PART ONE

PROGRAM PLANNING FUNDAMENTALS

Part One provides a fundamental introduction to program planning and the organizational and group contexts in which planning is carried out. Chapter One examines the basic features and structures of human service programs and the organizations in the nonprofit and governmental sectors that sponsor these programs. The discussion also differentiates service programs from planning projects. Considerable attention is given to the nature of program planning, the differences between planning and implementation, and the stages of program planning. Chapter Two covers some fundamental issues that must be addressed by organizational officials and planning team leaders as they form planning groups: their composition, factors to consider in selecting the planning team, and group leadership. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the patterns of social relations that work groups must manage.

EXPLORING THE NATURE OF PROGRAM PLANNING

This chapter begins by discussing the features and structure of human service programs and differentiating these programs and planning projects. Then the chapter examines the organizations that conduct human service programs. These sections provide the context for the subsequent discussion of the nature of program planning and how it differs from program implementation. The chapter ends with a clarification of terms and a discussion of how the book's contents are organized and presented.

Human Service Programs

This book analyzes the planning of *human service programs.* (The terms *service program* and *program* are often used as substitutes for human service programs throughout the book.) The service programs at the core of attention are those intended to provide direct benefits for persons rather than for other organizations (as do corporate law firms, for example). Programs are the main vehicles in modern society through which all kinds of formal services are provided to people: adult education programs; vocational training programs; consumer education or protection programs; parks and recreational programs; libraries; museums; symphony orchestras and civic theaters; services designed to address employment,

housing, marital, health, mental health, substance abuse, or legal problems; assistance offered by religious organizations; membership services of professional associations; and so on.

Many distinctive features are shared by these programs and the organizations that conduct them. They are held to a variety of legal and civic standards and are expected (or required) to adhere to these standards in their treatment of the persons served. Two examples are a patient's right to confidentiality, privacy, and participation in decisions about health care, and the regulations governing the treatment of juvenile and adult offenders. The primary targets, or intended recipients, of human service programs are vested with special moral value—that is, as human beings, they must be served with methods that are acceptable. Examples of this include tolerance and respect for diversity and differences in ability and values, selection of the least-restrictive placement for frail elders who cannot live independently, and the provision of housing that optimizes opportunities for independent living for persons with physical or developmental disabilities. The choices and behaviors of service recipients are not easily predictable, and they respond (or refuse to respond) in unique ways to services offered to them. Their views and reactions usually have consequences for the organizations responsible for the delivery of services (Hasenfeld, 1983, pp. 7–11; Hasenfeld, 2000). All of these critical factors are discussed.

These programs and services come into being in response to the demands or the presumed needs of some persons for particular services, and they continue to exist because attention is given to their management, support, and degrees of achievement. The diversity of programs should not mislead us into thinking that they lack fundamental similarities. Because they possess common features, they constitute a class of enterprises, they can be compared in important respects, and we can learn how to analyze, design, and implement—or improve—them.

Although each human service program is unique to a given locale, organization, mission, and recipient population, for purposes of this book, a human service program is characterized by the following features:

- It is designed to provide specific benefits of some kind to particular persons who are believed to have distinctive needs or problems.
- It is administered by a private nonprofit or a government organization through designated program personnel who engage in services that include direct interactions with persons receiving the service, within a particular locale, and under certain conditions.

Structure of Human Service Programs

There is no uniform or standard way that one type of service or another must be structured in order to constitute a single, identifiable program. In one organization, services such as first-aid training and water safety instruction may be combined in the same program. But services that appear related and compatible to one organization may not appear similarly interrelated in another context. So it is not at all uncommon for a program to offer only a single service such as first-aid training or water safety instruction.

A *service* can be conceived as a set of concrete activities performed for recipients and with recipients, and a program can be conceived as a composite of linked services that constitute an integrated enterprise. Two or more closely related services may be joined to become one program because all or many of the intended recipients are known to need both services, and the services are compatible. So combining them for service delivery purposes makes sense. For example, one can understand why occupational testing or training services could be linked to employment and career counseling, and perhaps both can be linked with job placement services. Persons seeking employment for the first time (or perhaps change of employment due to a factory closing, for example) could proceed from one service unit to another in the same location, which is more convenient than being successively referred to another organization in a different part of town. Of course, not every person who uses one of these services would need to use the other services.

In addition to compatibility and convenience, reasons for integrating two or more services into a larger entity—which itself may be a single program or a composite of programs—usually have to do with the host organization's policies, funding, resources, and overall structure. Some local government and nonprofit organizations are required, as a condition for receiving state or federal funds, to provide specific related services that are imposed by enabling statutes, policies of the funding source, or regulatory standards. For example, community mental health programs in one state must provide outpatient child and adult services, substance abuse services, crisis counseling, and other services, as a condition of receiving state funds. All of these examples illustrate that there are variations among organizations as they develop service programs and go about structuring (and reorganizing) their constituent parts into endlessly diverse administrative patterns. On a related note, programs, as such, should not be confused with organizational units, such as departments.

Distinction Between Service Programs and Projects

As used in this discussion, there is a distinction between the terms *service programs* and *projects.* Service programs have the character of *cycles* in that their operations are composed of a series of activities that are repeated over particular periods. The most obvious example of a cycle is represented by K–12 school programs. The teaching of each grade is repeated for the next group of advancing pupils during the following school year. The cycles of some programs are far shorter, perhaps lasting only as long as a few interviews or just a few minutes or hours. The cycles of some programs are bound by particular periods, such as school years. Others are known as *constant flow* in the sense that they are continuously repeated according to the needs evidenced, such as hospital emergency rooms. Each program cycle may be almost identical to the one before it but different in minor details. A given program cycle may also become significantly different when changes are deliberately introduced according to some plan.

Service programs are almost continuously being modified, cut back, or started up in response to changing conditions and opportunities. These activities are undertaken in every organization, with some persons becoming responsible for their planning. This process is conceived as a *project* because it has the character of being conducted one time only, unlike the cycles of service programs. A planning project is not repeated in the same way for the same purpose in the same organization (or elsewhere). Planning projects also have time-limited durations for accomplishing their aims. Each is distinctive to a time, place, participants, and intended results. New or changed service programs are the deliberate products of these projects.

This book covers only the process of planning by which significant changes, or new programs, are designed—that is, those endeavors that necessitate carefully planned projects to improve or initiate a program or adjust to critical events and trends in the organization or environment. Much of even deliberate program change is actually just tinkering, coping, or adjusting and does not involve making major changes. Programs are always in a state of flux, but much of it is unintended, often unacknowledged, perhaps even unnoticed. These kinds of deliberate and unintended changes are not central to this discussion.

Projects involving planned change in an existing program are far more common than those initiating new service programs. Starting up a new service often seems more interesting and more exciting than modifying an ongoing program, but this is often mainly in the eyes of the participants. It's like building a new home versus making major renovations in one's existing home. Some remodeling, especially of valuable older houses, is as creative, ambitious, and taxing as building a modest home using conventional plans.

Organizations That Conduct Human Service Programs

This book applies to the kinds of service programs that are almost always located within formal organizations. They are corporate entities that host or sponsor programs in the sense that they have administrative structures through which services are supported, coordinated, and managed. The organizations are often referred to as *agencies* because they are regarded as agents of governments at all levels. For private nonprofits, they are regarded as representing community interests. Some programs are also conducted by various neighborhood, communal, and self-help groups and by other associations that are neither corporate bodies nor chartered by state government.

Formal organizations are chartered or otherwise authorized to operate as enterprises under state laws and by the Internal Revenue Service (Lampkin, Romeo, and Finnin, 2001). All formal organizations have some kind of governance structure that defines their purposes, determines their policies and service priorities, and assumes responsibility for funding, space, personnel, operations, and other necessities. Different phrases are employed to convey the governance, legal, administrative, and fiduciary responsibilities an organization assumes for its programs: "sponsorship," "under the aegis of," "under the auspices of," and sometimes simply "administer" or "operate." Thus the organization sponsors the service program, while the program conducts the activities that provide services for persons and is directly accountable to officials in the sponsoring organization.

Human service programs are conducted by governmental organizations at all levels—municipal, county, state, and federal—and are frequently called *departments*, as in the case of city consumer affairs departments or county departments of public health. Some state government agencies offer certain local-level services to citizens through district offices, even while performing many other, different public sector functions. Departments of public health, mental health, social services, education, labor, and corrections are found in every state, but they differ in size, structure, and the particular duties and functions they are assigned. At the federal level, of course, departments are huge bodies headed by cabinet-level secretaries, which do many things, including regulating or funding service programs that are conducted by other organizations, as well as many of their own. Many of these governmental units allocate funds to support services administered by other organizations in both the profit and nonprofit sectors and also support numerous programs offered by lower levels of government (Austin, 2003; Young, 2000).

Service programs are also conducted by a bewildering array of *private nonprofit* enterprises (Grønbjerg, 2001). They are also known as *voluntary organizations*, members of the *voluntary* or *private sector*, or *nongovernmental organizations*. Some of these organizations are faith based or sectarian organizations that are governed and

operated by a particular church or religious denomination (Chaves and Tsitsos, 2001; Farnsely, 2001). Others are nonsectarian, that is, not affiliated with a religious denomination. Some nonprofit organizations are national, some regional, and others statewide in scope, but most are found within local communities. These organizations are so numerous and so varied that there is no single listing of them, but local telephone and community service directories list most of them. These enterprises can be thought of in categories according to the kinds of services or benefits they provide or to some other distinguishing aspect. For example, private, nonprofit medical hospitals comprise a universe of organizations that provide specialized health services in their locales. Another set of organizations offers arts and cultural services, such as art programs for children, annual festivals, museum and other artistic exhibitions, theatrical classes and performances, and so on.

Another way of looking at organizations is to focus on the persons being served by the program. For example, there are shelters, hot meals, and emergency food programs for the homeless and for disaster victims. A well-known set of national and local organizations are concerned with services for children and youth, including the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. And these have their counterparts at the other end of the age range in programs for the elderly. Nonhospital health service, education, and advocacy programs are offered by diverse organizations for persons with almost every major illness and disability, as well as many less common problems. An entire class of organizations—membership associations—sponsor particular programs to serve their members; perhaps best known are the professional associations; and many are aimed at other interests that bring people together, such as religious congregations, Little League, historical societies, and collectors' clubs.

Regardless of their other activities and reasons for being, the organizations focused on here are those through which particular human service programs are hosted and conducted and that are in the governmental or private nonprofit sectors. Within these contexts, persons design, start, change, and conduct service programs.

Regardless of the differing cycles among programs and how they are structured within organizations, many are designed and conducted to connect—more or less directly—with services offered by other agencies. The recipients of service in one program are frequently referred to a program in another organization. These *serial* service linkages are most apparent among local *service centers* or *bureaus* that are explicitly designed to help route persons to appropriate service providers elsewhere in the community. These include such services as Travelers Aid stations and similar information and assistance centers in major airports, local area agencies on aging, and referral agencies for troubled youth.

The following case illustrates these *service delivery* interrelations between human services and the organizations that conduct them. Each of the units that provides distinctive but closely linked services is italicized in this example.

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A person walking through a shopping center suddenly experiences an acute attack of some unfamiliar kind. Luckily, a *passerby* has received special home medical emergency training as a *Red Cross volunteer.* She seats the ill person on a nearby bench, checks him over, asks a few questions, suspects a stroke, commandeers another shopper to stand by, rushes to the nearest telephone, and calls 9-1-1. In this location, the 9-1-1 *emergency communications center* is operated as a central areawide unit jointly funded under county-city agreements, with immediate computerized access to every fire, police, sheriff, ambulance, hospital, and related emergency organization. The 9-1-1 operator assures the Good Samaritan that an ambulance staffed by paramedics will arrive at the site within five minutes, dispatched by that locale's *Metro Ambulance Service* under contract with the city, local hospitals, and third-party insurers. After its prompt arrival and pickup, the ambulance races to deliver the ill person to the *ER* at *Community Medical Center,* owned and operated by an area public-private consortium, where appropriate diagnosis and treatment is immediately given (and information obtained for later billing to the patient's *health plan insurer*). The patient is soon transferred to the center's intensive care unit and shortly thereafter to a semi-private hospital room (with more billing to follow). Before the patient's release from the hospital, arrangements are made through the patient's *private physician* with *Home Health Care, Inc.* (a unit of a regional for-profit corporation, with more billing to third-party insurers, including *Medicare*) to obtain assistance so the patient can return to his home. Because the patient lives alone, Home Health Care will provide in-home basic care for as long as his physician determines is necessary, until he can care for himself and resume his activities.

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Note how many service providers there were in this extended chain. Critical assistance was initially given by a passerby using knowledge gained through training by the Red Cross, a multiprogram nonprofit organization. Except for the passerby, all services were then administered in tandem by highly specialized personnel employed by a variety of governmental, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations. The central community service routing facility in this and many comparable situations was the 9-1-1 police and emergency call-in phone line. This service is explicitly designed to distinguish among the needs of callers—often including non-emergency problem circumstances and injuries—and route them accordingly through their special switchboards.

In this example, most services were provided in serial order, as discussed earlier in this chapter in regard to the job training and placement programs and progressive class grades in K–12 school districts. Alternatively, interorganizational service relationships may be centered on providing *concurrent* services to the same persons. For example, programs for the homeless typically forge linkages with other local agencies to cope with the multiple problems of shelter residents. Occasionally, a single program is jointly conducted by two organizations who pool their resources. All of these collaborative associations depend on interorganizational agreements and arrangements, which are required by some funders as a condition for receiving funds.

Service Program Planning

Planning a service program is a systematic future-oriented endeavor that involves analysis of problems or needs, determination of goals and objectives, exploration of alternative service designs, and development of the chosen design. The scope and complexity of the program at issue, especially if the planning effort is focused on change in an ongoing service, determines which of these elements must be addressed in a particular project. The product of a planning project is a written program plan that must be forwarded to organizational officials for their approval. It might also have to be submitted for early review by relevant funding or oversight bodies. Once approved, the completed plan will serve as a concrete guide or blueprint for those who will implement it, typically with additional directives. The implementers may or may not include some of the planners.

Although the process of planning is the focus of this book, it is important to differentiate it from program implementation and program operations. *Program implementation* is the decision and action process aimed at actually introducing a new service program or modifying an existing service program according to the approved plan, not at serving persons directly. *Program operations* follow implementation and refer to the activities required to provide services to recipients. Planning and implementation have some common features, but they are separable processes. Planning and implementation projects are carried out sequentially, but they have linkages.

Implementation is also a systematic future-oriented endeavor, but it denotes all of the decisions and steps that must be taken to bring a plan from the drawing board to operational reality. Many things must be done to "open the doors" and begin service to people. Space has to be found and properly equipped, personnel have to be trained or recruited, prospective service recipients must be notified, the phones have to be installed, equipment and supplies have to be purchased, and

appropriate forms must be ready to be filled out. All of these things—and more—must be planned, arranged, and done before program operations can begin. Planning and implementation endeavors take place for both new programs and those to be significantly changed.

The organizing framework of the book rests on the belief that planning should precede implementing a significant change in an ongoing program, and certainly before launching a new program. Because introducing program changes or launching new services both follow prior planning to some degree, these two major processes can be viewed as an extended continuum, as closely intertwined phases of a single larger process. There are important connections and overlaps between them. Some of the individuals who work on the first process, planning, may also be active in the second process, implementation. Similarly, there are continuities between these two processes and program operations, which follow on and are greatly influenced by planning and implementation.

It's important to underscore a desirable set of relationships among these processes. Many different kinds of resources and critical arrangements must be assembled and melded to bring into being a service program—from personnel through space to public information—that can survive and therefore deliver benefits for its recipients. Failure to provide a program's essential wherewithal obviously hampers its conduct or makes it wholly impossible. To ensure that all of these provisions are in place when the program is brought into actual operation, prior preparations must be completed. Program implementation is the composite of these prior steps, whether applied to a new service program or a significant change in an ongoing program. But these preparations must be guided by some blueprint that specifies what is needed, what is to be done, and what resources will be used to do it. The activities that produce this blueprint are the program planning. In short, the probable achievements at each point in this chain of processes are greatly influenced by the work that has preceded it.

Rational, Cumulative, and Back-and-Forth Process

Service program planning is essentially a *rational* decision and an activity process carried out in successive stages of work. Planning is rational in that it is a means-ends driven process. Planning is also purposeful, just as the program-to-be is intended as a purposeful system of activities. The *means* are the creative, analytical, and technical tasks that are carried out in an orderly manner. These tasks are instrumental activities intended to reach a designated *end*—a plan for a new or changed service program that fulfills the assigned *charge* (the authorization to engage in the project). That is why the directions issued by officials to the planners should be considered first (and last). These charges authoritatively empower the

conduct of the planning project and define the ends to be attained, as well as the directives and provisions for carrying out the assigned tasks. Rational pursuit of these stated purposes necessitates planning the new program or planning the changes to the existing program *before* their introduction through implementation.

Planning involves numerous interdependent decisions and actions, which proceed in *back-and-forth* and *cumulative* ways as work moves forward. Teams frequently have to retrace some prior steps, often several times. Sometimes retrospection enlightens current efforts. Sometimes earlier efforts need to be reconsidered in light of emerging formulations and then require adjustments. For example, as a new service program is being designed, planners may realize that they had set standards of performance for program outcome objectives too low, and they must now be redefined. As participants complete tasks and stages, their decisions and actions must be accumulated and brought forward in order to connect them to the ongoing work at hand, so that progress builds on prior thinking and results. This is the main reason why work teams should continuously document their thinking and decisions, extending cumulatively toward their end products.

The logical order suggested here does not mean that there is only one right way to do planning. Participants may have to follow different pathways that are adapted to the particulars of place and persons, the discoveries made as the process unfolds, and the complexities of the issues. Generally speaking, however, there is a general and efficacious way to go about program planning, and that way is fundamentally rationalistic.

From the perspective of participants as decision makers, planning takes place in a context of bounded rationality and limited discretion. This is because participants are unable to comprehend and examine all planning alternatives, weigh the usefulness of each, and then decide on the best alternative (York, 1982, pp. 29–30, 45–47; Simon, 1976). The complexity would be overwhelming. As a result, work groups make decisions that "satisfice," meaning that they are good enough (Simon, 1976). Planners' decisions are also bounded by directives and constraints on the substance and procedures of their projects. These directives and constraints are directly or indirectly stated in the planning charge, external mandates, and the organization's mission, policies, and commitments to and investments in particular programs, service delivery designs, or staff competencies. (See Chapter Three for a detailed discussion of these issues.)

It is important to note that there is a fundamental source of disjunction between the products of planning and the products of implementing, and it is so even when there are no changes in either plans or personnel. It is an inescapable fact that no endeavor can fully anticipate, predict, and control—through any kind of planning—the future, the unexpected, and the changing circumstances of life. The products of these two processes include both desired and undesired, antici-

pated and unanticipated, developments. These developments must be managed, as they unfold over time, by members of the planning work group, and subsequently by those who undertake to provide the program services. As a result, whatever changed program or new program is finally initiated will be different from the plans on which it was based, for better or for worse. But none of this justifies minimizing the crucial importance of preparing good plans and implementing them effectively (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1974). It is necessary to anticipate as fully as possible in both processes.

It's important to acknowledge the reality and the importance of what can be thought of as the *social and political dynamics* of the planning process. Case studies and reports of experienced planners have identified these dynamics and have clarified potential flash points and risks (University of Kansas, 2004; McClendon and Catanese, 1996; Schorr, 1988, 1997; Lauffer, 1978, pp. 6–29; Delbecq and Van de Ven, 1977). The direction often taken by those using the social-political approach has been to identify the conditions under which one or another mode of planning or acting seems to succeed, fail, or just get by. In attempting to generate guidelines for deliberate endeavors, this approach has helped alert practitioners to relationships and circumstances that can either hamper or facilitate change and to actions that offer greater potentials for success. For example, some officials believe that the best decision is to appoint influentials to the planning team and have them make the "right" decisions, whereas others believe that prospective recipients or outside consultants should also be on the team so as to lend credibility to its decisions (Lauffer, 1978, p. 7).

Some social and political dynamics facilitate the planning process. Others are irrational intrusions or exercises of power, or both. For example, an influential volunteer accepted an appointment to a priority study committee because she wanted to have a say in how youth-serving agencies were responding to reports of increases in juvenile street crime in a particular neighborhood. An analysis of recent crime statistics revealed a low incidence of such crimes. The volunteer later revealed that a close relative was mugged by a purse snatcher in her neighborhood. No amount of data could convince her about the randomness of the offense and that crime on the streets in that community did not merit a high-priority rating. In another planning project, an influential member of the community declared that he did not want any money allocated to programs that "incited people in those neighborhoods to march on city hall." Yet that very same week, some residents of his neighborhood lodged a protest at city hall in an adjoining community. When he was gently confronted with his contradiction, he said, "It's not the same." Community empowerment programs were assigned a low priority. Sometimes planners are motivated by what they perceive as enlightened self-interest—personal, departmental, organizational, or professional. For example, one participant in a

planning project admitted that "he joined up to get as much of the pie as possible." In another situation, a participant confided that he agreed to serve on the planning committee to make certain that planners did not interfere with his programs. In still another situation, the chair of the planning committee stacked it with members of her own profession when senior officials asked her to develop a plan to restructure services that would require redistribution of staff to other units. All of these examples are indicative of some social and political dynamics that occur in the course of rational planning. Other examples of these dynamics will occasionally be introduced in the discussion of different stages of planning, but the rational model of planning is the primary focus of this book.

The social-political dimension of planning deserves much more study before valid, systematic guidelines for action can be formulated. Regardless of what this knowledge reveals, it must then be synthesized with the substantive and methodological matters presented in this book. The practical tools for planning must still be acquired and employed if effective service programs are to come into being.

Planning and Value Preferences

Although a rational model of planning is promoted in this book, planning is also inevitably value driven. Human service organizations and their officials, staff, supporters, and recipients all have their own set of ideals, including altruism, empowerment, justice, civic pride, assimilation, tolerance, community harmony, and protection of the vulnerable.

Planners bring their values to planning projects, and it is hard to imagine that their values would not influence their participation and decision making. Planners are not required to declare their values when they are appointed to a planning team, and there is no suggestion that officials or the team leader should seek such declarations. Sometimes planners announce their value orientations or reveal them through their patterns of decision making.

Shared values can serve as the source of cooperation, and value differences can serve as the source of conflict in planning teams (for example, charity versus justice, rehabilitation versus punishment, a strengths approach versus a problem-and-deficits approach, doing for versus doing with). Consequently, the team leader and the other members must be attuned to value preferences and how these preferences can be reconciled in the interest of moving the planning project forward. Sometimes team members have some value differences, but they have some values in common, or they may recognize a hierarchy of values that can surmount impasses. For example, in one planning project focused on services for abused children, one group supported independent disclosure interviews of victims by dif-

ferent law enforcement agencies and service providers, whereas another group supported joint interviews. After several rounds, a team member invoked the "best interests of the children" and reminded the team about a recent "worst case" in which a victim was subjected to ten interviews. The team eventually worked out a compromise by agreeing to videotape interviews or to engage in joint interviews in particular cases to reduce the number of times victims would have to disclose the details of their abuse.

Stages of Planning

Planning service programs proceeds over time and involves various participants in successive stages of work: the *initiation stage,* the *analysis stage,* the *goals and objectives stage,* the *design stage,* and the *documentation stage.* Issues and problems arise at each of the stages and should be identified and addressed by the responsible participants. These issues and problems, in turn, pose challenges and requirements that define the tasks that need to be performed and that are common to planning all programs, although every project presents unique demands. For each stage of planning projects, the series of tasks to be accomplished has to do with obtaining information, making choices, seeking alternatives, and drafting summaries and reports. Other tasks have to do with resolving dilemmas, producing materials, locating resources, and starting some activity.

This book examines the issues and decisions faced in planning and describes the successive tasks and steps in this process. Tasks are clustered into progressive stages based on the logic of rational decision making and action, the interrelatedness of the tasks, the authors' relevant experiences, and their judgment about whether a particular boundary-spanning task belongs in this or that stage. This five-stage planning model provides a structure that readers should be able to apply to their own circumstances, even though it is clear that there is no one arbitrary, lock-step approach to planning projects.

Within any particular planning stage, some tasks must be addressed concurrently or interactively with other tasks. Some tasks within a particular stage must be carried out while anticipating certain tasks of one or more subsequent stages. For example, in the analysis stage, planners must decide which of the factors that are believed to have contributed to the problem should be explored. Some factors may be so intractable that it would be infeasible for an organization to devise approaches to deal with them, and there is no point in exploring these factors. Planners must also look ahead to the implementation stage. For example, planners of a new admission program might pose this question: "What are the information technology and staff requirements of the admission system that we have designed so far?" Similarly, implementers must return periodically to the program

plan to refresh their recollection of what it intends, or they must revise their forward steps in light of actual organization resources and capabilities.

In actual situations, boundaries between stages are not clearly marked. They typically flow together. Tasks of some stages have their origins in prior stages, and the activities of early stages extend into subsequent efforts. Movements from one to another may be incremental and disjointed due to the circumstances of particular ventures. It is advisable for participants to take stock of where they are in the process and to manage their movement through each stage. This entails taking into account which tasks are currently preoccupying most of the team, which ones are stragglers from an earlier stage, and which ones are moving the team into the next stage. During some periods, some team members may be "picking up loose ends" or completing activities from a previous stage, and other members may be easing into the activities of the next stage. These transitions are commonplace in planning ventures. Work should be managed to keep the team moving toward fulfillment of its charge to complete a program plan.

Planning projects are usually more demanding and difficult than expected. They frequently extend over a longer period of time than was intended at the outset, especially when the program is new for those working on it or for the organization.

Use of Terms

A number of terms are used throughout this book. The most important are the key words that denote critical concepts (for example, *service program* and *projects,* as discussed earlier in the chapter). They are italicized initially and are defined at that point or soon after. To minimize monotony, synonyms (for example, the *planning effort, endeavor,* or *venture*) are sometimes substituted for *project* or *planning project.*

Planners, participants, work group, team, members, and *committee* refer to the individuals who become directly engaged in the actual work of planning. *Coordinator* and *leader* refer to the individuals who provide guidance to participants, coordinate their activities, and report directly to officials. (The critical roles and features of these work groups are examined more fully in the next chapter.)

Decision makers, officials, and *policymakers* refer to the executives, administrators, and board members of voluntary human service organizations, as well as the elected and appointed officials of government agencies who have the authority to initiate planning and to whom the planners are directly accountable for the process and the products of their work.

Host organization or *sponsoring organization* refers to the nonprofit or government organization that authorizes the planning effort and under whose auspices it is carried out.

The official impetus to undertake program planning is referred to as a *charge*—an authorization to a work group to engage in a project. The charge informs the work group about what is to be achieved and provides guidelines that direct or constrain project work. At the outset of planning efforts, work groups must review and interpret the charge with the officials who issued it, especially its concrete elements, to determine its focus and whether it is complete and clear enough to begin project activities.

Recipients is the generic term for the primary persons to whom program services are given. It refers to a variety of designations given to these persons by human service organizations, including beneficiaries, clients, patients, members, patrons, offenders, residents, and students.

Planners must develop, monitor, and revise *work plans* to guide their efforts. These plans are formulations developed by participants that provide a shared understanding of what needs to be done, who will be doing it, when it will be done, and how it will be done. *Documentation* is the general term for all forms of reporting and communicating the progress and results of the planners' work. Both work plans and documentation will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter in the discussion on work groups and some of their tasks.

Program plan document is a general term that refers to the final written work product of the planning team. Sometimes the terms *proposal* or *report* are used in the book to denote that document. Many planning projects in nonprofit and government organizations do not result in a grant application. For the purposes of this book, *grant application* refers to a document prepared for submission to a funding organization.

How This Book's Contents Are Organized and Presented

This book spans a range of basic topics, from the beginning to the end of the planning process, rather than concentrating on a few specialized methods or features. The emphasis here is on the process of program planning so as to avoid the risks of looking at specific methods out of the larger context in which they can be applied. But this book is not another general "theory of planning," nor is it an eclectic framework that attempts to synthesize major approaches to be applicable to all sorts of enterprises.

This book presents the means by which the planning process should be advanced in a logical order. In Part Two, the chapters address planning according to its successive stages of work. For example, determining the objectives of a service program are dealt with before deciding its operational features (the lowest level of the ends-means chain). The major tasks that should characterize planning

projects during each stage are laid out, from the initiation of the activity through its completion with the production of final program plan materials. Various subsidiary steps and procedures are described for many of these tasks. This does not render the processes linear, however, such that at each point there is only one next step to be taken. Substantive matters are addressed within a distinctly methodological approach. There is practical procedural guidance for application in the real situations where people engage in these tasks. Special planning problems and important variations are discussed here as well.

A wide array of practitioners have responsibility for planning new programs and planning changes to existing ones. Many nonprofit organizations and governmental departments do not have staff in specialized roles who are responsible just for planning or program development. Nevertheless these staff members have to plan program modifications and new programs that are responsive to the changing conditions in their communities and to funding opportunities. Even in large-scale organizations with specialized staff, middle managers and frontline staff serve as leaders and members of planning teams. The materials in this book are relevant to both specialized and nonspecialized staff, regardless of their roles or positions.

The book is intended for both classroom and job-related studies. In several kinds of courses, it can serve as either a main or a supplementary text to help students gain the knowledge and competence to carry out a planning project. It can also provide additional knowledge and competence to persons—in all kinds of organizations that sponsor human service programs—who are concerned with improving their abilities to undertake planning duties.

Different readers will, of course, proceed through the book in different ways. Generally speaking, those with less experience should work through the book chapter by chapter. Those with considerable experience will probably prefer to select particular chapters or parts of chapters that are relevant to them. It would be useful, however, for them to scan the other chapters for information that is new to them.

Types of Examples Presented

The book uses several types of examples, from brief parenthetical inserts, to short sketches, to extended case examples. Practical, real-world examples from a range of organizations are included in every chapter to illustrate how planners can approach planning tasks and to amplify the text, including illustrating some approaches that are less than desirable. These same examples are revisited several times, so the reader can follow the progress of a work group as analysis and prescriptive text unfold. This approach provides for continuity and follow-through.

The extended case examples focus on local governmental settings and nonprofit organizations, and they include several occupational and professional groups. The extended case examples may be challenging, but readers will be able to engage intuitively or through their life experiences. None of the case examples requires complex technical knowledge. Many will likely have a ring of familiarity.

Exercises for Readers

At several points, readers are invited to engage in an exercise in order to develop insight into the methods proposed in the book and then assess their work in light of these guidelines. These exercises also involve the reader in working through a concrete problem in order to become familiar with all of its aspects. Readers are urged to try these exercises and see whether they fully understand what is expected, regardless of the degree of their prior experience or their familiarity with the matter at hand.

The Book's Prescriptive Approach

Planning is discussed from an action framework—that is, as an exposition of all of its stages and tasks. Guidance and operational recommendations are offered for persons who have responsibility for planning projects or who want to learn how to plan. From this view, the book is not *about* planning, but about how *to do* collaborative planning. It is not a theory book (though it agrees with such valid theory as exists). These guides are derived in considerable part from the authors' own real-world experiences working on a variety of community and organizational projects as consultants, program evaluators, and volunteer members and leaders of nonprofit and governmental agency planning committees. At many points in the text, the authors assume the voice of a coach, as if sitting at the elbow of the planner, reflecting on a particular task, cautioning about this and that, and reminding practitioners about what lies ahead.

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The next chapter examines some common issues that must be addressed by participants in planning projects: the composition of work groups, the essential competencies required by its members, leadership, and the patterns of social relations experienced by work groups.