

OEO REGION X HOLDS CONFERENCE THIS MO.

Problems, Successes Of Poverty Programs Discussed at Gathering

The problems and successes of poverty programs were discussed at a conference held in early November involving representatives of low income people in four northwestern states.

The OEO Region X office held a Regional Conference on November 7, 8, and 9 to consider alternatives for serving the poor and to develop priorities which need to be addressed by community action agencies.

Over 300 delegates from Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon met in Seattle in effort to find a way to continue serving the under-privileged.

Workshops were held on Legislation for a National Poverty Program, Public CAAs - Why and How, Citizens Participation Programs, Neighborhood Centers, Senior Programs, and New Models for a Community Poverty Programs.

An item of discussion was the Bill HR 10865 introduced by Senator Hawkins as "Community Services Act of 1973", which would, in effect, take the place of the Economic Opportunity Act.

The Legislative Workshop, in analyzing concepts to be included in legislation to replace the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, recommended that programs created under the EOA, which have been transferred to other federal agencies since 1968 be returned to EOA (or a similar agency) and delegated to CAAs; that CAAs be established in all areas of the region, and that the governing boards be composed of 1/3 public; 1/3 private; and 1/3 low income representatives.

Also, that 1/3 of the policy making board consist of low income people; to increase the authorization level to a \$500,000,000 minimum for FY 1975 with at least a 10% annual increase through the remaining four years in the Hawkins Bill.

They felt that the Department of Labor statistics should be used to determine eligibility and that regional poverty guidelines should be developed.

Among other things, they were concerned about certain provisions of the Hawkins Bill including eligible activities, schools, property, the spin off of programs and funds, an amendment for the continuation of regional offices, and the fact that there are no provisions addressing minority groups.

With regard to an amended Hawkins Bill, they felt a National Human Resource Development Council should be established; there should be assurance of low income and/or consumer participation; that CAAs should have prime sponsorship for receiving funds for conduct and administration of programs, research and development of pilot programs and have a strong independent advocate roll.

There should be a variance funding, multi-year funding and anti-impoundment legislation, and there should be an applicant appeal procedure when prime sponsorship is withdrawn.

The Workshop for a Model Community Poverty program stated basic functions in broad terms as education of the constituency, needs assessment and organizational structure of a policy-making body.

The Senior Programs Workshop expressed a desire to remain a part of OEO.

Charles Chong, Chief of Operations for the regional office, told the group that OEO would receive its funds under the continuing resolution mechanism passed by the Congress. This will permit expenditure of funds at last year's level through June, 1974.

Mr. Lud Kramer, Secretary of State, also spoke to the Conference at a luncheon meeting, on the State's Role in Eliminating Poverty.