



THE WORKS PROGRAM

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-- Works Progress Administration --

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HOPKINS CITES FIFTH YEAR OF GROWTH IN WPA EDUCATION PROGRAM; SAYS  
ILLITERACY REDUCED 25 PER CENT.

In spite of economy reductions both in the teaching staff and the number of classes, enrollment under the education program of the Works Progress Administration during the 1937-38 school year showed an increase for the fifth consecutive year, Administrator Harry L. Hopkins announced today. Total enrollment was 1,586,211 as compared with 1,569,529 a year ago.

At the same time, he added, a five-year goal of teaching one million illiterate adults to read and write has been reached and passed. The WPA program, he said, had reduced illiteracy in the United States by approximately one-fourth during the five years of its existence.

From a report submitted by Dr. L. R. Alderman, WPA educational director, showing the accomplishments of the program during the school year just closed, Administrator Hopkins cited gains showing a consistent growth in the scope and value of the work.

"Proof is now at hand," he said, "that a large segment of adult America is hungry for educational advantages which it missed in its youth.

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"Until the inception of the emergency education program under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1933, publicly supported adult education in this country had been limited to a small number of states. As begun then and continued under the WPA, educational opportunities, geared especially to the needs of the lower income groups, have been extended to an ever-growing number of people.

"Participation in these classes is, of course, voluntary and without cost. The fact that more than one and one-half million persons of all ages, creeds and colors were enrolled during the last school year is convincing proof not only of the need for such a program but also that those who have lacked in educational opportunities are eager for a chance at self-improvement."

The gain of 16,782 enrollments during the past year was spread over all phases of the program, Dr. Alderman's report showed. The gain was made in the face of a twenty per cent decrease in the number of teachers and a similar decrease in the number of individual classes. In April of this year, 26,271 teachers were offering 101,602 classes as against 34,230 teachers and 139,756 classes a year ago.

"Outstanding among the accomplishments of the year," Dr. Alderman declared, "has been the achievement of a five-year goal of teaching 1,000,000 men and women, hitherto illiterate, the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic. Efforts to eradicate illiteracy will continue undiminished, however, for there are at least 3,000,000 more adult illiterates in the nation."

The report is based on comparative statistics for April in the years 1937 and 1938. Cumulative totals for the entire year, allowing for new enrollees and drop-outs, are not maintained, Dr. Alderman explained, adding that the April figures are representative of the net enrollment for the year.



Enrollment in literacy and naturalization classes totaled 278,440 in April, an increase of more than 37,000 over the same month last year, the report showed. The literacy education program will not close down for the traditional summer vacation this year. On the contrary, plans are being made in many localities for its expansion. In at least three states--North Carolina, Georgia and Louisiana--the program is being augmented by the use of supplemental state and local public funds.

Classes in home-making--cooking, nutrition, household budgeting, sewing, hygiene and care of the sick--were attended by 133,562 wives and mothers during the month covered by the report. Sixty-five thousand others participated in classes related to child welfare and family relationships. So popular has this type of instruction become with low income families, the report states, that plans are being made cooperatively with the Office of Education and the Department of Agriculture to provide a higher type of training for the homemaking and parent education teachers during the summer.

Closely associated with the above are nursery schools for children two to four years old. Fifteen hundred of these schools, with enrollments totaling 44,190, were in operation during the month studied. In addition to <sup>environment</sup> furnishing a healthy/for play and recreation, the nursery schools gave nourishing and well-balanced lunches which, in many cases, the report points out, proved to be the only adequate meal hundreds of children received during the day.

One of the most significant educational fields which the WPA has entered, Dr. Alderman declared, is that of furnishing correspondence courses for persons living in remote farm and mountain regions. While only eight states conducted programs of this sort, enrollments were distributed over the entire nation and increased from 23,409 in 1936-37 to more than 30,000 last year.

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Such courses, of either high school or college level, are conducted cooperatively with state universities in Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon and Washington, and with state departments of education in California and Idaho. All teaching personnel is taken from WPA rolls while the universities furnish quarters and general supervision. Trade and professional subjects dominate the courses of study selected by the correspondence students, the report indicates, yet the most popular single subject is English. Others in order of popularity are Diesel engineering, auto mechanics, mathematics, practical arts, forestry, history and aeronautics. Business subjects are also popular, as are several courses in the liberal arts.

Other types of education offered under the program, and the numbers participating, are as follows: workers' education, 38,424; public affairs, 56,754; vocational education, 202,891; leisure time and avocational activities, 315,282; college subjects, 6,985; general adult education, 353,503; miscellaneous, 60,836.

"The year has also been marked," the report concludes, "by the strengthening of cooperative relations between the WPA and state and local educational agencies. In every state but one the WPA educational program is now under the sponsorship of the state department of education, while in practically every city and town, WPA teachers and classes are under the supervision of local school officials.

"The WPA program is thus really an extension of the services of the public schools into the two relatively new fields of adult education and nursery schools."

The following summary shows by states the numbers of teachers, classes and enrollees in the WPA education program for April, 1938.



	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Classes</u>	<u>Students Enrolled</u>
Alabama	572	1718	21,898
Arizona	197	372	5,640
Arkansas	196	996	19,400
California (northern)	599	9429	73,569
California (southern)	676	6351	71,513
Colorado	343	1060	16,508
Connecticut	275	628	10,386
Delaware	5	5	218
Dist. of Columbia	111	287	4,531
Florida	353	744	7,106
Georgia	529	1549	20,149
Hawaii	16	13	311
Idaho	161	2178	8,363
Illinois	1316	3782	67,189
Indiana	429	1574	33,567
Iowa	172	555	8,963
Kansas	505	1779	23,403
Kentucky	596	2433	25,806
Louisiana	686	3208	35,378
Maine	72	94	1,498
Maryland	113	161	3,662
Massachusetts	543	1099	28,697
Michigan	394	1682	28,353
Minnesota	344	2866	23,040
Mississippi	735	2140	35,747
Missouri	505	1278	25,222
Montana	160	303	5,428
Nebraska	252	1171	11,443
Nevada	31	41	589
New Hampshire	61	492	2,074
New Jersey	832	1254	28,033
New Mexico	98	271	3,184
New York State	1276	6123	246,653
New York City	4589	9097	118,694
North Carolina	591	2834	32,412
North Dakota	154	942	17,076
Ohio	1307	4442	84,126
Oklahoma	261	780	17,351
Oregon	248	782	15,303
Pennsylvania	1547	8497	137,770
Rhode Island	147	609	6,795
South Carolina	473	1302	23,790
South Dakota	220	362	7,743
Tennessee	394	3181	53,537
Texas	1005	2210	46,196
Utah	180	407	7,470
Vermont	87	1529	13,155
Virginia	494	1096	22,146
Washington	498	2587	39,644
West Virginia	516	1433	23,837
Wisconsin	343	1383	18,240
Wyoming	64	503	3,305