

DOCUMENT RESUME

05690 - [B1246225]

The Linkages between Federally Assisted Implementation Programs and Plans. GGD-78-66; B-146285. April 27, 1978. 6 pp. + appendix (2 pp.).

Report to Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.; by William J. Anderson (for Victor L. Lowe, Director, General Government Div.).

Issue Area: Intergovernmental Relations and Revenue Sharing: Federal, State, Area-wide, and Local Coordination (402); Land Use Planning and Control: Land Planning Programs (2305).

Contact: General Government Div.

Budget Function: General Government: Executive Direction and Management (802).

Organization Concerned: Office of Management and Budget.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.

In response to concerns about conflicting Federal program planning requirements, a study was performed to determine the extent to which federally assisted planning efforts guide federally assisted implementation programs which have an impact on State and local governments. Many planning programs supported by the Federal Government seem to have little or no link to implementation programs. Some problems with Federal programs are that: federally assisted comprehensive planning is not performed in all broad governmental functions and is not linked to all implementation programs, many narrow-scope programs fund both planning and implementation, and a large number of implementation programs are not linked to any federally assisted plan. The updated 1977 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance was reviewed to identify and list Federal programs which required a State or local government plan as a condition for assistance or could affect State and local government planning. An analysis of the catalog pointed up the lack of clear and effective linkages between Federal planning and implementation programs. (HTW)

6225



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

GENERAL GOVERNMENT
DIVISION

APR 11 1978

B-146285
GG8-187

The Honorable William V. Roth, Jr.
United States Senate

Dear Senator Roth:

In your letter of March 9, 1978, you requested a report detailing our efforts in assessing the effectiveness of Federal program planning requirements. You expressed concern about the profusion of conflicting planning requirements and the need to improve methods of targeting Federal dollars to areas where they are most needed. In addition, you indicated that very little analysis is available to assess how effectively planning requirements are being used, and to what extent programs are administered with little or no advance planning.

The objective of our ongoing study is to determine the extent to which federally assisted planning efforts guide federally assisted implementation programs impacting on State and local governments. Because our study is still in its preliminary stage, we are not prepared, at this time, to reach firm conclusions or make any recommendations. Therefore, as agreed with your office, this letter is based on preliminary information.

A number of tentative observations can be made about the ability of the Federal aid delivery system to assure effective allocation of program dollars at the State and local level. The Federal Government supports a large number of planning programs, but many of these programs have, or appear to have, little or no link to an even larger number of implementation programs. The specific problems with the current array of Federal programs seem to be that

--federally assisted comprehensive planning is not performed in all broad governmental functions and is not linked to all implementation programs,

GGD-78-66
(01747)

- many narrow-scope programs fund both planning and implementation, making it difficult to link such program-specific planning with other related implementation programs; and
- a large number of implementation programs and dollars are not linked in any way to a federally assisted plan or planning process.

As the initial step in our study, we reviewed the updated 1977 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. you know, the catalog is a compendium of Federal programs and activities which provide assistance or benefits to State and local governments, public and private organizations, profit and non-profit organizations, and special groups and individuals. The catalog is designed to identify the types of Federal assistance available, eligibility requirements, program uses and restrictions, agency procedures and guidelines for the application and award process, and Federal program policies and regulations. The 1977 catalog, updated as of November 1977, contains 1,086 programs administered by 56 Federal agencies.

We reviewed the catalog program descriptions to identify and list Federal programs which (1) required a State or local government plan as a condition for assistance or (2) could affect State and local government planning. Therefore, our list includes those programs for which State and local governments are eligible applicants, and also those for which private firms, organizations, or individuals are eligible. Furthermore, we included all programs making any reference to plans even though prior studies have shown that some federally required "plans" are really not plans.

We excluded from our analysis

- non-financial assistance programs, such as those providing for advisory services, dissemination of technical information, or the use of or access to Federal facilities or property;
- programs which provide direct aid to individuals where the State or local government would not likely have a role in or impact

on the use or allocation of the program funds, such as Medicare, social security benefits, and veteran's pensions; and

- programs which solely fund research activities which are national in scope or are not designed to meet the needs or to address problems of a particular State, area, or locality.

The number of excluded programs totaled 514, or 47 percent of all catalog programs.

We categorized the remaining 572 programs into 10 functions which we selected after a review of several functional classifications used by governments. The 10 functions are described in the appendix.

The following table summarizes our functional classifications of catalog programs that appear to assist or impact on planning and implementation activities at the State or local level. The implementation programs are divided into these sub-categories:

- programs which fund both planning and implementation,
- programs which make some reference to a plan, and
- programs which make no reference to any plan or planning process.

The dollar amounts shown are from the catalog and include estimates of obligations and the amounts of loans guaranteed and insured.

FEDERALLY ASSISTED PROGRAMS IMPACTING
ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
Fiscal Year 1978 (estimated)
(000 omitted)

FUNCTION	PLANNING PROGRAMS		IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS				TOTALS			
	No.	Amount	With some plan- ning authorized	With some ref- erence to plans	With no ref- erence to plans	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	
Community Development	1	\$ 57,000	5	\$ 90,446	7	\$ 7,923,500	51	\$18,251,101	64	\$26,322,047
Economic Development	2	22,000	22	160,273	6	270,872	50	17,039,127	80	17,492,272
Education	1	3,000	32	978,348	22	1,205,755	130	4,855,307	185	7,042,410
Environment	0	---	9	5,738,200	2	---	15	32,561	26	5,770,761
Health	2	136,500	15	627,601	12	12,385,152	32	945,802	61	14,095,055
Law Enforcement	1	50,000	3	320,292	2	23,500	10	1,055,524	16	499,316
Mapower	0	---	1	8,346,000	4	2,110,419	9	890,613	14	11,347,032
Natural Resources	3	15,338	16	578,833	5	151,212	15	779,320	39	1,524,703
Social Services	0	---	7	584,610	20	19,182,096	33	2,030,011	60	21,796,717
Transportation	2	69,000	9	7,721,238	7	1,250,630	9	2,240,250	27	11,281,118
Totals	12	\$352,838	119	\$25,145,841	87	\$44,503,136	354	\$47,169,616	572	\$117,171,431

As shown by the table, we identified 12 Federal programs which are exclusively planning assistance programs, but not all functions have such programs. Further, where a planning-only program exists for a function, the program does not always provide for comprehensive planning for the entire function. For example, the planning-only program in our education function covers only post-secondary education.

Where a purportedly comprehensive planning program exists for a function, the comprehensive plan is not always linked to many of the implementation programs. Health and economic development planning-only programs fall into this category.

The table shows that 119 programs fund both planning and implementation, but in many instances, the planning is done for only the projects funded within that program. Related projects funded under other programs are not addressed by such program-specific plans. For example, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's (HEW) Drug Abuse Prevention Formula Grants program requires the preparation of a State drug abuse plan. It appears that the plan guides only the drug abuse projects funded under this program. Other HEW-funded drug abuse programs make no reference in the catalog to the State drug abuse plan. None of the HEW-funded drug abuse programs makes any reference to the State and areawide comprehensive health plans which might also address drug abuse health problems.

A total of 87 implementation programs made some reference to plans or a planning process, but the specific plans and the sources of funding for the plans were not always clear from the catalog descriptions. The plans alluded to may be funded under another Federal program, funded by a State or local government, or may not be "plans" at all.

The catalog descriptions for these programs range from clear to vague references to plans. For example, in the Department of Housing and Urban Development Low-Income Housing Assistance program, the proposed projects must be consistent with the local "Housing Assistance Plan." The Department of Agriculture's feeding programs, however, refer to a "State Plan" but no further information on or identification of the specific plan to be followed is provided.

Some of the plans referred to in the catalog may not be plans. For example, HEW studies concluded that several of its programs require "State plans" which are not planning documents. Such "plans" consist primarily of assurances that the States will conform with the law and with program regulations, and serve purposes other than planning.

The table includes 354 implementation programs which make no reference to any plan or planning process. These programs represent 62 percent of the total programs and 40 percent of total obligations and loan guarantees.

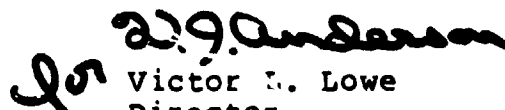
- - - - -

The picture that emerges from our analysis of the catalog is not encouraging, if one is concerned about clear and effective linkages between Federal planning and implementation programs. Of course, there are limitations in relying on the catalog to reach firm conclusions about the extent of linkages in the assistance system. Detailed analyses of program operations within given functional areas are needed and may show different results than are shown by the catalog information.

While the catalog analysis is only one part of our ongoing study, we believe it provides a starting point for rationalizing the Federal assistance system by identifying what currently exists. We hope you find the above information useful.

As agreed with your office, we plan to distribute copies of this letter to appropriate Senate and House Committees; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and heads of departments and agencies directly involved. We will make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely yours,


Victor S. Lowe
Director

Enclosure

GG8-187

CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION INTO TEN FUNCTIONS

1. Community development--programs assisting urban and rural communities through capacity building, community preservation, and better housing. Examples include programs for community planning, beautification, historic preservation, rural electrification, intergovernmental personnel, disaster preparedness, fire protection, civil defense, disaster assistance, homebuying, homeownership, home improvement, housing cooperative, housing development, and facility construction.
2. Economic development--programs assisting business, trade, the economy, and employment. Examples include business management assistance, economic and trade adjustments, regional planning and economic development, business and industrial loans, public works assistance, commercial fisheries, maritime, air carrier subsidies, credit unions, and foreign investment programs.
3. Education--programs covering all facets of education. Examples include programs for resource development and support; handicapped, vocational, elementary, secondary, and general higher education; specialized medical, health, law enforcement, environmental, foreign development, civil defense, fire safety, marine, and Indian education; arts; humanities; museums; cooperative extensions; and facilities and equipment.
4. Environment--programs for protection of environmental resources. Examples include water pollution, air pollution, pesticides and radiation control, solid waste management, and coal mine fire control programs. Many of these programs could also be classified under other functions.
5. Health--programs covering all facets of health maintenance. Examples include facility planning and construction; health services; mental health; maternity, infants and children; narcotic addiction and drug abuse; alcohol; meat and poultry inspection; and occupational safety and health programs.

GG8-187

6. Law enforcement--programs covering law, justice, and legal services. Examples include programs in law enforcement planning, training, crime analysis and data, criminal justice systems development, and corrections.
7. Manpower--programs covering employment, labor and general training. Examples include programs in job training and employment, Job Corps, Apprenticeship Outreach, unemployment assistance, and work incentives.
8. Natural resources--programs to manage and conserve physical and biological resources. Examples include programs dealing with mineral discovery, water conservation, watershed protection and flood prevention, energy conservation, wild life preservation, forest management, outdoor recreation, coastal zone management, and water resources planning.
9. Social services--programs covering all facets of human services. Examples include programs dealing with families and child welfare, the disabled and handicapped, old age assistance, youth, food and nutrition, rehabilitation services, public assistance, refugee assistance, and volunteer service.
10. Transportation--programs covering all facets of transportation services. Examples include programs dealing with urban mass transit, railroad assistance, airport planning and development, highways and roads, boating safety, and aviation and maritime war risk insurance.