

Economic Aid to Families

During the process of adjustment to changing economic situations many families and children may be left without an assured livelihood because of unemployment, disability, low wages, or other factors beyond their control. It is becoming the established American policy that these families be given adequate economic assistance (General Report, p. 21).

1. Measures for unemployment compensation, workmen's compensation, and old-age and survivors benefits, which are of special importance in relation to children, should be extended as to coverage and liberalized as to benefits provided, and insurance against loss of income through temporary or permanent disability should be developed.

2. The Federal Government should adopt a policy of continuing and flexible work programs for the unemployed, operated and primarily financed by the Federal Government and carried on in cooperation with State and local governments. The amount of work provided in each State should be in proportion to the number of needy unemployed. As supplementary to this program and in no way displacing it, the Federal Government should provide aid to the States for general relief covering all persons in need who are not in the categories now the objects of special Federal concern. Federal aid for general relief should be adjusted in each State to the economic capacities and relief needs of that State.

3. States should provide substantial financial assistance to local units to make possible adequate public assistance and relief. State assistance should be adjusted to need and financial capacity of the local units.

4. Aid to Dependent Children should be further developed with the objective of enabling each eligible family to provide adequate care for its children. Rigid limitations on the amounts of grants to individual children or families should be removed from State and Federal laws. Necessary appropriations should be made by State and local governments and by the Federal Government. Federal aid should be equitably adjusted to the economic capacities and the needs of the several States.

5. State laws making legal residence a prerequisite for economic aid should be made uniform and reasonable, with no more than a year required for establishing residence. The Federal Government should take full responsibility for developing plans to care for interstate migrants and transients, such plans to be administered in cooperation with the States but with the Federal Government assuming complete financial responsibility. The States should assume the responsibility for State residents who are without legal local residence, with such aid as may be made available by the Federal Government for general public assistance.

6. In all systems of economic aid safeguards should be provided to assure staff selected on the basis of merit, adequate in number and qualifications to administer the benefits and to provide or obtain for each family the services needed.

Public Administration and Financing

This Conference believes that it would be unsound to relieve governments on State and local levels from responsibility for such services as schooling, recreation, health, and medical service. It is important, however, to assure a reasonable minimum in these services and to remove inequalities so far as possible by spreading the cost. The Conference therefore endorses a consistent and well-organized system of grants by States to localities and by the Federal Government to States, for the support and expansion of certain services to children (General Report, p. 79).

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It is of the utmost importance that merit systems be adopted in administration of public service in local, State, and Federal governments. . . . This Conference looks to a time when the body of public servants will be carefully selected and retained by reason of professional qualifications and will be backed by a strengthened and informed public opinion (General Report, p. 80).

The following principles are basic to the proper development of public services to children:

1. The number of local administrative units of government for health, education, and welfare should be reduced, and units sufficiently large and appropriate for efficiency and economy in performing the functions of government should be organized.
2. Financial responsibility should be shared by governments at the various levels—local, State, and Federal—taking into account the needs in the respective localities and States and the resources of these governmental units.
3. Merit systems which will assure competent personnel to perform the services essential for children should be adopted in public administration in local, State, and Federal governments.