

D. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS ON EMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS

A series of community workshops on employment of older workers were held during the spring of 1964, in Bakersfield, Eureka, Long Beach, Van Nuys, Oakland, Pasadena, Sacramento, and San Diego, under the cosponsorship of the Department of Employment, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Aging, the Institutes of Industrial Relations of the University of California, and a wide variety of community groups. These included local committees on employment of the older worker, local business, industrial, labor and community leaders, and other groups with either general or specific interests in the employment needs of older workers.

Although general responsibility for the organization and planning of the workshops rested with the Department, the Committee, and the Institute, each community was encouraged to assume the primary responsibility for the specific planning of the workshop program and content. Also, similar encouragement was given to develop appropriate community organizations as local cosponsors for each workshop. Both emphases were deemed essential to develop workshop content that was appropriate to their particular experiences and problems.

The role of the Department, the Committee, and the Institute was to provide general guidelines and information about the scope of the entire study, to provide background materials and data for use by workshop participants, and to provide whatever technical assistance that might be requested by the local cosponsoring group or groups. Several preliminary planning meetings were held with these sponsoring groups and, during these meetings, it was made clear that the workshops should encourage wide discussion of community opinions and ideas. There was no effort made on the part of the agencies authorized to conduct the study to superimpose any specific problems or proposals that should be evaluated by community representatives.

As a result, each of the workshops had somewhat different content and sponsorship. For example, in the Bakersfield Workshop, considerable attention was given to the seasonal character of agricultural employment and physical requirements of employment in the petroleum industry and their implications for employment of the mature worker. The Eureka Workshop focused attention on recent change in that area's lumber industry and related this trend to the need for retraining and a more diversified economic basis to provide necessary employment opportunities. As an older community by comparison with most in Southern California, as well as one having a large older and retired population, the Pasadena Workshop included discussion of the actual cost factors of hiring older workers experienced by local employers over the years as well as possible part-time employment opportunities for older men and women. The Van Nuys Workshop was geared to the examination of possible broad action by labor, management, and government to insure improved short- and long-range steps to