

**HOUSING
YEARBOOK 1942**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649079452

Housing yearbook 1942 by Coleman Woodbury & Edmond H. Hoben

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COLEMAN WOODBURY & EDMOND H. HOBEN

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Editors

COLEMAN WOODBURY
EDMOND H. HOBEN

Publication No. N159

Price \$3.00

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
HOUSING OFFICIALS

CHICAGO

7123

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SERVICE

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Foreword

THIS volume is frankly an economy *Yearbook*. Unfortunately the only effective way to reduce costs in a publication of this kind is to cut things out; so we have left out this year the long section on state and local housing activity, the shorter account of NAHO's doings, and the editors' annual summary.

Our regret about the state and local section is lightened somewhat by our tentative plan to include it, possibly in revised form, every other year or so. *Yearbook* readers will thus be able to keep in direct touch with developing local programs, and the repetition that has crept unavoidably into this section in past *Yearbooks* will be less. This year seemed to be a good one to start skipping the section, both because many local authorities simply have been finishing up work under way and also because war housing problems are dealt with in considerable detail in other parts of the *Yearbook*. The story of NAHO's principal activities has been running serially in *NAHO NEWS* and is also summarized at the Annual Meetings. The editors' summary of the year would have been necessarily and to a very considerable extent a repetition of other parts of the *Yearbook*.

While the 1942 *Yearbook* was still in the early stages of preparation, the President reorganized the federal housing agencies. This act affected the volume in three ways. We included a brief statement on the reorganization and the texts of the Executive Orders that brought it about. Further, we asked the writers of articles on federal housing programs during 1941 to extend their accounts to the time of the reorganization, February 24, 1942. Finally, we gave up plans for an inclusive directory of housing projects because the reorganized agencies could not be expected to undertake the considerable work that the directory would have entailed for them.

The chief innovation of this *Yearbook* is the sizable article "Activities of National Unofficial Housing Agencies and Committees for 1941." Although we have included short statements on a few of these organizations in the past, this is the first time that they have been given much space. In one sense this record balances last year's summary of the organization and activities of citizen housing associations and councils. Should the *Yearbook* be continued, we hope to stress different types of housing agencies and programs each year, perhaps alternating articles on citizens' efforts with the reports on official state and local programs mentioned above. In many respects this plan seems

to us to represent a more effective use of our resources than does a table of contents that is identical every year.

Again we are grateful to a long list of housing officials and representatives of associations and agencies for preparing articles and forwarding information for the directories. Many of them are working under extra pressure because of war duties and uncertainties. This fact increases our debt to them.

Again we ask for comments, criticisms, and suggestions, both on the makeup and contents of this *Yearbook* and on the tentative plans outlined in the Foreword.

COLEMAN WOODBURY
EDMOND H. HOBEN
Editors

April, 1942

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The Reorganization of Federal Housing Agencies

EIGHT of the ten federal agencies described in the following articles were directly affected by Executive Order No. 9070, of February 24, 1942, which established the National Housing Agency and consolidated under it most of the housing activities of the federal government. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to introduce this series of articles by the following comments on the reorganization.

THE GROWING NEED FOR REORGANIZATION

A number of conditions contributed to the need for reorganizing federal housing agencies. The pre-reorganization pattern of the federal government's housing activity was largely a result of the government's assuming various housing functions over a period of fifteen or twenty years and under widely varying circumstances. The objectives of some of the programs varied as widely as did the major forces responsible for their growth.

Starting with the early fact-finding and reporting activities, such as were carried on by units of the Department of Commerce and the Department of Labor, the federal government proceeded to: (1) conduct research in housing construction materials; (2) conduct and aid various types of housing surveys; (3) arrange rescue financing for distressed home owners; (4) lend federal funds to private corporations for the development of large-scale rental housing; (5) extend federal credit to home-financing institutions; (6) insure investments by individuals in home-financing institutions; (7) construct and operate large-scale low-rent projects; (8) grant loans and subsidies to local public housing agencies for the development and operation of low-rent public housing; (9) insure mortgage loans made by private financial institutions for the refinancing, construction, or repair of housing; (10) conduct research in low-cost construction materials and methods for housing; (11) construct and operate Greenbelt towns, rural resettlement communities, permanent and mobile camps for migratory agricultural workers, and make loans to tenant farmers for the purchase of land and farm homes; (12) grant disaster loans that included the repair and reconstruction of housing; (13) construct and operate