

**USDA -CSREES Annual Report  
FY October 1, 2001 - September 30, 2002**

**Overview**

The Southern University Cooperative Extension Program's (SUCEP) goal is that diverse audiences, those who have limited social and economic resources, improve their access to positive opportunities through outreach education. The objectives are to help small-scale farmers and ranchers develop and/or maintain viable farming operations that are in harmony with the environment, help communities build capacity to enhance the growth and development of business and industrial sectors, and improve the quality of life for families and youth throughout the state. SUCEP accomplishes its objectives by conducting outreach and educational programs that positively impact their targeted clientele.

**Noted accomplishments for SUCEP include:**

- SUCEP continued its collaborative efforts with Heifer Project International, and increased the number of producers participating and days in which the markets were open. The seven small livestock associations that were established during the previous year, were enhanced by adopting management skills to better serve their membership.
- The Families First-Nutrition Education and Wellness System (FF-NEWS) Program made over 50,800 contacts.
- Outreach efforts for the Faith-Based Initiative benefited more than 3,500 individuals, families and organizations. This is estimated to be 25 percent of the faith-based leadership in the state of Louisiana.
- Approximately 7,300 contacts were made with youth participating in the Youth Educational Support After School Program (YES). The program provides hands-on activities in science, math, reading and character education.
- The Sustainable Agriculture Program successfully reached more than 2,000 producers, gardeners, landowners, and others. The program focuses on helping farmers who successfully produce enterprises (crops and livestock) using sustainable and organic practices to establish market outlets to include farmers' markets, roadside stands, and onfarm markets.

## **Objective I.**

### **Overview**

SUCEP's agriculture program targets small, socially disadvantaged and minority farmers. This is a diverse group of farmers who produce an array of agricultural enterprises, including traditional agronomic crops, vegetables and livestock. SUCEP's goal is to help these farmers develop and maintain viable farming operations.

During 2002, Louisiana Summary of Agriculture and Natural Resources reported a 10% increase in the number of commercial vegetable producers over 2001. This report comes despite the rainy weather in the fall of 2002 and low prices that dealt Louisiana commercial producers severe blows in 2002.

The 1890 agriculture program operates in seven parishes. The number of commercial vegetable growers has increased slightly and is expected to continue to increase. This increase is due, in part, to depressed market conditions for agronomic crops and increased demand for fresh vegetables. Major problems preventing vegetable producers from achieving their desired outcomes are: lack of understanding regarding the market structure, lack of understanding regarding how to access available markets and risk management, and following recommended production and cultural practices.

SUCEP is working with low-income families in 18 parishes on home/container gardening and beautification of home environment. Gardens range from one to two pot plants in urban areas to an acre in rural areas. As interest in gardening increases, residents are seeking information on marketing strategies and policies, economic and financial planning, and management.

In addition to the above areas of work, SUCEP has established an educational program targeting sheep, goat and rabbit producers. These producers are experiencing similar production, management and marketing problems encountered by the gardening and vegetable producers.

### **Key Theme - Small Farm Viability**

- a. Much of SUCEP's efforts were devoted to small farm viability. The program is operational in seven parishes in the state. Producers were taught holistic and sustainable farm planning principles and concepts. Producers also received information and technical assistance in the area of agricultural risk management. The above information was combined with the framework of helping farmers follow recommended production and cultural practices. The goal was to help producers increase their share of the dollars received from farm commodities. SUCEP used a variety of educational methods such as farm visits, meetings, workshops, result and method demonstrations, and farm tours.
- b. Impact - Based on University faculty and field agents' reports, SUCEP had more than 22,240 contacts with farmers, gardeners, and homeowners. SUCEP faculty and staff conducted numerous one-on-one farm visits, workshops, result demonstrations as well as

numerous method demonstrations; produced circular letters, newspaper articles, radio; and appeared on radio and television shows. Evaluation of the quality and value of production meetings and demonstrations by participants average a rating of 3.0 on a 5point scale. Post observations and discussions by field faculty with participants indicate that producers are slowly incorporating the risk management strategies into their farming operations. More farmers, especially vegetable and small livestock producers are finding alternative marketing outlets for the commodities.

- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration was approximately \$150,000.

### **Key Theme - Adding Value to New and Old Agricultural Products**

- a. SUCEP's goals were first to help producers become effective managers of the enterprises they currently produce, and secondly to help find new enterprises to give these producers a comparative advantage, either due to scale of production and/or marketing strategies. Target enterprises included meat goats, pastured-poultry, and vegetables. Producers were helped with developing farmers' associations, markets, and on-farm markets. SUCEP also helped small farmers develop marketing strategies for valued-added products such as jellies, packaged vegetables, customers slaughtering, etc.
- b. Impact - More than 300 vegetable producers increased their awareness and adopted one or more valued-added approaches or practices such as developing direct, regional, and terminal marketing channels. SUCEP was successful in helping small vegetable farmers expand the volume of produce handled by increasing the number of participating farmers and the amount of vegetables each farmer supplied to the local farmers' markets. The markets increased the number of producers participating and days in which the markets were open. SUCEP continued its collaborative efforts with Heifer Project International. The seven small livestock associations were enhanced by adopting management skills to better serve their membership. SUCEP serves as the lead entity providing educational and technical assistance for the Louisiana Meat Goat Association. The 100 members of the association were provided with training on best production practices. Approximately 30 goat producers received direct on-the-farm assistance with production practices. The SUCEP goat specialist continued to write an article for the association's bi-monthly newsletter.
- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - SUCEP, in collaboration with the Southern University Agricultural Research Program, Louisiana Department of Agriculture, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, and local grassroots farmer organizations, delivered the educational programs to help the small-scale farmers of Louisiana. The total cost for the program

including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration was approximately \$105,000.

## **Objective II**

### **Overview**

According to USDA Food and Nutrition Service national data, there has been an increase of food stamp recipients by 198,669 persons to 19,223,042.

There has been an increased number in food stamp program recipients represented a rise of nearly 2 million people over the same period last year. However, there is still almost a 4-million person shortfall from the level of five years earlier. This may be contributed to the 1996 welfare law which was implemented around the same time.

In the state of Louisiana, the national trend has had a trickle down effect. State numbers indicate an increase of almost 91% since FY 2000. There is a total of 205,404 families that are receiving food stamps in the state of Louisiana. The average family is given \$189.65 (\$5,408,549 total dollars) per household monthly with an average household consisting of 2.63 people. Data on racial and ethnic make-up of food stamp households reflects the majority of food stamp recipients being of African-American descent (77%), where as Caucasians, make up approximately 24% of food stamp households.

However, despite the increased numbers of individuals receiving governmental assistance in the form of food stamps, there are still food insecure households in Louisiana. Nationally, Louisiana ranks fifth in food insecurity and ninth in hunger-filled households. Sadly, most of these households are comprised of a large percentage of young children and the elderly.

To address these issues, SUCEP has implemented the following program: **Key**

### **Theme: Food Accessibility and Affordability**

- a. A major component within the Families First - Nutrition Education and Wellness System (FF-NEWS) Program is assisting families with not only stretching their food dollar but in also incorporating low-cost healthy menu selections within their meal plan. The program targets food stamp and food stamp eligible families. Information is provided at various communal sites of targeted audiences and methods of utilizing foods that are provided. Some of these programs are Food for Families/Seniors Food Distribution and Commodity Food Distribution, and general community group programs in limited-resource areas. Educational lessons is given to targeted FF-NEWS parishes with full-time nutrition program assistants who provide nutrition information. These parishes include: East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Ascension, St. James, East Carroll and West Carroll. We

are currently in the process of expanding our outreach to include Evangeline and Avoyelles parishes.

Also, as a means of heightening awareness about food insecurity in Louisiana, a program was held on World Food Day, October 16, which focused on the barriers confronting the working poor in our society.

- b. Impact - Nutrition program assistants in six parishes made over 50,800 contacts through recipe/fact sheets. Of this number 26,638 were Food for Families/Seniors Participants, 18,893 were commodity foods participants, 2,776 were food stamp eligible participants and 2,508 were non-enrolled group participants. Furthermore, approximately 100 fact sheets are distributed per month through seniors' programs at both the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and also the Food Bank of Central Louisiana. An evaluation tool is in place to assess the success of the program. On a Likert scale of 1 - 5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent) the program received a 4.9 from enrolled clientele and a 4.6 from onetime non-enrolled group participants.
- c. Source of Federal Funds - Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - SUCEP in collaboration with USDA Food and Nutrition Services, the Louisiana State Food Stamp Office and local parish community and health agencies. The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel and administration was approximately \$172,340.

### **Objective III.**

#### **Overview**

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy G. Thompson, released a report that underscored the importance of physical activity in preventing disease and outlined the physical and financial costs associated with a sedentary lifestyle. The report cited that 300,000 people die each year from diseases and health conditions related to a sedentary lifestyle and poor eating habits, nearly as many who die from smoking. Millions of Americans suffer from chronic illnesses that can be prevented through dietary changes and physical activities. The "Healthier U.S. Initiative", unveiled by the Bush administration detailed that there are four areas of importance to improve overall health:

- I. Physical Fitness- be physically active each day
- II. Nutrition- eat a nutritious diet
- III. Prevention- get preventive screening
- IV. Avoid risky behavior- make healthy choices

Research has shown that there is a direct correlation among chronic disease prevention, dietary intake and behavior. Louisiana risk behavior survey (2000) indicates that less than 30% of all adults eat fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables a day and 35% of women and 29% of men report no leisure-time physical activity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics, reported limited resource families (income less than

\$10,000), have a higher percentage of poor health status. Since 2000, SUCEP and ten other 1890 universities formed a consortium to help limited-resource families improve dietary and health behaviors through extensive nutrition education. Nutrition program assistants in six targeted parishes have provided nutrition information to persons receiving or eligible to receive food stamps. The FF-NEWS program is a nutrition intervention program designed to help with selection and preparation of meals consistent with cultural traditions while improving overall health.

Recent behavior risk survey data indicated that lack of knowledge of chronic disease prevention, lack of adequate healthcare facilities within communities, as well as engaging in risky behavior are the major reasons for limited change in limited-resource families. Many of these risk factors are eating patterns, limited or no doctor visits/health insurance, smoking, and other substance abuse.

**Key Theme: Human Nutrition (FF-NEWS)**

- a. Nutrition program assistants in six targeted parishes have provided nutrition information to persons receiving or eligible to receive food stamps. The FF-NEWS program is a nutrition intervention program designed to help with selection and preparation of meals consistent with cultural traditions while improving overall health.
- b. Impact - A total of 151,476 individuals (direct and indirect contacts) were reached through the FF-NEWS program. Of this total, 50,761 were direct nutrition contacts. Direct contacts are considered to be participants actually participating in a nutrition session. Indirect contacts are considered to be participants receiving fact sheets or gleaning information from displays at various locations and the number of limited-resource families that received information through printed media.
- c. Source of Federal Funds - Smith-Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - SUCEP, in collaboration with the Food Nutrition Services, Louisiana State Food Stamp Office and local parish community and health agencies. The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel and administration was approximately \$172,340.

**Key Theme: Health**

- a. The *Healthy Prescriptions* newsletter is a joint publication between the area of health education and human nutrition. The bi-monthly newsletter focuses on issues relating to health and diet and is disseminated to the 1890 parish staff for distribution to local clientele and to be used when planning educational programs. Each newsletter has an overriding theme throughout an entire issue and there is also an insert which can be used as handouts during workshop and seminar presentations.

The Health program, along with other entities of the Family and Consumer Sciences Division of SUCEP, participated in the Summer Engineering Math Institute of Technology (SEMIT) program to teach middle school students the importance of food safety, nutrition, manners and character. SEMIT took place during the months of June, July and August. Forty-five students participated in the program.

- b. Impact - Currently over 3,400 individuals receive a copy of the bi-monthly newsletter.
- c. Source of Federal Funds - Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact - SUCEP, in collaboration with the Southern University School of Nursing and the Southern University Math Department. The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel and administration was approximately \$105,000.

### **Key Theme: Food Safety Initiatives**

- a. In September, 2000, Southern University, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Cornell University, and the Great Lakes Intertribal Council, was awarded funding from the USDA to provide food handler education and training for high risk and hard-to-reach audience. A total of 143 families were visited. The project, entitled Food Safety as a 3-year project. In the first year of the grant, FY 2002, the extension educator from Southern University, the LA site, piloted English-language computer-based food safety lessons with 30 high-risk low-income families. Families who agreed to participate were visited in their homes by an Extension educator. The educator made one to three visits with the family to work with the homemaker, evaluating her responses to a series of 19 computer-based food safety assessments, focusing on chilling, cooking, storing, cleaning and separating foods properly.

Six weeks after the assessment visits were completed, the educator returned to the client's home to administer a post-test and a project evaluation. The findings of the post-test highlighted 10 of the 19 assessment statements while covering all areas of interest. Families who participated in the project were eager to learn more about food safety. One participant said, "I use to always let my leftovers stay out on the stove the entire night in the winter. Now I know bacteria can grow in food that is left out." Another participant said he now uses separate plates for raw meats and cooked meats. The project is currently in its second year.

- b. In an effort to provide food handler education and training for commercial and noncommercial audiences to include food handler certification training, Southern University, in collaboration with Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, the University of Arkansas and Cornell University was awarded a two-year grant by USDA CSREES to develop a training curriculum on food safety issues plaguing individuals who receive assistance from food recovery agencies. The project, entitled "Preventing Food Borne Illness in a Vulnerable Lower Mississippi Delta Population," works through food recovery agencies throughout Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas to train their personnel and volunteers in

correct food handler procedures. Once educators are trained in the food recovery curriculum, they will use the curriculum to train personnel at distribution sites throughout their service areas. The project is currently in its first year.

#### **Objective IV.**

##### **Overview**

The SUCEP sustainable agriculture program is concentrated in seven parishes where there are extension field agents with agricultural responsibilities. Based on a survey conducted by the agents, there were approximately 550 small-scale farmers growing primarily agronomic and vegetable crops, and some livestock. The targeted small farmers tend to have low yields and crops of substandard quality because they are not following the latest recommended production and cultural practices. The sustainable agriculture program is designed to help farmers become better prepared to deal with new environmental and conservation policies and regulations. These programs focus on pesticide usage and land management issues. Programs also have an objective to identify those agricultural enterprises that lend themselves to sustainable and organic methods of production, as well as, command premium price at the market. Much of the sustainable agriculture work was performed in partnership with USDA, Natural Resource and Conservation Service and the Southern Sustainable Agricultural Research and Educational Program.

##### **Key Theme - Sustainable Agriculture**

- a. The SUCEP agents in collaboration with the Southern University agricultural scientists are developing best management practices that minimize the use of commercial fertilizers and pesticides.\* The program also focuses on helping farmers who successfully produce enterprises (crops and livestock) using sustainable and organic practices to establish market outlets to include farmers' markets, roadside stands, and on-farm markets.
  - b. Impact - More than 30 agricultural educators (extension agents, USDA personnel and farm leaders) gained knowledge on the concepts and principles of sustainable agriculture. The program successfully reached more than 2,000 producers, gardeners, landowners, and others. These education efforts resulted in the following:
    - Fifty beef cattle producers adopted soil and pasture management practices.
    - Thirty vegetable producers adopted sustainable marketing practices through participation in their local farmers' markets.
    - One hundred and fifteen producers and homeowners gained knowledge in the safe use of pesticides.
    - One hundred producers attended a production meeting gaining knowledge in environmental law.
  - c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
  - d. Scope of Impact - SUCEP, in collaboration with the Southern University Agricultural Research Program, Louisiana Department of Agriculture, ARE and USDA, NRCS, delivered the educational programs to help producers, gardeners and land-owners. The
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total cost of the program including salaries, fringe benefits travel, and administration is approximately \$105,000.

## **Objective V.**

### **Overview**

Based on the 2000 census, 1,219,062 (27.3%) residents in Louisiana were less than 18 years of age. Louisiana ranks in the lower one third percentile of the 50 states for quality of life for its youth. The state also leads the nation in the number of youth living in poverty, in single parent families, with health problems, and with parents without a high school education. These factors place slightly more than 60% of Louisiana's youth at risk. Youth development research indicates the need for character and quality education, parental involvement, and civic and citizenship education to help ensure the long-term positive development of youth. Through SUCEP's educational programs, strategies have been developed to support academic learning by all members of the family.

The citizens of Louisiana continue to suffer economically and socially because of earlier dependency on depressed petroleum and agricultural industries. Louisiana is ranked among the top ten states for poverty and low literacy. These factors tend to yield a less educated population that are not prepared for the opportunities of mainstream America. The economic and community development program works with faith-based and other social and civil organizations to explore and develop enterprises that will foster long term economic viability.

### **Key Theme - Youth Development (Youth Educational Support After School Program)**

- a. Youth Educational Support After School Program (YES) is an organized after-school program that incorporates education and fun in scholastic activities, expands the role of the parent/guardian with academic learning and builds support, self-esteem and confidence through completion of tasks and projects. YES is operational in nine parishes during the academic school year. During FY 2002, YES focused on: youth, parents, volunteers, school staff and community members at-large, working together on a community-based project that required total involvement. Seven YES community-based projects were implemented inclusive of gardening, beautification, mural painting, and community clean up. A total of 250 youth and adults participated in these projects.
- b. Impact - The evaluations reflect that the majority of participants gained a greater appreciation of team-work and community volunteerism. The potential long-term impact is a sense of community service and pride. The on-going efforts of the YES Program allowed agents and volunteers to make approximately 7,300 contacts by providing hands on activities in science, math, reading and character education.
- c. Source of Federal Funds - Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444

- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration is approximately \$105,000.

**Key Theme - Youth Development (Livestock and Poultry Show)**

- a. SUCEP Livestock and Poultry Show is a comprehensive program to help youth develop leadership and character skills. The Youth Rabbit Show also provides an opportunity for youth to enhance those skills. In preparation for both shows, youth work with the livestock (beef breeding, dairy, sheep, swine) and rabbits concerning proper nutrition and grooming. During the shows, youth are required to exhibit their animals and are judged on industry standards in the areas of showmanship, control and appearance of the animal. The animal is judged for quality and overall appearance according to industry standards. Youth are also provided with the opportunity to sell their animals at an open auction; thus, learning economic and financial management practices. Corporate sponsors of the show are: Heifer Project International, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, Louisiana Federal Land Bank Association, Louisiana Feed and Supply Company and Lone Star Feeds.
- b. Impact - More than 250 youth exhibited in the SUCEP Livestock and Poultry Show. Approximately 75% of youth exhibited leadership skills relative to showmanship of their animal. Six hundred youth exhibited at the Southern University State and National Rabbit Show. During FY 2001, two seminars were held to assist producers with production and management and marketing practices.
- c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444
- d. Scope of Impact -. The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration is approximately \$79,324.00.

**Overview**

The presence of a strong community development program is emerging as a critical need in many land-grant universities. Agriculture is still a powerful economic engine in many parts of the rural south, although it now finds itself sharing the economic stage with several other sectors, including manufacturing, services, and retail trade. Many community economies are growing and diversifying, while others are in an economic tailspin. Technological advances are creating a demand for better-educated, more skilled workers, resulting in the displacement of thousands of southern workers having little more than a high school education. Our region is witnessing dramatic compositional shifts in its population, including the rapid expansion of the south's Latino and African-American populations. While some communities - both urban and rural - have attracted many new residents, others have struggled to hang on to the few residents that remain.

These are a sampling of the complex conditions facing communities in the Louisiana today. The challenges are many, but the opportunities are equally considerable. Enhancing the capacity of communities to build their own future requires guidance, information, and education.

## **Key Theme - Community Faith-Based Development**

- a. The Community Development Specialist developed a comprehensive program to assist faithbased leaders by implementing a Statewide Faith Based Development Initiative that focuses on housing development, economic development, evaluation, strategic planning, organizational development, and health care. The Faith-based initiative consists of two program areas. The first is the annual faith-based conference, a three-day event with over twenty-two workshops, several speakers and various vendors from the federal, state and local levels along with several national nonprofit service providers assist the faith-based community. The second program area consists of technical assistance that is provided by individual consulting from Extension specialists and agents who assist the faith-based community with organizational development, strategic planning, and project selections. Collaborators involved in the project are the Federal Reserve Bank, FDIC, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Louisiana Department of Economic Development, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.
- b. Impact - More than 3,500 people attended these meetings, which is about 25 percent of the faith-based leadership in the state. Overall evaluation concluded that about 77 percent of the faith-based community supports community development and had a strong desire to collaborate with service providers. Close to 66 percent of those surveyed after the meetings indicated they had implemented changes or were planning changes in their operations as a result of the meetings and individual contact. The City of Baton Rouge and the State of Louisiana have created faith-based task forces to assist faith-based organizations with accessing Federal HOME funds and state funds.
- c. Source of Federal Funds-Smith-Lever 1444 d.

Scope of Impact- State and Regional Specific

## **Key Theme - Promoting Business Programs - Center for Rural and Small Business Development**

- a. SUCEP specialists and field agents along with the staff from the Center for Rural and Small Development assisted in the creation and sustainability of small business development in the state. The outreach efforts took place with seminars and one on one business consultation. The small business owners and potential owners were assisted in business plans, strategic planning, credit rating and loan packaging. The collaborators were the U.S. Department of Small Business (SBA), small business development centers and local area chamber of commerce.
- b. Impact - More than 1,900 potential and small business clients were served. More than 20 percent of the business owners were referred to loan officers for loan packaging. Over onehalf of the businesses surveyed responded that they had learned new techniques and practices

to operate their businesses more effective and efficient. The outreach efforts have lead to over 25 businesses being started and over 35 expanding. Therefore, creating 45 new jobs.

c. Source of Federal Funds-Smith-Lever 1444 d.

Scope of Impact- State Specific

### **Key Theme: Nonprofit Organizational Development -The Center for Community Development (CCD)**

#### **Overview**

- a. The Center for Community Development (CCD) was established to provide a concentrated, multi-disciplinary approach to community development. The CCD relates directly to the outreach efforts of the university's land grant activities for the community. The CCD assisted the University and SUCEP in developing and transferring knowledge that contributes to economic diversification and sustainable development in communities across Louisiana. A state technical assistance project has been concentrating on how best to assist community based development organizations in building capacity to better serve their communities. The project consists of meetings, individual contacts, site visits of successful community based development organizations and evaluative techniques. These programs were presented at the annual statewide community development conference aimed at nonprofit organizations that were involved in housing development, economic development and human capital development. The project collaborated with various statewide organizations such as the Louisiana Association of Community Economic Development, Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations and the Louisiana State TANF Office to provide the most effective training and assistance to nonprofit organizations with organizational development activities.
- b. Impact - More than 4,700 people attended these meetings, which is about 50 percent of the community development practitioners in the state. The meetings led to the state of Louisiana investing in the establishment of nonprofit organizational development programs to assist small minority operated nonprofit organizations.

Several community and small group meetings were conducted to promote community development. Staff and stakeholders participated in the process. Forums were conducted in parishes with 1890 extension staff. The representation was broad-based, inclusive of gender, race, and ethnicity. Issues and concerns identified, included: economic development, education, environment, youth development, family support and structure, crime and other social issues.

A faith and community development resource compact disc was developed, which included sample copies of articles of incorporations, bylaws, 501-c-3 applications, over 700 pages of documents and books related to community development. Over 900 organizations received a copy of the disc.

c. Source of Federal Funds-Smith-Lever 1444

d. Scope of Impact- State Specific

**Key Theme: To Provide Consumer Education and Training**

- a. Workshops and seminars were conducted to educate and inform families and community leaders about practices of lenders who utilize predatory lending techniques. A partnership was formed with the Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions and the Louisiana Bankers Associations to develop posters and brochures to inform service organizations about predatory lending. The posters and flyers were distributed to faith and community based organizations in Louisiana, who in turn will distribute the material and resources to their clients.

Three financial consumer workshops were conducted around the state on credit and financial management. Relationships were established with local credit counseling organizations to bring education and information to organizations and individuals about consumer financial education.

- b. Impacts - The financial education outreach was implemented in 7 parishes. In collaboration with several banks, consumer credit advocates and the IRS, over 17,000 contacts were made through educational consumer financial sheets and counseling sessions. Of this number, 14,000 were low to moderate income individuals and most were eligible for tax assistance and earned income credit assistance.

c. Source of Federal Funds- Smith - Lever Act under Section 1444

- d. Scope of Impact - The total cost for the program including salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and administration is approximately \$100,000.

**Key Theme: Child Care Program**

- a. In Louisiana, data indicates that there are more than 317,392 children between the ages of birth to four years of age and 336,780 children ages five to nine years of age. There are approximately 220,000 children living in 143,000 families where the head of household is working, receiving some type of education, or job skill training. Studies reveal that at least 50% of Louisiana's parents working with children birth to six years of age are challenged daily with the dilemma of finding quality child care (Galinsky, 1999). Further research indicates that the quality of childcare is limited. In order to ensure that childcare providers move to quality care, providers in 19 parishes in Louisiana have received 12 hours of professional development training.

Quality childcare exists in a home or facility when child care providers interact with children, maintain safe environments, provide opportunities for children to learn social skills, and help them appreciate diversity in others. These training sessions were offered at convenient times, and held in accessible locations for providers in rural and urban areas of the state. The classes taught to the providers were based on the competency levels of the Child Development Credential.

A total of 5,876 providers completed surveys in the class sessions. Of those, 66.5% were African American, 29.9% were Caucasian, 2% were Hispanic, 0.1% were Asian and 1.1% were others. According to the data, there were more than 6,416 direct contacts made with providers.

b. Impact - The evaluations of the classes reflect the knowledge gained and the behaviors that changed as a result of their attendance in the class sessions. Child care providers' responses to the surveyed information suggested that they would consider the following:

- 63% indicated that they would acquire Child Development Credentials.
- 82% stated that they learned more because the class sessions were sensitive to all learning styles.
- 100% stated that the structure of the class sessions, and the hand-on activities made it easier to gain more knowledge and increase skills.
- 85% stated that training increased their care giving skills and knowledge.
- 90% indicated that childcare classes improved their interaction with children and other center teachers.
- 80% indicated that childcare training gave them a sense of validation and confidence about working in the center or their home.

The customer service evaluation section of the survey showed that 90% of the childcare providers were satisfied with professional development classes conducted by Child Care Educators. Through training efforts, SUAREC saved program participants a total of \$192,480.

### **Key Theme: Family Strengthening Program**

a. Families lack skills and knowledge in strengthening their family structure and developing a sense of community. Families statewide also lack knowledge in communicating with other family members and individuals in their communities. Extension educators have provided workshops and conducted an annual program that acknowledges families and the culture of families statewide. The programs were couched in the concepts of strengthening families (e.g., communication, contentment, & community). There were other class sessions that helped parents to grasp children's stages of development, and modeling and understanding the appropriate behavior for children. These programs reached a total of 2,706 families.

b. Impact - Families and other individuals were given a basic background in communication and participated in sessions that allowed for some pragmatic experiences among families. Evaluations reflect that participants attending workshop sessions developed a better sense of communication within the family structure. The short-term objectives for program participants were accomplished in sessions where 80% of the family members and other individuals were able to define communication, express the value of communication in their family, and identify methods that could improve their family settings. Program participants (40%) acquired researchbased information which allowed them to change the methods they used in communicating with family members. As a result of these workshops and other meeting sessions, Extension saved tax- payers \$81,180.

## **STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

The Southern University Cooperative Extension Program (SUCEP) has always had input from targeted stakeholders. The input has helped SUCEP design educational programs that address needs of the clientele; thus, specific programming efforts will assist the clientele relative to enhancing their quality of life. SUCEP works with parish advisory committees, livestock producers, faith-based organizations, economic and community development organizations, nutrition and health associations, and other entities to secure information to modify and/or develop educational programs.

The LSU Cooperative Extension Service initiated and conducted a strategic planning process in each parish of Louisiana during the 1999-2001 fiscal year. The 1890 county staff and stakeholders participated in the process. Forums were conducted in each parish, and those parishes with 1890 extension staff not only invited participants, but also attended as well as served as facilitators for some parishes. The representation was broad-based, inclusive of gender, race, and ethnicity. Issues and concerns relative to the 1890 program were identified. Those concerns included economic development, education, environment, youth development, family support and structure, crime and other social issues. From this process, SUCEP has begun to amend its educational programs to ensure relevancy and timeliness.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Evaluation of multi-state activities**

There are no multi-institutional or multi-state programs supported by federal funds, Section 1444 at this time.

### **Merit Review Process**

A basic assessment of programs is conducted by the field staff and University specialists to determine the usefulness of the information. A merit review process committee is in the process of being appointed.