culminated in the [Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996](#), that [Bill Clinton](#) claimed "end [ed] welfare as we know it." Nonetheless, the legacy of the War on Poverty remains in the continued existence of such federal programs as [Head Start](#) and [Job Corps](#).

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Major initiatives



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- [Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 -- August 20, 1964](#)
- [Social Security Act of 1965 -- July 30, 1965](#)

The [Office of Economic Opportunity](#) was the agency responsible for administering most of the War on Poverty programs created during Johnson's Administration, including [VISTA](#), Job Corps, Head Start, [Legal Services](#) and the [Community Action Program](#). The OEO was established in 1964 and quickly became a target of both left-wing and right-wing critics of the War on Poverty. Directors of the OEO included [Sargent Shriver](#), Bertrand Harding, and [Donald Rumsfeld](#).

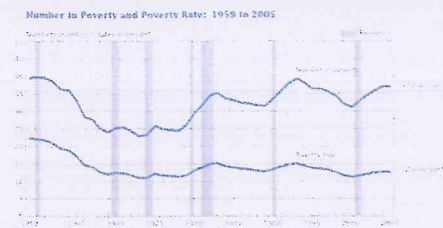
The OEO launched Project Head Start as an eight-week summer program in 1965. The project was designed to help end poverty by providing preschool children from low-income families with a program that would meet emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. Head Start was then transferred to the Office of Child Development in the [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare](#) (later the [Department of Health and Human Services](#)) by the [Nixon Administration](#) in 1969.

President Johnson also announced a second project to follow children from the Head Start program. This was implemented in 1967 with [Project Follow Through](#), the largest educational experiment ever conducted. [1]

The policy trains disadvantaged and at-risk youth and has provided more than 2 million disadvantaged

young people with the integrated academic, vocational, and social skills training they need to gain independence and get quality, long-term jobs or further their education. Job Corps continues to help 70,000 youths annually at 122 Job Corps centers throughout the country. Besides vocational training, many Job Corps also offer [GED](#) programs as well as [high school](#) diplomas and programs to get students into [college](#).

Criticisms



Percent and number below the poverty threshold.^[2]

President Johnson's "War on Poverty" speech was delivered at a time of recovery (the poverty level had fallen from 22.4% in 1959 to 19% in 1964 when the War on Poverty was announced) and it was viewed by critics as an effort to get the United States Congress to authorize [social welfare](#) programs. Some economists, including [Milton Friedman](#), have argued that Johnson's policies actually had a negative impact on the economy because of their interventionist nature. Adherents of this school of thought recommend that the best way to fight poverty is not through government spending but through economic growth.

One common criticism of the war on poverty is the incentives that it creates. Specifically, critics claim that the welfare programs encourage illegitimacy and dependency, and that they discourage people from obtaining education and job skills. Some examples follow:

- William L. Anderson, who teaches economics at [Frostburg State University](#), wrote an opinion column explaining why he believes the war on poverty has caused more harm than good. To show his point, he compared two poor immigrant families to each other. According to Anderson, one family lived in a very small apartment. The parents obtained entry level jobs, and were eventually able to afford a larger apartment. A few years later, they had purchased their own home, and were now middle class. The other family started collecting welfare and food stamps, and living in Section 8 housing. Several years later, they were still dependent on those government programs, and had done nothing to improve their circumstances. Anderson concludes "... the Great Society programs... actually made things much worse."^[3]
- In 2004, African American economist [Thomas Sowell](#), writing about the war on poverty, stated, "The black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and discrimination, began rapidly disintegrating in the liberal welfare state that subsidized unwed pregnancy and changed welfare from an emergency rescue to a way of life."^[4]

Results and legacy

In the decade following the 1964 introduction of the war on poverty, poverty rates in the U.S. dropped to their lowest level to date: 11.1% . They have remained between 11 and 15.2% ever since. Since 1973 poverty has remained well below the historical U.S. averages in the range of 20-25%.^[5]

Poverty among Americans between ages 18-64 has fallen only marginally since 1966, from 10.5% then to 10.1% today. Poverty has significantly fallen among Americans under 18 years old from 23% in 1964 to 16.3% today. The most dramatic decrease in poverty was among Americans over 65, which fell from 28.5% in 1966 to 10.1% today.

In 2004, more than 35.9 million, or 12% of Americans including 12.1 million children, were considered to be living in poverty with an average growth of almost 1 million per year.

The OEO was dismantled by President Nixon in 1973, though many of the agency's programs were transferred to other government agencies.

According to the "Readers' Companion to U.S. Women's History",

Many observers point out that the War on Poverty's attention to Black America created the grounds

for the backlash that began in the 1970s. The perception by the white middle class that it was footing the bill for ever-increasing services to the poor led to diminished support for welfare state programs, especially those that targeted specific groups and neighborhoods. Many whites viewed Great Society programs as supporting the economic and social needs of low-income urban minorities; they lost sympathy, especially as the economy declined during the 1970s.

[[verification needed](#)]

See also

- [Social welfare](#)
- [List of wars on concepts](#)
- [Perpetual war](#)

External links

- [Christian Science Monitor article](#)
- [Text of President Johnson's special address to Congress](#)
- [U.S. 2003 Census Report](#)
- [The U.S. Social Security Administration](#)
- [Economist.com](#)
- [NPR article about War on Poverty](#)
- [Column by conservative author Thomas Sowell critical of War on Poverty](#)

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2. [^](#) "US Census Bureau, report on income, poverty and insurance for 2005". Retrieved on 2006-01-19.
3. [^](#) [The Poverty and Poison of Paul Krugman](#) William L. Anderson, February 25, 2008
4. [^](#) [War on Poverty Revisited](#) Thomas Sowell, August 17, 2004
5. [^](#) [Historical Poverty Tables](#)

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Great Society

[Britannica Concise Encyclopedia](#): Great Society

Slogan used in 1965 by Pres. [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) to identify his legislative program of national reform. In his first State of the Union address, Johnson described his vision of a "Great Society" that would include a "war on poverty" and federal support for education, medical care for the elderly, and legal protection for African Americans deprived of voting rights by state regulations. He also proposed a new department of housing and urban development to coordinate federal housing projects. Congress enacted almost all his programs, the largest number of such measures since the [New Deal](#). See also [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#); [Medicare and Medicaid](#).

For more information on [Great Society](#), visit [Britannica.com](#).

[US Government Guide](#): Great Society

The Great Society was the phrase that President Lyndon B. [Johnson](#) gave to his domestic programs. Johnson spelled out his vision of the Great Society in a commencement speech at the University of [Michigan](#) on May 22, 1964. He called on the nation to move not only toward "the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society," one that would "end poverty and racial injustice." The term came from the English socialist Graham Wallas, who wrote a book of that name in 1914; the term was also used by the English socialist Harold Laski in his 1931 book *introduction to Politics*.

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Johnson believed that [low-income](#) communities could be aided by providing a variety of social services to their residents. These services would enable them to obtain the education and training necessary to obtain jobs that would lift them from poverty. Programs for the poor included the following: Head Start, which provided preschool educational and health programs; the Job Corps and Neighborhood Youth Corps, along with the Vocational Education Act, which gave job training to inner-city teenagers; the [Higher Education Act](#), which provided loans and scholarships to college students from low-income families; the Teachers Corps, *Volunteers in Service to America* (VISTA), VISTA Lawyers and Legal Services Program, which sent teachers, community organizers, and lawyers into poor neighborhoods; the Model Cities Program of 1966, which coordinated slum renewal and economic development; the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which barred racial discrimination in housing, provided more low-income housing, and experimented with rent-supplement payments to the poor; Medicaid and Neighborhood Health Services, which provided funding to hospitals and doctors serving the poor; and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provided federal funding to schools and targeted the aid to low-income school districts.

Johnson created the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964 in order to coordinate social programs in poor neighborhoods. It did so through community action programs that provided for participation by residents in the communities served, usually through the creation of public corporations with elected boards of directors to administer services. These community action programs came under fire at the local level from conservatives opposed to government services for the poor as well as from mayors who wanted local governments to administer such programs. By 1968 most of these programs had been reorganized to place them under the control of city officials.

Richard Nixon's administration attempted to abolish the Office of Economic Opportunity and gave departments such as *Health, Education, and Welfare* (HEW) and *Housing and Urban Development* (HUD) the responsibility to administer its programs. [Ronald Reagan](#) was an unabashed foe of these programs, campaigning in 1980 with the slogan "In the 1960s we fought a war against poverty and poverty won." During Reagan's Presidency many of these programs were abolished and others, including job training, housing, and community development programs, suffered significant cutbacks.

Democrats pointed out that the Great Society programs had significantly reduced the poverty rates in the 1960s, down from 19 percent to 12 percent of the population between 1964 and 1969. In the 1980s, by contrast, poverty rates increased to about 15 percent when conservative Republican administrations phased out Great Society programs. In the 1960s the income of young black families had risen more than 60 percent. In 1992 families with children headed by people younger than 30 had [one-third](#) less income, and young black families had half the income of their predecessors in 1972.

Democrats also noted that many Great Society programs benefited middle-class families. These included the College Work Study and Higher Education Act, which provided loans and work-study employment for college students, and the [Medicare](#) program, which provided health insurance for the elderly.

See also [Johnson, Lyndon B.](#)

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[US History Encyclopedia](#): Great Society

Great Society, the program of liberal reform put forward by President Lyndon Johnson in his 1964 commencement address at the University of Michigan that proposed expanding the size and scope of the federal government to diminish racial and economic [inequality](#) and improve the nation's quality of life. Johnson sponsored legislation that strengthened African American voting rights and banned discrimination in housing and public service provision. The [War on Poverty](#), a collection of community [empowerment](#) and job programs, directed resources toward the inner cities and the [Medicare and Medicaid](#) programs provided health insurance to the poor and elderly, respectively. While many Great Society programs were subsequently abandoned, in the early 2000s, Democrats continued to defend the social insurance and civil rights changes Johnson enacted. Top

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[Columbia Encyclopedia](#): Great Society

Great Society, in U.S. history, term for the domestic policies of President Lyndon [Johnson](#). In his first State of the Union message, he called for a war on poverty and the creation of a "Great Society," a prosperous nation that had overcome racial divisions. To this end, Johnson proposed an expansion in the federal government's role in domestic policy. During his administration, Congress enacted two major civil-rights acts (1964 and 1965), the Economic Opportunity Act (1964), and two education acts (1965). In addition, legislation was passed that created the Job Corps, Operation Head Start, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Medicaid, and Medicare. Although the Great Society program made significant contributions to the protection of civil rights and the expansion of social programs, critics increasingly complained that the antipoverty programs were ineffective and wasteful. The economic and political costs of the escalation of the [Vietnam War](#), as well as the costs of these programs themselves, soon overtook Johnson's domestic initiatives. Top

[History Dictionary](#): Great Society

The name President Lyndon [Johnson](#) gave to his aims in domestic policy. The programs of the Great Society had several goals, including clean air and water, expanded educational opportunities, and the lessening of poverty and disease in the United States. (See [War on Poverty](#).) Top

[Wikipedia](#): Great Society

For 1960s band featuring [Grace Slick](#), see [The Great Society](#).

The **Great Society** was a set of domestic programs proposed or enacted in the [United States](#) on the initiative of [President Lyndon B. Johnson](#). Two main goals of the Great Society social reforms were the elimination of poverty and of racial injustice. New major spending programs that addressed education, medical care, urban problems, and transportation were launched during this period. The Great Society in scope and sweep resembled the [New Deal](#) domestic agenda of [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), but differed sharply in types of programs enacted.

Some Great Society proposals were stalled initiatives from [John F.](#)

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Kennedy's [New Frontier](#). Johnson's success depended on his persuasive skills, coupled with the [Democratic landslide in the 1964 election](#) that brought in many new liberals to Congress. Anti-war Democrats complained that spending on the [Vietnam War](#) choked off the Great Society. While some of the programs have been eliminated or had their funding reduced, many of them, including [Medicare](#), [Medicaid](#), and federal education funding, continue to the present. The Great Society's programs expanded under the administrations of [Richard Nixon](#) and [Gerald Ford](#).^[1]

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Economic and social conditions

Unlike the [New Deal](#), which was a response to a severe economic calamity, the Great Society emerged during a period of prosperity. President Kennedy proposed a tax cut lowering the [top marginal rate](#) by 20%, from 91% to 71%, which was enacted in February 1964^[nb 1] by [Lyndon Johnson](#). [Gross National Product](#) rose 10% in the first year of the tax cut, and economic growth averaged a rate of 4.5% from 1961 to 1968. Disposable personal income rose 15% in 1966 alone. Despite the drop in tax rates, federal revenues increased dramatically from \$94 billion in 1961 to \$150 billion in 1967. As the [Baby Boom](#) generation aged, two and a half times more Americans would enter the labor force between 1965 and 1980 than had between 1950 and 1965.

Grave social crises confronted the nation. [Racial segregation](#) persisted throughout [the South](#). The Civil Rights Movement was gathering momentum, and in 1964 urban riots began within black neighborhoods in [New York City](#) and Los Angeles; by 1968 hundreds of cities had major riots that caused a severe political backlash. Foreign affairs were generally quiet except for the [Vietnam War](#), which escalated from limited involvement in 1963 to a large-scale military operation in 1968 that overshadowed the Great Society.

Ann Arbor speech

[Positive liberty](#)
[Women's suffrage](#)
[Economic progressivism](#)
[Economic interventionism](#)
[Mixed economy](#)
[Social justice](#)
[Labor rights](#)
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v · d · e



President Lyndon B. Johnson during commencement exercises at the University of Michigan on May 22, 1964

Johnson presented his goals for the Great Society in a speech at the [University of Michigan](#) in [Ann Arbor](#) on [May 22, 1964](#). Speechwriter [Richard N. Goodwin](#) had coined the phrase "the Great Society," and Johnson had used the expression occasionally before the Michigan speech, but had not emphasized it. In this address, which preceded the election-year party conventions, Johnson described his plans to solve impending problems:

"We are going to assemble the best thought and broadest knowledge from all over the world to find these answers. I intend to establish working groups to prepare a series of conferences and meetings—on the cities, on natural beauty, on the quality of education, and on other emerging challenges. From these studies, we will begin to set our course toward the Great Society."^[2]

1965 legislative program and presidential task forces

President Kennedy had employed several task forces composed of scholars and experts to craft New Frontier legislation and to deal with foreign affairs. The reliance on experts appealed to Johnson, in part because the task forces would work in secret and outside of the existing governmental bureaucracy and directly for the [White House](#) staff. Almost immediately after the Ann Arbor speech, 14 separate task forces began studying nearly all major aspects of United States society under the guidance of presidential assistants [Bill Moyers](#) and [Richard N. Goodwin](#).

The average task force had nine members and generally was composed of governmental experts and academicians^[citation needed]. Only one of the task forces on the 1965 legislative program addressed foreign affairs (foreign economic policy); the rest were charged with domestic policy (agriculture, anti-recession policy, civil rights, education, efficiency and economy, health, income maintenance policy, intergovernmental fiscal cooperation, natural resources, pollution of the environment, preservation of natural beauty, transportation, and urban problems).

After task force reports were submitted to the White House, Moyers began a second round of review. The recommendations were circulated among the agencies concerned and were evaluated by new committees composed mostly of government officials. Experts on relations with Congress were also drawn into the deliberations to get the best advice on persuading the Congress to pass the legislation. In late 1964 Johnson reviewed these initial Great Society proposals at [his ranch](#) with Moyers and Budget Director [Kermit Gordon](#). Many of them were included in Johnson's [State of the Union address](#) delivered on [January 7, 1965](#).

The task-force approach, combined with Johnson's electoral victory in 1964 and his talents in obtaining congressional approval, were widely credited with the success of the legislation agenda in 1965. Critics later cited the task forces as a factor in a perceived elitist approach to Great Society programs. Also, because many of the initiatives did not originate from outside lobbying, some programs had no political constituencies that would support their continued funding.

1964 election and the Eighty-ninth Congress

With the exception of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)^[3], the Great Society agenda was not a widely discussed issue during the [1964 presidential election](#) campaigns. Johnson won the election with 61% of the vote, the largest percentage since the popular vote first became widespread in 1824, and he carried all but six states. Democrats gained enough seats to control more than two-thirds of each chamber in the [Eighty-ninth Congress](#) with a 68-32 margin in the [Senate](#) and a 295-140 margin in the [House of Representatives](#). The political realignment allowed House leaders to alter rules that allowed conservative [Southern Democrats](#) to kill New Frontier and civil rights legislation in committee, which aided efforts to pass Great Society

legislation. In 1965 the first session of the Eighty-ninth Congress created the core of the Great Society. The Johnson Administration submitted eighty-seven bills to Congress, and Johnson signed eighty-four, or 96%, arguably the most successful legislative agenda in American history.^[4]

Major programs

Civil rights

Historian Alan Brinkley has suggested that the most important domestic achievement of the Great Society may have been its success in translating some of the demands of the civil rights movement into law.^[5] Four civil rights acts were passed, including three laws in the first two years of Johnson's presidency. The [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)^[3] forbade job discrimination and the segregation of public accommodations. The [Voting Rights Act of 1965](#) assured minority registration and voting. It suspended use of literacy or other voter-qualification tests that had sometimes served to keep [African-Americans](#) off voting lists and provided for federal court lawsuits to stop discriminatory [poll taxes](#). It also reinforced the Civil Rights Act of 1964^[3] by authorizing the appointment of federal voting examiners in areas that did not meet voter-participation requirements. The [Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965](#) abolished the national-origin quotas in immigration law. The [Civil Rights Act of 1968](#) banned housing discrimination and extended constitutional protections to [Native Americans](#) on [reservations](#).

War on Poverty

The most ambitious and controversial part of the Great Society was its initiative to end poverty. The Kennedy Administration had been contemplating a federal effort against poverty. Johnson, who as a teacher had observed extreme poverty in [Texas](#) among [Mexican-Americans](#), launched an "unconditional war on poverty" in the first months of his presidency with the goal of eliminating hunger and deprivation from American life. The centerpiece of the [War on Poverty](#) was the [Economic Opportunity Act of 1964](#), which created an [Office of Economic Opportunity](#) (OEO) to oversee a variety of community-based antipoverty programs. The OEO reflected a fragile consensus among policymakers that the best way to deal with poverty was not simply to raise the incomes of the poor but to help them better themselves through education, job training, and community development. Central to its mission was the idea of "[community action](#)," the participation of the poor in framing and administering the programs designed to help them.

The War on Poverty began with a \$1 billion appropriation in 1964 and spent another \$2 billion in the following two years. It spawned dozens of programs, among them the [Job Corps](#), whose purpose was to help disadvantaged youth develop marketable skills; the Neighborhood Youth Corps, the first summer jobs established to give poor urban youths work experience and to encourage them to stay in school; [Volunteers in Service to America](#) (VISTA), a domestic version of the [Peace Corps](#), which placed concerned citizens with community-based agencies to work towards empowerment of the poor; the [Model Cities Program](#) for urban redevelopment; [Upward Bound](#), which assisted poor high school students entering college; legal services for the poor; the [Food Stamps](#) program; the [Community Action Program](#), which initiated local [Community Action Agencies](#) charged with helping the poor become self-sufficient; and Project [Head Start](#), which offered preschool education for poor children.

Education

The most important educational component of the Great Society was the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) of 1965, designed by Commissioner of Education [Francis Keppel](#). It was signed into law on [April 11, 1965](#), less than three months after it was introduced. It ended a long-standing political taboo by providing significant federal aid to public education, initially allotting more than \$1 billion to help schools purchase materials and start special education programs to schools with a high concentration of low-income children. The Act established [Head Start](#), which had originally been started by the Office of Economic Opportunity as an eight-week summer program, as a permanent program.

The [Higher Education Act of 1965](#) increased federal money given to universities, created scholarships and low-interest loans for students, and established a [National Teachers Corps](#) to provide teachers to poverty stricken areas of the United States. It began a transition from federally funded institutional assistance to individual student aid.

The [Bilingual Education Act](#) of 1968 offered federal aid to local school districts in assisting them to address the needs of children with limited English-speaking ability until it expired in 2002^[6].

Health

Medicare

The [Social Security Act of 1965](#) authorized [Medicare](#) and provided federal funding for many of the medical costs of older Americans.^[7] The legislation overcame the bitter resistance, particularly from the [American Medical Association](#), to the idea of [publicly-funded health care](#) or "socialized medicine" by making its benefits available to everyone over sixty-five, regardless of need, and by linking payments to the existing private insurance system.

Medicaid

In 1966 welfare recipients of all ages received medical care through the [Medicaid](#) program. Medicaid was created on July 30, 1965 through Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Each state administers its own Medicaid program while the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) monitors the state-run programs and establishes requirements for service delivery, quality, funding, and eligibility standards.

Arts and cultural institutions

National endowments for arts and humanities

In September 1965, Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act into law, creating both the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) and [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) as separate, independent agencies. Lobbying for federally funded arts and humanities support began during the Kennedy Administration. In 1963 three scholarly and educational organizations—the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the Council of Graduate Schools in America, and the United Chapters of [Phi Beta Kappa](#)—joined together to establish the National Commission on the Humanities. In June 1964 the commission released a report that suggested that the emphasis placed on science endangered the study of the humanities from elementary schools through postgraduate programs. In order to correct the balance, it recommended "the establishment by the President and the Congress of the United States of a National Humanities Foundation." In August 1964, Congressman [William Moorhead](#) of Pennsylvania proposed legislation to implement the commission's recommendations. Support from the White House followed in September, when Johnson lent his endorsement during a speech at [Brown University](#). In March 1965, the [White House](#) proposed the establishment a National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities and requested \$20 million in start-up funds. The commission's report had generated other proposals, but the White House's approach eclipsed them. The administration's plan, which called for the creation of two separate agencies each advised by a governing body, was the version approved by Congress. [Richard Nixon](#) later dramatically expanded funding for NEH and NEA.^[8]

Public broadcasting

After the First National Conference on Long-Range Financing of Educational Television Stations in December 1964 called for a study of the role of noncommercial education television in society, the [Carnegie Corporation](#) agreed to finance the work of a 15-member national commission. Its landmark report, *Public Television: A Program for Action*, published on January 26, 1967, popularized the phrase "public television" and assisted the legislative campaign for federal aid. The [Public Broadcasting Act of 1967](#), enacted less than 10 months later, chartered the [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#) as a private, non-profit corporation. The law initiated federal aid through the CPB for the operation, as opposed to the funding of capital facilities, of public broadcasting. The CPB initially collaborated with the pre-existing [National Educational Television](#) system, but in 1969 decided to start the [Public Broadcasting Service](#) (PBS). A public radio study commissioned by the CPB and the [Ford Foundation](#) and conducted from 1968-1969 led to the establishment of [National Public Radio](#), a public radio system under the terms of the amended Public Broadcasting Act.

Cultural centers

Two long-planned national cultural and arts facilities received federal funding that would allow for their completion through Great Society legislation. A National Cultural Center, suggested during the [Franklin Roosevelt](#) Administration and created by a bipartisan law signed by [Dwight Eisenhower](#), was transformed into the [John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#), a living memorial to the assassinated president. Fundraising for the original cultural center had been poor prior to legislation creating the Kennedy Center, which passed two months after the president's death and provided \$23 million for construction. The Kennedy Center opened in 1971.^[9] In the late 1930s the United States Congress mandated a [Smithsonian Institution](#) art museum for the National Mall, and a design by [Eliel Saarinen](#) was unveiled in 1939, but plans were shelved during World War II. An 1966 act of Congress established the [Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#) as part of the [Smithsonian Institution](#) with a focus on modern art, in contrast to the existing [National Art Gallery](#). The museum was primarily federally funded, although New York financier [Joseph Hirshhorn](#) later contributed \$1 million toward building construction, which began in 1969. The Hirshhorn opened in 1974.^[10]

Transportation

The most sweeping reorganization of the federal government since the [National Security Act of 1947](#) was the consolidation of transportation agencies into a cabinet-level [Department of Transportation](#).^[11] The department was authorized by Congress on [October 15, 1966](#) and began operations on [April 1, 1967](#). The [Urban Mass Transportation Act](#) of 1964 provided \$375 million for large-scale urban public or private rail projects in the form of matching funds to cities and states and created the [Urban Mass Transit Administration](#) (now the [Federal Transit Administration](#)). The [National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966](#) and the Highway Safety Act of 1966 were enacted, largely as a result of [Ralph Nader's](#) book [Unsafe at Any Speed](#).

Consumer protection

In 1964 Johnson named Assistant Secretary of Labor [Esther Peterson](#) to be the first presidential assistant for consumer affairs.

Cigarette Labeling Act of 1965 required packages to carry warning labels. Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 set standards through creation of the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#). Fair Packaging and Labeling Act requires products identify manufacturer, address, clearly mark quantity and servings. Statute also authorizes permits HEW and FTC to establish and define voluntary standard sizes. The original would have mandated uniform standards of size and weight for comparison shopping, but the final law only outlawed exaggerated size claims. Child Safety Act of 1966 prohibited any chemical so dangerous that no warning can make it safe. Flammable Fabrics Act of 1967 set standards for children's sleepwear, but not baby blankets. Wholesome Meat Act of 1967 required inspection of meat which must meet federal standards. [Truth-in-Lending Act](#) of 1968 required lenders and credit providers to disclose the full cost of finance charges in both dollars and annual percentage rates, on installment loan and sales. Wholesome Poultry Products Act of 1968 required inspection of poultry which must meet federal standards. Land Sales Disclosure Act of 1968 provided safeguards against fraudulent practices in the sale of land. Radiation Safety Act of 1968 provided standards and recalls for defective electronic products.

Environment

[Joseph A. Califano, Jr.](#) has suggested that Great Society's main contribution to the environment was an extension of protections beyond those aimed at the conservation of untouched resources.^[12] Discussing his administration's environmental policies, [Lyndon Johnson](#) suggested that "[t]he air we breathe, our water, our soil and wildlife, are being blighted by poisons and chemicals which are the by-products of technology and industry. The society that receives the rewards of technology, must, as a cooperating whole, take responsibility for [their] control. To deal with these new problems will require a new conservation. We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction, we must restore what has been destroyed and salvage the beauty and charm of our cities. Our conservation must be not just the classic conservation of protection and development, but a creative conservation of restoration and innovation." At the behest of Secretary of the Interior [Stewart Udall](#), the Great Society included several new environmental laws to protect air and water. Environmental legislation enacted included:

- Clear Air, Water Quality and Clean Water Restoration Acts and Amendments
- [Wilderness Act](#) of 1964,
- Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966,
- National Trails System Act of 1968,
- [Wild and Scenic Rivers Act](#) of 1968,
- Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965,
- [Solid Waste Disposal Act](#) of 1965,
- [Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act](#) of 1965,
- [National Historic Preservation Act](#) of 1966,
- Aircraft Noise Abatement Act of 1968, and
- [National Environmental Policy Act](#) of 1969.

The legacies of the Great Society

Several observers have noted that funding for many Great Society programs, particularly the poverty initiatives, became difficult beginning in 1968, chiefly due to the [Vietnam War](#) and Johnson's desire to maintain a balanced budget. Many Great Society initiatives, especially those that benefited the middle class, continue to exist in some form. Civil rights laws remain on the books in amended versions. Some programs, like Medicare and Medicaid, have been criticized as inefficient and unwieldy, but enjoy wide support and have grown considerably since the 1960s.^[13] Federal funding of public and higher education has expanded

since the Great Society era and has maintained bipartisan support. Federal funding for culture initiatives in the arts, humanities, and public broadcasting have repeatedly been targets for elimination, but have survived.

The War on Poverty

Interpretations of the War on Poverty remain controversial. The Office of Economic Opportunity was dismantled by the [Nixon](#) and [Ford](#) administrations, largely by transferring poverty programs to other government departments. Funding for many of these programs were further cut in President [Ronald Reagan](#)'s first [budget](#) in 1981.

[Alan Brinkley](#) has suggested that the gap between the expansive intentions of the War on Poverty and its relatively modest achievements fueled later conservative arguments that government is not an appropriate vehicle for solving social problems. ^[5] The poverty programs were heavily criticized by conservatives like [Charles Murray](#), who denounced them in his 1984 book *Losing Ground* as being ineffective and creating an underclass of lazy citizens. One of Johnson's aides, [Joseph A. Califano, Jr.](#), has countered that, "from 1963 when [Lyndon Johnson](#) took office until 1970 as the impact of his Great Society programs were felt, the portion of Americans living below the poverty line dropped from 22.2 percent to 12.6 percent, the most dramatic decline over such a brief period in this century."^[12] The poverty rate for blacks fell from 55 percent in 1960 to 27 percent in 1968.^[14]

Conservative economist [Thomas Sowell](#) argues that the Great Society programs only contributed to the destruction of African American families, saying "the black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and discrimination, began rapidly disintegrating in the liberal welfare state that subsidized unwed pregnancy and changed welfare from an emergency rescue to a way of life."^[15] Professor [William L. Anderson](#) also criticized the War on Poverty, noting the increase of dependency on the government as being harmful to the lower classes.^[16]

Neoconservatives

[Irving Kristol](#) and other critics of Great Society programs founded a politics and culture journal [The Public Interest](#) in 1965. While most of these critics had been anti-communist liberals, their writings were skeptical of the perceived [social engineering](#) of the Great Society. Often termed [neoconservatives](#), they are credited with laying the groundwork for the [conservative](#) movement of the 1980s and 1990s.^[17]

Footnotes

1. ^ Three months after his [assassination](#).

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7. ^ [Social Security Act Amendments \(1965\)](#)
8. ^ [How NEH got its start](#)
9. ^ [Living Legacy: Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#)
10. ^ [The Hirshhorn Story](#)
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External links

- [President Johnson's speech at the University of Michigan from the LBJ Library](#)
- [Social Studies help on the Great Society](#)
- [Johnson's Great Society speech on CNN](#)
- [John Gardner Architect of the Great Society on PBS](#)
- [University of Wisconsin notes on the Great Society](#)

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OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICESIncreasing the Capacity of Individuals, Families and Communities

**COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK
GRANT PROGRAM****Information Memorandum**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Community Services
Division of State Assistance
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447**

Transmittal No. 94**Date: January 13, 2006**

To: State CSBG Lead Agencies, State Community Action Associations
From: Director of State Assistance , Office of Community Services
Subject: Fiscal Year 2006 Head Start Triennial and Follow-Up Reviews in Community
Action Agencies - Immediate and Long-Term Opportunities

Background: As you know, the two Federal agencies that administer the CSBG and Head Start -- the Office of Community Services (OCS) and the Head Start Bureau -- have been working over the past several years to improve program integrity, effectiveness, and accountability of their respective programs. OCS has sought to strengthen program monitoring and oversight through its block grant relationship with States. The Head Start Bureau has implemented significant changes in monitoring to improve upon many aspects of the monitoring process. These changes are detailed in the FY 06 PRISM GUIDE available at www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/.

Sixty-percent of Community Action Agencies administer Head Start programs and serve as the grantees for over five hundred Head Start programs throughout the country. Community Action Agencies operate approximately 30% of all federally funded Head Start programs. OCS and the HSB recognize and reaffirm the intentional historic pairing of community action and Head Start because of their common purpose, shared families, and complimentary outcomes. It also recognizes that Head Start is often the largest program within Community Action Agencies and that the continued viability of the agency as a whole may ultimately be reflected in the integrity and soundness of its administration of Head Start.

One result of the collaboration between community action and Head Start has been improved communication among Federal, regional, State, and local officials involved in program oversight and continuous improvement. Also sharing of relevant Head Start monitoring results and other pertinent information can better inform and influence the types of technical assistance needed to support program improvement as well as identify high quality Community Action Agencies that can serve as models or mentors for other community action agencies.

Distribution of the list of community action agencies scheduled for Head Start triennial, first year or follow-up program reviews in Fiscal Year 2006 provides an opportunity for State CSBG Lead Agencies and State

Community Action Associations to reinforce the importance that Community Action Agencies have ongoing systems that enable the agency to comply with Head Start administrative, fiscal, and Head Start Program Performance Standards..

In addition, it provides yet another opportunity to help improve community action agency compliance with program coordination requirements and expectations described in Section 672 of the Community Services Block Grant Act:

(A) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning and coordinating the use of a broad range of Federal, State, local, and other assistance (including private resources) related to the elimination of poverty, so that this assistance can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions; and

(B) the organization of a range of services related to the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services may have a measurable and potentially major impact on the causes of poverty in a community and may help the families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency.

Recommendations for Immediate Action

Fiscal Year 2006 Triennial or First Year Reviews

At a minimum, OCS urges State CSBG Lead Agencies and State Community Action Associations to work collaboratively with local community action agencies scheduled for a Head Start triennial or first year review in Fiscal Year 2006 to:

Review Assessment of Key Agency Policies, Procedures and Practices

State CSBG Lead Agencies and/or State community action associations should encourage local agencies with Head Start programs to conduct their annual Head Start self assessments and ensure that the community assessment contains updated and accurate information, and that agency Head Start programs have ongoing systems of oversight and monitoring. The tripartite boards and executive staff of local community action agencies should also be encouraged to remain knowledgeable and involved in Head Start program assessment, monitoring, and improvement. The processes - self assessment, community assessment and ongoing monitoring provide opportunities for agencies to identify Head Start program strengths and areas that warrant improvement. Agencies in the past have often focused their energies on "preparing for the monitoring test" instead of implementing ongoing systems that identify areas needing improvement and that sustain the actions taken to correct weaknesses.

Through local agency implementation of an annual Head Start self assessment, community assessment and ongoing monitoring, agency tripartite boards and community action executive staff will be able to assess the current status of key agency-wide or Head Start-specific administrative and program policies, procedures, and practices, including but not limited to:

- Coordination and responsible governance among agency tripartite boards, Head Start Policy Councils and advisory committee(s);
- Recruitment, enrollment, and eligibility of Head Start program participants;
- Agency-wide or Head Start-specific financial status, management and accountability policies and procedures, including those related to establishing and maintaining fund accounts, disbursements, records, reports, and audits;
- Staffing procedures and requirements, including recruitment, hiring, composition, qualifications and certification, training, retention and/or dismissal;
- Appropriateness and completeness of program services to eligible children and families;
- Facility requirements - health and safety;
- Information collection and reporting - service reporting and accountability/evaluation reports for child and family outcomes;
- Relationship of Head Start programs and services to other programs and services administered by the agency and/or other service providers in the community. For example, is Head Start part of an agency-wide strategy or strategic plan to reduce poverty or promote self-sufficiency?

Grantee Review Identification and Resolution of Issues

If potential compliance or program performance issues are identified in the assessments described above, OCS recommends that State CSBG Lead Agencies and State community action associations encourage and help where possible local agency executive directors and Head Start program directors resolve those issues within a reasonable time frame so that the corrective actions can be sustained over time. It is important to stress that quick fixes to identified problems typically result in a reoccurrence of the problems. Most areas needing improvement are often linked to major systems that often require thoughtful planning and time to implement needed changes. An agency's ongoing planning should include corrective action or improvement plans as needed. Agencies that assume a proactive role in addressing their identified weaknesses through a thoughtful corrective or program improvement plan will be better positioned to sustained quality services.

It is important to keep in mind that Federal Head Start monitoring is done on a triennial schedule. Due to rapid changes within communities today including natural disasters, agencies that do not conduct rigorous ongoing monitoring may find that the federal monitoring team uncovers a serious weakness or deficiency that should have been discovered by the agency.

Longer-Term Opportunities and Strategies

Beyond the immediate and targeted support to community action agencies scheduled for Head Start reviews during this fiscal year, the Community Services Network must continue to focus its efforts on strengthening overall agency governance and administration, fiscal control, program effectiveness and accountability to assure capacity to comply with all program requirements of the various programs administered by the agency.

The continued presence of Head Start among programs administered by community action agencies, and all the benefits to low-income people that can be derived from that association, will depend upon the resolve of

Federal, regional, and State officials of both programs to ensure that agencies are held accountable to meet all applicable regulations

and that each entity with oversight authority does its best to carry out its oversight responsibilities in an objective and timely manner. Cooperation and coordination among Head Start and community action administrators and informed and active governing boards at the local level are also key factors to positive outcomes.

Strategic Planning and Program Coordination

OCS encourages State CSBG Lead Agencies and State Community Action Associations to continue to provide ongoing training and technical assistance to local agencies that focuses on improving strategic planning and coordination among all programs and services they administer, particularly Head Start. Agencies that choose to operate each of their programs separately without a coordinated strategy to address the multi-faceted causes and conditions of poverty among low-income people and communities are meeting neither the letter nor spirit of the CSBG Act. And, these agencies are much less likely to be helping low-income people out of poverty.

Program Administration and Financial Management

ongoing training and technical assistance is needed to assure that local community action agencies have the capacity to administer multiple programs in ways that comport with the fiscal and administrative requirements of each program. Central administration and financial management of various Federal, State, local, and privately-funded programs is a unique hallmark of community action and a powerful rationale for its preservation. It is not easy to operate many programs with varying requirements but we do it well in most places. We need to do it well everywhere.

OCS has created and supported national training and technical assistance resources that focus on agency administration and financial management. These resources continue to be available to State and local community action agencies. OCS encourages State CSBG Lead Agencies and State Community Action Associations to utilize these resources.

Tripartite Board Training and Empowerment

Community Action tripartite boards are responsible for overseeing the operation of the entire agency and all its programs, including Head Start. In order to help safeguard the integrity of community action agencies, tripartite boards must have the capacity to carry out their oversight responsibilities and need training and technical assistance to, at a minimum, assess, approve, and monitor:

- Annual and long-range agency strategic plans;
- Agency administrative policies and procedures for all programs;
- Agency financial management policies, procedures, and practices for all programs;
- Agency program design and performance;
- Agency relationships with other organizations in the community; and

- Agency compliance with applicable Federal, State, and local program requirements.

OCS recommends that State CSBG Lead Agencies and State Community Action Associations help local agencies coordinate the work of agency-wide tripartite boards with the governing or advisory boards and committees of other programs administered by the agency, particularly Head Start. Both community action and Head Start require strong parent/client participation in local program governance and oversight. Shared membership or joint meetings of the community action agency tripartite board and the Head Start Policy Council may strengthen assessment of family and community needs, help achieve consensus on an overall agency response to those needs, provide for closer and more effective oversight of agency administration and financial controls, and improve programs and outcomes for clients of all programs administered by the agency.

One Agency, One Mission

Finally, the most effective way to ensure sustained health among all of the programs that comprise community action, especially CSBG and Head Start, is an understanding that community action is one agency with one mission - to reduce poverty among low-income people and improve opportunities for their success in their communities. To be effective, all staff, all programs, all board members, and all community partners need to work in unison toward this common mission and goal. Community Action Agencies with multiple programs throughout the country have moved to reaffirm their singular antipoverty purpose and identity. State CSBG Lead Agencies and State Community Action Associations are encouraged to support and reinforce this Network-wide transformation with training and technical assistance, and by achieving similar congruity of purpose and action across programs at the State level.

Margaret J. Washnitzer, DSW
Director of State Assistance
Office of Community Services

Community Services Block Grant

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides U.S. federal funding for Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and other programs that seek to address poverty at the community level. Like other block grants, CSBG funds are allocated to the states and other jurisdictions (including tribes, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and territories) through a formula, with less federal oversight and fewer federal requirements than categorical grants. The CSBG formula determines each jurisdiction's funding level based on poverty population; once disbursed, most of the money is passed by the states and other jurisdictions to CAAs and other designated organizations to be spent on employment, education, income management, housing, nutrition, emergency services, and health.^[1]

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History

Congress authorized CSBG by the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981, P.L. 97-35. President Reagan had requested the consolidation of 85 existing anti-poverty grants into seven categorical grants; Congress agreed to consolidate 77 grants into nine. The nine new block grants were budgeted about 25% less than the programs they replaced (Conlan, qtd. in ^[2]). The CSBG legislation was amended in 1998 by the Coates Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1998, P.L. 105-285.^[3]

Management

CSBG is administered by the Office of Community Services in the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Spending

In fiscal year 2007, the Federal Government, through the Department of Health and Human Services, spent \$630 million. That amount was \$654 million for fiscal year 2008.^[4]

See also

- Community Development Block Grant
- Community Action Services and Food Bank

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