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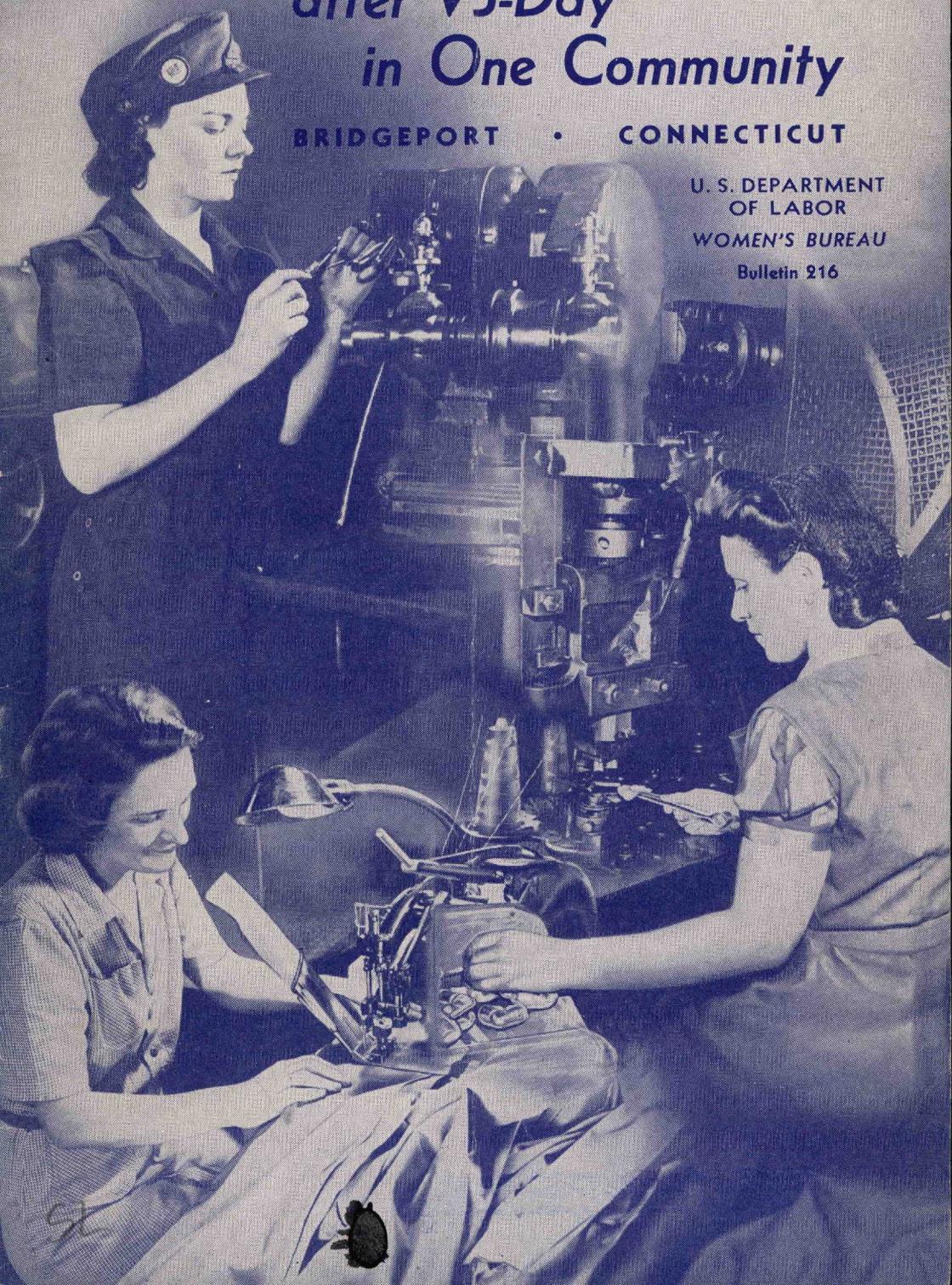
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Women Workers

after VJ-Day in One Community

BRIDGEPORT • CONNECTICUT

U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR
WOMEN'S BUREAU
Bulletin 216



LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
WOMEN'S BUREAU,
Washington, April 16, 1947.

SIR: I have the honor to present a report on the outstanding postwar changes that affect women workers in Bridgeport, Conn., and recommendations for community action to promote the welfare of these women. The study was undertaken at the request of three Bridgeport organizations: The Community Advisory Service Center, The Young Women's Christian Association, and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. It is hoped that the report will serve as a basis for further analysis of local conditions and for the development of programs to meet the employment needs of women. The study was carried out under the general direction of Constance Williams, Chief of the Research Division. Ethel Erickson, Chief of the Field Work Section, supervised the field work, and Isadore A. Spring, Chief of the Statistical Section, was in charge of the statistical work. Several persons in the Division assisted in writing the final report.

Respectfully submitted.

FRIEDA S. MILLER, *Director.*

Hon. L. B. SCHWELLENBACH,
Secretary of Labor.

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WOMEN WORKERS AFTER VJ-DAY IN ONE COMMUNITY—BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

REASONS FOR MAKING STUDY AND METHODS USED

The study was made in response to requests from three Bridgeport organizations—the Community Advisory Service Center, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. These organizations realized the importance of providing for the welfare of working women in promoting the welfare of the community as a whole. They believed that community planning for employment, vocational counseling, training, and placement should specifically include consideration of women's needs and problems. They therefore requested the Women's Bureau to 1) bring together data on the characteristics of Bridgeport women workers, on their war and postwar jobs, and on local employment policies and practices affecting women, and 2) offer suggestions for a community program that would help meet the employment problems of women in Bridgeport.

During the month of February 1946 three representatives of the Women's Bureau gathered information from Bridgeport community agencies, working women, and employers.

The United States Employment Service cooperated in making available its files containing information on labor market trends for men and women, current job openings for women, and characteristics of women job seekers. The Unemployment Compensation Commission provided information on benefit payments to women.

To obtain additional information on women's jobs and on employment policies and practices affecting them, 45 establishments were visited. Representing the kinds of work Bridgeport women do, the establishments included metal and electrical factories, garment shops, stores, laundries, hotels, and banks.

By filling out questionnaires, many women workers in Bridgeport supplied information on their work experiences during and since the war period and on their economic responsibilities. The women who were interviewed were contacted through various labor unions and through civic, church, and social organizations. Not necessarily representative of all women workers in Bridgeport, these women did represent a substantial part of the city's working women. About 700 questionnaires were filled out by women workers who were members of any one of 35 groups.

Information was also secured from many community agencies on the opportunities currently available to women for vocational training, counseling, and other special services which help directly or indirectly to make employment more satisfactory for both women workers and their employers. Interviews were held with staff mem-

bers at the Community Advisory Service Center, the YWCA, the Bullard Havens Technical School, and many other agencies.

The data collected in the course of the study are not intended as statistical records regarding all women workers in Bridgeport. They serve rather to point out the outstanding employment changes which women in that city have recently experienced, as a basis for understanding current employment needs of Bridgeport women. The study aims primarily to make known the nature of the employment problems that Bridgeport women workers face and to offer an outline of first steps toward their solution.

INDUSTRIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BRIDGEPORT AND OTHER BACKGROUND DATA

WHAT DOES BRIDGEPORT MAKE?

With the advent of war and the accompanying total mobilization of resources, manufacturing activities in Bridgeport increased greatly.

Many diversified products are manufactured in Bridgeport. Electrical machinery, including electrical appliances, predominates and constituted in 1939 about one-fourth of the value of all Bridgeport manufactures. Also made in the metal-working plants are airplanes, machine tools, sewing machines, iron and steel products, aluminum and brass goods, hardware, valves, gages, instruments, cutlery, razors, office appliances, ammunition, silverware, jewelry, and novelties. Needle-trade industries produce women's garments—corsets, lingerie, dresses, suits, and coats—and men's and boys' shirts. Textile products such as lace and webbing, rubber products, lumber and wood products, drugs, and a large number of miscellaneous items are also represented in Bridgeport's list of manufactured goods. The State Directory of Manufacturing lists about 500 plants in the metropolitan area of Bridgeport in 1945.

HOW MANY WOMEN ARE EMPLOYED IN BRIDGEPORT?

Women formed about 30 percent of all employed persons in Bridgeport in April 1940, or just about the same proportion as in the country as a whole, which was 29 percent. In July 1945 the proportion was 38 percent, again close to the Nation-wide figure of 37 percent.¹

The total number of women employed in Bridgeport increased 85 percent from April 1940 to July 1943, from 27,000 to almost 50,000. By July 1945 the number had dropped to 44,000, but even then it was still about two-thirds more than in the prewar period. By February 1946 the number of employed women had dropped considerably from the July 1945 level, but the number employed and the proportion of women to total employment continued to be above the prewar level. Of about 105,500 employees in the Bridgeport area in February 1946, about 35,000 or, roughly, a third were women.

WHAT DO THE WOMEN WORKERS DO?

Even in 1940 when, in the Nation as a whole, about one-fifth (20.8 percent) of all employed women were in manufacturing, in the industrial center of Bridgeport more than one-half (51.3 percent) were in

¹ Nation-wide figures from Bureau of the Census Monthly Report on the Labor Force, old series, August 15, 1945. Bridgeport figures from USES Labor Market Developments Report, Bridgeport, Conn., Area, December 5, 1945.

manufacturing. Of these Bridgeport women employed in manufacturing, the largest number were in apparel (33.3 percent), and the second largest group was in electrical machinery (21.7 percent). The half of all women who were not in manufacturing were for the most part in trade and service industries such as stores, hotels, laundries, and restaurants.

During the war, manufacturing—particularly the metal-working plants—expanded to the point where two-thirds of the employed women were in manufacturing establishments. Aircraft, ordnance, and electrical machinery—industries which together employed 3,700 women in April 1940—were employing 17,300 women in July 1945, almost 5 times as many as before the war; and at the peak of manufacturing employment in 1943 they had employed even more women. Such expansion in female employment in metal-working manufacturing was made possible by new women entering the labor market, by transfers from nonmanufacturing establishments, and by reduction in the number of women employed in some manufacturing plants, such as apparel shops, where there were in 1945 almost 40 percent fewer women than in 1940.

The distribution of women by industry and the proportion women constituted of all workers in the prewar period (April 1940) and in July 1945 (about a month before the end of the war) are shown in some detail in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1.—Industrial Distribution of Employed Women in Bridgeport, April 1940 and July 1945

Industry	April 1940		July 1945	
	Number of women	Percent distribution of women	Number of women	Percent distribution of women
All industries.....	26,900	100.0	44,000	100.0
Manufacturing—total.....	13,800	51.3	29,600	67.3
Metals, chemicals, rubber.....	8,400	31.2	25,200	57.3
Aircraft.....	200	.7	6,000	13.6
Automobiles and equipment.....	100	.4		
Ordnance.....	500	1.9	4,600	10.5
Chemicals.....			300	.7
Rubber products.....	100	.4	100	.2
Iron and steel.....	1,500	5.6	1,700	3.9
Electrical machinery.....	3,000	11.1	6,700	15.2
Machinery (except electrical).....	1,000	3.7	2,400	5.5
Nonferrous metals.....	1,800	6.7	2,600	5.9
Professional and scientific instruments.....	200	.7	400	.9
Other.....			400	.9
Other manufacturing.....	5,400	20.1	4,400	10.0
Apparel.....	4,600	17.1	2,900	6.6
Textiles.....	300	1.1	600	1.4
Other.....	500	1.9	900	2.0
Nonmanufacturing—total.....	13,100	48.7	14,400	32.7
Government.....	400	1.5	1,000	2.3
Construction.....	100	.3	100	.2
Transportation, communication, and public utilities.....	500	1.9	2,000	4.5
Trade and service.....	11,600	43.1	11,300	25.7
Other.....	500	1.9		

Source: USES Labor Market Developments Report, Bridgeport, Conn., Area. Dec. 5, 1945.

NOTE.—In July 1943, at the peak of war production, there were nearly 34,000 women in Bridgeport in manufacturing, approximately 34 percent of all employees, and at the time of the study this number had decreased to 22,000, still about 34 percent of the total.

Table 2.—Proportion of Women to All Workers Employed in Bridgeport, by Industry, April 1940 and July 1945

Industry	Percent of all workers who were women	
	April 1940	July 1945
All industries	30	38
Manufacturing—total	29	38
Metals, chemicals, rubber	22	37
Aircraft	8	37
Automobiles and equipment	13	50
Ordnance	14	75
Chemicals	13	20
Rubber products	22	30
Iron and steel	32	44
Electrical machinery	13	26
Machinery (except electrical)	33	25
Nonferrous metals	20	27
Professional and scientific instruments		67
Other		
Other manufacturing	50	52
Apparel	82	76
Textiles	19	46
Other	14	27
Nonmanufacturing—total	32	37
Government	17	38
Construction	2	5
Transportation, communication, and public utilities	13	41
Trade and service	39	38
Other	36	

Source: USES Labor Market Developments Report, Bridgeport, Conn., Area. Dec. 5, 1945.

By January 1946, with reconversion well under way, some indication of the postwar pattern in women's employment was evident. When peak employment in manufacturing establishments in the area was reached in July 1943, 33.7 percent or 33,700 of all the manufacturing employees were women. Although the number has since declined to 22,400, the proportion remains high. In aircraft and ordnance, war industries, both men and women had been laid off in great numbers, and women had been laid off in greater proportions than men. Within manufacturing, the electrical-machinery industry, a normal consumer-goods industry, made outstanding gains in employment of women during the war and was maintaining these employment levels to a considerable degree. The needle trades, where the number of women employed decreased from 4,600 in 1940 to 2,900 in July 1945, had regained some of their women workers but were still from 1,200 to 1,500 short of their employment before the war.

DO THE WOMEN WORKERS OF BRIDGEPORT BELONG TO LABOR UNIONS?

Out of the 65 locals in Bridgeport, 27 reported they had women members. The total number of women belonging to labor unions in Bridgeport in early 1946 was estimated to be slightly over 7,000. The 27 locals represented workers employed in 40 establishments, of which 36 were manufacturing.

The two manufacturing industries, electrical machinery and apparel, which normally employ the largest numbers of the women employed in manufacturing in Bridgeport, are highly organized, and women form an important part of the union membership. The United

Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, CIO, with 9 locals in the city, has organized the workers in electrical-machinery plants. Apparel workers have been organized by the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, AFL (5 locals), by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, CIO (1 local), and by the Corset Workers Federal Union, AFL. The apparel workers include women in women's garment, underwear, blouse, and corset shops and in men's shirt shops.

Numerically there are more women union members in the electrical industry than in the apparel industry. In the apparel industry, however, the proportion of all union members who were women was 90 percent, while in the electrical industry it was a third, reflecting differences in the relative numbers of men and women employed in the respective industries.

Among the other 11 locals which have women members are those in the iron and steel, other metal, aircraft, and other industries. In these industries the unions which have the largest number of women members in Bridgeport are the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, CIO (4 locals), and the United Automobile, Aircraft, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, CIO (1 local).

In nonmanufacturing industries, which toward the end of the war in July 1945 employed almost one-third of the women workers in Bridgeport, union organization is less highly developed than in the manufacturing industries. Of the 27 locals which have women members, all but 4 have jurisdiction in manufacturing industries only.

Women's activity in unions usually has a direct bearing on the benefits women receive from collective bargaining agreements. In many Bridgeport unions women have taken an active part. Of the 26 locals reporting the activities of women members, women held some office in 20. Women held the office of president in 5 locals, and in 2 locals the chairmanship of the executive board. Shop committees in the 16 dress, coat and suit, underwear and blouse, and corset shops covered by ILGWU agreements were composed mostly of women. In 12 of these 16 shops women held also the position of business agent or chairlady. In the Corset Workers Federal Union a woman held the position of business agent, and the chairladies for the 2 shops covered by agreements with this local were women. In all 9 of the UE locals women held offices such as members of executive boards, secretaries, organizers, or shop stewards.

Although in many unions women were active in shop committees and in union offices, in most unions it was reported that women's attendance at union meetings was not as good as men's.

WHAT PLACEMENT, TRAINING, AND COUNSELING SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO BRIDGEPORT WOMEN?

Placement—The United States Employment Service is the outstanding placement service in Bridgeport, and within the limits of its appropriation it offers good placement service for both men and women. The USES is the chief source of community information on trends of employment, unemployment, applications for employment, job openings, and data on the characteristics of women registered for work in specified occupational groups. Seeking to provide a public employment service effective in meeting the needs of both employer

and employee, the Bridgeport office maintains regular contact with local employers.

During the war the USES concentrated on getting employees for essential industries and consequently had to curtail service usually given, both in following up the placement of persons looking for employment and in considering the problems of peacetime industries such as trade and service. In addition, under the strain of its wartime tasks and with considerable staff turn-over, this office, in common with other USES offices throughout the country, had to drop many of its special services, particularly that of counseling.

The four commercial employment agencies which were operating in Bridgeport in February 1946 were visited. All were fee-charging, and the persons in charge stated they had more job listings than applicants. One, affiliated with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, promoted job opportunities as well as placement of Negroes; most of its placements for women were in the domestic and other service fields. The other agencies were small and did not keep detailed placement records but stated that most of their openings and placements were in the clerical and service occupations.

Training—Apparently the number of women who were getting vocational training in Bridgeport was very small in February 1946. The Bullard Havens Technical School, financed by State funds and operated by the State Board of Education in cooperation with the local board of education, offered regular day courses of a secondary level for a large number of trades and 2-year courses above the secondary level for junior engineers.

Courses were offered in mechanical skills, building trades, graphic arts, and electrical and automotive occupations. Registration in these courses was not limited to men and boys, and a few girls were, in fact, registered in them, mostly in the graphic-arts section. One girl was taking the 2-year course for junior engineers. It was clear, nevertheless, that attendance in these courses by women was regarded as unusual and a demonstration of individual initiative. In the strictly girl's-trades area the only course offered was dressmaking. Of approximately 400 to 450 students in all regular courses, 50 to 55 were women.

This trade school itself, however, is not entirely responsible for the inadequacy of vocational training. The policy of the school is to offer any course which will prepare women for employment if a definite demand is expressed for such training. During the war women had been trained for aircraft and other industries. Only because there was no demand for more extensive industrial training at the time of the study were such a limited number of courses given. When Women's Bureau agents were in Bridgeport, the school reported that plans were being made to offer a greater number and variety of courses to girls.

The Job Research Shops of the Bullard Havens School were a new part of the school program. These shops offered an orientation and try-out program especially for veterans, displaced workers, and handicapped individuals. The objective of the program was to assist workers in selecting an occupation in line with their interests

and aptitudes, to give them an opportunity to try out jobs, to give preliminary orientation in job requirements and duties, and to offer training in needed skills or counseling in the choice of further training. When fully staffed and equipped, try-out job facilities were expected to be provided for jobs in machine operating, electrical and radio work, riveting, plumbing, sheet metal work, carpentry, printing, and clerical work. During the first two months of operation, veterans had been the principal group served. Only one woman had registered for a try-out. As the program develops, more opportunities for try-outs and orientation along the lines of women's interests and job openings are planned.

Vocational courses were also given in public high schools, the public trade school, and by several community agencies. In addition, prevocational work was given in the public primary and secondary schools and in the private junior colleges. Other trade-training facilities for women consisted of courses in private schools—three business schools, two beauty schools, three nursing training schools, and a kindergarten training school—and on-the-job training carried on in a few plants and institutions.

It is obvious that any future decision on trade-training courses for girls should be based on what jobs are likely to be open to women, what the need is for trained workers, and how adequately private schools or on-the-job training facilities are already performing the task. In addition, the fact that women can fill some positions in fields once regarded as men's work should also be taken into consideration in making training plans.

Since regular vocational-school classes cannot hope to carry the full burden of all types of training needed in the community, some consideration needs to be given to how these services can be extended by advisory or supplementary methods. Such new training techniques as were found satisfactory during the war are still applicable, i. e., short courses for "spot" training, foreman training, job try-out and orientation, and on-the-job training with related instruction in the public school.

Closely tied to the question of providing training is the problem of providing personal income during the training period. When a short course is sufficient, the financial burden will not be severe. Some workers, however, will need scholarships or direct financial aid, particularly when a longer period of training is required. While these are total community responsibilities, recommendations and referrals by the employment services to other agencies which provide financial help are often necessary. Great Britain has moved toward a solution of the problem by making provision for attendance at training courses during the period unemployment compensation is being paid.

The Women's Bureau agents were informed in February 1946 that a study of Bridgeport's educational facilities for both men and women was in the process of development. The Bridgeport Community Advisory Service Center assumed that this study would include a review of the vocational training practices of the city. The study-plan seemed to offer particular opportunity for making a careful analysis of vocational-educational opportunities and needs as they affect women as well as men.

Counseling—The Community Advisory Service Center was developed primarily to meet the needs of returning servicemen. It was also designed to give counseling to displaced war workers and new workers, but in February 1946 about 92 percent of the persons who used its services were veterans. The Center has been in operation since the fall of 1944 and has a background of community planning which involved the State Reemployment Commission, the city government, and many local organizations. The Center is both an outgrowth of the planning done by these organizations and a contributor to further community planning.

Less than 10 percent of the persons serviced by the Center have been women—predominantly veterans, school girls, and relatives of servicemen—although neither the USES, the YWCA, nor the local schools were staffed to offer women professional counseling. With the expected decrease in veterans' needs, the Center plans to put more emphasis on other community groups. In fact, the request to the Women's Bureau to make this study was prompted by the Center's interest in expanding its services to women.

The functions of the staff give an idea of the scope of the services offered. Included are a director, a director of community education, director of occupational adjustment, director of educational counseling and planning, 3 occupational and educational counselors, a testing supervisor, a psychometrist, 4 testing department workers, a personal service adviser, a librarian, and a contact representative. Also assigned to the staff are 18 employees of the Veterans' Administration, including contact representatives, training officers, and medical officers. Representatives of other agencies on the staff include persons employed by local banks and lending institutions, the American Red Cross, the State Food and Dairy Council (a nutritionist), the Bullard Havens Technical School, the State Bureau of Rehabilitation, Selective Service, and the Connecticut Veterans Reemployment and Advisory Commission.

The United Community Fund owns the building in which the Center is situated and supplies the operating budget.

An average of 300 to 350 persons use the Center each day. Some come for information only, but many may receive complete counseling service involving a series of interviews. Referrals are made to other agencies when the service can best be provided outside of the Center.

The Center has made a conscious effort to coordinate the community's efforts to serve its needs, rather than to be just another agency. To this end it has built up wide coverage of community interests in 38 functional committees representing over 800 organizations. It bases its ability to aid individuals on its knowledge of the community and on its efforts through these committees to stimulate new approaches to filling gaps in community services.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Past, present, and future job opportunities for women in Bridgeport were studied by analyzing recent job openings and records of women applicants registered at the United States Employment Service and by visiting 45 industrial establishments in the city.

During the war, as already noted, the employment of women increased, particularly in the electrical-fabrication industries. Some women worked in war jobs different from those normally held by women in peacetime production, but with the end of the war the Women's Bureau found there was a tendency to shift women back to the jobs they customarily held before the war.

Many of the women in Bridgeport, on the other hand, did very much the same kind of work during the war as they had done before the war. War production in the basic metal industries of Bridgeport did not always require fundamental changes, because in many plants the prewar processes and products were similar to those needed to produce war goods.

Women who shifted from traditional woman-employing industries, such as the needle, mercantile, and service trades, to work in new war plants often experienced a marked change in their surroundings. Ventilation, lighting, seating, and service facilities such as lunch, rest, and toilet rooms usually were much better than on their old jobs. Also, it was reported, there was generally more consideration for the worker on the job and less speeding. Now, when these women are offered employment at their old jobs, many are reluctant to return to loft buildings with poor conditions. Also, to young workers who have worked only in new war plants, a job in a crowded and poorly maintained needle-trade shop or laundry offers few inducements, and they prefer to wait, hoping for work on jobs and under conditions more like those of the war period.

THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY

Job orders² and job applicants are grouped by the USES office into five classifications: factory operative, clerical, sales, service, and other; jobs for factory operatives are sub-classified as skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled. The USES reported in February 1946 that the bulk of the job openings for both men and women were for factory workers, reflecting the fact that Bridgeport is predominantly an industrial city. About 40 percent of the job openings registered for factory operatives were for women.

The demand for women factory operatives was chiefly for semi-skilled workers; 4 of 5 factory jobs open to women were in this classification. In the month of February approximately two-thirds of all semiskilled job openings were for women, whereas only about one-third of the unskilled openings called for women, and no job openings for women in skilled work were reported.

In service industries three-fifths of the openings were for women; in clerical and sales work, three-fourths. However, in professional and managerial classifications practically no jobs were available to women through the USES.

A more detailed analysis was made of over 100 job orders which were on file in the local USES office for the months of December 1945 and January 1946. These orders contained requests for over 1,000 women, of whom some 700 were to be factory workers; 90, clerical workers; 200, service workers; and a small number were to be either salespersons or professional or semiprofessional workers.

² A job order is a request from an employer for workers for particular jobs.

Of the jobs for women factory operatives about one-half were for sewing-machine operators. The next largest number of factory openings for women was for assemblers in metal-working industries. In the classification of machine operators in the metal-working industries the only openings numerically significant were for punch-press operators. These are all old-line, women's jobs. Although some requests were made for clerical workers, such jobs formed less than 10 percent of all jobs open to women.

Among the USES job orders analyzed, jobs for women in service industries—laundries, hotels, hospitals, and household employment—comprised only about one-fifth of all jobs available to women. Also, the jobs open in trade industries were relatively few. During the war public employment offices devoted their efforts almost exclusively to placing workers in war industries. While they were again, at the time of the study, promoting and accepting orders from all employers, their services to certain industries were undoubtedly still below the peacetime level.

It can hardly be said that jobs for women in Bridgeport were either unavailable or scarce at the time of the study. In spite of cut-backs and changes in processes since the war, the USES office reported that openings for women relative to their proportion in the labor force were greater than for men.

FOR WHAT TYPES OF JOBS DID THE WOMEN APPLICANTS APPLY?

An analysis was made of a random sample of 50 percent of the USES records on file at the time of the study. This sample, consisting of records on more than 1,500 women applicants, showed that the large majority of the applicants applied for the same type of job as their last job, which for most applicants was also their war job. Among the workers with prewar experience, relatively little shifting to different lines of work had taken place during the war. This tendency to stay in the same occupation was characteristic also of the women who were interviewed first hand by Women's Bureau agents.

Almost 60 percent of the women applicants at the USES applied for jobs as factory operatives, and about a fourth desired clerical jobs.

Shown below is a classification of the women applicants according to their most recent previous job and according to the job for which they applied.

	<i>Most recent pre- vious job (percent)</i>	<i>Job applied for (percent)</i>
All women.....	100	100
Factory operatives.....	64	59
Clerical workers.....	22	24
Personal service.....	5	8
Sales.....	3	2
Other.....	6	7

For the most part, women applicants were referred to the same type of job for which they had applied. Eight in ten of the women applying for factory work and of those applying for clerical work were referred to these respective jobs. However, one in six of those applying for clerical work was referred to factory work, and a small propor-

tion of those desiring factory work, to household employment. Investigation of the USES records, both applications for employment and orders for jobs, showed that:

- (1) the labor force was not yielding readily to employment changes which accompanied reconversion. The tendency for workers to seek jobs involving the same work and paying the same wages to which they had been accustomed during the war was apparently causing some delay in reemployment of displaced war workers.
- (2) some women were apparently unable to meet the hiring specifications set forth by employers who placed job orders with the USES.

WHAT JOB CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE VJ-DAY?

In spite of the fact that war production in Bridgeport differed less from ordinary peacetime production than in many other places, it was inevitable that reconversion should bring about some changes in jobs. To ascertain the nature of these changes, Women's Bureau agents visited 45 business establishments in Bridgeport. Thirty were manufacturing plants, chosen because they employed a significant number of women or had a large proportion of women employees. Heavy metal industries that normally employ relatively few women were not visited. Two major electrical-machinery plants, in an industry which employs a large proportion of women, were not included because of a then current strike.

Table 3.—Number and Proportion of Women Employed in 45 Bridgeport Establishments, February 1946 and July 1943

Industry	Number of establishments	Women employed			
		February 1946		July 1943 ¹	
		Total number	Percent of all employees	Total number	Percent of all employees
All industries	45	13,063	36.5	23,034	39.2
Manufacturing	30	11,243	34.4	21,195	37.8
Metal and electrical	16	8,167	30.8	18,256	36.1
Apparel	7	1,302	77.5	1,239	79.2
Other	7	1,774	39.6	1,700	44.0
Retail trade	5	1,233	72.7	1,292	74.4
Department store	3	1,115	71.2	1,173	73.0
Limited price	2	118	90.1	119	91.5
Personal service	5	283	50.6	284	50.8
Laundry	3	149	70.6	150	71.1
Hotel	2	134	38.5	134	38.5
Bank	4	246	61.7	263	66.6
Transportation	1	58	12.3	(²)	(²)

¹ In 2 of the 45 establishments employment information was not available for July 1943. One was a small apparel plant, the other was the transportation company.

² Information not available. See above.

Source: Women's Bureau interviews with employers in 45 Bridgeport establishments, February 1946.

Employment of women in these 45 establishments dropped by approximately 10,000 from July 1943 to February 1946. The number of women employed in manufacturing on the latter date represented only a little more than half (53 percent) what it had been at the peak of war production. Furthermore, the postwar figure in manufacturing shows that women represented 34.4 percent of all employees, while 37.8 percent of the wartime employees had been women.

Plant interviews with employers in manufacturing and nonmanufacturing industries showed:

1. There are certain jobs which, having been filled satisfactorily by women for years previous to the war, are considered women's work.

Women most commonly are employed as:

In metal and electrical plants: assemblers, punch-press, drill-press and other machine operators, inspectors, and packers. (A tabulation of 5,100 women factory employees in 31 plants—chiefly metal and electrical—by the Manufacturers' Association in the fall of 1945 showed that 90 percent of the women employed in these plants in processing jobs were in the occupations just mentioned, nearly one-half of whom were assemblers.)

In apparel plants: sewing machine operators and finishers.

In other miscellaneous manufacturing plants: packers and inspectors.

In department and limited price stores: saleswomen and clerical workers.

In laundries: markers, sorters, flatworkers, pressers, and hand ironers.

In hotels: maids and waitresses.

In banks: clerical and certain executive workers.

In the bus company: clerks.

2. As demobilization progresses, many of the jobs assigned to women during the war are again becoming men's work.

During the war women operated lathes, grinders, milling machines, and automatic screw machines—jobs usually performed by men. Although occasionally women are still performing these operations, their number is proportionately less than during the war. Veterans with machine-shop experience have been given preference in filling vacancies in such jobs. During the war some women did blanking and forming on heavier work than that to which they had been assigned in the prewar period. This has been largely discontinued, but women still predominate as light-press operators.

The few women taken on as cutters in the garment trades are quickly being replaced by men; the cutters, highest paid of the clothing workers, are traditionally men. In the bus company, where women were taken on as bus drivers, bus cleaners, bus washers, stock and tool-crib attendants, and garage helpers, management has already replaced all but the drivers and a few cleaners with men, and, while women drivers with union seniority will be retained, no more women will be hired for this job.

3. Reconversion to peacetime production has reversed some of the changes which during the war expanded women's employment.

Contracts* for civilian customers carry specifications less rigid than did war orders, resulting in elimination of many exact inspection jobs which had been necessary during the war because of the close tolerances required on certain war goods. Regular production calls for less factory-clerical work than did war production.

Job dilution and its corollary, specialization, were markedly characteristic of war production; but, due to subsequent consolidation of jobs, management has since been asking for employees with greater versatility in skill than women could acquire during the war period.

4. Although reconversion and demobilization are resulting in contraction of women's occupational opportunities, some women undoubtedly will profit from skills acquired in war plants.

After reemployment of veterans has been taken care of, women may be given opportunities on jobs other than those traditionally considered women's, if management takes into account women's effective war service on jobs they had been allowed to fill for the first time. Total mobilization of industry, such as was experienced during wartime, gave the woman worker a chance to prove herself.

WHAT ARE BRIDGEPORT EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR IN NEW WOMEN WORKERS?

Job orders placed with the USES may include employers' specifications concerning the age, education, training, experience, marital status, or other personal characteristics of desired applicants. During the war management suspended many of its usual hiring qualifications, but, as the number of applicants in relation to jobs increases, employers have become more selective. In the course of interviews with Women's Bureau representatives, a number of personnel managers commented that they were planning to "tighten up" on requirements and qualifications for employment. Further evidence of this was found in employers' specifications submitted with job orders to the USES:

A job applicant under 18 or over 40 will find her age a disadvantage.

Few employers will consider girls under 18 years of age.³

One-half the clerical jobs were for women of 20 and over. A large majority of the orders which specified a maximum age limit excluded women over 40, although, in domestic service, the orders were apt to specify 50 as the top age.

In order to get a white-collar job, at least a high school education is desirable.

For the most part, specific schooling was required only for the white-collar jobs. Household employment had no schooling specifications; factory jobs rarely specified schooling requirements. Stores and offices showed decided preference for high school graduates. For

³ Minors under 16 are safeguarded by the Connecticut law which prohibits their employment at any time in manufacturing, mechanical, mercantile, restaurant, and a number of other specified industries. The Governor, under the War Powers Act, was authorized to suspend any law governing labor. This authority was not exercised in regard to the minimum age for employment, and the standards fixed in the law were maintained.

stenographers and bookkeepers, training and skills were more definitely specified.

The inexperienced worker will find many employers unwilling to hire her.

In four-fifths of the jobs open to factory and clerical workers, experienced workers were preferred. The dress and suit and coat shops were requesting experienced sewing-machine operators. On the other hand, some of the corset and shirt shops were offering to train women to operate power sewing machines. In two of every three openings for professional and semiprofessional workers, mostly for nurses, previous experience as well as training was required.

In service trades—laundries, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, and domestic services—were found the largest proportion of jobs for inexperienced applicants.

WAGES AND HOURS ⁴

What cut in earnings may the displaced woman war worker expect? Most of the women war workers in Bridgeport had been employed in metal-working plants, where their earnings averaged about 83 cents per hour during 1944.⁵ Women wartime factory workers applying for jobs at the USES had averaged 82 cents an hour on their last jobs. Two-thirds of these women had earned 75 cents or more. If, however, the displaced war worker cannot secure a job where she may use her wartime acquired skills and accepts a job in a manufacturing plant for which she has had no previous experience, the chances are that her starting rate will be 60 cents an hour. Moreover, if she secures work in a trade or service industry, her hourly earnings, in most instances, will be even less than 60 cents.

It should be emphasized that the above statements compare, for the most part, earnings of experienced workers in war industries with rates offered to beginners on peacetime jobs.

WARTIME HOURLY EARNINGS OF WOMEN APPLICANTS AT THE USES

About 900 of the 1,500 women applicants reported hourly earnings on their last wartime jobs. These women had averaged 81 cents per hour. For those who had been factory operatives, this average was 82 cents; for clerical employees, 83 cents; and for all other women applicants, 68 cents. A percent distribution of these women by hourly earnings follows:

<i>Hourly earnings</i>	<i>All appli- cants</i>	<i>Factory (percent)</i>	<i>Clerical</i>	<i>Other</i>
Total.....	100	100	100	100
Under 60 cents.....	7	4	9	41
60, under 65 cents.....	8	8	8	11
65, under 75 cents.....	20	22	9	16
75, under 85 cents.....	21	22	15	9
85 cents, under \$1.....	36	35	56	16
\$1 and over.....	8	9	3	7

⁴ All rates and earnings shown in the study, unless otherwise specified, were those in effect the first months of 1946. Most of the data given in this section refer to hourly rates or earnings. Further information on weekly earnings is given in the following section.

⁵ Data compiled by the Manufacturers' Association, Bridgeport, Conn., for a meeting with Connecticut Congressmen, May 22, 1945.

HOURLY EARNINGS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES

More comprehensive data on actual earnings of employed women in Bridgeport industries are reported in Area Wage Rates studies conducted by the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. This Bureau collected information on over 4,500 women in 92 Bridgeport establishments for selected months during the first half of 1945. The following average hourly earnings were found:

Metal-working plants.....	\$0. 86
Women's and misses' dress factories.....	1. 25
Men's and boys' dress-shirt factories.....	. 75
Mercantile establishments.....	. 51
Laundries.....	. 55

According to these findings, women in dress factories were averaging over twice as much as women employed in stores. In stores and laundries approximately 90 percent of the women had earnings of less than 65 cents an hour, while only 11 percent of the women in metal-working plants and 5 percent of those in dress factories had hourly earnings which averaged less than 65 cents.

BEGINNING WAGE RATES IN 45 ESTABLISHMENTS

What is an inexperienced woman paid as a beginning rate? Interviewing 45 Bridgeport establishments, Women's Bureau agents found that entrance rates varied considerably among industries and also within industries. Rates quoted here represent either time payment (hourly or weekly) or guaranteed base rates for incentive workers. It is important to remember that factory production workers who are paid under an incentive system are guaranteed minimum hourly rates. For output above that warranted by the minimum, guaranteed rate, earnings are higher. Also, experienced workers may start work at more than the entrance rate if their skills are considered valuable on the new job.

In 30 manufacturing plants the beginning hourly rates for women factory workers ranged from 50 to 83 cents; the most usual was 60 cents. Ten plants had beginning rates of 65 cents or more; eight, of less than 60 cents. Most of these jobs were paid on an incentive basis, and actual earnings may be considerably higher. In three laundries, 45 cents, 50 cents, and 55 cents were the beginning rates. In stores the rates for beginners were reported on a weekly basis and ranged from \$17 to \$21. In two hotels the base rate for maids, experienced or inexperienced, was 50 cents an hour; waitresses in the one hotel received a flat hourly rate of 25 cents, and waitresses in the other, \$15 for a full week.

The most usual beginning rate for clerical workers, generally specified as file clerks or general clerks, was \$24 weekly, the equivalent of 60 cents an hour on the basis of a 40-hour week. Clerical rates in stores and banks tended to be lower than in factories, laundries, or hotels.

RATES OFFERED ON JOB OPENINGS FILED WITH THE USES

Information obtained from employers' statements regarding women's job openings filed with the USES revealed that the average rate for all job openings was approximately 60 cents (58.7) per hour. In 7 of 10 openings the rate was from 50 to 65 cents an hour. As was stated previously, most of the available jobs were for factory workers

(about half of them for sewing-machine operators), and the usual rate offered for these jobs was 60 cents per hour. The demand for clerical workers was for trained and experienced workers. The average weekly rates offered of \$24.50 for typists and of \$27 for stenographers are indicative of wages for these types of workers. The usual rate offered for laundry workers was 50 cents per hour plus an incentive bonus; for domestic employees, 60 cents. Job openings on file at the USES office of a professional or semiprofessional nature were few. They were chiefly for nurses or therapists in low-paying public hospitals.

WOMEN'S BEGINNING HOURLY RATES VERSUS MEN'S

Beginning hourly rates are indicative of the general wage structure since they are usually the foundation or lowest level on which the wage structure is built. The lowest-rated beginning job for men is usually classed as common labor, and the rate for this job is often the base rate in a plan of job evaluation. For women, beginning jobs tend to have a more specific connotation, as for example, assembler, punchpress operator, inspector, and women's jobs are rarely classed as common labor. Although it is difficult to compare men's and women's rates without information on job content, apparently in the beginning rates in the Bridgeport plants the equal pay principle or rate for the job is not in general practice. Among the 30 manufacturing plants visited by the Women's Bureau agent, there were only 8 in which the minimum entrance rates were the same for men and women. In one of these plants all women's beginning jobs were grouped together at 55 cents, while the only job priced at 55 cents for men was that of truck boy. In the 22 other plants, the difference between men's and women's beginning rates usually favored the men by from 5 to 20 cents.

In its May 1946 summary on the labor market the local United States Employment Service office reported hourly wage rates for job openings on file for unskilled factory jobs for men and women. For men, the unskilled jobs had hourly rates of 80 to 95 cents, while the rates for unskilled women ranged from 50 to 65 cents.

ONCE THE BRIDGEPORT WOMAN IS ESTABLISHED IN A JOB, WHAT IS THE BEST-PAYING POSITION SHE CAN HOPE FOR?

A discussion of highest-paid jobs must begin by pointing out the difference between the highest flat-time rate paid to any employee and the high earnings that are possible for workers under an incentive system where piece rates are set to enable fast and efficient workers to make high wages.

Women's Bureau agents found in the plants visited that the well-paid jobs for women were not always in the same occupations in each plant. The manufacturing plants, other than garment plants, reported various jobs—those of assembler, inspector, calibrator, dispatcher, machine operator, or group leader—as their highest paid women's positions, exclusive of forelady. Inspectors at \$1.12½ and a small group of women lathe operators at \$1.20 had the two highest hourly rates reported for women in the survey who were paid on a time basis. Women press operators paid on an incentive basis were making as much as 90 to 95 cents an hour.

Fast and skillful sewing-machine operators, under an incentive system in the garment plants, were earning 90 cents to \$1.80 hourly.

In nonmanufacturing industries, highest-paid jobs in each industry were those of: buyer and ready-to-wear saleswoman in department stores; floor girl in variety stores; shirtline operative, dry-cleaning presser and hand finisher, and curtain and blanket finisher in laundries; housekeeper in hotels. Among white-collar workers the most frequently mentioned women's job with top salary was that of secretary to an executive, but there were various other jobs reported in the upper wage brackets for women: head bookkeeper and accounting clerk, auditor, credit and claims manager, chief of correspondence, advertising copy writer, assistant personnel and employment managers. In the banks the highest women's salaries went to assistant cashiers, assistant treasurers, and tellers.

HOURS OF WORK

Early in the war, the Governor of Connecticut was authorized to suspend those laws and regulations of the State which (1) limit women's employment generally to 48 hours per week and 8 or 9 hours per day, and (2) prohibit employment of women after 10 o'clock at night. At the time of the study, February 1946, the 10 p. m. limit for women had been reestablished in restaurants, but it had not been reestablished in manufacturing or mechanical establishments.

Women's Bureau agents found that none of the 45 plants visited were employing women over 48 hours; in 17 of the plants women were working a 48-hour week; next most common was the 40-hour week. Twenty of the firms scheduled a 30-minute lunch period, and 20 scheduled 1 hour. Formally scheduled rest periods, usually 10 minutes in the morning and the same in the afternoon, were allowed in 18 establishments, 15 of them in manufacturing.

Table 4.—Weekly and Daily Hours for Women in 45 Bridgeport Establishments, February 1946

Hours	All establishments	Number of establishments in—			
		Manu- facturing	Mer- cantile	Banks	Other
Total	45	30	5	4	6
Weekly hours:					
35	4	4			
40	13	9		4	
42, 43½, 44	5	1	4		
45	6	5	1		
48	17	11	1		6
Daily hours:					
7	9	4	1	4	
7¼, 7½	4		4		
8	20	17			3
9	12	9			3

Source: Women's Bureau interviews with employers in 45 Bridgeport establishments, February 1946.

Evening and night hours were scheduled for only a small proportion of the women in 9 of the 30 factories visited, but only 2 factories had more than 100 women each on second shifts. Less than 10 percent of

the women were working late shifts, and none worked after midnight. No women in factories were on third shifts. As the 10 o'clock curfew for women in manufacturing and mechanical establishments had not been resumed at the time of the plant visits, some factories were still employing women after 10 o'clock. Six factories scheduled women to work after 10 p. m.; two of the six reported that if women could not continue working after 10 o'clock, the women might be replaced by men; the others reported that upon official notification that the 10 o'clock law was to be enforced again, they would either adjust the women's hours to meet the provisions of the law or transfer women to day work. Some firms reported at the time of the visit that they had, or would have in the future, job openings for which women could qualify if it were possible to have the same hours for women as for men on the second shift.

THE REPLIES OF 678 WOMEN WORKERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR WORK EXPERIENCE AND THEMSELVES

THE SAMPLE

Neither the interviews with employers nor the USES records of job openings, discussed in the preceding sections, yielded answers to such questions as—Why do women work? or, What has been the effect of reconversion on the work and earnings of individual women?

To answer these questions, interviews with women workers themselves were necessary. The limited time and personnel allowed for the study did not permit the development of a city-wide sample of Bridgeport women workers which would represent in proper proportions all industries, occupations, age groups, and other personal characteristics, nor was home visiting feasible within the resources provided for this study. Instead, information was secured by having questionnaires filled out by individual women workers who were members of groups willing to cooperate with the Women's Bureau in this project.

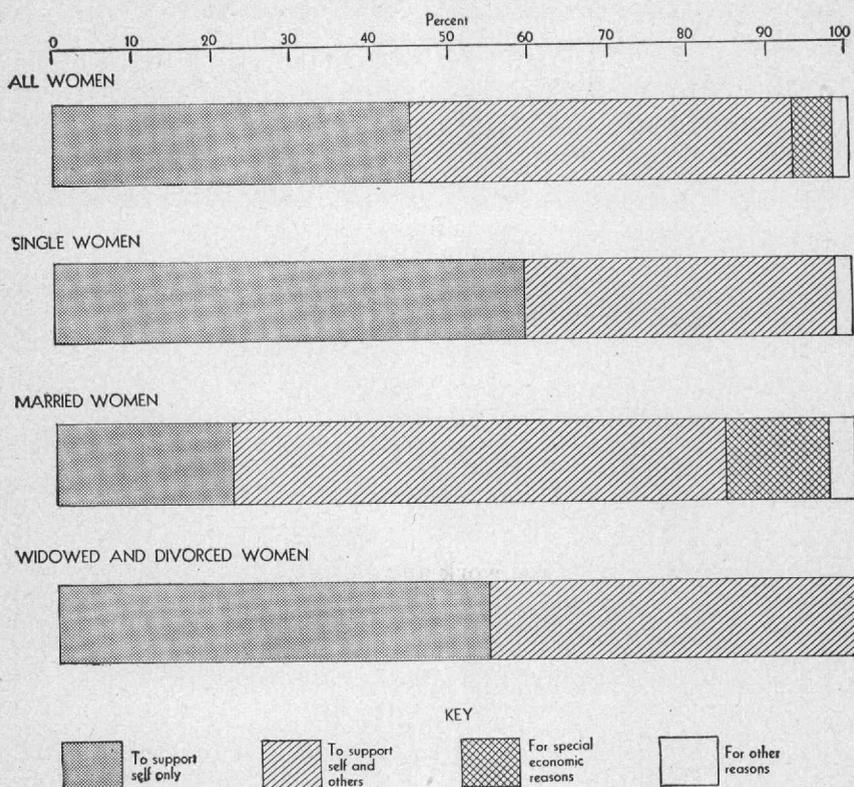
By this method information was obtained from 678 women in 35 groups representing 22 organizations.⁶ Eighty-nine women, or 13 percent, were affiliated with the YWCA; 306 women, or 45 percent, with eight local trade unions. The remaining women were members of various women's clubs, church and nationality groups (such as the Jewish Hadassah and the Polish Falcons), trade schools, and other groups. Each of the 678 women had been in the labor market, employed or seeking work, in at least one of the three periods—prewar (the week before Pearl Harbor), war, present; 579 were currently employed, 27 were seeking work, and 72 were no longer in the labor force.

WHY DO WOMEN WORK?

This survey showed that more than 9 of every 10 women in the labor force work to support themselves, and over half of them also contribute to the support of others. All of the widowed and divorced, 98 percent of the single, and 84 percent of the married women workers were

⁶ See Appendix, p. 34.

CHART I.—WHY WOMEN WORK



working for these reasons. Previous studies by the Women's Bureau have shown similar results.

Among married women, a small group (13 percent) stated they were working for definite objectives, such as buying a home. Only 3 percent of the married and 2 percent of the single women stated they were working from choice and not necessity—in order to be independent, to maintain professional skills, or simply because they like working. (See chart I.)

A substantial number of women were the sole wage earners for a family group. Almost 90 percent of the women interviewed lived in family groups, and of these women 16 percent were the sole wage earners in the family. (See charts II and III.)

Among the widowed and divorced women who lived in family groups, almost half were sole wage earners. The proportion of the married and of the single women who were sole wage earners of family groups was smaller, 16 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

Women workers' families were found to be large; 60 percent of the women were members of families of four or more persons.

CHART II.—WOMEN LIVING WITH FAMILY AND WOMEN LIVING APART

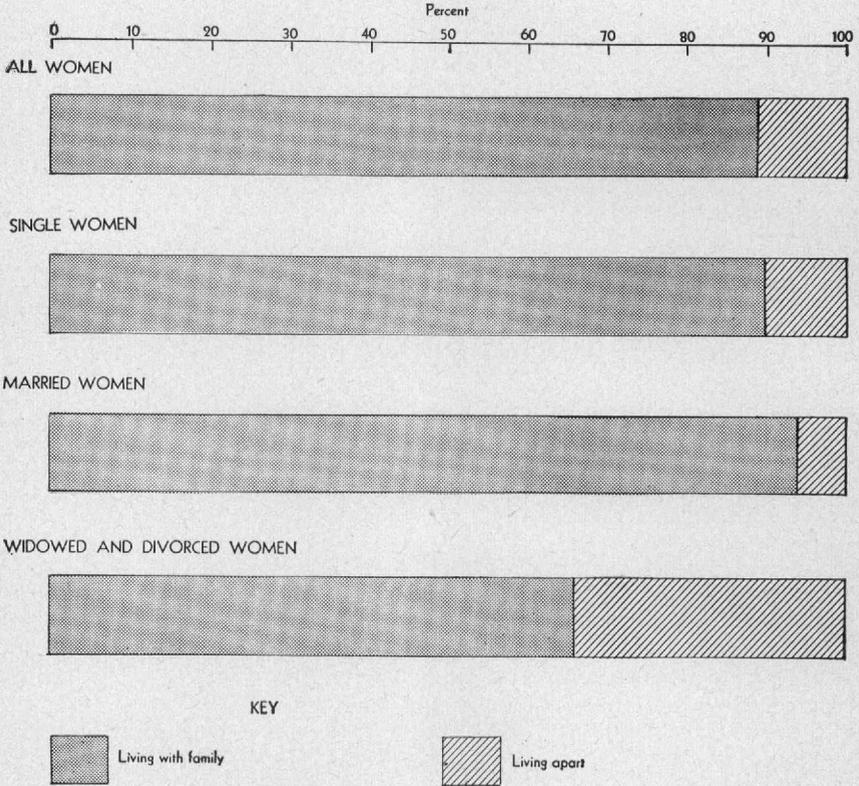


CHART III.—WAGE EARNING RESPONSIBILITIES OF WOMEN LIVING WITH FAMILY

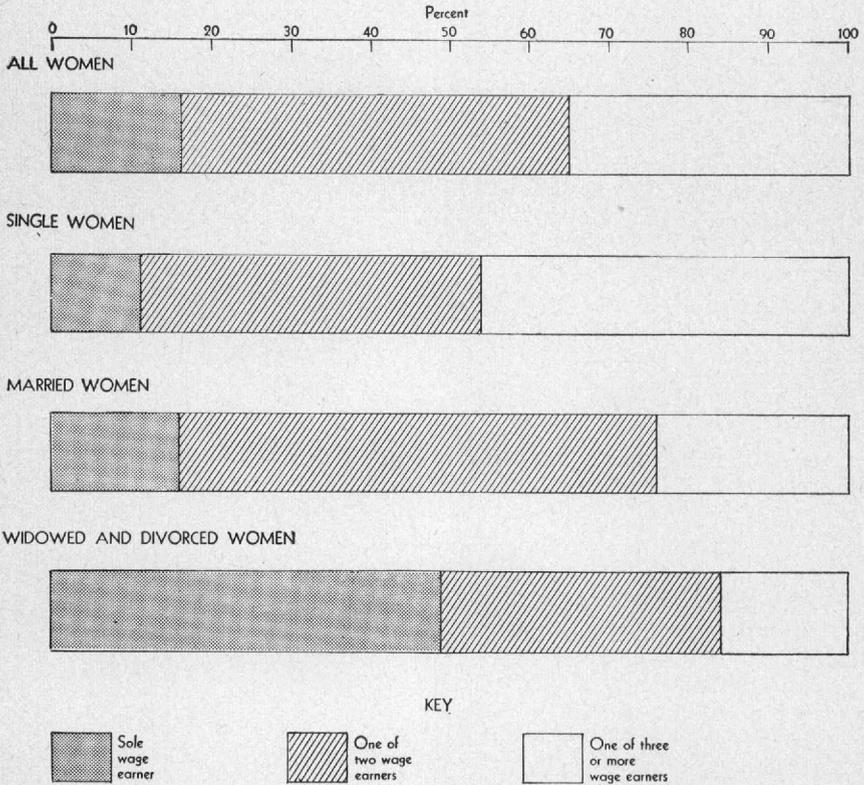
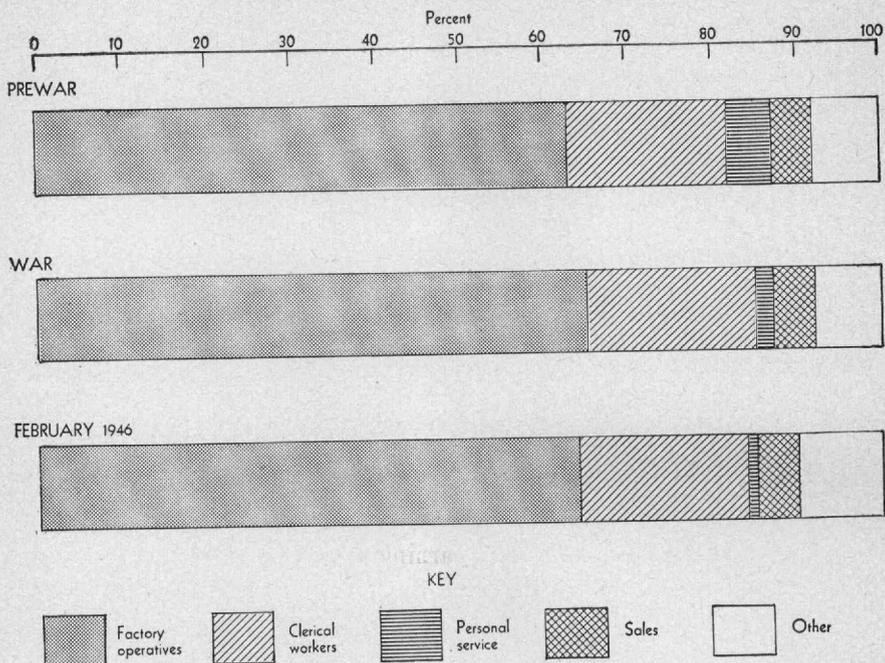


CHART IV.—OCCUPATIONS IN THREE PERIODS



OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES DURING THE PREWAR, WAR, AND POSTWAR PERIODS

Although the employment experiences of the women interviewed cannot reflect in detail changes in the employment status of all Bridgeport women, they do reveal some general trends typical of a large group of Bridgeport women.

Most of the women interviewed were factory operatives, a fact which supports the data previously presented showing that the bulk of the women employed in Bridgeport before the war, during the war, and since the war have been factory workers.

Of the women who were employed in the different periods, the proportion employed in specified occupations in each period remained relatively constant, although a smaller proportion was employed in personal-service occupations in the war period than before the war. (See chart IV.)

Among the women interviewed in February 1946, about 10 percent had left the labor market since the end of the war.

THE WOMEN'S REPORTS ON THEIR WEEKLY EARNINGS IN THE WAR PERIOD AND IN FEBRUARY 1946

The end of the war meant decreased earnings for many women workers. Cancellation of war contracts resulted in plant shut-downs, lay-offs, shorter hours, and elimination of overtime. Reconversion to peacetime products was sometimes accompanied by lowered incentive rates.

More than half (54 percent) of the women interviewed experienced a change in weekly earnings between the war period and February 1946. Most of the women experiencing a change in weekly earnings had been subjected to a cut, but a few enjoyed increased earnings.

Among 510 women who reported earnings from full-time jobs both during the war and in February 1946:

44 percent were earning less per week in 1946 than they had earned during the war.

10 percent were earning more.

46 percent were earning the same amount. (See chart V.)

Not only was there a larger number of decreases in weekly earnings than of increases, but the amounts of the decreases were considerably greater than the amounts of the increases. Only a fourth of the increases were more than 25 percent, while more than half the decreases were greater than 25 percent. (See chart VI.)

Differences between war and postwar earnings reflected chiefly reductions in hours worked and job changes. (For information on hourly rates and earnings on particular jobs, see the preceding section.) Factory operatives experienced more serious cuts in weekly earnings than did clerical employees, both in the proportion of workers affected and in the amount of earnings lost. Ten of every 20 factory operatives were earning less in February 1946 than they had earned during the war period, and 4 of each 20 were earning at least a third less. Only 6 of every 20 clerical workers suffered a decrease in earnings, and only 1 in each 20 was earning at least a third less.

CHART V.—CHANGES IN WEEKLY EARNINGS SINCE THE WAR PERIOD

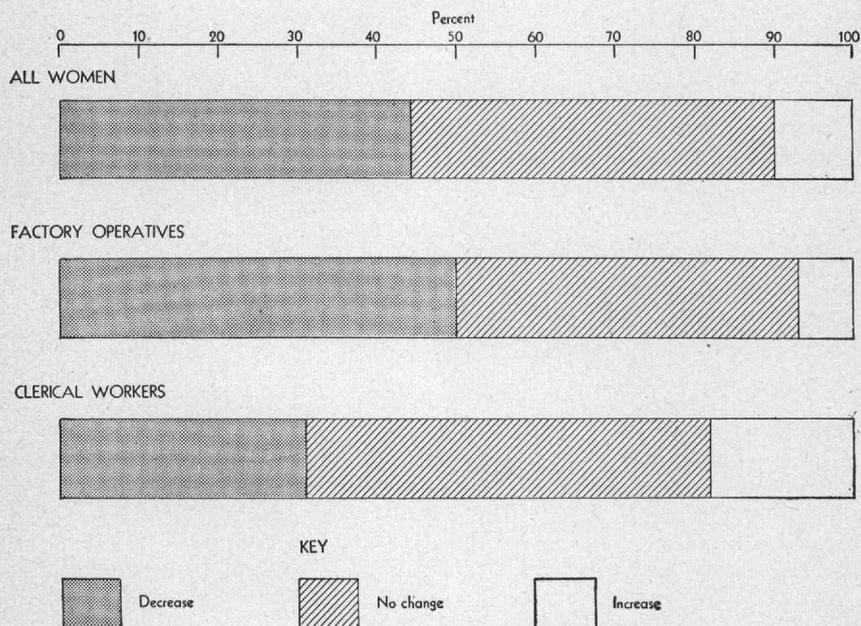
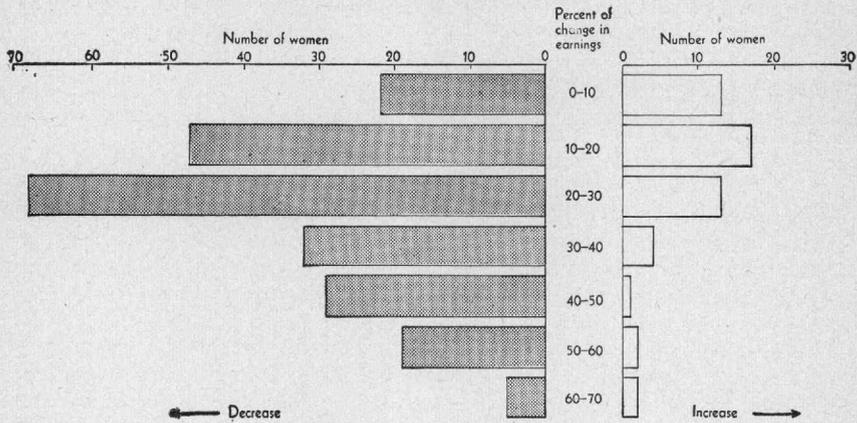


CHART VI.—PERCENT OF CHANGES IN EARNINGS SINCE THE WAR PERIOD



The small proportion of factory women who reported increased earnings was composed, for the most part, of apparel workers who had shifted to better-paying shops. The increase in clerical workers' earnings was due to higher rates of pay resulting from competition for the inadequate number of experienced office workers with specific skills and also to length-of-service raises, commonly granted to clerical workers.

Average earnings of factory operatives and of clerical workers covered in this survey also illustrate the drop in earnings since the war.

	Average weekly earnings		Percent decrease
	February 1946	Wartime	
All women.....	\$31. 15	\$36. 35	14
Factory operatives.....	31. 75	38. 30	17
Clerical workers.....	29. 55	32. 75	10

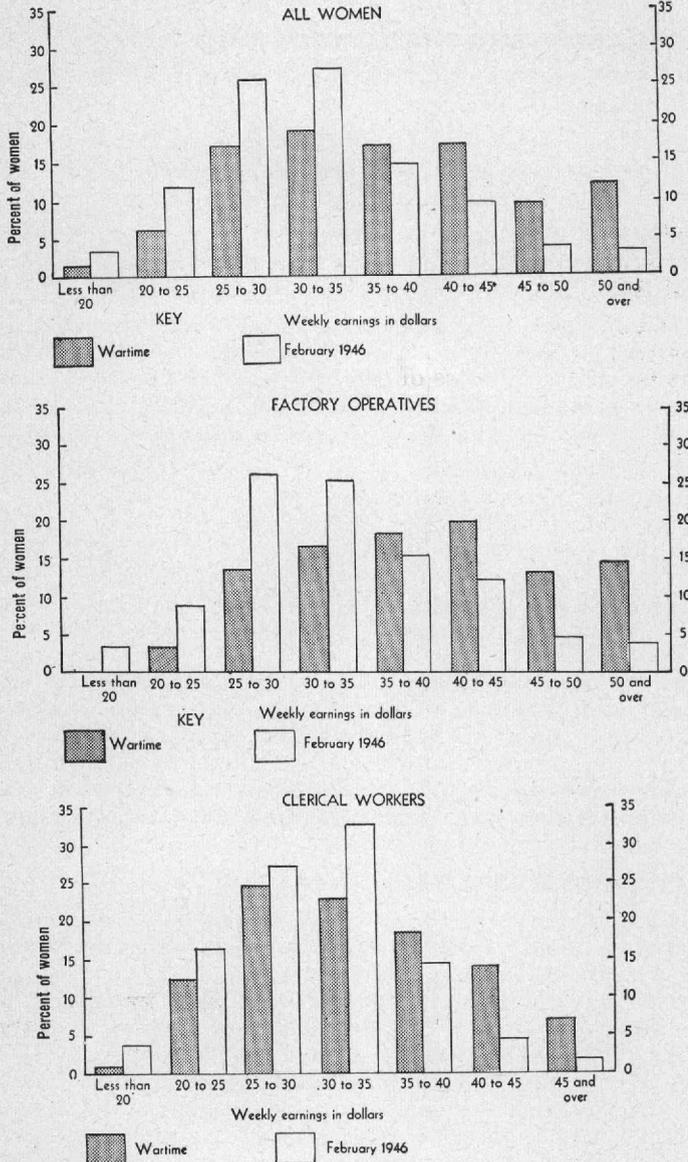
The proportion of women earning over \$40 per week dropped markedly since the war. A substantial proportion of women (39 percent) earned \$40 per week or more during the war, but by February 1946 this proportion had been cut by more than half, reflecting decreased earnings due to shorter hours, loss of overtime pay, and shifts to lower-paying peacetime jobs. The change in proportion is shown in the following tabulation (see also chart VII):

	Percent of women earning \$40 per week or more	
	February 1946	Wartime
All women.....	17	39
Factory operatives.....	21	48
Clerical workers.....	6	21

As the foregoing analysis shows, earnings of women workers were affected in different ways. Certain groups of women experienced very serious cuts in weekly earnings, while other women were no worse off, and some were relatively better off than during the war period.

Although the experiences of the women interviewed do not provide a quantitative measure of the problems to be met, they do indicate some of the questions Bridgeport must take into account in dealing with the needs of its women workers.

CHART VII.—COMPARISON OF USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS IN THE WAR PERIOD AND IN FEBRUARY 1946



PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of the women workers who were interviewed, something over two-fifths were between 20 and 30 years old. About 50 percent of the group were single, 40 percent married, and 10 percent widowed or divorced. About a third of them had never been beyond the eighth grade in school, a fourth had entered high school but never finished, another third were high school graduates, and the remaining 9 percent had attended college or university. Only a small percentage, 4 percent, were Negroes.

OTHER INFORMATION FROM WOMEN INTERVIEWED

Husbands in service—Only eight, or 3 percent, of the married women had husbands still in service.

Experience of workers—65 percent of the women had worked at least 5 years. It is interesting to note that 75 percent of the women affiliated with trade unions had been employed 5 years or more.

In-migration—13 percent of the women were in-migrant workers who had moved into the Bridgeport area since the beginning of the war; two-fifths of these came from other places in Connecticut.

Employment of Negroes—During the war and since the war, most of the 4 percent of the women interviewed who were Negroes were employed in factories. The week before Pearl Harbor, the number in service industries was equal to the number in factories.

Women not in the labor market—About 10 percent of the women interviewed were no longer in the labor market. Proportionately more of these were married than single. Half of the women who left the labor market had been factory workers during the war, and close to one-fourth had been clerical workers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AND DATA ON UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The personal characteristics of women job seekers, some of whom were veterans, and of women recipients of unemployment compensation were analyzed from records in the USES office. Data were also obtained from the current file of the Unemployment Compensation Board on how much was paid to Bridgeport women receiving unemployment compensation benefits and for how long each woman received such benefits.

WOMEN APPLICANTS AT THE USES

Personal characteristics of the group of women job seekers at the USES differed markedly from those of the employed group among women interviewed by Women's Bureau agents.

Probably the outstanding difference between these two groups was the higher proportion among the unemployed of women 40 years of age and over. It was also evident that a higher proportion of the job applicants were married, and a relatively larger number had had no high school education. Finally, there was a higher proportion of Negroes among the applicants than among the employed women interviewed.

These differences show that to the extent that unemployment exists it presents particular difficulties to older women, married women, less educated women, and Negroes. These are the groups for whom local programs of vocational training and placement are most needed. The characteristics of the unemployed women registered at the USES are shown in greater detail in table 5.

Table 5.—Comparison of Personal Characteristics of 579 Women Workers and of Women Job Seekers Registered With the USES

<i>Personal characteristics</i>	<i>579 women workers personally interviewed (percent distribution)</i>	<i>Women job seekers at the USES (percent distribution)</i>
AGE:		
Under 20.....	10	7
20, under 30.....	44	37
30, under 40.....	25	22
40 and over.....	21	34
MARITAL STATUS:		
Single.....	54	28
Married.....	37	58
Widowed and divorced.....	9	14
EDUCATION—last grade of school attended:		
8th or less.....	37	43
9th through 11th.....	22	27
12th.....	31	25
College or university.....	10	5
RACE:		
White.....	96	90
Negro.....	4	10

WOMEN VETERANS REGISTERED AT THE USES

Since the placement of veterans is of special interest today, an analysis was made of all the job applications on file from women veterans. There were 87 such applications in the Bridgeport office in February 1946. About half of these women had been in the Army (WAC); less than half, in the Navy (WAVES); and a few, with the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. Forty-three percent of these veterans were receiving unemployment compensation at the time of the study.

The veterans were characteristically a young group of women. Most of them were under 30. Almost all of these ex-servicewomen registered with the USES were white, and over half of them were single. More than half were high school graduates, and 9 percent had attended college. Forty percent reported some trade education; business college, nursing or other professional training, industrial schooling, etc.

Nearly all had been employed before entering the service. Enlistments had been drawn largely from the ranks of the white-collar workers; only about one-third had been factory or service workers before the war, while nearly two-thirds had been in sales, clerical, professional or semiprofessional work. Further evidence that most had been white-collar workers is found in the fact that three-fifths of

these veteran-registrants applied to the USES for clerical work since their discharge.

As for post-discharge occupational plans, as indicated by applications for employment, the study showed:

- (1) About one-half (55 percent) of the women veterans did the same type of work while they were in the service as they had done previous to their enlistments and were applying for that type of work in a civilian postwar job. This group was made up of women who had special skills which were useful to the services, and the enlistees were put into uniform and assigned to the type of work for which they were qualified. Included in the special-skill jobs which the Army and Navy found so useful were: telephone operator; photographic processing occupations; physiotherapist; stenographer and typist; secretary; special clerical jobs such as bookkeeping machine operator, purchasing clerk, and pay-roll clerk.
An interesting example is the veteran who had been a dressmaker before the war, made costumes for army shows as a Wac, and was looking for a dressmaking job again.
- (2) Of the women who learned new skills while in the service, 7 out of 10 wanted to come back to their preservice work. The others applied for jobs of the same type that they held as servicewomen. Among these were the clerical workers (stenographers, typists, clerks), whom the service trained from the ranks of the ex-factory workers and ex-salesgirls, and those who learned special technical occupations, such as the army-trained physiotherapist who had been a clerical worker before enlisting.
- (3) Some of the ex-servicewomen had been doing work in the Army or Navy which would ordinarily have been men's work. In this group were an aircraft dispatcher, truck drivers, and mechanics. These and a few others who learned special skills for which there will be no demand in the civilian labor market will probably have little chance to use their service-acquired skills in their postwar jobs.
- (4) On the whole, then, the group presents a picture of women who were back in the civilian labor market, most of whom were searching for jobs similar to those they had had before the war; only a few were seeking jobs for which their service training and experience had prepared them.

Only four Negro women were among the veteran-registrants, and their story was much the same as that of the white women. All four were unmarried and were between the ages of 20 and 30; all were high-school graduates and one had been in college. One, who had been a nurse before the war and had served in the Army Nurse Corps during the war, asked for nursing work on her USES application; one applied for laboratory work; the third, who had worked in a factory before the war, was seeking that kind of work since her discharge; and the fourth, who had done clerical work in the WAC, wanted to continue in that type of work.

AMOUNT OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

A random sample of approximately one-third of the unemployment benefit claims in the current files was analyzed. This sample was obtained, for the most part, by matching the USES records with the unemployment compensation claims. About 49 percent of these claims were active, that is, benefits were being paid in February 1946; 44 percent were inactive; 5 percent had been disallowed; and 2 percent had been approved but not collected. About five-sixths of the claims paid had been filed by factory or clerical workers, most of whom had been laid off from war plants.

The women whose compensation claims were approved had been or were eligible for total benefits ranging from less than \$100 to \$440 (the maximum allowed), depending on the wage credits accumulated in 1944. Over 40 percent of the women were eligible for the maximum amount. Most of these women had been laid off from plants formerly engaged in war production. About one-third were eligible for less than \$300. The weekly benefits paid to individual women ranged in amount from less than \$5 to the maximum of \$22.

About one-half (52 percent) received \$20-\$22 weekly.

About a quarter (26 percent) received \$16 but less than \$20 weekly.

About a quarter (22 percent) received less than \$16 weekly.

LENGTH OF PERIOD COVERED BY BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Among the inactive claims, allowable payments to approximately 70 percent of the claimants had been exhausted. About two-thirds of such claimants had been paid for 20 weeks, the maximum time allowed by the law. About 15 percent of the claimants had found work before exhausting their benefits, some within a few weeks after beginning to draw payments. Payments to the remaining 15 percent whose claims were closed had been discontinued because the claimants either had failed to collect their benefits or had become unavailable for employment. Some women in the latter group had possibly secured jobs which they had not reported to the Unemployment Compensation Board.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bridgeport is one of many communities interested in planning a positive program to meet the employment problems of all its workers. The fact that local agencies invited an outside agency to make a study of the employment needs of women in the city and to draw up suggestions for local action attests to their awareness of the importance of women in the local economy.

No claim is made that an individual community can do much to affect the general level of employment of both men and women; this will be determined largely by industrial conditions in the country as a whole. Local agencies can, on the other hand, do many things to promote the effective use of labor resources within their respective areas.

The findings of this study regarding the employment problems and needs of women have been summarized under 9 points. On the basis of these findings recommendations have been offered for local consideration. The adoption of any or all of these recommendations

would, it is believed, help to meet the present and future employment needs of Bridgeport women.

FINDINGS

1. Women are a substantial part of the Bridgeport labor force.

In February 1946 women constituted about a third of the Bridgeport labor force.

2. Almost all the women who were working in Bridgeport in February 1946 did so to support themselves or to support themselves and others.

It is estimated that over 90 percent of these women worked to support themselves or themselves and others. Although a few women may yet leave the labor market as other members of their families take up peacetime occupations, the number of women in the Bridgeport labor market in February is probably about the minimum number who will want employment in Bridgeport in the coming years.

3. The range of occupations in which women may expect to find employment in Bridgeport has narrowed since the war.

During the war women demonstrated their ability to learn new skills and to adapt to new work conditions. They were employed in types of occupations more varied than in the prewar period. In February 1946, however, an increasing proportion of women were again being employed in occupations in which women had been employed before the war, particularly at their usual jobs in the garment and electrical industries. Only few women have been allowed to continue in the newer fields of employment and thus to continue to use skills learned during the war.

4. Unemployment was particularly serious among certain groups of women.

Finding a job is particularly difficult for older women, married women, women without high school education, and Negro women.

In general, employers did not want workers 40 years of age or over, and some did not want workers over 30. Very few would employ girls under 18, and some hesitated to take women under 20.

5. Some women were reluctant to take jobs where the conditions of work were unsatisfactory.

While working conditions were generally good in Bridgeport plants, substandard conditions were found in some establishments. For example, in smaller garment shops and in some of the trade and service industries, lighting, ventilation, toilet, and other plant facilities did not meet the needs of the workers, nor did they conform to good standards of health and sanitation. Garment shops with openings for sewing-machine operators were having difficulty recruiting workers, according to the USES reports.

6. Many Bridgeport women were earning less in February 1946 than during the war.

The effect of reconversion on the weekly earnings of Bridgeport women was not all in one direction. For about one-half of the women weekly earnings did not change; for about one-tenth of the women weekly earnings increased; and for the remainder there was a cut.

Decreases in weekly earnings were due usually to a reduction in the hours worked, downgrading, or a transfer from a war job to a peacetime job at a lower rate. The shift to a new job sometimes meant

changing from the category of an experienced worker to that of an inexperienced worker.

Increases in weekly earnings were most common among garment workers and to a less extent among clerical workers. Garment workers' increases were often due to transfers to better-paying shops and sometimes to increased seniority, while clerical workers' increases were most often based on length of experience.

7. Placement activities at the USES were not as adequate as is desirable.

The Bridgeport office of the USES gives good employment service. Throughout the war all its efforts were directed toward filling jobs in war plants. In February 1946 it was concerned with reestablishing the services to employers which had necessarily been neglected because of war priorities. However, the extent of its service to individuals applying for work is limited by funds insufficient to follow up referrals and placements.

8. Vocational training opportunities for women were inadequate.

Although the Bullard Havens Technical School and its Restoration Center for job try-out and rehabilitation work are establishing a program to meet the vocational needs of men and boys, they are not equipped to offer proper trade training to women and girls. Almost all the women students registered in February 1946 were taking avocational, noncommercial courses in sewing rather than learning trades that would help them to get paying jobs.

9. Vocational counseling for women was inadequate.

Organized counseling resources for women and girls in Bridgeport were practically nonexistent in February 1946. Girls seeking vocational information and guidance can and did approach any number of persons for help—teachers, school advisers, placement officers, ministers, YWCA or YWHA staff—but these persons, although willing to give assistance, were not specializing in vocational counseling and frequently did not have sufficient factual information at hand. Only a small proportion of the persons serviced at the Community Advisory Center were women, most of whom were veterans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A committee should be established to coordinate and help develop the many types of employment services currently needed by Bridgeport women.

This committee should seek to integrate the activities of local placement, training, and counseling agencies so that they share responsibility for the satisfactory work adjustment of women. (See recommendations 3-6 below.) In addition, the committee should promote the development of supplementary local activities, such as the preparation of periodic fact-finding reports on job opportunities and on trends in the demand for and supply of workers with particular characteristics. (See recommendation 2 below.)

In general, the coordinating committee should aim to provide the same kind of employment service for women as for men. For both men and women, sound employment policies mean filling local jobs with the best qualified individuals regardless of sex and placing each individual who wants to work in the job which he or she is best qualified to fill.

The coordinating committee working on women's problems should work closely with other local organizations including both those concerned with the employment of men and women and those concerned primarily with women's employment. By working with organizations of women, this committee could get help in analyzing and understanding the particular needs of working women and could gain support for local programs undertaken to assist women who work. Among the local private organizations which might help in analyzing individual aspects of women's employment programs are the Business and Professional Women's Club, YWCA, and the Jewish Community Center.

Since the Community Advisory Service Center has successfully coordinated local activities affecting veterans and has become experienced in this work, it is suggested that this Center take the initiative in acting on this recommendation by expanding its activities to include a more positive program to help meet the employment needs of women.

2. Provision should be made for periodic studies of changes in the number and nature of job opportunities for women and of changes in the characteristics of women in the Bridgeport labor force.

A plan for securing information on job opportunities for women and the characteristics of women in the Bridgeport labor force should be worked out as part of a general plan that includes both men and women. These studies are needed to supply information that is basic for developing sound placement, training, and counseling programs.

Studies of changes in job opportunities might well be developed by the USES on the basis of its present contact with employers or by a separate agency. Studies of changing characteristics of the Bridgeport labor force could be sponsored by the proposed committee to coordinate all employment services in the city and could be developed in cooperation with the advice of the Federal Census Bureau or college authorities in the local area.

3. Placement activities of the local USES ought to be expanded.

The good work of the Bridgeport USES should be expanded along two lines. The service should develop a more complete list of job openings for women through increased employer contact. In this work the Service should take leadership in educating employers to seek the best qualified individual for a job regardless of the sex of the applicant.

As pointed out, the placement service should work closely with the city's training and counseling services for women.

4. Vocational training should be expanded in occupations most likely to be open to women in Bridgeport.

The development of a vocational training program should be based on comprehensive and continuous studies regarding local job opportunities for women and on the application of progressive and effective methods for learning new jobs.

In planning the development of this work, use should be made of the educational survey, in the process of development in February 1946 and planned to cover all types of educational facilities, including vocational training practices as they affect women.

5. A good vocational counseling program for women should be established.

Like that for vocational training, a program for vocational counseling must be based on the best possible information regarding current trends and job opportunities.

Since the Community Advisory Service Center has developed a good counseling program for men, with special emphasis on veterans, it is suggested that this Service could well broaden its work by developing for women resources comparable to those now offered men.

6. Special placement, training, and counseling programs should be developed for women who have difficulty in securing jobs.

Those likely to have such a problem are older, younger, married, less educated, less trained, and Negro women. Among the programs that might be promoted by local training and placement agencies for such women are: placement in part-time work of persons who must devote part of their time attending school or on home duties, education to lessen discrimination against certain groups of women in the community, and organization of child-care and housekeeping services for employed women.

7. Improvements in working conditions should be promoted.

Employers and labor organizations should take increased interest in promoting good working environment and adequate plant facilities for the workers.

APPENDIX

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH WOMEN WERE INTERVIEWED *

	<i>Number of women interviewed</i>
I. Organizations other than unions:	
Beauty School.....	37
Bullard Havens School.....	61
Business and Professional Women's Club.....	18
Calvert Catholic College Club.....	5
Federal Housing Project.....	14
Hungarian Mothers' Club of St. Stephen's Church.....	13
Italian-American World War Veterans' Ladies Auxiliary.....	9
Jewish Community Center.....	80
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.....	6
Navy Mothers' Club.....	10
Nursery Schools.....	12
Polish Falcons.....	12
St. Mark's Episcopal Church Guild.....	6
Young Women's Christian Association.....	89
Total.....	372
II. Union organizations:¹	
Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.....	19
International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.....	199
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America.....	88
Total.....	306
Total number of personal interviews.....	678

¹ Interviews covered 8 locals of the 3 listed unions.
Several of the larger unions were engaged in strikes or the negotiation of new contracts, and union officers were unable to arrange for interviews with the women in their locals.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU

For complete list of publications, write the Women's Bureau.

Single copies of these publications—or a small supply for special educational purposes—may be secured through the Women's Bureau without charge, as long as the free supply lasts. These bulletins may be purchased direct from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C., at prices listed. A discount of 25 percent on orders of 100 or more copies is allowed. Leaflets may be secured from the Women's Bureau.

Bulletins available for distribution, published since 1940

157. The Legal Status of Women in the United States of America, January 1938, *United States Summary*. 1941. 89 pp. 15¢. No. 157-A. *Cumulative Supplement*, 1938-1945. 31 pp. 1946. 10¢. Leaflet—Women's Eligibility for Jury Duty. June 1, 1947.
175. Earnings in the Women's and Children's Apparel Industry in the Spring of 1939. 91 pp. 1940. 15¢.
176. Application of Labor Legislation to the Fruit and Vegetable Canning and Preserving Industries. 162 pp. 1940. 20¢.
177. Earnings and Hours in Hawaii Woman-Employing Industries. 53 pp. 1940. 10¢.
178. Women's Wages and Hours in Nebraska. 51 pp. 1940. 10¢.
180. Employment in Service and Trade Industries in Maine. 30 pp. 1940. 10¢.
182. Employment of Women in the Federal Government, 1923 to 1939. 60 pp. 1941. 10¢.
183. Women Workers in Their Family Environment. (City of Cleveland, State of Utah) 82 pp. 1941. 15¢.
185. The Migratory Labor Problem in Delaware. 24 pp. 1941. 10¢.
186. Earnings and Hours in Pacific Coast Fish Canneries. 30 pp. 1941. 10¢.
187. Labor Standards and Competitive Market Conditions in the Canned-Goods Industry. 34 pp. 1941. 10¢.
188. Office Work in 5 Cities in 1940:
 - 1, Houston (10¢); 2, Los Angeles (10¢); 3, Kansas City (15¢);
 - 4, Richmond (15¢); 5, Philadelphia (15¢); Chart, Salary Rates in 5 Cities.
189. Part 1. Women's Factory Employment in an Expanding Aircraft Production Program. 12 pp. 1942. 5¢. (See Bull. 192-1.)
Part 4. Employment of and Demand for Women Workers in the Manufacture of Instruments—Aircraft, Optical and Fire-Control, and Surgical and Dental. 20 pp. 1942. 5¢.
190. Recreation and Housing for Women War Workers: A Handbook on Standards. 40 pp. 1942. 10¢.
191. State Minimum-Wage Laws and Orders, 1942: An Analysis. 52 pp. and 6 folders. 1942. 20¢. Supplements through 1946. Mimeo. Progress of Minimum-Wage Legislation. 1943-1945.
192. Reports on employment of women in wartime industries: 1, Aircraft Assembly Plants (10¢); 2, Artillery Ammunition Plants (5¢); 3, Manufacture of Cannon and Small Arms (10¢); 4, Machine-Tool Industry (10¢); 5, Steel (10¢); 6, Shipyards (20¢); 7, Foundries (10¢); 8, Army Supply Depots (10¢); 9, Cane-Sugar Refineries (10¢).
195. Women Workers in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 15 pp. 1942. 5¢.
196. "Equal Pay" for Women in War Industries. 26 pp. 1942. 10¢.
197. Women Workers in Some Expanding Wartime Industries—New Jersey, 1942. 44 pp. 1943. 10¢.
198. Employment and Housing Problems of Migratory Workers in New York and New Jersey Canning Industries, 1943. 35 pp. 1944. 10¢.
199. Successful Practices in the Employment of Nonfarm Women on Farms in the Northeastern States. 44 pp. 1944. 10¢.
200. British Policies and Methods in Employing Women in Wartime. 44 pp. 1944. 10¢.

201. Employment Opportunities in Characteristic Industrial Occupations of Women. 50 pp. 1944. 10¢.
202. State Labor Laws for Women with Wartime Modifications, Dec. 15, 1944.
 Part I. Analysis of Hour Laws. 110 pp. 1945. 15¢.
 Part II. Analysis of Plant Facilities Laws. 43 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 Part III. Analysis of Regulatory Laws, Prohibitory Laws, Maternity Laws. 12 pp. 1945. 5¢.
 Part IV. Analysis of Industrial Home-Work Laws. 26 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 Part V. Explanation and Appraisal. 66 pp. 1946. 15¢.
203. The Outlook for Women in Occupations in the Medical and Other Health Services.
 No. 1—Physical Therapists. 14 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 2—Occupational Therapists. 15 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 3—Professional Nurses. 66 pp. 1946. 15¢.
 No. 4—Medical Laboratory Technicians. 10 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 5—Practical Nurses and Hospital Attendants. 20 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 6—Medical Record Librarians. 9 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 7—Women Physicians. 28 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 8—X-Ray Technicians. 14 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 9—Women Dentists. 21 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 10—Dental Hygienists. 17 pp. 1945. 10¢.
 No. 11—Physicians' and Dentists' Assistants. 15 pp. 1946. 10¢.
 No. 12—Trends and Their Effect Upon the Demand for Women Workers. 55 pp. 1946. 15¢.
204. Women's Emergency Farm Service on the Pacific Coast in 1943. 36 pp. 1945. 10¢.
205. Negro Women War Workers. 23 pp. 1945. 10¢.
206. Women Workers in Brazil. 42 pp. 1946. 10¢.
207. The Woman Telephone Worker. 38 pp. 1946. 10¢.
- 207-A. Typical Women's Jobs in the Telephone Industry. (In press.)
208. Women's Wartime Hours of Work—The Effect on their Factory Performance and Home Life. 187 pp. 1947. 35¢.
209. Women Workers in Ten War Production Areas and Their Postwar Employment Plans. (Springfield-Holyoke, Baltimore, Dayton-Springfield, Detroit-Willow Run, Kenosha, Wichita, Mobile, Seattle-Tacoma, San Francisco-Oakland, and Erie County, N. Y.) 56 pp. 1946. 15¢.
210. Women Workers in Paraguay. 16 pp. 1946. 10¢.
211. Employment of Women in the Early Postwar Period, with Background of Prewar and War Data. 14 pp. 1946. 10¢.
212. Industrial Injuries to Women. (In press.)
213. Women Workers in Peru. (In press.)
214. Maternity-Benefits Under Union-Contract Health Insurance Plans. (In press.)
215. Women Workers in Power Laundries. (In press.)
216. Women Workers After VJ-Day in One Community—Bridgeport, Conn. (Instant publication.)
217. International Work for Status of Women. (In press.)
218. Women's Occupations Through Seven Decades. (In press.)
219. Earnings of Women Factory Workers, 1946. (In press.)
- Special bulletins**
2. Lifting and Carrying Weights by Women in Industry. Rev. 1946. 12 pp. 5¢.
3. Safety Clothing for Women in Industry. 11 pp. 1941. 10¢. Supplements:
 Safety Caps for Women Machine Operators. 4 pp. 1944. 5¢. Safety Shoes for Women War Workers. 4 pp. 1944. 5¢.
4. Washing and Toilet Facilities for Women War Workers. 11 pp. 1942. 5¢.
10. Women's Effective War Work Requires Good Posture. 6 pp. 1943. 5¢.
13. Part-Time Employment of Women in Wartime. 17 pp. 1943. 10¢.
14. When You Hire Women. 16 pp. 1944. 10¢.
15. Community Services for Women War Workers. 11 pp. 1944. 5¢.
19. The Industrial Nurse and the Woman Worker. 47 pp. 1944. 10¢.
20. Changes in Women's Employment During the War. 29 pp. 1944. 10¢.
 (Chart based on statistical data also available.)
- Bibliography on Night Work for Women. 1946. Multilith.

Leaflets

- Standards for Employment of Women. Leaflet No. 1, 1946.
Training for Jobs—For Women and Girls. Leaflet No. 1, 1947.
Equal Pay for Women. Leaflet No. 2, 1947.
Women White-Collar Workers, "Re-Tool Your Thinking for Your Job Tomorrow." 1945.
Protect Future Wage Levels Now (on minimum-wage legislation). 1946.
Unemployment Compensation—How It Works for Working Women. 1945.
Why Women Work. 1946. Multilith.
The Women's Bureau—Its Purpose and Functions. 1946.
Your Job Future After College. 1947.