

OEO Grassroots Program to Be Initiated Here

Application has been made for a Grassroots Program to bring people in Alaska's rural areas and villages into more effective contact with community resources.

The program will operate through a system of local coordinators and aides, according to Flore Lekanof, coordinator of the Fairbanks Office of Economic Opportunity. He

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said that the particular point of the program will be to get full information to the areas served by the Alaska State Community Action Program.

The people working in each local area will need to speak the native language of the area, Lekanof stressed. This will help all the people to better understand the work of the Community Action Program, he said.

In order to carry out this information program at a grassroots level, each of the five existing ASCAP coordinators will hire two special assistants. Working under these assistants will be several area assistants, each as-

signed to cover about four villages. These area assistants will have an aide in each village.

According to plans discussed at the meeting of the ASCAP Board held May 19 and 20 at Juneau, the new Grassroots Program may work closely with the Canadian co-operative programs. Lekanof said that an orientation program for the assistant coordinators will be held either in Alaska or in Canada.

The Canadian cooperatives, which have been very successful in recent years, will be used as a basis for more effective cooperative work in Alaska, Lekanof said. Charley Edwardson, recently named to spearhead Alaska's co-operative movement, will work full time to help set up the Grassroots Program and establish an effective working program for the cooperatives in Alaska.

The new Grassroots Program will focus both on geographic and social areas, Lekanof stated. As well as working through the local coordinators and aides it will work with social organizations such as the various Native associations. The primary purpose of the grassroots' work with these associations will be to show them how to use their influence in getting community action programs set up.

Another topic discussed at the Juneau meeting was the possibility that the Alaska State Community Action Program may become independent from the governor's office. If this happens, ASCAP will function on a state-wide basis much as the Community Action Agency functions within the North Star Borough.

In this case, Lekanof explained, the Office of Economic Opportunity in Juneau will still continue to offer specialized assistance.