



AHEA

AMERICAN
HOME ECONOMICS
ASSOCIATION

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About The American Home Economics Association

The American Home Economics Association (AHEA) is one of the oldest professional societies in the United States. Founded in 1909, its purpose is to improve the quality and standards of individual and family life through education, research, cooperative programs, and public information.

The Association serves as the voice for the home economics profession, the only profession that integrates knowledge from all the basic disciplines— the sciences, humanities, and arts, and brings that knowledge to bear on solving the complex everyday problems of individuals and families through prevention and enrichment strategies, as well as remedial interventions. Every profession has a spokesperson-advocate organization of professionals. For home economists, that organization is the American Home Economics Association.

AHEA represents professionals in all the arenas in which the profession is practiced and all the content specializations therein. As such, the Association represents almost 20,000 men and women— home economics professionals, students, and supporters— who work in diverse fields of applied knowledge toward a common goal— improving the quality of life for every person, with special emphasis on the family unit which nurtures, protects and renews that individual.

The nature of home economics and the program of the Association have evolved by virtue of changes in resources, family functions and cultural climates, the discovery of new knowledge in the basic disciplines, and conclusions from applied research. The concerns initially identified by Ellen H. Richards, founder and first president of AHEA, remain at the core of the profession and the Association, and indeed have become increasingly important. Richards, the first female graduate and professor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was concerned with consumer education; nutrition; child protection; industrial safety; public health; career education; women's rights; purity of air, food, and water; and the application of scientific and management principles of the home. Historians credit Richards with originating the concept of ecology, as well as formalizing the profession of home economics.

In its infancy AHEA was fortunate in finding volunteers who gave their time and efforts to details of operating an Association office. The early offices of AHEA were private rooms and spaces in the homes and offices of those individuals who wanted to help the new professional organization to become established. Today the association is staffed by nearly 30 professionals who provide services to members, represent their concerns, and facilitate the growth of individuals and programs. In June 1989, the Association Headquarters was moved to its current facility, located at 1555 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia.