

Programs Available to Train Labor for the Fishing Industry

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I WOULD LIKE to spend a few minutes narrowing this discussion. If I were sitting in the audience, I would want to hear someone address himself specifically to what we can do tomorrow, or next week or in the next couple of months to get some answers to this problem. My contribution is to provide some perspective for you, to give you some specifics and suggestions, and then, during the discussion period, to respond to your questions.

Basically we have to remember that we are in a tight economy and that we are definitely in competition for labor. The unemployment rate back in 1961, you remember, was 6.7% but today it is 3.8%. Millions of people have gone to work in productive jobs. What 3.8% really means is that there is only 2% unemployment in most of the big cities. The insured unemployment rate is down below 1%. In addition your competition is with 40,000 other occupations. To combat it you have to organize in a methodical, planned way because that is what industry groups are doing all over this country.

The major assistance that the Department of Labor has to offer is the employment service. Marshall Miller has gone through a description of what you should do in terms of placing your job offers. The employment service also has another capacity, and that is providing training through Manpower Development and Training funds. But how are those funds spent? Unless you understand that, you will not get a chance at using those funds. I think it is terribly significant that the shrimp industry has not had more than 1,000 men trained since the beginning of the Act, probably because you have not told your story to one person. He is the State Employment Security Administrator who also is the chairman of the Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System in each state. The Cooperative Area Manpower plan is set up with funds budgeted at \$323 million for this fiscal year. The funds are allocated, in the main, to the states, and the states then decide what occupations to train. They usually select the shortage occupations and those occupations for which the underemployed and the hard-core disadvantaged unemployed can be trained. States respond to the need, and if they are aware of it they are likely to respond to your need and set up a training program. But you must remember that you are in competition with literally hundreds of other industries and hundreds of other occupations for these programs.

Beginning immediately, you should contact your state Employment Security Administrator and the state committee members of the Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System. The main individuals in the state are the Employment Security Administrator and the vocational education man in the State Department of Education. The United States Department of Labor representative can also help you with an on-the-job training program.

A selective aptitude test battery might help with the problem of how to

decide whether or not an individual is likely to succeed on a shrimp boat. I don't know whether the shrimp industry has tried to get a selective test battery in conjunction with your Employment Security Manager at the local office. If you haven't, I would start out by sitting down with that local manager and stating, "Let's design together a specific aptitude testing pattern and battery that we can use." I think you will be surprised that there are literally hundreds of test batteries for hundreds of occupations that are very effective. Give it a try!

Another major program that is available is the JOBS program. If you are centered in one of the fifty largest cities in the United States, you have undoubtedly heard about J-O-B-S, or Job Opportunities in the Business Sector, a government-assistance program called the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA). MA-4 is a format for describing a proposed training program. The government has sent out a request for proposals to firms in fifty large cities, saying, "How will you train the hard-core disadvantaged in your firm, hire them and train them and retain them?" You describe that program, and the government will assist you in providing training.

We have just funded the program that was alluded to this morning for 100 rig men in Shreveport, Texas, and I think additional programs like that can be funded. The MA4-RFP (Request for Proposal) anticipates funding most of the programs before March 1969. Some \$200 million will be utilized in training hard-core disadvantaged workers in fifty cities. You now have only one contract funded for this. I think you have a real opportunity in terms of assisting your industry in training these disadvantaged workers.

I fully expect that this next fiscal year we will be going beyond the fifty cities. We are not sure whether or not the JOBS program will be accepted by the new President, but we are sure that the MDTA program and the JOBS program have bipartisan support on the Hill. In his campaign speeches President-elect Nixon indicated that he wanted increased involvement in the private sector, so we are looking forward to a really massive increase in the JOBS program.

So, if you have not looked at the Request for Proposal (RFP) or MDTA, please contact your National Alliance business representative, or your local Employment Service manager in one of the fifty cities. And if that fails write me at 2315 Main Labor Building, and I will see that you get information.