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APPLICABILITY: State agencies receiving financial assistance
under Section 231 of the Economic Opportunity Act.

INTRODUCTION

The states have an important and unique contribution to make in the nation's efforts to deal with the problems of the poor and in assisting the Office of Economic Opportunity with programs authorized by the Economic Opportunity Act. It is the policy of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to encourage the states to make this contribution. The OEO Director, under Section 231 of the Act, is authorized to fund State agencies to provide technical assistance to communities and local agencies in connection with Title II programs to coordinate related state activities, to mobilize state resources and to advise and assist the OEO Director. At the request of the governors, OEO provides grants to the states for the establishment of State Economic Opportunity Offices (SEOOs) to assist the states in these activities. Section 242 of the Act provides that Title II grants and contracts of assistance will be submitted to the Governor for his consideration. It has been the practice of governors to ask their SEOOs for advice and assistance in exercising their authority under Section 242 and other Sections of the Act.

The establishment and support of State Economic Opportunity Offices (SEOOs) is one way by which OEO seeks to aid state governments in their efforts to assist the poor within their boundaries. OEO expects to obtain through the SEOOs a greater understanding of the roles that the individual states can best play in OEO activities, and to encourage the states to focus more of their resources on such activities. OEO expects to receive advice from the SEOOs on how OEO can best support other state activities consistent with OEO's mission and objectives.

OEO recognizes that states differ in their constitutional, statutory and organizational patterns and that a Governor needs the flexibility to use various administrative arrangements in the organization and placement of his State Economic Opportunity Office. While the specific means of carrying out their roles will therefore differ, the State offices funded by OEO under Section 231 of the Economic Opportunity Act are expected to perform the basic functions outlined below in Sections 2, 3, 4 and 6.

THE STATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY OFFICES

1. PLACEMENT

Because of the role expected of the SEOOs in state anti-poverty activities and the need for coordination at the state level, it is desirable that the SEOO be located at a high level in the state government structure, readily accessible to the Governor.

2. ADVISOR TO THE GOVERNOR ON ANTI-POVERTY MATTERS

a. The SEOO provides the Governor with information and advice with respect to the policies and programs of OEO and other anti-poverty resources, particularly as they relate to his state. At the discretion of the Governor, the SEOO may assist him in carrying out the provisions of Section 242 of the Economic Opportunity Act concerning the Governor's authority to disapprove OEO grants and contracts of assistance, and his authority to consent to the assignment and request termination of assignments of VISTA Volunteers (Section 810(b)).

b. Upon the designation of the Governor, the SEOO Director acts as his representative on matters related to the poor. The SEOO may thus represent the Governor with respect to other state agencies, local units of government, CAAs, OEO (Regional and Headquarters), other Federal agencies and other states.

c. The SEOO Director provides the Governor, other state agencies, and the OEO Regional Offices with information on the causes and conditions of poverty in the state. (See 6-a.)

3. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION, COORDINATION AND ADVOCACY

a. The SEOO shall give priority to the mobilization and coordination of anti-poverty resources, particularly at the state level. This requires effective interagency mechanisms to assure good communication between state agencies and offices whose activities affect the poor. The SEOO should, on its own initiative, seek out and develop or assist in the development of every state, Federal, community and private agency resource (programs, expertise, funds, etc.) that can be effectively marshalled and/or coordinated to assist CAAs and other anti-poverty efforts within the state.

b. The SEOO acts as a special advocate for the poor in state government by such activities as:

Working for representation of the poor on state committees and other instrumentalities which develop policy, provide advice or operate programs affecting the poor;

Assessing state poverty-related programs and state administrative procedures, and working to make them more responsive to the needs and desires of the poor;

Developing career opportunities for the poor within the SEOO and in other state agencies in coordination with the state civil service system; and

Employing poor persons whenever possible.

c. The SEOO, at the discretion of the Governor, provides information and assistance to the state legislature, state planning agencies, and other state agencies with the objective of enacting and amending legislation and developing programs for the benefit of the poor. SEOOs should consult regularly with local CAAs and other representatives of the poor on legislation they feel should be recommended to the Governor or state legislature.

d. The SEOO provides state agencies and officials, OEO grantees and the general public, with information and statistics -- using such devices as periodic bulletins, annual reports, meetings, etc. -- on the problems and needs of the poor and the programs and efforts to overcome poverty within the state.

e. The SEOO works with the state planning agency, other appropriate state agencies, and the community action agencies of the state in the implementation of BOB Circular A-95 (Part II) which establishes improved state-level coordination of planning in multi-jurisdictional areas, as it applies to activities conducted under the Economic Opportunity Act.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CAAS AND OTHER OEO GRANTEEES

In accordance with a Work Program approved by the Regional Office as part of the OEO refunding grant to the SEOO, the State Economic Opportunity Office provides the following technical assistance to community action agencies and other OEO grantees:

- a. Provides special technical assistance where needed to Community Action Agencies, community groups, local government agencies, and other grantees or potential grantees, in developing, conducting and administering programs to alleviate poverty. At the time of grantee pre-review and when developing its own annual refunding request, the SEOO shall consult with the CAAs -- using Checkpoint Form 76 -- and with the Regional Office to determine OEO grantee needs for specialized technical assistance and to get advice on how the SEOO can assist in meeting these needs. In filling staff vacancies and when funds permit hiring new personnel, the SEOO shall give priority emphasis to the hiring and training of personnel specialized in those areas most needed by the CAAs and other OEO grantees.
- b. Participates in the annual field pre-review of an OEO grantee, along with an OEO representative (Regional or Headquarters). Through the Checkpoint Procedure, the SEOO provides advice and assistance at an early or pre-review stage in the development of program proposals by CAAs and other OEO grantees. The grantee will concurrently provide the SEOO with all the required forms and information that it submits to the Regional Office before and during the pre-review. If the SEOO cannot participate in the field pre-review, or if a pre-review is not being held for a refunding or a new request, such documents and information shall be provided the SEOO at an early or preliminary stage by the grantee or applicant, along with Checkpoint Procedure Form 77. Form 77 should be signed by the SEOO on site at the conclusion of the field pre-review or no later than 15 days after receipt of the form. The SEOO shall indicate on the form, or on an attachment thereto, the specific kind and degree of technical assistance it will be able to provide the grantee, identifying those resources it will try to make available.
- c. In consultation with OEO, assists grantees in taking any corrective actions, recommended by OEO as a result of evaluation and audit reports. (See 6-e.)
- d. Surveys and assists in obtaining resources and funds for CAAs and other OEO grantees, available from state and Federal agencies, the private sector and other sources within the state. (See 3-a.)

- e. Sponsors or participates in training programs and workshops for CAA staff and Board members, in consultation with OEO grantees and the OEO Regional Office, with particular emphasis on utilization of state resources and personnel.
- f. Provides information and assistance to CAAs and other OEO grantees in planning, developing, and operating volunteer programs.
- g. Assists CAAs in planning and developing boundaries coterminous or complementary with other area development, planning and program units where feasible. (See 3-e.)

5. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The State Economic Opportunity Office may:

- a. Receive OEO and other Federal and state agency funds to operate -- or delegate the operation of -- programs which further the objectives of the Economic Opportunity Act. The Checkpoint Procedure (Form 76) must be used by the SEOO with any CAAs whose areas would be affected by the operation of OEO-funded programs. CAA concurrence is required for SEOO programs funded under Section 221 of the EOA. (This is required by the EOA, Section 221(b).) Wherever an SEOO operates a special OEO-funded program, it shall establish an advisory committee which shall include representatives of the poor and of the affected CAAs. (See OEO Instruction 6005-1.)
- b. Participate in research and demonstration programs, funded by OEO and other sources. Research and demonstration proposals in program areas where states have particular experience will be encouraged by OEO. Each Fiscal Year, OEO will reserve funds to be used for SEOO research and demonstration activities. Grants will be funded in accordance with priorities established in OEO's Research and Demonstration Plan. Priority will be given to proposals for research and demonstration activities designed to bring about meaningful changes in state and local government to assist to make their activities more responsive to the unique problems of the poor. Preference will be given to proposals which provide evidence that state or other non-OEO funding of the program is probable after a successful demonstration of one or two years. (See 8-g.)

c. Develop and carry out programs to help meet the immediate needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families, promote increased community awareness and acceptance of such families, and help them participate in special education and job training programs. (See Sections 311 and 312 of EOA.)

6. ADVISOR TO OEO

a. The SEOO advises the OEO Regional Offices on the criteria established under Section 241(a) and (b) of the EOA, which are designed to achieve within the states an equitable distribution of assistance between urban and rural areas under Title II of the Act. The SEOO shall provide an annual written analysis to the Governor and to the OEO Regional Office (due July 1), highlighting the principal problems and causes of poverty in the state. This analysis includes recommended priorities and types of programs to meet those problems. The SEOO also prepares an annual three-year anti-poverty plan for the state. Copies of the SEOO analysis and plans should be sent to the Governor and other appropriate state agencies, to all CAAs in the state, and to the appropriate OEO Regional Office and to OEO Headquarters (State and Local Government Division).

b. After receipt of the annual funding guidance by the Regional Office from OEO Headquarters, each SEOO shall meet with Regional Office representatives to assist in developing the total funding plan for their particular state. A major consideration in developing the state funding plan will be the needs, priorities and analysis provided the Regional Office, described under subparagraph "a" above. When disagreements exist, the SEOO will be provided in writing (with copy sent to the State and Local Government Division) the reasons for the Regional Office position before final approval of the state funding plan. Subsequent modifications to the state funding plan require prior SEOO consultation.

c. The SEOOs shall be consulted in the development of the OEO Headquarters and Regional Training and Technical Assistance Plans. Possibilities for utilizing state resources for all areas of training and technical assistance shall be explored by the Regional Office through the SEOO. Prior to funding, comments and recommendations by the appropriate SEOOs shall be sought by the OEO funding office on all proposals for training and technical assistance projects -- whether grants or contracts -- that would operate in their states.

- d. The SEOO advises OEO on funding requests from all applicants within the state or who will operate within the state. The SEOO is to receive copies of all such official applications simultaneously with submission to the OEO Regional Office, and written comment on these applications is due in the Regional Office within 20 days after receipt. OEO Headquarters Offices, at the time serious consideration is given to funding or refunding a project, shall submit to the appropriate SEOO(s) a copy of the application or an "information packet" containing pertinent materials describing the project. SEOO comment on these Headquarters proposals, due within 15 days of receipt of the application or the information packet, is submitted to the appropriate Regional Office, which will forward the SEOO comment to OEO Headquarters, along with its own comment. The OEO funding office (Regional and Headquarters) shall consider the SEOO comments in their review prior to funding.
- e. The SEOO jointly participates with the Regional Office in the evaluation of OEO-funded programs and is consulted by the OEO Regional Office in the development of standards for the evaluation of program effectiveness. (See OEO Instruction 7850-1.) An SEOO representative shall be invited to serve on all OEO staff evaluation teams which are organized to review the overall effectiveness of a grantee's program. The SEOO shall receive copies of all such evaluation reports and shall work with OEO on any necessary follow-up. (See 7-i.)
- f. The SEOO monitors some or all of the OEO-funded programs within the state, if it has the staff capability and if this activity is part of the approved SEOO Work Program. Such monitoring activity shall be included in the joint written agreement on the use of field personnel (See 7-f) which shall include arrangements for periodic written reports, plus other reporting of special activity or problems, to the appropriate OEO grant office.
- g. The SEOO advises the OEO Regional Offices on VISTA operations within the state. The Regional Office will consult with the SEOO in the development of an annual State VISTA Plan. This will include consultation on programs for VISTA Volunteers and on VISTA Volunteer assignments. The SEOO will assist VISTA in any coordination needs with state-operated programs. When specifically authorized by VISTA, the SEOO may assist in recruitment. The SEOO advises the Regional Office on special problems in the state that might develop as a result of the activities or presence of VISTA Volunteers, and assists the Regional Office in resolving such problems.
- h. The SEOO advises OEO on procedures and programs which will promote state agency participation in carrying out the aims and objectives of the Economic Opportunity Act.

i. The SEOO advises and assists OEO in identifying problems posed by Federal and state statutory or administrative requirements that impede state-level coordination of OEO-related programs, and in developing methods or recommendations for overcoming those problems. This is achieved through continuing relations with both OEO Regional Offices and OEO Headquarters, and through the consultation provisions of BOB Circular A-85.

7. REGIONAL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD THE SEOOS

a. The responsibility for application review, grant approval and program monitoring of SEOO activities funded under Section 231 of the Economic Opportunity Act is the responsibility of the OEO Regional Offices. Regional liaison and coordination with the SEOO Directors (including VISTA, Legal Services and Health Affairs) shall be focused in the Office of Governmental and Private Sector Relations under the Regional Director.

b. The Regional Office shall encourage and assist each SEOO to develop an annual Work Program (as a part of its funding request), which takes full advantage of SEOO staff capabilities; and which is responsive to the main missions and functions under Sections 2, 3, 4, and 6 of this Instruction. Consideration should be given to the diversity of the states, recognizing that different approaches are appropriate in carrying out these basic functions.

c. The Regional Office is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the SEOOs, as OEO grantees, in implementing their annual Work Program (Form 7-e) and in carrying out the basic objectives outlined in their "Plans and Priorities" (Form 81-a). Whenever possible, the evaluation team should include a staff member of another SEOO. The Regional Office shall work jointly with the SEOOs to strengthen the SEOO staff capability to carry out their Work Programs and to overcome any weaknesses that may be revealed by these evaluations.

d. Regional Offices are responsible for ensuring that the SEOOs are consulted concerning OEO Regional Office plans and priorities with regard to OEO grantees within their respective states. When flexible or other OEO funds become available for additional programs in a given state, the Regional Office shall first consult with the SEOO before committing such funds.

- e. Regional Offices are to involve their SEOOs formally in the development of the state funding plans (6-b) and on the annual Training and Technical Assistance Plan as it pertains to the state (6-c); and they shall provide copies of such plans when approved to the appropriate SEOOs, and to the Division of State and Local Government, Office of Operations. They shall ensure that the SEOOs are consulted in advance and notified upon funding on all Section 230 (Training and Technical Assistance) grants and contract awards, approved by the Regional Office.
- f. The Regional Offices shall jointly work out a written agreement with each SEOO -- dividing responsibilities as staff capability and interest dictate -- to assure a maximum of coordination and a minimum of overlapping of activities and functions carried out by their respective field representatives. This agreement shall be jointly reviewed at least annually to effect improvements.
- g. The Regional Offices shall invite -- with adequate advance notice -- the appropriate SEOO to all "pre-reviews" held with other OEO grantees in the state. They are responsible for seeing that the completed Check-point Procedure Form 77 is included in all funding requests received by them and will not begin an application review unless the completed Form 77 is included or unless the applicant provides evidence that the SEOO has not responded. (See 4-b.)
- h. The Regional Office shall ensure that a copy of all applications and requests for OEO funds, as well as requests for reprogramming, submitted to the Regional Office for approval is sent by the applicant simultaneously to the appropriate SEOO for information and comment. The Regional Office shall send written notice to the appropriate SEOO(s) upon the receipt of all applications for funding and reprogramming requests. Written comment by the SEOO on funding requests -- which is due within 20 days of SEOO receipt of the application -- shall receive serious consideration and response by the Regional Office prior to funding. (See 6-d.)
- i. The Regional Office shall invite the SEOOs to participate in all OEO staff evaluation teams which it organizes to review the overall effectiveness of a grantee's programs, and shall share with the SEOOs the findings and recommendations of such team

evaluations immediately upon completion of the written report. The Regional Office, in consultation with the SEOO and the grantee, shall jointly work out a follow-up procedure and plan to ensure implementation of OEO's recommendations. (See 6-e.)

j. The Regional Office will work through -- or in consultation with -- the SEOO in any of its dealings with other state agencies, unless it has arranged for a by-pass agreement with the SEOO for specific types of contacts elsewhere in the state government.

k. The Regional Directors, and the SEOO Directors in each Region, shall jointly plan and participate in regular meetings -- to be held at least quarterly -- to discuss mutual problems, exchange information and explore new and innovative ways to increase their effectiveness in working together. Notice of such meetings shall be sent the State and Local Government Division of the Office of Operations, so that a representative may attend when practicable.

l. The Regional Office shall forward to the State and Local Government Division, Office of Operations, a copy of all executed SEOO grant packages and a copy of all evaluation reports on the SEOOs.

8. OEO HEADQUARTERS RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE SEOOs

a. The State and Local Government Division of the Office of Operations shall be the primary office in OEO Headquarters for dealing with the SEOOs. This Division is to maintain a nation-wide overview of SEOO operations and shall work in close coordination with the Office of Governmental and Private Sector Relations of each Regional Office.

b. OEO Headquarters shall seek to develop and strengthen the effectiveness of the SEOOs in the anti-poverty effort and to encourage OEO consultation, coordination and co-operation with the states.

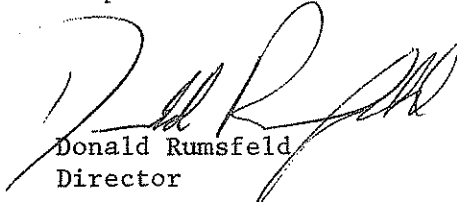
c. The Office of Operations shall foster an exchange of information and program experience among all the SEOOs and Regional Offices. It will sponsor, and jointly plan with the SEOOs and the Regional Offices, an annual national conference for all SEOO Directors.

- d. OEO Headquarters shall be responsible for keeping the appropriate Regional Office informed of negotiations, requests, etc., from SEOOs, in the Regional Office area of responsibility. It shall consult with, coordinate, and request guidance from the Regional Office on matters affecting SEOOs within the Region's area of responsibility.
- e. In consultation with the Regional Offices and the SEOOs, OEO Headquarters will ascertain national and inter-regional training and technical assistance needs of the SEOOs. It will assist them in meeting such needs by the use of OEO personnel, or through contractors.
- f. The Office of Operations is responsible for monitoring the Checkpoint Procedure system with the SEOOs which is to be used by all funding offices in OEO Headquarters. (See 4-b.)
- g. The Office of Operations will work with OEO's Office of Program Development and the Regional Offices in the solicitation and review of new SEOO proposals for demonstration programs. (See 5-b.) SEOOs interested in developing demonstration proposals should ordinarily consult first with the appropriate Regional Office and then contact the State and Local Government Division. The Office of Program Development will provide assistance, review and decide on approval of SEOO Research and Demonstration grants. When the SEOO makes direct contact with the Office of Program Development, the SEOO is responsible for so informing the Office of Operations.
- h. The Office of Operations shall assist the SEOOs in their dealings with the Headquarters offices of other Federal agencies.
- i. Each OEO Headquarters funding office is responsible for seeing that one copy of every official application (or an "information packet" summarizing the application), submitted to that office for approval, be sent to the SEOO in the state the applicant is located (and to any other SEOOs of states in which the program is to operate) for information and comment, as soon as the funding office has the application under serious consideration. Written comment by the SEOO -- which is due in the Regional Office with 15 days of SEOO receipt of the application -- shall receive serious consideration by OEO Headquarters prior to funding. (See 6-d.)

9. SEOO RESPONSIBILITIES AS OEO GRANTEES

- a. When a state applies for funding from OEO under Section 231 of the Economic Opportunity Act, it shall use the forms and follow the application procedures for SEOOs outlined in OEO Notice 6710-2 of February 26, 1969 (until revised forms and requests for funding procedures are issued by OEO). Refunding requests are due in the Regional Office no later than 60 days before the end of the SEOO's Program Year. Five copies are required by the Regional Office; a sixth copy should be forwarded directly to the State and Local Government Division, Office of Operations.
- b. The state's share for funding under Section 231 shall be a minimum of 20 percent of the total cost of the operation in cash and/or in kind.
- c. Preferably 120 days, but no later than 90 days, before the end of its Program Year, the SEOO's "Plans and Priorities" (Form 81-a) is due in the OEO Regional Office. The SEOO should submit three copies to the Regional Office and one copy directly to the State and Local Government Division, Office of Operations.
- d. As part of its annual refunding request, the SEOO must include a progress or self-evaluation report on its activities for the previous year, giving a candid assessment of its successes and failures in meeting its Work Program.
- e. The SEOO shall submit a MIS Quarterly Narrative Report on its activities, related to the approved Work Program, to the OEO Regional Office, with a copy to the State and Local Government Division, Office of Operations. (The MIS Quarterly Statistical Report is no longer required of the SEOOs.)
- f. The SEOO draft Work Program (Form 7-e) shall be checkpointed with all the CAAs in the state for comment and such signed Checkpoint Forms (76) included as part of the annual SEOO refunding request. (See 4-a.)
- g. The SEOO shall have an annual financial audit conducted, in accordance with OEO guidelines. It shall cooperate with monitoring and evaluation visits by OEO personnel or by OEO contractors.

- h. SEOO acceptance of an OEO-approved "grant package" is an agreement by the SEOO to perform the work stated in the SEOO Work Program submitted as part of the funding request. Unsatisfactory performance may be cause for OEO to re-evaluate and lower the future funding level of a SEOO.
- i. As OEO grantees, the SEOOs shall comply with all applicable OEO Instructions. SEOO personnel policies and procedures shall be consistent with CAP Technical Assistance Memorandum 26-A of April 3, 1967. When OEO personnel policies and procedures are in conflict with state law and personnel regulations, a mutually acceptable solution shall be spelled out in a written agreement between the SEOO and the OEO Regional Office and incorporated in the SEOO grant.
- j. SEOOs are expected to carry out pre-service and in-service training programs to upgrade the skills of their staffs, and all SEOO refunding requests shall include specific plans for staff in-service training. Whenever funds permit, the SEOOs will be given the opportunity by OEO to strengthen their staff capabilities to carry out their responsibilities and functions more effectively.



Donald Rumsfeld
Director

