



Nonprofits in Urban America (Policy Studies Organisation Book)

Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore, Richard C. Hula

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From their experience in nonprofit operations and their understanding of the realities of urban politics, the editors of this wide-ranging volume and their contributors dig into issues seldom explored in the literature. They study the role of nonprofits in local governing coalitions, the potential of nonprofits to replace social welfare programs, their efforts to restructure key elements of the local political process, and the unanticipated internal impacts of the changing roles of nonprofit organizations in the urban community. The result is a compelling argument that to understand life in contemporary American cities, we must take into account the expanding role of nonprofit organizations, their response to increased service demands, and their participation in common efforts to direct policy choices.

Hula, Jackson-Elmoore, and their panel of scholars, researchers, and close observers of urban policymaking focus on the delivery of social services to illustrate the complex and important set of roles that nonprofits have assumed. As social programs are cut at all levels of government, it is often believed that nonprofits can and should take up the slack and restore at least some portion of the cutbacks in such services. They examine how some nonprofit organizations have taken a proactive stance in this regard by implementing efforts that do not simply react to political and social change, but attempt to initiate and guide it instead. They attempt to change the political environment in which they operate, and the result has been to change the face of local politics in many jurisdictions. Each chapter of their book explores these expanding and emerging roles. Themes and focuses vary, which in turn reflects the variation and complexity within the nonprofit sector itself. At the same time, each chapter presents an emerging political or policy role now being played by today's nonprofits and voluntary associations, and a theoretical context in which such activities and behavior can best be understood. Scholars and advanced students in public administration, economics, and nonprofit management, as well as executive-level nonprofit managers, will find here an important update on what is happening in their special worlds, and the knowledge they need to make sense of it.

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Jeffery Bruce:

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