

R E P O R T

OF THE

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STUDY COMMITTEE

Submitted To The 59th General Assembly
February, 1961

REPORT OF
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STUDY COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION

The Fifty-eighth General Assembly by Joint Resolution No. 3, created a joint bipartisan Committee to study Public Assistance in this State, and to make a written report and recommendations to the Fifty-ninth General Assembly.

The Committee has been composed of six members from the House of Representatives and six members from the Senate; three Republicans and three Democrats from each chamber. After the initial organizational meeting, the Committee was composed as follows:

Senate Members	House Members
Jake B. Mincks, Chairman	Riley Dietz, Secretary
George E. O'Malley	A. L. Mensing
Walter F. Edelen	Hillman H. Sersland
Jack Schroeder	Kenneth E. Owen
J. Louis Fisher	Robert R. Dodds
Guy G. Butler	Robert D. Fulton

Mrs. Winifred Dalrymple was employed as secretary by the Committee and took minutes of all meetings. These have been retained and are available for study by the members

of the Fifty-ninth General Assembly. As a result of the information received, the following summaries and recommendations are made.

WELFARE PROGRAMS OF IOWA

Following is a brief explanation of the welfare programs in Iowa.

Categorical Relief:

Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled, Old Age Assistance are welfare programs that are supported by funds from the federal, state, and county government. These are commonly called the categorical relief programs. Although the contributions to the programs vary, they are approximately on the following basis: The federal government contributes 50% and the state and county government, 25% each.

These programs in accordance with the Social Security Act are administered by the State Department of Social Welfare. These programs must be administered according to broad rules and regulation promulgated by the Social Security Office. Failure to comply with these basic requirements by the Federal Government can result in the State of Iowa being deprived of federal matching funds.

On the local level, these programs are directed by the county board of social welfare "with only such powers and duties as are prescribed in the laws relating thereto" (Sec. 234.11, 1958 Code of Iowa). This means that the local welfare boards must comply with the rules and regulations of the Social Security Board as well as the State Board of Social Welfare and do not have a free hand in administering these funds.

These programs are actually under the supervision of the director of social welfare who is employed by the county board of social welfare. The competency of all employees in the office of the director of social welfare, other than clerical or stenographic, is subject to review by the State Board of social welfare. The director of social welfare and his employees interview and investigate all applicants and those who are on the categorical relief roles.

Applicants for categorical relief cannot be summarily denied relief by the director or his staff or the county board of social welfare. They have the opportunity to appeal to the State Board of social welfare. If they are denied by the State Board, they may appeal to the proper District Court of the State of Iowa, with the exception of Aid to the Blind applicants.

In addition to the programs heretofore mentioned, there are two other programs administered by the State

Board of Social Welfare. They are Emergency Relief and Child Welfare. These programs are not direct aid programs; that is, they do not have recipients on their roles receiving aid.

Under Chapter 235 of the 1958 Code of Iowa, the State Department of Social Welfare is given many responsibilities and duties regarding the welfare of children in Iowa. These range from providing child welfare workers in the various counties; cooperating with the various other state agencies concerned with child welfare, i.e., juvenile court, probation office and the State Board of Control; and approve, supervise and inspect the various public and private institutions for the care of dependent, neglected and delinquent children.

The duties of the State Board of Social Welfare relating to Emergency Relief are established in Chapter 251 of the 1958 Code of Iowa. Emergency Relief is as its name implies. The fund appropriated for this welfare program is primarily a revolving fund.

County Relief

For want of a better name, the remaining public welfare programs shall be classified as county relief. All funds for this relief come from the county. The programs are "Support of the Poor", as established

by Chapter 252 of the Code of Iowa, and "Relief for Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines", as established by Chapter 250 of the Code of Iowa.

These programs are directly under the control of the board of supervisors. Since only county money is expended, the State Board of Social Welfare has no control over the dispersement of these funds. The office of the overseer of the poor administers the county poor relief fund. Relief may be in the form of clothing, fuel, etc., or in the form of money. This differs from the categorical relief programs in which all relief is in money except medical assistance. The fact that this is a county program means that an applicant has recourse only to the county board of supervisors if his request for relief is denied.

It should be stated that Chapter 182 of the Acts of the 58th General Assembly modified the residence requirements for this type of aid and in analyzing this program, members of the 59th General Assembly should refer to it.

Soldiers' and sailors' relief is administered by a three-man relief commission, all of whom must be veterans. In most counties an executive secretary is appointed who actually directs the program. The county board of supervisors appoints the members of the commission who are responsible to the board.

The relief supplied, as in poor relief, can be either in money, or fuel, food, clothing, etc. As the name of the program implies, only veterans are eligible. In addition to the normal welfare activities, the commission is responsible to provide data required by the bonus board and maintain graves for veterans if such be demanded of them.

The office of the overseer of the poor may be combined with that of the director of social welfare at the option of the board of supervisors. This creates what is called an integrated county since the county welfare functions, i.e., poor relief, are integrated with the categorical relief programs in one office. This does not change the authority of either the State Board of Social Welfare or the county board of supervisors or their control over the respective funds. It merely allows the director of social welfare and his staff to administer both programs.

Section 250.12 of the Code of Iowa prohibits the combining of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief Commission with any other relief agency. Therefore, even in the integrated counties there exists two welfare offices. In the non-integrated counties, there are three welfare offices, separate and distinct from the other; the Overseer of the Poor, the director of Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief, and the director of Social Welfare.

Purpose

The State of Iowa is dispensing approximately \$58 million annually in federal, state and county funds for welfare purposes. These expenditures are continually growing and constitute one of the greatest burdens on the taxpayers of this State.

The 58th General Assembly, being aware of the growing criticism of the welfare programs throughout the State of Iowa, authorized this Committee to inquire into the validity of the various welfare programs in effect in this State, and to determine whether changes are needed to insure maximum benefit of the welfare dollar expended in this State. To accomplish this purpose, meetings were held in all sections of the State, in counties of various sizes, and all welfare agencies, both public and private, and all individuals and organizations interested were heard upon request. The Committee also met with the Board of Social Welfare and a representative of the Social Security Commission in an attempt to more clearly understand the various programs.

As a result of these hearings, the following summaries and recommendations are made.

AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN

I

It is the opinion of the Committee that basically there are enough statutes now on the books of the State of Iowa

to prevent fraud and deceit on the part of ADC recipients, but that a failure of the law enforcement agencies to adequately prosecute the cases has resulted in a breakdown of collection of the welfare payments from responsible parents and the failure to prosecute cases of fraud. In order to overcome this failure, the Committee recommends the following steps be taken:

A. It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General to file Informations in the various counties where welfare support cases and fraud cases are not adequately prosecuted by the local county attorney. It is the feeling of the Committee that this would encourage the local county attorney to be more diligent in this area of law enforcement.

II

The Committee found that in some instances the recipients of ADC have failed to manage their funds properly, and therefore the money supplied to the recipient is not being used for the benefit of the children as is the intention of the program. The Committee recommends the following steps be taken:

A. That provisions be inserted in the Iowa law for a compulsory guardianship in cases where there was mismanagement of the welfare funds by individual recipients. The Iowa law now allows the guardian to be appointed under Section 239.5 of the 1958 Code of Iowa, but the appointment of such guardianship is not mandatory.

B. That there be regularity and close supervision by case workers in calling on ADC recipients.

C. That the local welfare workers should encourage the ADC recipient to avail himself of educational programs in the community to prepare the recipient to support himself at such time he would be removed from the ADC roll. This program would be particularly advantageous when a mother was removed from the ADC roll due to the fact that her children became self-supporting, left home, or reached the age of 18 years. It was also suggested that the children on ADC that were not receiving their formal education be encouraged to enter into some type of vocational training. It was hoped this would greatly reduce the number of second generation ADC recipients.

D. It was suggested that a member of the Board of Trustees of a township act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Social Welfare in determining the eligibility of prospective recipients. It was the consensus that the local Trustee would be more aware of the circumstances surrounding the applicant's financial status.

III

The amount of an ADC grant has been too small which has caused the recipient to live at a substandard level and encourage recipients to violate some of the departmental regulations. The grant of an ADC recipient is computed

as follows: The State Department of Social Welfare, using a 1950 price schedule, determines the amount of money necessary for the minimum daily requirements of children of various age groups and for adults to live in Iowa. An ADC family grant is then computed by adding the grant of each member of the family. However, due to the shortage of funds, the recipients are paid only 85% of this amount. In accordance with federal regulations, the recipient is allowed 100% of his minimum daily requirements. An Iowa ADC recipient is allowed to earn the difference between 100% of minimum daily requirements and the amount of his grant. Therefore, an Iowa recipient can earn up to 15% of his minimum daily requirements without having it deducted from his grant.

A. The Committee suggests that the 59th General Assembly increase the appropriation for the ADC program in order to pay the recipient a higher percentage of his minimum daily requirements based on 1960 prices.

B. The Committee feels that the recipient should be allowed to earn more than 100% of his minimum daily requirements without having it deducted from his grant. It is also suggested that the State Department of Social Welfare base its requirements on 1960 prices.

C. The Committee recommends the enactment of legislation making it a misdemeanor if a recipient of welfare fails to provide law enforcement agencies with information,

within his knowledge, necessary to prosecute those responsible for the support of the recipient.

D. In event that these suggestions conflict with federal laws or regulations which would deny Iowa participation in the program, it was recommended that the 59th General Assembly pass a resolution urging Congress to change the federal regulation to allow enactment of such legislation.

OLD AGE ASSISTANCE

I

County Homes

The Subcommittee studying county homes found that every county home operation is different. The cost per person ranges from \$1.25 per week to \$15.00 per week depending on the size of the county farm and the number of people in the home. Some homes are well equipped and provide excellent care for their poor and mental patients. The corrections must be made at the local level. The Committee does not feel it is possible to recommend any set of standards for county homes. The Committee feels that it would be advantageous for them to survey their needs in the line of capital improvements to the extent that they could be licensed for custodial care and provide wards for mental patients that could be cared for in the county home, thereby reducing the county's expense of care at the State institutions. The Committee is of the opinion that county

homes licensed for custodial care could serve the State better, being able to keep OA recipients in the county home, making use of the facilities to the approximate capacity of the county home.

II

Private Nursing Homes

A. It is the suggestion of the Committee that nursing homes receive the grant of OA recipients in their home direct on a vendor payment basis rather than sending each recipient his individual check. The personal grant of each recipient would still be paid individually, however. The Committee felt that often it was difficult for the nursing home operators to obtain the signatures on the check of some of the older and sometimes senile recipients.

B. The Committee suggests that action should be taken through legislation or by the Board of Social Welfare to encourage unlicensed nursing homes to become licensed. This could be accomplished by -

1. Requiring an old age recipient to live in a licensed home whenever space was available in the locality, or
2. Reducing the grant to old age recipients who are living in an unlicensed home.

III

Responsibility of Children

A. It was suggested that the State Department of Social Welfare should investigate the possibility of paying OA recipients' grants in full even where there are responsible children and having the State collect the money due from the children. The Board of Social Welfare reported to the Committee that this would greatly increase the administrative costs. If it is found to be too expensive, this suggestion could be ignored.

ADMINISTRATION

The Committee found that there is some overlapping and duplication in administering the various welfare programs in Iowa. In some counties administrative costs of the local offices were exceedingly high. Consideration should be given to integrating all welfare agencies into one office to reduce the costs of administration and to expedite the handling of cases.

Respectfully submitted,

Jake B. Mincks,
Chairman

Riley Dietz,
Secretary