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BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
**Report To The  
Secretary Of Agriculture**

**Areas Needing Improvement In The Adult  
Expanded Food And Nutrition  
Education Program**

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program of the Department of Agriculture receives about \$50 million annually in Federal funds to improve the nutrition knowledge and diets of low-income families.

A limited GAO assessment of the program showed the need to better cope with the impact of inflation on its funding and human resources. The assessment also showed the need for (1) better communication alternatives, standards, and evaluation tools to demonstrate the program's effectiveness, (2) stronger program administration, and (3) increased coordination within the program and with other nutrition programs.

This report discusses these problems and contains recommendations to help achieve the needed improvements.



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SEPTEMBER 4, 1980**

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

B-199881

The Honorable Bob Bergland  
The Secretary of Agriculture

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Subject: Areas Needing Improvement in the Adult  
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education  
Program (CED-80-138)

At the request of the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition, House Committee on Agriculture, we made a limited assessment of the Adult Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, and New York. We concentrated primarily on the programs in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and New York City. In California, we also looked at the program in Riverside County. Our assessment was made between October 1979 and April 1980 and included work at the local program offices and sites, the State cooperative extension offices, and the Extension component of the Department of Agriculture's Science and Education Administration in Washington, D.C. We did not include in our assessment other nutrition education and feeding programs which are important in improving public awareness of nutrition and are expected to work in concert with EFNEP.

In April 1980 we testified before the subcommittee on overall program operations and on program activities in California. Subsequently, we submitted for the subcommittee record our views on the programs in the other States. Copies of our testimony and the subsequently submitted statements are included as appendixes I through IV.

This letter, which summarizes the material in the appendixes, contains our impressions of the overall program and our recommendations for improving certain program aspects. These relate to the need for

--communication and dissemination alternatives to offset budget constraints,

- standards and evaluation tools to measure the program's success,
- improved administrative practices, and
- better coordination within EFNEP and with other nutrition programs.

EFNEP IS AN IMPORTANT PROGRAM BUT  
IT CONTINUES TO DECREASE IN SIZE

EFNEP is an important program. It has the potential for improving and maintaining people's health through better diets and for saving money through knowledgeable food purchases. During these times of inflation and fiscal constraint, helping people learn more about nutrition and food quality is particularly important. Poor eating habits have been linked to a wide spectrum of diseases and disorders, and Americans waste billions of dollars worth of food annually. Wise and nutritious food selection can be an effective way to cope with inflation by getting the most out of the food budget and can also contribute to maintaining good health.

Ignorance about nutrition is not limited to those at certain income levels but spans all socioeconomic levels and cultures. The need to combat this ignorance is critical at the lowest income levels because the poor can least afford food waste and are more likely to have health problems.

EFNEP's purpose and the Congress' intent is to improve the diets of low-income families through guidance on diet and food buying, care, and preparation. This guidance is provided mainly through paraprofessional program aides from the target areas. EFNEP, which was established in 1968, is the largest Federal nutrition education program. It operates at about 1,270 sites in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Through fiscal year 1980, the Congress has appropriated a total of more than \$500 million for EFNEP. Annual funding has been about \$50 million since 1971. Over the last several years, however, fewer program aides have been employed and fewer homemakers have been instructed because inflation has eroded the purchasing power of EFNEP funds. Between 1971

and 1978, the number of families active in the program decreased from 361,000 to 196,000, and the number of program aides decreased from about 7,300 to 3,700.

#### COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ALTERNATIVES NEEDED TO OFFSET BUDGET CONSTRAINTS

With EFNEP funds and resources dwindling each year from the lack of inflation adjustments, EFNEP program managers need to consider alternative ways to reach and educate more target families with less funds and personnel.

One-to-one communication is EFNEP's basic approach to recruiting and instructing homemakers. Although this approach has the advantage of personal contact, it is costly and limits the number of families that can be reached. Some States have been receptive to exploring new ways of reaching people. For example, under a joint Massachusetts-Rhode Island project to increase the number of food stamp recipients in EFNEP, the two States are testing and will evaluate combinations of various teaching methods involving radio, newspapers, correspondence courses, and small group meetings, as well as the traditional one-to-one approach.

Continued attention to and encouragement of such efforts by EFNEP managers is needed in developing and adopting alternative communication and dissemination methods, in addition to the one-to-one instruction, to reach more people with available resources.

#### STANDARDS AND EVALUATION TOOLS NEEDED TO MEASURE PROGRAM SUCCESS

EFNEP does not have specific standards and effective evaluation and feedback tools to measure its success. Some socioeconomic, demographic, and program participation data is collected, and some reviews of program and financial operations have been made by the Department of Agriculture and others. However, data is not gathered and compiled on changes in the participants' knowledge or behavior regarding such major program aspects as food buying, preparation, and care. Nor have the Department's and others' reviews given much insight into the program's effectiveness or ineffectiveness in improving homemakers' nutrition knowledge or diets.

The program's primary evaluation method has been the 24-hour food recall, whereby program aides periodically asked homemakers what they had eaten during the previous 24 hours. The validity of this method and the findings based on this data are questionable and may be only a remote indicator of diet changes. For example, California program officials told us that they generally discount use of the 24-hour food recall as an evaluation tool. They suspect that some homemakers alter their responses to please the program aides and that some do not remember all the foods they have eaten. Furthermore, the data's validity is questionable because aides can take another recall if they feel the first one does not represent a typical day's diet.

Also, according to Illinois program officials, the 24-hour food recall has a built-in bias, since the aides are recording data that could be used to evaluate their own teaching methods. In addition, the homemakers may cite learned responses rather than report their actual diets. Other problems cited by the Illinois officials were that some homemakers are told in advance that they will be quizzed or that the recall may not be taken on a typical day. For example, if it is near the end of the month when food stamps and funds have diminished, recall results may be quite different from those at the beginning of the month.

The Science and Education Administration's Extension officials, in cooperation with State and local EFNEP officials, need to define achievement standards on diet and nutrition knowledge, develop resource allocation and management strategies, and develop and apply evaluation methods so that program managers know their degree of success.

#### IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Program administration varied in the States and at the sites reviewed. Generally, those sites with closer supervision had better records to support and assess their activities. At other sites, records were so poorly maintained that the data's unreliability precluded any meaningful assessment of the program. Poorly maintained records raise questions about the validity of information being used at the local, State, and national levels regarding the program's success.

Although some Federal guidance has been provided to help States and sites administer their programs, we found limited use of such guidance.

We noted the following administrative weaknesses in one or more of the States.

--Supervisors were not reviewing records. In Massachusetts, supervisors had not adequately reviewed the 24-hour food recall records because they assumed that the aides had correctly recorded and classified the food eaten according to the proper food group. As a result of our review, one supervisor began to review the food recall records, found misclassifications, and now recognizes that additional training is needed in this area.

--Records were incomplete and recordkeeping was inconsistent. In some cases, records did not show the quantity and quality of training given each aide; aides' records had a number of discrepancies; family records did not show nutritional needs at entry or progress at any time in the program; forms were not dated, so that progress was impossible to determine; summary reports conflicted with supporting records; and recordkeeping practices varied among sites and aides.

Some officials claimed that poor recordkeeping was inherent in the program; that is, most aides lacked a high school education and while able to develop a rapport with homemakers, they could not cope with the program's administrative demands.

Some efforts were being made to rectify recordkeeping problems. In Massachusetts, training was being given to reinforce the need for accurate recordkeeping; manuals describing various reporting requirements and responsibilities had been drafted and were to be distributed to aides and supervisors; and the State office was planning to computerize much of the data collected at the local level.

Other administrative weaknesses noted were that:

--Controls to ensure aides' attendance or performance were sometimes lax or informal. In California, supervisors were not always aware of aides whereabouts.

In Massachusetts, the only formal mechanisms for locating aides during working hours--proposed weekly itineraries and daily telephone call-ins--provided little control because they were too vague and inaccurate for locator purposes.

- Some aides had excessive caseloads. In California, many homemakers had not been seen for a year or longer because some assigned aides had caseloads that were four to six times the national average.
- The program's management information system does not provide adequate information on program operations. For example, information is lacking as to those families which successfully complete the program and those which move, discontinue the program for reasons of their own, or are dropped because they are not progressing.
- Funds were not always well managed. In California, an average of \$546,000, or 28 percent, of the Federal funds available since 1971 had been carried forward to each succeeding year. Although these carryovers are permitted by the Federal Extension, State program officials acknowledged that these carryovers were excessive. These carryovers could have been used to reach more families. The State also needed criteria to determine how much money each EFNEP site should receive and where the sites should be located to best reach the target groups.

Federal program officials have provided the States with little guidance on selecting program sites or allocating funds to the sites. As a result, assurance is lacking that site sizes and locations are appropriate for reaching the target population and achieving good results.

Because of the above administrative weaknesses, assurance is lacking that the program is being run as effectively and efficiently as possible.

BETTER COORDINATION IS NEEDED WITH EFNEP  
AND WITH OTHER NUTRITION-RELATED PROGRAMS

Coordination, both within EFNEP and between other nutrition-related programs and EFNEP, is generally inadequate. Within EFNEP, training and instruction materials

for aides and homemakers may vary between States and at the sites within a State. While some differences in materials are necessary to meet local needs and conditions, such as the cultural differences of homemakers in certain locations, greater sharing of ideas and materials from all nutrition-related programs would make better use of limited resources.

Coordination among the Food Stamp Program, other nutrition-related programs, and EFNEP appears minimal at the Federal and State levels and varies from site to site based on local management. The Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (91 Stat. 973) specifically directed the Secretary of Agriculture to extend EFNEP "to the greatest extent possible to reach food stamp program participants." But, as of March 1979, Federal Extension officials reported that the percentage of EFNEP families participating in the Food Stamp Program had remained at 49 percent since June 1976.

Some attempts to encourage multiple-program coordination are being made at the Federal level. A joint letter from the heads of the Extension and the Food and Nutrition Service was sent to State Cooperative Extension Service offices encouraging coordination and providing outreach suggestions. Also, 16 pilot projects were federally funded to explore ways of increasing food stamp families' participation in EFNEP.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Certain program aspects need to be improved if EFNEP is to meet its objectives effectively and efficiently. To offset budget constraints, ways must be found to reach more families who could benefit from the program. Specific standards and effective evaluation and feedback tools need to be developed for measuring the program's effects. Better recordkeeping, closer supervision, and increased Federal guidance on certain administrative practices are needed to help assure that the program is administered as effectively and efficiently as possible. And greater sharing of ideas and materials among Federal, State, and local EFNEP units and increased coordination with the Food Stamp Program and other nutrition-related programs are needed. Increased coordination with other programs not only helps identify needy families to be reached but can help promote EFNEP's objectives through a fuller use of other resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY  
OF AGRICULTURE

We recommend that you instruct the Director of Science and Education to:

- Encourage State and local EFNEP officials to develop and test various innovative methods for reaching more families within the constraints of available resources.
- Evaluate the methods that are developed and disseminate to all EFNEP officials information on those found to be feasible and effective.
- Develop (1) objective and measurable standards for judging program effectiveness and (2) the evaluation and feedback tools needed to measure program performance against such standards.
- Provide additional guidance and training to State and local program officials on supervisory and record-keeping requirements and responsibilities.
- Develop specific criteria for State program officials to use in selecting program sites and allocating funds among the sites.
- Encourage increased State and local EFNEP coordination with other nutrition-related programs for reaching more families.
- Ensure adequate evaluations of the 16 pilot projects which are exploring ways of increasing food stamp families' participation in EFNEP.

- - - -

We discussed our findings and recommendations with agency officials who advised us that they are addressing a number of these issues. However, as you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs and the House Committee on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the

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report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the above committees; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Chairman, Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition, House Committee on Agriculture; other committees and Members of Congress; the Director of Science and Education; and the Inspector General.

Sincerely yours,

  
for Henry Eschwege  
Director

10/10/10

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ABBREVIATIONS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| EFNEP | Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program                      |
| USDA  | U.S. Department of Agriculture                                     |
| VISTA | Volunteers In Service To America                                   |
| WIC   | Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children |

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90071

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY  
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MONDAY, APRIL 21, 1980

STATEMENT OF  
WILLIAM E. GAHR, SENIOR GROUP DIRECTOR  
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING,  
CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ADULT EXPANDED FOOD AND  
NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM AND ITS OPERATION  
IN CALIFORNIA

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

We are pleased to appear here today to discuss our review of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). In October 1979, you asked us to obtain information on the program's efficiency and effectiveness in cities such as Boston, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. 1/ You also requested that we look at the coordination between EFNEP and the Food Stamp Program.

First, we would like to give our impression of the overall program based on our work in these four cities. Then, we will discuss in more detail the program's operation at the State level citing California and at the county level citing Los Angeles and Riverside Counties. We will be pleased to provide testimony on our findings of EFNEP activities in Boston, New York, and Chicago at future hearings and for the record.

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1/See table, p. 12, for data on EFNEP in these locations and nationally.

We believe that EFNEP is an important program. It has the potential for improving and maintaining people's health through better diets and for saving money through knowledgeable food purchases. During these times of inflation and fiscal constraint, helping people learn more about nutrition and food quality is particularly important. Poor eating habits have been linked to a wide spectrum of diseases and disorders, and Americans waste billions of dollars worth of food annually. Wise and nutritious food buying can be an effective way to cope with inflation by getting the most out of the food budget as well as maintaining good health.

Ignorance about nutrition is not limited to certain income levels, but spans all socioeconomic levels and cultures. However, the need to combat this ignorance is more critical at the lowest income levels because people at these levels can least afford food waste and medical costs.

EFNEP's purpose and the congressional intent is to improve the diets of low-income families through guidance on diet and food buying, care, and preparation. EFNEP, which was established in 1968, is the largest Federal nutrition education program and operates at about 1,270 sites in the 50 States and Puerto Rico. USDA's Extension Service administers the program nationally, and State and county extension offices administer it locally. Paraprofessional program aides from the target areas are recruited and trained to instruct and work with homemakers on a one-to-one basis in the homemakers' residences or in small group settings.

Through fiscal year 1980, the Congress has appropriated more than \$500 million for EFNEP. Annual funding has been about \$50 million since 1971. Over the last several years, however, fewer program aides have been employed and fewer homemakers have been instructed because inflation has eroded the purchasing power of the EFNEP budget. Between 1971 and 1978, the number of families active in the program decreased from 361,000 to 196,000, respectively, and the number of program aides decreased from about 7,300 to 3,700, respectively.

We interviewed program aides who were enthusiastic about their work and felt that EFNEP had improved homemakers' diet and nutrition knowledge. However, we are unable to tell you specifically the degree of EFNEP's effectiveness because of inadequate management information.

Despite this limited information, we identified four areas of opportunity which could improve the program. We believe EFNEP managers should:

- Develop communication and dissemination alternatives to offset budget constraints.
- Develop standards and evaluation tools to measure the program's success.
- Improve administrative practices.
- Improve coordination within EFNEP and with other nutrition programs.

#### DEVELOP COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ALTERNATIVES TO OFFSET BUDGET CONSTRAINTS

EFNEP funds and resources have been dwindling over the last several years due to the lack of inflation adjustments in the annual budgeting process. With these constraints and the current economy-minded mood in the Congress and the administration, it is increasingly important that EFNEP program managers consider alternative ways to reach and educate more target families with less funds and personnel.

One-to-one communication is EFNEP's basic approach to recruiting and instructing homemakers. Although this approach has the advantage of personal contact, it is costly and limits the number of families that can be reached. Some States have been receptive to exploring new ways of reaching people. However, continued attention and encouragement by EFNEP's managers is needed in developing and adopting alternative communication and dissemination methods in addition to the one-to-one instruction to reach more people with available resources.

#### DEVELOP STANDARDS AND EVALUATION TOOLS TO MEASURE THE PROGRAM'S SUCCESS

EFNEP does not have specific standards and effective evaluation and feedback tools to measure its success. To manage program resources for the best results, EFNEP needs to define achievement standards on diet and nutrition knowledge, develop resource allocation and management strategies, and develop and apply evaluation methods so program managers know their degree of success.

The program's primary evaluation method is the 24-hour food recall, whereby program aides periodically ask home-

makers what they ate during the previous 24 hours. The validity of this method and the findings based on this data are questionable and may be only a remote indicator of diet changes.

EFNEP does not gather and compile data on the changes in the knowledge or behavior of program participants regarding major program subjects such as food buying, preparation, and care. Program officials agreed that they should measure these changes to help ensure that the program is meeting its objectives. They added, however, that evaluation methods to measure these behavior changes may not be available.

#### IMPROVE ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Although the Federal Extension Service is responsible for monitoring and evaluating EFNEP nationwide, the Service has an inadequate management information system and provides limited feedback on program success and opportunities to improve the program's effectiveness. The Service does not ask the States to report such basic information as the number of participants that graduate versus those that drop out. States receive little guidance on selecting program sites or allocating funds to program sites. As a result, the Extension Service lacks assurance that the size and location of EFNEP sites are appropriate for achieving good results.

At the State level, the Cooperative Extension Service is responsible for EFNEP in each State and its involvement appears minimal. The States also lack periodic evaluations of site operations and assurances that the program is being run as effectively as possible.

Program administration varied at the sites we reviewed. Generally, those sites with closer supervision had better records to support and assess their activities. At other sites, records were so poorly maintained that the data's unreliability precluded any meaningful assessment of the program. Poorly maintained records raise questions about the validity of information being used at the local, State, and national levels regarding the success of the program.

#### IMPROVE EFNEP COORDINATION

Coordination, both within EFNEP and between EFNEP and other nutrition-related programs, is generally inadequate. Within EFNEP, training and instruction materials for aides and homemakers, respectively, may vary between States and at the sites within a State. While some differences in materials are necessary to meet local needs, such as the

cultural differences of homemakers in certain locations, greater sharing of ideas and materials would make better use of limited resources.

EFNEP coordination with the Food Stamp Program and other nutrition-related programs appears minimal at the Federal and State levels and varies from site to site based on local management. The Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 specifically directed the Secretary of Agriculture to " \* \* \* extend EFNEP to the greatest extent possible to reach food stamp program participants." But, as of March 1979, the Federal Extension Service reported the percentage of EFNEP families participating in the food stamp distribution program had been 49 percent since June 1976. Some attempts to encourage participation are being made at the Federal level. A joint letter from the Directors of the Extension Service and the Food and Nutrition Service was sent to the States' Cooperative Extension Service offices encouraging coordination and providing outreach suggestions. Also, 16 pilot projects were federally funded to explore ways of increasing food stamp families' participation in EFNEP.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the work we performed, the program's major problems appear to be weak program administration, inadequate evidence to demonstrate the program's effectiveness, and dwindling funds and human resources. We feel each of these problems can be solved if program managers (1) find communication and dissemination alternatives in the face of limited resources, (2) develop standards and evaluation tools to measure the program's effectiveness, (3) improve administrative practices, and (4) improve coordination within EFNEP and with other nutrition programs.

#### EFNEP OPERATIONS AT CALIFORNIA STATE LEVEL AND LOS ANGELES AND RIVERSIDE COUNTY SITES

In California, the University of California Cooperative Extension Service at Berkeley is responsible for managing EFNEP. The university gives some guidance to EFNEP sites, compiles certain operating statistics for the Department of Agriculture, and occasionally trains program site personnel.

From fiscal years 1969 through 1979, California disbursed about \$19 million in Federal funds and enrolled about 111,000 homemakers in the program. Through fiscal year 1979, the

program operated at 15 sites for 18 of California's 58 counties. We were told no State funds augment the program.

We limited our California review to the Cooperative Extension Service at Berkeley and to the EFNEP sites in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties. Our findings showed:

- No mechanism exists for coordinating this program with similar programs at the State level and coordination varies at the two county sites.
- Funding is poorly managed and allocated. (Since 1971, an average of 28 percent of Federal funds were carried forward to each succeeding year--funds which could have been used to reach more families.)
- California's EFNEP has not been evaluated in depth by State or Federal officials, and the reports generated by the individual EFNEP sites give little insight into program effectiveness and improvement opportunities.
- The Los Angeles site has had (1) no permanent home economist for the past 2 years, (2) inadequate supervision of aides, (3) a lack of demographic data, and (4) no volunteers or community involvement to augment its program.

Coordination with other programs  
is not well established

State level coordination between EFNEP and other programs trying to reach the same target audience is poor. State program officials said greater coordination is desirable but they think local sites must initiate this coordination themselves. No documentation was available at the State or county levels to determine the extent of coordination with the Food Stamp Program or other programs, nor was any data available on the numbers of people EFNEP may have referred to other programs or vice versa.

Little has been done to reach Food Stamp Program participants as directed by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. Based on available data, the percentage of EFNEP families receiving food stamps in California in 1978 was less than the national average of 49 percent. The percentage had decreased from a high of 45 percent in 1972 to less than 35 percent in 1978. In Los Angeles County, which had a participation rate of 30 percent as of September 30, 1979, past coordination was generally limited to distributing

posters about EFNEP to some food stamp offices. This action, we were told, had little effect because food stamps are usually mailed to recipients. In Riverside County, which had a participation rate of 21 percent as of September 30, 1979, coordination included mailing information about EFNEP to food stamp families by the Riverside Department of Public Social Services. In addition, food stamp personnel gave program aides materials and some orientation about the Food Stamp Program.

Coordination with other programs, such as the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, and the Head Start Program, occasionally occurs in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties.

A State program official said the State Food Stamp Program office was recently given the names of the EFNEP home economists to contact at each of the 15 California sites. Also, attempts are being made to obtain the names of food stamp families for a proposed project being funded by the Department of Agriculture to explore various ways of increasing food stamp families' participation in EFNEP. This project will be conducted in two counties where there is a large Hispanic population. It will use various control groups to measure the impact selected communication strategies have for teaching nutrition education. The strategies include television, one-to-one instruction, and a combination of the two.

#### State's management and allocation of EFNEP funds needs improvement

The State's lack of criteria to determine how much money should be allocated to program sites and how much should be retained for other purposes may be a primary cause for the recurring large carryovers of Federal funds each year. These carryovers have averaged about \$546,000, or 28 percent, per year since 1971.

The average carryovers were substantially greater than the combined funds available in fiscal year 1979 to the Los Angeles and Riverside sites. These funds could have been used to reach more families and offset California's reported enrollment drop from 21,000 families in 1972 to 8,200 families at the end of fiscal year 1979. During the same period, the number of equivalent full-time program aides dropped from 168 to about 100.

State program officials acknowledge the carryovers have been excessive. They said carryovers usually happened

because (1) funds were reserved to cover contingencies, such as possible salary increases, and (2) counties failed to spend all their allocated funds. These officials agree State guidelines should be established to determine reasonable carryovers for covering operating contingencies.

The State also needs criteria to determine how much money each of its EFNEP sites should receive and where the sites should be located to best reach the low-income target groups. According to 1970 census data, 43 percent, or 752,000, of the poor in participating EFNEP counties live in Los Angeles County. Yet, only 14 percent, or \$290,000, of the total 1979 funds allocated went to Los Angeles County. In contrast, the Tulare-Kings Counties site, with a reported 2.7 percent, or 47,000, of the poor, was allocated 7.7 percent, or \$151,000, for 1979.

State program officials agree the State should assess its allocation of EFNEP funds to ensure proper program location and size. They said program site locations were chosen based, in part, on the 1960 low-income census and the counties' willingness to participate in EFNEP. They also said that where the largest number of poor people lived was not a critical factor in the 1969 decision on how to distribute funds. Instead, the decision was based on how widely the funds could be distributed to reach the maximum number of counties.

#### Evaluations are limited

Periodic indepth evaluations of California's EFNEP effectiveness or efficiency are insufficient. Limited evaluations have been performed by (1) the U.S. Department of Agriculture, (2) the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and (3) the University of California's Internal Audit Staff. The evaluation reports, based on data furnished by the sites, give little insight of the program's effectiveness or ineffectiveness in improving homemakers' nutrition knowledge or diet.

State program officials said they are developing a mechanism for evaluating the program's effect on homemakers. They also plan to hire a program coordinator to provide overall leadership in planning, implementing, reporting, and evaluating the program.

The 24-hour food recall data required by the Federal Extension Service has been the State's primary basis for

measuring the program's effectiveness. State program officials told us they generally discount its use as an evaluation tool. They suspect that some homemakers alter their responses to please the program aides and some do not remember all the foods they had eaten in the past 24 hours. Also, the data's validity is questionable because aides can take another recall if they feel the first one does not represent a typical day.

In addition to the 24-hour recall, the counties routinely collect other information from program sites and submit the data to the Federal Extension Service which uses it to evaluate program operations. The data, however, is not verified and is inadequate to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Program officials stated that the Department of Agriculture's progression model, developed in 1976 to help program aides teach homemakers and evaluate their progress, is not widely used in California. Its use is encouraged but not required. The progression model is not used in Los Angeles County and is partially used in Riverside County. According to several program staff members in Los Angeles and Riverside, the model was too complex.

Past EFNEP evaluations in California were limited but provided some feedback to program managers on opportunities to improve the program. They consisted of two limited surveys by the Extension Service in 1974 and 1979; a 1974 Department of Health, Education, and Welfare financial audit of California's Cooperative Extension Service operations at Berkeley; and a limited audit in 1976 by the University of California's Internal Audit Staff. Each evaluation touched on the State's management of the program. The Extension Service surveys and the University internal audit included visits to some sites. Riverside County was visited in the 1974 survey, and Los Angeles County was included in the 1979 survey.

A number of the findings we are discussing were disclosed in past EFNEP evaluations. Limited action, however, appears to have been taken on these findings.

#### California's State and local levels of program administration need strengthening

Management controls at the State and local levels appear to be too weak to ensure that EFNEP is administered as efficiently and effectively as possible. At the State level, no one seems to be in a leadership position or

devoted full time to administering EFNEP. The person most directly responsible for the program statewide is the Assistant Director of Human Resources; less than 15 percent of this person's time in fiscal year 1979 was spent with EFNEP. The State does, however, plan to establish a full-time EFNEP coordinator position. The person assigned will provide leadership and coordinate the county programs, assess program needs, identify priorities, recommend policy changes, require ongoing program evaluations, implement program reviews, facilitate exchanges of information, and handle most administrative duties.

At the local level, we found varying degrees of management control. Most of the major problems were observed at the Los Angeles site. The site did not have (1) a permanent home economist to supervise the site, (2) adequate supervision over program aides, (3) a demographic assessment of the Los Angeles urban area, and (4) volunteers and community support.

We will comment briefly on each of these points:

1. No permanent home economist

California Cooperative Extension's failure to permanently fill this first-line supervisory position in over 2 years raises a question about the priority given to EFNEP in Los Angeles County. Even though the position was temporarily filled during the last 2 years, it does not have the accountability associated with a permanently assigned supervisor. Program officials said they are still looking for qualified candidates.

2. Lack of adequate supervision

Inadequate supervision has resulted in homemakers not being seen for long periods and incomplete records. Yet, compared to Riverside, the Los Angeles site has a higher ratio of supervisors to full-time equivalent aides.

Lax supervision results in supervisors not always knowing the aides' whereabouts, and some aides having case-loads that exceed the national average from four to six times. As a result, many homemakers are not seen for 1 year or longer. Lax supervision in Los Angeles may be due, in part, to time taken by the aides' supervisors to perform clerical tasks done by the EFNEP secretary in Riverside.

We found inadequate records to support the quantity and quality of training given each aide. Also, there was

no information to show how closely supervisors work with the aides to ensure that homemakers' nutrition education needs are met and that their progress through the program is satisfactory.

The program aides' records had a number of discrepancies which could be an indication of inadequate supervision, lack of training, or poor guidelines. For example, one aide's records showed that numerous EFNEP subject categories were covered only sporadically with homemakers. Another aide's records, covering 143 families, could not be located. The acting home economist and the aide said the records were either destroyed or lost.

### 3. Lack of demographic data

The Los Angeles site has no EFNEP demographic assessment of the city's urban area. Such an assessment is critical to identify EFNEP priorities. Without demographic data, the site has no assurance the program is (1) in the best administrative setting, (2) concentrating resources on the target group, and (3) logically and systematically progressing through a community. State program officials told us the county is responsible for developing this data. County program officials acknowledge the need for such data but had no explanation for not developing it.

### 4. No volunteers and community support

Federal EFNEP guidelines encourage sites to use volunteers and elicit community support to aid program operations. State program officials told us they neither encourage nor discourage their sites from using volunteers or getting community support. Los Angeles site officials could not explain why volunteers are not used. Riverside County uses some volunteers.

In summary, we have identified some of the same problems of EFNEP that were previously disclosed by other studies conducted by the State and Federal Governments. Action taken to resolve these problems has been limited. We feel more attention to correct these problems is needed to reinforce the importance of nutrition education toward improved food purchasing and consumption patterns and health.

This concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman. We would be pleased to answer your questions.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ADULT EFNEP NATIONALLY  
AND AT FOUR STATE LEVELS AND LOS ANGELES, RIVERSIDE,  
CHICAGO, NEW YORK CITY, AND BOSTON EFNEP SITES

| Characteristic   | As of        | Nationally       | California  |                    | Illinois         |             | New York              |             | Massachusetts |           |                         |
|--|--------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|
|  |              |                  | Statewide   | Los Angeles County | Riverside County | Statewide   | Chicago (Cook County) | Statewide   | New York City | Statewide | Boston (Suffolk County) |
| Total population   | 1970 census  | 203,235,298      | 19,953,134  | 7,036,457          | 459,072          | 11,113,976  | 5,493,766             | 18,241,266  | 7,893,329     | 5,689,170 | 735,190                 |
| Eligible EFNEP population  | 1970 census  | 28,751,754       | 2,152,716   | 752,559            | 60,680           | 1,112,145   | 866,810               | 1,985,954   | 1,245,166     | 473,200   | 107,716                 |
| Cumulative enrolled families since the start of EFNEP                          | 9/78<br>9/79 | 1,694,450<br>N/A | 111,777     | 20,627             | 8,396            | 56,000      | 13,680                | 72,561      | 15,064        | 22,567    | 6,278                   |
| Enrolled families  | 9/78<br>9/79 | 196,099<br>N/A   | 8,236       | 2,159              | 919              | 5,800       | 1,914                 | 9,047       | 2,203         | 2,181     | 703                     |
| Percent of EFNEP families participating in the food stamp distribution program | 3/79<br>9/79 | 49<br>N/A        | 34          | 30                 | 21               | 54          | 73                    | 57          | 60            | N/A       | 71                      |
| Total counties   | FY 1979      | -                | 58          | -                  | -                | 102         | -                     | 57          | -             | 14        | -                       |
| Total sites  | FY 1979      | 1,270            | 15          | 1                  | 1                | 23          | 4                     | 59          | 4             | 14        | 2                       |
| Federal appropriations (note a)  | FY 1979      | \$51,810,000     | \$2,734,072 | -                  | -                | \$1,819,671 | -                     | \$2,864,060 | -             | \$825,462 | -                       |
| State distribution of Federal funds (note a)                                   | FY 1979      | -                | -           | \$357,722          | \$198,982        | -           | \$363,634             | -           | \$807,630     | -         | \$174,587               |
| Program aides, full-time equivalent  | 9/78<br>9/79 | 3,717<br>N/A     | 102         | 17                 | 7                | 125         | 37                    | 174         | 46            | 48        | 13                      |
| Average number of families per full-time aide                                  | 9/78<br>9/79 | 53<br>N/A        | 81          | 127                | 131              | 46          | 52                    | 52          | 48            | 45        | 54                      |

N/A - Not available

a/Includes 4-H component of EFNEP--States can allocate 15 to 20 percent of Federal appropriations to 4-H. Funding for adult component only was not readily available.

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD 1/  
  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING,  
CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
  
CONCERNING THE OPERATIONS OF THE  
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM  
IN ILLINOIS

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The statement below contains information about the effectiveness of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Illinois with emphasis on the Chicago urban area. In Illinois, the program is managed by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Cooperative Extension Service. The university runs the program through 20 local cooperative extension offices in 17 of the 102 Illinois counties. In Cook County, there are four programs sites--three in the City of Chicago and one in the south suburbs. The sites serve "target" neighborhoods, which are relatively small slices of low-income communities. Targets include public housing projects like Cabrini Green and Robert Taylor Homes and other low-income areas.

The program strives to improve the nutrition of low-income families, especially those with young children. These families usually do not avail themselves of public service information, nor are they motivated to seek educational help even when opportunities are readily available. To reach them, the local offices recruit persons from the target area and train them as nutrition aides. These aides visit homemakers and teach on a one-to-one and small group basis. A central theme of instruction is the basic four food groups: milk, meat, vegetables and fruits, and breads and cereals. Meal planning, food selection and buying, and food safety and sanitation are also taught.

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1/This statement was submitted to the Subcommittee on  
May 23, 1980.

The program has an adult phase and a youth phase. The adult phase focuses on the individual responsible for planning and preparing the family's food. The youth phase teaches nutrition and related skills to youths 8 to 19 years of age.

The university has delegated responsibility for the program's success to a home economist at each local office. It provides general guidance and compiles certain operating statistics for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but does little site monitoring. University nutritionists give training to home economists and adopt and prepare educational material for use by aides. However, it is a local home economist who must recruit, select, train, monitor, and evaluate the work of aides and generate monthly and semiannual statistical reports.

Federal dollars for the program have remained constant for several years, but resources are actually diminishing because of inflation. At the same time program participation has declined.

In response to your request, we examined the program at the university and in Cook County. Briefly, we found:

- Limited resources and inefficient allocation are diminishing program enrollment.
- EFNEP lacks a formal relationship with other agencies serving the same population with food and nutrition information.
- The program's communication strategy limits the number of eligible families that can be reached.
- Program monitoring and evaluation are limited and ineffective.
- Various administrative weaknesses are hampering the program.

#### LIMITED RESOURCES AND ALLOCATION

The program's goal is that families living in poverty, especially those with young children, acquire the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary to achieve adequate nutrition. However, in Illinois less than 2 percent of the poor population is being reached.

Federal funding for the program has remained at about \$1.8 million a year, but inflation has ravaged the program. Enrollment at first grew rapidly and at its peak in 1970 totaled more than 11,000 families in 37 Illinois counties. In contrast, at the close of 1979 the program was serving only 5,800 families in 19 counties. The number of aides peaked at 286 in 1973, then declined to 141 in 1979.

Although the program is now operating in predominantly urban counties, resources have not been concentrated in Cook County where most of the poor reside. For instance, in fiscal year 1979 Illinois had allocated 155 paraprofessionals to program sites, of which only 41, or 27 percent, were designated for Cook County. Also, in September 1979 only 33 percent of the enrolled homemakers resided in Cook County. In contrast, about 70 percent of the food-stamp-eligible families resided in Cook County. This is still an improvement over earlier years, such as 1972, when only 17 percent of the homemakers enrolled at yearend resided in Cook County. Program officials view this inequity as a necessary sacrifice to achieve the broadest geographic coverage. Cook County officials told us they were only scratching the surface (less than 1 percent) of the county's poor because of inadequate funds.

#### LACK OF COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Management and local extension staff have not emphasized the importance of a formal relationship with other agencies serving the same populace with food and nutrition information. Thus, some program staff are acting independently of other Federal assistance programs that they are unaware of.

#### Coordination With the Food Stamp Program

Most EFNEP families are eligible for the Food Stamp Program and vice versa. Yet, the extension service has not satisfied one of the program's prime objectives of reaching food stamp recipients. In fact, the percentage of program families using food stamps has not appreciably increased since 1973. Formal interaction between the two programs is scant.

There is no established referral system. EFNEP personnel receive training from food stamp personnel and may refer eligible families to the Food Stamp Program. In counties other than Cook, some food stamp recipients have been referred to the EFNEP program. Statewide, referrals from food stamp personnel ranged from zero to 10 percent of all referrals. For 11 of the 17 counties, the referral

rate from all agencies and programs was less than 20 percent; for 5 sites it was less than 10 percent.

In Cook County, the idea of a referral system is frowned upon because officials want to concentrate on target neighborhoods. Honoring food stamp referrals would mean sacrificing the target area concept. As it is, 73 percent of the Cook County families enrolled are also getting food stamps. This percentage corresponds to the eligible families actually receiving food stamps countywide.

However, only slightly more than 50 percent of all Illinois EFNEP families have historically been enrolled in the Food Stamp Program. Of course, most of the other counties also have lower percentages of eligible families actually participating in the Food Stamp Program. Officials could only speculate why an EFNEP family would not take advantage of the Food Stamp Program.

We saw no indication of greater local interaction between EFNEP and the Food Stamp Program since the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, which requires the Department of Agriculture to extend EFNEP to the greatest extent possible to reach food stamp recipients. Accordingly, the Department's Extension Service recommended that:

- Local extension personnel be encouraged to have frequent and cordial contacts with food stamp certifying offices, with mutual referral of participants where possible.
- Materials explaining EFNEP should be posted conspicuously in food stamp offices.
- Food stamp personnel should be involved in EFNEP aide-training sessions so that aides remain familiar with the program.

In Illinois, the extension service responded by preparing an EFNEP poster and related materials for display in food stamp offices. However, the materials may have received little impact because EFNEP does not serve persons outside the target neighborhoods.

During our audit, the university contacted county offices to determine if the materials had been distributed to food stamp offices and determined that 8 of the 17 counties had circulated the posters. According to EFNEP officials at the county and State levels, the materials will not be circulated in Cook County because this would generate

requests for instruction from persons outside target neighborhoods. The counties that have circulated them are merely fulfilling the Department's recommendation; they do not intend to honor requests outside their target area because of limited resources.

#### Coordination with other agencies

Some coordination with other agencies is occurring, but more by accident than by design. The university extension service has not worked out arrangements for coordination, leaving them up to the home economist at each program site. Thus, the coordination which has developed is not systematic, but peculiar to the individual sites.

At five counties outside Cook, some coordination takes place with the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). But only one of the three sites visited in Cook County has had some contact with that program. At the location, the WIC coordinator gave a presentation at a 1979 nutrition fest held by the EFNEP and open to all the residents of a housing project. In Cook County, some contact has also occurred with senior citizen groups, Head Start centers, and church clubs.

#### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY HAS NOT BEEN ASSURED

One-to-one communication continues to be the extension service's basic approach to recruiting and instructing homemakers. This approach has drawbacks, is costly, and limits the number of families that can be reached.

Program families are primarily recruited and enrolled by aides through door-to-door canvassing. For example, Cook County enrolls 90 percent of program families through this method. The remaining families are referred to EFNEP by other homemakers and youth volunteers.

Once enrolled, families may be taught on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Illinois uses mainly the one-to-one approach which is advocated by the Department of Agriculture. Of the families enrolled in fiscal year 1979, 89 percent received instruction, of which 83 percent were on a one-to-one basis. More group instruction has been tried over the years with limited success. All homemakers are taught first in individual sessions, until a rapport is established with the aide. Later, they may join in group meetings. The problem, however, has been in getting the

homemakers to leave home. A popular topic in group meetings is low-calorie diets.

EFNEP reaches some low-income families who are not enrolled in the program. Home economists and aides several times each month give lectures on nutrition to various groups such as Head Start parents and workers, senior citizens, school children and teachers, and church clubs. For example, 11 sites in Illinois, including 2 in Chicago, have conducted nutrition sessions for Head Start parents and personnel.

The one-to-one approach offers the advantages of personal contact. However, such an approach is costly and limits the number of families that can be reached. Despite the shrinking number of aides, the extension service has no immediate plans to increase the program's productivity. An official said an educational television project is in an idea stage. A committee will eventually be formed to make plans for a television series. Along these lines, the university extension service recently applied for a Department of Agriculture grant to develop videotaped lessons for use in small group meetings, but the grant application was not one of the 16 grants eventually funded by the Department.

#### Problems in making one-to-one contacts

The home visit approach has certain serious drawbacks. Because the program operates in depressed neighborhoods, the safety of the aides is in question. Thus, at one local office in Cook County, the aides visit the homemakers in pairs. At other locations, aides enter and leave the high-rise buildings together. These practices naturally reduce the number of homemakers that can be reached.

Another drawback to one-to-one contact is that the aides encounter a gamut of human problems, including financial, drug-related, and medical, that interfere with instruction. For example, we accompanied an aide who visited a homemaker having problems with her food stamp allotment. Because she wanted to discuss her problem, the aide dispensed with the lesson and provided only sympathy.

Further, because of the personal relationships that developed in one-to-one contacts, many families were maintained in the program longer than the university's goal of 2 years. Of the current enrollees whose folders we examined in Cook County, 11 percent had been in the program more than 2 years, while 56 percent of the graduated homemakers had remained beyond the 2 years. Once an aide establishes a good relationship with a homemaker, it is easier to keep

that homemaker in the program than to let her go and enroll someone else. For example, one homemaker had been in the program more than 2 years and had a proper diet according to program standards. The aide realized the homemaker had no further nutrition needs but was reluctant to graduate her because she was a good contact person in her high-rise project building. Thus, the one-to-one contact, though the primary method used in Illinois, is inefficient in reaching the target audience.

#### PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARE LIMITED AND INEFFECTIVE

The university and local extension offices have not taken adequate steps to monitor and evaluate program results. Beyond the 24-hour food recall and the statistical reports being compiled, there is no systematic review of program performance within the State. Plus, there is a serious question of the reliability and accuracy of those two techniques. To effectively carry out program objectives, management needs more evaluation data.

#### Diet recall lacks reliability and validity

The program's primary tool for evaluating success is data from enrolled homemakers about their eating habits. Aides evaluate family dietary habits at enrollment and every 6 months, using a technique called 24-hour food recall. The aide asks the homemaker what she ate during the past 24 hours. Then she rates the homemaker's diet according to the number of servings from each of the four food groups. An adequate diet is described as 2/2/4/4--two servings each of meat and milk and four servings each of bread/cereal and fruits/vegetables.

Dietary recall lacks reliability and validity. Officials uniformly discounted it as an evaluation tool. For one thing, it has a built-in bias, as the aide is recording data that could be used to evaluate her own teaching methods. Secondly, the homemakers may in fact cite learned responses rather than report actual diet. Other problems with this technique are that some homemakers are told in advance they will be quizzed or the recall may not be taken on a typical day. For example, if it is near the end of the month when food stamps and funds have diminished, results may be quite different than at the beginning of the month.

Defects of the food recall technique are related to a general problem of inaccurate and incomplete records. Many

family records showed no nutritional needs at entry or progress at any time in the program. Forms were not dated, making it impossible to determine a homemaker's progress. Often, the information recorded was inaccurate, such as not recording two eggs as two servings of meat. At one location aides were recording the milk in coffee as one serving of milk.

The food recall is one input to a progression model which is supposed to be used in assessing whether or not to retain families in the program. In Cook County, we found no evidence that such assessments were being made. Homemakers were dropped mainly when they moved and were graduated because of some subjective criteria applied by the aide.

#### Management information system is inadequate

Just as the food recall is inadequate to evaluate individual progress, the management information system is inadequate to evaluate the program's success. Home economists send various reports to the State office, which then collates them for reports to the national office. The reports deal mainly with such peripheral matters as the ratio of program families to aides. They do not constitute a measure of the program's effectiveness nor provide a basis for cost-benefit analyses.

We found numerous inconsistencies in the management information system. For example, in the area of "non-program families worked with," this figure ranged from zero to 243, depending on the local office definition of what the term should mean. At one location it included persons in the audience of lectures by program staff; at another location it included homemakers refusing to participate in the program.

In addition, although Illinois reported 1,272 homemakers graduated in 1979, our work in Chicago indicates this figure is inflated. Until 1979, the number of graduates was not generated; thus, some aides are confused about how to account for families. At one location, for example, when an aide left the program, many of her families were graduated, without regard to their dietary progress.

#### More emphasis on studies and reviews needed

Program evaluation has not received the priority it deserves. Its purpose is to determine whether the program is meeting its objectives. No systematic evaluations have been made; however, there have been a few ad hoc studies:

- In 1977 a Department of Agriculture team performed a program and financial survey. It noted that the progression model, a record of homemakers' progress, had not been introduced; staff lacked supervision and guidance in their work; and management should perform reviews to provide closer contact with the local offices.
- As a result of the 1977 survey, the university extension service reviewed all local sites but one. The reviews included a 1-day visit to each Cook County site in June 1979. The reviewers concluded that in Cook County "family folders tend to lack sufficient detail to give a reader an understanding of progress of the family." Also, incomplete and inaccurate food recalls were noted.
- In 1978 the Will County home economist compared a group of former homeworkers with a group of nonparticipants. She concluded that while former participants displayed superior knowledge of nutrition, their diets were similar to that of persons who had not enrolled.

Our review of records in Cook County corroborated the findings of the Department and the university reviews; that is, many incomplete files, little use of progression model and food behavior checklist, and incomplete and inaccurate 24-hour food recalls. We do not know the reason for the poor condition of the records. Some officials claimed that the problem was inherent; i.e., most aides lack a high school education and while able to develop a rapport with homemakers, they cannot cope with the administrative demands of the job. Other officials partially attributed the problem to poor supervision by the home economists.

The university has considered triennial reviews at the local sites, but is now awaiting the action of a reorganization committee formed in December 1979 to study the program's organization and determine why it is not more productive.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE WEAKNESSES HAMPER THE PROGRAM

A number of weaknesses in operations are hampering the program because EFNEP management relies primarily on local office management for the program's success. They appeared to place a significant amount of trust in the ability of program site management to carry out the program. The officials maintained that this trust is characteristic of Cooperative Extension Service programs. Consequently:

- The university personnel do not know what is happening locally. For example, they could not characterize the extent of coordination between local offices and other food-related agencies. During our audit they sent the sites a questionnaire on coordination.
- The requirement that enrolled families meet the Community Services Administration's poverty criterion is not always met. Aides dubiously assume any family living in the target neighborhood is eligible. Although they ask enrollees their income, they do not verify or use this data. At one site, the data they collected shows that 35 of 587 enrolled families did not meet the income criteria.
- Each home economist has to design her own orientation training programs and in-service training for aides.
- At the university level, nutritionists' primary involvement is to keep home economists up to date on nutrition education developments. This is done through occasional correspondence, quarterly contacts by telephone or personal visits, and an annual 2-day training session. Nutritionists, however, are not involved in routine monitoring of the program and have not been involved in program evaluation since 1973.

University officials conceded that home economists are weak in management skills and that the program is not as productive as it should be.

#### OTHER OBSERVATIONS

We would like to make a few additional observations:

- In 1978 and 1979 Illinois fell short of the requirement that at least 70 percent of program costs be for aides' salaries. In 1979, \$600,300 of the \$1,764,823 expended was for other costs--mainly for home economists and university staff such as project coordinator, nutritionists, program leaders, and preparers of educational materials.
- In the dropped folders reviewed in Cook County, 64 percent of the homemakers were dropped because they moved. Other reasons include returning to work, lack of interest, and an aide's departure. Of the graduates' folders examined, we saw a good dietary improvement in only 27 percent of the homemakers.

- Many homemakers are in the program too long and many who graduate have not learned much or changed their dietary habits. Also, some enrollees are not those for whom the program is intended; for example, they include a number of elderly single homemakers.
- Generally no contact is maintained with homemakers after graduation; only a few become involved in other extension service programs.
- No data is collected and compiled on homemakers' knowledge and behavior improvements with respect to such nutrition-related subjects as food buying, care, and preparation. Yet, considerable program time is devoted to these areas.
- Within Cook County, the aides serve homemakers residing in designated target neighborhoods. Those target neighborhoods have not shifted much in the program's 10 years. For example, the massive public housing project, Robert Taylor Homes, has been a target area from the beginning.
- Despite the program's problems, we did note cases where the homemakers appeared to improve their diets. A side benefit of the program is that it enables aides to improve their incomes sufficiently to move out of the target neighborhoods.

This completes our statement.

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD 1/

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING,  
CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCERNING THE OPERATIONS OF THE  
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM  
IN MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The statement below contains information about the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Massachusetts with particular emphasis on that program in the Boston urban area.

EFNEP, primarily federally funded and State-implemented through county offices, works to improve the dietary behavior of low-income families. In Massachusetts, the State Cooperative Extension Service, headquartered at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, administers the State program. From program inception (1969) through fiscal year 1979, the Massachusetts EFNEP spent an average of \$271.50 per family to reach 22,567 families. Program officials noted that many more actually received nutrition or nutrition-related instruction through EFNEP, but existing reporting mechanisms recognize only those who have formally enrolled or intend to enroll in the program. An additional \$1.4 million was spent to reach youths aged 9 to 19 years under the 4-H component of EFNEP.

Based on 1970 census data, the State program staff generally targeted large urban centers in 10 of the State's 14 counties to reach the greatest concentrations of lower income families. Although this census data base has not been updated statewide, the State Program Leader believes that the rationale for targeting urban concentrations holds true today. Changes, however, have been made to the targeted areas in the past several years. Some units have closed down whereas others have opened. One county, for example,

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1/This statement was submitted to the Subcommittee on  
May 23, 1980.

was recently added to the program in a short-term effort to expand coverage into virgin territory as well as to extend extension services into that county to reach low-income populations not reached before. Several county units have extended their program coverage beyond the initially targeted areas.

The State EFNEP Office provides overall program direction and controls the individual county units through various budgetary, approval, and reporting mechanisms. At the county level the Cooperative Extension Service Director is responsible for the EFNEP units operating within that county and reports directly to the State Program Leader. Each unit is supervised by a professional home economist or nutritionist who reports to the county director. Under the unit supervisor, paraprofessional nutrition aides, familiar with the communities and speaking the same language as the homemakers they serve, fill out the State organizational picture. These aides are the critical link in this program, for they enroll families into the program, identify the families' nutritional needs, and provide the family homemakers guidance on meeting dietary needs and related areas, such as food buying, care, and preparation.

Until this past year Suffolk County EFNEP had been targeted at Boston only. According to the 1970 census, the City of Boston houses nearly 92 percent of the county's below-poverty families with children under 18 years of age. An aide living in Revere was hired in April 1979 to extend the program into other areas of the County.

The two EFNEP units in Suffolk County have worked with 6,278 families from program inception through fiscal year 1979. One of these units, with 10 aides supervised by a nutritionist, primarily serves the Hispanic population. The second unit of 9 aides supervised by a home economist with nutritional training is heavily oriented toward the city's black population. The aides work from 10 to 40 hours weekly and generally carry a caseload of 1 to 1-1/2 families per hour worked.

In each Suffolk County unit, one aide acts as the supervising aide, carries a reduced caseload of families, and performs the unit's administrative functions. With the current fiscal year, the Suffolk County Cooperative Extension Service created a new professional position to oversee and coordinate both EFNEP units as well as the County's other home economics programs.

Based on your requested review of EFNEP in Massachusetts and Suffolk County (Boston) in particular, we found:

- Formal coordination mechanisms with other food programs trying to reach the same target audience have not been established at the State level but have been at the Suffolk County unit level.
- Program evaluations are limited. None have been done on a statewide basis, and reports currently required provide little insight into program effectiveness.
- The State program has been hard hit by a relatively stable budget and inflation, but State and Suffolk County staff have been receptive to adopting new approaches beyond the traditional one-to-one instruction to reach larger audiences.
- Other than budgetary controls exercised at the State level, administration of the program at all levels has been based largely on assumptions and trust rather than any formal mechanisms.
- Records at the unit level are neither properly maintained by the aides nor adequately reviewed by the supervisors.

#### COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

No formal coordination exists at the State level between EFNEP and other food programs trying to reach the same target audience. According to the State Program Leader, greater coordination is desirable, but any expansion of program activities would require additional financial support.

State program officials have met with State Food Stamp Program staff to discuss possible coordination between the programs. While a food stamp participant roster could not be made available to the EFNEP staff, food stamp officials offered to mail EFNEP brochures to all food stamp participants. The State Program Leader pointed out that while such a mailing is feasible, program credibility could be seriously hurt. The State program simply does not have the resources to meet the increased demands which could result from such a mailing.

The program will mail EFNEP brochures to all food stamp participants in two Massachusetts counties as part of a special Massachusetts-Rhode Island joint project to test alternative approaches to increase EFNEP outreach to food stamp

families. This special project, funded for fiscal year 1980, is the only new State initiative responding to the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 provision that EFNEP be extended "to the greatest extent possible to reach food stamp program participants." The State Program Leader, however, pointed out that this act did not spawn any other new efforts in the State because the emphasis had always been there.

Although Massachusetts' EFNEP does not routinely maintain statewide food stamp participation statistics, one Suffolk County unit, designated as the only USDA sampling unit in Massachusetts, does. Food stamp participation statistics from that unit have been consistently and substantially higher than the national average. As of March 1978, for example, about 85 percent of the enrolled families in that unit were receiving food stamps compared with 48.3 percent nationwide. As of September 1979, this unit's rate had decreased to 71 percent, which may be indicative of statewide participation. A recent State attempt to develop a profile of State program families arrived at the same participation rate based on a 48 percent statewide return of questionnaires on families worked with during fiscal year 1979.

In Suffolk County several formal coordination mechanisms have been established this past year with two units of the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). These WIC units refer homemakers to EFNEP, for which the EFNEP unit provides a monthly progress report. In fiscal year 1979, a total of 17 homemakers were referred by these two clinics. In addition to WIC, both Suffolk County units have made and maintain extensive contacts with other agencies, hospitals, health centers, churches, and community action groups. In one unit nearly half of the new families enrolled are still actively recruited by the aides, and the remainder are referred from other homemakers, community groups, clinics, and other agencies. At the other unit nearly all new enrollments result from referrals or the development of individual contacts at group sessions. Knocking on doors to recruit new families in this unit is becoming a thing of the past.

Suffolk County aides actively promote the Food Stamp Program to EFNEP families and help them apply for food stamps. Program staff explain that not all EFNEP families are receiving food stamps because (1) for some there is a reluctance to accept any government "handout" and (2) for others family income is too high for food stamp eligibility. On the latter point, it is impossible to determine from EFNEP records how many more families are actually eligible for food stamps. No one, even the aides who obtain and

record the data, places much faith in the income levels provided by program families. No verification is made of the income claimed and some point out that it shouldn't be for it would destroy the rapport and trust the aide is trying to build with the family homemaker. As one program official pointed out, the high food stamp participation rate certainly indicated that the aides are targeting the right audience.

#### PROGRAM EVALUATIONS ARE LIMITED

No cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness studies have ever been made of the Massachusetts program. The only audits of any kind of this program were a brief financial and operational survey done by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service in April 1975 and another one conducted in February of this year.

The need for some type of evaluation mechanism is generally recognized by the program staff, but they are unsure of what that should be. One State official pointed out that until recently, there was not any pressure to evaluate program effectiveness. Federal funding though stable was provided year after year and everyone felt the poor were being reached. The Director, Suffolk County Cooperative Extension Service, also pointed out that it is extremely difficult to scientifically measure behavioral change resulting from EFNEP instruction, especially when that instruction is directed at such a highly mobile population segment.

Very little information is routinely collected at the units on a statewide basis on which to evaluate program operations. Summary data reported by the units to the Extension Service at 6-month intervals provides socioeconomic and demographic data on participating program families and a measure of change in food consumption practices. Because not all the information is obtained from all units, some data collected is not representative of the overall State program. A recent State attempt to develop a State program profile failed because of the low unit response rate, and the data generated can only be used as indicators. To obtain a better grasp of what is happening in the program and not routinely reported on, the State Office has requested narrative reports from the units, but not all units have responded. This fiscal year the State Program Office is emphasizing the submittal of quarterly narrative reports from all units.

Evaluation data in some cases has simply not been required and in others the data provided is misleading. For example, neither the State nor the Suffolk County units know how many families have successfully completed the program.

The term "program families dropped" is the only statistic reported on which includes the number of families successfully completing the program. However, "dropped" also describes families who moved, discontinued the program for some reason of their own, or were dropped because they were not progressing in the program. The statistics generated do not explain the reasons a family was dropped and the aides have usually not completed supporting records, which should show that information. Based on what is available from the reports and discussions with one supervisor, many families are dropped because they moved, not because of dietary changes. Even the term "family" is vague for it is not restricted to the target audience of families with children below the poverty level. Families enrolled in the program may be above or below the poverty level, with or without children, and even individuals. Yet, the term "family" is used to describe them all. However, the State Program Leader explained that this is not really the State's fault, because much of data collected is in response to USDA reporting requirements where USDA terminology, though ambiguous, has been adopted.

The 24-hour food recall is the primary means of evaluating program effectiveness. Under this approach, the aides determine what the family homemaker has eaten over the past 24 hours. This is then classified according to the four basic food groups as a way to evaluate nutrition needs and to show progress over time. Aside from the fact that much controversy surrounds the validity of this as an effective evaluation tool, the aides have not recorded the data in accordance with USDA instructions. Moreover, the supervisors had not adequately reviewed the forms because they had assumed that the aides had correctly recorded and classified the food eaten. As a direct result of our review, one supervisor started to review the food recalls, found misclassifications, and now recognizes that additional training is needed in this area.

Even if correctly completed, however, the 24-hour food recall measures only changes in dietary behavior, which reflects some nutrition knowledge gained by the homemaker. It does not, however, provide data on what is actually being done in the areas of food planning, buying, preparing, and storing.

The Massachusetts program does not use the USDA-developed progression model to measure family progress in the program. The State Program Leader told us that because the initial model was too lengthy and complex, the State staff chose to use the 24-hour food recall and its own checklist. This checklist covered not only dietary changes but other

behavioral changes expected in food buying, preparation, and storage. However, it was offered only as a suggested approach rather than required. According to the State Program Leader, the State plans to adopt the shortened version of the progression model statewide by the end of this fiscal year.

As part of its annual program planning cycle, the State prepares a detailed plan of work it intends to accomplish the following year, but no yearend evaluations have been made. Even though this plan identifies evaluation criteria, the State staff has not developed a reporting mechanism to provide the data necessary to compare against the criteria to determine how effectively the program is meeting work objectives. However, the staff plans to do just that this fiscal year and will collect statewide evaluation data.

#### NEW APPROACHES TO REACH MORE FAMILIES

EFNEP has been hard hit by inflation. With Federal funding support relatively stable over the years, the number of families reached is decreasing. From a statewide peak enrollment of 3,678 families in 1971, only 1,477 were enrolled in 1979. In Suffolk County alone the number of new families added to the program peaked at 1,076 in 1970, but in 1979 only 444 families were enrolled. On a Statewide basis full-time equivalent aide positions dropped from 124 in 1971 to 54 in 1979. As inflation has eaten away at program resources, the cost per participating family statewide has increased nearly threefold since program inception. Recognizing this impact, the State program staff has pushed for the adoption of innovative ways to reach more people and make the program more cost effective. Suffolk County has been receptive.

At the State level several approaches are being tested now under the joint Massachusetts-Rhode Island project to increase the number of food stamp participants. Under this project the two States will evaluate combinations of various teaching methods involving radio, newspaper, correspondence courses, small group meetings, and the traditional one-to-one teaching. The State Program Leader expects that the lessons learned from this project will be extended statewide.

Over the past few years, the Suffolk County units have used a variety of methods to reach a wider audience, including Spanish language radio spots providing nutrition information, radio interviews in both English and Spanish, and group instruction. Aides instruct groups on various aspects of

nutrition with the intent that at least some of those attending will enroll in the EFNEP program. In this way recruiting time is minimized and basic instruction is provided in the group sessions. In one unit, for example, one aide teaches four group sessions on nutrition education as part of a 3-month homemaker/nurses aide program funded under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. At the first session she takes a 24-hour food recall on each attendee, which she uses to identify individuals in need of nutrition education. During the next three sessions, she contacts them individually to enroll them in EFNEP. During fiscal year 1979 she enrolled 31 homemakers in the program this way.

Group instruction may also provide a way to recruit new families among the "hard-to-reach poor"; i.e., those who live in dangerous housing projects in constant fear. Door-to-door recruiting will not work; these people will not open their doors to anyone they don't know. Moreover, the aides themselves are afraid to work in some of these areas. One unit, working through a VISTA worker in one such housing project, recently provided a Chinese cooking demonstration to a Spanish-speaking audience as a way to introduce EFNEP to project residents. After the demonstration the VISTA worker arranged for them to explain the program to a tenants' advisory council.

Both supervisors strongly support bringing enrolled homemakers into small group sessions. Moreover, many of the aides stated that this method of teaching gives them the opportunity to effectively use audiovisual aids and demonstrations as well as involve homemakers in discussions on what they are teaching. The major problem in holding such sessions is the logistics involved in getting homemakers with small children to one location at one time. One supervisor also pointed out that not all aides can teach group sessions effectively. Notwithstanding such problems, the Suffolk County units conducted over 300 group sessions during fiscal year 1979.

#### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Beyond budgeting controls exercised by the State Program Office, program administration at the State and local levels has been very informal. Much of the program operates on suggested ways of doing things rather than firm requirements. As a result, recordkeeping is inconsistent, records are not properly maintained, and supervisors are not adequately reviewing them. Moreover, reporting mechanisms in use do not adequately portray what is actually happening in the program. The State Program Office recognizes these problems and is taking steps to strengthen overall program management.

For the past several years, the State Program Office has used the budgetary allocation process as a way of providing incentives for the counties to improve program effectiveness. Professional staff costs are reimbursed, but funding for paraprofessionals is distributed by comparing target population census data and the number of participating families, children, and volunteers among county programs. Moreover, the State Program Leader may adjust this allocation to reflect special conditions or problems at individual units. The result is that the more progressive units are rewarded with a higher funding allocation than needed to sustain operations, whereas those performing less effectively receive budgetary cuts. For example, the fiscal year 1980 budget allocation of one county, which needed \$58,653 to sustain its operations, was slashed to \$40,000 largely because the unit has not worked with youth or recruited volunteers. To such a unit the message should be clear if it wants to improve its budgetary position.

Supervisors have not been adequately reviewing records and reports prepared at the units. Based on our limited sampling of unit records, we found some missing or inaccurate records, conflicts between some summary reports and supporting records, and misleading statistical information at times being reported by the units. We found many incomplete records and many not completed in accordance with instructions. Moreover, very little consistency in record-keeping exists between the two Suffolk County units or even between aides of the same unit.

The State Program Office is aware of the problems in recordkeeping and is taking steps to rectify them. Training has already begun and will continue to reinforce the need for accurate recordkeeping. Manuals, which detail the various reporting requirements and responsibilities, have been drafted and will be distributed to the aides and supervisors. Additionally, the State Office plans to computerize much of the raw data collected at the unit level which will reduce the number of reports generated at the unit and will provide statewide data. The State Program Leader expects all these steps will be fully in place by the end of this fiscal year.

Graduation criteria is a very ambiguous area. The supervisors rely on the aides to make these judgments. The aides, however, have no criteria to use and graduate program families when the family has met the aides' concept of satisfactory progress. The unit supervisors have not been routinely involved in those decisions. In fact, none of the records provided any indication of the nutrition educational needs of newly enrolled families, the specific areas instruction

would be provided, and the progress the families had made toward satisfying those needs.

Few formal controls exist to provide any assurance that the aides are actually doing what they are supposed to be doing. All records on the program families are prepared by the aides with no verification by a third party. The only formal mechanisms we found to locate aides during working hours--preparation of proposed weekly itineraries and daily telephone call-ins by the aides--provide very little control, because they have been too vague and inaccurate to use for locator purposes. Basically, confidence that the aide is performing is based on the supervisor's trust and a variety of informal mechanisms which reinforce that trust. These mechanisms include the aide's participating in weekly staff meetings, preparing lesson plans at the unit, instructing groups, and consulting with the supervisor. The State Program Leader also pointed out that repeated referrals from the same agency or group speak well for the quality of aides' work. All give credence to the aides' performance without formal controls.

The State Program staff believes very strongly that the data currently collected in the program doesn't convey what is really happening. For example, people reached through multiple group meetings, telephone contact, mailings, and the media are not recorded. Aides' time is not recorded as to actual instruction, travel, administrative work, developing and maintaining contacts with other agencies, and similar categories. The aides themselves identified numerous success stories where the health or well-being of enrolled families improved as a result of EFNEP instruction and assistance. Yet, none of this information has been routinely recorded or reported on.

#### CONCLUSIONS

To strengthen EFNEP and improve the program's effectiveness, all governmental units need to address

- the need for evaluation tools and reporting mechanisms which provide meaningful program evaluation data and
- the need for stronger managerial controls over program operations.

This completes our statement.

\* \* \* \* \*

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD 1/

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING,  
CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCERNING THE OPERATIONS OF THE  
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM  
IN NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The statement below contains information about the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in New York State with emphasis on New York City.

In New York State the program is managed by the Cooperative Extension Service at Cornell University. As of October 1979, EFNEP occurred in 55 of the State's 57 counties, with 59 program sites. New York City has four EFNEP sites--one each in Manhattan, Bronx, South Brooklyn, and Jamaica-Queens. The latter site became operational in October 1979.

Contained below are some of our brief observations concerning EFNEP operations at the New York State, county, and City levels:

- The State and City EFNEP programs are attempting to coordinate with other programs.
- State and county fiscal augmentation to the relatively stable Federal funding level has helped support EFNEP's growth and stability.
- The State periodically monitors and provides guidance to EFNEP sites, but standards and evaluation tools for measuring achievement of program objectives is lacking.

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1/This statement was submitted to the Subcommittee on May 23, 1980.

--New York City sites varied in how well they administered the program--two of the three sites visited appeared to be administered in a satisfactory manner; problems were observed at the third site.

#### COORDINATION WITH PROGRAMS

Coordination exists at both the New York State and City levels between EFNEP and other programs trying to reach the same target audience. State program officials have met with State Food Stamp Program staff to identify ways of improving coordination between the two programs. One major attempt at improving coordination is expected to result from a recently funded Department of Agriculture pilot project for about \$85,000. This project will be conducted at four EFNEP sites and is intended to encourage food stamp families to participate in EFNEP, and vice versa, through the use of audio cassette units that contain specially prepared food and nutrition taped messages.

In New York City EFNEP coordinates with the Food Stamp Program; the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and welfare agencies. Contacts are also maintained with hospitals, schools, health centers, day care centers, churches, and community action groups. In 1979, New York City EFNEP sites reported working with 355 local community agencies; 141 of these were schools and/or other youth groups.

Program officials told us they are receptive to referrals resulting from coordination with other programs, but geographic boundaries and the lack of aides do not permit the handling of all referrals. Referrals living outside the EFNEP geographic boundaries are not served; those inside are contacted.

Statewide about 57 percent of the enrolled EFNEP families receive food stamps. About 60 percent of New York City's EFNEP program families receive food stamps and about 56 percent receive welfare. Program officials could only speculate why all EFNEP families would not take advantage of the food stamp or welfare programs. Aides told us they actively promote the Food Stamp Program and other programs to newly recruited families. Two reasons program personnel usually cite for EFNEP families not receiving food stamps and welfare are (1) an ethnic group reluctance to accept any government "handout" and (2) family income is too high to be eligible. On the latter point, it is impossible to determine from EFNEP records how many families are actually eligible for food stamps. No one, not even the aides who

obtain and record the data, place any faith in the income data provided by program families. No verification is made of the income claimed because such a verification is not a program requirement and the aides believe that attempts to verify it would destroy the trust they are trying to build with the EFNEP homemaker. For this reason program officials feel EFNEP eligibility should be determined on the basis of target neighborhoods, not income.

STATE AND COUNTY FISCAL  
AUGMENTATION TO FEDERAL FUNDS  
HELPS SUPPORT EFNEP's STABILITY

The State and county governments' financial contribution to the relatively stable EFNEP Federal funding of about \$2.8 million annually has helped reduce the impact of inflation, permitted most counties in the State to have an EFNEP program, and provided New York City with added funds for its program. In 1979, State and county governments contributed a total of about \$1.9 million to EFNEP. New York State contributed about \$917,000 for fringe benefits. Fifty-two of the 53 counties in EFNEP contributed a total of about \$242,000 for program leaders' salaries, and 33 counties contributed a total of about \$228,000 for aides' salaries; the balance of about \$496,000 was contributed by counties in the form of in-kind services.

State program officials told us State and county contributions and the establishment of funding criteria for a minimum viable EFNEP site allow them to obtain maximum benefits from Federal funding and to reduce the impact of inflation on Federal funds. They felt that for a viable EFNEP site to exist, a minimum of \$21,900 is needed for a program leader, aides' salaries, and maintenance and support. Most counties are able to meet this need because of State and county contributions. These contributions also allow increased funding for the New York City EFNEP sites.

State program officials told us that even with the present Federal, State, and county contributions to EFNEP, available funds are only sufficient to scratch the surface of reaching the State's poor population. Much of the slow progress in reaching eligible EFNEP families with available funds can be attributed to the program's outreach methodology and instruction. In 1979, New York City EFNEP sites enrolled and taught about 86 percent of their families by door-to-door canvassing and one-to-one instruction.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS ARE LIMITED

The State's primary basis for evaluating its program operations consists of periodic monitoring and guidance to its EFNEP sites. State program officials told us, however, they are unable to tell us how successful the program has been toward meeting its objectives due to the lack of program standards and effective evaluation tools.

The 24-hour food recall remains the predominant evaluation tool for measuring program effectiveness. Under this approach, the aides determine what the family homemaker has eaten over the past 24 hours. This is then classified according to the four basic food groups to evaluate the enrolled EFNEP families' nutrition needs and progress. It does not measure behavior changes or nutrition knowledge gained on such EFNEP subjects as food buying, preparation, and storage.

The need for more and better evaluation mechanisms is recognized by the program staff, but they are unsure of what these mechanisms should be. The State Program Leader told us that until recently there was no pressure to evaluate EFNEP's effectiveness. Also, the counties' voluntary contributions to the program were considered a positive endorsement of its effectiveness.

We did note in our interview of 22 New York City EFNEP homemakers that they all felt they and their families had benefited from the program.

NEW YORK CITY'S PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The quality of program administration appeared satisfactory at two of the three sites visited. The third site needed improvement in the degree of aide supervision and quality of recordkeeping. Our assessment was based on observations, a review of 20 aides' records, site reports to the State, and discussions with local EFNEP supervisors and staff.

We observed at the one site, for example, that supervisors were not reviewing the aides' records for accuracy and completeness. We found incomplete records, records not filled out in accordance with instructions, summary reports that conflict with supporting records, and inconsistencies in recordkeeping between aides. Also, the records did not consistently indicate the nutrition educational needs of newly enrolled families and the specific areas of instruction to be provided.

At each site there did appear to be adequate controls for ensuring the aides' work attendance. The aides submit weekly itineraries in advance and make daily telephone contacts with their supervisors. We also found a number of supervisors meeting with their assigned aides on a daily basis.

In conclusion, we found that the efficiency of the sites in New York City varied depending on the amount of management control by the site program leader. Statistics on the New York City EFNEP operations are contained on the following pages. This completes our statement on New York EFNEP.

\* \* \* \* \*

New York City EFNEP  
1979  
Program Data

1. Number of enrolled homemakers who participated in EFNEP during the 1979 calendar year. 3,635
  
2. Of the enrolled homemakers, the number who were:
  - (a) graduated from EFNEP 1,399
  
  - (b) dropped for the following reasons
 

|                            |    |            |
|----------------------------|----|------------|
| (1) moved                  |    | <u>155</u> |
| (2) lack of progress       |    | <u>32</u>  |
| (3) lost interest          |    | <u>69</u>  |
| (4) other reasons          |    | <u>86</u>  |
| -returned to school        | 8  |            |
| -went to work              | 35 |            |
| -illness - expired         | 3  |            |
| -unable to contact         | 8  |            |
| -group discontinued        | 20 |            |
| -aides not working in area | 7  |            |
| -unsafe conditions         | 2  |            |
| -spoke no English          | 1  |            |
| -personal problems         | 2  |            |
  
3. Criteria used for graduating homemakers.
  - (1) Has actively participated in the program for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 18.
  - (2) Has received a minimum of 12-15 productive lessons in the areas of nutrition, food, and related issues planned to meet her needs.
  - (3) Completion of two or three Food Recalls and Food Behavior Checklists.
  - (4) When significant changes in food behavior patterns and shopping practices occurred as determined by the Food Behavior Checklist, the dietary recall, and personal observations made by the aide in the home.

## 4. Methods used to recruit program participants in EFNEP.

| <u>Method</u>                     | <u>No. Recruited</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Door-to-door canvassing</u>    | <u>3,114</u>         |
| <u>Agency referrals</u>           | <u>190</u>           |
| <u>Community organized groups</u> | <u>143</u>           |
| <u>Homemaker referrals</u>        | <u>179</u>           |
| <u>Self referral</u>              | <u>3</u>             |
| <u>Youth group referral</u>       | <u>6</u>             |

5. Number of volunteers who assist with EFNEP. 574

6. The number of aides employed.

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| (a) full-time    | <u>44</u> |
| (b) 3/4 time     | <u>0</u>  |
| (c) 1/2 time     | <u>1</u>  |
| (d) other        |           |
| 2/3 time         | <u>1</u>  |
| 4/5 time         | <u>3</u>  |
| summer assistant | <u>4</u>  |

7. Contributions other Extension Agents have made to EFNEP.

--Provided orientation and training for aides in the areas of housing, urban gardening, consumer education, maternal and infant feeding, and local farmers' markets.

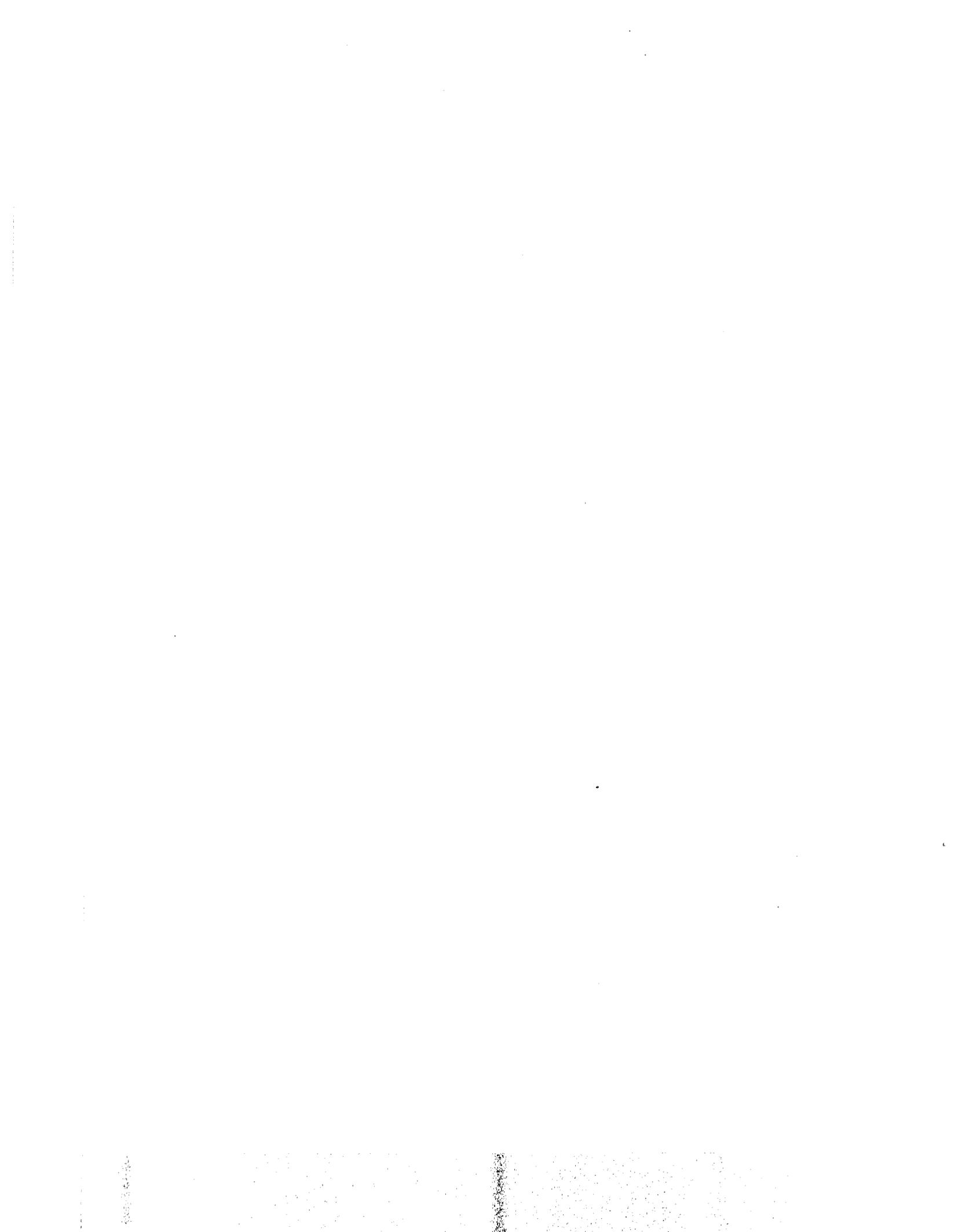
--Assisted with the preparation and distribution of educational materials for the use of aides, program homemakers, and enrolled EFNEP youth. Example: Snack Leaflet, Aides' Mini-Lessons, youth lesson plans, recipes, Maternal and Infant Feeding practices.

--Shared new resources available with our professional staff.

--Provided horticultural expertise, tools, and seeds to EFNEP for homemakers and youth interested in summer gardens and house plants.

--Referred groups of potential clients to EFNEP.

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