Preparation begun for educational projects under Works Program.

Preparing to include educational projects in the new Works Program, Aubrey Williams, Assistant Federal Emergency Relief Administrator and Assistant Works Progress Administrator, today authorized emergency relief administrators of the States, Territories, and District of Columbia to continue their emergency education projects until further notice. This will make it possible to select later from going FERA projects those to be continued under the Works Program.

Authorization has also been given the State, Territorial, and District of Columbia relief administrators to use any unexpended balances of emergency education funds, together with July FERA education grants to finance a teacher-training program for relief teachers who will be eligible to teach under the new Works Program.

It was pointed out that work-relief wages may be paid to teachers while they are attending training schools. Out of their salaries, teachers must pay for their maintenance while attending the training program, and also, any travel expenses or tuition and registration fees in connection with the training school.

The number of teachers who will attend the training program is not yet known. Some 40,000 teachers have been receiving work relief under the entire emergency education program.

From October 1933, through March, 1935, the most recent month for which detailed figures are available, approximately $21,000,000 have been expended for the FERA emergency education program. About 2,000,000 adults enrolled in classes and 60,000 underprivileged children were cared for in nursery schools. In addition, from February, 1934, through March, 1935, about $12,000,000 were paid to 104,673 college students as work relief wages to aid them in completing their formal education, and about $10,000,000 were given to 22 States to keep rural schools open during 1935.

There is a wide difference in emphasis on various phases of the emergency education program in the various States, it was pointed out. Whether a State
develops workers' education, literacy classes, vocational rehabilitation, or any other activity authorized by the FERA, depends upon local needs within the state and on the decision of the State relief and education officials.

The procedure for the organization and administration of a State emergency education program was laid down by FERA after consulting with existing agencies in the field of education. In August, 1933, a conference of State superintendents of education was called to meet with the Federal Emergency Relief Administrator, Harry L. Hopkins, to discuss relief for unemployed teachers. Coordination of all existing facilities helped reduce administrative costs so that the maximum of relief money was paid in wages.

The need for immediate action focused attention of school officials and teachers, not only on the problem of relief, but on the fact that the established public school system did not meet all the educational needs of all groups in the community.

Subsequently, the States were authorized to develop education programs. Classes were organized according to a five-point program:

General adult education for unemployed and other adults to gain additional training to fit them to become better workers, parents, and citizens;

Literacy classes to instruct unemployed adults to read and write English with understanding;

Vocational education to instruct unemployed adults in practical occupations;

Vocational rehabilitation to help those who are physically handicapped, because of disease or accident, to become self-supporting;

Nursery schools to develop the physical and mental well-being of preschool children of unemployed parents or children in underprivileged homes.

A major purpose of the relief program in adult education, it was indicated, has been to counteract some of the unfortunate psychological effects of the depression upon unemployed men and women, to keep human labor power from being relegated to the scrap heap of unemployment. Brought together in classes, in contact with others of similar circumstances, unemployed men and women begin to renew their hope in society and the outlook for their problems. They try to broaden their understanding and develop skills so they can better adjust themselves to new economic conditions and develop a healthy mental attitude toward life.
Two years' experience with the emergency program has shown that adults are eager and willing to learn, it was pointed out. Moreover, they generally learn faster than children because they have a greater power of concentration and study with a purpose. This is evidenced in the classes conducted for general academic education in history, philosophy, political science, economics, mathematics, the natural sciences, foreign languages, education, art, sociology, psychology, English, engineering, and other subjects.

Because illiterate people are almost social and economic "shut-ins", the Federal Emergency Relief Administration has sought to accomplish the two-fold purpose of giving jobs to unemployed teachers and instructing adults to read and write. According to the 1930 Census, 4.3 percent of the population or 4,283,753 persons over 10 years of age were unable to read and write any language. It is estimated that in addition, there are more than 8,000,000 functional illiterates, those who can not read or write with understanding. This makes a total of approximately 12,000,000 adults in the United States in need of the most elementary education.

Illiteracy, contrary to much popular opinion, is not confined to sparsely settled areas. In New York State, for example, the 1930 Census discovered 388,883 persons over ten years old who could not read and write in any language. Most of them were in New York City.

Education for illiterates is necessary not only for their benefit, but for that of the communities they live in. Illiterate people, unable to read even the simplest signs, are often the cause of accidents and the communication of diseases.

Illiterate men and women, from 16 to 82 years of age, have been eager to attend FERA classes held in schools, churches, and forest cabins --- in southern mountains, in industrial centers, and in rural counties.

The FERA program of vocational education was designed to aid the thousands of unemployed adults to acquire new skills or otherwise keep them employable. Five different fields of training have been opened to the unemployed: trade and industrial education, home economics, agricultural, and commercial education, together with vocational adjustment and guidance. Despite the difficulty in obtaining equipment for vocational work, the emergency program has extended vocational education throughout the country, making it a challenge to leaders in the field, it was pointed out.
Not so generally known is the field of parent education which has been benefited by the emergency education program. Because of the importance of parent education as a specialized phase of adult education, an advisory committee of the National Council of Parent Education was invited to cooperate with the United States Office of Education and the FERA in planning for the organization and supervision of emergency parent education activities in the various States.

Practically all of the States are participating in the emergency parent education program. Local public schools authorities have immediate supervision of it. In the spring of 1935, five States had supervisors of parent education, and 28 others had a supervisor jointly responsible for this and some other emergency education program. Twenty-four States reported more than 600 parent-education teachers, and 24,000 parents in their classes.

Workers' education is a program offering to industrial, office, store, domestic, and agricultural workers an opportunity to train themselves in clear thinking through the study of those questions closely related to their daily lives as workers and citizens. The FERA advises States in the organization of classes and teaching methods; makes contacts with workers, both organized and unorganized; prepares and distributes materials, initiates teacher-training projects, and coordinates the field activity. At the present time 18 States have workers' education supervisors selected on the basis of professional qualifications.