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TEAMWORK IN THE DELIVERY OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO THE ELDERLY

A REPORT

BY THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NINETY-SIXTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

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FOREWORD

Recent decades have seen a tremendous growth in Federal programs which provide direct benefits to the elderly. Beginning with the 1935 Social Security Act and subsequently including other programs such as medicare and the Older Americans Act, some of these established age as a criterion of eligibility. By definition and original intent, these programs were designed to meet specific needs of a discrete age sector within our society.

Beginning in the midsixties and continuing into the current era, there has been a great expansion of social welfare programs. Relatively few of these are designed expressly for the elderly, but of those which provide benefits to adults in general, the elderly are entitled to access along with other eligible beneficiaries. To insure such access, most of these programs now identify the elderly in their antidiscrimination provisions and many contain sections which require specific consideration of the elderly in the distribution of program benefits.

It is only in relatively recent years that we have given due recognition to the need for the broad-gaged legislative action required to provide access to a generally acceptable quality of latter-year life. Had such awakening taken place early enough and with ample foresight, it might have been possible to create a body of law and programs expressly structured to the needs of the elderly. What we have instead is a near-incomprehensible complex of programs, amendments and regulatory provisions which occur at multiple points within the overall corpus of social legislation.

In reviewing this situation, Congress took the only logical course open to it. By amendment to the Older Americans Act, it directed executive branch coordination of all programs providing direct benefits to the elderly.

This report evaluates the degree with which the executive branch has complied with such directive and how effectively such compliance has been carried out.

CLAUDE PEPPER,
Chairman.
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Ranking Minority Member.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Since its inception in 1965, appropriations for the Older Americans Act have grown from $6,500,000 in fiscal year 1966 to over $1 billion in fiscal year 1980. This act combines with social security, medicare, and Federal pensions or annuities to constitute the core group of major Federal programs designed specifically for the elderly.

As evidenced by the 1935 Social Security Act, early legislation reflected a primary concern for the economic condition of persons leaving the work force because of age. Over the years, however, and especially since the mid-1960's, Congress has come increasingly to view the older American as a whole person whose merit and whose needs differ in no way from those of any other sector of society except as they might be emphasized by the social and economic conditions of latter-year life. As a result of this congressional attention, there are now over 130 Federal programs which, by legislative mandate, provide direct benefits to the elderly. The magnitude of these programs is evident in an estimate by the Office of Management and Budget that about $155 billion, or 25 percent of the President's fiscal year 1981 budget proposals, consists of program benefits to the elderly. (The major part of this sum consists of social security, medicare, and retirement benefits which represent earned entitlements derived from contributions made by the recipient.)

Programs providing benefits to the elderly cover a range of goods and services which touch on virtually every aspect of the lives of America's senior citizens. In a great many cases, they complement or overlap each other. In every instance, they are delivered under the terms of complex Federal regulations and technical procedures which tend to limit administrative expertise in the delivery process to persons whose responsibilities are primarily confined to a specific program area. In addition, most departments and agencies have their own delivery systems and these differ widely in terms of operational procedures and the geographical distribution of field offices within regional, State and substate areas.

There is clear and substantial potential for waste and confusion in such a complex and confusing array of programs and delivery methods. Noting this, Congress stipulated in section 203 of the 1973 amendments to the Older Americans Act that:

> Federal agencies proposing to establish programs substantially related to the purposes of this Act shall consult with the Administration on Aging prior to the establishment of such services, and the Federal agencies administering such programs shall cooperate with the Administration on Aging in carrying out such services.

In the 1978 amendment to the act, this language was replaced with a stronger and more specific section 203 which conveyed increased authority and responsibility to the Commissioner on Aging. As summarized in the committee's 1979 staff summary of the Older Americans

Act, the Commissioner's authority and the responsibilities of other Federal departments and agencies are as follows:

Federal agency cooperation.—Programs under the jurisdiction of the Administration on Aging are to be coordinated with the programs of other federal agencies impacting on the lives of the elderly. The law cites specifically, programs under the Department of Labor, Social Security Administration, Department of Housing and Urban development, and Community Services Administration, and Department of Transportation. It is intended that department heads will advise, consult and cooperate with one another to develop programs consistent with meeting the needs of the elderly.

CHAPTER II

Purpose and Background

In order to determine what effective action, if any, is being taken to accomplish coordination between and among programs providing benefits to the elderly, the House Select Committee on Aging acquired copies of all pertinent agreements that have been developed in compliance with the coordination provisions of the act. Twenty-six such agreements were found, the majority of which were promulgated in 1974 and 1975, in response to the 1973 amendment.

A review of these 26 agreements indicated that they covered many of the program areas falling within the intent of the law. Inquiries by the committee staff revealed, however, that efforts to maintain continuing compliance with the agreements had, in many cases, deteriorated since the time that they were first put into effect.

Based on preliminary staff findings, a committee hearing was held on October 24, 1979. Chairman Claude Pepper opening the hearing by stating that:

> The lack of interagency coordination of programs affecting the elderly has the harshest impact on the very persons having the most desperate need. The crucial question of where can an elderly person turn for help often lends itself to no immediate action. Usually, he must blindly attempt to traverse an endless maze of bureaucratic rules, regulations, referrals and requirements in a gallant, but futile attempt to obtain a benefit to which he is legally entitled.

Mr. Charles Grassley, ranking minority member of the committee stated that:

> Effective program coordination must extend down through the State and local delivery systems. The law is not satisfied by a mere exchange of agreements between the heads of Federal departments and agencies. It is the responsibility of such Federal executives to make coordination work, to monitor and perfect performance and to maintain a vigilant alert for opportunities to provide ever-improved services through continuous emphasis on interagency cooperation

The committee undertook to assess the effectiveness of the existing coordination agreements by tracing the program delivery process through the system from Washington to the ultimate beneficiary at the local community level. This resulted in a hearing format in which the testimony of Federal department and agency officials was followed by the observations and critique of a panel consisting of State and local representatives drawn primarily from the field delivery network of the HEW Administration on Aging.

Departmental and agency witnesses appeared in the following order:

Dr. Robert Benedict, Commissioner, Administration on Aging, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Charles B. Knapp, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Department of Labor.

Dr. Helen Kelley, Deputy Associate Director for Older Americans Volunteer Program, ACTION, Washington, D.C.

C. Anthony Jackson, Director, Office of Program Development, Community Services Administration.

Alex P. Mercure, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development, Department of Agriculture.
Dr. Donald R. Trilling, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, Department of Transportation.
George I. Lythcott, M.D., Administrator, Health Services Administration, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.
Clyde McHenry, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Housing, Federal Housing Commissioner, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Panel members were as follows:

Joseph W. Hemingway, state planner for the Governor's Office of Human Resources, Jackson, Miss.
James H. Stamper, associate director, Office on Aging, Richmond, Va.
Richard Ambrosius, director, Iowa Lakes Area Agency on Aging, Spencer, Iowa.
Shirley Overland, director, Huron Area Senior Center, Huron, S. Dak.
Laurence Lane, director for public policy, American Association of Homes for the Aging, Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER III

Highlights of Testimony

A. Dr. Robert Benedict, Commissioner, Administration on Aging

1. AOA will commit over $13 million in discretionary grant funds during fiscal year 1980 for interagency activities.

2. Older Americans Act funds for the first half of fiscal year 1979 generated more than $260 million other Federal, State, or local resources and this figure is over and above the required matching dollars for Older Americans Act programs.

3. AOA has agreements or informal arrangements with almost every other Federal agency which either directly or indirectly provide services to older people. These cooperative efforts include:

(*a*) *Transportation*

The White House Initiative on Rural Transportation provides for coordination with AOA, HEW, DOL, CETA, FHA, and GSA on essential transportation arrangements for the elderly.

(*b*) *Legal Services*

AOA and the Legal Services Corporation developed the advocacy assistance program which provides nursing-home-ombudsman and legal-services development to the States. LSC has also offered assistance relative to patients' rights, protective services, consumer rights in and out of institutions, and housing displacement from urban renewal and condominium conversions.

(*c*) *Housing*

An agreement with the Community Services Administration and AOA provides for winterization and weatherization programs for low-income elderly. In addition, HUD and AOA are coordinating the implementation of the new congregate housing services program and the urban initiative anticrime program.

(*d*) *Employment*

AOA and DOL are coordinating to revitalize the older worker programs and strengthen the linkage between the aging network and existing employment resources.

(*e*) *The frail elderly*

SSA and AOA initiated an outreach project to contact those SSA beneficiaries who are 75 or over and who have not contacted SSA in the past 5 years. The purpose is to determine their need for available social services.

(*f*) *Health and long-term care*

(1) AOA has jointly sponsored "health fairs" with the American Red Cross and the National Health Screening Council.

(2) HSA and AOA have sponsored 10 demonstration sites to extend primary health care to the underserved elderly.

(3) AOA, The Health Care Financing Administration and the HEW Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation are collaborating on a plan to prepare long-term care demonstrations authorized in section 422 of the Older Americans Act.

(4) The National Institute of Mental Health and AOA are sponsoring conferences to determine ways to provide better services for the elderly through existing delivery systems.

(*g*) *Title XX*

The Administration for Public Services and AOA have provided assistance to the States in the administration of title XX funds of the Social Security Act.

(*h*) *Congregate meals*

This program provides 9,800 congregate meal sites through policy coordination between the Office of Education and the Department of Agriculture.

(*i*) *White House Conference on Aging*

AOA and the White House have been coordinating with other Federal agencies in preparation for the conduct of this Conference in 1981.

B. Charles B. Knapp, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment Training.

1. 1974—AOA and DOL pledged to work together to improve Federal information and referral activities to older people, to coordinate Federal, State, and local information and referral services, and to monitor and evaluate the progress of this effort.

2. 1979—Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training and AOA agreed to increase services and job opportunities for the elderly through linkages of CETA, welfare reform, employment opportunities pilot projects, and Older Americans Act programs.

3. 1979—Pursuant to the President's rural transportation initiative, DOL agreed to train and assign 900 older workers using $4.2 million in CETA discretionary funds to provide jobs in public transportation services in 13 demonstration States.

4. 1978—Older Americans Act Amendments require DOL to Coordinate the delivery of the Senior Community Service Employment Program between the State and national contractors at the State level. The sponsors of the SCSP are required to list all vacancies with the U.S. Employment Service and State employment security agencies.

5. CETA provisions for older workers:

(*a*) Each prime sponsor is required to establish a planning council on which older workers are to be represented.

(*b*) All CETA plans must describe:

(1) arrangements to insure employment and training services to older workers;

(2) how job development and placement services will be coordinated with other area employment;

(3) training opportunities with other federally funded programs.

(*c*) The CETA plan must describe specific programs or services designed for persons 55 years or older.

(*d*) Agencies receiving CETA funds must give special emphasis to older workers when developing program services and activities. Such emphasis includes establishing outreach procedures, acquainting older persons with services available under the act, and coordinating these activities with other programs serving older workers.

C. Dr. Helen Kelley, Deputy Associate Director, Older Americans Volunteer Program (OAVP), ACTION

Dr. Kelley observed that, despite the relationships that obtain among many Federal programs, people within responsible departments and agencies are sometimes so unaware of related programs and activities that no thought can be given to promoting communications and coordination.

In commenting on the cooperative activities of OAVP, she said that the need for coordinated effort is such a practical reality to OAVP personnel operating within State delivery systems that the exchange of an interagency agreement at the Federal level simply codifies a practical working arrangement which is already in effect in the field.

Dr. Kelley listed six existing agreements covering the period 1973–77 to which OAVP is a signatory with other Federal agencies. These include:

1. A general coordination agreement with AOA.
2. An agreement to encourage cooperation and coordination at the State and local areas between AOA and ACTION's Older Americans Volunteer Program (OAVP) with specific emphasis on Title III: Community Services and Nutrition of the Older Americans Act.
3. An agreement with AOA and the Office of Child Development (HEW) to encourage cooperation between Head Start and the OAVP's.
4. An energy crisis intervention program for the elderly, involving AOA, USDA, DOL, HUD, FEA, and OEO.
5. An agreement with AOA, The Office of Education, the Charles Mott Foundation and the National School Volunteer Program to provide opportunities for older citizens to serve children in public schools.
6. An agreement with the right-to-read agency of the Office of Education to enable senior volunteers to assist with reading and literacy programs.

Other OAVP agreements are being negotiated in the areas of fire prevention, education for the handicapped, transportation, housing, and children, youth, and families.

Dr. Kelley stressed the theme that program coordination among Federal agencies serves no purpose unless it results in productive results at the local level.

D. Anthony Jackson, Director, Office of Program Development, Community Services Administration (CSA)

Mr. Jackson outlined a background of CSA cooperation with AOA in several experimental and outreach programs between 1965 and 1971, a period prior to the inclusion of a specific coordination requirement in the Older Americans Act. Current interagency coordination agreements to which CSA is a signatory include:

1. Information and referral (I. & R.). This is a multiagency agreement under which all signatory departments and agencies pledge to pool information regarding programs providing services to the elderly and to make joint use of such information to the benefit of the elderly by apprising them of available resources and referring them to the proper source of assistance. CSA and other participating agencies are members of an interagency I. & R. task

force which meets monthly under the chairmanship of the AOA National Clearinghouse.

2. A mutual support agreement with AOA which provides that State offices of AOA and CSA will work cooperatively at the State level to assist area agencies on aging (AAA's), and community action agencies to enter into meaningful agreements at the local level. This national agreement was signed in 1975. Subsequently, State agencies on aging and their CSA counterparts have entered into such agreements in 21 States.

3. Energy crisis intervention. This multiagency effort establishes guidelines and procedures for insuring that the poor or near-poor will receive energy assistance to prevent cold weather privation. The elderly poor benefit from this program and the aging network assists in identifying eligible recipients and in overseeing program distribution.

4. Mr. Jackson said that the nature of CSA programs, and the funding levels received, force the agency to seek cooperative arrangements involving pooled resources. Some other CSA programs may involve local coordination, but do not appear to be covered by an AOA–CSA agreement. These include:

(*a*) Community food and nutrition programs.

(*b*) Rural housing development.

(*c*) Senior Opportunities and Services (SOS) which cover transportation to clinics and nutrition sites, home health care, homemaker services, legal counseling, and other social services and benefits.

E. Alex P. Mercure, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development

1. The Science and Education Administration (SEA), through the Extension Service, provides educational programs to senior citizen centers and other centers which are part of AOA's national nutrition program for older Americans. Courses include nutrition, food buying, community services, and home safety. SEA also cooperates with AOA under an agreement to provide information and referral services for older people. Information is provided on new programs and new dimensions of existing programs for the elderly. A working agreement between AOA and SEA is also in effect on energy conservation actions for the elderly, with emphasis on educational resources and information on new programs that can benefit older Americans.

2. The Secretary of Agriculture, through the Food and Nutrition Service, is authorized to donate food to recipients of grants or contracts under AOA's nutrition program.

3. The Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), in coordination with AOA, is providing $10 million for 10 congregate housing demonstration projects over a 3-year period for elderly residents. AOA is providing up to $85,000 per year in support services.

4. FmHA's rural rental construction loans and HUD's rent subsidy program have been combined through a 1976 interagency agreement which simplifies procedures for the developer by making it possible to work with a single agency. This program has created over 3,800 housing units for senior citizens and handicapped persons in 1979.

5. The Forest Service, in conjunction with the Department of Labor's senior conservation employment program provides jobs for economically disadvantaged persons aged 55 or older who reside or

work in rural areas. The present funding level for 3,095 positions in 40 States and Puerto Rico is $14.5 million from DOL and $2.9 million from the Forest Service. Projects provide work experience in construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of recreation areas and other national forest lands.

F. Dr. Don Trilling, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, Department of Transportation

DOT is a party to the following interagency agreements:

1. 1975—AOA, DOT, and the Office of Education signed an agreement to increase the mobility of older persons through the use of schoolbuses, especially in rural areas. A manual for local and State planners who wish to use schoolbuses for other than pupil transportation will be available in the spring of 1980.

2. 1975—An agreement between AOA and DOT sets forth the following objectives:

(a) Continued implementation of grant programs under the Urban Mass Transportation Administration which could improve specialized transportation systems. In 1979, $25.6 million in grants were awarded to organizations in 40 States and Puerto Rico to assist in the acquisition of capital equipment for use in providing transportation services to elderly and handicapped persons.

(b) Continued implementation of the Rural Highway Public Transportation Program in a manner that could contribute to the improvement of the mobility of rural elderly persons. Guidelines have been developed which provide that services for the elderly and handicapped will be one on the criteria used in evaluating applications for grants funds. Of the projects funded under that program, 98 percent identified elderly persons as direct beneficiaries of the proposed services.

(c) Joint research, demonstration, and technical assistance activities to promote efficient and effective provision of transportation services to older persons. DOT, SOS, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration of HEW sponsored three regional workshops to encourage further cooperation between agencies providing services to elderly and handicapped persons and local public transportation operators.

3. 1975—DOT, in conjunction with AOA and other Federal agencies, agreed to provide other agencies with information about financial and technical resources which may be available for improving transportation service to the elderly.

G. Dr. George Lythcott, Administrator, Health Services Administration, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

In 1970 HSA and AOA agreed to the following goals:

1. An increase in the access of older persons to health care services in HSA-sponsored facilities within a given geographic area.

2. A combined effort to demonstrate that coordinated linkages can produce comprehensive health and social services for the elderly through joint use of funds, manpower, and facilities available to area agencies on aging, HSA-sponsored facilities, and Indian tribal organizations.

3. An AOA set-aside of $1 million for each of fiscal years 1979, 1980, 1981 to be used for grant awards to HSA-supported facilities and Indian tribal organizations. Objectives are to increase the number of older persons served; to expand the amount and/or scope of services currently provided; and to improve the quality of services provided.

4. The establishment of an HSA priority to develop and expand home health services in those areas chosen for demonstrations and to provide technical assistance to staffs in HSA-sponsored facilities regarding the special needs and problems confronting older persons.

5. An HSA agreement to undertake 11 demonstrations; 5 in community health centers, 3 in BMS hospitals or clinics, and 4 in tribal organizations. Eight projects were funded during fiscal year 1979 and three more projects will be funded in fiscal year 1980.

H. Clyde McHenry, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Housing, Department of Housing and Urban Development

1. The following are examples of agreements that have been made by HUD which effect the elderly:

(*a*) 1963—The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Public Housing Administration (a forerunner to HUD) agreed to establish kitchens and dining rooms in public housing for the elderly.

(*b*) 1964—The Public Housing Administration and the Cooperative Extension Service, Department of Agriculture, agreed to provide training and educational programs designed to help families in low-rent public housing improve their living conditions.

(*c*) 1964—The Public Housing Administration and the U.S. Office of Education coordinated to improve the homemaking skills of low-income families and prepare them for employment.

(*d*) 1974—HUD and DOT agreed to work toward increased availability of local transportation for elderly and handicapped persons.

(*e*) 1974—Agreement between AOA and HUD to provide opportunities for meeting the needs of the elderly through the Community Development Program under title I of the Housing and Community Development Program Act of 1974.

(*f*) 1978—The statutory language for the HUD congregate housing services program requires area agencies on aging and appropriate State agencies to assist in the implementation of two primary functions:

(1) Consultation to public housing agencies and section 202 projects; and

(2) Review of program applications prior to submission by applicant to HUD.

2. The following are examples of recently enacted programs to aid the elderly through coordination:

(*a*) Early notification to area agencies on aging concerning the congregate housing services program which:

(1) gives the AAA notice of forthcoming needs which cannot be met by the congregate housing services programs,

(2) allows time to incorporate needed AAA effort to assist the housing project to identify other potential funding sources, and

(3) assures that the design and other features of the housing project will satisfy an AAA's program requirements and tenant needs.

(*b*) The Anticrime Demonstration Program for public housing and the Public Housing Security Demonstration Act of 1978 provides $40 million which was awarded to 39 public housing agencies (PHA's). Each PHA submitted a comprehensive plan which incorporates improved management of public safety; physical redesign to improve security; tenant anticrime organization and activity; tenant employment; youth, drug abuse, and victim/witness services; increased and more sensitive law enforcement; local as well as Federal public/private partnerships to cotarget resources not only on housing projects but also on their surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Currently HUD is negotiating new interagency cooperative agreements with DOL, LEAA, Interior, AOA, ACTION, HEW, CSA, Economic Development Administration, and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration.

4. The following are examples of Federal aid resulting from HUD cooperative agreements:

(*a*) About $135 million annually in funds and services flows into HUD-assisted public housing from HEW, DOL, DOT, ACTION, and other Federal and voluntary agencies. This amounts to about $35 being contributed to public housing authorities (PHA's) for each dollar from PHA's own budget. Within this general total:

(1) About 1,400 PHA's have nutrition program sites for elderly under the title VII program.

(2) Current CETA enrollment may be worth over $15 million to the more than 3,000 public housing residents involved, some of whom are elderly.

(*b*) Approximately 20 percent of all Community Development Block Grant program funds benefit the elderly.

(*c*) About 15 percent of section 312 rehabilitation loans and 20 percent of the funds go to the elderly.

In his testimony, Mr. McHenry described subordinate agreements initiated by several HUD regional directors to advance coordination with other agencies providing services to the elderly. The cases cited affirmed positive accomplishments in specific program activities in specific geographical areas. It was not inferred that this level of coordination emphasis applied throughout the spectrum of interagency coordination agreements involving HUD or that it was common to all Federal regional council areas.

CHAPTER IV

Committee Comment on the Testimony of Executive Branch Witnesses

The testimony of executive branch witnesses reflected diligence and success in program coordination. The committee was convinced that these witnesses were committed to the principle of coordination, but it was not dissuaded from the belief that substantial improvement is needed in departmental and agency performance in the implementation of existing coordination agreements. Prior to the hearing, discussions with members of executive branch offices responsible for acting on interagency coordination agreements had revealed few instances of diligent administration of such agreements. In many instances, executive branch respondents had not been familiar with existing agreements and required time to locate them in the office files before they could engage in discussion of them.

These preliminary findings relate closely to the fact that many social programs, including those which benefit the elderly, face a prospect of more austere funding as Congress and the President strive to balance the Federal budget. This emphasizes the importance of the kind of coordination which can derive more effect from available funds by combining the resources of complementary programs.

The following statement by Mr. Biaggi, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Services, puts this proposition in the context of present-day reality:

> The 1970's mark an era of limits where, in terms of federal programs, consolidation has replaced expansion; oversight of the old has replaced establishment of the new and sunset has replaced creation. Today's hearing seeks to foster improved coordination between federal agencies so that the elderly will benefit from better programs. This is an attainable goal and one we should all work for.

CHAPTER V

Panel Comments on the Testimony of Executive Branch Witnesses

A. PANEL QUALIFICATIONS

In selecting persons to serve on the panel, a special effort was made to obtain a mix that would include recognized professional excellence in the aging network at the State, area, and community levels. Wide geographic dispersion was sought to insure that concurring panel comments were without local bias. The panel was deliberately weighted with persons whose experience includes service to rural areas. This stemmed from a recognition that, while the elderly in rural and urban areas confront common needs, the challenges associated with meeting these needs are often more difficult in geographically large area agencies on aging which must serve a widely scattered elderly population. Such conditions emphasize the importance and the practical difficulties which program coordination poses to those working within the delivery systems.

The panelists were encouraged to be frank and forthright in their evaluation of executive-level program coordination agreements as regards their effectiveness at the State and local levels. Predictably, they drew strongly on anecdotal experience to illustrate coordination problems and to suggest remedies.

B. SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL PANEL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All panelists agreed that coordination agreements between Federal departments and agencies are a useless bureaucratic exercise unless they result in actual cooperation between and among local representatives of such Federal agencies and departments. The experience of the panelists has been that ignorance of executive-level coordination agreements at the local level of department or agency delivery systems is more the norm than the exception.

2. After an agreement goes into effect, project proposals received in Washington which fall within the areas covered by such agreement should be reviewed by all parties to the agreement prior to approval and funding.

3. The general agreement on information and referral, signed by numerous departments and agencies, is excellent in concept. It does not appear, however, that it is implemented with sufficient reach and vigor. There should be much more "chain of command" emphasis to make it effective at the State and local levels.

4. Coordination is often initiated at the State and local levels before the fact of an interagency agreement. However, field experience is rarely sought in development agreements at the Federal level. The result can be disruptive to existing arrangements for coordinated program delivery.

5. Disaster assistance to the elderly is a neglected area of coordination. The elderly are especially hard hit by natural disasters and need prompt assistance. No interagency agreement exists between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and AOA. During disasters, nutrition sites for the elderly and area agency on aging vans are pressed into service for the general community, but there is no reciprocal consideration to the elderly. In a disaster situation, the elderly lose glasses, medicines, prescriptions, and other possessions that place them in need of prompt assistance. Some of them become disoriented and need special attention. In the aftermath of a disaster, they may be confronted with debris removal or other physical tasks which they cannot perform, yet CETA damage-repair employees are not authorized to work on private property. The disaster field is one that is especially needful of coordination and special provisions for the elderly.

6. Emergency energy assistance requires timely advance planning. States and substate localities initiate their planning and local coordination in the spring. In 1979, AOA initiated its planning and coordination effort in the late fall. If the two plans mesh, it is coincidence. If they don't, State and local planning can be thrown into chaos. There is need for a Federal coordination initiative which will assist in the development of an effective energy assistance delivery system.

7. Area CETA programs are often developed without consultation with State or area plans. For example, CETA slots for transportation (primarily drivers) may be provided through Green Thumb without coordination with a State department of transportation and without consulting State and local interests to determine priority of need.

8. There was agreement among the panelists that coordination with CSA is unsatisfactory. They complained of CSA programs that ignore the elderly and a CSA attitude of "turf protection" which makes coordination difficult at the State and local levels. Panelists from Mississippi, Iowa, and Virginia were in agreement as to this problem and cited instances of difficulty in areas of senior opportunity services, nutrition, winterization, CSA provider services and energy assistance programs to buttress a general complaint. While CSA was singled out for particular criticism, the panel said that coordination problems of a similar nature had been experienced with other agencies.

9. The panel, consisting largely of representatives from rural States and areas, were highly complimentary of the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) program for congregate housing for the elderly. They cited this as an excellent example of coordination between AOA and FmHA. To counteract the charge that public housing too quickly deteriorates, it was suggested that HUD and the Cooperative Extension Service work together to provide training in home maintenance, sanitation, and other areas of tenant responsibility that would lead to improved living conditions and property upkeep in public housing projects. In a more general comment, it was observed that the Department of Agriculture should require that persons in its field delivery systems be more sensitive to the needs of the rural elderly.

10. Like CSA, the Department of Transportation was subjected to severe criticism, especially in the field of public transportation for the rural elderly. It was observed that DOT has very little rural expertise because it has very few rural transportation systems. Thus, where such programs exist, DOT cannot provide technical expertise that is

applicable to the peculiarities of rural systems. The panelists also complained that DOT tends to "parachute" programs on rural areas with little or no prior coordination with local interests. This creates an inbuilt predisposition to failure because each rural area has unique needs and problems that should be considered in the process of project development. The panel stressed that special features such as wheelchair lifts are far less important than are vehicles which can provide dependable transportation under the weather and road conditions that obtain in a given area. The panel was of the general view that most school bus experiments have been unsatisfactory due to excessive operating costs and administrative complexities. They were also agreed that operating costs are the largest problem in maintaining a rural public transportation system.

CHAPTER VI

Committee Findings and Recommendations

A. FINDINGS

1. The panel was generally objective in its reaction to the testimony of the witnesses. The committee found that the remarks of each panelist were, with no stated exceptions, supported by other panel members.

2. Agreements at the Washington level attest to the fact that executive branch leaders recognize a need for better program coordination. There is, however, a failure to establish specific monitorship and followup procedures to insure that persons throughout the delivery system accomplish and maintain the coordination actions required by interdepartmental and interagency agreements.

3. Coordination is an abstract concept which many persons find difficult to perceive in terms of practical action. The feasibility of combining the benefits of several complementary programs within a single project escapes many persons and the administrative methodologies of accomplishing such combination are poorly understood by persons whose normal responsibilities are confined to the administration of a single program. The existence of an interagency agreement does not solve this problem. Such agreements should be reinforced by explanatory instructions to field personnel in departmental and agency delivery systems. This need is expressed in the following comment by an AAA director on the panel. While addressed to the CSA witness, it is applicable to all agencies:

> The thing I miss in the letters of agreement is the commitment. You know, is it communicated down through the CSA network to the local level? But more specifically, if there is a national agreement, what do you expect? What does Commissioner Benedict expect of me? What do you expect of my counterpart, the CSA director in my area, to make that work? I see that absent . . .

4. The A–95 review process does not appear to be integrated into the coordination procedure. This process requires that project applications for Federal funding be submitted for review by OMB Circular A–95 clearinghouses located in the substate planning and development district, or comparable jurisdiction, and at the State level. While largely autonomous, these clearinghouses receive matching Federal funds from HUD, DOT, and other Federal agencies. An A–95 review to insure that project applications are in compliance with statutes and interagency agreements requiring the coordination of programs providing benefits to the elderly would be consistent with the role of these clearinghouses. At present, the A–95 review process is not mentioned in the agreements per se. The panelist observed that projects suitable for cooperative action are cleared through the A–95 process without reference to the area or State agencies on aging, and are approved in Washington without reference to AOA.

5. Departmental and Federal agency witnesses, in describing their

coordination activities, cited examples of specific accomplishment by field offices in selected geographic locations. The committee was left with the impression that these isolated cases reflected local initiatives and were not characteristic of the overall coordination effort thoughout the field delivery system. The committee considers that departmental and agency executives have the authority and the obligation to require similar excellence of performance in all regions of the country.

6. Program coordination at the State and local levels may entail considerations that are not recognized at the national level. This suggests a need for the participation of State and local representatives in the development of interagency or interdepartmental agreements.

7. Among areas not covered by an executive-level coordination agreement is disaster assistance to the elderly. Panel comments were specific and convincing regarding the need for such an agreement.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the committee provide this report to the heads of the appropriate departments and agencies of the executive branch under a cover letter directing their attention to its findings and recommendations.

2. That responsible authorities within Federal departments and agencies:

(*a*) Reexamine existing coordination agreements affecting the elderly to determine that they are current and adequate to the proper achievement of coordinated program delivery.

(*b*) Promulgate and exchange instructions and guidelines to insure that persons throughout regional, State, and local delivery systems understand and fulfill the responsibilities conveyed by all existing and future coordination agreements.

(*c*) Be directed to provide to the Select Committee on Aging, and to the appropriate standing committees, copies of all new or amended coordination agreements pertaining to the delivery of Federal programs to the elderly, along with implemented guidelines and instructions promulgated in relation thereto.

(*d*) Develop an agreement for a coordinated response to the special needs of the elderly during and after natural disasters.

(*e*) Assign to a specific individual within the staff of each agency or secretariat the responsibility for the monitorship of each coordination agreement to insure that its purpose is faithfully discharged throughout the program delivery process.

(*f*) Obtain the participation and counsel of persons in the State and local delivery systems in the development or modification of coordination agreements.

3. That the Commissioner on Aging, in coordination with the Office of Management and Budget, and with appropriate Federal departments and agencies, insure that all interagency agreements concerning program delivery to the elderly be provided to the State and substate area A–95 clearinghouses.

4. That the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in an action related to recommendation 3 above, bring this matter to the attention of the A–95 clearinghouses for the purpose of insuring

that their review process will reinforce compliance with interagency agreements requiring the coordination of programs which provide benefits to the elderly.

5. That the Select Committee on Aging maintain oversight of this area of concern to determine progress in the compliance with the recommendations contained herein.

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