The Center for Government Services

50 Years of Service to Rutgers University and the State of New Jersey


The Center for Government Services was created in 1991 through the consolidation of the Bureau of Government Research and the Department of Government Services. This article provides a brief history of these two earlier units of Rutgers, the State University, from their origin in 1950 through the current period.

Origins

Rutgers was designated as the State University of New Jersey by an act of the Legislature in 1945. Soon afterwards, leaders of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities began urging that, as part of this responsibility, the University should establish a "...municipal research and in-service training program." Pressure from the League culminated in the appointment, by Provost Mason W. Gross in November 1949, of a 10-member study committee of faculty members to meet with representatives of the League. Professor Bennett M. Rich of the History and Political Science Department was named as chairman. Meetings were held during the fall and winter of 1949-50 with the League representatives and resulted in a proposal to establish a Bureau of Government Research to provide in-service training, conduct research, serve as a clearinghouse for information, and offer technical assistance to municipal, county, and state agencies. A budget of $13,640 was suggested, $2,000 of which was to come from fees charged for the training courses. The League took the lead in urging support by the Governor and, in the spring of 1950, the state budget director recommended to the University's Board of Trustees that the Bureau be established.

First Steps

The Bureau officially began operation on July 1, 1950, with Bennett Rich as the first director. He continued to teach on a half-time basis during the academic year, with an additional stipend for summer work. The other members of the staff were a full-time research associate and a full-time secretary. They were joined in September by a part-time graduate assistant.

The first office of the Bureau was in half of a prefabricated shed left over from an Army training program in World War II. It was located in New Brunswick on George Street where three high rise dormitories were later built. The office consisted of a single room with a plywood floor and metal roof and walls. When a heavy rain pounded on the roof, it was almost impossible to be heard in the building. At the end of the first summer, the office was relocated to a three-room suite on the second floor of Winants Hall, a former dormitory on College Avenue, where it remained for more than 10 years. Office furniture consisted of used war surplus desks and chairs, and most of the typewriters were of World War I vintage.

Research

It had been planned that early research emphasis would be placed on the preparation of materials that would fill an apparent void by providing general descriptions of New Jersey state and local government. However, more immediate concerns led to the Bureau's first research study. This was a survey of the state's multitude of pension laws, many of which promised non-contributory pensions to publicly employed war veterans. When enacted in 1912, the expected obligation had been minimal; by 1950, however, the financial potential was enormous. The Bureau's report, published in December 1950, provided a systematic catalogue of the laws and led toward their eventual absorption into a fully funded pension system.

With this task completed, attention returned to the general background studies, County Government in New Jersey (James M. Collier-1952), Handbook of New Jersey State Government (Stanley H. Friedelbaum-1952), Municipal Government in New Jersey (Friedelbaum-1954), and The Population of New Jersey (John E. Brush-1956).

The early 1950s also saw the beginning of a theme that runs through much of the Bureau's history - equal political representation. This began with a minor research analysis in the summer of 1950, which anticipated the results of reapportioning the U.S. House of Representatives based on 1950 Census data. The experience gained here led the Bureau staff to apply the same mathematics to the
The first training conducted by the Bureau of Government Research was an 8-week program in Municipal Finance Administration. It was held in New Brunswick in the fall of 1950 and was taught by George C. Skillman, the Assistant Director of the Division of Local Government.

"Rutgers has been the life-line for training and service for the State of New Jersey, the local governments and each individual finance officer. The staff works for the citizens of New Jersey, ensuring that local officials operating our governments maintain and grow to the highest professional standards. I am proud to have joined Rutgers and gone along for the ride. Yes, the finance officers have 'come a long way, baby!' In this next century I see Rutgers continuing to be the leader. Shoot high! Keep up the good work."


New Jersey's Congressional Districts, which had not been redrawn since 1931. The resulting report, *Congressional Districting in New Jersey* (Ernest C. Reock, Jr. and Friedelbaum-1956), examined the history of such districts and proposed four different plans for their revision. Again, political factors were too great an obstacle, and no action was taken.

**Training**

In-service training was one of the principal objectives of the League of Municipalities in urging formation of a Bureau of Government Research, and it was one of the first activities undertaken. The Bureau's first training activity, in the fall of 1950, was an 8-session course in Municipal Finance Administration, held in New Brunswick. Several patterns followed extensively in later years were established in this program. First, the course was offered as an extension activity and was not for college credit. Second, it was not taught by a college professor but by a practitioner in the field, in this case George C. Skillman, deputy director of the state Division of Local Government, which was responsible for supervising municipal financial activity. Third, in the absence of study materials specifically aimed at New Jersey law and practice, the Bureau assumed responsibility for preparing materials. A staff member attended all of the class sessions, took copious notes, and wrote a text which, after review by the instructor, was distributed to the class. The volume later was offered for sale, rather than being restricted to use in the class. Fourth, upon successful completion of the class it was moved away from the New Brunswick base to other locations, starting with Camden in the spring of 1951, so that it could be made available statewide.

Additional activity in the same field occurred when Governor Robert B. Meyner requested that the Bureau undertake a study of New Jersey Legislature in 1952, with results not altogether appreciated by those in political control of the State House. The Bureau's conclusion that the two largest counties, Essex and Hudson, each should lose two seats in the General Assembly led to a stalemate. Although the Bureau's recommendations were embodied in a constitutional amendment that passed the State Senate, they were not enacted in the General Assembly, and the impasse continued until broken by judicial action to force a redistribution of seats late in the decade.

In addition to the courses, a variety of conferences were created, the first two being a 3½-day Institute for Assessing Officers initiated in 1954 and a one-day conference for municipal administrators in 1955. In 1958, the Bureau was contacted by representatives of a slate of local candidates who very unexpectedly had won election. In response to the cry of, "Help, what do we do now?" the Bureau organized a Municipal Orientation Conference for newly elected municipal governing body members. The conference was supplemented by conferences for municipal candidates and for newly elected county freeholder board members in 1959. It was superseded in 1969 by a 15-hour course for members of the governing body, which ran in several locations, and in the 1990s by an array of programs leading to a certificate for local elected officials.

**Government Institute**

In the Government Institute, the Bureau presented a different kind of training activity aimed primarily at social studies teach-
"The Center, from its onset, has had an influence on every assessor who has served a municipality in New Jersey. Through the offering of courses, seminars, workshops and conferences, they have provided an environment for assessors to further their knowledge and continue to grow professionally. The Center’s far thinking insight into the needs of our profession, demonstrated by the agreement with the International Association of Assessing Officers for use of their educational material, keeps New Jersey Assessors at the forefront of assessment administration and an example for other states to follow.

Entering the new millennium we expect this relationship to continue to grow and get stronger with the recent passage of legislation requiring mandatory continuing education for the holders of Certified Tax Assessor certificates. We thank you for all that you have done and will do in the future. Congratulations on your 50 year anniversary and may the Center continue to have the dramatic and positive impact on local government in New Jersey for the next 50 years."

—Michael Barker, President
Association of Municipal Assessors of New Jersey

ers. Held for the first time during July 1951, the Government Institute met at the State House in Trenton and ran full time for two weeks. Most of the instruction was provided by a wide range of officials from all branches of the state government, who described the work of their agencies. In addition, members of the political science and history faculties participated to offer an overview of state government, and there were field trips to state institutions.

Three credit hours were granted by Rutgers and six state colleges for students completing the course, which required a term paper for graduate credit. The Government Institute generally enrolled 20 to 30 students and ran every year through 1959. In addition to the educational value of the program, it was very valuable in bringing the Bureau to the attention of officials at all levels of state government.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance to state and local agencies by Bureau staff members began early in the 1950s. Almost concurrently with the establishment of the Bureau in 1950, the state Legislature enacted the Optional Municipal Charter Law, or Faulkner Act, which authorized the election of municipal charter study commissions and made several new forms of local government available to every community in the state. One of elected in Newark, and the director of the Bureau served as a consultant, with assistance from other Bureau staff. In 1953, the Bureau commissioned and published Municipal Charter Revision in New Jersey (Benjamin Baker-1953).

Technical assistance in this area continued as a regular activity of the Bureau and was supplemented in later years by two research studies prepared for the New Jersey County and Municipal Government Study Commission, Forms of Municipal Government in New Jersey, and The Changing Structure of New Jersey Municipal Government (Reock and Raymond D. Bodnar-1979, 1985).

Some staff expansion took place during the 1950s. In 1951 during the Korean War, Ernest C. Reock, Jr., the first Bureau research associate, was recalled to active duty in the U.S. Navy. His place was taken on a temporary basis by Stanley H. Friedelbaum. When Mr. Reock returned from active duty in 1953, the University was persuaded to enlarge the Bureau staff so that both men were retained.

Although research studies dominated the time of the Bureau staff during the decade, by the end of the 1950s the growth of training programs began to limit the time available for research. The solution in 1959 was to create the Government Services Training Program (GSTP), which was to be an answer to the need for a uniform and comprehensive training program for local government officials.

Extension Division (UED), headed by Raymond D. Bodnar with the faculty title of extension associate. Although technically a UED staff member, Mr. Bodnar worked under the supervision of the Bureau of Government Research director and was housed in the Bureau. Creation of the new position was justified by the increased tuition income being generated by training courses.

As the 1950s drew to an end, Bennett Fich expressed his wish to return to full time teaching. The director's position then was upgraded to full time, and Dr. Reock was appointed as his replacement. With this change, the University's budgetary support for the Bureau's research faculty reached its maximum level of three positions, and all future expansion depended on the receipt of grants and contracts.

Tax Assessor Certification

Tax assessor courses and conferences, which started at the Bureau in 1952, quickly became the largest single training area. By 1962, 27% of the total enrollment was in assessor training, and about 60% of the active tax assessors in the state had completed at least the introductory course. Part of the success of this area was due to the combination of an active association of local assessors and strong support from the state Division of Taxation. In fact, the
Division had utilized the Bureau's courses as the principal source for its own staff training when it created a new Local Property Tax Bureau (LPTB). It also contracted with the Bureau to prepare the state's first handbook for tax assessors, based heavily on study materials developed for the courses.

In 1964, the director of the Division of Taxation appointed a six-member committee to study the training of tax assessors, including representatives of the LPTB, the Bureau and the assessors' association. That committee, which reported in October 1964, recommended elimination of the elected position of assessor, development of new series of training courses, a certification program based on a state examination, and job security for tax assessors who achieved certification. The essential elements of this plan were enacted into law as Chapter 44 of the Laws of 1967. This plan actually served as a model for later statutory training-based programs of state certification for many other local officials.

Regional Studies

As the population of most American cities spilled over beyond their old boundaries during the baby boom years, interest in regional studies grew. In 1958 and 1959 Bennett Rich, with Bureau staff support, headed a faculty committee appointed by the University's president to develop a proposal for orienting Rutgers to the problems of urban areas. Based on the land grant pattern of research, training and technical assistance that had served as model for the Bureau, the proposal made to the Ford Foundation requested a multi-million dollar grant for an urban research and extension center. While not funded for the full amount, the proposal resulted in the establishment of the Rutgers Urban Studies Center, which eventually became the Center for Urban Policy Research.

At the Bureau, regional

major funded programs. The first was the Northeastern New Jersey Regional Urban Renewal Survey, sponsored by the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency. In this work, published in 1963, Bureau staff examined in depth the property tax and other fiscal resources of local governments in the study area.

A second series of studies, funded by the Ford Foundation from 1961 to 1964, made similar analyses of the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware region surrounding Philadelphia. Bureau staff addressed the New Jersey portion of the region in a series of six monographs, Monograph No. 1. Historical Development of Government in the Penndel Region, Monograph No. 2. Geographical Development and Population Growth in the Penndel Region, Monograph No. 3. Present Organization of Local Government in the Penndel Region, Monograph No. 4. Distribution of Functions Among Local Governmental Units in the Penndel Region, Local Government in a Regional Setting: Adaptation to Change, and Adaptability of Local Government in Six Municipalities in New Jersey Portion of Penndel Region (Harris I. Effross, Harold M. Haak, John N. Matzor, Jr., Benjamin Palumbo, Reoek-1961-64), while the other sections were covered in Penndel Government Studies, by the staffs of the Pennsylvania Economy League (Eastern Division), and the University of Delaware.

In the middle of the decade, a Federal Demonstration Grant from the Housing and Home Finance Agency made it possible for the Bureau to undertake a study of the governmental arrangements necessary for comprehensive development of the Hackensack Meadowlands. Numerous staff reports were prepared, with proposals for a property tax-sharing formula forming the basis for eventual legislation in 1968.

Legislative Apportionment

Interest in the apportionment of state legislative bodies mushroomed with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1962 in the case of Baker v. Carr and subsequent court cases. New Jersey's legislature clearly was vulnerable under the one person-one vote principle stated by the court. This was especially true for the State Senate, where one senator from Essex County represented 19 times as many people as the senator from Cape May County. New Jersey litigation followed the federal decisions closely.

The Bureau's background in this subject and contact with attorneys in the cases led to two research studies by staff: Origins of Post-Colonial Counties in New Jersey (Effross-1963) and Population Inequality Among Counties in the New Jersey Legislature: 1791-1962 (Reoek-1963). Experience and interest gained in these studies led in later years to major historical studies: County Governing Bodies in New Jersey (Effross-1975) and Jurisdictional Issues and Justice: The Sheriff's Office in New Jersey Since the Seventeenth Century (Effross-1997).

Bureau staff remained active as the New Jersey cases proceeded. When a solution was sought through a state Constitutional Convention, several background

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papers were prepared and, during the 1966 Convention, a historical study of the use of districts for election of the General Assembly during the 19th century, New Jersey’s Experience With General Assembly Districts: 1852–1893 (Alan Shank and Reock), was made available to the delegates. Dr. Reock also served as a staff researcher for the Convention and issued New Jersey Assembly Districts: A Plan for 1967 at its conclusion.

After the 1980 census the Bureau proposed a substitute for a badly gerrymandered plan of Congressional districts being considered by the Legislature. Considerable pressure was brought on the University administration by a candidate who stood to benefit from the legislative plan, but the long record of the Bureau in this area strengthened the administration’s hand in defending the Bureau. The legislative plan, although used for one election, eventually was thrown out by the U.S. Supreme Court. Further technical assistance in drawing state legislative districts was given to the State Apportionment Commission in both 1981 and 1991 and to county freeholder districting commissions in the latter year.

Public Health Studies

Early in the 1960s the state Commissioner of Health approached the Bureau with a request for help in reorganizing the governmental structure for providing public health services. A discussion group of state officials, local health officers, mayors, members of county freeholder boards, and University faculty members met several times over a period of weeks and produced Organizing for Public Health: Recommendations for New Jersey (Robert Northrop-1962), proposing 13 recommendations for reorganization.

The first recommendation was that a major investigation be undertaken of the principles on which local health service areas should be based. Funding from the Milbank Memorial Fund and the state Department of Health made this possible, and Service Areas for Public Health (Philip H. Burch, Jr.) was issued in 1966. The successful completion of this study and the threat of a mosquito-born encephalitis epidemic led to other health-oriented projects dealing with surface water control, Surface Water Control in New Jersey, Parts I and II (Stephen A. Decter-1967), funded by the state Department of Conservation and Economic Development, and Water Pollution Control in New Jersey (Burch-1973), financed by the Rutgers Water Resources Research Institute.

The Housing Act of 1964

Until the late 1960s, research always dominated the Bureau’s staff activity. A small grant under the federal Higher Education Act and the University’s commitment of another full-time faculty position facilitated some expansion of training activity in 1966, with Stephen Aronson and Harold Klein being added to the staff. However, it was the federal Housing Act of 1964, together with dwindling research funding, which caused a major shift in Bureau priorities.

Early in the fall of 1967, the newly established state Department of Community Affairs requested the Bureau’s help in preparing the state plan for training of local government personnel that was to be submitted to the federal government for funding. The material prepared at the Bureau provided a framework for analyzing existing and needed training, an inventory and analysis of available programs, a process for setting priorities, and a specific program and budget for 1968-69. The materials prepared at the Bureau became the nucleus of the state plan and resulted in a grant of $260,000 to the state—the first federal grant made to a state under the act. Eventually, $84,907 of this money was passed on to the Bureau to expand its training activities.

The receipt of this money permitted a very substantial expansion. Four new faculty positions and two secretarial positions were authorized, and a wide variety of new course developments, study materials, and training activities were initiated.

In 1968-69, for the first time, staff training activity exceeded research, in fact more than doubling the time devoted to research studies. With a minor exception in 1970-71, this pattern prevailed through the rest of the Bureau’s history, with the staff time devoted to training programs outweighing the research component of the Bureau’s activities and usually comprising more than half of all Bureau activities.

Another consequence of the staff expansion under this act was a change in office location. In 1962 the Bureau had outgrown its quarters in Winants Hall and was moved to two old row houses on Morrell Street near the College Avenue gymnasium. A doorway was broken through between the two houses to provide interior access. While old, with years of ingrained dirt and very low ceilings on the second floor, the Morrell Street offices provided enough space for the staff then on board. When the staff expanded to cover the public health and regional studies projects, two more houses were added.

Since the Bureau seldom had direct dealings with undergraduate students, it was asked in 1966 to
The Bureau was asked in 1966 to move from Morrell Street to the wilderness of World War II Camp Kilmer, which had recently been acquired by the University. The first location was on part of the second floor of the old camp administration building. The offices were renovated to Bureau specifications, and they were light, airy, and much more suitable than anything experienced up to that time.

With the addition of six new positions in 1968, however, a further move was necessary. This time it was across the street in Kilmer to the old officers' club. This building essentially was a large dance hall, flanked on each side by massive bars. Above the dance floor was an open balcony with a few offices at the front and back of the building. For the Bureau, the bars were removed and one bar area was partitioned into offices. The balcony was closed in and converted into a horseshoe-shaped secretarial office, 10-feet wide and running around the perimeter of the building. The dance floor, itself, and the other bar area were left empty, as was almost all of the rest of Camp Kilmer prior to the establishment in 1969 of Livingston College. This was to be the Bureau's office for the next 22 years, perpetrating a multitude of "war stories" about leaky windows and roofs, dead squirrels in the attic, insect infestations, skunks under the building, leaning chimneys, and shaky exterior stairways.

Finally, in 1990, the Bureau was relocated to a one-story modular building next to the Livingston College Student Center. While not luxurious, the new quarters were the best accommodations made for the Bureau before 1991.

With the larger staff available, training activity increased substantially in 1968-69, with the number of different programs available rising from 39 to 54 and the number of class and conference sections growing from 75 to 122, with an enrollment of 3,374 persons. Reflecting the Bureau's initial training endeavors in municipal finance, the financial management field was greatly expanded with new courses in municipal accounting, budget preparation, and purchasing. In addition, new programs were started in code enforcement, planning, recreation administration, and housing.

Another, smaller grant was received under the Housing Act in 1969-70, and the curriculum development work of the prior year paid off in more new programs being made available, particularly a series of one-day public policy conferences for which proceedings were published. However, enrollments lagged and tuition payments failed to provide sufficient funds to retain all of the new faculty. By 1970-71, most of the new staff had departed, leaving only William G. Rae of the new appointees, but the course offerings had increased substantially, forming a base from which additional growth could take place at a more measured pace.

**Other Certification Programs**

The University increased its budgetary commitment to Government Services Training Program in 1975 through the transfer of a full-time faculty position occupied by Albert G. Barnes. In that year also, the GSTP was re-named the Department of Government Services (DGS). However, growth in the training programs was relatively slow in the 1970s. By 1980-81, although the number of classes was up to 132, the total enrollment was only 2,482, less than in 1968-69. Staff turnover was fairly rapid with Beverly A. Williams, Joyce Fedak, and Mary Louise Stanton joining Mr. Bodnar, Mr. Rae, and Mr. Barnes for extended periods.

While not required for certification, courses for tax assessors remained the largest part of the Bureau's training activities for many years. The enactment of similar certification programs for other local officials, which did require completion of courses offered at the Bureau, eventually resulted in significantly increased enrollments in those areas also.

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A certification law for municipal finance officers in 1975 pushed these courses into first place at the Bureau. Similar certification programs were enacted for tax collectors in 1965, for county tax administrators in 1981, for municipal clerks in 1985, for public works managers in 1991, and for county finance officers in 1993. A law of 1991 required that county tax board members complete certain training in order to retain their seats.

In addition, the Bureau, in cooperation with the respective professional associations, established non-statutory certification programs for municipal attorneys, purchasing officials, and public school facility supervisors.

In each case, enrollment in the certification courses rose as enrollment approached and for a few years thereafter and then tapered off as the peak demand was met. By 1986-87, the certification programs were having a significant impact on enrollments. In that year the number of tuition-supported classes rose to 182, and the enrollment to 4,443, with financial management courses making up almost one-third of both.

New Jersey Tax Policy Committee

As the 1970s began, emphasis shifted back to a brief time toward research and technical assistance, which often are indistinguishable. In the fall of that year, Bureau staff members were asked to provide research and staff support to the New Jersey Tax Policy Committee that had been appointed by Governor Cahill. A number of research papers dealing with the allocation of functions, responsibilities, and financial resources among governmental jurisdictions were prepared. New state aid programs were devised, and Bureau personnel then assisted in the preparation of the Committee's final report. After the Committee finished its work, the Bureau prepared and distributed a pamphlet containing a list of questions and answers in an effort to explain the Committee's proposals.

Joint Education Committee

Just as the Tax Policy Committee was concluding its work, a court decision in the case of Robinson v. Cahill declared New Jersey's system of financing the public schools to be unconstitutional because it failed to ensure that every child received the benefits of a "thorough and efficient" system of free public schools. In 1973, the lower court decision in this case was upheld by the New Jersey Supreme Court, and the state was faced with the task of completely revising its funding of the schools.

The Legislature proposed approaching the subject in the spring of 1974 through the creation of a Joint Education Committee (JEC), bringing together members from both parties in both houses. Staff support was a major problem, however, since the Office of Legislative Services at that time had only one staff member to assist both of the standing education committees and also assist the new joint committee. Time was exceedingly short, since legislation was needed by June.

As an outgrowth of its work with the Tax Policy Committee, therefore, the Bureau was asked to provide assistance. The entire research staff of the Bureau participated in the work, with the Bureau's director, Dr. Ernest Reock, being named as secretary of the JEC. A research outline was developed, school finance experts from across the country were recruited to prepare papers on various aspects of the subject, and the papers were summarized and presented to the JEC members. Two Bureau staff members then assisted the chairpersons, the regular legislative staff, and representatives of the state Education and Treasury Departments in drafting legislation.

When the initial legislation failed to achieve passage, the Bureau director remained as secretary of the Joint Committee of the Public Schools (JCP), the successor to the JEC, for the next year as negotiations progressed in the Legislature under increasing threats of more drastic judicial action. The final product was Chapter 212 of the Laws of 1975, which remained as New Jersey's basic school finance law through 1991-92. Upon passage of the law, the Bureau director continued as secretary of the JCP for another three years in order to assist the committee in monitoring implementation of the law.

Legislative District Data Book

For over 175 years representation in the New Jersey Legislature was based primarily on county boundaries. With the amendments made to the State Constitution in 1996, however, legislators began to be elected from districts.
A December 1950 publication entitled *Pension Legislation for Public Employees in New Jersey*, cost 50 cents. The study classified and summarized pensions authorized by law for public employees at all levels of government in New Jersey.

The first textbook produced by the Bureau was *Municipal Finance Administration*, by George C. Skillman. It was published in November 1951 and carried a price tag of $1.

drawn with little regard to county lines. As Bureau staff members worked with the Legislature on the school finance issue, it became quite clear that most legislators had not changed their way of thinking— they still thought in terms of county representation. Furthermore, statistical data were not normally compiled on a legislative district basis. When a legislator wanted to know something about his or her district, a special effort was needed to develop the data.

In response to this need, the Bureau began in 1976 to prepare and issue an annual *New Jersey Legislative District Data Book*. The book provides maps, descriptions, and a wide range of statistical data about each of the state's 40 legislative districts and about the communities of which they are composed. (See article, page 19.)

**State and Federal Contract Training**

Training and certification of inspectors in the various facets of the building trades was a special case. The Bureau's record in this field started in 1959, with its first course in Principles of Building Inspection. Other courses gradually were added over the years. They dwindled in the early 1980s, however, with adoption by the state of the Uniform Construction Code, that required entry-level training provided mainly by county colleges. The Bureau re-entered this field in 1984-85, when a $220,000 contract was concluded with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs to cover all of the costs of license-renewal training of local code enforcement personnel. Preparation of training manuals and of a regular newsletter also was required by the contract. Subsequent annual contracts extended and increased the size of the program, which does not depend on individual tuition payments. A new staff position was established to administer this program and was filled by Jacquelyn R. Zelinka. A similar contract for the update training of fire code personnel was negotiated in 1986-87.

Finalization of the fire code training contract coincided with two other events, resulting in another major staff expansion in 1987. Mr. Barnes, who had been on the faculty since 1975, died suddenly in mid-1986. The vacancy thus created, together with another caused by the resignation of Ms. Stanton, and the receipt of a federal contract for training of local road personnel, brought about the recruitment of Deborah Cutchin, Marjorie Saari, Julie Ekdund, and Claudia Knezek within a few weeks of each other. In addition, the first step was taken in creating a specialized staff capacity through creation of a position of editor-librarian, filled after one year by Carolyn Golojuch.

With the development of state and federal contract programs, the training activities of the Bureau and DGS moved to a new level. In 1990-91 over 600 course and conference sections were run, covering more than 7,600 class hours, with almost 20,000 individual registrations.

**School Studies**

The Bureau's involvement in the school finance controversies of the 1970s pointed its research efforts in a new direction. A number of studies in the early 1980s provided information on the progress under the law in effect at that time. As critics of that law planned a return to court, data on state aid gathered at the Bureau began to form a significant basis for legal action: *State Aid for Schools in New Jersey: 1976-1989* (Reock-1990). In addition, Bureau staff members began to develop information in other areas of public school activity, such as *Educational Attainment and Accountability in New Jersey* (Burch-1985) and *The Dropout Problem in New Jersey's Big Urban Schools: Educational Inequality and Governmental Inaction* (Burch-1992).

**Personnel and Organizational Changes**

Changes in University policy had a substantial influence on the Bureau in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The first of these dealt with the status of Bureau staff members. From the Bureau's inception, the regular research and training staff members of the Bureau had held faculty status. A research associate was equivalent to an instructor and could move up the faculty ranks to assistant research professor, associate research...
professor, and full research professor. Similarly, an extension associate could eventually become a full extension specialist. Entry level appointments almost always required at least a master's degree, with some specialization in government or public administration.

In the late 1970s the University administration concluded that persons administering extension programs should not hold faculty rank. Those staff members already holding faculty appointments could retain them, but all new appointments must be considered A/P/S (administrative/professional/supervisory) employees of the University. This change had several impacts. First, it saved the University a significant sum of money, since the A/P/S categories were lower paid. Second, because the positions were at a lower salary level, it usually was difficult to recruit persons with the same level of academic qualifications and governmental background as previously. Third, it separated new employees from the "career ladder" offered by the faculty rank structure. A/P/S positions, in most cases, were considered unique "dead-end" appointments. The struggle to develop a new career path for A/P/S positions has continued to the present day.

The other change came about 1980, when the University administration decided that the concentration of most extension activities in the University Extension Division was not desirable. The UED was ordered dissolved, with its component parts being dispersed among any other University units that could absorb them. In the case of the Department of Government Services, the logical future location was the Bureau of Government Research. Therefore, DGS was assigned to the Bureau, and the central staff support formerly provided by UED was decentralized to DGS. The director of the Bureau was also appointed as director of DGS. While on paper this strengthened the relationship between the two units, in actuality it merely formalized the arrangement that had previously existed for many years.

**Bloustein School**

The late 1980s and early 1990s was a period of reorganization at Rutgers University. New schools were being started, and old organizational lines changed. The place of the Bureau and DGS in the University structure was ill defined, with the director reporting to one associate provost for research and another for extension activities, having no attachment to any of the regular academic units of the University. With the proposed creation of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, a logical place for the Bureau appeared available. When the dean of the Bloustein School invited the Bureau to become a part of the School, the invitation was accepted and, on July 1, 1991, the two units were combined into the Center for Government Services and transferred to the new school.

**CGS IN THE 1990s**

The Bloustein School Family

While combining the Bureau of Government Research and the Department of Government Services into the Center for Government Services formalized a relationship that had in fact existed over the years, the movement of the Center into the Bloustein School marked a more significant change. Joining the Bloustein School meant different reporting requirements for the Center, and that a new set of working relationships had to be forged with the many other components of the School.

A major step in this regard occurred when the Bloustein School, including the Center, moved to a new building at Civic Square in downtown New Brunswick. This was the first time that the Center and most of the other components of the School were housed in the same facility. This meant much more day-to-day contact, more opportunities to learn about the missions and personnel of the three academic departments and the other centers and institutes within the School, and more opportunities for cooperative efforts.

The Center responded to a request from Bloustein School Dean James Hughes to provide administrative and logistical support for the many seminars, conferences, and other programs conducted by the Dean's office and other school-wide functions.

The Center had been considering hiring a part-time administrative assistant to assist program coordinators in securing hotels and other meeting facilities, providing an on-site presence at many of the courses and conferences held at various locations around the state, and generally offering logistic support in providing many of our fee-based programs.
supported activities. A new position was created that addressed the Bloustein School's needs and the growing logistical needs of the Center. In 1996, Jennifer Sawicki was hired as the Center's first events coordinator.

The administrative support role played by the Center quickly started to take on other dimensions. Recognizing the Center's long history of attracting and skillfully managing external grants and contracts, Dean Hughes asked that the Center provide similar grant support for Bloustein School faculty members. Linda Guardabascio, the Center's departmental administrator, assumed the leadership role in this effort and became a valuable source of assistance to many of the School's faculty as they developed and administered grants for externally funded research projects.

A major development in the Center was the John J. Heldrich Leadership Institute on Workforce Development, a joint project of the Center and the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC). The Center and the SETC conducted the Leadership Institute for one year. The program was so successful that it became the inspiration for a much larger effort that was established as the John J. Heldrich Center for the Workforce Development. The Center also assumed an important early role by providing administrative and logistical support to the newly established Heldrich Center, as both the departmental administrator and the events coordinator provided valuable assistance. Moreover, the Center had hired a part-time graphics coordinator, Chris Lit, to handle the preparation of course brochures, the revision and production of manuals and reports, and the preparation of newsletters. The graphics coordinator position was upgraded to a full-time publications manager position, with a portion of Chris' time devoted to providing services to the Heldrich Center and other units within the Bloustein School.

While the move to Civic Square marked a significant milestone in the Center's history, limits on available office space and storage space presented a challenge for a growing organization. Yet the Center has experienced considerable growth in its budget, and the number of program areas, courses and conferences, and clients served.

Dealing With Change

Over the long history of the Center, a number of individuals have done a tour of duty with the organization. While there has always been a modest amount of year-to-year turnover among Center staff, the latter part of the decade of the 1990s is notable because of the extensive turnover of 1998 and continuing through the Fall of 1999, roughly one-third of the overall staff of the Center had to be replaced. The reasons for the huge turnover ranged from retirements to family relocations to more lucrative job opportunities elsewhere. The rapid and extensive turnover presented both challenges and opportunities. The challenges, of course, were to keep the organization running effectively during the transition from one employee to another, and to find good replacements for departing staff members. The opportunities were to bring in new people with new ideas for new programs, and for making existing programs more productive.

Other important changes were also occurring. For example, personal computers were still a rarity in the Center at the start of the decade. Moreover, it would be difficult for a self-support organization like the Center to find resources to introduce such technology into its operation. However, a plan for providing all employees with a personal computer was developed and implemented. As a result, each office and workstation in the Center is now equipped with a personal computer with a direct internet connection. Moreover, the office has several top-of-the-line printers that are linked to each computer. The Center’s commitment to technology is evidenced by the creation of a new full-time position of microcomputer analyst in 1999.

When the Center was established in 1950, most of its support came from the University. Over the years, the level of University support has declined significantly. For example, as recently as 1990-91, 18 percent of the operating support for the Center came from the University. By 1998-99, that level of support had fallen to 6 percent. As this trend will likely continue rather than reverse, Center staff will need to be mindful of entrepreneurial opportunities and cost-cutting measures.
A Look at the CGS Leadership

During its 50 years of existence, the Center for Government Services and its forerunners, the Bureau of Government Research and the Department of Government Services, have had only five directors or chairpersons. These individuals worked with the Center’s staff, instructors, advisory committee, cooperating professional associations, and clients to fulfill the mission of the organization.

The founding director was Dr. Bennett Rich, a professor of Political Science at Rutgers. Dr. Rich, who directed the Bureau of Government Research (BGR) for ten years, laid the foundation for many of the research themes and training programs undertaken by the organization over the years. Perhaps most importantly, he hired many of the individuals who went on to serve with distinction as members of the Center staff for many years.

Dr. Ernest Reock, Jr. followed Dr. Rich as the director of the Bureau of Government Research in 1960. Dr. Reock went on to serve in that capacity until his retirement in 1992. Dr. Reock also served as the chair of the Department of Government Services (DGS) from 1981 to 1992. (Note that no separate leadership was defined for the Department from 1959-1966, as the Department was viewed as a component of the Bureau.) Dr. Reock notes that the University support for the BGR/DGS did not keep pace with the demand for services and the concomitant growth in staff. As such, the BGR/DGS had to “follow the money,” and focus on training programs and particularly on research projects for which external funding was available. Several major grants were secured during his tenure, and a concerted effort was made to diversify the work of program coordinators in the organization by providing an opportunity for them to get involved in research projects.

New On-going Initiatives

Several new initiatives were introduced in the Center during the 1990s. First, the Center initiated the annual Municipal Incentive Award Contest, where a financial incentive was provided to encourage municipal government to consider a novel or innovative approach to address some problem or issue of interest. In selecting each year’s winning submission, the Center’s selection committee considers several factors, including how readily the program or activity could be replicated in other communities.

The Center also introduced conspectus, its quarterly newsletter, in the summer of 1996. The newsletter has proven to be a useful mechanism for sharing information about developments regarding the Center’s staff, programs, activities, and work products. A web site has been developed for the Center.

facilitates other efforts to share information about programs and provides for on-line registration for many of those programs.

Work Products

One of the aims of the Center during the decade of the 1990s was to strike a better balance among its training, technical assistance, and research activities. Quite a bit of success was realized in this regard. Any discussion of the Center’s research work products must begin with consideration of the annual Legislative District Data Book; mentioned on page 10. The Data Book continues to be the flagship of Center publications, under the leadership of editor Jacquelyn Zelinka and the other members of the Data Book production team.

In addition, two major books were published during this period. First, Dr. Burch published Reagan, Bush, and Right-Wing Politics: Elites, Think Tanks, Power, and Policy: Parts A and B, and Dr. Harris Effross published the long-awaited Juries, Jails, and Justice: The Sheriff’s Office in New Jersey since the Seventeenth Century. Several significant entries in the Center’s Occasional Papers Series were made, primarily by former Center director Dr. Ernest Reock, Jr. Property taxes, school district consolidation and school district achievement, redistricting, and 9-1-1 regionalization were among the topics addressed in these occasional papers.

The Center also completed several externally funded research reports during this period, focusing on important topics such as “Whole School Reform,” “Special Education,” and “Property Tax Revaluation in Newark.” Other special reports produced internally include “A Summary of Training-Based Certification of Local Public Officials in New Jersey: Part One” and two updates on studies on state aid for schools covering the period from 1976 to 1996. Finally, several new manuals were prepared.
Henry A. Coleman

Dr. Henry A. Coleman became director of the Center in 1992. One of his major goals was to achieve a better balance among the Center’s training, technical assistance, and research activities. In particular, his aim was to increase the amount of externally funded research and technical assistance, while continuing to increase the quantity and quality of training programs provided. The number of external contracts increased during this period, complementing the continued growth in training programs and enrollments.

Raymond D. Bodnar

Raymond Bodnar, an extension specialist faculty member, served as the chair of the Department of Government Services from 1968-1976. Mr. Bodnar focused on expanding and diversifying training programs. For example, the offerings for elected officials were enhanced by extending the one-day conference to a 15-hour Powers and Duties course. In addition, emphasis was placed on certification programs and the development of accompanying study manuals. Still, a major on-going concern during Mr. Bodnar’s tenure was how continuing professional education programs would be financed.

William G. Rae

William Rae chaired the Department of Government Services from 1976 until 1981. During this period, the number of program areas and enrollments continued to increase, while the Department staff remained stable at about five program coordinators and five program assistants. Most of the administrative aspects of the training, including registrations, payroll, and financial record keeping were still done manually. 

Many opportunities for the Center to serve the state in this capacity. First, the Center helped to explore the options available to local government for delivering services, and the pros and cons of each option, with its “Alternative Services Delivery” conference in 1993. Next, following the approval in 1994 by the voters in the state of a constitutional amendment that extended the power to recall all locally elected officials, the Center conducted a conference on the practical implications of the constitutional amendment for municipal clerks and others directly involved in the recall process.

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the State’s Constitutional Convention in 1947 and the adoption of the state constitution, the Center hosted a series of meetings of individuals and other organizations that were involved in activities related to these significant milestones. In addition, Dr. Burch, Kathi Cupano, and Dr. Reock developed and prepared CONCON97, a newsletter of information and activities related to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention and the adoption of the state’s constitution.

As previously noted, Marjorie Saari was the project director for the John J. Heldrich Leadership Institute on Workforce Development, which was sponsored by the Center in collaboration with the State Employment and Training Commission. The Leadership Institute provided a monthly forum for approximately 100 leaders from
nized a mini-conference on "The Potential Efficacy of a Two-Tier Property Tax System in New Jersey." Attendees included a state legislator, academics from New Jersey and around the country, tax assessors, development specialists, and other experts.

Finally, the Center has been very active on the international front, as we frequently provide briefings for the Bloustein School's Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship program. In addition, we often work with the Local Democracy in Poland program and the International Office at Rutgers to provide briefings on state and local government, continuing professional education, certification programs, and similar topics for visiting delegations from Poland, the Ukraine, and other countries.

**External Grants**

The Center was successful in attracting external funds to support training and research activities during the decade. First, the Uniform Construction Code and the Fire grants were continued and expanded in terms of number of programs provided and level of funding support. In addition, one-time grants were awarded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs to the Center for a project directed by Margaret McDonald to conduct training on the "Rehabilitation Subcode" and for Jacqueline Zelinka to provide training on the newly implemented "Residential Site Improvement Standards." A multi-year contract was awarded by NJDCA to the Center for a project led by Marjorie Saari to develop, test, and conduct training for a "Flexible Chart of Accounts."

Center director Henry A. Coleman worked with Nancy Mantell of the Center for Urban Policy Research to provide technical assistance and analysis to the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission on "An Analysis and Update of the Taxbase Sharing Formula."

The Center continued its policy of involvement in research on topical issues in education and property taxation. On a project funded by grants from the Fund for New Jersey and the Schumann Fund for New Jersey, Dr. Bari Anhalt Erlichson led a team of nationally known scholars in examining "Whole School Reform implementation," a critical issue following the series of decisions by the New Jersey Supreme Court in the *Abbott v. Burke* case. The Fund for New Jersey also provided support on a project conducted by Henry A. Coleman, Kathleen Cupano, and Ernest Reock to examine the "Potential Impacts of Revaluation on Property Tax Burdens in Newark," following a move by the state's Justice Department to force the City of Newark to revalue its property tax base for the first time in almost forty years.
Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is often overlooked by many as an important component of the Center’s mission. Still, it was an active area for the organization during the 1990s. The Center continued to be a source of technical assistance to local charter study commissions around the state. The Center also continued its role of providing technical support and analysis to many special state commissions, such as the Quality Education Commission (1991) and the Education Funding Review Commission (1994). The Center also worked with the School Finance Committee (1996) of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities to explore options for substituting a local income tax in an effort to offset some of the local property tax burdens.

Two on-going activities have been established by the Center to improve the flow of information and provide technical assistance. First, several of the Center staff participate as part of the School Finance Discussion Group. This group meets regularly to share information, ideas, and perspectives on education issues, especially finances. The organization periodically sponsors media briefings, policy roundtables, and other activities of importance and interest. The Center also hosts the Charter Reform Discussion Group, which meets regularly to consider state and local government issues ranging from charter revisions to consolidation and related issues of local government structure to finances.

Training/Program Areas

As noted above, many of the training programs conducted by the Center have been in operation for several decades. The need for information on new developments, the need to train entering professionals, and various (re)certification requirements have kept the demand for the many training programs stable, if not increasing. However, at some point the pool of potential clients for existing program areas starts to shrink, and other areas must be developed to reflect the changing needs in our society. The Center has been very active in responding to this need for new training opportunities.

A Look at Two New CGS Programs
Public Education Institute

The Public Education Institute (PEI) joined the Center in the Fall of 1999. PEI was established in 1975 as an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to analyzing critical issues facing New Jersey’s public schools, and assessing policy options with local and state decision makers. PEI conducts a variety of activities, including monthly roundtables on topical issues featuring nationally known speakers, background briefings for the media, technical assistance to local schools, and selected policy studies on issues of importance.

Public Housing Authority Directors Association

The Public Housing Authority Directors Association (PHADA) and the Center began a partnership in 1999 to offer a new opportunity for professional development for housing authority executive directors throughout the country. With a membership of over 1,600 housing authority executive directors and commissioners, PHADA is one of the largest trade associations in the country. The partnership between PHADA and the Center will provide courses three times a year in conjunction with PHADA’s national conferences.

With the support of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the Center has worked with PHADA to develop the Executive Director Education Program. This program provides an environment to comprehensively study critical functions of the executive director’s position, to hone management skills, and to enhance knowledge. An overview of executive housing management issues is followed by nine special topic seminars.

“The Municipal Clerks throughout the State of New Jersey applaud the talents of the many individuals at the Center for Government Services who have worked to better prepare us for our chosen profession. Their standards of excellence and dedicated service have set the best example for all of us to follow. We are proud to be part of your 50th Anniversary celebration and look forward to our continuing partnership.”

—Nancy Hatten, RMC
President
Municipal Clerks’ Association of NJ, Inc.