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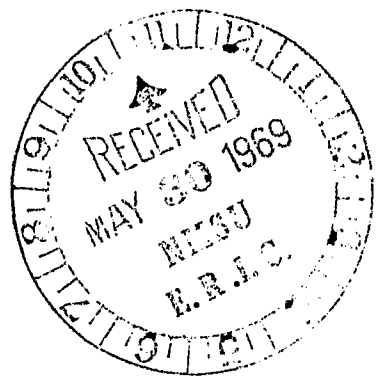
The Federal Government, through its Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, has served approximately 80,000 rural youth through its various training programs. The Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) and the "Concerted Services Approach" are 2 programs which have had particular impact on rural areas. The need for these programs is readily evidenced in the declining occupational opportunities in rural areas and the resultant migration of the rural population to urban centers. (DK)



MANPOWER-DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND THE PEOPLE OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

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In holding resolutely to its belief that the economy of the Nation can support full employment for its citizens, the Government of the United States is obliged continuously to assume a residual role in supplying those services needed for optimum manpower development and utilization that fail to emerge in the regular operation of the agencies and institutions of the states, cities, towns and rural communities. The position is taken that only through the maximum development of each individual and his active contribution to the productivity of the country, in work matching his interests and abilities, will this Nation be strong, its communities healthy, and its people find the good life.

Thus, the last few years have witnessed the development of a remarkable array of federally sponsored manpower programs, many of which are designed to aid the youth of the country prepare for and find work opportunities that hold promise of upward movement, not only in terms of income but also in terms of broader life objectives.

It is fairly apparent that youth in sparsely settled areas have not received a fair share of the benefits of these federal programs, perhaps partly because these young people are less visible and somewhat better behaved than their city cousins, although this is not to suggest that their needs are any less urgent. Other barriers to adequate delivery of the necessary services to the children of the plains, of the small-town

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slums, of the caravans of wandering workers, of the back country, of the mountains, and of the worn-out farmlands, arise from the remoteness and dispersion of the people, and the uncertainties and diversities of their respective economies.

It should be clear that far less generalization of manpower problems in sparsely populated areas is possible than of those in the cities. Although "rural" and "farm" were once equated, in 1967 the rural nonfarm population of about 47 million outnumbered the farm population of about 10 million almost 5 to 1. Of the total rural population, 11 million or almost one-fifth live in poverty, according to the Office of Economic Opportunity. Quickly to be excluded from the roster of disadvantaged rural families are (1) those of the million or so prosperous farmers, (2) those of the even greater number of successful business and professional men and women, mostly in the small towns, and (3) families, middle class and above, whose orientation and sources of livelihood are essentially urban, but who choose to live away from the cities. But far too many of the remainder suffer not only from inadequate or marginal income but also from poor or severely limited housing, educational facilities, health services and medical facilities, and social and cultural activities. Among these disadvantaged are Negro families of the South, white families of Appalachia, Spanish-American families of the Southwest, and Indian families on and off reservations.

The realities of the economy of most rural areas further compound their manpower problems. By 1967, a 50 percent decline in farm employment over the past twenty years left job opportunities in agriculture for only 3.8 million of the 57 million persons residing in rural America. There have been similar declines in mining, another formerly large supplier of work opportunities in many rural areas. So, between 1950 and 1960, in spite of moderate employment increases in manufacturing, services and trade, and slight gains in construction, transportation and public utilities, there was a net loss of 390,000 jobs in rural America. The major factor in this loss is steady decline of farm employment, from 38 percent of the labor force in 1900 to 4.7 percent in 1967, accompanied by a steady flow of persons of working age from rural to urban labor markets. This is not to suggest that this shrinkage of farm employment will not approach a lower limit, leaving a residual food production industry characterized by high efficiency, automation, mechanization, highly specialized personnel and all the other marks of technological advances. Nor should these aggregate figures conceal the fact that there are growth areas in rural America; indeed, between 1950 and 1960, nearly one-sixth of all rural counties absorbed not only their own natural population increase, but some net in-migration as well. Young people, in greater proportion than any other age group, have been leaving the farms to seek their fortunes, fleeing an economy that cannot supply employment opportunities to meet their needs, and a social setting that offers less than fulfillment.

With this social and economic backdrop the reality must be faced of a continuing stream of city-bound migrants from rural areas until such time as there may be a balance between the supply of indigenous rural manpower and the quantity, range and appeal of rural job opportunities.

The immediate problem, then, is to make the presently irreversible rural to urban migration a more reasoned and efficient process. Almost simultaneously the longer range and broader programs of economic development of rural areas must be mounted.

The first phase of the undertaking should include (1) improved public education programs; (2) an improved information system on local, regional and national employment opportunities and outlooks; (3) expanded vocational counseling and guidance services; (4) greatly expanded and improved programs and facilities for the preparation of youth and adults for initial employability and for retraining, as economic and personal circumstances may require; and (5) more effective ways to help city-bound migrants make the move, find a suitable job,and adjust to the new environment.

The second great task must embrace economic and technical assistance to rural communities to help them attract their share of the type of industry that traditionally hugs the urban centers; develop their own natural economic resources such as those suitable for recreation and those presenting the opportunity for orderly and substantial enterprises of conservation; and assist small farm operators to increase their efficiency in agriculture and develop supplementary sources of income. Coupled with

all this must be complete programs of human-resources development to supply the manpower for an expanded and more diversified industrial activity.

There is no doubt that only a beginning has been made in providing the funds and services required to meet the needs of the people of the depressed and marginal rural areas. With these broad program objectives in mind, brief mention should be made of some of the opportunities afforded rural residents by manpower-related services under recently enacted legislation.

The increased Federal funds and flexibility, provided for in the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, represent both an immediate and a continuing approach to the better preparation of youth for initial employability. The Act provides the means to increase the types, range, quality, quantity and geographic spread of vocational education programs in rural areas, and opens the way to establishing a greater relevance between job goals and preparation.

Since the passage of the Manpower Development and Training Act in 1962, it is estimated that over 80 thousand rural youth have participated in its training programs, with an expenditure of over 100 million dollars. On the average, one in five MDTA trainees to date have been classified as rural and about one out of three was under 22. This places the

percentage of participation by rural young people at about 6.5 percent of all MDTA enrollees -- greater than the 4 percent of the total population 16 and over they represented according to the 1960 Census figures. It is also significant to note that the yearly enrollment of rural residents of all ages in MDTA courses is running well over 40 thousand, with only one-sixth in agriculture-related courses; the remainder receiving training in non-agriculture skills such as welding, auto mechanics, and clerical and sales training.

Similarly, almost half of the Neighborhood Youth Corps Programs have been located in rural areas, with enrollments amounting to approximately one-third of the total. Some unique and fruitful experimental projects have been carried out under NYC, such as the ones conducted in the summer of 1967 to provide an opportunity for rural youth to work in a city and learn about life there. These projects were in Goldsboro, North Carolina, Lynchburg, Virginia, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

A variety of pilot and demonstration projects have been undertaken to find better ways to deliver manpower-development services to rural communities. Among these are the "Concerted Services Approach", which is a multi-agency effort to supply comprehensive services which may embrace the following:

1. Measures to insure good elementary and secondary education for all young people in rural areas.
2. Financial assistance to help needy youngsters stay in school and to move on to higher education if they are qualified.

3. Effective vocational education--emphasizing skills in growing industries and occupations. This should include the provision of training and work experience opportunities for jobless out-of-school youth.
4. Retraining facilities for unemployed adults, supplemented by allowances to help them support their families during the training period.
5. Facilities for part-time adult education to help employed workers upgrade and update their skills and knowledge.
6. Alternatives in the form of work opportunity or income maintenance when work is not available or training not feasible.
7. Day care centers for children of training and working mothers.

Another example is the Concentrated Employment Program (CEP) of the Department of Labor which attempts to combine a variety of work experience and training programs, with supportive services, in a single contract for a specific geographic area. The community action agency in the selected area is expected to serve as the prime sponsor and coordinating body.

Finally, the Manpower Administration of the Department of Labor, through its State Employment Agencies is trying to extend the Cooperative School Program to schools in sparsely populated areas by expanding its outreach services. It hopes to accomplish this by establishing itinerant service points, setting up mobile units, and increasing regular visitation by counseling personnel to the rural schools.

The total range of the Federal Effort, of which the programs mentioned briefly are a part, to help the people of rural America make the right decision and to ease their transition between the phases of their lives, can only be looked upon as a fair start on the solution of a problem vital to the welfare of the Nation.