

INTERPRETIVE: SHAKEUP IN GOVERNMENT FUNDING



DOWNTOWN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

By Barry Cassidy

While administering programs in the City of Philadelphia, I had access to many potential funding sources and did my best to secure all available funds so we were not reliant on a single source, and program delivery could proceed without interruption. A few months ago, I wrote about cost allocation and its effect on staffing.

I will address the effects the client's end has on the same process. The number of people receiving assistance is now under review across the federal funding landscape. People are being asked to prove their eligibility, and there is a lot of fraud because underwriting was loose concerning which documents are accepted.

Many of the programs are per-client reimbursement programs, and it would be like working on a piecework rate. A program like weatherization was on a per-project reimbursement basis. So, to add to the complexity, programs have different funding mechanisms. To contrast with the weatherization example, something like mortgage counseling has no per-person requirement if it is a strictly program-delivery grant.

All of these cuts directly affect the number of people employed by individual nonprofits. Seeing the reaction, I would think this has gone beyond eliminating "merit" employees to the value-added "political" employees, leaving people in

jobs that, in many cases, are beyond their capacity. Some of these people did not even do the work allocated through the grant cost allocation formula. People who have had this "power" ... maybe a better word, "edge" in the political hierarchy are starting to realize that tough times lie ahead.

In the Manuscripts of 1844, Marx defines humans as a "species-being" (Gattungswesen) whose nature is to be free, conscious, and creative producers. Capitalism reduces this unique human capacity to a mere tool for individual survival, effectively dehumanizing the worker and reducing them to the level of an animal or a machine.

The reality of capitalism, adapting the theory of noblesse oblige (the notion that privileged people have an inferred responsibility to act with generosity and nobility toward those less privileged), through donations to a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, it is not enough to sustain the bloated program delivery process. They need government money.

What you are watching is the dismantling of a social program delivery process at its roots, not like Reagan did by renaming things and switching agency names. People have to find real jobs in the private sector.

The associate's degree in art history is unlikely to be very helpful, as many cultural agencies are cutting back. Sometimes, practicing idealism through cronyism is a devastating combination and has long-lasting effects on your ability to get through it.

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Recently, HUD has notified landlords and public housing authorities that, in addition to the 200,000 tenants requiring additional eligibility verification, it had also identified nearly 25,000 deceased renters and 6,000 “ineligible non-American tenants” receiving federal aid, the agency announced. It has given housing authorities and landlords 30 days to take corrective action or face sanctions.

In this case, there may be winners in the client game and no losers in the administrative apparatus. Some people are eligible but cannot access the benefits of living in public housing and are on a waiting list. In this case, the only loser is the person who fits the exclusionary criteria outlined by HUD. Real low-income people, not “connected” people, will win.

Each instance is independent, but in some cases, it is combined with another program(s), and the term “outreach worker” becomes the kiss of death. It would be difficult to estimate what the ultimate effect of all these changes will be, and which agencies are going to significantly change their operations.

The foundations are holding workshops to determine priorities. The funding focus is shifting from DEI, which was the holy grail of funding a couple of years ago,

to a trend toward client monetary passthrough rather than funding an outreach worker. The world of relief is in flux. I detect a change in culture as vocations are re-examined, and people move toward being a “gig worker/side hustle” employee. The glorification of becoming a delivery person or a chauffeur will reach an all-time high. If only to be free, conscious, and creative producers in the service industry.

Even jobs dealing drugs are becoming more difficult as the crackdown on crime reminds me of when I was growing up in the late '50s with Brodrick Crawford's series *Highway Patrol*. The bad guys are on the run.

There are jobs that are funded by foreign sources to create unrest in America. Government sources are homing in on those as I write this article. I suspect that many of the nonprofits involved will lose their 501 (c) (3) status, and those jobs will dry up. Without a nonprofit to launder the money, those people are guilty of being agents of a foreign government.

These cuts are not random; it is an orchestrated effort. A very well-organized and effective effort. I have never seen something this thorough before.

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