

3116 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

project in Eastern Kentucky which provides work experience and training for approximately 3,800 unemployed fathers.¹ The Kentucky Department of Economic Security administers the Title V, Work Experience and Training Program under a grant of \$12.5 million in Federal funds for fiscal year 1967. Although the Kentucky Legislature in 1964 passed enabling legislation for the State to claim Federal matching for aid to families with dependent children in need as a result of unemployment of a parent, necessary State matching funds have not been appropriated for the past several years. Neither the State nor localities provides general assistance in the 19-county area so, aside from the Economic Opportunity programs, there is practically no other means of livelihood for large numbers of families headed by unemployed fathers. Most of these men previously earned a living working in the mines. They are a somewhat older population (average age 39) with a relatively low educational level (almost 36 percent of all Title V trainees had completed only the fourth grade and under.)

The Community Associates, Inc. study is generally favorable with respect to the Work Experience and Training Program except (1) to charge a lack of imagination in utilizing participants for a variety of purposes including construction of dams, low cost homes for public assistance recipients, aid to community development, etc. (reference is made to suggestions offered by trainees themselves in the April 1967 issue of the "Sorry Times"); and (2) the opinion "that the vocational training has been weak, due primarily to lack of suitable heavy equipment, and some field supervisors who are 'straw bosses'." (The latter reference is not too clear.)

With respect to the first point, it is agreed that the suggestions for program activities made by the Work Experience and Training trainees themselves offer some excellent possibilities. On May 31, 1967, staff of the Welfare Administration (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) met with a representative of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the Office of Economic Opportunity to discuss possible implementation of these suggestions. It was learned that the Office of Economic Opportunity is in a position to secure heavy equipment (Government surplus property) from the General Services Administration, which will be of major assistance in carrying out some of the activities suggested. Other activities, such as construction of low cost housing for welfare recipients, are not authorized by law as far as the Title V program is concerned. However, while construction of housing is not authorized, Title V trainees in Eastern Kentucky have received training in home repair skills through patching the roofs, fixing broken doors, and windows and otherwise making the rundown homes of public assistance recipients more habitable. It should also be pointed out that there has been considerable work done under the Title V project in Eastern Kentucky in the way of conservation of natural resources, beautification of roadsides, renovation of classroom and other public buildings, building of bridges to enable children to attend school, repair of roads so families can get into town, clearing of streams for fishing and recreational purposes, etc. An example of such activity was observed² in Wolfe County, Kentucky which is rated the second poorest county in the United States. Here some 150 unemployed fathers are enrolled in the Title V program. Under a project sponsored by the Soil Conservation Services, approximately \$1 million worth of flood control work has been provided by Title V trainees in the Red River Valley. A garbage dump was constructed on land donated by a private citizen. April 13, 1967 was designated as the town's first "Clean-up Day" with Title V trainees manning borrowed trucks to pick up trash collected by local residents.

The second point of criticism made by the Community Associates, Inc. report is with respect to limited vocational training provided under the Title V project. This point should be considered in relation to the characteristics of the group being served in Eastern Kentucky. As pointed out previously, about 36 percent of the trainees have completed only the fourth grade or under (about 6 percent reportedly had no schooling at all). Consequently as a first step in upgrading their employability about 95 percent of the trainees were enrolled in adult basic education courses. This was carried out right from the beginning of the project in January 1965 with the wholehearted cooperation of the State Department of

¹ The other 15 counties included in this project are Bell, Breathitt, Clay, Elliott, Floyd, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Morgan, Owsley, Pike and Wolfe.

² During a visit on March 27-30, 1967, by representatives of the Office of the Secretary, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and Office of the Commissioner, Welfare Administration, D/HEW.