

The “War on Poverty”

Johnson used government organization and volunteers to help him reach his stated top priority for the Great Society: to put “an end to poverty in our time.” The federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, became the administration’s showcase in this “War on Poverty.” The OEO established many innovative programs. Two programs were set up to aid disadvantaged and low-income children: Head Start provided free nursery schools to prepare disadvantaged preschoolers for kindergarten, and Upward Bound gave low-income teenagers the skills and motivation to go to college. The Job Corps and the Neighborhood Youth Corps provided jobs and vocational training for young people; Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) trained young people to conduct community service in impoverished rural and urban areas.

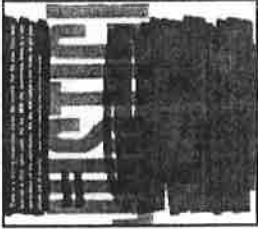




Major Legislative Efforts

Johnson combined such programs utilizing volunteers to help the needy with government-funded efforts. From 1964 to 1966, the Johnson administration submitted a steady stream of legislation to Capitol Hill, and Congress approved nearly all of it. The Department of Housing and Urban Development was established to administer low-income housing. For the first time, the federal government began to subsidize the arts. The National Endowment for the Arts offered grants to artists, and the National Endowment for the Humanities provided grants to scholars. The focus of the Johnson administration’s other social programs were education and health care. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 authorized \$1 billion in federal funds to benefit poor children. That same year Johnson signed the Higher Education Act, which provided the first federal scholarships for college students. In addition, for the first time in history, Congress passed federal health insurance programs. Medicare was established to provide health care for the elderly, and Medicaid provided the same for the poor. A variety of measures were also passed that benefited middle-class Americans, such as home mortgage assistance, Medicare assistance regardless of need, and federal aid to education.




The Legacy of the Great Society

These ambitious programs represented a tremendous commitment of federal funds, while at the same time raising the hopes of millions of Americans that great social change was at hand. But in two years most of the resources for these programs began to dry up. By 1966, the administration was faced with another huge drain on its resources: the expanding war in Southeast Asia. In that year the government spent \$1.2 billion on Johnson’s “War on Poverty”; it also spent \$22 billion fighting the war in Vietnam. Before long, Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, in the words of Martin Luther King, had been “shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam.” However, despite significant cutbacks in the programs, many of them continued to influence American society through the end of the twentieth century.

<p>"War on Poverty" Program</p>	<p>Goals of Program</p>	<p>Description of Program</p>	<p>How Program Has Influenced Contemporary Society</p>
 <p>Program: _____</p>			
 <p>Program: _____</p>			
 <p>Program: _____</p>			

Notes on "War on Poverty" Programs

Directions: At each station, carefully read the information about the "War on Poverty" program. Summarize the goals of the program and write a brief description of it in the appropriate spaces. Finally, discuss with your partner and record the ways in which the program has influenced contemporary society.

"War on Poverty" Program	Goals of Program	Description of Program	How Program Has Influenced Contemporary Society
 <p>You may be fully qualified for Federal Food Assistance and not even know it! Find out if you qualify. Ask a social worker or the person who handles community work at the Children's Clinic.</p> <p>FOR FURTHER INFO, SEE THE POSTER AT THE CHILDREN'S CLINIC.</p> <p>Program: _____</p>			
 <p>Head Start wants you!</p> <p>Program: _____</p>			
 <p>who cares? Job Corps!</p> <p>Program: _____</p>			

The Job Corps

The Job Corps was a national job-training program administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the federal government agency created by Congress in 1964. The goal of the program was to train disadvantaged youths aged 16 to 24 in technical, social, and educational skills so they could find work in a variety of fields. The Job Corps established both rural and urban centers throughout the country. Enrollees underwent six to nine months of technical training, learned social skills, and, if necessary, learned basic educational skills such as reading and writing. They also received room and board, clothing for work, books, supplies, and cash allowance. Trainees in rural centers learned to repair roads, build firebreaks, and help manage conservation and natural-resource efforts. Urban centers—for those youths with a basic sixth grade education—taught skilled crafts such as carpentry, plumbing, welding, and electrical wiring. They could stay in a Job Corps center as long as two years, and at the end of which time they were given assistance in finding a job.

In 1967—the peak year of the program during the 1960s—the Job Corps operated 123 centers with 42,000 enrollees. Since then, more than 1.8 million economically disadvantaged youths have gone through the program. In the late 1990s, the Job Corps operated some 114 centers, with an enrollment of about 68,000 students.

Head Start

Head Start was an educational program for disadvantaged children administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the federal government agency Congress created in 1964. The main goal of Head Start was to improve the overall school performance of poor children by entering them in a two-month prekindergarten program. During this time, the preschoolers were introduced to a variety of experiences designed to increase their intellectual awareness. They were taken to local supermarkets, fire stations, zoos, and working farms. They were introduced to various aspects of culture, such as art, music, dance, and theater. They were also intellectually spurred by a variety of toys, games, and puzzles. In addition, the program provided hot meals and immunizations against many childhood diseases to support children's health. Funded by the federal government, Head Start was run by local school districts, activists, and civic groups in cities and towns throughout the country. Local Head Start projects were held in schools, churches, stores, apartments, and civic centers.

The first Head Start project began in the summer of 1965, with more than 500,000 four- and five-year-old preschool children in 2,500 communities around the country. The cost of the program was \$82 million. It was such a success that President Johnson soon announced that Head Start would become a full one-year permanent program to benefit about 350,000 poor children, ages three and up. By the late 1990s, Head Start was enrolling more than 800,000 children a year, and its annual budget was more than \$4 billion. Since Head Start's inception in 1965, more than 17 million preschool children have benefited from the program.

Federal Food Assistance

The Federal Food Assistance—or Food Stamp—program began in 1939 during the Great Depression. It was started to enable the poorest Americans to get enough to eat at a time when many American farmers were producing a surplus of food. The program was discontinued in 1943, when the American economy had recovered from the Depression. The program resumed in 1961 under President John F. Kennedy, after studies during the 1950s demonstrated that millions of American were living in poverty and were not eating nutritionally balanced diets. As part of his “War on Poverty,” President Lyndon Johnson requested that Congress make the Food Assistance Program permanent, which it did by passing the Food Stamp Act of 1964. Since that time the goal of the program has been to ensure that disadvantaged Americans of all ages obtain at least the minimum diet of nutritionally balanced foods, whether or not they can afford it. The federal government—under the Department of Agriculture—distributes food coupons to individuals or families who can demonstrate an income insufficient to purchase an adequate amount of food.

In its first year as a permanent program, the Federal Food Assistance program reached more than 500,000 needy Americans. By 1970, the number of participants had grown to 4 million, and by the mid 1970s, that number had grown to 15 million nationwide. Despite budget cutbacks during the 1980s, the program has continued uninterrupted since its inception. By the late 1990s, the program was helping to feed more than 20 million disadvantaged Americans annually, from the youngest children to the oldest senior citizens.

Legal Services

The Legal Services program was designed to help poor, disadvantaged people with civil legal problems. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), a federal government agency that Congress created in 1964, administered the program. The goal of this program was not only to assist poor people with various legal problems, but to act in a “representative fashion” to change and reform laws that were harmful to the disadvantaged. Lawyers for the program sought to make laws simpler and more accessible to the poor, and fought laws that punished or harmed people living in poor communities. The program recruited lawyers in cities and towns throughout the country to work as advocates for the poor.

Initially, the Legal Services program had one of the lowest budgets of any of the “War on Poverty” programs administered by the OEO. In 1966, Congress allocated only \$25 million in funds, enough to establish local legal services agencies in about 125 communities around the country. In 1974, Congress created the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), a nonprofit corporation, to administer the program. Under the LSC, the program concentrated its efforts on providing legal assistance to those who could not afford it, rather than attempting to reform the legal system itself. In the late 1990s, the LSC’s annual budget was about \$283 million. This money funded more than 260 local legal services programs, which provided legal assistance to more than 4 million people annually.

The Office of Economic Opportunity

The Office of Economic Opportunity—or OEO—was a large federal government agency created by the Economic Opportunity Act, legislation submitted by President Johnson and passed by Congress in 1964. The agency was the centerpiece of President Johnson’s “War on Poverty” program. It was created to administer, coordinate, and guide various programs designed to reduce the number of poor, uneducated, and jobless people in the United States. Government programs such as Head Start, VISTA, and Job Corps were all administered by the OEO. The agency was headed by a single director in Washington DC—appointed by the president—and employed hundreds of government officials at the federal, state, and local levels. In the OEO’s first year, Congress authorized a budget of \$800 million—and more than doubled it to \$1.78 billion for the second year. The OEO’s budget remained at more than \$1.5 billion through the late 1960s.

By the early 1970s, the OEO lost control of some of its major programs to full Cabinet departments. For example, Head Start became part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Job Corps went over to the Department of Labor. Soon, government support for maintaining the OEO as a separate agency began to disappear. By 1974, its budget had dropped to only \$328 million—down from \$1.9 billion in 1969. Soon after, the OEO went out of business as a separate government agency.

VISTA

VISTA—or Volunteers in Service to America—was a program administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the federal government agency Congress created in 1964. VISTA was designed as a domestic version of the Peace Corps. VISTA volunteers lived and worked in areas of poverty throughout the country to help improve the living conditions of poor and disadvantaged Americans. Like the Peace Corps, VISTA recruited mostly young, well-educated recent college graduates to enroll in its six-week training course, which emphasized psychology, sociology, economics, and the culture of poverty. After their training, volunteers were assigned to one of six designated poverty areas around the country. For a two-year period, volunteers taught classes in English and office skills, set up food cooperatives, advised local residents about legal problems, helped tenants with landlord problems, and organized local youth clubs. VISTA looked to recruit the same idealistic young men and women who were drawn to the Peace Corps, but who did not wish to reside in a foreign country.

From its inception, VISTA suffered from budget limitations, allowing it to accept only about 20 percent of the applications it received each year. Still, since its beginnings, more than 100,000 volunteers have served in the program. In 1993, VISTA became part of the Clinton administration’s new AmeriCorps program. In the late 1990s, there were nearly 4,000 VISTA volunteers serving in cities and towns across the United States. These volunteers worked in conjunction with more than 900 nonprofit or public agencies sponsoring VISTA projects in local communities.

Great Society Program Spectrums

Place the six programs on these spectrums, where appropriate.

Greatest Impact on Life Today

Least Impact on Life

Program still Exists Today

Program Does Not Exist

Program the Federal Government
Should not be involved In

Program the Federal Government
Should not be involved In

NOVA - The Assassination Theories

1. Of the two official inquiries into Kennedy's death, one said there was a lone assassin. The other said:
2. Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested at first for the murder of:
3. Oswald was shot by:
4. How many shots were heard coming from the Texas Book Depository.?
5. Oswald purchased the rifle from:
6. Jim Garrison held a trial in what year?
7. The idea that one bullet hit Kennedy and Connally is called :
8. What was found on a stretcher in the hallway of Parkland Hospital?
9. The fragments in the wrist of Gov. Connally matched the bullet found where?
10. Who restaged the events in Dealey Plaza?
11. Dr. Shaw states that one bullet could have hit both men if they were leaning certain ways. Which ways.?
12. Where did Mr. Holland see the "puffs of smoke"?
13. The "black dog shape" could have been a person holding what
14. In one shooting demonstration a skull shot from behind flew in what direction?
15. Comparisons of possible shots recorded on the dictaphone and restaged shots from the grassy knoll found how many matching points?
16. Kennedy's body arrived in Bethesda wrapped in what?
17. The doctor in charge of the autopsy had never done an autopsy on what kind of wound.
18. What did FBI agents say had been done on the head area of the president?
19. What part of the president's body has disappeared?

