

**OFFICE OF ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20504



Type of Issuance	Number
OEO Instruction	7850-1
Subject	Date
Standards for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community Action Programs	May 28, 1969
	Office of Primary Responsibility
	C/P/PE
Supersedes	Distribution
	M, N, S(LI)

REFERENCES:

Sections 201(a), 233(b) of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, as amended.
OEO Instruction 1105-1, "CAP Mission and Objectives"
OEO Instruction 6710-1, "Applying for a CAP Grant."

APPLICABILITY:

This Instruction applies to all Community Action Agencies (CAAs), Limited Purpose Agencies (LPAs), and State Economic Opportunity Offices (SEOOs) assisted by OEO under Sections 221, 222, 230, 231, and 312 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, as amended. The Instruction is written primarily in terms of accomplishments at the local level by CAAs and LPAs. Training and Technical Assistance grantees (Section 230) and SEOOs (Section 231) generally do not have direct operational responsibilities but perform essentially support functions. However, such support functions must be directed toward improving the effectiveness of local CAA and LPA efforts in terms of the standards set forth herein.

DEFINITIONS:

CAP Program Effectiveness: The extent to which identifiable progress is being made toward achieving the basic purposes of Community Action, as cited in Section 201(a) of the Economic Opportunity Act, and in the Statement of CAP Mission and Objectives (OEO Instruction 1105-1).

CAP Program Quality: The extent to which specific needed services or benefits are being provided efficiently and responsively to poor people by OEO-funded grantees and programs.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Instruction is to outline the standards against which the effectiveness of local community action programs will be evaluated. The focus is on the accomplishments which constitute program effectiveness. It is not the purpose of this Instruction to establish standards for conducting evaluations. Subsequent policy and guidance issuances will cover the conduct of evaluations, including subjects such as composition of evaluation teams, techniques for evaluating programs, and the development of adequate evaluation designs.

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In establishing program effectiveness standards in accordance with the Congressional mandate it is not the intention of OEO to limit the local initiative of its grantees, but rather to provide a basic framework within which CAP grantees may proceed to establish local goals and priorities.

2. POLICY

a. General

All CAP grantees and programs are subject to evaluation, both in terms of quality, and in terms of effectiveness, as defined above.

General standards of CAP program quality are included in a variety of CAP policy and program guidelines. Program quality, as defined above, is a prerequisite to the success of Community Action, and additional instructions and guidance will be issued on this subject to assure that the content, staff, facilities, and management of community action programs are of such quality as to provide maximum benefits to program participants.

This Instruction deals exclusively with program effectiveness, as defined above. While program quality is essential to program effectiveness, it does not in itself automatically insure the effectiveness of a grantee or program in achieving the special, primary purposes of Community Action. A program may be a high-quality anti-poverty program and yet fail to be an effective community action program.

The ultimate goal of eliminating poverty is shared by Community Action and many other programs, both public and private. Within this widely shared effort, however, Community Action has a unique purpose which is not shared by other programs, namely to stimulate a better focusing of resources on the anti-poverty goal, by promoting certain improved methods through which community institutions and groups can become more responsive and productive in addressing the problems of poverty.

Effectiveness in carrying out this special mission of Community Action will be assessed on two levels:

1. The extent to which the grantee as a whole or any of its individual programs is achieving the broad purposes set forth in the Economic Opportunity Act and the CAP Mission Statement.
2. The extent to which the grantee or individual program is achieving, within the funding period, the more specific goals established locally, consistent with the broad national purposes.

Paragraph 2.b of this Instruction states the basic national standards for evaluating program effectiveness which are related directly to the

nationally determined purposes of Community Action. Paragraph 2.c establishes the requirements for setting more detailed local goals which are consistent with the national standards but which are further tailored to meet the specific needs and conditions of the local community. Paragraph 3 of this Instruction establishes the specific procedures for setting such goals.

b. National Standards of Effectiveness

The standards which can be applied uniformly on a national basis are limited by the very nature of Community Action, which emphasizes the development of local answers to local problems and conditions. The basic effectiveness standard which does apply to all grantees and all programs under Sections 221, 222, 230, 231, and 312 of the Economic Opportunity Act is that they must be stimulating measurable improvement in the way their communities respond to the problems and needs of poverty. That is, community action programs and grantees must in fact be stimulating the better focusing of a range of resources on the goal of eliminating poverty. This means helping to build greater community understanding of the problems of poverty, increased community commitment to undertake the actions needed to deal with them, and strengthened community capacity to carry out such actions, whether in education, health, employment, housing, community or family services, legal protection, welfare or any other programs and activities which are relevant to the elimination of poverty.

The basic standard of effectiveness is further divided into five parts, which represent five broad types of desired improvements in the community's responses identified in the Statement of CAP Mission and Objectives (OEO Instruction 1105-1):

1. Strengthened community capacity for planning and coordinating poverty-related programs.
2. Better organization of a range of services related to the needs of the poor.
3. Innovations and improvements in programs, institutional practices, laws, and regulations which increase opportunities for the poor.
4. Increased and more effective participation by the poor in the planning and conduct of programs which affect their lives.
5. Broadening of the base of human and material resources invested by the non-poor community in anti-poverty activities.

Each community action grantee and program must produce or stimulate, during any funding period, some measurable improvement in the community's response to poverty in each of these five standards categories.

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The specific improvements necessary to meet these five general standards will differ in each community according to its particular needs and conditions. Therefore, there is no one way for all grantees and programs to meet these standards. Attachment A to this Instruction lists a representative sample of the kinds of improvements in community response which are indicators that these standards are being met. The lists in Attachment A are not exhaustive. They merely identify a range of constructive effects which have been or can be achieved through effective community action programs.

It is unlikely that any single grantee will achieve all or even most of the improvements listed in Attachment A. It may, of course, achieve other improvements, not listed in Attachment A, which are equally valid indicators of improved community response.

The range, depth, and speed of improvements will depend on local conditions, capabilities, and needs. For example, it is recognized that rural communities face a different set of problems from those confronting urban areas. They generally have a more limited range of institutional, fiscal, and human resources on which to draw; fewer facilities; a widely dispersed and isolated target population in areas with no public transportation; and a heavier poverty load in relation to total population.

Priorities and strategies will therefore differ from one community to the next, and may change over time in any single community. Since each community has a different potential for change, and since each community action program is at a different stage of development, the effectiveness of a grantee or program will be measured by improvements over previous performance in that community rather than by comparing different communities against a single absolute level of performance.

Since the purpose of Community Action is to improve the community's response to poverty, the desired improvement in the focusing of resources should occur in the activities of other community groups and institutions outside the grantee organization. However, program effectiveness is determined also by a finding that grantee programs or actions significantly contributed to the improvements achieved in the response of other groups. Program effectiveness is thus judged both by (1) the nature of the improvement, and (2) the grantee's contribution to it.

The longer a grantee or program has been in operation, the greater will be the degree of improved community response expected from its current programs and activities. The general presumption is that there should be a continuing cumulative increase in the grantee's ability to produce or stimulate constructive effects in the community.

c. Setting Local Goals Consistent with National Standards

Every CAP grantee is already required to establish planning goals as part of its annual application process. The additional requirement established by this Instruction is that such goals must be consistent with and directly related to the national standards of program effectiveness.

This means that in addition to indicating how the grantee's programs will meet standards of program quality, grantee goals must indicate what specific improvements in the community's response to poverty the grantee will attempt to accomplish during the new funding period. In reviewing and approving grantee applications for funding OEO will be concerned not only with whether the grantee's goals are realistic and consistent with the grantee's overall strategy, but also with whether such goals are consistent with the basic community action purpose of stimulating a better focusing of the community's resources.

Accordingly, in establishing its planning goals, CAP grantees are subject to the following requirements:

1. Every grantee goal must meet at least one of the five general national standards.
2. Every grantee must establish a sufficient range of goals so that taken together they meet each of the five national standards.

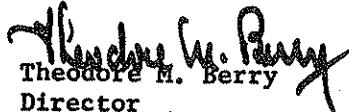
Local grantee goals may be more specific, locally tailored versions of one or more of the indicators listed in Attachment A or of some other indicator which the OEO funding office approves as meeting one or more of the national standards. In any event, grantee goals must be specific as to both the character and the extent of the improvement in community response which should be accomplished during the funding period. Where suitable, goals should be stated in quantitative terms, but whether they use quantitative or other concrete measures, grantee goals should deal with the question of "how much" as well as with the quality and character of improvements to be achieved.

3. PROCEDURES

CAP grantees should establish their local goals consistent with the national standards of program effectiveness as part of their regular grant application process. Local goals should be identified, and the strategy for attaining them should be discussed, in the grantee's Plans and Priorities form (CAP Form 81 for CAAs, 81a for SEOs, or 81b for LPAs) and Program Account Work Program forms (CAP Forms 7 and/or supplementary or alternate Forms 7a-7i). Instructions for completing these forms are found in OEO Instructions 6710-1 and subsequent instructions in the 6710 series.

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Local goals established for the funding period and subsequent years will be reviewed and approved by the OEO funding office as part of the grant approval process. These goals, consistent with national standards, will then form the basis against which the effectiveness of the grantee's programs will be evaluated.


Theodore M. Berry
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Attachment

ATTACHMENT A

INDICATORS OF IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNITY RESPONSE
TO POVERTY WHICH MEET NATIONAL STANDARDS OF
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

1. Strengthened Community Capacity for Planning and Coordinating Poverty-Related Programs
 - a. Development and dissemination of more accurate information about the problems, conditions, and causes of poverty.
 - b. Improved information on and evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of poverty-related programs.
 - c. Greater and more effective exchange of information among agencies dealing with poverty-related problems.
 - d. Increased allocation of staff and fiscal resources to anti-poverty planning.
 - e. Increased pooling and interchange of planning staffs and other resources among poverty-related agencies.
 - f. Increased joint planning of poverty programs.
 - g. Improved mechanisms for both formal and informal working contacts among agencies with related anti-poverty responsibilities.
 - h. Better division of labor and responsibilities among anti-poverty agencies.
 - i. Increased communication and cooperation between public and private poverty-related agencies.
 - j. Increased joint funding and operation of poverty programs by agencies with related responsibilities.

2. Better Organization of a Range of Services Related to the Needs of the Poor
 - a. Decentralization of services to low-income neighborhood locations.
 - b. Relocation of related services to common or nearby sites.
 - c. Establishment of programs which fill significant service gaps, and elimination of duplicative services.
 - d. Operation of related service programs so that each supports the other in helping the poor solve a combination of individual or family problems.

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- e. Changes in hours and methods of operation which increase utilization of services by poor people.
- f. Improved information and publicity about available services.
- g. Improved outreach, intake, and follow-up to maximize full use and benefit from available services.

3. Innovations and Improvements in Programs, Institutional Practices, Laws, and Regulations which Increase Opportunities for the Poor

- a. Implementation of new program concepts, designs, and techniques which increase the accessibility, quality, relevance, and effectiveness of services for the poor.
- b. Modification of eligibility and other rules to assure maximum use of services by those who need them.
- c. Improved incentives to service beneficiaries to move from dependency to self-sufficiency.
- d. Improved and expanded employment opportunities for the poor.
 - (1) modification of state and local civil service laws and regulations, as well as private employment practices, to remove arbitrary requirements for prior education and experience which exceed the actual demands of the job, or where necessary skills could be readily acquired through on-the-job training.
 - (2) increasing use of non-professionals to perform functions, otherwise performed by professionals, for which professional qualifications are not necessary.
 - (3) establishment of career development programs through which non-professionals can advance to positions of greater responsibility and higher pay through in-service training, education incentives, and other aids to self-improvement.
 - (4) elimination of automatic disqualification from employment because of arrest or bad credit records, or because of previous conviction of a crime where the crime was not serious or has no connection to the nature of the position.
 - (5) enactment and better enforcement of equal employment opportunity measures.
 - (6) increased active recruitment among the poor and minority group members for supervisory as well as entry level positions.

- e. Increased protection of the rights of poor people as consumers.
 - (1) strengthening and improved enforcement of housing codes.
 - (2) enactment and stronger enforcement of open housing measures, and adoption of non-discriminatory practices by real estate brokers.
 - (3) improved relocation assistance, fair compensation for replacement of property, and provision of increased low-income housing in urban renewal and other housing programs.
 - (4) elimination of discriminatory pricing, merchandising, and credit practices in low-income neighborhoods.
- f. Improved administration of justice and law enforcement.
 - (1) provision of adequate and competent counsel for low-income residents.
 - (2) elimination of discriminatory bail/bond requirements.
 - (3) inclusion of low-income and minority group members on juries.
 - (4) elimination of discriminatory sentences for poor persons convicted of crimes.
 - (5) improved police-community relations and elimination of discriminatory police practices in low-income areas.

4. Increased and More Effective Participation by the Poor in the Planning and Conduct of Programs which Affect their Lives

- a. Development and strengthening of neighborhood-based and target area organizations of low-income residents addressing a broad range of problems and issues.
- b. Development and strengthening of organizations of low-income participants or beneficiaries of specific service programs.
 - (1) welfare rights groups
 - (2) parent-school organizations
 - (3) youth groups
- c. Development and strengthening of economic self-help organizations.
 - (1) production and marketing cooperatives.
 - (2) buyers clubs.

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- (3) credit unions.
 - (4) neighborhood improvement and low-income housing organizations.
 - (5) private business enterprises owned and operated by organizations of low-income people.
 - (6) day-care cooperatives for working mothers.
- d. Development and strengthening of indigenous leadership in the low-income community and in organizations of poor people.
 - e. Increased and more productive communication and consultation between organizations of the poor and the public and private institutions which serve the poor.
 - f. Increased authority, responsibility, and administrative capability for organizations of the poor.
 - (1) delegation to such organizations of policy-making or operating authority for poverty-related programs.
 - (2) delegation to such organizations of policy-making or operating authority for non-poverty programs.
 - (3) provision to such organization of discretionary funds to plan, develop, and conduct programs of their choice.
 - g. More active and widespread participation by individual residents and poor people in both low-income organizations and in other community, neighborhood, civic, and school organizations.
 - h. Greater understanding and exercise by the poor of their rights and privileges as citizens.
 - i. Greater and more meaningful representation of the poor on the governing and/or advisory boards of public and private agencies.
 - j. Increased employment of low-income people by public and private agencies in positions of responsibility through which they can influence the character and quality of programs serving the poor.
5. Broadening of the Base of Human and Material Resources Invested by the Non-Poor Community in Anti-Poverty Activities
- a. Increased support by non-poor groups and individuals for programs and measures needed to deal with poverty problems.
 - b. Expansion of and improvements in public community services for residents of low-income areas.

- (1) police and fire protection
 - (2) public transportation
 - (3) garbage collection and street cleaning
 - (4) education
 - (5) recreation
 - (6) library services
- c. Redirection of public or private agency programs to focus more resources on the needs of the poor.
 - d. Increased local or state appropriations and revenues for anti-poverty programs.
 - e. New or increased (non-OEO) Federal funds in the community for anti-poverty programs.
 - f. Absorption by local or state public or private agencies of costs of established anti-poverty programs originally financed with OEO or other Federal funds.
 - g. Increased provision of volunteer time and services to anti-poverty programs by individuals and organizations.
 - (1) professionals and professional societies
 - (2) civic associations
 - (3) women's groups
 - (4) fraternal orders
 - (5) business organizations
 - (6) student groups
 - (7) private individuals
 - h. Increased development and provision by private industry of job training and placement programs for low-income persons.
 - i. New and increased investment by private industry in job-creating enterprises in low-income areas.
 - j. Provision of administrative and programmatic incentives to encourage increased or sustained commercial and industrial investment in low-income areas.
 - k. Elimination of discriminatory practices which withhold regular private loan capital from members of minority groups wishing to invest in commercial enterprises in low-income areas.

