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ABSTRACT

The Charter is intended to help shed light on rural youths' transition from education to work, and results from the 1977-78 activities of eight rural councils of the Work-Education Consortium. Recognizing the wide diversity of definitions for rural and nonmetropolitan, and understanding that rural youth are faced with economic and educational disadvantagement, the councils feel that their challenge is to work toward creating rural economic opportunities that will enhance the quality of community life and reflect community values. Toward that end, 10 propositions have been developed. While several propositions deal with the roles rural work-education councils should fulfill in providing various opportunities for rural youth, other propositions are: because national data do not adequately reflect the dimensions of rural living, the councils should collect, develop, and disseminate more relevant, accurate, and usable data regarding local rural communities; expansion of education and training opportunities must be balanced by and integrated with the development of appropriate employment opportunities; and rural communities need to develop collaborative models that respond to and grow out of local styles, customs, and modes of organization. Each proposition is accompanied by background and a section on "action initiatives" for implementation. A list of references concludes the document. (BR)

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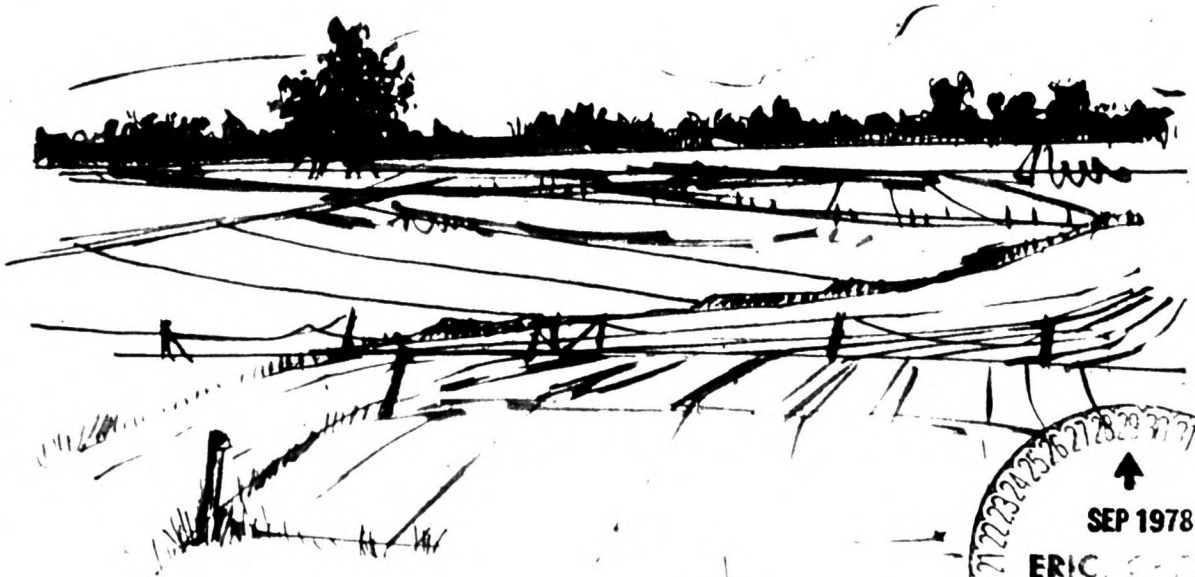
A Charter for Improved Rural Youth Transition



A Charter for Improved Rural Youth Transition

Rural Councils of the National
Work-Education Consortium

and the

Center for Education and Work
National Manpower Institute

July 1978

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FOREWORD

This Charter is a product of the collaborative process. It attempts to synthesize issues and ideas which the people that have been associated with this endeavor could agree upon.

We did not take a formal vote to certify that everyone agreed with every point -- that seemed unnecessary. The document has been subjected to several stages of discussion and several stages of review. If there were major areas of disagreement, given the open communications among the participants, it is reasonable to presume that they would have been mentioned. They weren't.

Karl Gudenberg and Kathy Knox of the National Manpower Institute assumed the staff responsibility for putting together the draft document for review. Karl has assumed leadership for asserting the value of the collaborative council concept in rural areas. He took the initiative to prepare for the "Conference on Work-Education Councils and Rural Conditions" and to manage the preparation of this Charter.

Valuable contributions to the development of the Charter were made by Dr. Kenneth Polk, of the Marion County Youth Study in Eugene, Oregon, who provided important information on the characteristics of youth transition in rural America; Martha Lewis, who ensured that the conditions and aspirations of rural women and girls were firmly in mind as the Charter developed; Jonathan Sher, of the National Rural Center, who was generous with his knowledge of rural education; and Lindsay Campbell, of the Department of Labor, who provided both insightful criticisms and continual support for our efforts.

Listed below are the workshop moderators for the initial December 1977 meeting of rural councils. They were important contributors to the germination of the Charter concept:

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Through the efforts of the Tri-County Industry-Education-Labor Council of East Peoria, Illinois the draft Charter was reviewed by a group of predominantly rural Illinois school superintendents, whose perspective and critique of the Charter was most useful in preparation of the final document. The "New Economic Process," a labor-management committee serving rural Chautauqua County, New York, was also involved in critiquing the Charter. Special thanks are due from all of us to the Mid-Michigan Community Action Council of Gratiot County, Michigan, which, along with

the National Manpower Institute, co-hosted the "Conference on Work-Education Councils and Rural Conditions" from which the idea of this Charter emanated.

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BACKGROUND

This "Charter for Improved Rural Youth Transition" has been developed to direct attention to an aspect of rural and small community life that has not been adequately addressed. The Charter is intended to help shed light on the transition from education to work for rural youth. It will examine the special problems encountered by rural youth as they negotiate the passage from education to employment, and the particular difficulties faced by rural communities as they endeavor to improve the prospects for youth transition. Most importantly, it is hoped that the Charter will provide guidance and encouragement to existing and emerging rural collaborative work-education efforts and indicate ways in which state, regional, and federal level agencies and institutions can render support to these local initiatives.

The Charter itself is the product of a collaborative effort, having grown out of the National Manpower Institute's close involvement with eight rural work-education councils presently participating in the U.S. Department of Labor-funded Work-Education Consortium.

The Work-Education Consortium is a diverse group of thirty-three communities that have made substantial efforts to involve important sectors of the community in youth's development. In these communities a combination of educators, business people, agriculturalists, union members, government officials, service agency representatives, parents, and students participate to smooth the transition from education to work. Each community is trying innovative methods of relating education and work through councils with different sources of community leadership. Collectively the

councils have expertise and experience that can provide models for other communities. The Consortium provides a forum for sharing this information and highlights those effective policies and procedures that can improve local education-work relationships. The National Manpower Institute (NMI) serves the Consortium by providing technical assistance to communities through field visits and the written word, by facilitating access to technical and funding sources at the federal level, by arranging for the provision of additional expert assistance, and by acting as an intermediary between the Consortium communities and the Cabinet agencies represented on the Federal Interagency Task Force on Education and Work.

Eight of the communities participating in the Consortium are rural, small towns, or service such areas and exemplify the diversity and variety of conditions characteristic of rural communities in America.

Each of these communities has developed a collaborative mechanism to address the school-to-work transition issue using different sources of community council leadership and different approaches. For example, the East Peoria Council is providing students in both rural and urban settings access to career information, career exploration, and work experiences that were not available previously. The Mid-Michigan Community Action Council is serving its county-wide constituency through the use of a growing cadre of 670 volunteers. The Sioux Falls Area Education-Work Council provides a regional forum whereby local school districts and employers formally separated by county lines can work together to impact a youth-transition situation that is not confined to any one locality or political jurisdiction.

The rural Consortium members are:

Bethel Area Community Education-Work Council
Bethel, Maine

Tri-County Industry-Education-Labor Council
East Peoria, Illinois

Mid-Michigan Community Action Council
Alma, Michigan

Martin County Education-Employment Council
Williamston, North Carolina

Northwest Vermont Community Education-Work Council
St. Albans, Vermont

Sioux Falls Area Education-Work Council
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Community Education-Work Council
Tullahoma, Tennessee

Community Education-Work Council of Southeast Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska

In December 1977, NMI, with the assistance of the Mid-Michigan Community Action Council of Gratiot County, Michigan, organized a two-day conference for these eight rural Consortium communities. The purpose of the conference was to provide the councils an opportunity to explore and define the rural perspective on the education-to-work transition, and to discuss among themselves and with outside resource persons the ways and means of addressing the problems that appear unique to rural conditions, values, and customs.

One of the outcomes of that meeting was the decision to develop "A Charter for Improved Rural Youth Transition." Following the meeting, staff of NMI's Center for Education and Work prepared a draft outline of the Charter, based on the concerns expressed by the rural Consortium members. A subsequent meeting was held in February 1978 at the annual meeting of the Work-Education Consortium; the rural council representatives then

reviewed and endorsed the draft prepared by NMI staff. NMI's Center for Education and Work staff has revised and expanded the document, based on recommendations made at that meeting.

The Charter will serve three major purposes:

- Provide expression for rural Consortium members' concerns, priorities, and needs;
- Provide guidance to rural Consortium members and to other rural communities interested in addressing youth transition issues;
- Inform agencies and institutions at the state, regional, and federal levels about these rural efforts and provide suggestions for their cooperation and assistance.

Moreover, it is hoped the development of the Charter will be only the first of a series of initiatives undertaken by these rural Consortium members with the support of the National Manpower Institute. Recognizing the varied conditions that characterize rural America, a major priority of the eight community councils is to expand rural Consortium membership to include representatives of other communities, particularly from the South and West. An expanded rural membership would assume a leadership role in developing policy recommendations and strategies to ensure that adequate resources become available to address transition problems in rural areas. This group, in addition, would identify, shape, and disseminate to other communities collaborative models that are appropriate to rural conditions. A major function of this body would be the development of liaisons with such groups as the Rural Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives and other political bodies at the federal, regional, and state levels. The implementation of this agenda would go far to increase the understanding by policy-makers and legislators of the needs of rural areas and the inadequacy of resources presently available to address youth transition problems in rural communities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH TRANSITION IN RURAL AMERICA

In a nation that is overwhelmingly metropolitan both in population and outlook, it can be difficult to draw attention to issues involving rural areas. It is certainly no easy task to obtain an accurate and detailed analysis of rural problems, in part because the vocabulary used by demographers and statisticians is woefully inadequate for dealing with the diversity of populations that do not live in "urban places." The term "rural" is defined differently by government agencies: The Bureau of the Census defines as rural those places with populations of less than 2,500, while the Department of Labor defines as rural those counties where a majority of the people live in places of less than 2,500 population. Another term commonly used is "non-metropolitan -- referring to counties with a population of less than 50,000. However, none of these terms covers the wide array of social and life conditions that characterize non-urban places. Rural farm areas vary from widely scattered wheat farms to compact citrus or avocado groves. There are small towns organized around extractive activities such as fishing, mining or logging, each with distinctive cultural and social elements. There are small cities that serve as business, communication, transport, and in many instances, governmental centers, in the outlying counties and states of the country.

If there is a practical reality that forces discussion of such diversity under the single concept of "non-metropolitan," at least it can be acknowledged that the result places us in a position analagous to the Eskimo confronted with but a single word for snow -- it is useful primarily for those who are not familiar with the phenomenon.

We recognize that many of the problems facing young persons in non-metropolitan areas are common to all American youth. The fundamental transformation of the economy, and the attendant altered occupational structure, have created a chronic unemployment problem that has affected urban and rural youth alike since the early 1960s. Jobs for young persons have disappeared, both in and out of cities.

Yet, the setting affects dramatically the forms these problems take and the solutions that might be considered. The distinctive features of rural life give a starkness to the problem of unemployment. Rural areas have both limits and resources that must be considered in developing meaningful solutions.

What do we know about this rural population? A great many U.S. residents are non-metropolitan. In 1970, 63 million people, or 31 percent of the population, resided in such environments, according to the U.S. Census (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975: 3, Table A). Until recently there has been a significant and consistent decline in the non-metropolitan population over the years. The percentage of the population living in rural areas has decreased from 46.4 in 1940, to 43.9 in 1950, 37.0 in 1960, 31.4 in 1970, and then to 27.2 in 1974 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975: 3, Table A). In very recent years, however, there has been a change in the pattern of growth rates in the United States. Between 1970 and 1974, the actual rate of growth was greater for non-metropolitan areas than for metropolitan areas -- 5.0 percent growth compared to 3.6 percent respectively. However, while central cities in large metropolitan areas have suffered a net population loss, suburban populations have increased at rates even higher than

those of rural areas (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975: 5, Table E).

Independent of population shifts, the close to one-third of the population residing in non-metropolitan areas merits attention. Moreover, the initial signs of a change in population movements suggests another concern. Strategies for dealing with the problems of rural Americans can no longer be based on the assumption that they will be moving to metropolitan areas.

Economic indicators show a general pattern of disadvantage for non-metropolitan populations. There are sharp differences in income. The 1973 median family income in non-metropolitan areas was $10,327, a figure somewhat lower than the median family income of $11,343 reported for residents of central cities, and well below the $14,007 reported in the suburban rings (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1975: 15, Table P). Closely related is the finding that poverty is somewhat more common in non-metropolitan than in urban areas. While the rural population comprised less than 30 percent of the total population in 1973, in that same year 40.1 percent of all persons falling below the poverty line were residents of such areas (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975. 16, Table R). In other words, while in 1973 the proportion of individuals earning below the poverty line for the nation as a whole was 13.7 percent, for non-metropolitan areas close to one individual in every five (19.1 percent) fell below this line (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975: 16, Table R).

One factor which has a dramatic effect on the economic structure of rural areas is the tremendous increase in the productivity of such areas, without a corresponding increase in demand which would call for a

simultaneous increase in employment. As one economist observes:

> "Gross factor productivity, i.e. output in ratio to all inputs, has risen sharply and continuously since 1920. Even more spectacularly, the charted indexes of total labor input and of output per man-hour have diverged at almost right angles since 1940. If agricultural output had faced an indefinitely expansible market, total production could have been more greatly increased and thereby enabled the retention of a greater proportion of the earlier farm labor force. But the market has not had sufficient absorptive capacity to offset gains in productivity; consequently, the intermediating mechanism relating increases in productivity to labor force adjustments has been the generally adverse farm price and income outlook. Given this outlook, thousands of farm youth have had to decide, individually, whether to stay with the family occupation, and fewer thousands of farmers have had to decide, also individually, whether to continue." (Fuller, 1970: 20)

According to Ray Marshall (1976) the transition problems of rural youth are significantly shaped by these economic conditions. These conditions, in effect, establish a number of barriers to the full development of rural young men and women.

The rural economic base can be seen to pose significant problems for rural young people. The lack of occupational diversity means that few job and on-the-job training opportunities are available and role models for jobs other than farmwork, marginal and blue-collar positions are scarce (Marshall, 1976). Private and public sector employment opportunities are severely limited, and although the location of more manufacturing plants in rural areas, especially in the Southeast, has resulted in somewhat more diversified employment opportunity, a large proportion of these jobs are going to workers imported from urban areas (Miles, 1973). The problem is compounded by inferior labor market information systems and inadequate educational and vocational preparation.

The need for more accurate and complete labor market information and occupational counseling in rural areas is acute. Responses to a 1974

survey of rural youth indicated that the 800 male and female high school seniors in the sample had very limited understanding of the world of work, were insecure and suspicious about their prospects for employment, and were unfamiliar with the federal-state employment service. A recent survey of job placement services provided by public school systems in the United States reveals that only 35 percent of school districts with fewer than 25,000 students have such services as compared to 71 percent of the districts with 25,000 students or more (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1976). Federal and state placement agencies (including the U.S. Employment Service) have limited coverage of, and thus limited effectiveness in, rural areas (Marshall, 1976).

Educational attainment is another arena in which sharp differences between non-metropolitan and metropolitan populations are apparent. In 1974, in the nation as a whole, 53.9 percent of non-metropolitan residents over age 25 had completed high school, in contrast to 59.8 percent in central cities and 68.5 percent in the suburban rings. Within the non-metropolitan group, more exacting breakdowns emphasize these differences. In counties with no town larger than 2,500, only 42.5 percent of the adults have completed high school, compared with 52.8 percent in counties with a town of 2,500 to 24,999, and 62.0 percent in those designated non-metropolitan with a town of 25,000 or more (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975: 54, Table 9). Even these figures are a bit deceptive since as high a proportion of non-metropolitan as urban youth aged 16 or 17 are enrolled in school. The drop-off occurs rapidly in the next higher age group, because significantly lower proportions of rural youth are enrolled in higher education (Sanders, 1977: 103). This is consistent

with a great number of studies that have shown significantly lower levels of educational attainment among rural and farm adolescents.

Adequate educational preparation is crucial to a smooth school-to-work transition; unfortunately, rural educational systems labor under the burdens of inadequate resources, training, and support services. Vocational schools, in many instances, are still directing students into traditional rural job paths, mainly agriculture or homemaking. During the period between 1950 and 1966 when farming jobs declined to the lowest point in decades, enrollment in vocational agriculture rose to a new high (Department of Agriculture, 1969). These educational and employment difficulties often are exacerbated by geographic isolation, inadequate medical and social services, and a pattern of out-migration to urban areas that further contributes to the depletion of an already inadequate tax base in rural communities.

The Marion County, Oregon Youth Study offers some insights regarding rural youth in transition. In one of few on-going, longitudinal studies dealing with one local area, early results are consistent with findings of national studies. A medium-sized county of 120,888 population in 1,175 square miles, Marion County's 19 incorporated communities include only 59 percent of the total population. Only Central City has a population of over 5,000; two-thirds of the 19 towns have fewer than 1,000 residents. The balance of the population resides in unincorporated, primarily rural areas (Polk, 1977).

Findings of the study to date indicate that a good percentage of Marion County youth already have been confronted with the necessity of moving. Ten years after high school graduation, 52 percent of the young

persons reside outside the county. High school performance appears to be related to the migration pattern. High achievers more frequently move to metropolitan or urban settings as young adults (57 percent) than is true for the low academic achievers (44 percent) or the dropouts (38 percent). At the same time, a preference to live in either a rural area or a small town is common to all of these groups. The preference to live in a rural area was expressed by 55 percent of the total group, 45 percent of the dropouts, 58 percent of the low achievers, and 53 percent of the high achievers, though the last group is more likely to be found in urban areas. These data tell a sad story: the most qualified youth are leaving rural places, even though many of them would prefer to stay if educational and -- perhaps more importantly -- economic opportunities were available to them.

The imperative for rural work-education councils is to work toward creating these opportunities. If the recent population growth in non-metropolitan areas continues, it may encourage and provide a new basis for this work. Migration back to smaller towns and rural areas would revitalize these markets and create demand for more personnel and government services. Technological innovation can support this movement: electronic communication and information retrieval devices now make it possible for certain kinds of professional work to be done far away from urban centers. In addition, if government programs and policies can become more responsive to these newly emerging conditions, a variety of new opportunities may become available to youth in rural communities. The challenge for rural councils is to ensure that these new opportunities will enhance the quality of community life and will reflect community values.

PROPOSITIONS AND ACTION INITIATIVES

This section constitutes the body of the "Charter for Improved Rural Youth Transition." A number of Propositions and Action Initiatives are advanced for the purpose of guiding local collaborative efforts that seek to address rural youth transition problems in local communities.

Each Proposition is accompanied by a background description of the circumstances and conditions that make its effectuation important. The Action Initiatives constitute a variety of ways by which the Proposition can be implemented.

The diversity of rural conditions and the complexity of the youth transition problem precludes the development of a simple set of solutions. We have attempted here to provide a variety of options, and our hope is that the Charter's Propositions and Action Initiatives will be continually added to as rural work-education councils expand their activities and grow in experience. Like work-education councils themselves, the Charter is intended to be a catalyst -- a document that will stimulate new initiatives within rural councils and communities.

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PROPOSITION

The expansion of education and training opportunities must be balanced by and integrated with the development of appropriate employment opportunities.

At the present time, many local rural economies are unable to sustain sufficient numbers and varieties of rewarding work opportunities for the adults in their communities. High unemployment and underemployment are endemic to most rural areas. Obviously, this situation is not conducive to the development of work experiences and training opportunities for the youth of these communities. Additionally, the training and work experience opportunities that do exist often are geared to declining occupations, such as agriculture, or to occupations in which there are few openings, such as manufacturing.

In many instances, young people's training prepares them neither for existing local opportunities nor for openings in urban or metropolitan areas. Understandably, local school systems are often unable or unwilling to use scarce local resources to train youth for employment elsewhere when the migration of the most able youth to urban areas further weakens the already inadequate economic base of the community. Consequently, the integration of education and economic development activities is crucial to any significant improvement of the transition process for rural youth. Community involvement and support for such activities is imperative if they are to succeed. Such support is strongest when all sectors of the community are involved early in thorough assessment of community problems and the establishment of priorities.

A rural work-education council can be a suitable catalytic agent for

such a community-wide effort and can provide staff and technical support for its implementation. The involvement of the larger community in the articulation of development goals not only will make the community more aware of youth transition issues, but also will bring to light ways to enhance prospects for youth by encouraging a comprehensive view of community conditions, problems, and opportunities.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural work-education councils should work toward the integration of education and economic development and seek to fashion a variety of strategies that are responsive to the needs of their own communities. Although developing a comprehensive plan may require a long "yeasting" period, the council should emphasize action and accomplishment.

Vital components of model development are the commitment and involvement of a cross section of the community and community control over the administration and operation of the program. Efforts should be made to increase the use of federal employment and training development funds and to find imaginative ways to integrate these funds with private corporate resources and locally based tax revenues.

Providing Human Services

Human services are frequently desperately needed in rural areas. The fields of health and welfare, in particular, provide potential employment opportunities for rural youth. Rural work-education councils are in a good position to encourage the development of new training and service delivery models that would provide greater employment opportunities for rural youth

and adults. For example, collaboration with local medical associations, colleges and universities, governmental agencies, and elected officials could lead to the creation of new work opportunities in the health field. Similar efforts could be undertaken in the fields of social welfare, mental health, and recreation.

Developing Rural Coping Skills

Many youth leave rural areas because they lack the necessary coping skills and value orientation to become productive members of rural society. Many more stay and swell the ranks of the underemployed and unemployed. Frequently, it is the academic achievers who leave and the underachievers who stay (Polk, p.19). Efforts should be made to provide opportunities for a cross section of youth to acquire a variety of skills that could enable them to remain in the community. For example, a four-year program of experience-based learning for a representative cross section of high school and college aged youth (grades 11 through 14) could be proposed. The aim would be for youth to acquire a variety of skills that would permit them to remain and flourish in rural areas. The sponsor for such a program might be the local high school or vocational school, a community or four year college, an agricultural extension service, or a rural economic development organization. Such a program would not be designed for high capital intensive, profit-oriented enterprises. Rather it would attempt to provide opportunities for youth to be productively involved in small scale agriculture, animal husbandry, manufacturing, and sales as well as a variety of other livelihood pursuits that combine self employment with work for others.

Developing Youth Enterprise Opportunities

Given the shortage of work experience programs, rural work-education councils should encourage the development and expansion of youth-operated enterprises. Local business and manufacturing associations could sponsor these programs jointly with 4-H groups, Junior Achievement programs, Explorer Scouts' career exploration activities, and a variety of other groups. While work preparation is important to the development of work habits of youth, it appears to be more a requirement of metropolitan than of rural areas. Rural youth are often exposed to the necessity of good work habits without formal preparation. Hence, youth enterprise development has a much better chance of success in rural areas than in most inner cities. Some of the ideas for youth enterprise fashioned by middle class planners for minority inner city youth in the 1960s (Pride, Inc., of Washington, D.C., and the Real Great Society of New York City) could be adapted to suit the conditions and needs of rural communities.

Forming School-based Community Development Corporations

Jonathan Sher (1977) of the National Rural Center has proposed the establishment of school-based community development corporations (CDCs). The school-based CDC would function in various ways -- as an economic development program, a community planning agency, an employment and training development project, a career education program, a community services agency, and a nonpartisan political institution. Although Sher proposes that the CDC be developed under the aegis of the school board, work-education councils also could serve as sponsors.

PROPOSITION

Rural work-education councils can serve to generate initiatives that benefit and involve a wide cross section of the community, enhance the community's general quality of life, and reflect its prevailing values.

Rural communities usually have a variety of volunteer organizations involved in community enhancement activities. The development of more rational rural education-to-work transitions may be promoted best through the involvement of community volunteers. Membership in voluntary organizations is substantial and active participation is generally the rule. These organizations encompass a range of purposes and functions which include specific task-oriented activities like the volunteer fire fighting and prevention companies; social-business promotion groups like the Rotarians; paternal-fraternal groups and auxiliaries like the Lions Club; youth development clubs like the Explorer Scouts, 4-H and Future Farmers of America; and religious organizations like the Masons and Knights of Columbus. Many rural people are significantly involved and find rewards in local community volunteer efforts. Most importantly, this involvement sets a positive tone for most rural community residents, including those who are not involved or only minimally involved.

The Martin County Education-Employment Council headquartered in Williamston, North Carolina, has established a "Resource Bank" of 650 volunteers. They represent 150 different occupations and represent a cross section of the 24,100 Martin County residents. Such an active involvement mechanism taps a community resource of great potential and provides a means by which local community residents acquire and maintain a stake in the action.

Work-education councils in rural areas also should actively seek to involve individuals who do not belong to formal organizations, indigent people, and those who have been most seriously affected by transition problems. These people should be given an opportunity to identify their particular education-to-work transition needs, and to be involved in initiatives to resolve them.

In addition, involving volunteers in council activities is an effective way to build constituent support for work-education councils.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural work-education councils should seek to make volunteers an integral part of their operations. Such support may come from both groups and individuals.

Involving Community Groups

Community service groups and organizations that have a defined leadership structure and an active membership are ideal for involvement in rural youth transition efforts. The role of work-education councils would be to provide motivation, focus, background information, support, guidance, and technical assistance so that groups can carry out initiatives on their own. Work-education councils should monitor and coordinate such efforts to maintain direction, avoid duplication, and prevent loss of interest. The development of an inventory of community resources and a long range, community-wide agenda for youth transition activities will provide valuable guidance to both councils and voluntary groups. These should be reviewed and revised periodically. A variety of rural groups might be involved,

including church and recreational clubs, social and fraternal organizations, community service groups, and cooperatives.

Among the tasks such groups can undertake in conjunction with work-education councils are gathering information about the community by conducting surveys on occupational information, land-use patterns for economic development, or socio-economic data to determine eligibility for state or federal assistance; suasion and influence brokering by identifying influential community leaders who can establish linkages between councils and private industry or various government agencies; or encouraging collaborative community action by working with competing interest groups to combine efforts around education-to-work transition initiatives in a neutral forum created by work-education councils.

Involving Individual Volunteers

A wealth of talent, capability, and experience can be found among rural community residents. Work-education councils should initiate and maintain "talent searches" to identify and involve people who can assist the work-education councils.

Volunteers can make a variety of other contributions. Some of the more important areas are: identifying and acquiring resources; writing pamphlets and reports, or developing graphic presentations of projects; developing publicity materials for local radio, television, or newspapers; working with local agricultural, manufacturing, and business enterprises to develop employment and career opportunities; and developing educational programs.

A Community Task Force could involve a cross section of individuals in

determining the nature and extent of education-to-work transition problems, and in suggesting approaches and solutions.

Councils might wish to provide incentives to select members of a community who have particular capabilities and interests that augment the efforts of work-education councils. For example, the Sioux Falls Area Education-Work Council, in conjunction with the Center for Community Organization and Area Development (CENCOAD), has developed the role of the Community Enabler. CENCOAD identifies, orients, supports, and provides stipends to community volunteers who assist local people in organizing around common concerns. The University for Man which operates in rural communities of Kansas has developed community faculties for the purpose of connecting "persons who know with persons who seek to know." In this variation of the "Free University" concept, community members are involved in educational activities both as students and as teachers thus increasing the educational resources of communities at a minimum of cost.

To maintain morale, commitment, and motivation, it is important for each volunteer to be able to recognize his or her contribution to the overall effort. Volunteers should be suitably acknowledged for their contribution in a newsletter or at periodic celebrations sponsored by councils.

PROPOSITION

Rural work-education councils need to increase both public and institutional awareness of school-to-work transition issues. Awareness-building activities should be based on an affirmation of community pride and be a corollary to the general reawakened interest in rural America.

For a number of reasons, urban America appears to be losing some of its appeal as a place to live and work for increasing numbers of Americans. Concerns for health, safety, and welfare as well as diminishing employment opportunities are lending impetus to an out-migration from cities to rural and small town communities. For the first time in this century, between 1970 and 1974 non-metropolitan areas evidenced greater population gains (5.0%) than metropolitan areas (3.6%) (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1975). Although the primary areas of gain are in counties contiguous to metropolitan areas, more rural counties also have shown increases. One attitude preference survey by Gallup Polls indicates this trend will probably continue, at least for the lifetime of the current adult population. By 1973, nearly two-thirds of big city dwellers indicated a preference for rural or small town living (Gallup Poll, 1973).

Even though the small reported gains in rural population are not evident in all rural areas, and despite persistent evidence that rural youth are still migrating to metropolitan areas, the long-term trend of population movement from rural areas to large cities appears to have halted, if not reversed. A significant concommitant development is the beginning of a genuine rural American renaissance. The burgeoning appreciation for rural and small town life provides an important opportunity for rural and urban Americans to take stock of where rural America is, where its

people want to go, and what role its youth will play in bringing about a more hopeful future.

Most rural youth want to remain in rural areas, and many metropolitan youth express a preference for small town or rural living. Thus, the incongruity of a persistent exodus of the young from rural areas should provide the impetus for community reappraisal and action.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Work-education councils should be involved in community education efforts that move from gaining community affirmation of youth transition problems, through appraising youth transition needs, to generating initiatives to overcome those problems. Youth transition problems must be defined and given clarity and focus. The public must be made sufficiently aware of the problem to begin to demand action. There are several areas in which rural work-education councils can assume active leadership.

Developing Public Media Presentations

Given the dispersal and isolation of many rural Americans and their heavy reliance on radio and television as a means of finding out what is happening, work-education councils should make optimum use of these media to educate the public. Media presentations regarding the character of education-to-work transition ranging from 30-second or one-minute spot announcements similar to the Bicentennial Minutes, to guest appearances on talk shows, documentaries, lectures, etc. should be developed. Both commercial and educational outlets should be encouraged to participate. The involvement of a cross section of community interests in the development,

execution, and sponsorship of such media presentations should be sought.

Presenting Work-Education Chautauquas

County fairs are occasions of great importance in rural America. So are church picnics and outdoor socials and festivities of all kinds. A phenomenon that combines these elements and is rooted in rural American history is the "Tent Chautauqua." These flourished in rural America between 1900 and the early 1930s, and it is estimated that over 40 million people were involved in these educational and cultural activities. A renewal of this American tradition with a work-education theme would be appropriate (National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, 1977).

Work-Education Chautauquas could become effective mechanisms to spread the word regarding the education-to-work transition in familiar formats in people's own backyards. They could be an important forum for the transferral of ideas, and a means to involve youth on a year-round basis in the design and construction of the exhibits and as participants in the presentations.

Convening Rural Work-Education Forums

A variety of formats could serve to heighten education-to-work transition awareness by both the general public and key decision-makers. Seminars, town meetings, and programs for local club meetings provide excellent vehicles for public dialogue. Many communities have traditional annual occurrences such as the New England Town Meeting or Community Affirmation Day, as well as monthly information seminars sponsored and led by community leaders and representatives. Whatever the format or time frame, these

events should involve recognized public persons, and have the endorsement or sponsorship of a cross section of community interests, and deal with education-to-work transition questions specific to the local community. Topics for these forums should be integrated with and supportive of other council initiatives.

Developing "Education-to-Work" Seminars

The development and sponsorship of seminars regarding education-to-work transition can be undertaken by a variety of groups, including secondary schools, community and junior colleges, four year colleges and universities, and adult and community education programs. Both local and regional arrangements may be used. For example, the University for Man in Manhattan, Kansas, has successfully operated in a number of small rural communities in the state for several years. The program matches declared interests of local residents with knowledgeable and willing persons as teachers or mentors in not-for-credit courses. The cost of the program is minimal since it relies heavily on volunteer participation and contributions of space and materials. Many of the organizing personnel are VISTA volunteers or persons from other existing service programs who operate in a network guided and supported by a full-time backup staff.

Disseminating Rural Youth Transition Information

Education-to-work transition information must be generated and disseminated. Several rural councils regularly distribute newsletters. "News and Views" of the Mid-Michigan Community Action Council and "The Bridge" issued by the Martin County Education-Employment Council endeavor to inform youth agency personnel as well as private citizens of the character and problems of local education-to-work transition and ways of achieving improvement.

Spokespeople from both within and outside of a community might also be involved in community discussions of rural youth transition. Topics might include: "Economic, Community, and Youth Development: Benefits and Responsibilities of Collaboration," "Work Opportunities for Graduating Seniors: Realities and Myths," "Livelihood Prospects for Youth Who Leave School on Their 16th Birthday." Education-to-work transition speakers' bureaus similar to the "Dial-A-Speaker" program of the Mid-Michigan Community Action Council could be developed in other rural areas.

PROPOSITION

Rural collaboration must seek to foster the consolidation of local, sectional, and national interests to meet specialized youth transition needs.

An important task for collaborative work-education efforts in rural areas is the identification of youth with special transition problems and the development of programs or services to assist them. Special problems may include geographical isolation, physical or mental handicaps, severe poverty, family dislocation, lack of mobility, and drug or alcohol abuse. Youth with such problems or special needs are often neglected in small communities because of the inadequacy of health or social services, scarcity of financial and program resources, and the difficulty of identifying those most in need of help -- especially in sparsely settled and isolated areas.

To begin to address these needs, work-education councils might initiate a low-key outreach program in which a volunteer network of community residents would seek to identify the special needs in a number of communities and bring them to the attention of local agencies, clubs, or other volunteer groups with social service concerns.

As a second step, the council should endeavor to share these concerns with other nearby communities (i.e., within a county or parish) by relying on informal networks and neighborly relationships to build community awareness of the problems and to generate support for efforts to address them. Building these informal networks within and across communities may help to create a climate of trust and cooperation that can make more formal cross-community collaboration possible. When the time is right, work-education

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councils may propose that three or four communities within a county join together to develop a program to meet an identified special youth need and to seek resources, both public and private, to implement the program. However, if such efforts are to bear fruit and gain acceptance within the community, they must grow slowly and be rooted in local understanding of both the problems and the need for collaborative solutions. Historically, rural development has been severely handicapped by inter-community competition and rivalries based, in many instances, on each community's acute perception of the scarcity of resources available to address local problems. Any program proposal that will provide benefits or services to one sector of the community at the expense of another will only exacerbate already existing community rivalry and distrust. For instance, public employment programs often appear to rural people to favor the "non-working poor" over the "working poor." Any project that would bring resources to one community at the expense of another should also be avoided. However, a number of special problems (e.g., those of the handicapped) cut across socio-economic lines and offer particular opportunities for joint community action.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Meeting the needs of the neediest will require cross-community cooperation and consolidation of resources. Rural work-education councils could be involved in several initiatives to nurture county-wide cooperation in youth development. Such cooperation could help to lessen the effects of isolation and the competition for scarce resources.

Training and Placement for Social Services

Health and welfare services in rural America need to be greatly improved. Public delivery systems are generally inadequate, and private

sector support systems are uneven at best, despite the advantages of "personal caring." Caseworkers, social workers, therapists, and nurses, among others, are frequently in short supply, and their training and orientation is frequently inappropriate to rural conditions. The sometimes well-publicized searches by isolated communities for medical doctors are not always successful, and too often the doctors do not stay.

Similar problems are evident in the educational and social service areas. It is not unusual for county agricultural extension agents to lack training in areas in which they are expected to perform yeoman services (i.e., soil science, land use surveys, animal husbandry, horticulture, meteorology, community development, rural sociology, etc.). Job requirements and preparation are frequently inadequate or inappropriate.

Work-education councils might coordinate efforts that lead to the development of more appropriate training and placement programs by a variety of existing public and private institutions located in or near their area. Programs could be developed for a full range of professional and para-professional social service functions and positions. The integration of training and placement of social service personnel is crucial.

Providing Services for Exceptional Youth

Exceptional youth include both the handicapped and the gifted. Gifted youth as well as those with physical and/or psychological handicaps require support in ways not always possible in isolated small rural communities.

Frequently, the highly intelligent or creative youth lack sufficient encouragement, support, and training to realize a fuller measure of their potential. Likewise, youth who have impaired sight, hearing, and mobility face particular transition problems that require supportive services not available in rural areas.

Rural work-education councils can generate and coordinate efforts to identify the needs of exceptional youth, the availability and nature of services to meet their needs, and ways and means by which such needs can be more adequately met.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112, sections 501, 503, and 504) as well as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 91-230) call for increased support and opportunities for the handicapped in both education and work. Work-education councils can be instrumental in fashioning ways and means by which such laws can be applied to benefit rural areas.

Developing Counseling, Caring, and Sheltering Programs

Rural communities frequently lack the facilities to counsel, care for, and shelter the handicapped and chronically ill. Many rural counties even lack community directories of available services. The Martin County Education-Employment Council in North Carolina met a local need by compiling and publishing a "Youth Services Directory." A finding from this inventory is that many of the services listed are located outside the county, as is often the case.

Certain chronic diseases can be more effectively managed through intelligent and supportive group counseling. Alcoholism, epilepsy, and diabetes, for example, necessitate a continuous access to persons in communities with understanding and knowledge of the problem for intelligent support and care to occur. Other chronic afflictions such as drug addiction require similar types of supportive care, but may be better dealt with through a more anonymous network in more distant communities.

In rural areas persons with chronic afflictions receive home care and family support, but there may be little understanding of such conditions in the community. This imbalance needs to be corrected.

Rural work-education councils might coordinate the development of a network of supportive services that provide rural residents with easily comprehensible information, telephone "hot line" support, and public education. The last is particularly important in rural areas. Both the public at large as well as program personnel need to be impressed with the necessity of full community involvement. Regional cooperation in improving sheltering and health care facilities may foster other cooperative programs.

PROPOSITION

Given the dispersal of population, the lack of public transportation, and the isolation of rural people and institutions, rural work-education councils need to be provided with adequate supportive services to carry out their work.

Rural work-education councils have particular needs for supportive services which differ from those of their suburban and urban counterparts.

In 1972, there were only 395 bus systems in towns under 50,000 population. In the last 15 years, 146 bus companies have disappeared -- most from cities of less than 25,000 people. Sparse and dispersed populations coupled with the lack of any real public transportation systems force reliance on private transportation. This situation seriously hinders the work of work-education councils' staff and volunteers; getting to places consumes considerable time, energy, and funds. For rural education-work councils to function efficiently, provision for travel by staff and volunteers must be assured.

Telephone communications in rural areas assume an expanded importance. Frequently the phone is the only access to sources of information and assistance and often must substitute for get-togethers and meetings.

A successful collaborative project often may depend on the participation of key community leaders or institutions, as an employment project would require the cooperation of local employers. Work-education councils need to be able to support this cooperation through the use of resources and technical assistance to develop and strengthen the participation of rural groups; ~~the~~ involvement of community institutions may depend on providing such technical assistance.

Work-education councils should not prove the case for collaboration

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solely through demonstration efforts or projects. They may, however, judiciously provide ad hoc and short term technical assistance for purposes of capacity building and more effective involvement of community institutions in the collaborative process.

One of the most important functions of work-education councils is in disseminating to the community relevant school-to-work transition information. Since much of this information must be obtained elsewhere, work-education councils must be in position to acquire or coordinate considerable amounts of literature as well as audio-visual materials. Councils must also be instrumental in adapting materials to the local idiom and in the developing of homegrown variants. Additionally, resources must be available to develop a variety of local media presentations on the education-to-work transition.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural work-education councils require additional resources for supportive services to generate and sustain collaborative programs. Such resources may be in the form of finances, personnel, equipment, materials, space, and services.

Developing a School-to-Work Information Base

To adequately serve the community and develop and conduct programs, local work-education councils will need a variety of information. They should have access to and be able to acquire data for a range of subjects. Examples of the information they may require include: federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the school-to-work transition; models of rural programs and services; current information on public and

private funding sources for programs, services, and resources; information on possible participants, such as agencies, institutions, employers, civic groups, and local leaders; articles and reports on aspects of the education-to-work transition as well as on rural life, culture, education, and economics.

Work-education councils should focus on the local area for the collection and development of information. Obtaining contributions from local institutions for the information base is important. It gives them a stake in the action by involving them in the process of defining the need, nature, and usage of this information.

The collection of information and data will be important to a council's role in educating the community about youth transition. In view of the variety of uses councils will have for the information base, the collection should not be limited to books, pamphlets, and reports. It should also include tapes, records, slides, and films. This collection of "images" could include slide presentations of relevant statistical information or filmed reports of successful projects. A similar collection of "people" could include stories on community people or institutions with a range of talents and experience who can be involved in council activities. Another collection of "ideas" could include descriptions of the variety of models, methods, and processes that could be used in council projects on the education-to-work transition.

Local work-education councils should have the resources to acquire such information on a service-fee basis, if necessary.

Increasing Transportation and Communications Allocations

Rural work-education councils need to augment their operating budgets

with additional resources to assure adequate funds for transportation and communications for regular staff, support personnel, and volunteers. Such funds may be necessary for participation in conferences, training sessions, and liaison activities in the locality, or elsewhere in the region, state, or nation.

Creating Regional Information and Technical Assistance Consortia

Work-education councils in the same region could form an informal consortium with other relevant institutions within the region. Consortium members could include colleges and universities, private and public research institutes, and state and regional agencies. The purpose of the consortium would be to share information, resources, and successful program ideas; through such a mechanism, distant communities also could participate in region-wide programs.

Developing Local Technical Assistance

Local work-education councils should have resources or access to resources to provide ad hoc, short-term technical assistance to council members and project participants. Short term assistance can contribute to building the capacity in the area to operate programs that address the youth transition problem, and can strengthen the ability of individual council members to operate more effective activities and services.

Acquiring Third Party Assistance

Local work-education councils will develop strength and expertise in dealing with problems of their particular locality. However, there will be areas where councils may need to tap resources outside their own areas of expertise. Councils may also have a need to develop liaison with a segment

of private industry or a federal agency to locate support or information for a new project. Councils' policies and procedures should be flexible enough to enable using an outside institution or group with the needed expertise on such occasions. Sufficient budget allocations should be provided to councils to encourage the use of third party facilitators.

PROPOSITION

National data do not adequately reflect the dimensions of rural living. An important function of rural education-work councils can be to specify the key indicators that more fully reflect the qualities of rural life. Rural work-education councils should collect, develop, and disseminate more relevant, accurate, and usable data regarding local rural communities.

National awareness frequently does not reflect the needs of rural America. The character of rural living is not as well understood as it should be, and this situation continues to be reflected in laws, statutes, standards, and regulations which are designed more for the benefit of urban than of rural America.

Rural America has experienced extraordinary changes during this century. The rural public is not fully aware of the effects of increased mechanization, communications, mobility, and specialization.

Rural economies, be they agricultural, extractive, recreational, manufacturing, or mixed, are invariably dependent on domestic and international markets far removed from the bucolic self-sufficiency of early America. Decisions by Chicago's Board of Trade and the Kremlin may have as much impact on the wheat farmers of the Dakotas as events in neighboring counties only miles away.

The press of mechanization and the freeing of agricultural labor has released countless numbers, both eager and bitter, to pursue other endeavors. Economic development for rural areas is increasingly of concern. The pull between the old and the new frequently produces wrenching tensions. For example, the growth of manufacturing in rural areas is often a response to the availability of low paid unorganized labor; such growth also inevitably effects the environment, existing marginal economic activity, property

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values, and taxes, and brings an influx of new and more competitive and qualified labor to rural areas.

Rural work-education councils should be responsive to the economic development needs of all sectors of their communities. Councils should be involved in efforts to document and validate present as well as future needs and develop ways by which the education of its people becomes an integral part of community development initiatives. Rural work-education councils should be involved in two interrelated pursuits regarding rural conditions: knowledge development and knowledge utilization.

Data regarding rural education-to-work transition as well as the circumstances and conditions that shape it needs to be retrieved and/or developed for use by legislators, developers, planners, human service administrators, and persons involved in the transition from education to work. Many local, state, or national governmental officials, both elected and appointed, would welcome well substantiated positions to help them make a better case for their constituents. Private investment interests are particularly responsive to substantiated evidence regarding the advisability of locating or expanding enterprises in rural areas.

A specific example of underused data relating to the education-work transition is occupational and career information. As Norma Ausmus of the Division of Career Information Services of the Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. points out, there is an abundance of occupational and career information available which should be retrieved and used. It has been collected by a variety of sources for a variety of purposes, for the most part on a national level, and much of it is of questionable value for local communities. But rural work-education councils should coordinate

efforts to retrieve and use as much relevant existing information as possible by collaborating with local, state, and national groups and sources. Where appropriate career information is not available, councils should attempt to generate it through such existing institutions as State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural work-education councils should be involved in a number of efforts to collect, develop, and disseminate more relevant, accurate, and usable data regarding rural conditions. They should exercise care in using and adapting as much existing information and data as possible before generating the development of new sources.

Developing Relevant Socio-Economic Indicators

The development of more relevant indicators of rural socio-economic conditions is long overdue. Rural work-education councils should take the lead in coordinating initiatives that can lead to more responsive laws, statutes, regulations, and standards of well being.

Federal income standards of poverty for non-farm and farm families of four differ by over $1,000; the poverty level for a non-farm family of four is $6,240 vs. $5,200 for a farm family of four. Yet food prices in rural areas are frequently higher than in urban areas due to processing and shipping costs. And in many rural areas, standard definitions of employment and unemployment do not accurately reflect the realities of making a living in rural America.

More relevant socio-economic indicators should be conceptually sound as well as germane to the rural experience. They must be related both

substantively and methodologically to work already completed or in progress. The rural members of the Work-Education Consortium of the National Manpower Institute and other coordinating agencies should play a significant role in such endeavors.

Determining Characteristics of Rural Youth Transition

There is little empirical data on the character and nature of rural youth transition. Few studies follow youth after they leave school, and often these are not sufficiently substantive to be of much use. When such information does exist it rarely becomes integrated into the curriculum.

One exception is the Lane County Youth Study by the Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, which has been tracking graduates of Lane County secondary schools since 1964.

The Vocational Education Amendments of 1976, Section 112 B (1)(b) to the Vocational Education Act of 1963 facilitates the tracking of students involved in vocational programs. Despite the legislative mandate, those provisions are only perfunctorily used. The closeness of most rural communities affords an opportunity to develop ways to determine and improve the congruence between education and work. However, obtaining a greater understanding of education-to-work transitions must be followed by efforts to encourage school administrators, teachers, school board members, manpower and economic developers, and others to make use of the information.

Particular efforts need to be made to find out more about school dropouts and academic underachievers. Generational tracking of youth through the Armed Services, through selected industries, and through a variety of public and private vocational training programs should be pursued. Selected case studies comparing persons who have remained in rural areas with those

who have come back after middle and post-middle age should shed some light on education-to-work transitions.

Gaining Access to Occupational and Career Information

Rural areas suffer from a greater dearth of relevant occupational and career information than do urban areas. Yet their need for such information and the use to which it can be put is demonstrably great. The Oregon Career Information System has demonstrated that access to a state-wide system affords considerable improvement in work preparation, orientation, options, and placement for rural residents. However, such systems are operating in only eight other states (Alabama, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Washington, and Wisconsin). Even in these states they are underused. The Michigan Occupational Information System, for example, has only recently been accessed by schools and agencies in Wayne County, a largely suburban-metropolitan area near Detroit. This was largely accomplished by a consortium of community interests led by the Livonia Work-Education Council of Southeastern Michigan using monies from the CETA program.

With the recent establishment of State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee of the U.S. Department of Labor, state-wide occupational information systems should soon be initiated in other states. Rural work-education councils should play a significant role in their development.

Even in existing occupational information systems, considerable improvement in the types, quality, and extent of relevant data must be achieved. Particular attention should be devoted to making state-wide information available to rural areas as well as to building assurances that

occupational and career information for less populated rural areas are included. This is particularly important since state and national data acquisitions are becoming increasingly general and lack applicability to local use. It is also important that the data more accurately reflect the values and opportunities of rural living.

PROPOSITION

State, regional, and federal resources available to rural areas for the enhancement of education-to-work transitions are generally inadequate. Work-education councils need to generate efforts to stimulate greater resources for rural populations.

Federal budget allocations to rural America are generally not on a par with those to metropolitan America. Senator James G. Abourezk of South Dakota, speaking about federal funding at the First National Conference on Rural America in 1975, stated "...virtually all the evidence we have points to a pattern of inequity for rural areas and small towns." This is particularly true of education, manpower, and social services. In fiscal year 1974, for example, only 22 percent of federal aid to state and local public agencies went to non-metropolitan areas. Vocational Education with 12 percent and Elementary and Secondary Education with 19 percent of total allocations were particularly under-subsidized.

Private sector investment in rural areas is not much stronger. Despite some growth in recent years, economic development in rural areas has not benefited rural communities and its residents to the degree needed and expected. Frequently the presence of a large workforce of underemployed, coupled with relatively favorable environmental conditions and the low incidence of organized labor, has attracted low-paying, labor-intensive industrial development. Economic growth and employment opportunities should increase, but not at the expense of the local citizenry.

Since resource allocations and investments for education, training, and work in rural areas are generally below those of non-rural areas, rural work-education councils should assume the leadership for the development of more resources for rural areas. Particular emphasis should be placed

on collaborative multiple resource development.

A policy for rural resource sufficiency is a modest proposition at best. For example, with regard to federally supported manpower programs, the following has been said:

> Rural programs are far more expensive than urban programs. Because of distances involved in operating rural programs, rural programs require more staff members; outreach, counseling, job development and other activities require more travel time in rural areas than in urban areas. Furthermore, transportation costs are also higher on rural projects. The lower educational levels of the rural population, the number of non-English speaking persons that live in rural areas, and the smaller proportion of the rural unemployed with vocational experiences, greatly increases the length of any manpower training program and hence, greatly increases the per capita costs of rural manpower programs. Manpower officials interested in developing and operating rural programs have to fight for and explain the need for higher per capita expenditures for rural manpower programs than for urban programs. Consequently, officials with the option of financing programs in either urban or rural areas are more likely to finance the "cheaper" urban projects. (Karter, 1975).

Given the fact that rural residents constitute only one-third of the total U.S. population and given the heterogeneity of their conditions and interests, proposals for greater resource sufficiency are difficult to implement (Rural Development Act of 1977). A strategy for sufficient rural funding needs to address several priorities:

- Identification and substantiation of actual rural education-to-work needs;
- Development of supportive collaborative rural constituent interests at local, state, regional, and national levels;
- Enlistment of support and contributions of funds and materials from private organizations, public agencies, and local governing bodies;
- Leadership of rural work-education councils in promoting resource development for improved rural school-to-work transition.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural work-education councils should advocate a three-step approach to generating more adequate resources for the enhancement of the education-

to-work transition:

- Maximizing the use of available resources;
- Gaining equal resource allocations for rural areas;
- Basing resource allocations on local community determination of needs.

Maximizing the Use of Available Resources

Due to the scarcity of resources available in rural areas, it is important to maximize the use of all currently available resources from both the public and private sources. Rural work-education councils in pursuit of this objective, need to be involved in a series of initiatives.

Resource Inventories and Monitoring: Currently available resources at the local, state, regional, and national levels should be identified. Rural work-education councils of the Work-Education Consortium and the National Manpower Institute, independently and in collaborative partnership, should determine the availability of resources, ways and means of access, scope of possible funding, and the types of programs and services for which funding is feasible. On-going review and monitoring of legislation, programs, and services for which both local and Consortium initiatives are eligible should be maintained.

Needs Inventories: Resource allocations are rarely sufficient to meet education-to-work transition needs. Obtaining larger allocations will require documentation of the needs of a local area. Rural work-education councils should assume a leadership role in the development of an inventory of resource needs to support rural education-to-work transition objectives. A clearer identification of the gap between available resources and needs

will be especially helpful in motivating the search for more resources, particularly outside of traditional channels. The cross sectional representation of work-education councils should strengthen the documentation significantly.

On-going Assessment: Programs and services available to rural areas should be reviewed and evaluated periodically. Both the processes and resultant products (e.g., indicators of rural education-to-work transition improvement) should be looked at. Work-education councils should exercise great care to involve the administrators of such programs as well as a variety of community members. General community improvement should be the purpose of such exercises, not critical denigration of efforts that may be suffering from great resource inadequacy.

Gaining Equal Resource Allocations for Rural Areas

There is a significant imbalance of resource allocations between rural and non-rural America. Rural work-education councils may wish to take several actions.

Determination of the Nature and Extent of Imbalances: A determination of the nature and extent of resource allocation imbalances by programs and services between rural and non-rural areas should be the first step in advocating equal resource allocations for those programs and services where rural areas are neglected (e.g., library development, vocational education, curriculum development, etc.).

The imbalance should be made known to both state and national funding sources and to public, quasi-public, and private sources.

Establishment of Priorities: Work-education councils need to establish program and service priorities. These priorities should be a direct outgrowth of local community determination of need, capacity to implement, and projected likelihood of improving education-to-work transitions for rural residents. Particular care should be taken to determine the interrelationship of priorities, both programmatically and fiscally. The melding of public and private sector interests of councils should be emphasized, as should developing nontraditional resources. Priorities may be met through a combination of external and local resources, including volunteer teaching, counseling, and career exploration.

Development of Suasion Networks: Rural areas generally reflect a high interest in both education and work. However, they do not have enough influence and support to obtain the levels of needed resources from outside their local communities. The reasons for this are numerous and vexing. Opposition to outside interference, control, and standard setting, as well as the independent nature of rural communities and of its citizens are a few of the many reasons. The high evidence of local community spirit or collaboration needs to be translated into the increased building of interest coalitions. The development of suasion networks operating on sectional, state, regional, and national levels needs to be given high priority. The theme of education-to-work transition may be of great enough concern to a broad cross section of interests to inspire development of coalition ventures. The rural members of the Work-Education Consortium can play a substantial role.

Basing Resource Allocations on Local Community Determination of Needs

Optimally, resources should be allocated in response to determined and declared needs of local communities. The improvement of local education-to-work transition cannot occur in isolation. Its success is contingent upon fruitful relationships with other communities, institutions, and governments. Rural work-education councils should be involved in several initiatives.

Substantiation and Verification of Needs Assessments: Needs assessments require on-going verification. They should reflect the changing perceptions and attitudes of communities regarding needs and revision of priorities, in view of earlier actions. Needs assessments that reflect the interest and involvement of communities may become important to the generation of new and expanded resources.

Development of Education-to-Work Transition Policies: Work-education councils should seek to develop comprehensive rural education-to-work policies. These policies should reflect the interconnection of livelihood preparation and pursuits. The compartmentalization of education and work has prevented most communities from fashioning comprehensive policies. Work-education councils are uniquely equipped to provide the leadership for such undertakings. Transition policies are evolutionary in nature, but this does not diminish the importance of deliberation and incremental policy development.

Resource Development: The use of as many existing resources as possible, still will not meet all the transitional needs of rural communities. The development of ways and means by which new resources can be obtained and

be developed is crucial. This may involve developing legislation; formulating and reformulating policies, guidelines and eligibility requirements; and generating private sector investments in education and economic development, among others.

The broad-based representation of rural conditions by the rural work-education councils and their modest number should be instrumental in attracting research and demonstration, discretionary, and investment funds.

PROPOSITION

Rural education-work councils should work cooperatively with other groups that represent rural interests to ensure that federal, state, and local linkages are sufficiently strong to provide equal opportunity for rural youth.

Although rural America encompasses a great diversity of conditions and interests, its people constitute only one-third of the total U.S. population. The combination of these two factors frequently has led to inadequate representation of rural interests at the state, regional, and national levels. Competition among a number of rural interests for available but inadequate resources has further weakened the position of rural communities.

Access to governmental decisionmaking which shapes both public and private rural development has not been sufficiently encouraged or developed. Rural residents are often the last to know when a new corporation moves into an area, despite local or regional planning and development efforts.

Moreover, the efforts of many state legislators to serve their constituents are severely handicapped by a lack of administrative staff support. For example, State Representative Karen Brown, representing the constituents of the Bethel, Maine area, works out of what is essentially a one-person office. Her membership on the Bethel Area Community Education-Work Council is proving to be a valuable support linkage for her legislative efforts at the state capital.

Because of a predominant bias toward the conditions and needs of metropolitan areas, government regulations often do not apply to the situation of rural citizens. Self-employed rural residents with marginal incomes are often ineligible for unemployment compensation since they are unable to contribute to the system.

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Inheritance laws make it difficult for equitable transfer of family farms. Martha W. Lewis, long active in advocating the rights of small farmers and farm women, points out:

> Many women have had to sell the farms on which they worked shoulder to shoulder with their husbands to pay estate taxes upon his death if they could not prove monetary contributions to its purchase and development. A surviving husband faces no such nonsense.

Many rural people do not have the cash to make necessary payments for property taxes, state and federal income taxes, and social security payments, and are increasingly losing their tax delinquent properties to opportunistic land sharks.

New and more appropriate policies and regulations need to be developed.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural institutions need to develop greater linkages with counterpart institutions both within their areas (i.e., county) and outside (regional, state, and national). Rural work-education councils should be the nexus for organizing these linkages.

Encouraging Intergovernmental and Public Agency Exchanges

Intergovernmental and public agency exchanges of a variety of types and levels of personnel would be particularly beneficial to rural communities. Most rural areas are governed by a variety of county, township, and municipal governments. It is at the county and central school district levels where the greatest need for infusion of information and expertise exists.

Conversely, state, regional, and federal governmental units are commonly out of touch with local governmental and public agencies. Exchanging personnel would be beneficial to both, and NMI in conjunction with rural work-

education councils should become instrumental in arranging such exchanges. For example, work-education councils might establish a "Fellows" program which would encourage persons in a variety of levels and areas of responsibility to be involved in an exchange program for three to six months. Areas of expertise might include community leadership development; organizational development; legislative access, development, interpretation, and impact.

The position of "rural advocate" should be created within government agencies at the national level. Advocates would assume responsibility for maintaining an on-going liaison with councils and local officials to assist them in taking advantage of federal programs. Needless to say, these advocates should be conversant with the needs of a variety of rural conditions. Advocates could work toward translating this understanding into more viable rural policies and program development at the federal level. Such a "Rural Policy Group" has been recently created in the Department of Labor in the form of the "Secretary's Committee on Rural Development."

Forming Coalitions of Rural Interests to Improve Youth Transition Prospects

The heterogeneity of rural populations is reflected by the variety of interest groups working to improve rural conditions. Groups like the National Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, National Farmers Organization, Congressional Rural Caucus, National Association of Counties, Rural America, Inc., and the National Rural Center are attempting to deal with a wide range of concerns. Each is important, but their numbers are not large, particularly when compared to metropolitan interest groups and lobbying efforts.

Rural work-education councils should seek to become a collaborative nexus for such groups. This should occur at local, regional, and national

levels. Particular care should be taken to involve as many interest groups as possible in the enhancement of rural education-to-work transitions. The establishment of an unbiased action forum which can focus purpose and energy toward the resolution of rural transition problems would be widely supported.

Creating Work-Education Council Partnerships

The National Work-Education Consortium comprises a variety of councils from a variety of places. Twenty-five are largely metropolitan; eight represent rural areas and small towns. Particular efforts should be made to connect rural councils with metropolitan councils in partnership arrangements. This would provide opportunity for the sharing of perspectives, resource development, personnel, technical assistance, program design and development, decisionmaking, administration and operations procedures, and general education-to-work transition information.

These relationships could result in the exchange of council personnel and information. For instance, if business and industrial firms have corporate headquarters in council cities and plant facilities or offices in rural areas, a piggybacking of their involvement in school-to-work transition efforts could occur. Materials regarding career opportunities could be shared with rural communities, and integrated cooperative experience-based work-study programs could result. Conversely, rural work-education councils could develop materials to provide their urban counterparts with a more realistic view of how people live in rural areas and what realistic career options exist.

Building Rural Relationships

Rural work-education councils should actively establish working relationships with a variety of sectional, state, and regional governmental

bodies, commissions, and authorities as well as with the elected and appointed officials who are responsible for their establishment and conduct.

Frequently, rural areas are the most in need and the least to benefit from resources and programs available to remedy their education-to-work transition difficulties. For example, CETA and YEDPA programs, which favor high density population areas, are frequently administered through Balance of State mechanisms which are woefully unresponsive to the desire for self-determination of small municipalities. Work-education councils have unique capacities to influence a more equitable development and administration of such programs. Federal authorities and administrators not only are charged with the responsibility for the equitable administration of such programs, but also are actively seeking ways and means whereby rural areas can contribute to fashioning improved and more responsive local programs and services.

PROPOSITION

Education-work councils can serve to expand and diversify educational, cultural, employment, and service opportunities for youth in their communities.

Certain natural and cultural conditions of rural America appear to contribute importantly to the development of its youth. Among the most significant are a generally healthy environment the stronger family unit, the close relationship of livelihood and vocational pursuits to nature, the blending of vocations and avocations, the strength of the work ethic, and the association of self reliance and development with community concern and service.

The lack of stimuli and livelihood options, however, is a distinct disadvantage in the development of rural youth. While large metropolitan areas frequently support a variety of activities in the performing, tactile, and visual arts without any substantial community-wide involvement and direction, it is exceptional when rural communities can develop and sustain the kinds of institutions characteristic of urban places. Even the prestigious and venerable "Chautauqua Institution" in rural western New York State operates for only two months during the summer in relative isolation from its surrounding rural neighbors.

The limitation of opportunities and options for rural youth is not confined to the arts. The development of rural youth is severely constrained because of their exposure to a more limited number of livelihood pursuits. This is reflected in their worlds of education and work. "Going away to school" or "getting a job in the city" are frequent explanations for both the temporary and more long term outmigration of youth. Rural education programs, be they liberal arts or vocational in nature, suffer

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from inadequate financial support, sex role and class stereotyping, and inappropriate or non-existent preparation for a limited number of available rural jobs. Experience-based education, where it exists, is most often limited to task specific functions in farm work, extractive labor, sales, or services.

A dearth of role models also contributes to the problem. Lack of familiarity with a range of occupations leads to fewer and more limited career choices.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural work-education councils should seek to provide greater stimulation for rural youth by increasing local educational, cultural, employment, and service options.

Developing Work-Experience Opportunities

In addition to the expansion of work experience opportunities for youth in existing rural work places, work-education councils should seek to stimulate the development of new work experience opportunities. Such opportunities should go beyond the worthwhile but more simulated work experiences of the Junior Achievement Program and the work readiness preparation of some of the fine 4-H sponsored youth entrepreneurial efforts in Texas and other southwestern areas of the United States. Economic development efforts involving the participation of all relevant sectors of the local community should move toward the establishment of sales, services, and manufacturing enterprises. These potentially competitive enterprises can involve a cross section of rural residents, particularly youth, in a variety of job functions which lend themselves to a large number of training experiences.

Work experiences should not be limited to standard occupations. Whenever possible they should include the fullest range of creative and professional experiences. These could take place through the sponsorship of exchange programs and rural retreats for persons from other areas.

Creating Work Exposure Opportunities

Considerable effort should be made to increase the exposure of youth to vicarious work experiences. These should encompass a range of opportunities under the general category of "livelihood options for rural youth: opportunities, responsibilities, and the many ways of getting there." A cross section of the employment options to be found in other areas of the U.S. should be represented. Personal accounts, audio-visual presentations, and exploration workshops should be featured. The local library could serve as a community resource center for transition activities, in this way building community support for the library and opening up new funding possibilities. Wake County public libraries in North Carolina have been funded under Title XX of the Social Security Act to operate a variety of nontraditional community enrichment services.

Acquiring and Developing Media Materials

The development and acquisition of relevant media materials should have particularly high priority in rural areas. Efforts should be made to make available materials that are relevant to, and reflective of, particular rural conditions. For example, in its current efforts to combat illiteracy in the rural south, the Highlander School in Tennessee is using videotaped and movie presentations as adjunct aids to group discussions. The discussions are in turn videotaped and used again in outreach in other rural

areas. The addition of familiar sights and sounds to otherwise foreign material enhances the effectiveness. The State Council of the Arts of the State of New York has made it possible for videotape technicians to teach local rural educators, artists, and youth program staff how to use videotape to add another dimension to their work. Several work-education councils have prepared and are using video and slide show presentations to portray their efforts in communities and to augment career exploration efforts.

Creating Community Service Opportunities

The involvement of local residents in such programs as VISTA and Peace Corps should be encouraged. The University for Man in Kansas has relied to a large degree on VISTA volunteers to organize its program in rural communities. The proposed National Youth Service is ideally suited for the development of opportunities for rural youth. Service in communities both similar and dissimilar to one's own provides broadening perspectives which are vital to the development of rural youth.

Developing Youth Exchange Programs

Work-education councils should foster programs that facilitate the exchange of youth between rural, suburban, and urban settings. Such exchanges enable a range of youth to become exposed to the conditions and demands of new environments with the solid support of family and home environments. Both short and long term exchanges similar to the programs sponsored by the AFS International/Intercultural Programs, Inc. should be promoted. Given the increased interest in rural America and the still pervasive outmigration of rural youth to metropolitan areas, exchanges for

middle and secondary school age youth would greatly enlarge real options for all youth.

Initiating Local History Projects

Projects that encourage people of all ages and walks of life to delve into the origins and development of their communities in order to ascertain the roles and contributions of their citizens can serve as a strong stimulant for concerted community collaboration. Encouraging community pride and concern will do much to facilitate the better transition of its citizens from present to future and from education-to-work. Such efforts also provide healthy stimulation for inter-generational cooperation, particularly between the young and the elderly.

Enlarging Options for Rural Living

Youth need to be provided with a variety of legitimate ways and means by which they can pursue livelihood options in both rural and metropolitan America. An emphasis on rural livelihood options should be featured since the predominant preference of rural youth is to remain in rural America. Work-education councils should attempt to interact with educators, agricultural extension agents, 4-H officials, volunteers, and economic developers among others, to provide youth with legitimate economic alternatives in business, industry, or farming, which are not solely high capital intensive, or production and profit oriented. Youth need to be provided with "coping skills" suitable for survival in rural areas. U.S. Government publications and Land Grant College extension efforts should develop and offer programs, services, and materials that espouse a more varied set of rural livelihood options than they do now.

PROPOSITION

Rural communities need to develop collaborative models that respond to and grow out of local styles, customs, and modes of organization.

The "primacy of local circumstances" is fundamental to the development of more effective rural youth transition, as Jonathan P. Sher of the National Rural Center suggested in his 1977 keynote address to the Conference on Work-Education Councils and Rural Conditions. Rural work-education councils should be primarily concerned with general community needs rather than with the particular needs of institutions or constituent groups.

Heterogeneity is the hallmark of rural America. Many rural communities have unique value orientations and styles of life. These should be explored, understood, and reflected in the mechanisms and processes of decisionmaking in both rural and non-rural America.

Particular care must be taken to develop efforts that involve, affect, and benefit a cross section of the community. The targeting of any one stratum of the community -- be it the poor, the middle-class, or the privileged -- results in exclusionary effects which are antithetical to the concept of collaboration. Rural youth transition efforts must deliberately seek to improve the general quality of community life for both the present and the future.

However, the preservation and enhancement of local communities is no mean task. Development schemes that seek to make rural life more viable need to maintain a reasoned balance between human and ecological imperatives. Many communities are resistant to outside values and influences, particularly legislation and programs developed without significant involvement of local citizenry. Rural work-education councils should attempt to ameliorate this

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situation and move purposefully toward achieving a more appropriate linkage between local community needs and extra-community resources.

Rural communities need to capitalize on their generally high state of community-mindedness. The involvement of a cross section of the community in the fashioning of models and processes by which improved rural education-to-work transition can be achieved is important. Care must be exercised to encourage rural communities to develop their own variations of the collaborative process. The opportunity to compare different types of mechanisms and processes can be furthered through the on-going relationships fostered by the Consortium of Work-Education Councils.

Anna Smith, Executive Director of "Clarinda: Town of Tomorrow," Clarinda, Iowa, suggests that rural areas appear to be more "involvement-oriented" while urban areas appear to be more "issue oriented." That is to say, rural residents seem to be more concerned with their involvement in overall community enhancement initiatives as distinct from metropolitan residents who appear to be more concerned with single issue concerns. Of the two, the former is probably more encompassing and more enduring. "Involvement" represents a sound general principal upon which work-education councils should base collaboration for improved rural youth transition.

The importance of community involvement is underscored by recent research on community development efforts. In "Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom" edited by Jonathan Sher, it is pointed out:

> In community after community...the story is depressingly similar. Rural development that has not been controlled by its alleged beneficiaries has not resulted in any substantial alteration or improvement of the recipients' social or economic conditions. Community based control of development by no means assures

its eventual success...it does at least ensure that development priorities are aligned with the perceived interests of those individuals most directly affected by them.

Broad scale community involvement should be evident in the organizational structure and developmental action of rural work-education councils.

ACTION INITIATIVES

Rural community work-education councils, as distinct from their non-rural counterparts, need to be more concerned with the involvement and support of a broad cross section of community residents. This should occur at every level of council activity: community value clarification, issue discernment, goal formulation, data aggregation and verification, and policy setting and implementation.

Recruiting Members

Membership in rural work-education councils should be open to anyone who contributes volunteer time to council activities. All involvements should be viewed as preludes to further participation. This requires continuously pinpointing specific needs and functions of council activities, and a careful matching of volunteer capacities, commitment, and available time with such functions. Personal and public recognition of involvement is essential.

Periodic celebrations and assessments should take place. Such events should be widely publicized as focal points for the purpose and mission of local work-education council activities. They should serve to connect individual contributions to the overall work-education council's initiatives and to raise general public awareness as well. As councils develop, such events also may serve as general planning and policy sessions. Referenda on issues, priorities, goals, actions, and leadership could also take place.

In addition to individual volunteer participant membership, there should be organizational and interest sector membership, which comprises a cross section of community organizations with community enhancement or civic groups playing an important role. Particular efforts must be made to help involve groups who lack the organizational structure and leadership to participate as fully as they would like to. Councils should be particularly mindful of involving hidden constituencies.

Membership can range from the informal to the formal, depending on local conditions and preferences. Councils should, however, encourage significant participation in all levels of endeavors and provide a sense of peer group status. Leaders of strong constituent groups as well as unaffiliated individuals should have a sense of belonging, a sense of investment and responsibility in the process.

Developing Leadership

Characteristically, the leadership of rural communities is generally small, partly as a reflection of small population size. Rural leaders are frequently involved in a variety of organizations and activities, and consequently wear many hats. It is not uncommon to observe local leaders juggling token appearances at simultaneous meetings some distances apart. The involvement of as many leaders as possible in work-education council affairs, however, should be encouraged. Short of formal involvement, such leaders should be sought out for their support. The relatively small group of leaders also suggests that their involvement must be appropriate and judicious.

In some rural areas, certain community groups (e.g., ethnic minorities) have traditionally avoided being publicly represented by formally recognized

leaders. This "headless horseman" phenomenon needs to be understood, and particular efforts must be made to involve representatives of such groups.

A variety of leadership roles for rural work-education councils is possible. These may be single or committee, alternating or sequential, task specific or general, and formal or informal. Each community should seek its own appropriate expression. Regardless of the leadership type, it must represent as broad a cross section of the community as possible. This may mean that the leadership of rural work-education councils may evidence a melding of policy making and administrative functions.

On-going leadership development would seem to be a primary task of rural work-education councils. Also, a variety of relationships and roles between policy setting, leadership, and administrative staff should be developed.

Identifying Appropriate Organizational Models

The diversity of rural conditions has a direct bearing on the form and substance of rural work-education councils. One of its main determinants is the geographic area for which a council assumes responsibility. Currently, work-education councils operate in a variety of jurisdictions. These include a school district centered around one dominant community (School Administrative District No. 44, Bethel, Maine -- approximately 7,000 population), a county-wide operation (Gratiot County, Michigan -- 40,000 population), a three-county operation with a population of over 356,000 living in both urban and rural environments (Peoria-Pekin Tri-County Area of Illinois), and an 18-county three-state area with a population of over 300,000 (Sioux Falls Area Education-Work Council, Sioux Falls, South Dakota).

Councils may be independent and free standing (Mid-Michigan Community

Action Council, Alma, Michigan), or they may be quasi-independent adjuncts of educational institutions (Community Colleges of Vermont, Montpelier, Vermont; Motlow State Community College, Tullahoma, Tennessee; and Southeastern Community College, Lincoln, Nebraska).

They may be comprised of single councils (Martin County Education-Employment Council, Williamston, North Carolina), or they may have satellite councils (Motlow Community College).

All have Consortium affiliation with one another and with other work-education councils in non-rural areas (i.e., the 33-member Consortium of work-education councils) and a variety of relationships, both formal and informal, with a number of local, regional, state, and national organizations.

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