

These checks and balances help ensure a fair system. However, if a group's application is rejected and the group wants to appeal that decision, there is no formal process currently in force. Although the group may appeal to the regional office, the Ottawa office, or the Minister, this right is not explicitly made known to groups.

The Committee recommends that when an application is rejected, reasons for the rejection be given in writing. Applicants should be informed of their right to appeal to the regional office, the national office or the Minister.

VIII Evaluations

Project evaluations should continue to include progress reports.

IX Program Delivery

- In addition to being in major population centres, social development officers should, as much as possible, also be in more remote communities.

Costs of this decentralization would be minimal if the officers utilized space in existing federal government buildings.

- Thought might also be given to establishing a system of networking between officials of the Women's Program and other federal departments located in remote areas. For example, field officers in CEIC offices are often involved in outreach programs and they could be an invaluable liaison with women in the remote communities and Secretary of State Regional offices.
- Steps should also be taken to ensure funds are delivered on time. Late payments put extreme and unnecessary financial strains on the waiting groups.

X Consultation

Women's Program officials should consult with a wide cross-section of women's groups (both funded and not funded) to:

- establish priorities for the program;
- evaluate the program;
- communicate national priorities.