Sharing a City Administrator

by Daniel R. McCarty

In Minnesota, 755 of the state’s 855 cities have a population of less than 5,000. Only 69 of these 755 cities have some type of administrator and of these 69, 55 are cities with populations between 1,000 and 5,000.¹ Yet most of these cities’ governments are overburdened with demands. Citizens are asking for more services, for more programs. Federal and state agencies are requiring compliance with more regulations. The paperwork mounts. Managing a city is becoming more and more complex.

In the past, many smaller communities were willing to forego paved streets, storm and sanitary sewers, and social programs for the young and old. But now their citizens want many of the services offered in larger cities. Minnesota has 395 cities with populations under 500. Two hundred forty-three of them are without sanitary sewer systems.² The elderly, with no apartments available to them, have no choice but to remain in their often roomier-than-necessary homes, burdened with the cost of maintaining more than they need. Young families cannot find homes they can afford. To begin solving these problems requires more than a wish and an engineer or contractor.

In the last ten years, many new state and federal programs and regulations have descended upon all cities, regardless of size. Minnesota cities are affected by various state and federal labor regulations, by new environmental laws and requirements, by the need to keep numerous records relating to fiscal matters, and to comply with new legislation. Assistance is available to cities through many state and federal programs. Grant

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and loan programs abound. But to receive assistance, a city must know where to apply and how. Someone must prepare the application form and actually administer the project if the grant or loan is given. For small cities this is beyond the level of time and expertise available. Mayors and councilmembers have other full-time occupations. Part-time city clerks are already too busy. The result is that many of Minnesota's smaller cities are missing out on the new programs that they so much need.

These burdens on the small city are not likely to diminish in the future. It is possible that even more responsibility will be directed to the local government as state and federal policies change. What is needed to cope with the ever increasing demands on city government is simply people with the time and ability to help the community begin providing needed services—experts who are familiar with the new rules and regulations, who know the ins and outs of obtaining grants and loans, and who understand fiscal management and personnel management.

The Redwood County Project
In April of 1975, five small cities in Redwood County, Minnesota began an experiment in small city government. Using a federal Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) grant and contributions from each city, the five jointly hired a city administrator and initiated the Rural Cities Administration Project. The cities participating in the project are Lucas (population 254), Milroy (247), Sanborn (505), Wabasso (738), and Walnut Grove (756).

The Rural Cities Administration Project was the conception of the Mayor of Wabasso, John Maurer. He recognized his own inadequacy and the inability of the city council and the city clerk to deal with the widening scope of city government functions. Many opportunities for Wabasso were being missed because of the lack of time and expertise needed to secure them. He felt that a professional administrator could be the answer. Several surrounding small cities might share in the costs and the benefits. Mayor Maurer recognized a possible funding source for such a project when he received information on an IPA grant money. Conversations with IPA personnel encouraged him to submit an application. As chairman of the Redwood County Mayors' Association, Maurer invited the mayors of surrounding communities to consider participating in a shared administrator program. Initially ten cities expressed interest. But when a final commitment was needed, the group thinned to Wabasso and four others.

Creating the Project
The application for the IPA grant was submitted to the Minnesota Department of Personnel by the City of Wabasso in October of 1974. The IPA Advisory Committee initially expressed doubts that an administrator could work equally well for five cities. After supportive presentations, however, by Mayor Maurer and James Solem, committee member for the State Planning Agency, the committee approved an allocation of $20,000 for the project, with the condition that each city contribute $1,340 in cash or in-kind contributions during the first year of the project.

The City of Wabasso represented the Rural Cities Administration Project as the grantee in the IPA grant contract and the State Department of Personnel (IPA division) as the grantor. The other four cities joined with Wabasso through a Joint Powers Agreement. The five mayors formed a coordinating board to plot the course of action for the project. They proposed an initial budget of $25,000. The administrator would be selected by a committee consisting of the mayor of each city or the mayor's representative. This committee would also, by a majority vote, be responsible for the dismissal of the administrator. A bank was selected for the deposits of project funds and a chairperson and treasurer were elected to disburse payments for salary, travel, and other expenses incurred by the administrator and the project.

In the beginning the board did not have a definite work program and job description drawn up. The mayors, however, did have an intuitive grasp of the important objectives of the project. The administrator would provide guidance and technical assistance in helping to meet the increasing demands on city government and would provide the leadership for more aggressive action in community development.

In selecting the administrator, the board was concerned not so much with what specific duties would be involved, as with the interest and flexibility of the candidate to explore and define the parameters of the project as the experiment proceeded. It was concerned with fostering a situation in which mutual trust and common sense would be the guiding principles in modeling a work program and position responsibilities.

The five cities drew up a Memorandum of Agreement between themselves formally recognizing the need for an administrator, acknowledging the IPA grant of $20,000, resolving to provide $1,340 each in cash and in-kind contributions for the program, and recognizing the coordinating board as the directing body of the project's activities.

The coordinating board advertised the position, and out of twelve candidates selected John Elam, a specialist in rural development. Mr. Elam and the program began in April of 1975.

The Administrator at Work
In the nearly three years that have passed since then, the administrator's roles and responsibilities have been worked out and refined. The administrator spends one day a week in each city. A flexible schedule is maintained throughout the day which allows him to meet individually with the mayor, council members, city employees, community groups, and citizens. An important part of the day is spent with the city clerk, helping with time-consuming administrative paperwork. The remainder of the time is devoted to immediate problems facing each city, and the larger physical and community development activities of the city.

Three or four evenings each week find the administrator attending meetings. A vital part of his involvement in each community is being available to provide professional know-how to any community organization. About once a month, the administrator makes the 150-mile drive to meet with people in various state and federal agencies in St. Paul and Minneapolis. The five mayors had rarely made such trips to discuss matters relating to their cities. Meetings are also scheduled now with the regional development commissions, county level agencies, and state and national legislative representatives. The administrator attends and participates in meetings, workshops, and seminars to increase his own awareness and effectiveness in city government. The mayors and councils realize the importance of such activities, which their full-time jobs prevent them from attending.

Benefits of the Shared Administrator Program
Since the beginning of the Rural Cities Administration Project in April 1975, a great many changes have occurred in Lucan, Milroy, Sanborn, Wabasso, and Walnut Grove. In August of 1977 all twenty councilmembers and five mayors assembled to critically review the program. The basic outcome of the meeting was a strong voicing of support to continue it indefinitely. It was decided to hold annual meetings to review the program and discuss project funding. The September meeting represents an important step forward in the administration of the program itself because it allowed the councilmembers to participate for the first time in decisions about the scope and funding of the program, along with the coordinating board.

What difference has the shared administrator program made to these five cities in southwestern Minnesota? The benefits have been evident in new and improved services in the communities, in many physical improvements, in better management practices, and in substantial fiscal gains. Beginning with the initial grant that established the shared
administrator program, the five cities have been able to capture a substantial amount of grant funds. About $600 thousand has been received in both public and private monies, and in addition the cities have saved both time and money through their venture in cooperation. All five governments have increased their efficiency, scope, and capability.

Increased Services

The relatively long distances between the cities in the Rural Cities Administration Project preclude the sharing of many basic services, such as waste collection and police protection, which might have been shared had the cities been closer. Areas where sharing has occurred include legal and engineering services, fire protection, ambulance service, and a Dutch elm disease program. Wabasso, Milroy, and Walnut Grove have the same city attorney. Lucan and Sanborn also share an attorney. The cities save money and the attorneys save time because legal work can often be duplicated. For example, when the state legislature required all cities to have a bingo ordinance if the game was to be played, Sanborn’s attorney drew up an ordinance which subsequently was used in Lucan and Wabasso as well. Because of Sanborn’s long and satisfactory association with a competent, conscientious engineer, Lucan has hired the same man as their city engineer and Walnut Grove has hired him for their storm sewer and street improvement work.

The fire protection contracts between the cities and adjacent townships were grossly inequitable in relation to services rendered. Using information from the University of Minnesota Fire Center, all five organized fire departments for both city and rural services. The budgets were presented to the townships and approved at their annual meetings. The result was an annual $10,000 increase in township contributions for fire protection. Cooperative fire boards, joining the townships and cities were created. In Lucan this has resulted in the construction of a new community and fire hall with the townships sharing 60 percent of the costs. The bonds to finance this $50,000 project were purchased entirely by residents of the city and the adjoining townships rather than, as is usual, by out-of-town banks. A similar improvement in township participation has brought gains for the area’s ambulance service.

In 1975 the five city councils passed Dutch elm disease control ordinances at the impetus of the administrator. In July of 1976, the cities were among the first outstate to implement a comprehensive plan of chemical treatment and sanitary removal for municipal and private trees. The Dutch elm disease program used a landscape architecture intern from the University of Minnesota to identify and treat diseased trees and to prepare a disease control map for each city, showing the location of every elm tree. The intern trained people in each city to carry on the program. In early summer of 1976, the five cities jointly purchased the chemicals and equipment for tree innoculations. The cities have benefited from this comprehensive program at a cost considerably less than had they done it each along.

Joint grants awarded to the Rural Cities Administration Project have also benefited the cities’ services. A Title VI Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) grant through the Governor’s Manpower Office allows the cities to hire low-income persons and train them in all aspects of city maintenance work. The CETA grant has resulted in better maintenance for the five Redwood County cities. In addition, it is training and licensing people who can then work in other small cities. In the first six months of the program, seven persons have been trained to perform routine maintenance on water and sewer systems, streets, buildings, and parks. It is a model on-the-job training program for small city maintenance work.

A joint matching grant was also received from the Minnesota State Arts Board for arts awareness and development. Although the grant was made to the cities jointly, an arts task force has been created in each city to decide what projects should be undertaken.

The administrator provided assistance in Wabasso when the library board reorganized and also assisted the Wabasso Historical Society in seeking funds from the County Historical Society. Through the shared administrator program, this type of technical assistance is available now to any civic organization which requests it.

Physical Improvements

Water and sewer systems, streets, parks, and housing, all show improvements over the last three years. For 1975-1977, physical improvements have totalled $4.2 million. Wabasso completed a $156,000 water treatment plant in 1975 and followed this in 1977 with street improvements and the installation of water and sewer mains. Lucan paved its residential streets in 1977 and added water, sanitary, and storm extensions to its sewer system. Sanborn did similar work in 1977. Milroy completed a $365,000 sanitary sewer system in the summer of 1977. And Walnut Grove added storm sewer extensions and street improvements, including participation in state improvements on Highway 14.

State Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON) funds were received in 1976 by Walnut Grove, Lucan, and Sanborn. State and local matching funds totaling $148,000 have been used to improve the parks and recreation programs in those communities. Each city applied separately for the money, but much time was saved by having one program staff prepare all of the applications.

Extensive changes in the housing stock of all five cities have been possible with the aid of the city administrator. One hundred and five new multi-family residential units will have been built by this summer, including thirty-seven units to be built in the spring of 1978. This represents 11 percent of the total housing stock. Loans from the Farmers Home Administration have funded twenty units in Sanborn, twelve in Lucan, and six in Wabasso, and will fund a twelve-unit building in Milroy this spring. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 rental assistance will be available for these units in Lucan, and Milroy anticipates that similar assistance will be available for their citizens as well. Wabasso is constructing a twenty-eight unit apartment under a Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) mortgage program and Walnut Grove anticipates a similar building either through the same program or through the HUD Section 8 multi-family program.

In addition to new housing, the five cities have coordinated several rehabilitation projects. In 1976 the five cities were the only small cities to jointly administer an MHFA Home Improvement Grant Project. A University of Minnesota architecture student served as administrator through the University Year for Action program. With this foundation, the cities increased their housing rehabilitation efforts in 1977. Funding came from HUD’s Community Development Block Grants for Lucan and Walnut Grove, from the MHFA for Wabasso, Milroy, and Sanborn, and from the National Demonstration Water Project for an innovative sewer connection program in Milroy. Continuing the relationship with the University of Minnesota’s University Year for Action program, an intern specializing in housing again administered the rehabilitation program in the five cities.

Planning grants have also been received by the Redwood County program. In 1977 a HUD 701 grant allowed each of the five cities to develop a comprehensive planning inventory. A second 701 grant for 1977-78 will enable each city to use the inventory as a base for drawing up a comprehensive capital improvement plan, land use zoning plan and ordinance, and establishing a planning commission.

The National Endowment for the Arts granted $4,500 through their architectural program to conduct a comprehensive five-city historic preservation survey. The survey was completed in the summer of 1977 by an historic preservation planning student from Metropolitan State University and a citizen committee in each city.
Advances in Management

Over the three years of the Redwood County program’s existence, each city has been able to form a cohesive administration unit with the shared administrator, city clerk, major, council, and staff. Problems and setbacks still exist, but there is now a sense of planned guidance and calculated strategy to city government policies, programs, and activities. Blind reaction to problems and events as they occur is less necessary than it was in the past. When unexpected problems do arise, it is more likely to be a week than a month before solutions are forthcoming.

The administrator has spent a significant amount of time with the five city clerks. Rules and regulations governing the operation of the office of city clerk have been developed in Sanborn, Walnut Grove, and Lucan. Much of the heavy load of clerical paperwork has been reduced with the administrator’s aid. All five clerks have become more skilled in their work.

The shared administrator has made it possible to provide much needed supervision and guidance for city employees. Job requirements and descriptions have been created. Continuing professional training is encouraged. Time is regularly set aside for discussing work progress, equipment, and possible job problems before they develop. Improved hiring practices have been implemented including public advertising, affirmative action plans, state testing for officers, and open interviewing. Compliance with federal and state labor standards, especially in hourly salaries and over-time payments, is now assured.

As communication and cooperation have developed within the cities’ administrative units, they have developed between these cities and other levels of government. The administrator communicates with various persons at the local, state, and federal level in the normal course of his work. Dealing with the concerns of five cities, rather than one, allows him to communicate the result that has been that the various levels of government have been made much more aware of the needs and problems of the small city, in particular those of the five in Redwood County. This awareness has been translated into various forms of concrete assistance to the five cities.

Communication and cooperation have improved not only with official government bodies, but also with municipal organizations, such as the League of Minnesota Cities. The administrator calls upon the League’s staff frequently for technical assistance.

Other changes in management practices through the shared administrator project include ordinances and bill collections. A number of new city ordinances have been developed and shared from town to town. For example, a water utility ordinance was created for Milroy and then later adopted by Milroy and Wabasso, saving time and legal fees. Traffic, curfew, bingo, and Dutch elm control ordinances were shared in a similar manner by all five cities. Collecting unpaid water, waste collection, and sewer bills had been a continuing problem with these cities. Past efforts to collect were largely ineffective. Now procedures have been implemented, in full compliance with the law, which permit the cities to act promptly and directly in collecting the unpaid bills. Here again the administrator has helped provide a solution for dealing with a problem distasteful for the clerks and elected officials.

Meetings abound in Lucan, Milroy, Sanborn, Wabasso, and Walnut Grove. The large number of projects being undertaken has caused several new organizations to form. Milroy and Walnut Grove now have housing and redevelopment authorities. Lucan and Sanborn have created the five city development corporations. An economic development corporation operates in Walnut Grove. And perhaps most important of all, each city has instituted an annual town meeting where citizens can provide ideas and direction to the city council about community priorities and goals for the future.

Fiscal Gains

Shared purchasing, new rate schedules for city services, budgeting, and grant monies have all contributed to a much brighter financial picture in Redwood County.

Shared purchasing of capital equipment and supplies has resulted in considerable savings. The savings in the control of Dutch elm disease have already been mentioned. Other joint purchases have included police patrol cars, water meters, water hydrants, water and sewer pipes, and a sewer cleaning machine, which at $10,000 would have been too costly for any one city to purchase alone. Legal fees and administrative time have been saved when work done for one community could be readily applied to another. New rate schedules were developed for both water and waste collection services. Water rate studies were undertaken in four of the five cities to determine the equity of current rate structures, provide a rational basis on which to calculate rate increases, and assure that income keeps pace with costs. Similar studies were made for waste collection rates as well.

Prior to the shared administrator program none of the five cities were managing their fiscal operations according to a comprehensive budget. They had no budget at all. As in many smaller cities, the mayor and council would intuitively fly by the seat of their pants when they made expenditure decisions, keeping in mind the current balance of funds. The administrator has instituted comprehensive itemized categorical budgeting, using a zero-based method of review. Now the cities can objectively and confidently plan for recurring expenses and capital improvements, and can provide for contingencies. The increased emphasis on maintaining specific accounts brought about by budgeting has proven efficient fiscal management. Citizens are able to see how their money is being managed.

Finally, a considerable amount of grant monies have come to these five cities. Prior to the beginning of the program, few applications were made. In the past three years grants have been received for physical developments, parks and recreation, supplies and equipment, and cultural development as well as continued funding of the project itself. Legal fees for large projects have been considerably reduced by having the shared administrator secure permits and various clearances, arrange financing, hold public hearings, and communicate with federal, state, and county agencies. A substantial amount of the administrator’s cost to the cities was recouped through the administrative expense provisions budgeted into these project grants and loans. One of the major cost-saving activities in 1977 involved the cities acting as their own contractors on projects. By hiring and coordinating individual sub-contractors themselves, overall project costs were reduced by at least one percent. This technique was used on several major improvement projects.

A student intern program has attracted private foundation monies, as well. As of November 1977, seven University of Minnesota students and one from Metropolitan State University had worked in the cities as interns. Foundations that have donated money for the internship program include the General Mills Foundation, the Apache Foundation, the Savings Bank Foundation, and the Dayton Hudson Foundation. Over $100 per resident in various monies has been received in each of the three years of the shared administrator project.

Other Shared Administrator Programs

The shared administrator, or “circuit riding administrator,” concept has been implemented in a few scattered areas around the nation in the last four years. At a special meeting for circuit riders held at Montgomery Bell State Park, Tennessee in April 1975, twenty-three persons listed their position as circuit rider. Programs with a circuit riding administrator vary widely in structure and function. Many are basically a shared consultant arrangement sponsored by regional, county, or state governments, or by a state or area league of cities, or by a state university.

A circuit riding program of the consulting services type is typified by a proj-
ect begun in 1972 in six central Missouri cities, ranging in population from 528 to 3,520. The administrator in this program was hired by the Missouri Municipal League, which contracted with the participating cities. The program was financed by the Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission. The primary focus is on fiscal management, particularly budgeting. The manager attends monthly and special council meetings and has workdays periodically in each city.

In 1974 in the state of Washington, HEW funds were used to start a circuit riding program between five cities with populations from 480 to 2,775, with only one city under 1,000. The manager in this program acted as a consultant and advisor to the mayors and council members in improving the general management of the cities involved. The administrator was responsible to the mayors. Significantly, after eighteen months of federal funding ended, the three largest cities (populations of 1,312, 2,375, and 2,775) supported the project entirely with local monies.

Four rural cities in southwest Texas, with underdeveloped human and economic resources, were aided in providing vital services and making the most of available resources by a circuit management staff sponsored by the county economic development corporation. The staff consists of a manager, assistant manager, and secretary. After an initial grant from the Community Services Administration, the project received funds from the Texas Department of Community Affairs and the Texas Municipal League. The staff provided the cities with fiscal and general city management services, as well as training of city staffs in these areas. It was also involved in initiating and managing capital improvement projects and grant preparation.

A recent development in Colorado demonstrates that the shared administrator concept is viable for small cities in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. The Denver Regional Council of Governments began a shared manager program in December, 1976, with the involvement of three communities: Bow Mar, Sheridan, and Cherry Hills Village. The report after six months is that the three "are eager to continue the program in some form for many years." A fresh indication of the relevance and success of the Denver area program is the advertising for a new circuit rider manager, for the cities of Lyons, Georgetown, Black Hawk, and Erie, in the October 24, 1977 newsletter of the International City Management Association.

Minnesota's Other Programs

Minnesota remains on the forefront in implementing shared administrator programs (see Figure 1). Four cities in Cottonwood and Murray Counties (Westbrook, Currie, Dovray, and Storden) began sharing an administrator in April 1977 with financial assistance from a $20,000 IPA grant and technical assistance from the Redwood County program. Fairfax and Franklin, located in Rice County, began their program in December 1977. Russell, Stalton, Ruthen, Garvin, and Lynd, five cities in Lyon and Pipestone Counties, plan that their administrator will begin in January, 1978. In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Mahtomedi and Lake Elmo began sharing an administrator in early 1977. In Hennepin County, the Northwest League of Municipalities is hopeful that some type of shared administrator program can be implemented for all or part of their group. The major obstacle at the present is the lack of funds. Other groups hoping to start programs in the near future include Ellsworth, Rushmore, and Bigelow in Nobles County; Kerkhoven, Murdock, Raymond and Pennock in Swift and Kandiyohi Counties; and Comfrey, in Brown County, is seeking other cities to join it in a program.

Characteristics for Cities Considering a Shared Administrator

Because each city and group of cities is unique and has different needs and problems, it is unwarranted to prescribe...
specific criteria to guide cities interested in sharing an administrator. Some basic guidelines about critical factors, however, may be helpful.

The geographical proximity of the cities involved is one limiting factor. Travel costs and travel time for the administrator are proportional to the distance between the cities. In Redwood County, the five cities are spread throughout the county. From Walnut Grove, where the administrator lives, Wabasso is the furthest city, twenty-three miles distant. The total distance around the circuit is seventy-six miles. Travel expenses average $200 per month and the daily travel time ranges from a minimum of forty-five minutes to over two hours. The distances between the cities in Redwood County are near the maximum feasible in such a project.

The size of cities in shared administrator programs varies considerably. Cities with populations close to 5,000 (or even considerably less than 5,000) may need and be able to afford an administrator of their own. The combined population of the Redwood County program is 2,500. A group of cities with a combined population of less than 2,000 may experience difficulties financing such a project. On the other hand, combined populations of over 3,000 may begin to over-burden a single administrator. A group of cities with a population of well over 3,000 might consider hiring an assistant administrator as well. Compatibility in size between the cities appears to be a positive factor in a successful program. Cities of 150 grouped with cities of 2,500 may feel they are not getting the attention they need.

The number of cities to share an administrator is a third critical factor. In Redwood County, the administrator spends one day per week in each of the five cities. In the future the schedule may be adjusted to allow more time in the larger cities and less in the smaller ones. At that time it might be feasible to include another city in the program. There are three on the waiting list. But at the present, the five cities provide fifty to sixty hours per week of work. The administrator feels that an optimal program would include four cities, in which the administrator would spend one day per week in each and leave the fifth day for workshops, meetings, and "catch-up" work.

At the core of a shared administrator program are the cities themselves. There must be a desire on the part of each city to join in the program. Enthusiasm and
cooperation within and between the cities is vital to a program’s success. A give and take attitude is important. At any given time some cities may appear to be benefiting more than others and then the situation will reverse itself.

Financing a Shared Administrator Program

When there is a significant difference in size or time spent between cities, the question arises as to how a satisfactory funding arrangement can be reached. Several alternatives are available.

Each city’s share could be determined solely by dividing the cost of the program by the number of cities involved. This arrangement may be satisfactory when the major cost of a program is met by a grant, as was the case in Redwood County. But when the cities are meeting the entire cost themselves it may not be suitable. If unequal time is spent between the cities, a city’s share could be based on the percentage of the administrator’s time spent in that city. When differences in city populations are considered, the figuring becomes more complex. The cost could be determined solely on a city’s population or this basic formula could be adjusted by incorporating the other alternatives, compensating for time spent in each city and the number of cities involved. For an example of this, consider the formula used by the Redwood County program for determining each city’s share for 1977 (Figure 2). The time to be spent in each of the five cities is one day per week, or 20 percent of the total time. The total population is 2,500 and total cost is anticipated at $24,000. The coordinating board decided that 50 percent of the total costs, or $12,000 would be shared equally by the five cities ($2,400 each). The remaining 50 percent would be based on the population of each city. Milroy, with a population of 247, would thus pay $250 times $4.80 ($1,200) divided by 2,500, plus the $2,400, or $3,586. Walnut Grove, with 756 people, would pay 250 times $4.80, plus the $2,400, or $6,029. Thus while Milroy pays less for the same amount of the administrator’s time, it pays more per citizen ($14.52) than Walnut Grove ($7.97). Thus a balance must be sought between the value of time spent in each city and the cost per resident in each city.

Many groups of cities contemplating sharing an administrator will face an initial problem in funding the program. There may be sufficient caution and doubts on the part of city government officials and citizens to provide 100 percent local funding at the beginning. Indeed, it is doubtful that the Redwood County program would have begun without grant assistance.

Expenses for the first year of the Redwood County shared administrator program proved to be greater than originally estimated. They were met by the $20,000 IPA grant and $1,760 in cash and in-kind contributions from each city. The in-kind payments included such things as secretarial help, equipment and supplies, telephone, and photo-copying. The IPA grant was increased to $23,250 for the second year of the program and the cities’ share of the costs increased also because of a change in the federal grant matching requirements. In the third year of the program, 1977, the five cities bore the entire costs themselves. A third IPA grant was received by the program, however, to be used for presenting the shared administrator concept in workshops with cities throughout Minnesota. The workshops, which begin this month at the League of Minnesota Cities and the State Planning Agency. In preparing the 1978 budgets, the five cities again included the entire cost of the program in their operational budgets.

It is evident that outside funding could be helpful in initiating the new shared administrator projects in groups of Minnesota cities, though two groups are now proceeding without any outside funds (the Balaton group and the Fairfax group). The IPA grant money is provided for “pilot” projects and not for a large number of such projects. Under a bill currently in the state legislature (House File 1376, Senate File 1228), a program to encourage more shared administrators in the state would be administered through the Office of Local and Urban Affairs of the State Planning Agency. Monies would be made available to hire administrators with a 25 percent local match in funds on a decreasing two or three year grant. Continuation of funding would be conditional upon performance.

The Redwood County project has shown how much can be accomplished over a short period of time through a shared administrator program. Interest in the program is widespread. The needs are great and the time is right for encouragement and assistance to help Minnesota cities begin similar programs which will enable them to start meeting needs and solving problems in a unique and self-determined manner.

NOTES

1Statistics are from the League of Minnesota Cities. Population figures based on 1970 Census or Special Census; administrator figures based on 1977 Directory of Minnesota Municipal Officials.

2Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Division of Water Quality, Municipalities Without Sewer Systems, (July 1975), Table 15.


4A shared city administrator has generally been defined as one who provides technical and/or various degrees of administrative assistance to two or more cities, acting in the role of either an advisor, consultant, or manager. An advisor provides technical assistance in the form of general advice on policies and programs. A consultant provides technical assistance. An executive officer is specifically in nature than that of an advisor. A consultant will conduct research, prepare proposals, and write final texts of programs and grant applications. A manager provides assistance, in addition to that of the consultant and advisor, which involves a considerable amount of discretion and responsibility. The manager is delegated authority to make decisions in specified areas and to implement programs.

As of May, 1976, the Redwood County program was the only one that met the basic structural criteria for a shared city manager position, and thus its “circuit rider” was the only one who truly functioned as an administrator or manager. (op. cit. Wanamaker) Of course many programs have followed suit since May of 1976.

5“Missouri’s First Circuit Manager,” Missouri Municipal Review, August 1973, pp. 4-6.


9For further information on the shared administrator concept, contact: Jon Elam, Rural Cities Administration Project, Walnut Grove, MN 55180; Office of Local & Urban Affairs, Minnesota State Planning Agency, 101 Capitol Square Building, St. Paul, MN 55101; League of Minnesota Cities, 480 Cedar, St. Paul, MN 55101.
Child Care in High Risk Families

by Judith H. Weir
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Preliminary findings from two projects related to child care were presented at a breakfast seminar in early November, sponsored by CURA with the cooperation of the University of Minnesota's School of Social Work and the Department of School Psychology. The two project directors, Byron Egeland and John Red Horse, spoke. This breakfast seminar is the first of several designed to bring current projects of special interest to the attention of people working in the human services.

Byron Egeland, from the University's Department of Psychoeducational Studies, reported on the preliminary results of a longitudinal study of mothers, infants, and environmental stress. In explaining the impetus for the study, Egeland noted that child abuse is linked to poverty, yet the majority of poor parents do not abuse their children. "Why do some mistreat their children while others do not?"

The research project was designed from a prospective, rather than a retrospective, approach. A high-risk sample of 263 families was selected for study over a two-year period. All the families were low-income people and the mothers were expecting their first child. Mothers and, when possible, fathers were chosen from the Minneapolis Children and Youth Project at the Minneapolis Public Health Clinic. Tests were given and observations made on a regular schedule beginning with the third trimester of pregnancy. Table 1 shows the actual test instruments used at each interval. The project, begun in April 1975, will not be complete until April 1979. At this point the data collected has been analyzed only through the nine month interval.

The researchers are looking at the entire range of caretaking skills. Because of the limited time available for the CURA presentation, Dr. Egeland presented the results by comparing a group of 27 "irresponsible" mothers with 26 "caring" mothers. The two groups were identified on the basis of observations made during home visits and ratings made on the Child Care Rating Scale, filled out by the observer after each home visit.
Some basic differences between the two groups of mothers are reported in Table 2. In looking at the amount of life stress (such things as troubles with welfare, frequent moves, and trouble with family members) there is little difference between the two groups. There is a difference, however, in their reactions to that stress: the caring mothers are able to cope with their problems. They can mobilize themselves to do something about their life situation to improve it. The irresponsible mothers, on the other hand, develop an indifferent attitude or one in which they appear to lack the skills to make use of resources or helping networks in dealing with the extreme disorganization of their lives. The irresponsible mothers, it was also noted, tend to be either low anxiety or high anxiety personality—usually extremely low anxiety.

Surprisingly, there are no personality differences between the two groups of mothers. It is apparent that identifying someone as aggressive or untrusting on a test is no predictor of what kind of parent that person will be. The emerging profile indicates that the mother's knowledge of the child and sensitivity to the child is the major variable in determining whether she is a caring or an irresponsible parent. Cohier's Maternal Attitude Scale, developed at the University of Chicago, was used to determine the mother's knowledge of her child and her command of child-rearing techniques. Major differences are apparent between the two groups of mothers in their understanding of the child's psychological complexity. The mother's level of understanding is clearly linked to her expectations of the child, as well. When expectations were compared before and after birth, the caring group showed that though their expectations may not have been realistic before the child's birth, they were modified, realistically, after the birth. Irresponsible mothers did not modify their expectations and continued to perceive their babies unrealistically.

Observations during the feeding periods, at three months after birth, show major differences between the two groups in the mother's sensitivity to her child and in her enjoyment and delight in the child.

The most obvious conclusion of the study to date is that there is more violence and mistreatment of children than official statistics indicate. A figure of 1.0 percent is typically quoted for child abuse but for the group in this study 10 percent is a more accurate figure. Much violence and neglect seems to be going undetected in our society. The sample chosen in this case was largely from the white community. It included about 7 percent black and 10 percent American Indian mothers. The study is supported by a grant from the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Office of Child Development. Egeland expects that final results of this research project will not be available until after April 1979.

John Red Horse, the second speaker at the breakfast seminar, reported on the philosophy behind the Ah-be-no-gee project which he has been directing for the past two and a half years within the American Indian community in Minneapolis. Ah-be-no-gee is a demonstration project designed to train Indian family advocates and to explore Indian family behavior. The project provides social services within the Indian community, separate from but parallel to the services offered in the main-line white culture. Red Horse stressed the necessity for a parallel system, similar to the old settlement house idea. "Minority people must be hired to work with minority communities."

Research in Minneapolis and St. Paul indicates that a majority of Indians prefer to receive services from Indians. Moreover, contrary to some popular notions, Indians can be recruited for professional schools. One of the major accomplishments of Ah-be-no-gee has been the recruiting and training of Indians for social work. At the beginning of the project in July 1975 there were six American Indian professional social workers in Minnesota. Only one was in practice as a social worker. At that time one Indian was enrolled in the University's School of Social Work. Today eight are enrolled as students. Five will have graduated by the end of Fall Quarter, 1977. One graduate has entered a Ph.D. program in sociology at the University. One will join the faculty of Bemidji State University. Three have entered direct practice: two in the Twin Cities and one at Red Lake Reservation. Four of these five graduates are working in specialized Indian service programs.

Within Indian culture, the concept of family differs in image and reality from that of a middleclass nuclear family. Indians live in an extended family network which influences culturally unique family behaviors and child development standards. These cultural differences

### Table 1: Tests and Observations Made in Assessing Quality of Child Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prenatal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last trimester of</td>
<td>Shipley Hartford Vocabulary Test*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pregnancy**</td>
<td>Personality Research Form*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IPAT Anxiety Scale Questionnaire*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inventory of Beliefs (short form of Rotter’s Locus of Control Scale)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neurasthen Perception Inventory (measure of parental expectations)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohier’s Maternal Attitude Scale (Questionnaire for Mothers scales used)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pregnancy Research Questionnaire (assesses mother’s reaction to pregnancy)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of Child Care and Expectations of Child Development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother’s Information and Interview Sheet*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At birth</strong></td>
<td>Nurse’s Ratings of Newborn (on activity, soothability, crying, etc. to characterize temperament)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7 and 10 days</strong></td>
<td>Brazelton Behavioral and Neurological Assessment Scale (to characterize infant temperament)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>after birth</strong></td>
<td>First Days’ Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Months</strong></td>
<td>Same measures as given prenatally, plus: Life Stress Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment of Baby Scale*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carey Infant Temperament Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three month Observation &amp; Rating Scales (Waiting Room Rating Scale, Doctor’s Rating Scale, Observation of Feeding Situation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Months</strong></td>
<td>Observation of Feeding and Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctor’s Rating Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment of Baby Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9 Months</strong></td>
<td>Observation of Feeding and Quality of Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiting Room Rating Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctor’s Rating Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bayley Scale of Infant Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12 Months</strong></td>
<td>Assessment of Security of Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Throughout 1st year</strong></td>
<td>Life Stress Scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Given to mother and father, where possible.
and delivery of social services. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and must be acknowledged in the planning namesakes, for example, should be integrated into any family intervention plan. One’s ability to orchestrate this network is dependent upon proximity; hence, the necessity for a parallel, settlement house system.

Ah-be-no-gee uses different models for different types of Indian families. Three basic family types have been observed: traditional, bicultural, and pan-militant. A social service plan that works for one family-type will not necessarily work for another. When asked what white social workers can do with Indian families, Red Horse talked about capacity building. Whites can train Indians in some skill areas. “Most whites are not able to get close to Indian families or to understand them.”

The Ah-be-no-gee project is funded on a three-year grant from the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect, a subsidiary of the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The project is administered through CURA. The CURA Reporter will present a more detailed description of Ah-be-no-gee in a forthcoming issue. Speaking of the demonstration project as a whole, Red Horse commented, “Right here in Hennepin County we have the best opportunity in the country to develop a protocol for Indian child welfare services.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences between Mothers Identified as Caring and Irresponsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caring Mothers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared for pregnancy (public health nurse rating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home equipped for new child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s support (mother’s estimate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support (mother’s estimate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s intention to breast feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of family stress (a 50 item defined list)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—major differences—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MLMIS Moves Into State Offices

The Minnesota Land Management Information System (MLMIS) left CURA last July and is now relocated in the State Planning Agency. MLMIS has been an ongoing joint project of CURA and the State Planning Agency. Research and development had proceeded far enough for the project to leave the University setting. The move will allow MLMIS to provide wider services to persons seeking land use data, analysis, and graphics.

Some changes have taken place during the move. The operation is now called the Land Management Information Center (LMIC). Al Robinette serves as director. The term MLMIS has been more narrowly defined to mean the computer data base and software that are a backbone of the service bureau. Two other divisions have been created: an applications section, the Planning Analysis Service, and the Mapping and Remote Sensing Information Center.

The MLMIS has proven capable of handling many land use problems. The list includes power line routing, solid waste disposal facility siting, 701 land use planning, and commercial forest suitability rating. It has been a valuable tool for allowing rapid and inexpensive responses to pressing problems. Its new location within the State Planning Agency should make its use more widespread.

Three new publications have been prepared by LMIC: A Directory of Minnesota Maps, Inventory of Aerial Photography and Other Remotely Sensed Imagery of Minnesota, and Publications Available From the Land Management Information Center.

Soon LMIC will start a newsletter to keep interested people up-to-date on system enhancements and new applications. For publications or the newsletter contact LMIC at 296-1212 or write to 15 Capitol Square Bldg., 550 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

Lakeshore Zoning Variances

Professor David Bryden, of the University of Minnesota Law School, has recently published the results of an empirical study of lakeshore zoning variances in Wright and Otter Tail counties. The article, titled “The Impact of Variances: A Study of Statewide Zoning,” was published in the May, 1977 issue of the Minnesota Law Review. It describes the origins and rationale for Minnesota’s statewide rules on shoreland development. An analysis is provided of tables showing the extent to which building and septic tank drainfield setbacks have been undermined by variances. This is the first scholarly effort to quantify the impacts of variances, and to relate those impacts to the strengths and weaknesses of the rules being varied.

The small size and humble performance of minority business are unjustly attributed to lack of minority entrepreneurial zeal and lack of a minority business tradition. In fact, minority business development has been artificially constrained. This report reviews the history of inequities in the American business community and analyzes various strategies designed to eliminate that inequity. Beginning in 1969 the federal government promised to provide opportunities for greater minority participation in the American business community. The report compares how two distinct phases of this government effort affected minority businesses in the Twin Cities area. Original data for the report were collected in 1975 and 1976 and include a number of maps showing the changes in minority business during those years. An outline model is included in the report to show how communities might be developed through minority enterprise. Author Earl P. Scott is an assistant professor in the University of Minnesota’s Geography Department.

Inside the Minnesota Experiment

John E. Vance offers a personal recollection of the past twenty years of growth in regional government for the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Minnesota’s experiment with regional government is still regarded nationally as creative and innovative. Vance’s account centers on the development of the Metropolitan Council, placing it in the context of innovative planning in Minnesota during the past century. The report serves not only as a history of what has been happening here, but also as an introduction to the impressive files which Mr. Vance accumulated while he occupied key staff positions with both the Metropolitan Council and its predecessor, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission. The Vance files are presently housed in the central offices of CURA (see “Vance Papers Housed at CURA” in this issue of the CURA Reporter).

Municipal Housing Policy in Minnesota

It is only recently that individual cities have begun to make housing policy—setting their own goals and designing their own programs. This report presents an inventory of the programs and grants of authority which can be used in creating local housing programs and local housing policies. Details about subsidized loan and grant programs and about taxing provisions are given along with brief discussions of how municipalities may use their development and regulatory authority to undertake housing programs. A series of case studies shows how the elements listed in the inventory have actually been combined to design local housing programs in three suburban Twin Cities communities: St. Louis Park, Robbinsdale, and Bloomington. The report is based on the work of students at the University of Minnesota under the direction of Michael E. Gleeson, assistant professor in the School of Public Affairs. Preparation of the report was funded by a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Office of Local and Urban Affairs of the Minnesota State Planning Agency.

Projected 1970-1980 Population Changes

This wall map depicts projected population changes in the present decade for Minnesota and adjacent areas. A central map of Minnesota and counties in neighboring states shows projected growth or decline with black (growth) and orange (decline) dots, each representing 100 people. The statistical bases used were the state demographer’s county level projections and past internal population change as measured or estimated by the Census Bureau. Inset maps are also given for the metropolitan area: one using projections of the state demographer, the other based on data from the Metropolitan Council. Finally, a county by county comparison is presented of projections by five different researchers: state demographer, Northern Natural Gas, Health Department, Hoyt-Nelson, and Metropolitan Council. The wall map was prepared by William J. Craig, assistant director of CURA. It is the fourth of a series of maps jointly produced by CURA and the Minnesota State Planning Agency. Earlier maps showed 1970 population and 1960-1970 population change.

Vance Papers Housed at CURA

The Vance Papers are the personal files of John E. Vance, collected over a period of forty years in government service. Vance came to Minnesota in early 1958 as an assistant to C. David Loeke, commission director, to help establish the Twin Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Commission. He served ten years with MPC and five years with the Metropolitan Council, first as executive secretary and later as director of public information. Retired since 1972, Vance now works as an urban consultant and author. Over the past few years Vance has indexed and annotated his extensive files so that they may be easily used by future researchers. They contain basic materials in the areas of urban planning, contemporary urban problems, and government reorganization. Major emphasis is on the working papers and documents of the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Metropolitan Council. In addition, there are local newspaper clippings on items related to Twin City Metropolitan government and urban problems. The clippings cover 1958 through June of 1977. Many local newsletters and reports are also included in these files. The files are presently housed in the CURA central offices and are available to any interested researchers.
CURA PUBLICATIONS 1977

AGING
AGING: News, monthly newsletter of the All University Council on Aging
Courses and Programs of Study in the Field of Aging: a Student Guide, All University Council on Aging

COMMUNITY DESIGN
Lanesboro and the Root River Valley; Ideas for Recreational Development and Community Design, Urban Education Center, CURA 77-2
Minnesota Project Rediscovery, Parks and Open Space, Mora, Minnesota, by Lynn Slearns, Urban Education Center, CURA 77-4
Project Rediscovery/Lake City; A Study of Choices, Urban Education Center (slidetape)
Project Rediscovery/Red Wing; A Study of Choices, Urban Education Center (slidetape)
Staples, by Richard Wolfgram, Urban Education Center, CURA 77-5
Wabasha: Design Possibilities, Urban Education Center, CURA 77-1

GOVERNMENT
Inside the Minnesota Experiment: a personal recollection of experimental planning and development in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, by John E. Vance, CURA 77-7

HOUSING
Municipal Housing Policy in Minnesota, CURA 77-3

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION
The Growth of Minority Business in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area: 1969-75, by Earl Scott, CURA 77-6

LAND USE
Reconnaissance Analysis of Lake Conditions in East Central Minnesota, by Dwight Brown, Robert Warwick, and Richard Skaggs, MLMIS #5022, (includes map)

POPULATION

CURA REPORTER, Volume VII
"The All University Council on Environmental Quality," Number 1 (February 1977)
"Council on Aging Joins CURA," Number 3 (June 1977)
"CURA Publications 1975-76," Number 2 (March 1977)
"CURA Update 75/76," Number 2 (March 1977)
"Funding Social Services in Minnesota," Esther Wattenberg, Number 3 (June 1977)
"Paradigms Lost," George M. Woodwell, Number 3 (June 1977)

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