

OPPORTUNITY

A Publication of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity

President Lyndon B. Johnson devoted a sizeable part of his recent special message to Congress on America's children and youth to strengthening the Head Start program and extending it with "follow-through programs" into the elementary grades (see article on New Jersey's efforts on Page 3). The President said:

"To fulfill the rights of America's children to equal educational opportunity the benefits of Head Start must be carried through the early grades. We must make special efforts to overcome the handicap of poverty by more individual attention, by creative courses, by more teachers trained in child development. This will not be easy. It will require careful planning and the full support of our communities, our schools and our teachers . . ."

Bayonne Continues Programs Despite Cut By Utilizing New Federal, State Resources

One of the State's smallest community action agencies is seeking new sources of income for its antipoverty programs in the wake of recent Congressional cutbacks and earmarking of funds in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

Formed in March of 1965, the Bayonne Economic Opportunity Foundation did not receive its first grant until July, 1966. As a result, its guideline for FY 1967 and 1968 has been set at \$102,000—a drop of nearly 50 per cent from its FY 1966 guideline of \$205,844.

Despite the cutbacks, however, the Bayonne group is proceeding with plans to continue programs by finding new sources of funds. "Since we were not able to obtain anywhere near the \$205,844, we won't notice the reduction quite as much as the larger programs," said Thomas A. Downey, Jr., BEOF executive director, "When you have nothing, something is everything."

At present, the Bayonne Foun-

dation is conducting an in-school Neighborhood Youth Corps program for 75 youths and an on-the-job work training program for 150 trainees. Also, it recently received approval for establishing two neighborhood centers.

"Community action programs can benefit from this cutback in OEO money in one important way," Downey insisted, "Antipoverty agencies will now be pressed to diversify their programs, utilizing other Federal programs and resources."

Bayonne's antipoverty agency hopes to accomplish this in three ways: by qualifying as a non-profit organization eligible for federal aid to establish housing for low-income families; by seeking funds under the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 and other federal acts; and by utilizing State funds and other sources of local income to meet the local share of

New Jersey CAPs May Get 35% Less In Versatile Funds

The amount of unrestricted, unearmarked federal antipoverty money available for New Jersey community action programs during fiscal 1967 has been tentatively set at \$10.1 million—approximately \$5.3 million or 35 per cent less than the estimated \$15.4 million received last year for these programs.

The estimates are the result of new tentative financial guidelines announced by the Northeast Regional Office of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity in individual letters sent to all antipoverty agencies in the region shortly before Christmas. The region includes New York, New Jersey and all of New England.

The letters, signed by Regional CAP Director James Crowley, said the new guidelines stemmed from the 1966 Congressional budget cutbacks and earmarking of funds in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Under the amended antipoverty bill, Congress earmarked \$523 million for "pre-packaged" programs, such as Head Start and the Neighborhood Youth Corps. But it allowed only \$200 million for distribution among the States as unrestricted, unearmarked (versatile) funds for community action programs.

Community Action programs, under Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act, are comprehensive, locally-organized projects—like neighborhood centers—designed to combat every aspect of poverty in a specific area.

As a result of the new guidelines, the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity and the State's 26 local antipoverty agencies can expect to receive approximately \$10,120,244

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Youth Corps Woman From Ocean County Now A Receptionist

Six months ago, Mrs. Gwendolyn Brown, a 21-year-old Lakewood mother of two, needed a job.

Her husband had been working irregularly and the couple needed money to help care for their two young boys, aged two and three. In desperation, she sought help from the Neighborhood Youth Corps of the Ocean Community for Economic Action Now, Inc. (OCEAN), Ocean County's anti-poverty agency.

Within days, she began on-the-job training as a clerk typist with the Ocean County Mental Health Clinic in Toms River. When a full-time receptionist position opened last month, Mrs. Brown was chosen from among three other NYC enrollees to fill it—the first Youth Corps graduate to be permanently hired by a cooperating business firm.

Since its founding last August 31, the OCEAN Neighborhood Youth Corps has enrolled some 43 disadvantaged young men and women who had left school. Of these, one (Mrs. Brown) is now fully employed, one has moved out of the State, six have dropped out, one has returned to school and three have been referred to the Rural Manpower Development Program — a special Neighborhood Youth Corps for rural youths run by the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity. The remaining enrollees are still in training.

According to Daniel E. Kreger, project director, all of the enrollees are from "extremely low-income families, all are school dropouts and most have either social, emotional or economic problems." Some need psychiatric care, he added.

Kreger said Mrs. Brown came to the NYC better prepared than most of the other enrollees in the program.

Originally from Atlantic City, Mrs. Brown was one of seven children. When her parents separated,

her mother had to rely on welfare assistance. Later, when the family moved to Lakewood, the girl left school while in the 11th grade to get married.

Soon after, she joined the Neighborhood Youth Corps, operated at that time by the Ocean County Board of Freeholders, where she received a high school equivalency diploma and training as a typist. (The Freeholders' NYC program was later incorporated into the OCEAN project.)

"A friend told my sister about the NYC, so we both went down," said Gwendolyn, a neatly-dressed, soft-spoken young lady. "After about four months, I was transferred to the OCEAN NYC and went to work at the Health Clinic. This enabled me to get an opportunity to hold a regular job that I liked."

Another NYC enrollee, Miss Anne Megna, 19, of Toms River, is still in training. A 9th-grade dropout who quit school because she "didn't like it," Miss Megna first heard about the OCEAN youth corps through a welfare worker.

At the time, her father was hospitalized and her mother had to

receive welfare aid to support Anne and her 16-year-old sister, also a drop-out. "My mother was on welfare and I was out of a job," Anne explained, "And, when the welfare lady told me about it, I decided to come down."

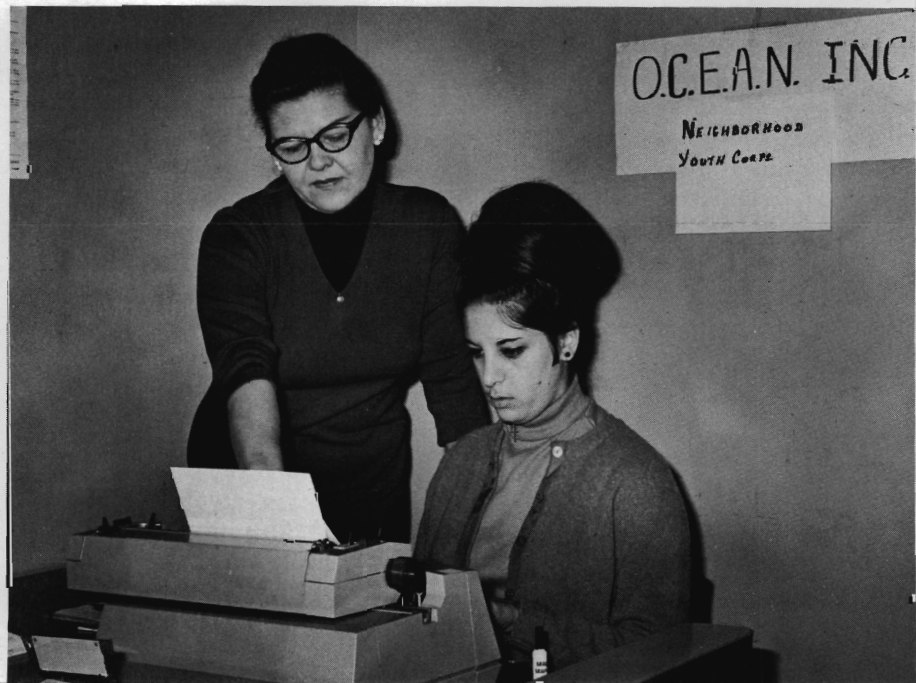
Kreger said Miss Megna came to the program "with no skills and little academic training." She was enrolled immediately as a secretary-receptionist trainee, in the program's Tom's River headquarters.

"Under the direction of Mrs. Patricia Montagna, our full-time secretary, Anne learned bookkeeping, typing, filing and other clerical duties," he added, "Soon, she may begin studying shorthand."

Kreger said Miss Megna has also enrolled in the Toms River Adult Evening School to pursue studies towards a high school equivalency diploma.

"Recently, she was given special permission to enroll in the high school equivalency program although she is not yet 20 years of age," said Kreger. "State law restricts enrollment in this program to enrollees who have reached

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NOW IS THE TIME—Mrs. Patricia Montagna (left), full-time secretary of the Ocean County Neighborhood Youth Corps headquarters, assists NYC trainee Miss Anne Megna, 19, of Toms River, who is preparing to become a secretary-receptionist.

Wolff Evaluation of Head Start Programs: Will It Bring Substantial, Needed Change To New Jersey Elementary School System?

Late last fall, an evaluation of Project Head Start—the most popular, most amply funded program of the War on Poverty—was published by Dr. Max Wolff, sociologist at the Center for Urban Education in New York City. Its conclusions caused professional educators and administrators of Head Start programs—including President Johnson (see Box on Page 1)—to take a sharp look at the state of elementary education in the United States.

For Dr. Wolff concluded that the thirst for learning acquired by children in the small, well-staffed classes of Head Start was quickly dissipated after a few months in the kindergartens and first grades of the public schools. He said: "Head Start cannot substitute for the long, overdue improvements of education in the elementary schools which have failed the Negro and Puerto Rican child..."

In New Jersey, where the 25,000 children who have participated in Head Start programs over the past two summers are now enrolled in public kindergartens and first grades, most Head Start administrators agree with the findings of the Wolff Report.

Mrs. Ida Zeitlin, director of Jersey City's CAN-DO Child Development Center, said recently the report points the finger at every Board of Education in the nation and urges each to make changes immediately to help disadvantaged children capitalize on the gains of Head Start. Another CAP director of educational services, Juanita High of Atlantic Human Resources, agrees "the follow up for Head Start is not what it should be in the public schools."

Given the findings of the Wolff Report, what changes are being proposed in grades Kindergarten through IV in New Jersey public

schools which might bring about effective results? The most promising situation is taking place in Newark.

As a result of the Wolff Report, representatives of the summer Head Start Project, the Newark Pre-School Council (which runs pre-school classes modeled on Head Start from September to June) and the Board of Education have begun a series of meetings which, if successful, could signal dramatic changes in elementary education in Newark. Their goal is to plan a new early childhood curriculum from pre-school through the third grade which will incorporate the best features of Head Start in the public elementary school program.

According to Dr. J. Thomas Flagg, director of the Pre-School Council, the pre-school members of the committee would like the representatives of the Board of Education to consider the following changes in curriculum and structure in the early grades:

- ▶A higher level of reading readiness;

- ▶A deepening of cultural interests;

- ▶A higher level of number readiness;

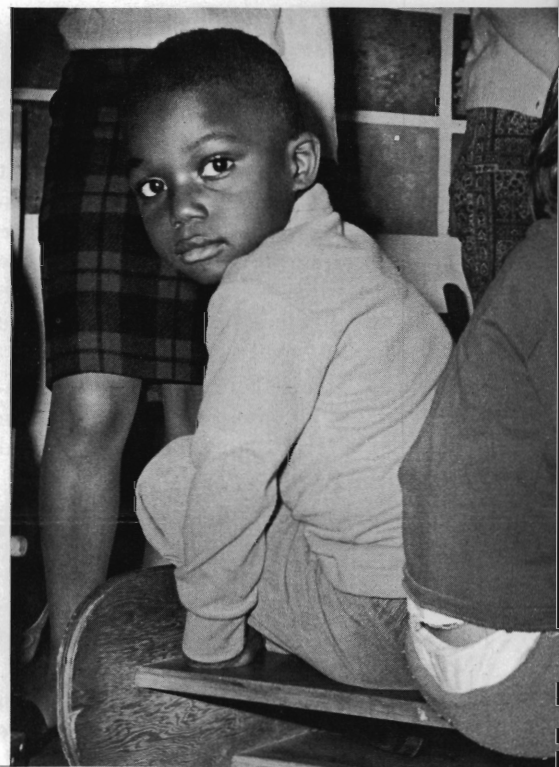
- ▶Greater teacher insight into actual ability of the children from poverty backgrounds;

- ▶Greater teacher faith in the actual potential of these children;

- ▶Greater efforts to improve the faith of the children in themselves.

What public school elementary teachers must do, Dr. Flagg believes, is to begin to think that disadvantaged children are teachable and then make their techniques sufficiently flexible so the children can learn.

The approach of Head Start and other year-round pre-school programs is to concentrate on the individual needs of every child. If this idea were to be accepted by



FACES OF HOPE—These three youngsters are members of the United Community Corp. (UCC), Newark's anti-poverty program. The UCC is staffed by trained teachers and non-professional aides and their parents are closely involved in the pre-kindergarten learning experience may be lost when

public school teachers, Head Start personnel believe disadvantaged children would continue to make significant progress throughout their school years.

A member of the Newark committee, Dr. Mildred Groder, who also serves as administrator of the Newark Board of Education's summer Head Start project, reports the three meetings of the group have gone smoothly. She says plans have been made for public school kindergarten teachers to visit classes conducted by the staff of the Newark Pre-School Council—an important first step towards the eradication of misunderstandings between the two groups.

Other Head Start administrators are hopeful the Newark example will spread to other cities and communities in the State. To date, no other similar groups have been formed.

In Jersey City, Mrs. Zeitlin of CAN-DO has many ideas she would like the Board of Education



Members of a Newark Pre-School program, operated by a poverty agency. The daily classes are small and well-attended. Children receive dental, medical and nutritional services. Many teachers now fear the gains of the program will disappear when the children enter the public schools.

to adopt. She favors an ungraded primary from kindergarten through the third grade (so children can progress at their own rates of speed in different subjects), small classes with no more than 15 children per teacher, the use of teacher aides recruited from poor neighborhoods, a day-long program which includes two hot meals and a nap, and a kindergarten program with less emphasis on reading readiness and more on stimulating, creative play. Mrs. Zeitlin feels the "Boards of Education must generate real change or the gains of Head Start will disappear."

Leon Hickman, director of last summer's Head Start project in Bridgeton (when he was a fulltime teacher for the school system), wishes the local Board could incorporate "the total freedom of Head Start into the elementary grades." He recalls that at the moment his Head Start children were talking about flowers they were able to go out to a florist to

see the wide variety he had to sell.

"If a similar situation came up in a regular kindergarten," Hickman says, "written permission to make the trip would have to be obtained from so many sources that by the time the forms were completed, the children would have lost interest and moved to another topic of study."

Hickman feels the public schools must make a greater effort to include parents of poor children in meaningful discussions and activities. "Parents of the poor have a fearful attitude towards schools and teachers," he says, "because most of them have had unsuccessful school experiences themselves."

In Atlantic and Cape May counties, Juanita High of Atlantic Human Resources reports her work with local Boards of Education ranges from excellent to poor. She has a long list of ideas for local education officials which includes: a pupil-teacher ratio of 15 to 1, the use of dental, medical, social, nutritional and psychological services in the schools, and a more liberal use of materials such as paper, paint and paste in the early grades.

At least one abortive attempt to bring pre-school and public school groups together occurred last December. At that time, Mrs. Angela McLinn, Regional Training Officer for Head Start in New Jersey, called a Head Start Conference to discuss parent participation in public schools.

She invited 50 representatives of summer Head Start programs, 50 staff members of year-round pre-school programs and 50 members of local Boards of Education to participate in the discussions. Each group sent its full complement of invitees, except for the Boards of Education who were represented by only 12 persons, she said.

Mrs. McLinn believes parental involvement and the use of non-professional teacher aides are essential ingredients for elementary school reform. She doubts members of Boards and teachers agree with her.

One member of the New Jersey State Board of Education is also

not very hopeful about the chances of placing untrained aides in classrooms to reduce the large teacher-pupil ratios and to give children more needed, individual attention. "Professional teachers are rigid in their outlook on such subjects," says Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss.

Dr. Ann Hoppock, director of elementary education for the State Department of Education, says firmly if local Boards had as much money as Head Start administrators receive, all desired changes would be made. If Dr. Hoppock and New Jersey professional educators receive funds for Head Start follow-through programs, which President Johnson requested in his recent message on America's children, will they make the changes desired by the Head Start leaders?

Commenting on Dr. Hoppock's statement, John T. Nordling, director of educational programming for the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity, says:

"It clearly is not only a fiscal matter. Dr. Hoppock avoids the realities of present policies and regulations of the State Department of Education. Specifically, current policy precludes non-certified personnel from being engaged in deeply meaningful functions within the school system. Today, they may undertake such trivial tasks as playground guards, lunchroom monitors and roll takers."

Nordling continues: "The evidence to date does show that 'non-professionals' can successfully participate in teaching activities."

Nordling believes that as long as such policies are rigidly enforced, it will be the rare school system which will chance innovation on a broad scale.

"What we have today is clearly inadequate for a significant percentage of the school population. Radical approaches can, at the worst, only continue existing non-success. At the minimum, they might ignite those teachers who have been consistently denied opportunities to succeed. At the optimum, we may achieve a real breakthrough."

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in unearmarked versatile CAP money during the 1967 fiscal year that ends June 30, 1967. Some of this has already been received by these agencies.

According to NJOEO figures, these agencies received some \$15,389,271 during fiscal 1966 for the same programs. This reflects a decrease of approximately \$5,269,027 (or about 35 per cent) over fiscal 1966. (A complete list of the 1966 FY guidelines and the new tentative 1967 FY guidelines for versatile CAP funds for NJOEO and each of the local antipoverty agencies is available upon request.)

A comparison of the three statewide totals indicates that although the State's versatile CAP fund guideline for FY 1966 was set at \$9.7 million, New Jersey actually received about \$15.4 million last year—almost double its guideline. In fact, most larger CAPs received as much as 250 per cent above their original guidelines for FY 1966.

Under the antipoverty act, guidelines or allotments—based on the incidence of poverty—are that portion of OEO funds appropriated by Congress which the director makes available to each State at the beginning of a fiscal year for use in beginning and maintaining community action programs. Allotted funds not used by a State, however, may be re-allotted among other states with acceptable and available programs. It is through this provision that New Jersey was able to double its fiscal 1966 allotment or guideline.

The State's versatile CAP fund guideline for FY 1967—tentatively set at \$10.1 million—is some \$400,000 above the 1966 guidelines but, significantly, some \$5.3 million less than the total amount of versatile CAP funds that actually came into New Jersey last year.

The United Community Corporation (UCC), Newark's antipoverty agency, is a good example. The 1966 versatile CAP guideline for UCC, according to USOEO, was about \$1.4 million; but UCC actually received some \$3.5 million last

year—about 250 per cent above its guideline. While the 1967 FY versatile CAP guideline for UCC is \$2.1 million—some \$700,000 above last year's guidelines—this is actually \$1.4 million less than UCC received last year for the same purpose.

"It is now clear that aside from the various Earmarked Programs, the total resources available for Community Action falls far short of meeting bare refunding needs of existing CAAs (Community Action Agencies)," Crowley explained in the letter. "This is true even if the broadest possible latitude is permitted in fitting presently-funded programs in earmarked categories."

Because of restrictions on community action money, Crowley continued, "the first rule must be to insist that all grants have a multiplier effect in mobilizing total Federal, State and local dollars in an effort to eliminate poverty . . ."

The letter also emphasized that these tentative financial guidelines, although predicated on fiscal 1967 refunding activities, "must be considered as a rather firm planning figure" for programs that will need refunding in fiscal 1968—an assumption based on "the uncertainties as to the availability of funds pending future actions by the Congress."

According to the letter, the limitations on the use of community action funds resulting from the new guideline provide that:

►new antipoverty agencies will "not be possible" within the northeast region "except in underallotted states on a case basis;"

►"existing antipoverty agencies can be combined into more viable groupings" when necessary on a case basis but any increase in community action money through combinations is "doubtful;"

►new single purpose agencies or new projects for single-purpose agencies will require CAP authorization based on specific justification with certain exceptions;

►marginal and ineffective antipoverty agencies and single-purpose ones will, for the most part,

be curtailed;

►the fiscal 1966 guideline has been used as a "benchmark" in formulating the new dollar availability, subject to a graduated reduction uniformly deployed across the nation and excluding low priority, low quality and earmarked programs; and

►communities will not generally be funded or refunded on a piece-meal basis. They must submit requests both for funding new projects and refunding existing ones as part of one package.

Three types of antipoverty programs were listed as high-priority; that is, those likely to be funded. The first type were programs earmarked by Congress. These included: Head Start, Legal Services, Nelson and Scheuer (adult work training and employment programs), Health Centers, Narcotics Rehabilitation, Family Emergency Loans and Adult Literacy.

The second type of high-priority projects were those that: can elicit significant funds from sources other than OEO; have a multiplier effect in inducing changes in other agencies and institutions; can assure that the project reaches the poor with the combination of services they need; can move people out of poverty on a permanent basis; and cannot be appropriately handled by other programs.

The third type of high-priority projects were multi-purpose Neighborhood Centers and Manpower Development Projects.

Low priority programs, the letter explained, "will not meet the criteria listed above and will not be funded," except for "exceptional cases." These programs included: educational counseling and guidance, remedial education, and all in-school education (out-of-school tutoring excluded); recreation and camping; cultural enrichment; social service counseling, unless they support other antipoverty efforts; programs within closed institutions such as orphanages and reform schools; food programs; homemakers and home management services.

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antipoverty projects costs.

Last November, the Foundation held a community-wide meeting to discuss the possibilities of providing public, private and non-profit housing in the city. With assistance from the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity, it now hopes to initiate plans for a 150-family project within the Bayonne urban renewal area.

To accomplish this, the foundation—as a non-profit organization—is eligible for various federal housing funds.

Bayonne's on-the-job training program will also continue to operate, since funds for it are provided by the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, not the antipoverty bill.

Finally, the Bayonne foundation will seek additional funds from the State to help it meet the non-federal share of antipoverty projects. Last month, Bayonne received \$5,100 from the Governor's Emergency Fund for this purpose. The State Legislature appropriated some \$200,000 last year for this fund to help local antipoverty agencies that had exhausted all other available local contributions.

The fund is distributed by NJOEO.

In July, the local share of anti-

poverty programs increases from 10 to 20 percent, due to 1966 amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act. In view of this, Gov. Richard J. Hughes, in his recent budget message, declared: "I trust the State will provide the necessary supplemental funds which I am recommending to keep crucial programs going and allow new programs to begin."

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their 20th birthday. Anne will be 20 in March."

Anne plans to take the exam in March and then begin studying typing and shorthand. In addition, she was recently engaged and expects to be married this summer.

"I think without the NYC I would still have been at work as a waitress and that's no life—being a waitress all your life," she said. "Here they taught me typing and many other things. I am earning my diploma and planning to get married. Later, I also hope to become a secretary or a nurse."

Kreger said the one NYC enrollee who has returned to school originally moved to Ocean County from Nutley when her father died. The family was large — three brothers and two sisters—and depended on welfare aid.

The girl, whom we shall call Joan, was 16 years old at the time, and

had almost completed the 10th grade when the family arrived in Toms River.

"Joan just couldn't adjust to the Toms River school system, which was strange to her, and she couldn't get along with her new classmates," Kreger explained. "Her mother tried to convince her to stay in school but she dropped out anyway. One day, she came to the OCEAN NYC office and said: 'I never want to see a classroom again.'"

Kreger said the girl had no job skills but wanted to become a secretary. After one unsuccessful job interview, she was hired as a clerk-typist, without skills, at the Lakehurst Elementary School, where she worked 28 hours a week and earned \$1.25 an hour.

After two months, Joan confided that she had felt out of place on the job because "everybody around me has a high school diploma or a college degree," Kreger explained.

"I don't care what you have to do to get me back in school," Kreger quoted Joan as saying, "but I'll return under any conditions."

Joan is now completing her sophomore year at Toms River High School, where school authorities are closely watching her academic and emotional development. With luck, she will graduate and perhaps go on to higher education.

FEBRUARY 1967 — Vol. 1, No. 12

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

RICHARD J. HUGHES, Governor

JOHN C. BULLITT, Director

P. O. BOX 2748 TRENTON, N. J. 08625
(609) 292-6064

