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The national conference of Black Mayors, Inc., (NCBM) in an environment of increasing conservatism

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THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS, INC. (NCBM)
IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF INCREASING CONSERVATISM

A DEGREE PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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JULY 1982
The National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. (NCBM) in an Environment of Increasing Conservatism

Adviser: Dr. Irvin Brown

Degree paper dated June 30, 1982

The main purpose of this degree paper is to assess the impact of Reaganomics on the National Conference of Black Mayors (NCBM). In the context of this effort, the following categories of NCBM programs and activities will be analyzed: educational and research; economic development; community development; municipal management; program coordination; and legislative and policy advocacy.

By use of the case study approach, the writer conducts a detailed assessment of the impact of Reaganomics on a minority organization which to a large extent relies on Federal funding. The dismantling of certain programs and departments, coupled with a reduction in spending, tax cuts and the shifting of both the tax burden and public services from Washington to state and local government is seen by the NCBM as an attempt to reduce the gains made
by minorities since the Reconstruction. The NCBM, like many other non-profit organizations endeavors to find alternative sources of funding to enable it to continue to operate and eventually become self-sustaining. The writer views various measures which are being pursued to ameliorate the negative impact of Reaganomics.

The main source of information for this descriptive study was obtained as a result of the writer's participative observation while assigned to the NCBM as an intern. Primary information was elicited from NCBM staff members as well as black mayors. A wider variety of information was derived from secondary sources such as textbooks, magazines, newsletters and NCBM file data.
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<tr>
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<td>19</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The National Conference of Black Mayors, Incorporated (NCBM) is a non-profit, tax exempt and non-partisan organization bent on the provision of research, technical, and management assistance to the mayors which make up its membership. This indirectly means that the municipalities governed by these black mayors benefit from the services rendered by the NCBM.

Significant positive efforts have been made by the NCBM in resolving the unique problems confronting its membership and the generality of the people (especially minorities) in the seven years of its existence. State chapter organization based-activities have served to marshall local opinion and draw the attention of the federal government to help in the resolution of problems that could not otherwise have been attended to. Thus, the existence of the NCBM has immensely helped to alert and awaken citizens to inculcate self-help to resolve their problems or seek state and federal government intervention.

The main purpose of this research paper is to assess the effects of Reaganomics on the NCBM. In doing such,
the activities of the NCBM will be assessed. Also, an attempt will be made to state the present predicament of the NCBM and the alternative channels that could be pursued in solving the problems confronting the organization with respect to the domestic policies of the Reagan Administration. The analysis will attempt to address the problematic areas identified by the NCBM. These include economic development, community development, education and research, coordination of programs and activities, legislative and policy advocacy, and municipal management.

As would be expected, the NCBM sees the enlightenment, advancement of the overall black communities and indeed, the generality of the minorities and poor as its primary challenge. In this regard, the NCBM is geared to changing the present outlook whereby black elected officials often find themselves on the outside looking in.

The Problem and Its Setting

The historical exclusion of blacks from the political process has had a far-reaching negative effect on blacks as a race. Such a predicament was partly ameliorated with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 after the struggle of the early 1960's. As a result of this new development, there are about 204,000 black elected officials in the United States. ¹ This represents significant

progress in terms of the input black officials have in shaping legislation and policies in the country. There is no doubt that the renewal of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 would bring about an increase in black political participation to reflect the values, goals and other concerns of the 26 million black Americans.\(^2\)

In spite of the enormous problems encountered by the blacks, progress has been made in terms of their strong desire to "make a way", not having found a paved one. In this regard, seven black mayors met in Fayette, Mississippi, in 1972. Their goal was the development of a strong untiring voice which would have a say in the resolution of the problems that confronted their constituencies. A year later, the Southern Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. (SCBM) was founded in Tuskegee, Alabama. In 1977, twenty black mayors decided to incorporate as an organization whose headquarters was based in Atlanta, where it still operates. In 1977, the organization decided to expand its membership and focus. Its name was changed from the Southern Conference of Black Mayors to National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. (NCBM).

At the moment, there are about 9,017 mayors nationally, with only 205 being black.\(^3\) In spite of recent progress,

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)NCBM Newsletter, September 1982, p. 5.
such a small proportion of black mayors indicates that
blacks in general have had little access to the local
decision-making processes. As a result, blacks have not
been able to acquire the skills necessary to fully partici-
pate in the public sector. It is the aspiration of the
National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. (NCBM) to
create a positive atmosphere for the smooth and
effective functioning of black mayors who must struggle
and compete, against sophisticated tactics to become
productive and sensitive public servants and not be
counter-productive once the victory at the polls has been
obtained.\footnote{Ibid., p. 8.}

The writer's assigned research involved an assess-
ment of service delivery capabilities within municipalities
governed by black mayors. In this respect, his effort
during the internship period was to obtain first hand
information related to:

1. Transportation (highways, waterways, etc.)
2. Existing facilities (water, waste treat-
ment, utilities)
3. Local public services, i.e., police
(personnel, patrol cars), fire protection,
zoning protection, planned commission
(4) Available city-owned developed sites such as industrial parks, etc.

Most officials interviewed indicated the absence of airports, waterways, trucking services, railways, and other services.

The utilization of Georgia Commerce Commission manuals and reference books, the Atlanta Public Library, and the Regional Census Bureau provided a wide range of additional secondary information to the writer in conducting his research. With the completion of the research assigned to the writer, the data was received and filed for final processing by the Director of Program Operations, Mr. Jerry Ford. It is anticipated that the filed data will be utilized in developing the new NCBM brochure.

Statement of the Problem

There are numerous problems confronting this relatively new (seven year) but progressive organization named the NCBM. These problems are increasing especially with the current economic and political policies termed Reaganomics. In a nutshell, Reaganomics refers to the Reagan Administration's domestic policies, part of which involves the reduction of federal participation in social programs. Moreover, the concept of Reaganomics includes additional federal expenditure for defense and a move toward a conservative posture in socio-economic spheres. The immediate problems associated with Reaganomics are the budget cuts, transfer of programs to the
states and the elimination of certain departments (Energy and Education) which funded the NCBM.

These problems facing the NCBM are critical because the organization is desperately in need of funds to expand its services to municipalities confronting poverty, an insufficient tax base, under and unemployment, etc. The large concern of the NCBM are with rural areas as a large percentage of its members come from such areas. It is estimated that 40 percent of the nation's economically disadvantaged live in or near rural communities. Fifty-two percent of the black families in eleven southern states live in poverty.5

There is no doubt that the prevailing budget cuts and "new federalism" would seriously constrain the technical and administrative staff of the NCBM in rendering required services and assistance to small town officials. These officials often lack information about relevant programs that have been instituted to provide financial aid and other kinds of federal and state assistance to encourage development.

Review of Literature

Many reasons can be advanced for the formation of the National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. The race issue is undoubtedly one of the reasons for an attempt to promote

5A proposal submitted to the Ford Foundation by the NCBM, November 1981, p. 3.
awareness among NCBM members about their predicament and how segregation, and discrimination can be overcome.

As the controversial George Gilder stated,

> There is much evidence that without discrimination, present and past, blacks would achieve earnings comparable to whites. In fact, during the twenty-five years since the massive dismantling of legal barriers against them, blacks have indeed performed better than other Americans—catching up from far behind and in some categories, even excelling the performance of the white majority.  

Thus, a primary function of the NCBM is to sustain the achievements made during the early sixties and to find ways to enhance that progress. The NCBM is very much concerned with a continued enhancement of black influence through the electoral process. Although it is a non-partisan organization the NCBM supports the Voting Right's Act because many practices were employed by southern governments to prevent blacks from voting in public elections. For example, economic intimidation, purging voter registration, changes in qualifications for office, changes in polling places and outright physical threats are common practices employed to prevent blacks from voting.  

In spite of the fact that racism is a reality in the American political and socio-economic system,

---


the NCBM does not inhibit white mayors from being part and parcel of the organization. The NCBM feverishly wishes to see the race issue buried once and for all, rather than have a few blacks to "move up although never in." For the NCBM, giving out a few important political front-desk jobs, a few cash handouts or slight rewards for the blacks that are being used would not help in the permanent resolution of the race issue.

The recent political and economic developments in the country would seriously affect the performance of the NCBM. Reduced funding has impinged upon the delivery of services that the NCBM provides. Most municipalities headed by black mayors are relatively poor and without the natural resources that could be easily tapped. Since most municipalities have an absence of heavy industries to provide employment, it is, therefore, necessary that a large number of rural dwellers live on welfare or are "living from day to day and from hand to mouth."\(^8\) This suggests that the tax base in such areas are to a large extent inadequate to provide the needed funds for development programs by mayors. In some cases, the type and nature of industries available in municipalities are relatively small scale. Therefore, they are unable to attract skilled man-power. As a result, a large number of families tend to

prefer welfare to low paying jobs. The result is the absence of a reasonable tax base, as welfare payments are tax exempt.

Another factor which compounds the problem is the fact that some forty-three of the 500 categorical grant programs have been combined into block grants. There exist no coherent allocation plans in states on how to allocate block grants to local municipalities and other interest groups. This is the first time states would handle a sizeable degree of this kind of responsibility.

During the recent NCBM Eighth Annual Convention held in Birmingham, Alabama, the president of the organization clearly stated one of the cardinal purposes of its existence:

> At this point of great unrest for (sic.) our nation . . . we cannot possibly meet the challenges of the 1980's without a clear-cut vision and new emphasis on the role that local government must play in restoring the health of American economy: unemployment, education, the new federalism, affirmative action, the Voting Rights Act, and so on.\(^9\)

This declaration clearly states the purpose for which the NCBM is geared: to spearhead by bringing to the president's attention the grievances of the American people—in this case the minorities and the poor. What is largely required by an advocate and interest group with a positive political, socio-economic agenda such as that of the NCBM, is to

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 4.
struggle to "recapture the revolutionary spirit and go forward into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal opposition to poverty, racism, and militarism."\textsuperscript{10}

The rise of unemployment statistics is an issue that bothers the generality of the American society. The NCBM as a vanguard of the poor is directly concerned with the rising figures of those unemployed, especially because blacks tend to be the last employed and the first fired. The elimination of 300,000 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) public jobs by the Reagan Administration is seen by the NCBM and other concerned interest groups as an issue that needs to be reviewed since blacks significantly benefited from the presence of the CETA Program.

There are many challenges facing the NCBM today. These challenges are largely due to increased service demands and reduced finances to sustain programs geared towards the economically disadvantaged in local municipalities. As a result of these and other related problems, the NCBM intends to increase the awareness on its membership to the need of a coherent black agenda that would be pragmatic and would effectively form a response to drawbacks of gains made by blacks since the reconstruction.

\textsuperscript{10}Emory N. Torf, op cit., p. 15.
Methodology

A participative-observation format has been used in assessing the effects of Reaganomics on the activities of the NCBM. Direct observation of the day-to-day operation of programs enabled the writer to obtain much of the information for this paper. He attended interviews with the administrative staff and selected mayors. By doing such, he was able to elicit the opinion held by the staff personnel and some selected mayors with regards to Reaganomics. These interviews provided the writer with an in-depth understanding of the concerns and aspirations of the NCBM.

Apart from primary data, secondary data was gathered and also analyzed. Much of this existing data was collated by the NCBM's economic and technical development specialist, Mr. Arthur M. Cole, Jr. Other secondary sources include journals, magazines and textbooks.

The study's factors of analysis are developed based upon a categorization of the various programs which have been undertaken and those currently embarked upon by the NCBM. These programs include:

1. Educational programs and research.
2. Economic development to cities and municipalities headed by black mayors.
3. Community development in the area of energy conservation and production, water and sewage improvement.
4. Municipal management.
5. Coordination of programs and activities.
6. Legislative and policy advocacy.
II

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS
(NCBM)

Objectives

The NCBM has experienced significant growth in its six-year history from a membership of seven mayors in 1976 to two hundred and nine in 1982. The objectives of this infant but progressive organization include the following:

1. The improvement of the executive management capacity and efficiency of member municipalities in the delivery of municipal services.

2. Creation of viable communities within the normal functioning of government to be performed with a reasonable degree of efficiency.

3. Providing the basis upon which new social overhead investments in the infrastructure of municipalities might be accomplished through utilization of federal, state and local and private resources so as to encourage new industry and increase employment.

4. Assisting municipalities in stabilizing their populations through general improvement of the quality of life of their residents and concurrently create viable alternatives to curtail migration and the resulting "braindrain" experienced by small cities.\(^\text{11}\)

The NCBM has played a significant advocacy role for the poor, the disadvantaged, students and other related

\(^{11}\text{NCBM, "Local Government in the Market Place," Eighth Annual Convention of the NCBM, April 21-24, 1982, p. 6.} \)
interest groups. It has focused on social and economic issues facing the country. For instance, the NCBM operates five programs which are meant to benefit the country as a whole but primarily the constituencies of its membership. These programs are: Economic Development; Municipal Management; Education and Research; Legislative; and Advocacy.

Organizational Structure

The NCBM has an elaborate organizational structure (see Exhibit 1). The Board of Directors consists of one appointee from each state having at least one or more black mayors whom are members of the NCBM. At the recent convention in Birmingham, Alabama, Mayor Johnny Ford was elected the President of the Board of Directors.

The NCBM national office is located in Atlanta, Georgia. The national office has a staff of six members headed by the Executive Director, Ms. Michelle Kourouma. The Executive Directors' duties include implementing the Board's policies and directives. The Executive Director has a special assistant whose functions include the preparation of financial reports and statement of grants, arranging all board meetings, maintaining personnel records, keeping inventory of all supplies, etc.
EXHIBIT I
NCBM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Board of Directors

Executive Director

Special Assistant

Director of Program Operations

Secretary

Director of Service Learning Programs

NCBM-HUD Project Director

Director of D.C. Office

Administrative Assistant

AL State Chapter Coord.

LA State Chapter Coord.

MD State Chapter Coord.

MS State Chapter Coord.

NC State Chapter Coord.

OK State Chapter Coord.

SC State Chapter Coord.

AL Intern

LA Intern

MD Intern

MS Intern

NC Intern

OK Intern

SC Intern

Source: The NCBM Overview, 1982, p. 60.
The Director of Program Operations assists the Executive Director in all aspects of management and administration, supervises the staff, and writes articles for the newsletter and other publications.\textsuperscript{12} The Director of Service Learning Programs provides direction to the field coordinators, university directors and participating mayors in an attempt to establish the goals and objectives of the program. The Director of the Service Learning Program has the responsibility of maintaining the overall fiscal control of the project and performs a variety of duties that might be assigned by the Executive Director. The NCBM-HUD Project Director, advises and supervises state chapter coordinators.

The NCBM's seven state coordinators are located in the following states: Alabama, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma and South Carolina. Their duties include the provision of administrative and technical support to state chapters, assistance in preparing project plans and applications for communities not currently receiving block grant funding, developing presentations on subjects pertinent to local government administration and community development, etc.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 23.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 70.
NCBM has a liaison office in Washington, D.C., manned by three staff members. Their duties include monitoring, reporting on legislation, and maintaining rapport with federal agencies and other major public interest groups.

Sources of Funding

The NCBM as a non-profit, non-partisan service organization derives its funds from various governmental agencies; socially-sensitive foundations and concerned corporations. Much of the funds have come from such agencies as the Economic Development Administration (EDA); the Department of Labor (DOL); the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE); Department of Energy (DOE); and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Membership dues are assessed based upon the tax base of the respective municipality. The NCBM received $24,000 in dues from its membership in 1979-80 and 1980-81 fiscal years. Contributions in the same period from charitable and private organizations amounted to $85,000.\textsuperscript{14} Dues, contributions and other gifts are reflected as part of the general fund.

A summary of NCBM budgets from 1980 to the present is shown in Exhibit II, III, and IV. The agencies which

\textsuperscript{14} Interview with Arthur Cole, NCBM Economic Specialist, National Office, Atlanta, Georgia, June, 1982.
## EXHIBIT II

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS, INC.**
**SUMMARY OF BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES**
**FOR THE YEAR 1980**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>GENERAL</th>
<th>EDA</th>
<th>UYA</th>
<th>DOL</th>
<th>DOE</th>
<th>NDWP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
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<td>$ 3,516</td>
<td>$ 93,823</td>
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<td>$32,964</td>
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<td>3,563</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Development Conference</td>
<td>58,893</td>
<td>47,415</td>
<td>5,478</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>6,000</td>
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<td>Volunteer Subsistence</td>
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<td>89,786</td>
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<td>Volunteer Travel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15,098</td>
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<td>Energy Grants</td>
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<td>Administration Overhead</td>
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<td>4,344</td>
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<td>2,500</td>
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<td>$193,052</td>
<td>$ 53,744</td>
<td>$ 98,268</td>
<td>$ 43,379</td>
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## EXHIBIT III

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS, INC.
SUMMARY OF BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES
FOR THE YEAR 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>GENERAL FUND</th>
<th>EDA</th>
<th>UYA</th>
<th>DOL</th>
<th>DOE</th>
<th>NDWP</th>
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<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
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<td>22,759</td>
<td>5,872</td>
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<td>5,613</td>
<td>18,669</td>
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<td>2,044</td>
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<tr>
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<td>668</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</tr>
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<td>15,642</td>
<td>15,198</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Conference</td>
<td>37,301</td>
<td>32,301</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Subsistence</td>
<td>49,113</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49,113</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Travel</td>
<td>14,368</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14,368</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Grants</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Overhead</td>
<td>36,073</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19,656</td>
<td>16,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$857,679</td>
<td>$84,264</td>
<td>$186,323</td>
<td>$134,176</td>
<td>$241,320</td>
<td>$172,763</td>
<td>$38,833</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EXHIBIT IV

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS, INC.**

**FUNDING COMMITMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR 1982**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>HUD</th>
<th>DOE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$245,240</td>
<td>$202,240</td>
<td>$43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>55,750</td>
<td>43,950</td>
<td>11,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultants and Contract Services</td>
<td>30,500</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>27,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Meeting Expense</td>
<td>74,600</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>24,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>21,300</td>
<td>6,900</td>
<td>14,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental or Purchase of Equipment</td>
<td>12,400</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumable Supplies</td>
<td>6,040</td>
<td>3,040</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>14,600</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>4,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage and Shipping</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and Publications</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Overhead</td>
<td>34,670</td>
<td>21,170</td>
<td>13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$500,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$350,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$150,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

have been most consistent in funding the NCBM are: the Department of Labor (DOL); Department of Energy (DOE); and Economic Development Authority (EDA). In 1978-81 fiscal years, NCBM budget totalled $857,679. This amount has been reduced to $500,000 for 1981-82 fiscal year. The reduction in funding is due to the Reagan Administration's dismantling of agencies, such as the Departments of Energy and Education. Reduced federal funding will negatively impact on the services provided to local municipalities by the NCBM.
III

REAGAN CONSERVATISM

The conservative mode of the Reagan Administration is evidenced by many readily identifiable factors. These include budget cuts to education, record unemployment since World War II; attempts to nullify or frustrate affirmative action policies and gains; the placing of black elected officials who support the interests and concerns of Black Americans on the "hit list", etc. Various pieces of legislation are being introduced to repeal gains made by minority groups. These include an attempt to dismantle the 1964 Civil Rights Act . . . the most progressive civil rights legislation, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and others. Indeed, the list is inexhaustible.

It could be clearly observed that the election of Ronald Reagan increased the conservative outlook for and posture of the American "ruling class". Reagan's new federalism is largely geared toward moving responsibility

16 Ibid.
and authority from the federal government to state and local governments. There are four components in this arrangement: spending cuts, tax cuts, relief from regulations and block grants.17

The Reagan Administration's spending cuts are largely centered on welfare services, such as food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medicare and Medicaid. What is more, the Departments of Energy and Education are slated to be dismantled. The budget cuts in these areas would affect students, workers, the poor and the elderly who total about 54.5 million.18

There has been a 25 percent cut over three years in personal and business taxes. Also, there is an appreciable percentage increase of depreciation allowances for business. President Reagan believes that raising taxes would encourage more government spending. Poor municipalities would suffer from the consequent abandonment of certain programs by local governments unless an alternative step of increasing direct and indirect taxes is initiated.

The Reagan Economic policy includes relief from the regulation of corporations, financial institutions and

multinational companies. For instance, the Civil Aeronautics Board has eased the regulation requiring airlines to provide non-smoking sections and may soon drop the rule altogether.\textsuperscript{19} Reagan's assumption is that an unfettered economy would enable business to flourish. John Kenneth Galbraith, a Keynesian economist, thinks that the contradictions inherent in Reaganomics "can only be resolved by divine intervention—a task for the Moral Majority."\textsuperscript{20}

The block grant is envisioned as merely a temporary arrangement. The President's prime intention is to shift a percentage of the taxing authority from the federal government to state governments. The whole issue is that the 500 categorical grants through which funds from the federal government were distributed to state and local governments will be dispersed in the form of block grants.\textsuperscript{21} States would therefore have discretion to utilize these funds the best way they deemed fit within the broad block grant areas. The issue that emerges is the fact that historically, states, for the most part, have not taken a progressive position on the plight of minorities. It is the federal government that has been the principal supporter of the poor and down trodden. Returning power to the states


\textsuperscript{21}Kenneth A. Gibson, op. cit., p. 12.
might not bring the government as close to the people as one would think, especially black people.

During the Depression of the 1930's, it was the federal government who moved swiftly in addressing the country's ills. The administration of Franklin Roosevelt brought in a new trend in domestic commitment. Federal grant-in-aid was used as an incentive to encourage state funding of various social programs. Unprecedented levels of grant-in-aid were provided in areas such as housing, energy, and so forth. Essentially, this discretion has been transferred to the states.

Traditionally, the federal government has used many regulations to ensure effective utilization of categorical grants by state and local legislatures. By combining numerous categorical grants into a limited number of block grants, there has been an equal limitation of congressional discretion over the funds. This new development is significant because it has greatly increased the level of discretion exercised by the states over federal dollars.22

The present issue faced by the NCBM would be how to concentrate their efforts on state governors and legislatures. Instead of concentrating its lobbying efforts on Congress, the NCBM would have to redirect their effort toward

22Ibid., p. 12.
the fifty state capitals. Since most state legislators are known to be non-urban, it therefore means suburban and rural areas have a disproportionately greater amount of influence. Even though the NCBM membership is largely rural, only a small percentage are black. This is due to the fact that a large proportion of black eligible voters do not vote because they are apathetic to the political process or are intimidated directly and indirectly by sophisticated devices such as eligibility tests, shifting of polling places, etc.

Owing to the conservatism of the Reagan Administration, there are more problems than those which meet the eye accompanying the governmental re-arrangement inherent in the new federalism. It is inevitable that a decrease in federal regulation will bring about an increase in state regulating authority. In spite of such, the states have not:

"trained the muscles they must flex with the new federalism . . . there are not workable formulas, blueprints or models which can be given to the states."23

The Reagan Administration believes that the formulation of "blueprints" should be the responsibility of the states. An anticipated problem could be the cost of setting up new bureaucracies to administer block grant allocation in states.

According to the NCBM economic specialist, Mr. Arthur Cole, the Reagan's economic policies have started impacting

23Ibid., p. 33.
negatively on the goals and objectives of the NCBM. It is therefore apparent that the absence of adequate funds is one of the major problems facing the NCBM today. As a result, NCBM's technical assistance geared to aid rural black communities in achieving better public facilities and services, is being drastically reduced.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24} Cole, op cit.
IV

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMS

This section will provide an analysis of program operation and the incumbent effects of Reaganomics. The analysis will be pursued in context of the major program categories reflective of past and present efforts embarked upon by the NCBM: Educational Programs and Research, Economic Development, Community Development and Municipal Management, Program Coordination and Legislative and Policy Advocacy.

Educational Programs and Research

There is quite an appreciable number of educational and research programs which have been embarked upon by the NCBM for the benefit of small black managed municipalities. The overall objective of these programs is to provide a service-learning experience for students and, make information, expertise and manpower available to member communities.

The University Year for Action is primarily a rural volunteer intern program started by the NCBM in 1978 with grants from university students (graduates and undergraduates) were assigned to work full time for mayors. These mayors

-27-
were members of the NCBM and were from small cities in six states. The goal of this program is to utilize the services of college and universities by local governments to improve the quality of life for citizens in small cities. The duties assigned to interns are usually challenging and demand initiative of participants. For instance, interns work as mayoral aides, review ordinances, attend public hearings and council meetings, and supervise temporary employees. The interns also endeavor to organize voter education classes, service groups, etc.

The interns' contributions have been significant as they have provided significant data used in grant applications, i.e., population characteristic, housing conditions, employment, and per capita income. In 1980, initiative of volunteer interns gave rise to $855,000 in new funding for projects under the UYA program. The 1981 programs basically focused on issues related to the essential needs of poor municipalities such as education, energy, finance and fiscal management, etc.

Thirty-three municipalities benefitted from the UYA program in 1981. These are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Forkland, Hobson City, Ridgeville, Roosevelt City, Uniontown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Bolton, Friars Point, Gunnison, Jonestown, Pace, Shaw, Shelby, Winstonville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Bolton, East Spencer, Greenevers, Mesic, Parmela, Princeville</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 Ibid., p. 56.
26 Ibid.
South Carolina
Atlantic Beach, Eastover, Gifford, Lynchburg, Ridgeville, Santee

Texas
Ames, Easton, Kindleton, Moores Station, Prairie View27

The UYA program received $193,032 in 1980 and $186,323 in 1981 as funds from VISTA.28 VISTA has been eliminated by the Reagan Administration. As a result, the NCBM terminated the UYA program in December 1981. The NCBM is researching the possibilities for alternative funding to initiate a similar program.

At present, the NCBM is engaged in an effort to establish a program similar to the UYA program. The new program is referred to as the Rural Resource Center. The objectives of this new program will be to:

a. To provide small economically disadvantaged municipalities with human and technical resources that are commensurate with the needs of the municipality, both immediate and long range.

b. To formalize a structure whereby this assistance can be accomplished and continued with or without too much additional external subsidy after initial start-up funds are identified.

c. To provide for the academic community and specifically from colleges and universities interns with demonstrated academic skills as well as commitment to the improvement of the standard of life for all citizenry.

d. To work very closely with the National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc., the States Conference of

27 Ibid., p. 57.
28 Ibid., p. 57.
Black Mayors, Inc., and other organizations in achieving these objectives, particularly in those communities having large numbers of blacks and other minorities, due to the substantially higher percentages of these municipalities falling into the categories of "impoverished" and "economically disadvantaged."

2. To help students develop positive concerns for others; to recognize their ability to contribute, and to help develop management and administrative skills commensurate with their educational and professional pursuits.  

The personnel required to implement the program included staff of the NCBM in the Atlanta office, the seven state coordinators and professors in universities and colleges providing interns. The seven universities and colleges which would provide interns are: Miles College, Jackson State University, Saint Augustine's College, Benedict College, Texas Southern University, Grambling State University and Lincoln University.  

Proposals for funding the Rural Research Center have been made and sent to various foundations such as the Associate of the Royal College of Art (ARCA) Foundation, the New World Foundation, and the Field Foundation.

The NCBM has an information resource library at its national headquarters which provides information to its membership, interested individuals and groups. Moreover, the NCBM publishes a quarterly newsletter, the NCBM INFO. The purpose is to inform and educate the members of the organization regarding

29 Ibid., p. 57.

30 Ibid., p. 58.
issues of development and activities embarked on by the NCBM. Conferences geared to educate mayors, municipal staff and other black elected officials in economic development are conducted each year by the NCBM.  

Economic Development

Economic Development is one of the five major programs embarked upon by the NCBM in its efforts to make life more meaningful for municipalities headed by black mayors. The NCBM endeavors to identify the sources of funding which small towns can use under Economic Development Capital Investment and Improvement Program. The effort of funds identification by the NCBM made it possible for the approval of $25 million in projects undertaken by black headed municipalities in 1976.  

At the moment, the NCBM is embarking on an economic project termed the "African Twin Cities Project." This project is a joint venture partnership with Africa Journal, Ltd. One of the aims of the projects is to "pair African and black-managed municipalities for cultural, educational and economic development exchange.  

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31 Ibid., p. 58.

32 NCBM 1980 Overview, p. 3.

33 African Journal, Ltd. is owned by an African based in London. The London based publishing company publishes four magazines which are: Africa (Afrique in French), African Woman, Sky Power (which is an official Nigerian Airways inflight magazine) and Know Africa (a three volume reference series).

34 Ibid., p. 5.
would participate in this project are Nigeria, Kenya and Zambia. The prospects for this undertaking appear very bright since many of the problems confronting black managed municipalities are essentially the same as those facing Africans. Indeed, an exchange of personnel for an agreed period of time would afford African bureaucrats at the local level experience and they could learn from what their counterparts in the U.S. have to offer. In addition to the anticipated progress, the African Journal Limited (AJL) would provide the NCBM with access to African heads of state and officials. The NCBM on the other hand would market the Know Africa series and other magazines produced by AJL in the United States to schools, universities, libraries and other interested organizations.

In April 1982, the NCBM went a step further in their efforts to increase the rate of economic development in black managed municipalities. To this end, an Economic Development Task Force was established at the NCBM Eighth National Convention. The objective of this task force is to form "a mechanism through which major corporations and businesses can assist the NCBM in planning and implementing specific economic development projects." 35 The objectives of this program are quite explicit and appear to show the seriousness which governs this innovative and pragmatic undertakings of the NCBM. The objectives of the Economic Task Force include the following:

1. Define types of businesses conducive to small, rural communities and their requirements in

terms of sites, service, tax incentives, transportation and access, local amenities, etc.

2. Conduct a business fair to promote interaction between mayors, entrepreneurs and financiers.

3. Establish a development loan fund for small projects such as promotional brochures, feasibility studies, etc. The task force would direct fund-raising activities. 36

The NCBM feels that there is a good percentage of black managed municipalities with infrastructure, labor force and land to sustain new business investments by corporations and business concerns. Thus, the newly established task force is expected to find all elements that could draw the corporations, financial houses, etc. to invest in rural municipalities rather than continue the usual over concentration of investment in large urban areas.

**Community Development**

The National Conference of Black Mayors did not embark on any community development until 1980. The determination of the NCBM was to actively assist its members in areas related to energy conservation and production. This effort was made possible through a grant made by the U.S. Department of Energy which has continuously funded the NCBM since its inception. The Energy Management and Production Program is geared to enabling municipalities to develop and utilize energy alternatives. The end result of this attempt would lead to a total grip on resources and technologies which would

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36 1982 NCBM Overview, p. 73.
require a reduction in energy consumption in local communities and individual households.

In an effort to keep officials in municipalities very much informed of the latest energy development programs, the NCBM has continuously published an energy-management brochure for utilization by local personnel in municipalities. There are seven black managed communities which are participating in the NCBM energy program. These municipalities are Tuskegee, Alabama; Compton, California; East Orange, New Jersey; Hayti Heights, Missouri; Eatonville, Florida; Tatums, Oklahoma; and Richwood, Louisiana.37

The task the NCBM is now bent on it to recommend energy polities and programs that would suit the conditions of the seven municipalities participating in the on-going program. The NCBM is also trying to disseminate available information on state and federal energy programs that small municipalities can benefit. Significant emphasis is placed on energy conservation programs due to escalating fuel and utility costs which tend to affect the operating budgets of municipalities with low tax bases.

Municipal Management

The municipal management program was begun by the NCBM in 1975 when the Economic Development Administration funded the NCBM. The aim of this program has been "to disseminate

information to the general membership (of the NCBM) useful in public administration and community development." 38 The NCBM encourages local governments to organize state chapters in order to have a more cohesive program of action and a set of priorities that would advance the interests of black mayors at the state level.

Under this program, the NCBM strives to conduct annual conventions or conferences on economic development for all its members. The conference usually consists of workshops, exhibitions, special presentations and other relevant activities that would benefit participants in their daily administrative endeavors. These conferences are significant because they form forums which attract distinguished representatives of the federal and state agencies, professionals in development fields, influential and big corporations, etc. This exercise gives an opportunity for mayors to grasp new and essential techniques to enable them to find new sources of revenue and "development strategies local governments can use to improve themselves and create employment." 39 This exposure of mayors in state-level conferences is not to be disregarded because personal networks and alliances which are vital for grantsmanship could be established during such conventions. For instance, a good working relationship between

39 Ibid., p. 41.
mayors and other departments in their state government could be beneficial when considering black managed municipalities which often have not benefitted equitably from state administered programs.

The NCBM's national office personnel publishes and disseminates a newsletter on a quarterly basis to its members. The newsletter provides ideas, experiences, information that are relevant in public management (recordkeeping, personnel administration, fiscal management, etc.) which local municipalities need to be effective.

Water and sewer facilities development comes under the Municipal Management Program of the NCBM. Technical assistance of the NCBM to municipalities having water and sewer problems started in 1976. The program's activities, designed for participating mayors and local officials, include, among others:

1. The strong desire to assist and guide local mayors and officials in securing funding to build water and sewer facilities.

2. The training of officials from participating towns to enable them have the required skills on which to manage, operate and maintain water and sewer facilities.40

The impact of Municipal Management Program has led to eighteen member cities in six states to participate in the program. The amount of $3,640,000 in water and sewer grants and loans was made available to the twenty-three cities by the

40Ibid., p. 51.
National Demonstration Water Project (NDWP) during the program's first year in 1976.\(^{41}\) The eighteen target municipalities are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Centerville, Alorton, Brooklyn, Pembroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Hayti Heights, Haywood City, Momestown, Howardville, North Lilbourn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Clayton, Grambling, Natchez, Richwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Bolton, Greenevers, Roper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Brooksville, Taft, Tatums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Ames, Kendleton, Moores Station(^ {42})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grant to the NCBM for this program comes from the EDA and HUD. In 1980, the grant to the NCBM amounted to $43,379 and was substantially reduced in 1981 to $38,833\(^ {43}\). The Reagan budget attempted to eliminate the source of funding for this program. However, Congress moved in to salvage the program. It is hoped that the NCBM would receive $54,000 for the continuation of this program later this year.

**Program Coordination**

Program coordination forms one of the primary focuses of the NCBM in its attempts to ameliorate the problems confronting its membership. The State Chapter Development Program

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\(^{41}\) Program to Promote Efficiency in Local Governments. A proposal submitted to the Ford Foundation by the NCBM, November 1981, p. 51.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 58.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 51.
was initiated by the NCBM in 1980. This program is geared to improving the availability of skilled personnel in small municipalities and to making the coordination of all NCBM programs more meaningful and effective.

The program coordination focus gave rise to the positioning of six state chapter coordinators in the following states: Alabama, Texas, Missouri, Mississippi, Illinois and Louisiana. The efforts of state coordinators have furnished the NCBM with economic profiles on forty small municipalities. In future undertakings, these profiles would ultimately benefit deprived citizens in small cities. This year (1982), the NCBM state coordinators are providing the essential technical assistance to eight state governments and forty municipalities.44

Other tasks pursued by coordinators include the study and rationalization of employment and job training. Moreover, the coordinators are expected to identify sources of revenue that could be utilized in advancing the interests of municipalities and their states of assignment.45

The Department of Energy provided the NCBM with the first grant of $99,268.00 in 1980 to embark on programs geared for better coordination, implementation and a greater degree of success in energy programs of small municipalities.46

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44 1982 NCBM Overview, p. 4.
1981, the grant was increased to $172,763.00. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is funding the NCBM this fiscal year. The grant amounts to $350,000.00 which would be used in undertaking a program entitled "a state-based approach to small cities development."  

Although the sources of funding for the state coordination program have not been seriously affected with the Reagan budget cuts, their duties have been increased. This is due to the nature of the block grants which states are going to receive from Washington to allocate to various agencies and interest groups. It is anticipated that the student interns will assist NCBM state coordinators in:

... research, analysis, planning and communication of tasks related to preparing and substituting block grants applications for individual communities, and in assisting those communities with approved grants in project administration.  

The state coordinators program also aims at giving necessary information to state agencies to enable them to adequately develop successful block grant programs for small cities. As states would be responsible for administering expanded block grant programs in the future, this information and level of coordination will prove essential. With the efforts of state coordinators, it is hoped that communities with black mayors would have greater access to the Small

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47 Ibid., p. 49.

48 Ibid., p. 5.
City Block Grant Programs. Moreover, the efforts of state coordinator programs have been positive because it enables local governments to come together as a group to articulate their needs and establish state wide priorities for action.

On March 29, 1982, the NCBM sponsored a "Project Management" symposium. The purpose of this symposium, which was held in consultation with federal, state and local officials was to develop a standardized plan for project management. Presently, the findings and conclusions are being documented and will be made available to state and local program administrators.49

Legislative and Policy Advocacy

Legislative and policy advocacy is another important function of the NCBM. The NCBM has recently increased its incisive and assertive advocacy position with respect to many of the issues facing the poor, students and minorities. It has also addressed issues relating to Haitian refugees, Free Trade Zones, nuclear disarmament, etc. The recent NCBM eighth convention in Birmingham, Alabama attests to the fact that there has been an overall increased legislative and policy advocacy position by the NCBM.

As an indication of the organization's increased cohesiveness, legislative and policy advocacy role, the NCBM is totally in support of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The

49Ibid., p. 17.
NCBM feels this piece of legislation has made it possible for a fivefold increase in the number of Black elected officials in the United States today. The NCBM is therefore against the temporary provisions of Section 5 of the Act expiring in August 1982. This is because Section 5 of the Act tends to dilute the Black vote by preventing last minute shifts in polling places. In its place, the NCBM supports the House-passed version of the Voting Rights Act extension (H.R. 3112).

The NCBM is strongly opposed to the deportation of Haitian refugees who number about 2,000 in the United States. The organization feels the Haitians came as a result of "politically stifling conditions in Haiti" and should be given political asylum and not detention or the threat of it. The NCBM sees these Haitians as "apparent victims of racist immigration policy that favors non-black immigrants." The NCBM states that it is clearly aware of the treaty and the law that bounds the U.S. to grant asylum to undocumented non-citizens who have a strong belief of persecution should they be returned to their countries.

The NCBM is one of those black interest groups that

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51 Ibid. (During the time of writing this paper, Congress extended the Act for another 25 years to the satisfaction of the NCBM.)

52 Draft Resolution, "Political Asylum for Haitians," NCBM Convention, Birmingham, Alabama, 1982, p. 42. (One of the lower courts have ordered their release.)

53 Ibid., p. 42.
fully endorses affirmative action because it serves to remedy past and present discrimination in employment. Therefore, the organization is strongly against the proposed Reagan plan to limit affirmative action requirements for federal contracts because any change would remove 75 percent of federal contractors benefiting from affirmative action. Measures that affect affirmative action would worsen the nature of black unemployment which is twice that of whites.

The NCBM has increased its advocacy for financial support to black colleges and universities. Moreover, the NCBM is opposed to the dismantling of the department of education because it has served to enhance minority participation in all endeavors of life.

The NCBM is strongly opposed to the unprecedented budget cut of $30 billion (fiscal year 1982) federal spending on social programs alone. The NCBM sees the budget cuts as displaced priority since $32 billion is being pumped into the military alone in peace time. This development does not benefit the economic recession that the nation is facing with 9½ million people out of work. The 15 percent increase in defense spending sounds incredible to the NCBM which sees defense spending as an investment in tools of death and destruction which should be regarded as tragically shortsighted.

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and destructive social policy.\textsuperscript{56}

Inspite of efforts of the NCBM in communicating the views of black mayors to policy makers at the national level, on most occasions its voice has been ignored. For instance, the NCBM has submitted policy papers and met with key government officials, including President Reagan, and Vice President Bush. The organization has also submitted policy papers to senior policy advisors on such issues as employment, voting rights, and new federalism. In the opinion of the writer, these efforts have been ineffective because there has not been any indication of change in the President's domestic policies. NCBM's position on such issues as school busing, economic sanctions against South Africa, funding of black colleges and universities, have not been responded to by the Reagan Administration. The failure to achieve success is largely due to the conservative posture of the present administration's policies and its unapologetic inclination to entrepreneurs, financial institutions and the multinational corporations. The belief that "supply-side economics" will give incentive to businesses to reactivate the economy, is essentially deceitful.\textsuperscript{57}

This is because the supply-side approach to economic problems was utilized prior to the Great Depression of the 1940s but


was found ineffective. Instead of investing in productive enterprises and creating jobs as a result of increased incentive by way of tax cuts, and tax exemptions, corporations are merely enlarging their own bank accounts and waiting for the economy to pick up before any positive action is embarked upon by big business.58

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The inception of the NCBM in 1976 was a progressive step of great significance for the poor, deprived and minorities. The NCBM has consistently functioned as an organ for communicating the views of black mayors to policy makers at the national level. The NCBM has embarked on various programs designed to benefit local municipalities. However, the present Reagan conservatism is negatively impacting on many of the programs and activities of the NCBM at a time of increased service demands. AFL-CIO President, Lane Kirkland rightly summarized the present predicament of public-based interest groups when he termed the Reagan policies "Economic Darwinism" geared to benefit the rich.59

The NCBM's educational and research program has been very beneficial to member municipalities in providing information, expertise and manpower to local communities. However, this organization's potential appears to have been

reduced due to the negative impact of Reagan conservatism on many of its programs and activities at a time of increased service demands. However, NCBM is presently pursuing alternative funding to establish the Rural Resource Center, a program similar to UYA.

The NCBM Economic Development program tries to identify sources of funding for small towns. The NCBM is vigorously endeavoring to develop the "African Twin Cities Program" as part of the organization's efforts to raise funds and, more importantly, for educational and economic exchange. The recent establishment of an Economic Development Task force is an indication of the NCBM's attempts to enhance the quality of life for the poor and deprived in local municipalities.

Community Development and Municipal Management programs are embarked upon by the NCBM to assist its membership in energy conservation and production. Relevant information on public management and community development is made available to the NCBM members by way of conventions and the publication of a quarterly newsletter. Unfortunately, there has been a substantial reduction of federal funding for these programs.

The aim of the NCBM program coordination component is to enhance the effectiveness of the organization's programs in servicing local municipalities. Surprisingly, the funding for this year has been doubled from $175,000 in
FY 1981 to $350,000 in FY 1982. The increase in funding corresponds to increased service demands and duties of state coordinators in seven states.

Since its inception, the NCBM has been in the forefront of minority related legislative and policy advocacy. The input of the NCBM to local, state and federal policies involves areas such as affirmative action, voting rights and unemployment. The present conservative mode has encouraged the NCBM to significantly increase its advocacy role. The NCBM continues to pursue its advocacy role in spite of the fact that the Administration continues to ignore its resolutions.

Recommendations

Some of the measures the NCBM can embark upon in order to withstand and prosper from the crippling effects of Reaganomics are:

1. The NCBM can broker in international trade between the U.S. and African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia. As a member of the NCBM, Mayor Andrew Young of the city of Atlanta could offer some expertise on how to achieve this goal. Mayor Andrew Young is a former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. As such, he was successful in developing a positive relationship with leaders of many developing countries. It is anticipated that he could be willing to serve as a liaison in developing a mutually beneficial relationship between the NCBM and these countries.

2. The NCBM could broker in wholesale purchases of equipment and supplies for member municipalities. For example, if eighty municipalities want to purchase new Chevrolet cars for their Police Departments, the NCBM
could deal directly with the auto manufacturing company. The discount from the purchase would be substantial. The amount realized could narrow the financial problems facing the NCBM.

3. The NCBM could provide community development services to member municipalities in areas such as planning, design and engineering. These services would be provided in the form of a for-profit subsidiary venture.

4. Many African countries are experimenting with the executive type of administration after decades of military rule. Nigeria, for example, has sent elected officials to the U.S. to view governmental operations. In this view, the NCBM could offer consultant services to the Nigerian Local Government Service Board which is an infant and largely inexperienced agency.

5. The NCBM should establish ties with the Departments of Public Administration, Sociology, Economics and Political Science at Atlanta University or one of the other black institutions. The NCBM and Atlanta University could engage in conducting research and writing proposals which would be submitted to public and private funding sources. This endeavor would be mutually beneficial to Atlanta University and the NCBM.
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