

A PILOT PROJECT TO DEMONSTRATE
TECHNIQUES FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO
EMPLOYMENT OF MINORITY WOMEN IN
WHITE-COLLAR JOBS: HOUSTON

Final Report

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In March, 1973, the U.S. Department of Labor contracted with Recruitment and Training Program, Inc., for the establishment of the Minority Women Employment Program in Houston, Texas. The project was undertaken to provide further information on the applicability of the outreach strategy to the employment problems of minority women and to promote the employment of qualified minority women in professional positions.

The Houston project may be considered a spin-off from the Black Women Employment Program which was begun in Atlanta, Georgia, in the spring of 1972. The Atlanta project, which succeeded in placing nearly 60 women in professional employment in its first year of operation, was regarded as highly successful; to assess the generality of the techniques developed in Atlanta and to determine the extent to which the success of the Atlanta program could be replicated in other cities, Houston was chosen as the site for the second phase of the program.

In the planning stages of the Houston project it was realized by those involved that the economic and political climate in Houston would provide a severe test of the viability of the outreach strategy. In his report on black employment in Houston, Vernon Briggs assembles convincing evidence of the lack of progress made by blacks in the city. In summarizing his findings with respect to the employment patterns of black women in the city, Briggs writes "...the employment patterns are so patently exclusionary as to warrant immediate investigation. The paramount

issue for black women is their inability to penetrate major industries. As most of these enterprises have substantial numbers of female employees, the paucity of black women can only be attributed to discrimination."¹ Further testimony to the bleakness of the employment situation in Houston for minorities is provided by William H. Brown, Chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, prior to hearings conducted in Houston in 1970. After a careful study of minority employment patterns in the 46 largest labor markets in the U.S., Brown concluded that Houston employers were among the worst, if not the worst, in the nation, in terms of the employment opportunities offered to minority group members. "Houston ranked 45th or 46th in every category," he reported.² However, despite his research into the Houston labor market, Brown was evidently unprepared for the testimony he heard. Upon completion of the hearings he remarked "... the picture which has been presented here, during the three days of hearings is even worse than we anticipated."³

The data presented below can perhaps convey an impression of the employment situation facing minority women in Houston. Table 1 reports the occupational distribution of men and women, by ethnic group, in the Houston SMSA in 1969.⁴ Only one percent of black women and Chicano women were employed as officials or managers, compared to 15 percent for white males. While the position of minority women is somewhat better in the professional and technical categories, data presented below indicate that these inroads have not been made in the private

Table 1

Occupational Distribution by Ethnic Group and Sex for Houston SMSA, 1969
(Percent Distribution)

Occupational Groups	Both Sexes				Male				Female			
	All Groups	Anglo	Black	Mexican American	All Groups	Anglo	Black	Mexican American	All Groups	Anglo	Black	Mexican American
Officials and Managers	10	12	1	2	12	15	1	3	2	3	1	1
Professionals	11	13	1	3	12	15	1	3	6	7	3	3
Technicians	6	7	4	4	7	8	2	4	5	4	9	5
Sales Workers	11	12	5	8	9	10	4	6	16	17	8	12
Office and Clerical Workers	18	21	8	12	7	8	4	5	48	56	18	32
Craftsmen	15	16	8	14	20	22	10	18	1	1	2	2
Operatives	17	12	30	26	20	16	38	30	6	4	11	14
Laborers	6	3	22	17	8	4	27	20	3	1	9	8
Service Workers	7	4	22	14	5	3	14	11	13	7	41	24
Total: Percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	312,130	247,801	44,517	19,812	225,428	179,247	31,853	14,328	86,702	68,554	12,664	5,484

Note: Sums of individual items may not equal totals because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

corporations in the city but have occurred principally in the medical services industry, long a traditional employer of minority professionals.

Table 2 presents the occupational breakdown of employment in 10 large industries in Houston. In the first four industries noted in the table, management personnel is 99 percent white. In the categories of managers, professional and technical, and sales personnel, there are a total of 300 blacks, both male and female, and 322 Chicanos employed in these industries. Total reported employment in these occupations in the four industries is around 28,000; thus each minority group accounts for slightly over 1 percent of professional employment.

The importance of the medical services industry to the employment of black professionals is also indicated in Table 2. This industry reports the employment of 1,308 black professionals and 429 Chicano professionals. In the entire SMSA, there are a total of 2,601 blacks and 1,925 Chicanos reported in professional positions. Thus, if the reported figures can be taken as representative, medical services employ a majority of the black and 20 percent of the Chicano professionals in the Houston SMSA. Since it is toward the large private employers that the activities of the outreach program are directed, the employment statistics surveyed above indicate that a successful program in Houston would require a significant change in the employment patterns of minority women in the city. For example, the placement of 50 black women in industries outside of medical services

Table 2

Ethnic Distribution of Occupational Employment
In the 10 Largest Private Employment Industries in the Houston SMSA, 1969

Industry and Occupational Group	Number of Employees					Percent of Employees				
	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental
<u>Chemical Industry</u>										
Managers	3,387	3,347	16	24	0	100.0	98.8	0.5	0.7	0.0
Professional	2,861	2,781	16	47	17	100.0	97.2	.6	1.6	.6
Technical	1,821	1,747	43	29	2	100.0	95.9	2.4	1.6	.1
Sales	584	578	3	3	0	100.0	99.0	.5	.5	0
Clerical	2,501	2,389	60	49	3	100.0	95.5	2.4	2.0	.1
Craftsmen	4,329	4,094	142	93	0	100.0	94.6	3.3	2.1	0
Operatives	6,384	5,491	658	233	2	100.0	86.0	10.3	3.6	0
Laborers	880	390	369	121	0	100.0	44.3	41.9	13.7	0
Services	450	322	94	34	0	100.0	71.6	20.9	7.6	0
Total	23,197	21,139	1,401	633	24	100.0	91.1	6.0	2.7	.1
<u>Machinery (nonelectrical) Industry</u>										
Managers	1,561	1,535	18	7	1	100.0	98.3	1.2	.4	.1
Professional	1,498	1,450	24	18	6	100.0	96.8	1.6	1.2	.4
Technical	1,217	1,146	26	44	1	100.0	94.2	2.1	3.6	.1
Sales	871	864	0	7	0	100.0	99.2	0	.8	0
Clerical	2,150	2,042	60	47	1	100.0	95.0	2.8	2.2	0
Craftsmen	5,032	4,346	435	258	1	100.0	86.4	8.4	5.1	0
Operatives	3,990	2,608	944	438	0	100.0	65.4	23.7	11.0	0
Laborers	1,415	676	632	107	0	100.0	47.8	44.7	7.6	0
Services	182	79	88	15	0	100.0	43.4	48.4	8.2	0
Total	17,916	14,748	2,217	941	10	100.0	82.3	12.4	5.3	.1

Table 2 (Continued)

Industry and Occupational Group	Number of Employees					Percent of Employees				
	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental
<u>Liquid Hydrocarbon Industry</u>										
Managers	1,645	1,635	3	6	1	100.0	99.4	.2	.4	.1
Professional	2,671	2,626	16	21	8	100.0	98.3	.6	.8	.3
Technical	1,534	1,434	47	43	10	100.0	93.5	3.1	2.8	.7
Sales	189	186	2	1	0	100.0	98.4	1.1	.5	0
Clerical	2,766	2,553	133	75	5	100.0	92.3	4.8	2.7	.2
Craftsmen	1,840	1,727	63	50	0	100.0	93.9	3.4	2.7	0
Operatives	1,821	1,533	213	73	2	100.0	84.2	11.7	4.0	.1
Laborers	587	394	79	113	1	100.0	67.1	13.5	19.3	.2
Services	160	43	103	13	1	100.0	26.9	64.4	8.1	.6
Total	13,213	12,131	659	395	28	100.0	91.8	5.0	3.0	.2
<u>Petroleum Refining Industry</u>										
Managers	2,351	2,343	4	4	0	100.0	99.7	0.2	0.2	0
Professional	4,893	4,769	47	42	35	100.0	97.5	1.0	.9	.7
Technical	1,311	1,233	42	36	0	100.0	94.1	3.2	2.7	0
Sales	158	153	3	2	0	100.0	96.8	1.9	1.3	0
Clerical	4,179	3,788	234	149	8	100.0	90.6	5.6	3.6	.2
Craftsmen	3,737	3,547	122	68	0	100.0	94.9	3.3	1.8	0
Operatives	1,208	953	191	64	0	100.0	78.9	15.8	5.3	0
Laborers	331	141	144	46	0	100.0	42.6	43.5	13.9	0
Services	199	133	55	11	0	100.0	66.8	27.6	5.5	0
Total	18,367	17,060	842	422	43	100.0	92.9	4.6	2.3	.2

Table 2 (Continued)

Industry and Occupational Group	Number of Employees					Percent of Employees				
	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental
<u>Wholesale Trade Industry</u>										
Managers	2,457	2,408	15	28	6	100.0	98.0	.6	1.1	.2
Professional	1,393	1,367	7	14	5	100.0	98.1	.5	1.0	.4
Technical	1,137	1,067	38	31	1	100.0	93.8	3.3	2.7	.1
Sales	3,056	2,968	36	41	11	100.0	97.1	1.2	1.3	.4
Clerical	4,995	4,640	189	153	13	100.0	92.9	3.8	3.1	.3
Craftsmen	2,492	1,851	425	214	2	100.0	74.3	17.1	8.6	.1
Operatives	3,466	1,861	1,291	306	8	100.0	53.7	37.2	8.8	.2
Laborers	1,178	382	573	223	0	100.0	32.4	48.6	18.9	0
Services	343	242	73	20	8	100.0	70.6	21.3	5.8	2.3
Total	20,517	16,786	2,647	1,030	54	100.0	81.8	12.9	5.0	.3
<u>Retail Trade (General Merchandise) Industry</u>										
Managers	1,845	1,740	50	54	1	100.0	94.3	2.7	2.9	.1
Professional	61	56	2	1	2	100.0	91.8	3.3	1.6	3.3
Technical	137	113	8	16	0	100.0	82.5	5.8	11.7	0
Sales	8,837	7,791	615	425	6	100.0	88.2	7.0	4.8	.1
Clerical	3,571	3,016	270	283	2	100.0	84.5	7.6	7.9	.1
Craftsmen	736	523	67	144	2	100.0	71.1	9.1	19.6	.3
Operatives	939	536	287	107	9	100.0	57.1	30.6	11.4	1.0
Laborers	794	387	280	127	0	100.0	48.7	35.3	16.0	0
Services	1,634	738	730	164	2	100.0	45.2	44.7	10.0	.1
Total	18,554	14,900	2,309	1,321	24	100.0	80.3	12.4	7.1	.1

Table 2 (Continued)

Industry and Occupational Group	Number of Employees					Percent of Employees				
	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental
<u>Electric, Gas, and Sanitary Service Industry</u>										
Managers	1,161	1,149	7	4	1	100.0	99.0	0.6	0.3	0.1
Professional	1,283	1,262	7	12	2	100.0	98.4	.5	.9	.2
Technical	858	828	8	21	1	100.0	96.5	.9	2.4	.1
Sales	235	227	4	4	0	100.0	96.6	1.7	1.7	0
Clerical	2,598	2,391	130	75	2	100.0	92.0	5.0	2.9	.1
Craftsmen	2,904	2,832	46	26	0	100.0	97.5	1.6	.9	0
Operatives	1,694	1,328	312	54	0	100.0	75.4	18.4	3.2	0
Laborers	410	108	264	38	0	100.0	26.3	64.4	9.3	0
Services	108	36	70	2	0	100.0	33.3	64.8	1.9	0
Total	11,251	10,161	848	236	6	100.0	90.3	7.5	2.1	.1
<u>Medical Services Industry</u>										
Managers	698	642	33	12	11	100.0	92.0	4.7	1.7	1.6
Professional	3,804	3,264	267	127	146	100.0	85.8	7.0	3.3	3.8
Technical	3,114	1,791	1,008	290	25	100.0	57.5	32.4	9.3	.8
Sales	12	4	6	2	0	100.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	0
Clerical	2,968	2,377	381	204	6	100.0	80.1	12.8	6.9	.2
Craftsmen	311	221	71	19	0	100.0	71.1	22.8	6.1	0
Operatives	817	323	422	71	1	100.0	39.5	51.7	8.7	.1
Laborers	324	75	236	13	0	100.0	23.1	72.8	4.0	0
Services	5,767	1,914	3,412	437	4	100.0	33.2	59.2	7.6	.1
Total	17,815	10,611	5,836	1,175	193	100.0	59.6	32.8	6.6	1.1

Table 2 (Continued)

Industry and Occupational Group	Number of Employees					Percent of Employees				
	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental	All Groups	Anglo ¹	Black	Spanish Surname	Oriental
<u>Food and Kindred Products Industry</u>										
Managers	1,178	1,117	42	18	1	100.0	94.8	3.6	1.5	.1
Professional	332	327	3	2	0	100.0	98.5	.9	.6	0
Technical	212	174	24	14	0	100.0	82.1	11.3	6.6	0
Sales	1,754	1,557	94	98	5	100.0	88.8	5.4	5.6	.3
Clerical	1,116	1,024	40	47	5	100.0	91.8	3.6	4.2	.4
Craftsmen	1,253	949	189	115	0	100.0	75.7	15.1	9.2	0
Operatives	2,909	1,377	1,127	405	0	100.0	47.3	38.7	13.9	0
Laborers	2,204	737	1,036	430	1	100.0	33.4	47.0	19.5	0
Services	269	128	127	14	0	100.0	47.6	47.2	5.2	0
Total	11,227	7,390	2,682	1,143	12	100.0	65.8	23.9	10.2	.1
<u>Fabricated Metals (Not Ordered or Transported) Industry</u>										
Managers	826	804	10	12	0	100.0	97.3	1.2	1.5	0
Professional	177	172	1	3	1	100.0	97.2	.6	1.7	.6
Technical	406	364	8	34	0	100.0	89.7	2.0	8.4	0
Sales	394	392	0	1	1	100.0	99.5	0	.3	.3
Clerical	1,038	1,000	21	16	1	100.0	96.3	2.0	1.5	.1
Craftsmen	2,460	2,051	163	246	0	100.0	83.4	6.6	10.0	0
Operatives	3,435	1,906	975	554	0	100.0	55.5	28.9	16.1	0
Laborers	1,056	383	496	177	0	100.0	36.3	47.0	16.8	0
Services	64	26	32	6	0	100.0	40.6	50.0	9.4	0
Total	9,856	7,098	1,706	1,049	3	100.0	72.0	17.3	10.6	0

¹In this table, the figures for American Indians are included in the Anglo category.

Note: Sums of individual items may not equal totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

would represent a gain in numbers equal to roughly 8 percent of the black women reported in such positions in 1969. For Chicanos, 20 professional placements would be equal to 5 percent of the 1969 employment figure. Clearly, modest employment gains in absolute numbers would require fairly substantial changes in the relative employment status of minority women.⁵

The figures presented above provide an interesting contrast with the employment pattern which characterizes Atlanta. The dominant impression conveyed by the data for Atlanta is that the city is primarily a distribution center, with a large service sector and relatively little heavy industry. Houston, on the other hand, is important for its petrochemical industry. Many of the large firms in this industry have their corporate headquarters in the city and are quite influential in city and national politics. The importance of this industry is also reflected in the pattern of demand for professional workers in Houston which is skewed toward technical fields and those with formal training in business skills.

Another way in which Houston may be compared to Atlanta is in terms of the political strength of the minority communities. While the black community in Atlanta is large, being a majority of the city's population, and powerful, having recently elected a black mayor, Houston has a smaller number of blacks -- around 25 percent of the city's population -- and they are more poorly organized politically. In his report, Vernon Briggs

concluded that, "...the black community has yet to produce a local organization with the necessary broad support to express its needs in a politically effective manner."⁶ While the political organization of the Chicano community in Houston has not been so thoroughly investigated, it does not appear that a much greater degree of organization exists within this ethnic group.

The Minority Women Employment Program

Although the contract for the Minority Women Employment Program was let on March 15, 1973, actual operation of the program did not begin until May 7. The two principal tasks that occupied RTP during the intervening weeks were selecting the women to staff the program and locating suitable office space.

In considering the qualities they desired in the professionals to be hired, the heads of RTP, in consultation with the directors of the Atlanta project, decided that it would not be necessary for the women they hired to be familiar with the outreach strategy through previous work. In addition, while it was initially suggested that members of the Atlanta staff could prove very effective in the initial stages of the MWEP if they could move to Houston to work in an advisory capacity, this idea was later abandoned. Thus the decision was made to begin operations in Houston with a staff recruited from the "outside," with the directors of the BWEP serving only in a consultative capacity.

While there can be no doubt that the Houston staff is now quite comfortable in its role as an outreach group and has assimilated the lessons to be learned from the Atlanta program, the staff was required to undergo a learning process which postponed initial program activities. The directors of the Atlanta staff, by way of contrast, had worked with apprenticeship outreach in the construction industry and so they were familiar with the strategy.

Even in retrospect, it would be wrong to conclude that hiring program directors unfamiliar with outreach was an error. While the decision may have resulted in a somewhat longer orientation period, other staffing arrangements also have their costs. Assigning a member of the Atlanta staff to Houston, for example, would have disrupted operations in Atlanta and could have fostered a dependency upon outside persons on the part of the permanent Houston staff. On the other hand, it is unlikely that RTP could provide a sufficient number of women already trained in the outreach method to staff BWEP-type programs if they were undertaken on a large scale. Thus it was decided that the long-run success of the program would depend on RTP's ability to recruit and train directors who had not previously worked in outreach programs and so it was decided that the effects of this policy were to be assessed in Houston.

The slow start of the MWEP cannot be attributed solely to the learning process through which the staff had to pass. Factors beyond the control of the program contributed significantly to retarding the program's development.

Shortly after the program staff was chosen, office space was leased in a predominantly black section of the city. The location is advantageous in that it can easily be reached by bus lines, making it accessible to minority women who do not own cars, and it is close to the University of Houston, Texas Southern University, and Rice University. The downtown business district is also within easy reach. Nearly six weeks elapsed between the time the lease was signed and the time the MWEP could take occupancy of the office. Thus it was not until June 15, 1973, three months after the Department of Labor contract was let, that the MWEP was operational.

There is an interesting comparison that can be drawn between the office arrangements of the BWEP in Atlanta and the MWEP in Houston. In Atlanta, the BWEP was, and continues to be, housed in the offices of the Southern Regional Council, a large and active research organization. On the other hand, the MWEP in Houston is the sole occupant of its spacious offices. As a result, MWEP staff are not encumbered by organizational commitments not directly related to program goals. The disadvantage is that when spirits are sagging among the staff, or when the advice of an experienced hand is needed, there is no one immediately available who can bring a fresh perspective to the program.

While the BWEP's association with SRC has undoubtedly made claims upon the resources of the program, most notably the time of its staff, and entangled it in a quantity of "red tape" that it might have otherwise avoided, it is also evident that the BWEP has derived benefits from the association. For example, the SRC is currently organizing a major research effort to provide information on the labor market experiences of black workers, in which the BWEP is having a substantial input. While it is difficult for an outsider to determine the relative merits of the organizational arrangements in Atlanta and Houston, the issue would seem to warrant serious evaluation.

Although the MWEP was able to open its offices in the middle of June after several delays, start-up problems were still not behind them. In August, the offices of the program were broken into, and typewriters, tape recorders, and other office equipment were stolen. Time was again taken from the normal activities of the staff to file police reports, obtain new office equipment, and reinforce the security of the offices. At roughly the same point in time, the staff experienced a tragedy of a more personal nature -- the death of Kay Campbell, one of the staff members. Understandably, this had a strong impact on the staff and made it most difficult for them to devote their full attention to the needs of the program. Because of these events, Beverly Lyle, the program director, believes that the MWEP was not really functional until September 1, nearly six months into the contract year.

The early weeks of the program (May, 1973) were taken up with two principal activities: (1) orienting the Houston staff to the outreach strategy as applied to the labor market for minority women professionals, and (2) researching firms in the Houston area in an effort to focus the efforts of the MWEP where they would do the most good. The responsibility for the latter assignment rested with the Center for the Study of Human Resources, University of Texas at Austin.

Orientation activities primarily took the form of intensive meetings among the staffs of the Houston project, the Atlanta project, and RTP. These meetings took place in New York and Atlanta, where the MWEP staff was able to observe successful outreach programs in operation and familiarize themselves with the organization of these programs, and in Houston, where the RTP and BWEP staffs could assist in the adjustment of the Houston staff to their new roles.

The research phase of the program seemed to experience difficulties from the outset, although even in retrospect the reasons for this are unclear. The problems that were encountered can perhaps best be explained by the differences in the expectations for the research held by the Houston staff and the perception of the research to be done held by the University of Texas researchers. This, in turn, seems to have resulted from a misreading of the value of the research performed in Atlanta.

In both cities, the research staff perceived that its role was to provide the outreach staff with a general orientation

toward the city's labor market, to interview representatives of firms in several industries to ascertain their hiring procedures and their plans for hiring over the next several months, to determine those job categories where professional workers are in demand, and to provide information about the supply of graduates from local colleges. In contrast, the outreach groups were anticipating much more specific information, such as the number of minority group members in various positions in particular firms, the efforts the firm has made to attract minority group members, and the nature of its affirmative action plans and its attitude toward minority groups.

While it is evident that there was a lack of communication between the researchers and the MWEP, this may be attributable, at least in part, to the organizational arrangement which existed between the two groups. As initially conceptualized, the research was to be conducted prior to, or at least in the very early stages of, the MWEP's existence. The advantage of this arrangement is that when the program begins its operations, it has access to the research findings, which can then be used to form the basis of its approach to firms and the minority community. However, this advantage may be outweighed by the fact that the researchers do not get rapid feedback from the outreach staff concerning the usefulness of the information that has been gathered. Since, in the early stages, the directors are more likely to be concerned with the internal organization of the program

rather than with the pursuit of the "leads" uncovered by the research, the researcher is likely to view much of the assignment as completed before its usefulness is evaluated.

An alternative method of organizing the research, one which would hopefully overcome some of these problems, would place the research responsibility under direct control of the outreach staff. This would result in the outreach staff being included in the formulation of the research design. The research could then be more readily paced to the needs of the project, and by directing the nature of the research performed, the project directors would ensure the relevance of the research to their needs.

The operation of the MWEP and the methods it employed in pursuit of its objectives can most clearly be discussed in terms of the three phases of the outreach approach -- recruitment, counseling and training, and placement. In contrast to the Atlanta program, the MWEP was targeted at assisting qualified women in both the black and Chicano communities in Houston in securing professional-level employment. While the organizers of the program perceived that since they needed more broadly based support in the community, a change would be required in the ethnic composition of the program staff, the staff that was actually assembled does not have a Chicano in a directorial role. The Houston staff consists of a director, an associate director, and an educational and training counselor, all of whom are

black, and an administrative assistant and a secretary, both of whom are Chicano.

The channels utilized by the staff to recruit registrants included local colleges and women's groups, the same sources that proved fruitful in Atlanta. In addition, the MWEP enjoyed the advantage of having access to the files of the Higher Employment Achievement Program (HEAP), an earlier effort to apply the outreach strategy to Houston. From these files the directors obtained the names and addresses of 289 women to whom letters were sent describing the nature of the Minority Women Employment Program. These letters resulted in replies from 20 women. Although disappointing, the small number of replies was not surprising in view of the fact that the HEAP files were three years old by the time the MWEP began.

The women's groups contacted by MWEP were not uniformly receptive to the program, although few could quarrel with its objectives. As in Atlanta, many community groups questioned why the program addressed only the needs of women. While the directors knew from the Atlanta experience that this question would arise frequently, circumstances in Houston made it a more difficult one to deal with. As Briggs' report shows, black men in Houston seem to suffer in employment status relative to black women. Apart from this difficulty, the problems that the MWEP encountered in dealing with community groups have not been great, and the program now has good relations with these organizations.

These include social groups, such as the alumni chapters of black sororities, and professional organizations, such as the National Association of Black Accountants.

In the early stages of the program, the large majority of the women registered with the program were liberal arts majors. The meetings that the program directors had with representatives of large firms in the Houston area indicated that it would be necessary to diversify the pool of registrants to include women with backgrounds in more technical fields. This led the MWEP to contact the placement officers at the local colleges and universities in order to introduce the program to the academic community and to secure the help of the placement officers in contacting women who could benefit from the services of the program. Visits were made to the placement directors at the University of Houston, Texas Southern University, and Prairie View A&M University. With the help of these persons, the MWEP has been able to generate a group of applicants whose fields of specialization are described in Table 3.

There were 243 registrants on file with the MWEP as of February 14, 1974. These included 38 women in education, 68 women in social sciences, 23 in applied sciences, 33 in business and related areas, and 24 in "other fields." While the fields of study are diverse, it should be clear that with roughly one-half of the active applicants in education or the social sciences, the program is still somewhat limited in its ability to meet the

Table 3
Registrants with MWEP by Major Field of Study

Education

<u>Specialization</u>	<u>Number of Applicants</u>
Elementary Education	12
Physical Education	3
Business Education	8
Biology/Chemistry	2
Journalism	1
Music	3
Secondary Education	
Medical	
Home Economics	3
Masters (Elem. Ed.)	4
Masters (Secondary Ed.)	2

Social Sciences

<u>Specialization</u>	
Behavioral Science	1
History	1
Political Science	4
Sociology	21
Psychology	9
Social Administration	2
MA Guidance and Counseling	7
MA History	
MA Social Administration	1
MSW	7
Library Science	1
BA Social Work	13
Attorney	1

Applied Sciences

<u>Specialization</u>	
Foods and Nutrition	3
Mathematics	4
Biology	9
Chemistry	1
Pharmacy	3
Physics	1
Economics	1
MA Public Health	1

Business and Related

<u>Specialization</u>	<u>Number of Applicants</u>
General Business	5
Behavioral Science Mgmt.	2
Business Administration	5
Accounting	6
Marketing	9
Office Administration	3
Management	2
MBA	1

Other Areas

Communication	Broadcasting	3
Liberal Arts	English	8
	Home Economics	7
	Languages	2
	Journalism	4

Applicants Without Degrees 14

Inactive Applicants 53

Minority Groups

Chinese	1
Indian (national)	1
Spanish Surname American	3
Black	238

demands for technical personnel expressed by industry; this point will be discussed further elsewhere in the report. It is also of interest to note the ethnic distribution of the applicants.

While the distribution of registrants by ethnic group and fields of experience remains a problem, the directors have been able to generate a constant flow of applicants through the MWEP offices. Currently, they estimate that an average of three to four women per day register with the program. The task they are currently working on is to change the composition of this flow.

Counseling and Training

The counseling and training conducted by the MWEP are patterned after the procedures followed in Atlanta. This is an important phase of the outreach program, for it attempts to reconcile the qualifications of the applicants with the job requirements demanded by firms. To the extent that these elements differ merely in terms of the criteria used to screen applicants, the outreach group can attempt to persuade employers that their usual criteria may have little validity when applied to minority populations. The outreach agency can legitimately argue that its familiarity with these groups enables its staff to screen more effectively, and persuade the employer to consider the staff's recommendations. On the supply side, the outreach staff can attempt to work with individual applicants to enable them to project those traits which employers perceive as desirable.

It must be conceded, however, that the employment problems posed by this type of "statistical discrimination" are a small part of the disadvantages faced by many of the women who came through the offices of MWEP (and other minority women as well). Some of the women MWEP counsels have only vaguely defined career objectives, and MWEP counselors assist the registrants in relating their aspirations to the alternatives provided by the job market. Unfortunately, there are many women whose options are severely limited by the nature of their education. The educational characteristics of the population are slow to change over time, and the change is most likely brought about through changes in the fields of specialization of successive cohorts of college graduates. This is the reason why the staff of the MWEP view their jobs as extending beyond their current applicants and make strong efforts to inform those minority women still in school of the nature of the job market they face.

In this vein, the MWEP staff is currently planning a one-day conference for May 15, 1974, in conjunction with representatives from the University of Houston and Texas Southern University. The theme of the conference is "Houston's Hidden Resources." It is expected that the conference will involve personnel from Houston area businesses, compliance officers, and placement officials in workshops centering on problems of underemployed minority women. Other staff educational activities are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Educational Activities Attended by MWEF Staff

 Conferences

*National Recruitment Training Program, Inc.,
 Office Seminar for Field Administrators
 New York, New York
 September, 1973

*American Society of Personnel Administrators
 "Interviewing Techniques"
 Corpus Christi, Texas

**Southern Economic Association
 Annual Conference
 Houston, Texas
 November, 1973

*University of Houston - Black Awareness Week
 "The Black Woman: Combatting Obstacles to Employment"
 Houston, Texas
 February, 1974

 Television and Radio Appearances

Television

"Women's Digest"
 "Steve Edward's Show"
 "Together with the People"

Radio

KYOK - "Third Day"
 KCOH - Interview

* Participation
 ** Attendance

As desirable and important as it is to influence the long-run decision making of minority women, current placements primarily reflect the ability of the staff to assist the program's current registrants in their job search. In terms of the daily routine followed by the MWEP, this aspect of the program is operated as follows. After submitting an application and resume, a new applicant is interviewed by either Yvonne Darensbourg, the associate program director, or Mary Allen, the career counselor. During these interviews the staff member attempts to determine the client's occupational interests, communicative abilities, personality traits, work history, and current plans. Staff members try to arrive at a preliminary assessment of the kind of counseling they can give the applicant that will help her in obtaining employment. The Houston staff encounters many women with poorly defined or very broadly conceived career objectives. Often it is necessary to evaluate the relative merits of particular types of employment with a woman who can verbalize only that "she wants to work with people."

The staff also spends time aiding the applicants in ways that are expected to be of more immediate benefit. Many of the resumes need rewriting, and often applicants are unaware that it is sometimes desirable to vary the information emphasized on the resume in accordance with the particular job the woman is seeking. After each woman is counseled regarding likely sources of employment in Houston and the appropriate ways to approach employers, she is encouraged to seek employment on her own and not to rely exclusively on the MWEP. It is also indicated that

if the woman does learn of a job, the MWEP is eager to lend its assistance and counsel in pursuit of the job opening.

In addition to counseling, the staff will occasionally engage in preparing an applicant to take specific tests, although it should be noted that formal testing appears to be utilized much less in Houston than in Atlanta. Thus far, only five employers have administered tests to MWEP registrants. These tests have been fairly standard ones, and the MWEP testing specialist has had access to sample tests and was able to prepare applicants for the exams. The MWEP plans to begin tutoring women interested in taking state merit tests and the FSEE.

Following the lead of the Atlanta project, the MWEP sponsored an informal seminar on career opportunities in sales. As the data in Table 2 (pages 5-9) indicate, blacks are woefully underrepresented in these positions, especially in the petrochemical industry. Approximately 10 women who were registered with the MWEP attended the seminar, along with representatives of three companies. Because the nature of sales positions varies a great deal among industries, an attempt was made to have the three companies which were invited span the range of job opportunities: one firm was a large retail department store, the second was a large insurance company, and the third was a manufacturer of computers.

Employer Contacts

The strategy underlying the MWEP's approach to firms was adapted from the experience of the BWEP in Atlanta. In addition, the program benefited from the files of the defunct Higher Employment Achievement Program, which contained records of the correspondence between HEAP and between 50 and 100 companies in the Houston area. This list of companies, along with a directory compiled by the Chamber of Commerce, containing the names of companies in the city with over 500 employees, provided the MWEP with an initial pool of companies from which the most promising companies could be drawn.

The first contact with most companies consists of a letter of introduction and a brochure which describes the goals of the program and indicates that the MWEP is eager to provide companies with well qualified black women to fill professional positions; it notes that these services are free of charge. The letter requests interested firms to contact the MWEP to arrange an appointment with the directors. This information packet was mailed to 300 firms selected from the HEAP files and the Chamber of Commerce listing. The mailing drew 31 replies, and visits with these companies were scheduled immediately. Those companies that did not respond were telephoned and an attempt was made to set up an appointment with the

appropriate representative of the firm. This follow-up procedure resulted in the promise of an additional 35 interviews.

During the first months of the program, the director was engaged in pursuing the leads turned up by the mailing and telephone canvassing. When possible, Ms. Lyle would visit three or four companies per day. The presentation Ms. Lyle made to each company followed very closely the approach developed in Atlanta. The ways in which the MWEF could help the employer were emphasized repeatedly. The cost reductions that could accompany the more efficient screening of personnel were pointed out, and in the course of the conversation Ms. Lyle tried to demonstrate to the employer that the MWEF staff was knowledgeable about his firm and its industry and could therefore be counted upon to fill his requests for personnel in a reliable manner. The questions put to Ms. Lyle by employers also seemed to follow the pattern established by employers in Atlanta, indicating a degree of suspicion on the part of many employers which was frequently directed towards the program's source of funding.

In addition to providing the MWEF with an opportunity to explain its objectives to the employers, these interviews enabled the directors to gather more information on each firm and to record their impressions of the personalities and attitudes of the employees they met. This information was collated for each firm

and continues to be used in preparing applicants for job interviews and deciding which registrants are most likely to succeed in gaining employment in particular firms.

Although the directors were apparently following the course marked out for them by the successful Atlanta project, after four months of operation and 55 company visits, only four women had been placed in jobs. During the first four months of the Atlanta project, the BWEP staff had visited only 20 companies, but this had resulted in nine placements. After assessing the program's performance, the staff determined that while the record revealed that they had evidently been hard at work, the program was not operating as efficiently as it should.

It was at this point that the value of the research with which the MWEP had been supplied began to be questioned and a more efficient method of targeting those companies with whom the program would have greatest success was sought. It was the feeling of the directors that while the research on the Houston labor market provided the staff with a general picture of the supply and demand for different types of labor in particular industries in the city, it failed to point out those particular companies in which professional employment was expanding most rapidly and failed to indicate the route through which these jobs could be secured. The directors felt that far too frequently they were scheduling interviews with firms that had no intention of hiring significant numbers of professional workers in the near future.

In order to focus the research more narrowly and to reduce the frequency of unproductive company visits, it was decided to reduce the pool of firms to be evaluated to a "target" group of 28. These firms appeared, on the basis of casual investigation, to offer the most promising employment prospects, and it was believed that by studying a smaller group of firms more intensively more information could be obtained about each and the frequency of misdirected company visits could be reduced.

It appears that this approach to firms has been more successful than the broader based approach followed initially. The coordination between the research staff and the MWEP staff also has improved. The program staff has clearly defined information needs for each company, which has served to focus the researchers on only those items that are directly relevant to the program. It has eliminated much of the negative feedback that the staff had been experiencing as a result of contacting companies that had been screened only very crudely to determine their potential for providing the MWEP with the kinds of jobs it is seeking. By reducing the number of firms the program works with at one time, this approach has enabled the staff to work more closely with each firm and has enabled them to begin the slow process of gaining the confidence of these employers. After nine months of work with this method, the Houston staff is just beginning to feel that they are establishing their credibility with firms in the Houston area.

In three instances, the MWEP has used another strategy to initiate a working relationship with a major company. This involved meeting with persons in the top management positions in the hope that they would "encourage" heretofore uncooperative managers in the personnel department to cooperate more fully with the MWEP. It is usually believed that top management is more concerned with the company's public image and less inclined to feel threatened by the presence of black women in the company's professional ranks. Such persons are therefore more likely to be sympathetic to the goals of the program, and they presumably have the power to ensure that their policies are implemented by their staff. However, Ms. Lyle feels that this approach has been only partially successful and that it should be studied much more thoroughly before it is relied upon as a standard method of making company contacts. It is instructive to consider the three cases in which the approach has been tried.

In the case of a large Houston manufacturing company, the approach was made to the company president by means of a letter from Ms. Lyle. This was the first and only contact between the president and the MWEP. In response to Ms. Lyle's letter, the president referred her to the personnel manager. It is the opinion of the program directors that the personnel manager never received any direct instructions from the president regarding the MWEP and the company's cooperation with the program has been minimal.

A large oil company was the second firm in which an approach through top management was tried. Here a direct personal contact with the employee relations manager by a Department of Labor official led to a meeting between the MWEP directors, the assistant employee relations manager, and the company's professional recruiter. The directors found these persons very cordial, and the meeting led to several MWEP registrants being interviewed by the firm. None of the fifteen women the program referred has been hired, and only two women passed the initial interview and were referred to department heads. After each woman was interviewed, the recruiter personally visited the MWEP offices to explain the reasons for rejecting each of the women the staff referred. The directors have noticed that the recruiter's impressions of the women they refer contrast markedly with their own, which leads them to suspect that he is searching for a woman with low ability, who will be unlikely to rise through the ranks and pose a threat to the incumbent workers. Women they believe to be eminently qualified for the positions for which they have been referred have been rejected out of hand.

In the third case, the associate director had initially contacted the personnel director of a large corporation, who told her he would notify the MWEP when job openings arose. After a considerable period of time passed without further communication from the company, the MWEP decided to take advantage of the acquaintance between a member of the BWEP and the vice-president of the company in charge of personnel. A meeting was arranged

among the vice-president, the personnel manager, and the associate director of the MWEF. At this meeting the vice-president expressed his strong support of the program and made it known to the personnel manager that he was displeased with his previous handling of the matter. Since that meeting, the personnel manager has continued to be uncooperative and on occasion has expressed hostility towards the directors. This is evidently a case in which going "over the head" of the personnel manager resulted in a backlash which made it even more difficult to deal with the company representative.

On the basis of the experiences described above, it would seem that the value of an approach to firms based on the practice of making initial contacts with top management is questionable. The problem appears to be that although top management often expresses an interest in the program, it lacks the time or the commitment to follow through and ensure that its policies are being implemented. On the other hand, this approach seems to have alienated those in lower management who are the targets of the directives from above. The experience in both Atlanta and Houston has been that the cooperation of the personnel staff and the department heads in companies where they do the hiring is essential if placements are to be made in a particular company. While top management undoubtedly has the power to compel such cooperation if it so desires, it seems that these officers are unwilling to exercise their power to the extent necessary to overcome the adverse reaction which this approach engenders among lower level managers.

As of March 1, 1974, MWEP had contacted 85 companies and secured the job orders listed in Table 5. The table is divided into four sections which describe the job orders which have come from private profit-making and nonprofit-making enterprises and public enterprises, and jobs which require previous experience and those which do not.

Turning first to the jobs requiring experience located in the profit-making sector, it is apparent that the vast majority require highly technical skills on the part of applicants, and many employers require an advanced degree. Seventy of the 88 job orders obtained in this sector are for persons in engineering, the natural sciences, mathematics, or computer sciences. A similar tabulation done for those jobs that do not require experience reveals that 29 of the 48 job orders obtained require highly technical training. Job orders obtained in the not-for-profit sector are less technical but also far less numerous. The implications of this pattern of demand, given the characteristics of the registrants, are discussed below.

Evaluating the Placement Record

As of March 1, 1974, the Minority Women Employment Program has directly accounted for the placement of 21 women and provided substantial assistance to four other women who learned of job openings from other sources. Included among these placements is one woman with a degree in finance who was previously employed as a secretary with a large oil company. She now is a management

Table 5

Job Orders Received by MWEP
By Experience, Field of Study and Type of Employer

PRIVATE SECTOR

Experience Required

<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Science</u>		
Biological Sciences	B.A./B.S.	4
Chemistry	B.S.	3
Geology	B.S.	1
Geology	M.S.	3
Geology	Ph.D.	1
Medical Technician		1
Pharmacology	M.S.	1
<u>Engineering</u>		
Aeronautical Engineer		1
Electrical Engineer	B.S.	12
Electrical Engineer	M.A./Ph.D.	1
Industrial Technology		2
Mechanical Engineer	B.S.	8
Mechanical Engineer	M.S./Ph.D.	1
Quality Assurance Engineer		3
<u>Programmer</u>		
Engineering Computer Science	B.S.	5
General	B.S.	7
Operating Systems		3
Mathematics	B.S.	10
Mathematical Statistics	M.S.	1
Physics	B.S.	2
<u>Business Related</u>		
Accounting		3
Business Management (Administration)		3
General Business		1
Rate Analyst		1

Table 5 (Continued)
(Private Sector)

<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Social Work</u>		
Behavioral Science	B.A.	1
<u>Journalism</u>		
News Writing		1
Radio-Television-Film		6
<u>General</u>		
English (Creative Writing)	B.A.	1
Home Economics/Bilingual (Home Service Advisor)	B.A.	1
<u>No Experience Required</u>		
<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Science</u>		
Biostatistics	M.S.	1
Chemistry	B.S.	1
Chemistry	M.S./Ph.D.	1
Geology	B.S.	3
Geology	M.S.	2
<u>Engineering</u>		
Electrical Engineer		9
Engineering Technology		3
Industrial Engineer		1
Mechanical Engineer	B.S.	4
<u>Programmer</u>		
General (Math, Engineering, Physics)	B.S.	2
Mathematics	B.S.	1
Physics	B.S.	1

Table 5 (Continued)
(Private Sector)

<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Business Related</u>		
Accounting		6
Business Administration		1
General Business		1
Personnel		1
<u>Attorney</u>		
Attorney	L.L.B.	2
<u>General</u>		
Claims Adjuster Trainee	B.A.	2
Underwriter Trainee	B.A.	1
Insurance Sales Trainee	B.A.	1
Sales Representative Trainee	B.A.	1
Retail Management Trainee	B.A.	2
Management Trainee	B.A.	1
<u>General (Non-Degreed Positions)</u>		
Bookkeeper		1
Clerical		9
Commercial Artist		2
Drafting		14
Photographer		2
Technician		41
Other		11

PUBLIC SECTOR AND NON-PROFIT SECTOR

<u>Experienced Required</u>		
<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Engineering</u>		
Mechanical Engineer	B.S.	1
Stationary Engineer		1

Table 5 (Continued)
(Public Sector and Non-profit Sector)

<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Programmer</u>		
Mathematics	B.S.	1
<u>Business Related</u>		
CPA		1
Business Education		1
<u>Social Work</u>		
Behavioral Science	B.A.	1
<u>General</u>		
Director of Social Service Agency	B.A.	1
Staff Director	B.A.	1
<u>No Experience Required</u>		
<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Science</u>		
Biology	B.S.	1
Biology	Ph.D.	1
Chemistry	B.S.	1
Registered Nurse		1
<u>Engineering</u>		
Electrical Engineer	B.S.	1
Mechanical Engineer	B.S.	1

Table 5 (Continued)
 (Public Sector and Non-profit Sector)

<u>Field</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Job Orders</u>
<u>Business Related</u>		
Accountant		2
<u>Social Work</u>		
MSW		1
Psychology/Sociology		1
<u>Journalism</u>		
Journalist	B.A.	1
<u>General</u>		
Counselor	B.A.	1
Staff Assistant (University Alumni)	B.A.	1
American History (Part-Time)	M.A.	1
<u>General (Non-Degreed Positions)</u>		
Clerical		57
Technician		4
Other		8

trainee with the telephone utility; her increase in salary is over \$250 per month. Another woman, with a degree in journalism, previously held a temporary job with NASA and is now a trainee with a large insurance company, earning over \$2,000 above what she received in her former job. A third woman, who holds a degree in biology, was formerly employed as a research technician in a university research center and is now an associate chemist with a major oil company in Houston, earning \$3,000 more than her previous salary. These placements, along with all others, are recorded in Table 6.

The change in salary secured for the entire group of placements totals approximately \$34,658, or an average increase in salary of over \$1,500 per placement. This may be compared to an average cost of \$6,000 per placement, obtained by dividing the total operational budget of the project by the 21 placements. Thus the cost of a placement would be recovered in four years if the salary increments received by each placement persisted over time.

This estimate of the returns to the program is conservative in that it attributes to four women who were unemployed for substantial periods of time prior to registering with the MWEP, salaries which they had earned in the relatively distant past, in order to approximate what their earnings would have been without assistance of the program. This procedure clearly overstates what their market opportunities were prior to the MWEP's assistance, since these women had searched the labor market extensively and had failed to receive offers of jobs comparable to those they

had previously filled. As a result, the salary increment attributed to the MWEP is understated for these four women. Although it is not clear what kind of adjustment should be made to more accurately reflect the earnings opportunities these women faced, it should be borne in mind that the figures noted above probably place a lower bound on the level of benefits derived from the program.

While the actual number of placements falls well short of the target of 100 placements, it does appear that the current level of performance would provide a respectable return on the cost of the project. It should also be pointed out that if the target were achieved, and if each placement earned a salary increment equal to the average of the 20 who were actually placed by the MWEP, the value of the returns provided by the program in a single year would have exceeded that year's

Table 6
MWEF Job Placements

Degree and Major Field	Previous Employment	Previous Salary	Present Job	Present Salary
B.S.; Biology	Research Technician	\$6,396/Year	Research Assistant (Virology)	\$8,528/Year
No degree; Spanish/ American Literature	Secretary	\$550/Month	Sales Secretary	\$525/Month
B.A.; Sociology	Drug Counselor	\$7,200/Year	Drug Counselor	\$8,000/Year
B.A.; Spanish	Teacher	\$7,600/Year	Remedial Reading Instructor	\$8,100/Year
B.S.; Biology	Research Technician	\$6,396/Year	Associate Chemist	\$9,000/Year
B.S.; Medical Technology	Laboratory Technician	\$8,460/Year	Research Assistant	\$9,984/Year
B.B.A.; Finance	Clerk Typist	\$4,920/Year	Real Estate (Mortgage Clerk)	\$7,560/Year
B.S.; Business Office Administration	Secretary	\$9,240/Year	Office Administrator	\$10,800/Year
B.S.; Sociology (Minor - Business)	Credit Investigator	\$9,000/Year	Civil Clerk	\$8,400/Year
B.S.; Business Education	Substitute Teacher	\$20/Day When Called	Clerical Instructor	\$7,500/Year
B.S.; Chemistry	EKG Technician	\$3,600/Year	Toxicology Laboratory Technician	\$7,200/Year

Table 6 (Continued)

<u>Degree and Major Field</u>	<u>Previous Employment</u>	<u>Previous Salary</u>	<u>Present Job</u>	<u>Present Salary</u>
B.A.; Journalism	Temporarily Employed Editing Papers	\$500/Month (Approximately)	Insurance Trainee	\$8,060/Year
B.B.A.; Marketing	Inventory Accounting	\$685/Month	Sales Representative	\$825/Training \$1,400/Month + Commission
M.S.; Counseling	Counselor	Unknown	Houston Epilepsy Association Counselor	\$375/Month Part-time
B.B.A.; Finance	Secretary	\$590/Month	Management Trainee	\$845/Month
No Degree	Cashier	\$2.20/Hour	Western Electric Installer	\$3.73/Hour
No Degree; Drafting	Draftswoman	\$7,800/Year	Draftswoman	\$9,500/Year
M.S.W.	Not Available	Not Available	Supervisor, County Welfare	\$906/Month
B.S.; Chemistry	Teacher	\$8,000/Year	Non-metallic Engineer	\$11,500/Year
M.S.W.	Drug Counselor	\$9,600/Year	Supervisor I State Welfare	\$10,872/Year

Table 6 (Continued)

Technically Assisted

<u>Degree and Major Field</u>	<u>Previous Employment</u>	<u>Previous Salary</u>	<u>Present Job</u>	<u>Present Salary</u>
B.B.A.; Accounting	Student Intern	Unknown	Accountant	\$8,500 - \$8,700/Year
B.B.A.; Accounting	Cashier	\$3.78/Hour	Accountant	\$700/Month (Approximately)
B.A.; Business Technology	University of Houston NFS Institute Center	\$3.00/Hour	Buyer, Health Science Center	\$600/Month
B.B.A.; Accounting	Clerk	\$400/Month	Accountant	\$640/Month

expenditure. Thus while it is usually good practice to aim high, the target set for the program implied a rate of return which could be matched by very few investments or programs of any type.

While a reckoning of the returns to the program in dollars and cents provides an evaluation that measures program success in terms of its ultimate purpose -- to provide high paying jobs for minority women -- in considering how the program might be modified it is often useful to look at the program's performance at more intermediate stages. For example, if it were found that the program could not secure job orders but did draw a representative supply of minority women, then one might wish to re-evaluate its approach to firms. On the other hand, a paucity of registrants would suggest that more active community work is in order. Reviewing the record compiled by the MWEP as reflected in Table 5 (pages 35-39), it may be seen that the program was able to generate over 275 job orders. This would seem to be a quite respectable number and one which would provide the program with the potential for attaining its target. On the other side of the ledger, the MWEP recruited over 200 applicants, only slightly less than the BWEP registered in its first year. Thus, in terms of the number of the jobs it uncovered and the number of women it registered, the performance of the MWEP cannot be found lacking.

It appears that the shortfall in placements experienced by the program is attributable in some measure to the differences in the fields of specialization and the related job experience

possessed by the file of applicants and the requirements of the jobs which firms have referred to the MWEF. As noted above, the registrants tend to be concentrated in education and the social sciences, while employers have referred to the program positions that demand technical training in the natural sciences, engineering, or business. Given these differences, there are many jobs for which the MWEF cannot find qualified applicants, and there are many women for whom it cannot find suitable employment.

These observations give rise to a related series of questions which, although difficult to answer, would seem to hold the key to assessing the performance of the MWEF and the viability of the outreach program as it is being implemented in Houston. It would be useful to know the extent to which the job orders being referred to the program are representative of the jobs that become available for professionals in Houston. It may be that a firm which is not interested in cooperating with the program simply refers to MWEF those jobs which it knows are extremely difficult to fill, thereby giving the appearance of cooperation while denying MWEF applicants access to those jobs with less specific skill requirements. Unfortunately, this is a difficult question to answer without a carefully designed research program. It would be worthwhile, for example, to study the labor market adjustments made by white males whose backgrounds are similar to those of the women on file with the MWEF. An assessment of the ease or difficulty with which they

are assimilated into the Houston labor market would provide a useful comparison to the experience of the minority women registered with the program. Without such information, or accurate information on job openings obtained directly from firms, little light can be shed on the question raised above.

On the supply side, it would be relevant to ask if the women registered with MWEP are representative, in terms of their skills, of the minority women in Houston who form the pool from which the program might be expected to draw its applicants. Table 7 reveals that the majority of women registered with the program are graduates of the three major colleges in the Houston area: the University of Houston, Texas Southern University, and Prairie View A&M College.⁷ While the University of Houston has the largest enrollment of the three colleges, it has the smallest number of black students (1,458); thus it appears that the distribution of program registrants among the three colleges is generally representative of the distribution of the minority population.

If it is accepted that the program has attracted a reasonably representative distribution of women classified by the college they attended, the next question that can be raised is whether the women drawn from each college are representative in terms of their fields of study. While information is available from the University of Houston on the distribution of its student body across fields of study,

Table 7

Distribution of Registrants by Colleges
From Which They Have Graduated

<u>Texas Schools</u>	<u>Bachelors</u>	<u>Masters</u>	<u>Law Degree</u>
Bishop College (Dallas)	2		
East Texas State University (Commerce)	1		
Houston Baptist College (Houston)	1		
Jarvis Christian College (Hawkins)	3		
Huston-Tillotson College (Austin)	8		
Lamar Tech University (Beaumont)	3		
North Texas State University (Denton)	1		
Our Lady of the Lake College (San Antonio)		1	
Paul Quinn College (Waco)	1		
Prairie View A&M College (Prairie View)	36	1	
Rice University (Houston)	1		
Sam Houston State (Huntsville)	1		
South Texas School of Law (Houston)			1
Texas College (Tyler)	2		
Texas Southern University (Houston)	62	16	1
Texas Women's University (Denton)	3		
University of Houston	19	3	
University of St. Thomas (Houston)	1		
University of Texas (Austin)	1		
U.T. School of Public Health (Houston)		2	
Wiley College (Marshall)	1		
<u>Louisiana Schools</u>			
Dillard University (New Orleans)	3		
Grambling University (Grambling)	5		
Loyola University (New Orleans)		1	
Southern University (Baton Rouge)	8		
University of Southwestern Louisiana	1		
Xavier University (New Orleans)	1		

<u>Other Schools</u>	<u>Bachelors</u>	<u>Masters</u>	<u>Law Degree</u>
A.M.&N. College (Arkansas)	1		
Atlanta University		1	
Bennett College (North Carolina)	1		
Bethany College (Kansas)	1		
Boston University		1	
Central State University (Ohio)	1		
Columbia University (New York)		1 (M.Ed.)	
Fisk University (Tennessee)	1		
Florida A&M	1		
Florida State University		1	
Georgia State University		1	
Hampton Institute (Virginia)	1		
Harvard		1 (M.Ed.)	
Howard University (Washington, D.C.)	1		
Langston University (Oklahoma)	1		
Mt. Holyoke (Massachusetts)	1		
New Mexico State	1		
Ohio State University	1		
Purdue University (Indiana)	1		
Stillman College (Alabama)	1		
Tennessee A&I State University	1	1	
Univ. Pontifica Bolivariana (South America)	1		
University of Denver		1 (M.S.W.)	
University of Michigan		1	
University of Toledo		1	
University of Wisconsin		1	
Wartburg College (Iowa)	1		
Woodrow Wilson College of Law (Atlanta)			1

the data do not distinguish among students by race or sex. Since minority students of both sexes make up only 15 percent of its total enrollment, it could be misleading to use these aggregate figures to make inferences about the fields of study of minority women at the university. On the other hand, Prairie View A&M and Texas Southern University are predominantly black institutions, and so such inferences can be made with greater confidence.

The data available for Texas Southern University on the distribution of the student body by field of concentration is summarized in Table 8. The manner in which the data are aggregated makes this information of limited use. Slightly over half of the women enrolled in the university are registered in the college of arts and sciences. However, within this college there can be a great range in the major fields of study that are offered. Thus the pattern of choice prevailing within the college is likely to be as important as the distribution of women between this college and the other colleges of the university.

A comparison of the distribution of men and women across colleges indicates that approximately the same proportion of men and women are enrolled in the college of arts and sciences and the college of business. The sexes differ noticeably in their registration in other colleges. Women are more likely to be enrolled in the school of education, while men predominate in the areas of pharmacy and technology.

Table 8

Texas Southern University Final Enrollment Report
Fall Semester 1973

<u>School or College</u>	<u>Under 12 Hours</u>			<u>12-14 Hours</u>			<u>15 or More Hours</u>			<u>Total</u>			<u>Withdrawals</u>		<u>Net</u>
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>
Arts and Sciences	255	358	613	650	488	1,138	720	753	1,473	1,625	1,599	3,224	76	50	3,098
Business	105	117	222	206	152	358	205	240	445	516	509	1,025	32	15	978
Education	30	165	195	46	141	187	32	254	286	108	560	668	4	16	648
Pharmacy	31	22	53	75	40	115	117	78	195	223	140	363	6	4	353
Technology	107	2	109	240	7	247	122	15	137	469	24	493	16	2	475
Undergraduate Total	528	664	1,192	1,217	828	2,045	1,196	1,340	2,536	2,941	2,832	5,773	134	87	5,552
Graduate	265	352	617	71	62	133	41	49	90	377	463	840	14	17	809
Law	15	5	20	43	11	54	177	38	215	235	54	289	9	1	279
Graduate Total	280	357	637	114	73	187	218	87	305	612	517	1,129	23	18	1,088
University Total	808	1,021	1,829	1,331	901	2,232	1,414	1,427	2,841	3,553	3,349	6,902	157	105	6,640

Source: Office of the Registrar and Director of Admissions.

Data for Prairie View A&M are more detailed and are presented in Table 9. The table breaks down enrollment between liberal arts and science majors and has a separate category for engineering; however, males and females are included in each group. At the undergraduate level, it may be seen that less than 10 percent of the undergraduates are enrolled in science and engineering. On the other hand, two-thirds are enrolled in teacher education or the very general business administration program the college offers. If the pattern noted at Texas Southern generalizes to Prairie View A&M, it would seem likely that a majority of women undergraduates are enrolled in the teacher education program. As with Texas Southern, the distribution of women within the liberal arts cannot be determined from the data.

Further evidence, although admittedly fragmentary, of the absence of black women in technical fields is provided by data obtained through the Prairie View A&M placement office. The office keeps records on placements it has made in technical fields, and these data appear in Table 10. They indicate that in the 1972-1973 academic year a total of 13 women were placed in technical positions through the placement office, nine of these in nursing.

These figures may be misleading since many women may obtain employment on their own without using the facilities of the placement office. However, comparing the figures in Table 10 with those in Table 9 reveals that 35 of 38 graduating engineers,

Table 9 (Continued)

Summary of Degrees Awarded at Prairie View A&M University
December, May and August of the 1972-1973 School Year

Program	Degrees Awarded				Total
	Undergraduate	Master's	Doctoral	Special Professional	
Liberal Arts	111	16			127
Science	28	10			38
Fine Arts	7	7			14
Teacher Education	287	369			656
Agriculture	15				15
Engineering	38				38
Home Economics	10				10
Law					
Social Service					
Library Science	4				4
Veterinary Medicine					
Vocational Training					
Physical Training					
Nursing	16				16
Pharmacy					
Business Administration	122				122
Optometry					
Teacher Education Practice Teaching					
Technology (Baccalaureate Degree Program Only)					
TOTAL	638	402			1,040

Table 10

Persons Employed in Technical Areas Through
Prairie View A&M's Placement Office

<u>Area</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Agriculture	5	
Business Administration (Non-clerical)	12	3
Clerical		11
Electrical Engineers	17	1
Mechanical Engineers	17	
Nursing	2	9

11 of 16 graduating nurses, and five of 15 graduates in agriculture were placed through the university's placement office, so it appears that graduates in technical fields have a high propensity to use the service.

The data presented above, while admittedly fragmentary, do not allow one to reject the hypothesis that the high proportion of MWEP registrants with concentrations in education and the social sciences are representative of the characteristics of the black, college-trained, female population at large. Although this hypothesis might explain why the current group of registrants has been difficult to place, it does not necessarily follow that if these women had been prepared in more technical specialties they would have had many more interviews and a higher probability of being placed. That is, while training in a technical field may be a necessary condition for enhancing one's chances of gaining professional employment in the Houston labor market, it may not be a sufficient condition. To evaluate this proposition we turn next to a consideration of the placement and interview experiences of those women in technical fields who are registered with the MWEP. If these women show no greater propensity for being interviewed or hired, then the problems minority women have encountered in Houston cannot be primarily attributable to their fields of specialization. Other obstacles, common to both technically and nontechnically trained minority women, must be at work.

While some information can be gleaned from the files on the technically trained registrants, they are so few in number that generalization beyond the sample is risky. The most numerous group of technically trained women is in accounting, which contains seven. But even within this group there is considerable diversity among the women. They range from a recent college graduate with no work experience in the field to an employed accountant with considerable experience who demands a minimum salary of \$14,000 per year of any new job. Representative of the group are four women, each with bachelor's degrees in accounting, and average grades of "B" or better in college. Three of these women have had either six or seven interviews, and none has been offered a job. In a few instances, companies appeared to be seriously considering one of these women for employment, but in the final stages of the hiring process employers found the applicant to be "unacceptable." There is also one woman with a master's degree in physics whom the directors have had difficulty placing and three women with degrees in mathematics who have not found jobs.

Based on the experience the program has had with these women, the directors believe that merely being trained in a technical field does not guarantee a good job. The cases described above would seem to validate this view; however as Table 6 (pages 40-43) indicates, no woman has been placed in a good job who was not trained in a technical field. Thus, the

limited evidence supports the view that the Houston labor market offers attractive employment to only professionally trained minority women, although by no means do all such women secure such jobs. As hypothesized, technical training is a necessary, but not a sufficient, qualification for good jobs.

Conclusions

The problem of the MWEP currently can be summarized very briefly: Houston firms do not appear interested in hiring many of the women currently registered with the program, and the program does not seem able to register women with the type of skills Houston firms claim they are interested in hiring. On the face of it, it would seem that the problem could be solved either by altering the skill composition of the registrants, or the nature of the job orders referred to the MWEP.

The first strategy can be counted on working only in the long run. Given the fields of specialization of minority women in Houston, the skill composition of the female labor force is likely to change significantly only through the entrance of new college graduates. Clearly this method of adjustment, while important, will take several years. Indeed, the MWEP staff believes that the experiences it has had with the technically trained women who are on file indicates that even if their numbers could be increased rapidly, given the present disposition of many Houston employers this would have little effect on program placements. Thus while the MWEP is attempting to provide college

and high school students with accurate information about the job market, it must look to other strategies to achieve its immediate objectives.

The short-run success of the MWEP must be premised on the assumption that there are a large number of professional positions in the Houston labor market for which the current group of registrants is qualified. Accordingly, an important aspect of the MWEP's mission is to cultivate contacts within Houston firms. This entails establishing the credibility of the program in the eyes of corporate managers by showing the program to be an economical source of qualified personnel. This is ordinarily a slow process, but one in which the program is making progress. The program staff reports that once it places a woman with a company relations with that company improve markedly. Hopefully, the program will be able to build on these contacts and the next year will see an acceleration in the rate of placements.

Another objective of the program in the coming year is to increase the proportion of its registrants who are Chicano. Estimates of the number of Chicanos (male and female) enrolled in Houston area colleges are around 1600. While this is far fewer than the number of blacks in the area it is still a substantial pool of potential registrants, and the pool could be increased by contacting colleges outside of Houston, such as Texas A&I University, in Kingsville. This and other activities aimed at Chicano recruitment are planned for the coming year, at the end of which the Program hopes to have achieved an ethnic balance among its registrants.

Footnotes

1. Vernon M. Briggs, Jr., Negro Employment in the South; Volume I: The Houston Labor Market, Manpower Research Monograph Number 23; (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1971), p. 94.

2. Ibid., p. 93.

3. Ibid., p. 93.

4. The data in Tables 1 and 2 are from Briggs, op. cit. The data were compiled from EEO-1 reports filed in 1966 and 1969 by employers in the Houston SMSA. These data, therefore, do not reflect employment in all firms in the labor market but only those that were required to file EEO-1 reports. This requirement applies to private firms which employed more than 100 employees for more than 20 weeks in the given year. Thus the data may be interpreted as reflecting employment patterns in large Houston firms.

5. These estimates are expressed relative to the employment reported to the EEOC. However, since the MWEP is targeted principally at large Houston employers, this may, in fact, be the appropriate comparison to make.

6. Briggs, op. cit., p. 25.

7. However, it should not be inferred that these are the only colleges with which the MWEP has been in contact. Other colleges which the MWEP has visited and written include Lamar University, Texas A&I University, College of the Mainland, St. Thomas University and Sam Houston State College.