North Carolina Fund [1]

North Carolina Fund

A community worker for the North Carolina Fund teaches math to two children on the front porch of their home near Boone in 1964. Photograph by Billy Barnes. North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.

by Linda Sellars, 2006

The North Carolina Fund [2], a statewide antipoverty program for rural and urban communities, operated from 1963 to 1968. In those five years, the fund received and spent more than $13 million in what director George Esser [3] described as a "quest for new ways to enable the poor to become productive citizens, to encourage self-reliance, and to foster institutional, political, economic, and social change designed to strengthen the functioning of democratic society." Inspired by Governor Terry Sanford [4] and his assistant, John Ehle, the Ford Foundation [5]provided initial funds for a demonstration program that would be dissolved after five years. Additional money from North Carolina foundations and the federal government enabled the fund to expand its support for education, community action, manpower development, research and planning, training and leadership development, and other efforts to fight poverty.

The largest of the fund's worker development programs wasManpower Improvement through Community Effort [6], which established field offices in eastern North Carolina to assist unemployed workers and their families using local resources. Mobility, the other major manpower effort, recruited unemployed rural people, developed jobs in industrial areas, and helped families to move and adapt to new jobs and homes.

Other programs sponsored by the North Carolina Fund included a summer volunteer project for college students, training for community leaders and workers, training for members of the federal VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America[7]), and internships and curriculum development programs in colleges. Some organizations and programs established by the North Carolina Fund continued after the fund's termination, including the Learning Institute of North Carolina to improve public education, the Foundation for Community Development [8] to facilitate economic development and leadership training, and the Low-Income Housing Development Corporation to assist communities in developing private, low-income housing and explore home ownership for low-income citizens.

Educator Resources:

Grade 8: Poor Power: The North Carolina Fund & the Battle to End Poverty & Inequality in 1960s America. North Carolina Civic Education Consortium. http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/04/NCFund.pdf [9]

Additional Resources:

North Carolina Fund, This Day In NC History, UNC:http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/ref/nchistory/jul2005/index.html [10]

Governor Terry Sanford's and the North Carolina Fund:http://www.unctv.org/60s/nc_fund.html [11]

The North Carolina Fund Records, 1962-1971, UNC-CH Libraries: http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/n/North_Carolina_Fund.html [2]

Picturing the North Carolina Fund, iBiblio:http://www.ibiblio.org/ncfund/fundframes.html [12]

*To right these wrongs : the North Carolina Fund and the battle to end poverty and inequality in 1960s America*By Robert Rodgers Korstad; James L Leloudis; Billy E Barnes; Video Dialog Inc: https://www.worldcat.org/title/to-right-these-wrongs-the-north-carolina-fund-and-the-battle-to-end-poverty-and-inequality-in-1960s-america/oclc/441211796 [13]

§ 143B-437.71. One North Carolina Fund established as a special revenue fund, NC General Assembly: https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_143B/GS_143B-437.71.html [14]

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