

tunity Centers in all major poverty target areas of Riverside County, staffed by Neighborhood Workers recruited from the target area. These Centers, representing the heart of the Riverside County program, are multipurpose, providing a total approach to the family. Representatives of the State Department of Employment, the County Welfare Department, Legal Aid, and others, visit the centers at scheduled times, thus providing readily accessible, coordinated, and effective help to the poor where they live. In a county still largely non-urban, where public transportation is nil, and distances are great, we cannot stress too much the value of having Neighborhood Workers and Opportunity Centers in target areas, using a person-to-person approach to give information, identify needs and gaps in existing services, and receive feedback from the involved poor.

Another example of the program's strength provides tangible evidence of the usefulness of the Opportunity Centers. Through them the Urban League and Department of Employment began in August, 1966, a program to assist the unemployed by providing testing, evaluation, counseling, job placement and job development. 300 people have been placed in jobs and follow-ups are being done, but an additional 1,000 people have not been placed because they have no marketable job skills; their average education level is about 6th grade. Their need for guidance, counseling, and training is staggering.

Our most critical unmet need in Riverside County is for training facilities for this 1,000 unskilled people, and hundreds more yet unidentified. The Riverdale area consistently has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, varying from 6 to 8.9%. Some recent federal programs do provide funds for the type of training of the unskilled needed in Riverside. However, most, if not all, of this money has already been allocated to large cities, while our local O.E.O. has not yet even received guidelines. We believe that consideration should be given to allocation of funds to counties based upon a poverty or unemployment index.

Most of the anti-poverty programs now operating in Riverside County are new in concept and in length of time they have been in operation. While our data is promising, it is tentative. We feel that Riverside County's Community Action Program is well justified in receiving more funding, not less, and for a longer period of time, for a sound evaluation of its impact on poverty. The financial resources available under the anti-poverty program in relation to the extent of poverty in Riverside County—30% of our families earn less than \$4,000 per year—can do little more than make a dent in the poverty status of our low income families. Riverside County will receive a total of \$1,749,782 in federal and nonfederal funds during fiscal 1967-68. Less than \$500,000 of federal funds will be available for locally initiated projects, an area in which we recognize our local personnel to have performed in an exceptionally outstanding manner—including the professionals, the poor, the volunteers, civic and governmental groups. Welfare costs in Riverside County are now \$26 million annually; the local war on poverty is allocated under two million dollars to try new solutions. The League of Women Voters of Riverside heartily urges that these new attempts at new solutions be not curtailed, but expanded.

MONTE SERENO, CALIF.,
June 17, 1967.

Representative CARL PERKINS,
Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. PERKINS: This letter is written to urge your support of legislation concerning the Economic Opportunity Programs, specifically the Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967, H.R. 8311.

The League of Women Voters has followed closely the efforts of the Economic Opportunity Programs as they are being implemented in Santa Clara County, California, and we are intensely interested in the continuation of these programs which stress the concept of the Community Action Program: motivation through personal involvement. This holds great importance for a community such as ours which has a Mexican-American population amounting to 12% of the total County population. To gauge properly the significance of this figure one must relate it to another: the Mexican-Americans make up 40% of the welfare rolls of the County. In a County that is dedicated to a rapid change from agriculture to industry we cannot afford to allow any large segment of the population to remain in isolation