

GED coll 951 Box 9

Gen Ext Div #C
Municipal Ref Bure
0100-4505

Proposal for Establishing an urban
Affairs Center 2 pages

General Extension
Dweller
UM archives

1963
~~1950~~
1963

11,500

5,648

4,400

21,548

Proposal for Establishment of Urban Affairs Center

For 50 years the Municipal Reference Bureau in association with the League of Minnesota Municipalities has been serving the communities and the state as a center for the dissemination of municipal information and a widely respected instrument for the improvement of Minnesota municipal government through education. It has provided municipal officials and citizens with answers and general information on the whole range of local government problems from bond limits to housing ordinances, from special censuses to bus subsidies, from forms of government to plans for one-way streets, and model zoning ordinances.

For a long time this organization also provided an excellent setting for the Public Administration Center, with which it still maintains a joint library and is closely identified in the teaching of municipal administration and the provision of research assistantships to graduate students who are planning careers in local government administration.

While the Municipal Reference Bureau and the League have performed excellent work in their field, many persons in many areas of the University have advocated a broader role for the University in the expanding field of urban affairs -- serving other local government units in addition to cities and villages as well as bringing the full resources of the University to bear on the problems of community growth and development in our rapidly expanding state. Among these problems are those of housing, urban renewal, population dispersion, public transportation, tax equities, juvenile delinquency, metropolitan governmental forms and processes, and the adaptation of the small communities to economic change. There are of course many more. With respect to all of these, the University can and should make a unique contribution.

Many universities are experimenting with organizations and programs designed to bring the total university resources to bear upon problems of urbanism. Agencies are being created either with autonomous status or as part of an existing agency for purposes of providing training, research, and extension service in this broad field, sometimes referred to as "community development" for lack of a more precise term. Much study is needed to determine the limits of need and how the University

can best be organized to meet these needs within areas appropriate for University activity. It seems evident, however, that some action in this field is needed quickly if the University is to fulfil its role of leadership

It has been proposed that the University should create a Center of Urban Affairs. It would seem wise that if such a center is to be established the University should build upon an already successful agency in the field by expanding the operations of the Municipal Reference Bureau and perhaps changing its name to reflect its expanded concerns. Since the General Extension Division traditionally utilizes the various departmental disciplines in its work, the center could draw on the many resources of the University in assembling and utilizing materials useful to urban governments and their citizens. This objective could be furthered through an advisory committee composed of persons from the many areas of the University which have an interest in these matters.

There is presently an Interdisciplinary Committee on Urban and Regional planning headed by Dean Grambsch. Although this committee has not met for some time, much of its discussion at earlier meetings related to the University's role in the field of urban affairs and services. Because it is broadly representative of the various interests involved, it may be the best committee through which to work.

A man named Tom Anding is presently working on an action program in urban affairs based on the research of the Upper Midwest Economic Study. He is working principally for the Upper Midwest Research and Development Council but commencing July 1st he began serving the Municipal Reference Bureau on a quarter-time appointment while continuing three-quarter time with the Council. Mr. Anding's services to the Upper Midwest group will end in December of 1965. Hopefully, he would be available to us full-time after that date.

We would like to establish the following positions and budget for the next biennium:

Director of Urban Center	\$ 11,500	(12 months)
Secretary	3,648	
Equipment	1,400	
Travel	2,250	
Supplies	750	
	<u>\$ 19,548</u>	

The Municipal Reference Bureau, through its joint work with the League, has excellent contact and rapport with local officials because of its 50-year history of successful University-municipal cooperation. It provides an appropriate setting for an expanded urban affairs program the exact nature and scope of which would be developed in cooperation with the advisory committee. The director, working with the committee, would survey the need, enlist University-wide cooperation and community support, plan and experiment with pilot programs, and develop proposals for grants from foundations, many of which are much interested in the field of urban development. While Mr. Anding has only now begun his activities with the Upper Midwest Research and Development Council and the Municipal Reference Bureau, the preliminary work program he has outlined for the council gives clear indication of its relevance to the proposed center. It includes, among other things, the use of a general extension division course as a means of increasing public awareness of urban problems, (possibly taught in a selected city as an experimental field laboratory), specific field work in a selected city on a particular problem, using a team of graduate students from several disciplines; short courses for persons now in the field who are faced with problems of urbanization without sufficient background; (county agents, for example); development of new model planning tools; and experimentation with large-scale intergovernmental cooperation.

Any such plans as this will, of course, require careful examination of the appropriate organizational relationship between it and the League of Minnesota Municipalities in view of the long and successful history of League-Municipal Reference Bureau partnership.