

CHAPTER THREE
ANALYSIS OF THE OLDER WORKER PROGRAM
IN 36 LOCAL OFFICES OF THE CALIFORNIA
STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Scope of the Analysis

In accordance with HR 77, the Department of Employment surveyed 36 of its field offices during March through May 1964 to study services to older workers, and explore difficulties encountered in placing them in employment. The study was concerned with: (1) employment problems presented by older workers; (2) employer attitudes and hiring practices as encountered by local office staff; (3) the organization and staffing of the older worker program, including the kinds of services being performed for older workers; (4) relationships of local offices with community groups interested in employment problems of older workers; and (5) training needs of older workers.

In the course of the study, a State staff representative of the California State Employment Service interviewed about 150 individuals, including placement interviewers, Older Worker Specialists, local office managers, field supervisors responsible for groups of local offices, and other managerial and technical staff. The offices visited included the four area administrative offices in the Division of Public Employment Offices and Benefit Payments, and 32 local offices. The sample comprised about one-third of local employment offices throughout the State, other than those devoted solely to farm placement. In the sample were small, medium-sized, and large "full-functioning" offices (those performing both employment service and unemployment insurance functions), as well as large specialized offices in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Metropolitan areas serving professional, commercial, industrial, and service occupations. Communities chosen for the study typified, as far as possible, the wide range of economic conditions and industries throughout California, including agricultural, light and heavy industrial, and "supporting" or bedroom communities which provide service facilities for residents who work elsewhere. Booming, declining, and static economies were represented.

2. Who Is An "Older Worker"?

For convenience in statistical reporting, a person is considered to be an "older worker" if he has reached his 45th birthday. But chronological age alone does not make an "older worker". Aging may progress at different rates for different individuals. Even a slight decline in physical capacity may end the professional career of a baseball player in his early 30's. At the other extreme, there is virtually no retirement