

History of the Organization

In February 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed the first national vocational education week into law. This act created federally supported, state-run programs of vocational education that included home economics (known today as family and consumer science education). The establishment of vocational home economics education laid the foundation for the development of Future Homemakers of America as an integral part of the program.

As early as 1920, high school home economics students belonged to home economics clubs. The clubs were sponsored by adult groups interested in home economics education, such as home economics education supervisory staffs of state departments of education, the American Home Economics Association and home economics departments in colleges and universities.

The clubs had many different names and structures, and there was no organized cooperation between state groups. Only those clubs who worked under the sponsorship of the American Home Economics Association had any affiliation with a national group.

Interest in one overall program for high school economics students grew. In 1943, the American Home Economics Association, in cooperation with the Home Economics Branch of the U.S. Office of Education, Division of Vocational and Technical Education, appointed a committee to study high school home economics club programs. The committee concluded that all existing programs could be strengthened by a united effort.

In March 1944, home economics leaders from 29 states met in Chicago, Ill., and discussed plans for developing one national organization. In June 1944, an interim committee, selected from participants at the March meeting and student and adult adviser, representative of home economics clubs, started plans for the development of a national organization.

In Chicago, on June 11, 1945, a group of national officer candidates from several subregions and a group of advisers drew up a temporary constitution. They also selected the name for the proposed national youth organization for students of home economics education: Future Homemakers of America.

The American Home Economics Association (now the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences) and the U.S. Office (now Department) of Education, under the direction of its home economics staff in the Division of Vocational and Technical Education, became cosponsors of the organization.

The National Education Association, through its department of home economics, and the American Vocational Association, through its home economics division, became cooperating groups.

Edna P. Amidon is considered one of the most influential leaders in the founding of Future Homemakers of America. She was a futuristic educator and strong promoter of junior and senior high school home economics education for more than 50 years. She served as chief of the Home Economics Education Service, Division of Vocational Education in the U.S. Office of Education and as the organization's first board chair.

Dr. Hazel Frost was the first national adviser for both Future Homemakers of America and New Homemakers of America.

FHA started with 42 affiliated state associations, 2,487 chapters, 92,516 members and a \$7,200 loan from AHEA. Within the first year the loan was repaid, and Future Homemakers of America was incorporated in the District of Columbia as a self-supporting, private, nonprofit organization. Operating funds came from the national dues of 10 cents per member per year.