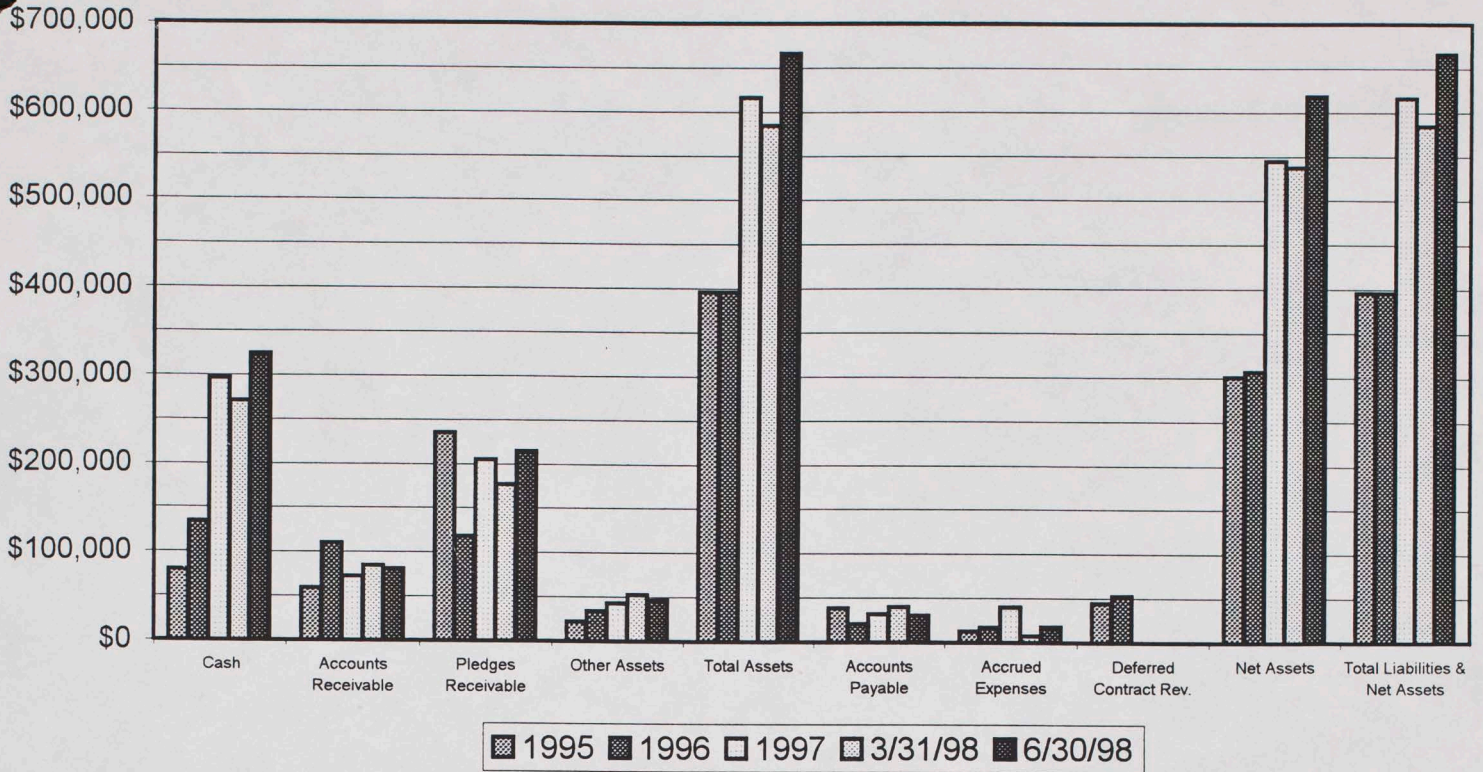
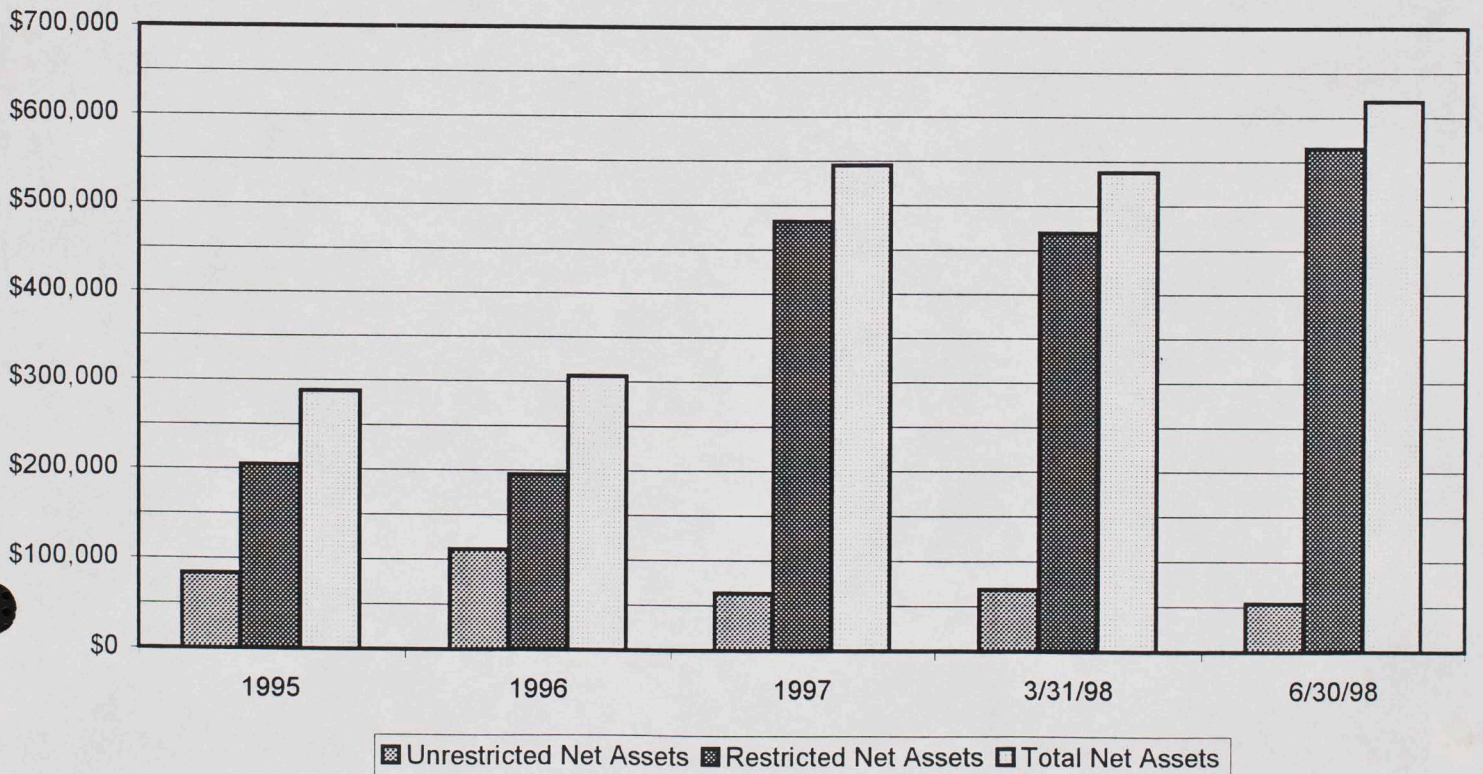


Consensus Organizing Institute Statement of Financial Position



Consensus Organizing Institute Net Assets



CONSENSUS ORGANIZING INSTITUTE

SWEETWATER HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH ORGANIZING PROJECT

The Consensus Organizing Institute (COI), in Partnership with the Sweetwater Union High School District and Sweetwater High School in National City is developing an after school program to train a selected group of Sweetwater students in the techniques and principles of community organizing over the course of the 1999-2000 school year.

This new program will assist the students in taking practical but dramatic steps to improve their neighborhoods, community, and city. COI seeks to provide the students with the tools they need to create and carry out community development agendas by identifying other young leaders, and by exploring their interests and concerns in developing solution oriented projects and ideas. Ultimately, the COI youth organizing and leadership development strategy seeks to build sophisticated networks of relationships between youth leaders and local, private and public sector leaders and institutions. COI seeks to position these young leaders so that they may use their new relationships as vehicles for community change and personal development.

Founded in 1994 by community development specialist and seasoned community organizer Michael Eichler, COI is a national non-profit community development organization committed to identifying, training and providing technical assistance and support to a new generation of local leaders. Utilizing careful analysis, intensive planning, strategic thinking and consensus building techniques to advance important community agendas or solve critical community problems, COI trains community organizers to help ordinary people build sophisticated networks of relationships. Central to COI's approach is the use of relationships as vitally important vehicles for advancing community development agendas. In every community with which it works COI carefully and creatively practices the art and science of building productive strategic relationships.

PROGRAM DESIGN

COI will design a program that introduces consensus organizing to a group of Sweetwater students. Interested young people will be given opportunities to learn and practice organizing by picking their own issues, designing their strategies, and achieving real goals. The critical core components of COI's work with the students would focus on the following areas:

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Leadership through community involvement and engagement
- ◆ Historical cultural awareness
- ◆ Active youth participation
- ◆ Mentoring and support
- ◆ Skill development and capacity building
- ◆ Citizenship and leadership development

With regards to skill development and capacity building, COI youth programs would focus on developing among community youth and young adults the:

- ◆ Ability to obtain information using resource materials tools; and
- ◆ Ability to articulate identified community needs;
- ◆ Ability to set realistic goals;
- ◆ Ability to develop and implement a strategic plan of action;
- ◆ Flexibility to adapt or substitute goals and strategies;
- ◆ Ability to process information and data , as well as think systematically and analytically;
- ◆ Negotiation and consensus building skills for conflict resolution and decision making;
and
- ◆ Team building skills

COI is already testing this concept at an alternative high school in Brooklyn, New York. At El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, COI organizer Paula Rojas has trained 14 young people, ages 15-18, to become effective organizers. The student organizers have used their community-building skills to identify disinvestment as a major impediment to neighborhood growth and have put together a cooperative vendors market as a means of keeping wealth in the neighborhood. COI wants to build on the early success of El Puente by allowing the current organizers to train a new group of youth who will work on the vendors market and identify new issues and relationships that they want to expand on.

At Sweetwater, COI will not pre-determine the projects or issues that the student's design. The success of El Puente is based in part on the willingness of the adult leaders/facilitators to allow the young people to think through issues and to determine for themselves which ones they want to address. In El Puente, it was the loss of wealth from the Brooklyn neighborhood. At Sweetwater, it may be to design a Community Development Certification course of study for high school students who have a significant interests in human services or to build partnerships with local government, businesses and community-based organizations to develop internships that would include incentives, like (school credit, internships, and/or work experience).

COI staffperson, Mark Baca, an experienced consensus organizer and an alumni graduate of Sweetwater High School will lead the organizing effort.

OUTCOMES

The following outcomes will result from the students' participation in the youth organizing program:

- ◆ Students develop personal, social and political skills;
- ◆ Students understand what it means to be contributors to strengthening a community;
- ◆ Students learn practical problem- solving skills; and
- ◆ Students feel empowered by the process of learning that collaboration and consensus building are the cornerstones of economic, community and personal development.

PROJECT TIMELINE

JANUARY-MARCH 1999

COI will commit Mark Baca full-time to be the youth organizer who will develop the partnership with Sweetwater Union High School District and Sweetwater High School. During this time, the organizer will develop relationships with teachers, counselors, students, administration and other stakeholders. The youth organizer will build an understanding of the organizing program among Sweetwater stakeholders by seeking out their ideas for making the program work at the school.

APRIL-JUNE

The youth organizer will work with people at the school to recruit interview and select the first group for the project, consisting of no more than 20 students.

OVER THE SUMMER

The youth organizer will take the first group through a short-term project (ex: a community garden, community asset mapping, street fair, etc.). The purpose of the project is to build a sense of cohesion among the group, demonstrate to participants their potential to positively impact their community and build the group's credibility within the community.

JANUARY- AUGUST 1999

In addition to the above tasks, the youth organizer will introduce the project idea to community members to solicit their ideas, help, and support for the first group of students.

SEPTEMBER 1999

The after school program begins with the first group of students.