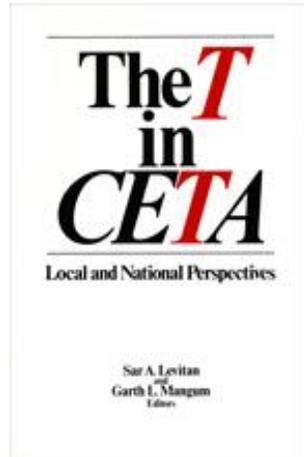

Upjohn Institute Press

Tucson, Arizona: Orchestrated Decentralization

Garth L. Mangum
University of Utah



Chapter 11 (pp. 365-385) in:

The T in CETA: Local and National Perspectives

Sar A. Levitan, and Garth L. Mangum, eds.

Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1981

DOI: 10.17848/9780880996051.ch11

Tucson, Arizona Orchestrated Decentralization

Garth L. Mangum

University of Utah

The Prime Sponsor Area

Tucson is the second largest city (next to Phoenix) and the only other metropolitan area of any size in Arizona. The city, with its 1979 population of 319,300, has the only population of more than 6,000 in Pima County. Most of the county's 539,800 people live in Tucson and its suburbs, while the county spreads over a geographical area larger than the State of Connecticut.

A little more than one hour's drive from the Mexican border, the county was populated by 118,600 Hispanics, 15,000 blacks, 12,900 Native Americans, 3,600 Asians, and 352,600 non-Hispanic whites in 1978. The area's nearness to Mexico contributes to a low wage structure which makes jobs at the federal minimum wage relatively attractive, even though the area's cost of living is above the national average.

Historically, copper mining has been an important source of employment, and Pima County is still the home of the fourth and fifth largest copper mines in the country. However, attractiveness as a retirement community and an emerging electronics industry have moved to center place in the local economy. Low wages and the human resource base of the 30,000-student University of Arizona and the 22,000-student Pima Community College have been the major attractions for the emerging industry. The community suffered heavily from the 1974-75 recession but gives promise of riding through that of 1980 more comfortably.

Unemployment was at a low of 3.9 percent in the spring of 1980, rising to 5.8 percent by midsummer.

Staff and Institutional Stability

Contrary to a general CETA reputation for high staff turnover, the Tucson prime sponsor has experienced almost total stability throughout the entire CETA experience. The staff is, of course, small—a total of 35 in 1980—as behooves a relatively small prime sponsor in a modest sized city.

That staff has functioned under one director from the CETA beginning, and he directed the public employment program under the Emergency Employment Act of 1971 and was director of the Tucson Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System under the Manpower Development and Training Act prior to CETA. The Tucson Employment and Training Administration is divided into five major departments. Only one department head has ever left the post and he only to enter private business, run successfully for the city council, and become a strong supporter of his previous colleagues from that position.

Top management as well as staff has grown with the expansion of CETA, and those who came, stayed. Two technician level positions were lost to the city when a city-county consortium split in 1979 but the incumbents continued with the county prime sponsor. Thus the record of stability is maintained at the technician level. There has been the normal turnover of clerical personnel.

Only one position experiences troublesome turnover. Eleven persons have rotated through the five positions as field monitors, or service delivery coordinators in Tucson parlance, since the function was established in 1977. The job is a difficult one. Approximately 80 percent of the time is spent at CETA contractors' facilities observing and checking

the delivery of service to enrollees. If there is any conflict between prime sponsor and contractor, the service delivery coordinator is in the middle of it. The service delivery coordinator is also in circulation to observe and be observed, and all who have left did so for better jobs. Because the assignment requires judgment and experience, that turnover could pose a recruitment and training problem. However, replacements are usually hired from the lower ranks of contractor staff with readymade familiarity with the CETA world.

At the director level, the explanation of the staff stability is political stability. One mayor, now in his third 4-year term, has headed city government throughout the CETA experience. Tucson also has a city manager of similar tenure. The CETA staff director reports politically to the first and administratively to the second, and has the trust of both. For the rest of the staff, the primary explanation is that all have been incorporated into the city civil service with full rights and protections rather than being grafted on in some temporary fashion as is the more usual CETA experience. In a small city like Tucson, city jobs are attractive ones, secure and competitively paid and few leave them.

However, the stability of Tucson CETA is not limited to the prime sponsor staff. The primary service delivery contractors—the Tucson Skill Center, the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Tucson Manpower Development, Inc., Operation SER, and Tucson Urban League—were all actively involved under the pre-CETA Manpower Development and Training Act and Economic Opportunity Act. Other minor contractors come and go, either providing specialized services or acting as hosts for public service employment slots, but these five carry the bulk of CETA service delivery responsibility year after year.

Contractor staff are almost as turnover-free as prime sponsor staff. The skill center went through a double transition at the end of MDTA as the director left to head a private trade school. The deputy became director but was not comfortable with the annual competitive funding process of CETA. The head of the DES/CETA unit, who had served the National Alliance of Businessmen-Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (NAB-JOBS) program from within DES, took over the skill center directorship in 1977 and has remained since.

The DES/CETA unit is staffed by professional employment service staff, primarily of Mexican-American extraction, and has experienced only that one change of leadership. SER, the Urban League, and Tucson Manpower Development all continue to function under their pre-CETA leadership. Turnover below the director level has been moderate for all. Only the prime sponsor and DES enjoy the protection of tenured systems. But salaries of all are competitive within the employment and training fraternity and with the private sector in a relatively low wage labor market.

Personal relationships are good except with the SER director, who is the "stormy petrel" of Tucson CETA. Militant, aggressive, and competent, he is a constant battler for more funds to provide adult basic education and English as a second language programs for his Hispanic constituency. Private sector members of the planning and private industry councils find his conduct in meetings disruptive and irritating. But all of that is offset by SER's outstanding performance. Thus Tucson CETA tends, in cliché, to be a reasonably happy and relatively close family.

Prime Sponsor/Federal Relations

"Adversary" is a better description of relations between the Tucson prime sponsor and the Labor Department's San

Francisco regional office. For the Tucson staff, that relationship is personalized by the federal representative or "fed rep" assigned full time to the Tucson consortium and now to both the city and county prime sponsors. The position is characterized by high turnover, both because the fed reps do not stay on the job long and because there is deliberate rotation. Of the eight fed reps who have served Tucson, only the current (mid-1980) one has ever had experience as a member of a prime sponsor staff. The Tucson staff, until that recent change, have viewed the fed reps as uniformly incompetent and uncooperative, inexperienced, and unwilling to invest the time to learn the Tucson scene and the reasons for and nature of its policies and practices. Knowing no way to be helpful, the Tucson staff feel, the fed reps can only be nit-picking enforcers.

Compounding the problem of local-regional relations is the national system, devised by the Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor, which requires the prime sponsor each year to complete planning for the next without knowing what level of funding will actually be available and to adjust to frequent funding and policy changes within each program year. Then too, the Tucson director has excellent Washington contacts and invariably knows of national office decisions weeks before they are communicated to the regional office and more time passes before the regional office can translate and transmit them through field directives. Confidence in the regional office is not helped by situations in which that office is accusing the prime sponsor of non-compliance for advance response to a coming national directive.

On the other side of the coin, many of the regional staff consider Tucson staff obdurate and uncooperative. Admitting all of the shortcomings of their position, they point out that relations are good with other prime sponsors in the region, despite the same set of obstacles.

At the time of this writing, however, the whole CETA administration in the regional office has been restructured and restaffed. A new federal representative has been assigned who has several years of prime sponsor level experience behind him. He has spent extensive time in Tucson to learn local conditions and practices and has been helpful in breaking loose some longstanding requests for information. Both sides are hopeful that a new and more positive relationship may emerge.

Political Vulnerability

The Tucson experience is an instructive example of the vulnerability of the CETA system to erratic forces of local politics. Tucson CETA functioned for five years as a consortium consisting of Tucson city, Pima County, and the city of South Tucson.

At CETA's advent only the city or the county including the city had the 100,000 population required for prime sponsorship. The county, at the time, lacked the administrative structure to handle such an enterprise. A consortium was formed including the city of South Tucson—a mile square enclave of 6,000 population, three-fourths of them Mexican-American, totally surrounded by the city of Tucson.

Tucson city assumed lead position in the consortium and the CETA staff all became city employees. A liaison committee of one member each from the Tucson city council, the five county supervisors, and the mayor of South Tucson were the chief policymaking body reporting back to their larger groups. Administratively, however, the staff director reported to the Tucson city manager. The prime sponsor advisory council was dominated by contractors who could not vote on issues of pecuniary interest to them, but meetings were long and acrimonious and tainted by self-interest. Despite that flaw, the system ran well except for continuous

complaints from Hispanics and Native Americans about their share of the resources.

The county outside the city limits grew to prime sponsor eligibility. However, Tucson still so dominated the county's population that four of the five county supervisors were elected by a totally Tucson constituency and the fifth represented the rest of the county along with some Tucson voters. The latter, a university professor, came to resent the city's dominance in CETA affairs and agitated for exercise of the county's right to separate prime sponsorship. The city CETA staff charge that the federal regional office staff encouraged those ambitions, but the latter deny it. At any rate, Pima County filed in 1979 for independent prime sponsorship, which became official October 1, 1979, for the 1980 fiscal year. South Tucson could only go along with the county.

The split brought no evident gain for the CETA-eligible citizens of either the county or the city or for employers or for the labor market. The city staff continued intact except for the loss of two positions. A new county staff had to be developed and the aggregate administrative cost rose. Except for one private not-for-profit organization providing rural services, the same set of contractors serve both prime sponsors and both populations. Two sets of requests for proposals go out each spring and each contractor makes two responses and keeps two sets of books and reports. The two sets of enrollees remain mixed in the receipt of services. The consortium bonus of \$260,000 per year (a little less than 2 percent of the new-CETA funding authorized for fiscal 1979) was lost to both prime sponsors. A prime sponsor which had planned for an entire labor market and more was replaced by two, each operating over a fragment of both the demand and supply sides of the local labor market.

The only observable gain was reform of the advisory council structure for the city prime sponsor.

The Decisionmaking Process

The city had become eligible during the 1974-75 recession for aid under the Economic Development Act and an employer-dominated committee had been appointed to prepare the Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP). That committee had worked well and the CETA staff director and the director of the Urban League were already members of it. At the CETA director's advice, the mayor assigned CETA responsibilities to the same committee, adding the representatives required by CETA law and regulation.

The OEDP/CETA advisory council has worked exceedingly well during its first year, despite the OEDP group's amazement at the CETA workload. A long range planning committee and a plant siting committee carry on the major OEDP responsibilities. There is a CETA planning committee with task forces for Title II-B programs, youth programs, and public service employment programs. The CETA committee actively participates in setting the boundaries for the annual request for proposals and the task forces read, assess, and rank all of the proposals and join with the staff in recommendations to the full OEDP/CETA council.

The council chairman is vice president for economic development of a major bank and the membership is heavily weighted by business interests. The private industry council (PIC) chairman, another banker, is a council member, as are all but one of the PIC members. Council membership is forbidden to any person whose salary is paid from CETA funds, thus eliminating from membership all contractors except the employment service, the skill center director whose salary is paid by the community college, and the Urban League director who is paid from United Way contributions. A nonvoting subcommittee of Community Based Organiza-

tions (CBOs) exists to give a voice to the contractors and other interested parties.

The council chairman requires advance written request for all agenda items and will not allow any meeting to last more than two hours. Appearances before the full council are by invitation only but interested parties can be heard at the task force and committee levels at their own request. Not only the chairman but other private sector members have let it be known that they will continue to serve and devote the necessary time only if the meetings are brief and businesslike and if their advice is taken seriously.

The first year of the new arrangement was promising. Several training sessions were held to acquaint the council members with CETA history, goals, and procedures. The members turned out to be strong allies of the staff in favoring objective criteria and rejecting political judgments. The mayor and council overturned only one joint council-staff recommendation. They funded a Native American contractor whose weak administrative abilities and fiscal controls produced chaos. Economic development and labor market policy decisions are admirably linked. Whether the private parties will continue to devote the needed time and energy remains to be seen.

Orchestrated Decentralization

At first look, the Tucson decisionmaking process appears to be so decentralized as to prohibit any meaningful planning. The staff, along with the CETA planning committee of the OEDP/CETA advisory council, decide what mix of age, race, and sex characteristics is appropriate for the next fiscal year's enrollees. They make their best guess of the amount of funds likely to be available under various CETA titles. They then send out a request for proposals containing only those two pieces of information. With no further guidance except

past experience, contractors then propose what groups and how many they hope to serve, what mix of services they propose, and the price tag. Each contractor is expected to be responsible for intake, all service delivery, whether directly or by subcontract, job development, and placement. Proposers are provided with the limited amount of labor market data available from Department of Economic Security sources but essentially contractors are left to their own devices to judge what the labor market needs or will absorb.

Confronted with the charge that the procedure delegates or abrogates to the contractors the essential planning decisions, the director counters, "Not so." He would prefer a centralized intake system, but is convinced that the political strength of the race and ethnic groups and their community based organizations and the responsiveness of the politicians preclude it. Advance allocation of the available funds among the alternative service components would tie the hands of the decisionmakers, he argues. Suppose most of the proposals in one service area such as classroom training are mediocre while all of those on-the-job training are outstanding. It would be necessary to fund the mediocre proposals up to the limits of the allocations for classroom training and reject the outstanding ones beyond the OJT limit. Under present procedures, staff and council select the best from an open "smorgasbord" of proposals and assemble a community employment and training program from among a concrete set of proposals rather than supposition and expectation.

But where is the impact of employer need and labor market information? The contractors know the needs of their constituent groups better than anyone else can, is the argument, while response to the demand side is kept flexible by the role of the skill center. A high proportion of the eligible enrollees need remedial education, language preparation, and job search training—all determined by the labor supply. Most training occurs in the skill center which contracts to

deliver training unbounded by predetermined occupational clusters. If changing demand is signaled, by either employer contacts or placement rates, enrollments are simply shifted from less- to more-demanded occupations. In reality, of course, the CETA training occupations in Tucson, as elsewhere, tend to be in a set of high turnover, continuous demand entry level occupations which rarely change significantly. Therefore, the key decisions in Tucson are seen to be the relative competence of the contractor and the choice between occupational and nonoccupational prerequisites of employability. These choices can be made from the proposed smorgasbord.

The Primacy of Training

Training, in the broad sense of employability development, is clearly the preferred choice of the prime sponsor, most contractors, and most eligible applicants whenever discretion is given and perceived. CETA Title VI offers no choice but public service employment. Title II-D funds could legally be used for training, but they are designated as public service employment (PSE) and the possibilities for reallocation are viewed as a legal technicality rather than a practical possibility. Depending as it does upon contractor initiatives to change the mix of services, the Tucson prime sponsor has been slow to take advantage of the invitation—and now the directive—to add and enlarge a training component to accompany Title II-D PSE. However, it has declared an intention to move more strongly in that direction in 1981.

Work experience is considered appropriate for youth and maintenance of effort regulations added by the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act keep a substantial amount of Title II-B funds allocated to youth programs and, therefore, in part to work experience.

Beyond that, however, Title II-B funds, over which the prime sponsor has greatest discretion, are spent entirely on various forms of employability development with emphasis on occupational skill training (Tables 1 and 2 provide the mix of expenditures and enrollments for 1979). Under the Tucson smorgasbord approach, the training priority is exercised in the selection of contractors. And since each contractor performs its own intake, contractor selection to a substantial degree determines who is to be served as well as what services are to be provided.

Table 1. CETA Funding for Tucson, Pima County, Arizona, Prime Sponsor, Fiscal 1979

Funding source	Available funds		
	1978 funds still available in 1979	1979 funding authority	1979 funds carried over to 1980
Total	\$303,229	\$15,648,679	\$1,869,620
Title II-B	15,963	3,098,374	217,500
Title II-D		2,925,509	
Title III	287,266	691,979	119,817
Title IV		2,302,338	195,982
Title VI		3,700,261	922,462
Discretionary		1,248,991	340,745
Admin. pool		1,681,227	73,114

Table 2. CETA Enrollments under Programs Funded by the Tucson, Pima County, Arizona, Prime Sponsor, Fiscal 1979

Funding source	As of September 30, 1979	Total for fiscal 1979
Total	1,660	7,997
Title II-B	410	2,349
Title II-D	553	700
Title III		322
Title IV	176	4,008
Title VI	521	618

SER serves a substantially Hispanic population and emphasizes English as a second language (ESL) and adult basic education (ABE). Its program is a well articulated and highly effective one in which those who are monolingual in Spanish undergo six months to one year of ESL instruction, are taught job search and survival techniques at the same time, and are then placed by SER's job development staff. To add skill training to such extensive language training is considered to be an excessive investment in some individuals at the expense of others when SER applicants already wait two to four months.

For those with limited English speaking ability (LESA), SER conducts a program offering a few weeks to a few months of English language instruction followed by referral to the skill center for occupational skill training or to on-the-job training. For those verbally functional in English but of limited literacy, there is a three-level ABE program. The ambitious goal which has been accomplished by the average enrollee is to achieve three years of basic education advancement for each six months of enrollment, the most advanced level leading to a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. The ABE program does not lead into the skill center but into on-the-job training or direct placement.

The services of the Tucson Urban League are available to all, but they are used by a primarily black population. After intake, the Urban League specializes in on-the-job training, job search training, and referral to the skill center for occupational training. On-the-job training has been the specialty of the national Urban League, and the Tucson chapter has followed that lead. Substantial numbers of Tucson employers are susceptible to affirmative action pressure, and the Urban League uses these pressures as leverage for on-the-job training placements.

In addition, the Tucson Urban League staff were instructed by their national and regional leaders in the arts of job search training as that activity came into vogue across the country. The Tucson Urban League therefore initiated a pre-job training program through which, in a 2-week format, those considered job ready are taught how to search for their own jobs. Aided also by the job developers, enrollees in this 2-week sequence have maintained placement rates well above 80 percent.

Finally, Urban League, like SER, maintains responsibility for 31 slots at the Tucson Skill Center. All league applicants considered appropriate for skill training are first sent to the skill center for vocational assessment. Though the skill center must accept for skill training whoever the Urban League (or any other contractor) refers to slots controlled by the contractor, the assessment helps determine who should receive what service. Those referred by Urban League to its skill center slots continue to receive stipends from the contractor and return for job development and placement at the completion of training. (That is also true for the other major contractors.) Tucson Urban League has also referred a few of its applicants to private clerical and trade schools, paid tuition for their enrollment, but has not found them effective because of their lack of supportive services.

The CETA unit of the Department of Economic Security belies any implication that the employment service cannot or will not serve the disadvantaged. Staff members pulled out of their regular DES activities appear to do as well in serving the total poverty population as the community based organizations do for their racially and ethnically concentrated poor. DES/CETA performs a broadly based intake role from a central city multipurpose center and outlying employment service offices. After counseling by one of the counselors assigned to the unit, clients are referred directly

to jobs or to on-the-job training, classroom training, or pre-job training, prior to job development and placement.

DES/CETA maintains 13 OJT slots with cooperating employers. It maintains an additional 35 slots at the skill center. Many of the numerous applicants it cannot serve in either of these ways are put through its pre-job training program, similar to the Urban League approach but somewhat higher in volume, with approximately 15 entering each two weeks. The mixes of age, race, sex, education, public offender status, and handicap give no evidence of pre-selection. A lone staff member puts them through an intensive week of motivation, self analysis, resume writing, videotaped simulated interviews, and telephone practice. They then decide upon an occupation to pursue and draw from the telephone yellow pages and other sources a list of employers likely to hire in that occupation. Goaded and cajoled by the instructor, they then spend the second week on the telephone eight hours a day seeking interviews or out being interviewed until a job is found. The placement rate is above 90 percent. The retention rate, as in all Tucson CETA programs is essentially unknown.

The skill center is the primary source of occupational skill training in Tucson. A few applicants have been individually referred by contractors to a private clerical college and a trade school. The trade school had a direct CETA contract. The training in these two institutions is of high quality, but trainees can survive it only if they have the same attributes as the general student bodies. The prime sponsor and the contractors prefer to allocate the training dollars to an institution designed to serve the disadvantaged.

The Tucson Skill Center is such an institution. It began under MDTA within the jurisdiction of the vocational education department of the public schools but made a successful transition to CETA and administration as a unit of

the Pima Community College. It conducts an extensive vocational assessment program using an extraordinarily broad range of assessment tools. In fact, many schools and other institutions in the area refer their enrollees and applicants for assessment on a fee basis. It employs a sympathetic counseling staff, maintains a nurse on site and a doctor on call, has some supervised residential facilities, maintains two vans to bring students in from rural areas and Indian reservations, keeps its curriculum bilingual in Spanish and English, and offers basic education supplementations.

Current occupational offerings at the skill center are: auto body, automotive repair, basic financial skills (teller, cashier, etc.), building maintenance, business and office, electrical helper, electromechanical assembly, food service, and health occupations (licensed practical nurse and nurses aide). However, the skill center obligates a blanket number of slots to CETA without limiting them by occupational area. Intake is left to the other contractors acting as referral agencies. The vocational assessment unit recommends an appropriate assignment for each referral. However, that is not binding on the referring agency or the applicant. The skill center must accept whoever is referred except that licensing requirements make it necessary to impose a high school graduation or equivalent minimum for the nursing program. If some occupational clusters grow as others shrink in response to the referral process, the skill center must meet the administrative challenge.

Despite administrative attachment to the community college system, skill center staff have none of its job security, few of its fringe benefits, and a lesser level of pay. On the other hand, they are not required to have the same set of credentials, though many do. Most instructors have substantial trade experience, receive less pay than they had been accustomed to, but have more job security and more pleasant

surroundings. Above all, they enjoy the challenge of teaching and the sense of community service.

The skill center has a well developed philosophy of education based on the enrollee as an adult self-directed learner and the instructor as a resource person. It follows practices of open entry (enter any time from any background), open exit (leave whenever job ready), and individualized modular instruction. It trains in broad occupational clusters from which placement is possible into a range of jobs. It maintains a remedial learning center to which trainees are referred by their skill instructors according to need. It designs its own curricula as well as drawing upon those obtained from other sources. It is gradually using its community college affiliation as leverage, so that its enrollees are now eligible for federal Basic Education Opportunity Grants and it is beginning to give community college credit in some courses.

The skill center has worked closely with new or expanding employers in coupled classroom-OJT programs. Most recently in electronic assembly, the trainees receive short periods (typically two weeks) of pre-entry instruction from the skill center before entering an OJT phase of CETA subsidized employment.

The skill center maintains a completion rate above 85 percent. It is not responsible for job development and placement. The enrollees return to the referring contractors for that. For 1979, placement rates were 74 percent placement rate for SER enrollees, 67 percent for Urban League, and 86 percent for DES/CETA. However, data are not available to break out skill center completers from those overall placement rates.

The only black mark on the skill center escutcheon is its facility. An abandoned department store in a declining part of town, its oft-remodeled innards resemble catacombs and its plumbing and air conditioning facilities (a must in the

Tucson climate) are in frequent disrepair. For overflow it rents other buildings which are even worse. However, help is on the way. As another by-product of the fortuitous OEDP/CETA partnership, an industrial park developer member of the committee has offered to provide new space at submarket rates which will be designed specifically for skill center needs. Given the high maintenance costs of the present facility, the actual cost will not be much higher. If the Tucson skill center can maintain the current attitudes of dedication within the new setting, it will be a most admirable institution.

Overall, Tucson intake agencies report that 85 percent of CETA applicants request skill training. But skill training costs over \$7,000 per trainee, including stipends, whereas OJT costs average less than \$1,000 per enrollee and job search training costs about \$150 per person. Table 3 provides a comparative breakdown of Title II expenditures between training and other services. The preference for classroom training is demonstrated by the fact that nearly all funds available for that purpose are spent, whereas there is less pressure to spend OJT and supportive services funds. The other services exist because the prime sponsor attempts to maintain a balance among alternative services. Waiting periods for CETA enrollments range from two to four months for all contractors. But within budget limitations, classroom skill training is nearly everyone's favorite.

The Tucson training system is still essentially what was put in place under the Manpower Development and Training Act. It has proven its adaptability as well as its durability. The decentralized nature of the system enables it to expand and contract without breaking. There is no large investment in buildings and equipment. No permanent commitments are made to instructors who seem to be readily available. Expanding means renting space and adding instructors. Contracting requires the opposite. The Tucson CETA training

system appears to be capable of operating in a range of 75 percent to 125 percent of current enrollments with no undue strain.

Table 3. Title II-B Authorizations and Outlays, Tucson, Pima County, Arizona, Prime Sponsor, Fiscal 1979

Service	Authorization	Outlays	Outlays as percent of authorization
Total	\$3,098,373	\$2,965,001	96
Classroom training	2,166,434	2,146,943	99
On-the-job training	72,588	56,227	77
Work experience	358,831	402,608	112
Supportive services	500,520	359,223	72

Need for Specialized Institutions

One of the lessons of the Tucson experience is the need for institutions that specialize in the serving of various populations. The Tucson Skill Center, SER, the Tucson Urban League, DES/CETA, and Tucson Manpower Development (not described here because of its youth concentration) survived their MDTA origins because they continued to meet a need. All serve a racial and ethnic mix, but their enrollees appear to have a preference for those that carry their own identity. That specialization is crucial when language and sharp cultural differentiation is involved. Thus SER specializes in bringing Hispanics to the point where they can compete in the skill center and the job market. The Papago Indian tribe meets most of CETA's reservation Indian responsibilities, as does a rural contractor for the Yaquis. Lacking a competent urban Indian contractor, members of those tribes living in the Tucson metropolitan area (and some of the reservation dwellers) are served by the skill center and other contractors but not without considerable dissatisfaction.

But despite the need for racial and ethnic specialization, there are plenty of CETA eligible non-Hispanic whites as well as the less culturally different of other races who can be served effectively by a sympathetically specialized unit within the employment service. DES/CETA has the advantage of direct linkage to major labor market and social welfare institutions. But without the specialized assignment to serve the CETA eligible, it is doubtful that they would seek and receive the same level of service from the mainstream Job Service offices.

As training institutions, the community college and the private proprietary schools can serve those few CETA eligibles who possess all of the characteristics of their regular student bodies except for family income. However, if there were not a skill center in Tucson, someone would have to invent it. There are too many of culturally different and competitively disadvantaged backgrounds who could neither survive in training institutions nor succeed in the labor market without specialized help.

Is CETA Worthwhile?

Hardly anybody in Tucson would categorize CETA as a four-letter word. Judging from employers who serve on the advisory and private industry councils and participate in OJT programs, the business community welcomes its help. Organized labor is not strong in Tucson but has been supportive of CETA to the extent of cooperating in specialized programs not described here for lack of space. The racial and ethnic communities want only more. The political support is bipartisan. To the extent they are aware of the situation, all would respond to the federal government, "Leave your money and go away and don't bother us. We need your resources, but, in administration and planning, you are only in the way." One can hope that attitude is subject to change.

CETA's administrators and decisionmakers have well articulated policies. To an outside observer, it would appear that a centralized intake and assessment process would be more likely to get each applicant the most compatible assignment to services. The actors on the scene have concluded that the political price would be too high.

The labor economist sees the need for a greater labor market information input into planning, including projections of the future level and structure of employment by occupation and industry. The administrators argue that a flexible training institution responding to employer and enrollee demand and placement rates is more dependable. The truth in between is that the occupations trained for are those characterized by high turnover and always in demand or undergoing secular expansion such as the local electronics industry.

But do the enrollees complete training and get jobs? The administrator responds with impressive placement rates. But are those jobs which would not have been obtained without program participation, do they last, and are the benefits worth the cost? The administrator cannot answer except to protest that followup is too expensive, taking scarce money better spent on direct participant services, that control groups are impractical, and that only limited analysis is possible without a computerized management information system. The observer/analyst responds, "I know in my heart you are doing good but I can't prove it."