

NATIONAL DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAMS

Government programs to assist displaced homemakers are no more than a decade old, California's 1975 law established the Nation's first program designed specifically to serve women who had lost their main source of income due to a husband's death, desertion, or divorce or to loss of eligibility for public assistance, and who consequently had to find paid work to support themselves and their families.

The first Federal legislation to assist displaced homemakers was the 1976 amendments to the Vocational Education Act, which directed that States could use Voc Ed grants provided by the Federal Government to meet the needs of displaced homemakers. Next, the 1978 amendments to CETA specifically named displaced homemakers as facing disadvantages in entering the labor market, and made them a target group for employment and training. In addition, for fiscal year 1980, Congress provided a special \$5 million fund under CETA for 47 demonstration projects serving displaced homemakers.

JTPA, passed in 1982, weakened Federal assistance to displaced homemakers; it made services to this group optional, instead of targeting them for special attention as CETA had done. Two years later, however, in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, Congress strongly increased Federal support for displaced homemaker programs. The new law authorized about \$84 million in fiscal year 1985 for Voc Ed grants that are specifically designated for services to single parents and homemakers—including displaced homemakers—and thus opened a large new source of Federal funds to displaced homemaker programs. Yet even with the increased Voc Ed funding, Federal support for employment and training services targeted directly to displaced homemakers remains at a very modest level for a program open to several million eligible people.

Meanwhile, by 1985, 24 States had enacted their own laws in support of displaced homemakers, with 19 appropriating funds for programs to benefit them. Although information

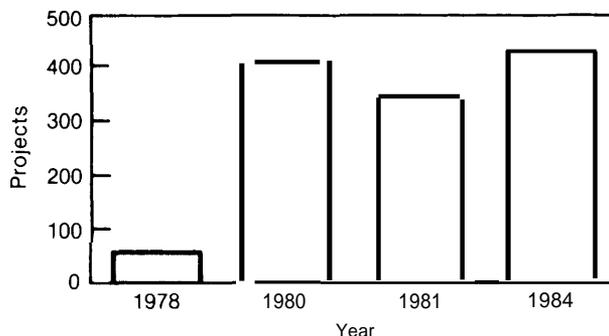
about funding for displaced homemaker programs is incomplete, it appears that State support has grown over the past few years, and in 1984 was the major source of money for these programs.

Levels of Service and Funding

Exactly how many displaced homemaker projects exist across the country—in community colleges, in vocational technical schools, in community-based organizations such as YWCAs, in city or State agencies, or in independent centers—is uncertain, but there appear to be several hundred. The Displaced Homemakers Network, a national information exchange for the local centers, lists 425 such centers, but this is not a complete count.¹⁴ It appears that the number of projects is expanding modestly, after a sharp decline in 1981-82. As figure 5 shows, displaced homemaker projects multiplied between 1978 to 1980; the number listed with the Displaced Homemaker Network rose from 50 to 407. With a drop in CETA funding in 1981, projects listed with the network also fell, to 337. By 1984, the number had once more risen.

¹⁴The 425 centers listed by the Network are those that replied to a 1984 survey, which was sent to over 900 organizations on the Network's mailing list. OTA analyzed the survey results. Of the projects that replied to the survey, 364 from 46 States and the District of Columbia provided enough usable data that their reports could be included in the analysis.

Figure 5.—Reported Number of Displaced Homemaker Projects in the United States, Selected Years



SOURCE: Surveys conducted by the Displaced Homemakers Network

The number of people served by the programs each year is likewise uncertain, but is probably at least 100,000. Displaced homemaker centers replying to a 1984 survey by the Network reported that they serve anywhere from 15 to 3,800 clients per year, with an average of 200 to 230 per program. According to the survey, increasing numbers of women are seeking services. A large majority of respondents said that both their funding and the number of clients they serve had risen over the previous year.

Interviews with directors of 20 displaced homemaker projects in the spring of 1984 painted a less favorable picture—one of expanding demands for services but no corresponding increase in funds.¹⁵ Sixteen of the directors said the number of clients they served had grown steadily; four reported their client load had remained relatively stable. Economic conditions had something to do with the demand for services. For example, one project director linked the rise in number of participants to layoffs in the steel and auto industries, which pushed homemakers into the breadwinner role. Four directors noted that outreach efforts were related to the growth in demand for services. Many displaced homemakers do not know that they can be defined as such, much less that there are programs designed to help them. Publicity in the community about the programs draws in these women.

As for funds, about equal numbers of the 20 project directors said their budgets had increased, decreased, or remained stable; one had been on a roller coaster, with budgets fluctuating between \$300,000 and \$40,000 over the past few years. Nearly all the project directors said there were displaced homemakers in their communities who were not being served, mostly because funds and staff were lacking. Two directors reported that they have continued to serve more clients each year as funding was cut, but are concerned about the quality of service as staff and resources are stretched thin.

¹⁵The interviews were conducted by the Urban Institute under contract to OTA. Results are reported in full in O'Brien and Nightingale, *op. cit.*

Others turned away applicants, or put them on a waiting list.

The typical displaced homemaker center runs on very modest resources. Half of the 307 centers which reported their levels of funding to the Network survey said they operated on \$41,000 a year or less, and two-thirds on \$62,000 or less. Only one-sixth of the projects reported receiving as much as \$100,000 a year. Almost certainly, these figures are understated. Many of the projects reported only cash funding, omitting in-kind contributions from community colleges or vocational technical institutes where they were housed. Nonetheless, on the whole, the survey supports the conclusion that these are lean programs, staffed by one or two full-time and one or two part-time people, with a few volunteers.

Sources of Funding

From the incomplete information available about displaced homemaker programs, it appears that Federal funds were their mainstay a few years ago, that these funds declined from 1981 to 1984, and that other sources—mainly special State funds—have recently been modestly increasing. With the passage of the Perkins Vocational Education Act late in 1984, a substantial new source of Federal funds became available for services to displaced homemakers.

In 1980, CETA was the main source of Federal funds for displaced homemaker programs. As shown in table 2, two-thirds of the displaced homemaker centers surveyed by the Network in 1980 reported that CETA was a provider of funds for them. About one-quarter cited Voc Ed grants (these are generally made up of two-thirds Federal money and one-third State). Thirty-one percent named State funds.

In 1984 the funding situation was quite different. Only 16 percent of the centers reported receiving funds from JTPA, CETA's successor. Special State funds were now cited by nearly half the centers as a source of support, and Voc

Table 2.—Principal Sources of Funding for Displaced Homemaker Programs, 1980 and 1984

Funding source	Percent of programs reporting funds from source ^a	
	1980	1984
Vocational Education	26%	43% ^b
CETA	66	N/A
JTPA	N/A	16
Special State funds	31	48 ^b
Private ^c	N/A	37
Foundations and corporations	10	N/A
Other public funds	11	N/A
College	N/A	8
Other	N/A	25

N/A—Not available or not applicable

^aPercentages add to more than 100 because most programs report more than one source of funding

^bAbout 12 to 15 programs reported what were probably Vocational Education funds as State funds. If these apparent misstatements were corrected, the percentages would be more even—State funds 44 percent and Vocational Education 46 percent

^cPrivate sources in 1984 included corporations, foundations, and charitable organizations such as United Way

^dOther in 1984 included such sources as fees for services and informal fundraising activities such as bake sales

SOURCE 1980 and 1984 surveys by Displaced Homemakers Network, OTA analysis of 1984 survey

Ed funds by more than 40 percent.¹⁶ Private sources—foundations, corporations, and charitable organizations—had gained in importance, and were now mentioned by over one-third of respondents, compared with one-tenth in 1980.

The actual *amounts* of funding from various sources over the past 4 or 5 years are harder to pin down. The Federal Government has never tracked either CETA or JTPA funds to their destination in local displaced homemaker centers, nor is there any information of this kind available for Voc Ed funds after the 1981-82 school year. From indirect evidence, it seems safe to conclude that JTPA/CETA funding shrank absolutely as well as relatively from 1980 to 1984. In the first place, CETA was a bigger program than JTPA. At CETA's high point in fiscal year 1979, appropriations were \$10.3 billion, and were still as great as \$7.6 billion in 1981. By contrast, JTPA appropriations

¹⁶It is probable that special State funds were somewhat over-reported as a source of funding and Voc Ed underreported; some 12 to 15 of the respondents recorded what were probably Voc Ed funds as State-provided. If correction is made for this probable misstatement, it appears that the percentage of programs receiving Voc Ed funding and special State funding are about the same.

for 1985 were \$3.8 billion. Furthermore, JTPA does not target displaced homemakers as CETA did. Nor did Congress ever add to the \$5 million it provided for national demonstration displaced homemaker projects in 1980. Indeed, only 15 of the 35 national demonstration projects operating in 1981 had obtained funds from other sources (mostly CETA and Voc Ed) to continue after the demonstration period. During 1981 there was also an apparent overall decline in the number of displaced homemaker programs, from 407 to 337,

By 1984, Vocational Education grants were the main source of Federal funds for displaced homemaker programs. This source also probably declined in amount after the 1981-82 school year. Between 1979-80 and 1981-82 (the last year for which data are available) the Federal share of Voc Ed contributions to displaced homemaker projects rose, from \$3.1 to \$4.4 million. Afterwards, in all likelihood, it declined, since total Federal Voc Ed grants (of which grants for displaced homemaker services were a small part) were cut by one-third from fiscal years 1981 to 1983.

The Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 represents an important change in direction. Its authorization of as much as \$84 million in one year for services to single parents or homemakers (including displaced homemakers) makes it likely that Voc Ed grants will be a much larger source of funding for displaced homemaker projects than in the past. So far as is known, the Voc Ed grants for services to this group never before totaled more than \$4.4 million per year. Although the target group for the Voc Ed grants is now broader,¹⁷ it is expected that displaced homemaker programs will be a major recipient. Moreover, the new law designates where Federal contri-

¹⁷The drafters of the law used the term "homemakers" rather than "displaced homemakers" to give more latitude to States in providing services. Women who might foresee the necessity to find work outside the home can be helped to start training or a job search, rather than waiting till divorce, widowhood, or some other factor forces them to do so. The inclusion of "single parents" in the target groups opens the program more emphatically to men, and removes any requirement of marriage or dissolution of marriage, or of inexperience in the labor market. The effect is to open the program both to all working single parents and to parents (mostly mothers) on welfare.

butions are to go, in a way not done before. Previously, States were allowed to use Federal Voc Ed grants for assistance to displaced homemakers; some chose to give virtually nothing to these programs. The new law imposes mandatory set-asides for single parents or homemakers. Although displaced homemakers are not explicitly named in the set-aside, they are included in the category.

Results from the Displaced Homemaker Network's 1984 survey suggest that at that time no more than about one-quarter of the financial support for displaced homemaker programs was coming from the Federal Government. Table 3 shows the amounts and sources of funding reported by 307 programs in the survey. (Comparisons with 1980 are not possible, because information on amounts of funding by source was not collected in the 1980 survey.) Ten percent of the programs' funding came from JTPA, and another 19 percent from Voc Ed (recall that about two-thirds of this is Federal money). "Other" sources of funding—for example, fees or informal fund raisers such as bake sales—were reported to provide as much money to these programs as JTPA. States emerged as the biggest contributors, providing about half of the projects' funds.

These figures should not be taken too literally. A few JTPA-funded projects were unable to distinguish services to displaced homemakers, so their records were not entered and their possible contributions went unrecorded. Also, JTPA was still less than 2 years old at the time of the survey; more recent evidence (discussed

below) suggests that by 1985 a larger number of projects—but still definitely a minority—were able to take advantage of JTPA support. Moreover, some of the funds credited to special State funds in the survey returns may actually be Federal block grant or revenue sharing money. On the other hand, States were not specifically credited with their share of Voc Ed money.

It is interesting to note that displaced homemaker projects which reported getting JTPA funding were quite heavily concentrated in a few States. Of the 57 projects reporting some funds from JTPA, nearly half (28) were in just four States: Ohio had nine, Kentucky eight, Montana six, and Wisconsin five. This suggests that someone in those States—possibly the State JTPA director or directors of training projects at the local level—took early advantage of the options JTPA offers for supporting displaced homemaker services.

Overall, the survey results probably give a reasonably accurate impression of where the money came from in 1984. Information from other sources was consistent with the survey findings. Six of the twenty project directors interviewed by the Urban Institute said that they currently had JTPA support, but of those, three mentioned sharp reductions in level of funding in the changeover from CETA to JTPA. (At least one director, however, foresaw an opportunity for increased funding through JTPA.) Six project directors also specifically mentioned that their Voc Ed funds had been shrinking, in

Table 3.—Funding for Displaced Homemaker Programs, by Source, 1984

Funding source	Amount of funds in \$1,000	Percent of total	Number of programs reporting	Average funds per program in \$1,000 ^b	Median funds per program in \$1,000
Vocational Education	\$3,787.1	19% ⁰	133	\$28.5	—
JTPA	2,025.3	10	45	44.0	—
Special State funds	10,078.7	51	151	66.7	—
Private	1,590.1	8	64	24.8	—
College	278.1	1	19	14.6	—
Other	2,149.6	11	72	29.9	—
Total	\$19,908.9	100% ⁰	307	\$64.9	41.0

^a"Programs reporting" in this table means those that reported the amount of funds received, by source. The sum of programs reporting is more than the total number of programs reporting, because most programs had more than one source of funds

^b"Average" is the arithmetical mean.

^c"Private" sources included corporations, foundations, and charitable organizations such as United Way.

SOURCE¹ 1984 survey by Displaced Homemaker Network and OT/analysis of the survey

some cases drastically. (These comments were made before the passage of the Perkins Act.)

In general, States seem to have taken over a major role of provider for displaced homemaker programs. Although support has weakened in some States (e. g., California's law expired in 1983 and was not renewed), it is rising in others. In the 19 States providing funds as of 1985, the typical contribution was something between \$100,000 a year to \$500,000, although six States provided more than \$500,000 and two over \$1 million. The number of projects funded ranged from 3 to 25.¹⁸

Some States have found ingenious ways to fund the programs. For example, Idaho, Montana, and North Dakota have inaugurated several new displaced homemaker centers with funds derived from a tax on divorce filing fees. Minnesota and Washington earmark money from marriage licenses as well as from divorce filing fees. New Jersey is considering setting aside \$1 million a year from the State lottery for displaced homemakers. New York has a funding scheme, begun in 1979, which allocates to displaced homemaker programs money from a special account in the State's unemployment insurance trust fund. (The account is made up of interest and penalties on delinquent taxes due to the fund from employers.) Contributions from this account have risen steadily, reaching \$1.6 million in 1984-85. The State supports 14 displaced homemaker centers from the account; three of them opened in 1984.

Some of the States with unusual sources of funding for displaced homemaker programs are considering supplementing or perhaps replacing them with regular legislative appropriations, so as to have a more reliable level of funding. In New York, for example, the special UI account that funds displaced homemaker projects is being depleted. Some States are finding that divorce filing fees are a rather small and irregular source of funds,

JTPA and Displaced Homemaker Projects

The two major sources of Federal support for services to displaced homemakers are Voc Ed

¹⁸Displaced Homemakers Network, *Displaced Homemaker State Legislation* (Washington DC: The Network, 1985),

grants and JTPA. Even before passage of the Perkins Act, Voc Ed grants were the bigger contributor. With the major changes in the new law, Voc Ed grants are likely to assume still greater importance. For two reasons, however, access to JTPA services remains important for displaced homemakers. First, although there is a good deal of flexibility in both the JTPA and the Voc Ed programs, JTPA more strongly emphasizes job search assistance and prompt employment, while the primary focus of Voc Ed is on training. For many displaced homemakers, getting a job as soon as possible is imperative. Projects that have placement as their central goal may serve their needs best.

Second, despite the increased funding designated for services to single parents or homemakers under the Perkins Act, the amounts involved are still relatively small for a training, education, and employment program open to millions of people. No estimate has been made so far of the number of single parents or homemakers eligible for Voc Ed programs which are authorized at approximately \$84 million a year, and have been funded at about \$63 million for fiscal year 1985. The population of displaced homemakers is estimated at about 2 to 4 million; if the two-thirds of the fiscal year 1985 Voc Ed grants for single parents or homemakers were spread over this group alone, they would amount only to about \$10 to \$21 per person per year. For comparative purposes, consider the JTPA Title III program for dislocated workers, funded in fiscal year 1985 at \$223 million and open to roughly 2 million workers. If every eligible person took advantage of the Title III program, the funding would amount to about \$110 per capita. Another comparison may be made with the general CETA programs which served a population of about 16 million disadvantaged workers in 1980 and were funded at about \$4 billion, or approximately \$250 per capita.¹⁹

The foregoing comparisons are only illustrative. It is unrealistic to suppose that every eligible person will be served in an employment

¹⁹The funding of \$4 billion for fiscal year 1980 refers only for the general training and employment programs open to all eligible disadvantaged workers; it omits programs for special populations such as the Job Corps and the Native Americans, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and dislocated workers programs. Total CETA funding in 1980 was \$8.1 billion.

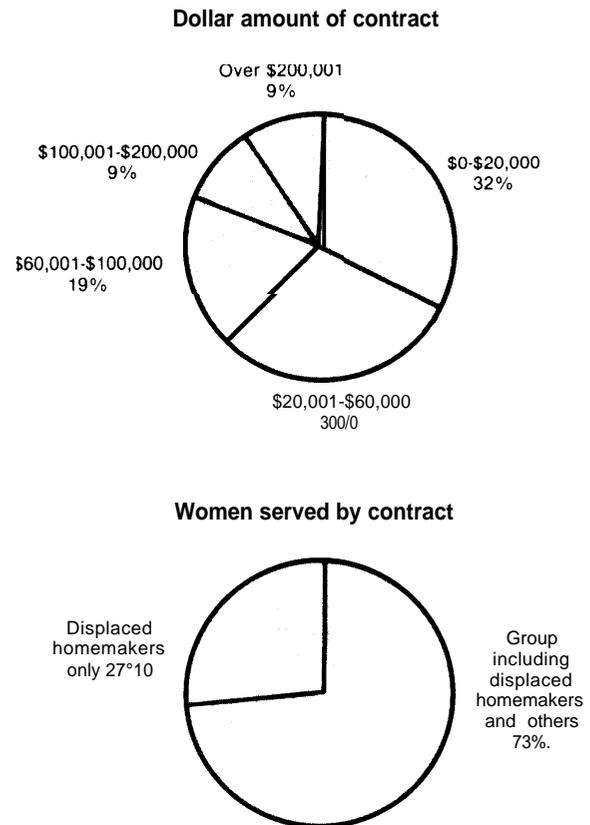
and training program. (In fact, about 1,377,000 disadvantaged workers participated in CETA's general employment and training programs in 1980, at a cost of approximately \$2,900 per person. Under JTPA Title III, 96,100 workers participated during the 9-month transition year, October 1983-June 1984, at a cost of \$768 per worker.) The point remains however, that despite the remarkable new infusion of Federal funds for services to displaced homemakers in the Perkins Act, funding for these programs is relatively thin.

By early 1985, it appeared that use of JTPA funds to support services to displaced homemakers might be increasing, but was still not a principal source of support. In the first months of that year, the Displaced Homemaker Network queried the 425 projects listed in its directory on their experiences with JTPA. Replies came from 176 projects, of which 55 reported that they had JTPA-funded contracts and 121 said they had not.²⁰ This compares with replies to the Network's 1984 survey the previous year, in which 355 projects reported sources of funding and 57 said they got some funds from JTPA.

The amount of JTPA money devoted to services for displaced homemakers in the 55 projects is uncertain, because only one-quarter of the projects' contracts served displaced homemakers exclusively; three-quarters served other clients as well. About half the projects reported they were serving small numbers of displaced homemakers—1 to 20 over the life of the contract, which was usually a year. Figure 6 shows the distribution of dollar amounts of JTPA contracts in the 55 projects, and figure 7 the distribution of numbers of displaced homemakers served.

²⁰Displaced Homemakers Network, *Services to Displaced Homemakers Under JTPA, Preliminary Figures 4/85* (Washington DC: The Network, 1985).

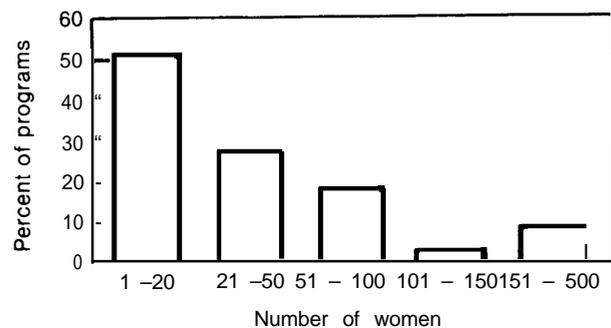
Figure 6.—Services to Displaced Homemakers Under JTPA Contracts, Dollar Amount of Contract and Women Served, April 1985



Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding

SOURCE: Displaced Homemakers Network.

Figure 7.—Services to Displaced Homemakers Under JTPA Contracts, Numbers Served, April 1985



SOURCE: Displaced Homemakers Network.

These data indicate that the typical JTPA-funded project serving displaced homemakers serves other clients as well. This works well for some displaced homemakers but, as discussed later in this report, many of these women benefit from services designed expressly to meet their needs. Unlike workers displaced from factories or offices, a great many displaced homemakers lack recent work experience; often they are less confident, and less attractive to employers, than someone with a long stable history at a paid job. The sudden loss of personal and financial support that displaced homemakers have undergone can also compound the job readiness problem. They may do better in special projects than in larger mainstream employment and training projects, or in general women's programs. So far, most JTPA-funded projects do not serve displaced homemakers as a special group,

A serious eligibility issue arises in the use of JTPA Title 11A funds for displaced homemakers. The Title 11A program is intended primarily to serve economically disadvantaged people; the problem is how to serve displaced homemakers who do not qualify as economically disadvantaged. According to the law, the term economically disadvantaged includes people who are on welfare or receiving food stamps, or whose family income in the previous 6 months was either below the federally established poverty level, or was no more than 70 percent of the lower living standard income level (whichever was higher). Often a newly displaced homemaker's family income for the previous 6 months, when she still had her husband's income support, is too high to meet the JTPA requirement. Even though her income may have been drastically reduced by the time she applies for services, she is still ineligible. Also, many displaced homemakers need assessment, counseling, and job search assistance services even when their income continues to exceed the JTPA limits.

It is possible to serve people who are not economically disadvantaged under JTPA. Title III, for displaced workers, has no income limits; but the definition of displaced worker in the act does not necessarily and obviously extend to displaced homemakers. Several States do serve displaced homemakers under Title III, reasoning that many of them fit the definition of long-term unemployed. (See ch. 5 of the full report for a discussion of eligibility for Title III programs.) Florida has even included Title 111 services to displaced homemakers in the 2-year coordination plan that States must submit to qualify for JTPA funds. Florida's plan allows increased costs per placement for displaced homemakers, taking into account their needs for more extensive training and services.²¹

Title 11A, which has the largest appropriation of any part of the law, makes some provision for people who are not economically disadvantaged, but face employment barriers. Roughly 10 percent of Title 11A funds can be spent for service to these groups. Displaced homemakers are among the ten groups named in the law as examples of those eligible for the 10-percent-window money. Anecdotal evidence suggests that although some States are in fact using the 10 percent money to serve hard-to-employ groups (including displaced homemakers), most are not. Instead, they are saving the money to pay back the Federal treasury in case any of the people they have already served as eligible are disallowed on audits. People who are above JTPA's low-income level may also qualify for a portion of the employment and training services which State education agencies provide with JTPA money, under cooperative agreements with JTPA agencies. Some States (Wisconsin is an example) have taken an active lead in using this education set-

²¹Paula Roberts, Center for Law and Social Policy, memorandum to People Interested in Women and JTPA on an analysis, by the Coalition on Women and JTPA, of the Governors' JTPA Coordination Plans for Program Years 1984-86.

aside money for service to displaced homemakers.

Theoretically, all displaced homemakers, without regard for income, were eligible for—but not necessarily entitled to—JTPA Title 11A programs that were funded at about \$177 million in fiscal year 1985. The remainder of the general program for disadvantaged adults and youth, funded at \$1.5 billion, was also open to those meeting the income limits. Some services under Title III, funded at \$223 million in 1985, were also available to displaced homemakers, without regard to income. The JTPA funds actually spent on services to displaced homemakers is not known, but is surely no more than a small fraction of these amounts. As table 3 shows, projects replying to the Displaced Homemaker Network 1984 survey reported receiving \$2 million in JTPA funds. This figure is undoubtedly too low; many projects did not report amounts of funding, and also JTPA was a new program in 1984. However, the Network's 1985 survey on experiences with JTPA indicated that it was still true that only a moderate number of displaced homemaker projects, and a modest amount of services, were paid for by JTPA funds.

In interviews, directors of local displaced homemaker projects repeatedly mentioned the low-income requirement as a drawback of JTPA funding. They added that in some States restrictive definitions as to who is a displaced homemaker puts up more barriers to entry to JTPA projects. (The Federal Government leaves it to the States to define displaced homemakers, both for the Voc Ed program and JTPA.) One displaced homemaker center reported that it sent 200 income-eligible women to a JTPA Service Delivery Area for employment and training assistance, and only 17 were enrolled, because the State definition of displaced homemaker was so restrictive as to how much the woman could have earned over the past few years.²²

Answers to the Network's 1985 survey offer additional insights into why more projects do not tap into JTPA as a source of funding. Of

²²Information provided by Displaced Homemakers Network.

the 121 projects which reported they had no JTPA contracts, 11 had tried for one and been turned down. The rest did not bid. The reason most commonly given was lack of information—a feeling of being too far removed from the local JTPA system to try for funds. The main reasons given by the 110 projects which did not bid, and the numbers of projects giving the reasons, are as follows:²³

- *Lack of information*: our project is not sufficiently tied into the local JTPA system (39).
- *Displaced homemakers not targeted*: the Private Industry Councils (PICs) which are responsible for direction of local JTPA programs are not funding programs for special populations but are “mainstreaming” service delivery instead (36).
- *Services not being funded*: PICs are giving contracts for vocational skills training, which is not our project's focus (30).
- *Eligibility*: displaced homemakers are not being served under the 10 percent “window” for people who face barriers to employment but are not low income (29).
- *Performance-based contracts*: Many JTPA contracts do not pay the contractor until the client is placed in a job, but our project cannot wait that long to be paid (22).
- *Community-based organizations*: these organizations, which often provide services specifically designed for displaced homemakers, are not getting contracts (20).
- *Eligibility*: displaced homemakers are not qualifying as economically disadvantaged (19).
- *Performance standards*: the job placement rate set by the U.S. Department of Labor for JTPA training, and adapted by States, is too high (16).

The Perkins Vocational Education Act and Displaced Homemakers

Under the Perkins Act, Federal Voc Ed grants may continue to be a larger and more reliable source of funding for displaced homemaker

²³Displaced Homemakers Network, *Services to Displaced Homemakers Under JTPA, Preliminary Figures 4/85* (Washington DC: The Network, 1985).

programs than JTPA. In the Perkins Act, Congress unequivocally designated funds for the use of single parents or homemakers, including displaced homemakers. Two programs under the act have mandatory set-asides for this group:

- 8.5 percent of basic grants to States—the major program funded by the act, authorization of \$835 million for fiscal year 1985—*must* be spent for services to single parents and homemakers;²⁴ and
- 50 percent of the services in a new, smaller program to encourage retraining and re-employment of adults—authorization of \$35 million but not funded by Congress in fiscal year 1985—*must* be delivered to single parents and homemakers.

In addition to the programs that can directly benefit displaced homemakers, two more provisions of the act are of particular interest:

- 3.5 percent of basic State grants *must go* to sex equity programs, which are designed to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping in vocational education, to help prepare young women for well-paying jobs, and to help prevent the emergence of more displaced homemaker problems in the future; and
- community-based organizations, which often serve displaced homemakers very effectively, may get special funding—authorized at \$15 million but not funded by Congress in fiscal year 1985—to provide vocational education support programs.

The women's programs in the Perkins Act—both the set-asides for single parents and homemakers and the sex equity programs for girls and young women—are tied very specifically to the goal of helping women overcome barriers to entering or reentering the job market. To make use of set-aside grants, displaced homemaker projects presumably will not have to compete with other worthy aims or target groups, nor will they have to persuade skepti-

cal PICs or State JTPA managers that there is a place for employment and training projects designed to meet the particular needs of former homemakers. That, at least, is how the program is supposed to work. In reality, there may be some hitches.

When the Perkins Act was under consideration by Congress in 1984, most State directors of vocational education strongly opposed designation of specific uses for Federal Voc Ed grants. They much preferred contributions on the block grant model. In the event, however, Congress reserved 57 percent of basic State grants for specific uses. Targeted groups and programs, besides single parents and homemakers and sex equity programs, are the economically disadvantaged (22 percent of basic State grants), adults (12 percent), the handicapped (10 percent), and criminal offenders in correctional institutions (1 percent).

In mid-1985, States were still sorting out how to comply with these designations. Some State Voc Ed administrators were planning to establish or add support for projects designed to serve displaced homemakers. In others, it was not yet clear what the response would be to the law's requirement that States use the specified part of their Federal grants to "meet the special needs" of single parents or homemakers.

Overall, despite some initial confusion or reluctance on the part of some education officials to change past ways of allocating funds, the Perkins Act undoubtedly opens new opportunities to projects serving displaced homemakers. Despite the broadening of the population to be served, to include single parents as well as homemakers, there is little question that States will have more Voc Ed funds than ever before to serve displaced homemakers. A Maryland official reported, for example, that her State was allocating \$100,000 of Federal Voc Ed funds to adolescent parents—but was reserving \$867,000 for displaced homemakers, for whom no more than \$200,000 had ever been available in any year before.

At this writing (September 1985), Congress had appropriated \$784.5 million for basic State grants under the Perkins Act for fiscal year

²⁴Up to 7 percent of basic State grants may be used for State administration expenses. Of the balance remaining, 57 percent is designated for specific uses, including the 8.5 percent for single parents and homemakers.

1985; about \$63 million of this was set aside for services to single parents and homemakers. Congress did not provide funds in fiscal year 1985 for the new adult training and employment program authorized under the act, half of which would be directed to serving single parents and homemakers, nor did it provide the special funding for community-based organizations.

Opportunities Under the New Law

Various sections of the Perkins Act spell out a broad range of fundable activities. In one place or another, it authorizes the use of Federal grant money to provide most of the services that displaced homemaker program directors see as necessary for their clients. The main purpose of the law, however, is to support vocational training, and it is training that receives most emphasis. The bulk of Federal Voc Ed funds are provided in basic grants to the States, of which 8.5 percent (after a deduction for State administration costs) is reserved for single parents and homemakers. States may use this portion of basic grants only for the following purposes:

- paying for vocational education and training, including basic literacy instruction, that will furnish single parents and homemakers with marketable skills;
- making grants to educational agencies and post-secondary schools to expand vocational education services to single parents and homemakers, so long as the expansion will result in providing marketable skills to the target group;
- making grants to community-based organizations that have proven their ability to provide effective vocational education to single parents and homemakers;
- assisting single parents and homemakers with child care and transportation expenses;
- scheduling programs to be more accessible to single parents and homemakers; and
- providing the target group with information about the vocational education and support services open to them.

The basic State grants that are not specifically designated for target groups may be used for many other purposes related to vocational education, such as:

- counseling, including self-assessment and career planning and guidance;
- placement services for students who have successfully completed vocational education programs; and
- stipends for students who have “acute economic needs” which cannot be met under work-study programs.

The new program in the Perkins Act (authorization of \$35 million) which offers special encouragement for adult training, retraining, and employment development programs was not funded.²⁵ This program was designed with an emphasis on cooperation with employers and placement in jobs, and half of it is designated for single parents and homemakers. Among the services this new program may support, if and when it is funded, are:

- education and training programs designed cooperatively with employers, such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, customized training;
- entrepreneurship training;
- counseling and job search assistance; and
- information and outreach to encourage participation by eligible adults, especially women, older workers, people with limited English proficiency, the handicapped, and the disadvantaged,

Finally, the Perkins Act emphasizes training for young women in secondary and post-secondary schools in nontraditional occupations, setting aside 3.5 percent of basic State grants for the program. The purpose is to give young women an alternative to low-paid, traditionally female jobs.

Although displaced homemaker projects using Voc Ed funds are usually located in community colleges or vocational-technical institutes,

²⁵In a supplementary appropriations bill passed in August 1985, the Senate voted to appropriate \$15 million in fiscal year 1985 for the adult training and employment program, but the House did not, and the provision was dropped in conference.

they do not have to be. For example, some community-based organizations, such as the YWCA, receive Voc Ed funding for displaced homemaker projects. Although the Perkins Act authorizes special funding (up to \$15 million in fiscal year 1985) for Voc Ed support programs to be provided by community-based organizations, Congress did not fund this part of the act in fiscal year 1985.²⁶ Even if the section is eventually funded, States are not required to deliver services through community-based organizations. One service authorized by the Perkins Act, which does not seem a likely candidate for funding by States, is stipends to Voc Ed students. The 1976 Voc Ed law, which the Perkins Act replaced, specifically named displaced homemakers as possible recipients for stipends, but very few were ever provided by the States.

. The law requires that every State receiving Voc Ed grants designate one person to administer the program for single parents and homemakers and the sex equity program, and spend at least \$60,000 a year for administering the women's programs. In most States, the administrator is the Sex Equity Coordinator, a middle-level official in the State Voc Ed hierarchy. How much real authority this official is given, and how effectively she or he uses that authority, will determine to a considerable degree whether the opportunities the law opens up are realized.

Altogether, the list of services that may be offered under the new Voc Ed act is impressively broad and flexible, yet the focus on vocational training is clear. The services most prominent in JTPA—training in job search techniques, job development and job matching, on-the-job-training—are not emphasized to a great extent except in the new adult training program which was not funded in fiscal year 1985. Relocation assistance is not offered at all. Neither is education toward an academic degree. The fact that most displaced homemaker projects funded by Voc Ed funds are physi-

cally located in educational institutions, and often are run by someone on the school's staff, probably discourages many displaced homemakers who urgently need a job from applying for services. JTPA, insofar as it serves displaced homemakers, plays a different and complementary role.

Data Collection

An issue of special concern to Sex Equity Coordinators in 1985, as States were gearing up to implement the new law, was data collection. Information about displaced homemakers and programs set up to serve them is extremely deficient. In 1976 the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor attempted a nationwide count of displaced homemakers, and the 1983 report of the Urban Institute for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Aging, made another national estimate, with additional information on services available to displaced homemakers. As mentioned, the estimates developed for OTA for four selected years from 1975 to 1983 are the only existing national estimates covering more than 1 year. In addition, many States have no idea of how many displaced homemakers they have, or the extent of services that may be needed.

Systematic evaluations of displaced homemaker programs—some of which are over 10 years old—do not exist. Even noncomparative reports on outcomes of individual projects—how many participants went into training, how many got jobs, what kind of jobs at what kind of wages—are scarce. Studies of program impacts, similar to those for displaced workers served under the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, or for disadvantaged workers under CETA, have never been done. The largest study in existence was descriptive, not evaluative; it gave an account of the national demonstration displacement homemaker program (consisting of 47 projects) funded under the special CETA demonstration grants in 1980.²⁷

²⁶In a supplementary appropriations bill passed in August 1985, the Senate voted \$15 million for Voc Ed support services to be provided by community-based organizations, but the House did not, and the provision was dropped in conference.

²⁷Deborah Kogan, Lois Greenwood, and Mary Vencill, *Assessment of the National Displaced Homemaker Program, A Cross-Project Analysis* (Berkeley CA: Berkeley Planning Associates, 1981).

The Perkins Act does not contain specific reporting requirements about single parents and homemakers. It requires that States submit to the U.S. Secretary of Education a vocational education plan, initially covering 3 years and afterwards 2 years, which includes an assessment of the special needs of target groups, and assurances that the State will comply with the requirements of the law in meeting those needs. The U.S. Department of Education does not require any reports, other than the general assurances contained in the State plans, on what States are doing to serve single parents and homemakers,

The Perkins Act directs the Secretary of Education to conduct applied research on aspects of vocational education specifically related to the act, including effective methods for providing quality vocational education to single parents or homemakers (among other target groups). In mid-1985, the Department of Education had no plans to carry out a study of this kind. The department must conduct a long-term national assessment of vocational education under the act (including services to targeted groups), but the final report is not due until January 1, 1989, 9 months before the expiration date of the Perkins Act.

Meanwhile, many of the State Sex Equity Coordinators see an urgent need for systematic collection of information on how many people qualify for services under the women's programs, how many actually are served, what their characteristics are, and what happens to them after they receive education, training, and employment assistance. The coordinators see these data as essential for writing State reports, at the end of the first 3-year planning cycle, to explain to Congress the effects of the new law, and the new emphasis on service to single parents and homemakers. Accordingly, at their 1985 annual meeting (which they organized and convened themselves) a group of State coordinators laid plans for an unprecedented program of consistent, nationwide data gathering. The Voc Ed departments of the cooperating States will pay for the program, which is being developed under the leadership of the

Maryland and Wisconsin Sex Equity Coordinators.

The Maryland Department of Vocational Education has set aside funds for developing a computer program which will include these major items:

- a count of single parent/homemaker/women clients, including those in regular vocational education classes (so far as possible) as well as those in special programs;
- a profile of clients, including factors such as age, education, amount and source of income, number and age of children, adolescent parentage;
- an account of the services the client receives—what type, how often, how many hours of service;
- outcomes after service, including details on quality of employment such as wages, occupational category, full- or part-time work; and
- a 1-year follow-up on outcomes.

Maryland officials expect the system to be in place by July 1, 1986, and anticipate that at least 30 States will buy into the program. The result will be a rich and consistent set of data covering many if not all States.

At the same time, the national Displaced Homemakers Network is offering to every State a relatively inexpensive service, worked out with the U.S. Bureau of the Census and based on the 1980 census, to provide a profile of single parents and homemakers within the State—and within Metropolitan Statistical Areas if desired. Characteristics of the population to be covered include age, race, education, income, type of displacement, number of dependent children, and labor force participation.

Definition of Displaced Homemakers

In the Perkins Act, "homemaker" is defined as an adult who has worked as an adult primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family, and for that reason has diminished marketable skills. The law adds, however, that the U.S. Secretary of Education may

not prescribe the manner in which the States comply with “the application of the definition.” The law further specifies that State plans shall provide assurances that in serving single parents and homemakers, the State will emphasize assistance to those with the greatest financial need; and in serving homemakers the State will give special consideration to “homemakers who because of divorce, separation, or the death or disability of a spouse must prepare for paid employ merit.” This is the guidance the law provides as to who gets service as a “homemaker,” and who is at the front of the queue.

Since the Perkins Act is barely in operation yet, it is hard to say whether differences in State definitions of homemakers will make for marked differences among States in who gets served. As noted above, anecdotal evidence suggests that differences in definition are important in determining who receives services under JTPA. In some States it is proving quite difficult for displaced homemakers to get assistance under JTPA, because even if they pass the hurdle of income qualification, they may still not meet a restrictive State definition of displaced homemaker.