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Service to Communities

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University of Nebraska at Omaha

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SERVICE to COMMUNITIES

CENTER for APPLIED URBAN RESEARCH
The Center for Applied Urban Research

The Center for Applied Urban Research, a research and service arm of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, exists to provide professional services in the areas of:

- Applied Research
- Technical Assistance
- Community Education

Since most of the units of the College have a state-wide service mandate (especially the Departments of Public Administration and Criminal Justice, as well as the Gerontology Program and the School of Social Work), the Center's mission extends beyond the limits of the Omaha metropolitan area to the entire State of Nebraska — its cities, including urban neighborhoods, as well as its counties, towns, and rural areas. Some activities may be national or international in scope, but the primary focus of the Center remains upon Nebraska.

To facilitate the dissemination of research information on a regular basis, the Center publishes the Review of Applied Urban Research. This publication is distributed free to Nebraska residents requesting it and by subscription to those outside the State. Research findings from the various studies by the Center are made available to the public through the publication of appropriate documents and reports and through a variety of educational activities.

The Center for Applied Urban Research has developed certain policy guidelines which define its program.

- While limited amounts of staff time are available without charge to help define and resolve problems, projects of a complex and time consuming nature are pursued on a cost reimbursement basis.

- The Center assists other groups and agencies. At no time does it take over operations or assume responsibility for its clients' functions.

- The Center engages in those activities which permit freedom of inquiry and unrestricted dissemination of results.

- The Center is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer.

Offices of the Center for Applied Urban Research are on the second floor of the former Storz Mansion at 6625 Dodge Street, now called Annex 15.
The Center has a multidisciplinary staff of social scientists, community service specialists, statisticians, and educators. Thirteen full-time professionals in the fields of economics, geography, sociology, political science, urban planning, social work, journalism, education, and history are employed by the Center. An emphasis on teamwork and freedom from the demands of traditional teaching responsibilities enhance the quality, quantity, and timeliness of the services delivered by the Center to its clients.

Members of the staff have served or are serving on a number of public advisory committees such as the Omaha Riverfront Development Committee, the State Housing Advisory Council, an allocation committee of the United Way, the Urban League Housing Committee, the MAPA Urban Affairs Committee, and the Grants and Research Committee of the National Council for Geographic Education.

Students have the opportunity to receive practical research experience through an informal student internship program. Undergraduates assist CAUR in data collection and compiling, interviewing, and cartography. Senior level and graduate students may design and complete projects under CAUR staff supervision.

Each year CAUR awards one or more summer urban research and service grants to University faculty members to do research on a topic of personal interest related to urban problems.
Resources and Interests

Resources of the entire University system are available to the staff of the Center. Consultations are frequently held with other departments of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service. Personnel of the Center are prepared to respond to almost any situation that lends itself either to social science analysis or community service strategies. The areas listed opposite, however, reflect the particular strengths and interests of the staff.

- Economic and Community Development
- Housing
- Human Services Systems
- Government Structure and Finance
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Energy Utilization
- Judicial Structures and Processes
- Criminal Justice Systems
- Citizen Participation
- Community Education

A CAUR data and documents library is maintained not only to assist staff members in their research but to serve the University community and the public. Information pertinent to the metropolitan area and the entire state is available.
Telephone surveys are one way of gathering data.

The Center is dedicated to applied research which yields data useful to policy-makers, decision-makers, and the people affected by such policies and decisions.

Among the principal types of research employed are the following:

• Evaluation research designed to measure the effectiveness of programs or the productivity of agencies and organizations.
• Surveys (by telephone or written questionnaires) to assess needs, gather opinions, or develop programs.
• Analysis of records (and/or observations) to determine organizational and individual behavior patterns.
• Population studies to identify trends, determine migration patterns, and improve planning.
• Policy analysis to determine the nature and impact of public policy upon business and industry, education, human services, and target groups such as older citizens, minorities, families, and youth.
Technical assistance differs from applied research in that the final product or process is the ultimate responsibility and possession of the client rather than that of the Center.

The CAUR clerical staff provides support for professional personnel. Typing, composing, and key punching (below) are essential to the production of research projects.

The University computer network is used for data processing.

Technical Assistance

The Center makes some of its expertise available, as appropriate, to governmental organizations, community groups, and the private sector in order to help them meet their needs of data collection, statistical analysis, problem solving, and organization.

Many groups have been helped through this effort to design surveys, assess needs, improve delivery of services, develop programs, strengthen planning efforts, and gain useful skills.
Community Education

The Center serves as a focal point for bringing educational resources to bear on problems associated with community life.

Efforts are made to provide training in the use of new tools, procedures, and systems that grow out of the Center's applied research activities.

Steps are also taken, independently of research programs, to help private organizations, government units, and community groups to build their problem-solving capacity.

A foster parent training workshop is one of the community service projects carried out with the assistance of CAUR.

The assistance of a college-wide Community Development Task Force may be explored by contacting the Center. Through this mechanism, expertise in criminal justice, public administration, human services, special education, urban studies, and gerontology can be tapped for purposes of providing educational programs such as conferences, workshops, and symposia or helping communities and neighborhoods develop their own training programs.

Once a park, this area is now a parking lot beneath the Interstate Highway. The impact of freeways is one of the studies made by CAUR.
Publications

Since 1966 when the Center was first organized, it has steadily enlarged its research activities by contracting with agencies at the Federal, State, regional, and local levels on a diversity of topics. A representative list of these studies is found below.

Midcontinent City Crime Rates: A Multivariate Analysis
Issues in School Desegregation
The Economic Impact of Non-profit Arts Organizations in Nebraska, 1976-77
National Juvenile Justice Program Collaboration Evaluation Report
The Economic Impact of UNO on the Omaha Economy
The Impact of Rural Nebraska Industrial Development
Upon the Migration of Rural Youth
Identification of Prime Residential Land in Nebraska
Occupational Estimates and Projections for the Omaha SMSA
The Sanitary Improvement District as a Mechanism for Urban Development
Demographic Survey of the Omaha Jewish Community
Intra-Urban Migration and Omaha’s Westward Expansion
Incentives for Attracting Commercial, Industrial, and Housing Investments into the Missouri Riverfront Development Project
Community Development Needs in Rural Nebraska
Hospital Facilities in Midcontinent Metropolitan Areas
Housing and Business Investment in Nebraska
A Housing Allocation Formula for Nebraska Cities of the First Class
Land Use Development in Gretna, Nebraska
Pottawattamie County Population Projections
Omaha Intra-Urban Demographic and Economic Indicators
An Analysis of Effective Property Tax Rates in the City of Omaha
Taxing Services in Nebraska — A Revenue Forecast
Public Transit Service: A Survey of Public Opinion
A City Index: Measurement of a City’s Attractiveness
Children in the Nebraska Courts
Radial Freeways and the Growth of Office Space in Central Cities
A Study of Nebraska Women’s Attitudes Toward Employment
An Overview of Research Needs on the Minority Group Aged
A Guide Toward Residential Land Development in the City of Norfolk

Projects

Proposal Writers’ Institute
Foster Parent Training Program
Workshops for Community-based Corrections Personnel
Seminars on Legal Issues for Child Protection Workers
Neighborhood Improvement Programs
Additional Information

Please clip the postcard below and indicate the areas in which you would like additional information. The Center will be pleased to furnish such information and discuss possible collaborative efforts.