

What Is The National Welfare Rights Organization ?

THE NWRO IS A NATIONWIDE ORGANIZATION OF WELFARE RECIPIENTS and other poor people. It is made up of affiliated local welfare rights organizations from coast to coast. At present there are over 100 affiliated local groups in 26 states, and another 100 local groups in various stages of formation and affiliation.

THE NWRO IS A MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION. There are presently over 5000 dues paying members (families), and the NWRO directly represents the over 20,000 welfare recipients in these households. The majority of its members are families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

MOST NWRO GROUPS ARE LOCATED IN THE GHETTOS AND BARRIOS of major U.S. cities, but there are also groups located in rural areas of the South, Appalachia, and the Mid-West. NWRO includes substantial numbers of low-income whites, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans, as well as Negroes in its membership.

How Did The NWRO Come Into Being ?

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS welfare recipients in communities around the country have been organizing to protect themselves against the injustices of welfare, and to seek ways to help themselves and to change the welfare system.

IN MAY, 1966, THE POVERTY/RIGHTS ACTION CENTER was formed in Washington, D.C. and began contacting local welfare rights groups, supporting local organizing, and encouraging cooperative action among the groups.

SEVERAL NATIONAL MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS were held and a National Coordinating Committee of Welfare Rights Groups was formed. On June 30, 1967 a major nationwide demonstration for welfare rights was held, with over 5,000 recipients in 40 cities uniting under the common banner of the National Welfare Rights Movement.

AUGUST 25-28, 1967 THE FIRST NATIONAL WELFARE RIGHTS CONVENTION was held in Washington, D.C. More than 300 delegates of local WRO's attended. A constitution establishing the National Welfare Rights Organization was written and adopted, national officers elected, and a platform of goals agreed upon.