19. Instructions for Chicago Metropolitan Area Local Government Paper

1. Select a local unit of government to study—a department or agency of the City of Cook County governments or a suburban unit of government.

2. Begin by finding out the answers to the final questions listed below and then write an essay similar to the studies within the **Blueprint of Chicago Government: 1989** or **Key to Local Government in Chicago and Cook County**.

3. Begin early as there may be problems getting data. Begin at the documents section of the UIC Library and the municipal section of the Harold Washington Library downtown.

4. Get basic data such as budget numbers and personnel before beginning interviews with departmental officials.

5. Attach key pages of original documents (or Xerox of them) to your paper. Do not attach entire documents but only critical sections.

6. Using all the information write a general paper like those in the **Blueprint** book. The end result should look like the article on the South Cook County Mosquito Abatement District.

7. If you run into problems set up a meeting with me or your Teaching Assistant, immediately. Don't wait until the last minute.

A. Purpose and Function of Agency

1. What is the legal basis in either city ordinances (printed in the **Municipal Code of the City of Chicago)** or state law printed in the State Statutes (i.e. law books)?

2. What are the current programs of the agency? (These are usually listed in agency annual reports, the Program Budget of the City of Chicago of Cook County, or the Comptroller's Report. They may be amplified in news reports and direct interviews with the agency personnel.)

Organization and Administration

1. Develop an organization chart and a list of the key executive personnel of the department. For the current personnel, the names and titles of the individuals are needed. (These can be found in department reports, directories of employees, and to some extent in previous documents like the **Blueprint.)**

2. How does the Mayor or top official of the local government control the department? This usually has to do with the positions directly appointed by the Mayor with or without the City Council's consent.

3. List the number of budgeted positions in the department or agency for the last three years including the current budget year? (These can be found in the city budget or similar document.)

    2003 _____   2004 _____   2005 _____

4. What are the Interdepartmental Connections required for the unit of government to accomplish it purposes?

Agency Budget

1. What was the amount appropriated for the agency's budget over the last three years?

   (This can be obtained from the city budget.)

    2003 _____   2004 _____   2005 _____

2. What was the amount actually spent by the agency over the last three years?

   (This can be obtained from the city budget for past years along with the Comptroller's Report.)

    2002 _____   2003 _____   2004 _____

Services and Program Delivery

1. What was the cost per unit of the service delivered by the agency such as cost per ton of garbage picked up or cost per mile of street repaired? (This is obtained by taking the total cost of a program—obtained from the program budget—and dividing it by the tasks performed. Not all services can be measured this way.)

2. What was the cost per unit of the same service delivered by other cities or similar units of government in the U.S.? (This can be obtained by checking the budgets of those cities or calling the budget directors in those cities.)

Functional Analysis

1. How does the agency deliver these services? Are there better ways to do so? (Some of the information may be in the program budget and agency reports. It may take direct observation to determine the answer to this question.)

Public Participation

1. What mechanisms if any are there for public participation in guiding the activities or decisions of the agency - public hearings, neighborhood government, etc.? (This is usually provided from interviews with agency personnel.)

Overview

1. Give your final evaluation of the agency—how well it operates, what could be done to improve it, etc?