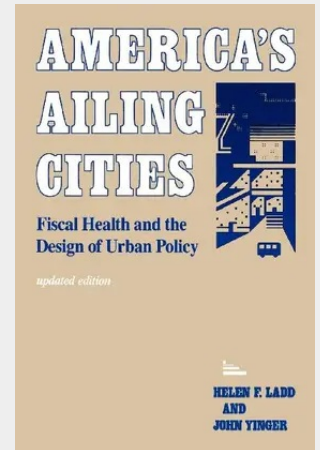


America's Ailing Cities

Fiscal Health and the Design of Urban Policy

In the past two decades powerful economic, social, and fiscal forces have buffeted America's major cities. The urbanization of poverty, the shift in employment from manufacturing to services, middle-class flight to the suburbs and Sunbelt, the tax revolt, and cuts in federal aid have made it difficult for many cities to pay for such basic services as police and fire protection, sanitation, and roads. In America's Ailing Cities Helen F. Ladd and John Yinger identify and measure the impact of these broad national trends. Drawing on data from 86 major cities, they offer a rigorous and innovative analysis of urban fiscal conditions. Specifically, they determine the impact of a wide range of factors that lie outside municipal control, including a city's basic economic structure and state-determined fiscal institutions, on a city's underlying fiscal health—the difference between potential revenue and the expenditure needed to finance public services of acceptable quality. Concluding that the fiscal health of America's cities has worsened since 1972, the authors call for new state and federal urban policies that direct assistance to the neediest cities.

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