



**Research in Progress and Available Data for Research in State Departments of Public Welfare in the Southeastern Region, 1936-1938**

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## PUBLIC WELFARE AND SOCIAL WORK

Contributions to this Department will include material of three kinds: (1) original discussion, suggestion, plans, programs, and theories; (2) reports of special projects, working programs, conferences and meetings, and progress in any distinctive aspect of the field; (3) special results of study and research.

### RESEARCH IN PROGRESS AND AVAILABLE DATA FOR RESEARCH IN STATE DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC WELFARE IN THE SOUTHEASTERN REGION, 1936-1938\*

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LARGELY due to the participation of the Federal government, first in the relief program and more recently in social security, our social horizon is no longer limited to the narrow boundaries of county and state, but has been enlarged to include the region and the nation. Increasingly social workers, teachers of sociology, and related professional groups are becoming interested in what other states besides their own are doing in collecting social statistics, and conducting social surveys and special studies. There is at present, however, no adequate clearing house of information either on a regional or a national basis with regard to social problems. We have of course at ten year intervals a tabulation by the United States Census Bureau of inmates in charitable, penal and correctional institutions, and the Children's Bureau issues certain annual juvenile court statistics and makes public from time to time special studies in child welfare. The Federal Social Security Board

also is beginning to make available by states current data on old age assistance, aid to dependent children in their own homes, aid to the blind and the crippled, etc. But for the great mass of social and public welfare problems, the state is still the unit in the collection and publication of social statistics. Suppose, for example, a social worker in Tennessee wishes to find out what effect the Federal program of old age assistance has had upon the rate of admission to almshouses in various Southern states. No Federal agency at present could supply this information. Such data would have to be secured separately from each state. Suppose, again, the Georgia Department of Public Welfare made some startling discoveries in regard to the "prolificness of families on relief." Unless Georgia had an extremely capable publicity director, the chances are most of the Southern states would never hear of this study. This would be unfortunate, for the states should be able to share the results of their social experimentation and research with their neighbors. There is clearly needed, therefore, some medium of exchange of social work data in the

\*Read before the third annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society in Chattanooga, Tennessee, April 1, 1938.

Southeastern region. It is to be hoped that the Southern Sociological Society will attempt to meet this need.

This paper embraces the research activities of the state welfare departments in the eleven states included within the Southeastern region; namely, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. The first step in assembling this material was to consult the most recent annual or biennial reports issued by the various welfare departments. This was not very satisfactory, however, because even the most recently published reports included material two or three years old, and several of the state welfare departments have been established or reorganized so recently that they have issued no formal reports. For instance, six of the eleven states set up or reorganized their welfare departments during the year 1937; Louisiana in January, 1937, Arkansas and Georgia in February, and Florida, Tennessee, and South Carolina on July first. Two state welfare departments were organized in 1936, Kentucky in March, and Mississippi in April, while Alabama's Department of Public Welfare was set up in 1935. Virginia's Department of Public Welfare was last reorganized in 1927, while the form and organization of the North Carolina State Board of Charities and Public Welfare is essentially the same today as when it was reorganized in 1917.

With so many recent administrative changes in the state welfare departments, the major emphasis, necessarily, has been placed upon organization. With a view to finding out, however, what has been accomplished in the meantime in social research, what facilities for research are available, what research is in progress or is planned for the near future by the state welfare departments, a three page ques-

tionnaire was sent to the eleven states in January, 1938, and all were returned with the desired information.

#### DEPARTMENTAL PROVISION FOR RESEARCH

The first question dealt with what provision has been made for research in the organizational set-up of the welfare department. The returns indicate that no department in the eleven states has a separate bureau or division of research. In eight states (Kentucky, Arkansas, Louisiana, Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina) there is a bureau or division of *Research and Statistics*; in Alabama there is a division of *Statistics and Surveys*; while in Georgia and North Carolina there is a *Statistical Section* or a *Statistical Service* within the Division of Public Assistance. Almost without exception the major function of these bureaus or divisions of research and statistics has been to collect and tabulate the data on the county and state social security program required by the Federal Social Security Board. These data are practically uniform for all the states and constitute almost the only current basis for comparing the extent of the social needs of one state with those of another.

The staffs of these divisions of research and statistics are usually small, consisting in the main of one technician and one to seven clerical workers. In Alabama there is one part-time clinician and one part-time clerical helper in the Division of Statistics and Surveys. In Georgia there is "one person on the staff who devotes his time to research work, largely in connection with projects sponsored by the State Department of Public Welfare and carried out by WPA on a project basis, in the fields of Public Assistance and Child Welfare." In North Carolina the heads of the various divisions are expected to make surveys and studies and to issue the

results in bulletin form. No special appropriation, however, has ever been made for this purpose, and there are no special inducements to encourage research. Research projects in most of the states originate out of the need for facts and information on which to base policies and future action. There is apparently no clear-cut policy in the state welfare departments with reference to relative emphasis to be placed on research as compared with administrative duties. The only department making a definite comparative statement on this matter declared "we are devoting about two per cent of our time and money to research."

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED BY  
LAW

That social research and the making of special studies and surveys is regarded in general as an important function of the state welfare department is evident from the following quotations from the various public welfare laws:

*Alabama.* Among the listed duties of the State Department are included "the compilation of statistics and other information relative to public welfare and to make surveys and in other ways to ascertain the facts which cause or contribute to the need for public assistance, family welfare, child welfare, and other welfare activities."

*Arkansas.* The Department is authorized to "carry on research and compile statistics relative to the entire public welfare programs throughout the State, including all phases of dependency, defectiveness, delinquency, and related problems; and develop plans in coöperation with other public and private agencies for the prevention as well as treatment of conditions giving rise to public welfare problems."

*South Carolina.* "The Department shall

study the various social problems confronting the State, inquiring into their causes and possible cures, making such surveys, gathering such statistics, and formulating such recommended public policies in connection thereto as may be in the interest of the State, and make such information available in published form."

*Florida.* "The Board shall investigate and study the causes of the dependence of indigents." (This state is also one of nine states in the Union keeping a perpetual census of dependent children for the United States Bureau of the Census.)

*Louisiana.* The State Department provides services to parish governments including "the compilation of statistics and necessary information relative to public welfare problems throughout the State." (Manual, p. 6.)

*North Carolina.* The State Board has listed among its powers and duties "to study the subjects of nonemployment, poverty, vagrancy, housing conditions, crime, public amusement, care and treatment of prisoners, divorce and wife desertion, the social evil and kindred subjects and their causes, treatment, and prevention, and the prevention of any hurtful social condition. To study and promote the welfare of the dependent and delinquent child." The Board is directed also to "give special attention to the causes of insanity, defect or loss of the several senses, idiocy, and the depravity and infirmity of the physical organization." It is required, furthermore, "to issue bulletins and . . . in other ways to inform the public as to social conditions, and the proper treatment and remedies for social evils."

*Tennessee.* The Department of Institutions and Public Welfare shall "study the incidence of dependency, defectiveness, and delinquency in Tennessee, the causes of such conditions, and the efficiency of

methods used in Tennessee and elsewhere to prevent and remedy such conditions."

*Virginia.* "The Board shall . . . collect and publish statistics regarding the dependent, defective and delinquent classes, both in and out of institutions, within the State, and such other data as may be deemed of value in assisting the public authorities and other social agencies of the State in improving the care of these classes and in correcting conditions that contributed to their increase."

*Georgia.* The State Department shall "provide services to county governments including . . . the compilation of statistics and necessary information relative to public welfare problems throughout the State."

*Kentucky.* The Department of Welfare shall exercise certain administrative functions including "the compilation of statistics and necessary information relative to public welfare problems throughout the State." It is also charged with the duty of "operating a laboratory of criminal identification and statistics."

*Mississippi.* The Act creating the State Department of Public Welfare is known as the "Mississippi Old Age Security Act," and deals solely with the administration of old age assistance. No specific reference is made to any type of research or special studies.

RESEARCH STUDIES AND SURVEYS COMPLETED  
BY STATE WELFARE DEPARTMENTS DURING  
THE CALENDAR YEARS 1936 AND 1937,  
BY STATES

*North Carolina*

1. *Juvenile Court Cases in North Carolina, 1929-1934*, by Wiley B. Sanders and William C. Ezell. This study includes more than sixteen thousand cases of children passing through one hundred and eight city and county juvenile courts during the five year period. The pur-

poses of the study were to show the effects of the economic depression on the number and types of juvenile court cases, to bring up-to-date an earlier statistical study of twenty-three thousand juvenile court cases in North Carolina, and to stress the need for periodical collection and tabulation of juvenile court statistics, and more adequate State supervision of juvenile courts. Published by State Board of Charities and Public Welfare in 1937. 53 pages.

2. *A Study of Negro and White Pupils in Piedmont North Carolina*, by Harry V. Bice. This study was made under the direction of the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare through the division of Mental Hygiene and the division of Child Welfare. It consists of results of mental tests upon 438 white pupils and 457 Negro pupils in two representative communities in North Carolina. 23 pages. Completed but not yet published.

*Alabama*

1. *Health and Housing Conditions in 548 Aid to Dependent Children Families*. In August and September 1936 an analysis of health and housing conditions was made in 548 Alabama families receiving public assistance under a classification of aid to dependent children. One thousand five hundred eighty-one children were involved in the study, which was made at the request of the State Department of Public Welfare under the direction of the State Department of Health. The county units of health and public welfare cooperated to make the analysis effective. The counties were selected with due regard for the facilities to make the study and as being representative of average prevailing conditions. A summary of this study was published in the February, 1937, issue of *Alabama Social Welfare* (official monthly publication of the State Department of Public Welfare) and, also,

in the First Annual Report of the State Department of Public Welfare.

2. *Almshouse Studies*. At various intervals during the past two years, studies have been made of the Alabama almshouse situation and, also, of arrangements made for care of former almshouse residents. None of these studies have been released in detailed form but summaries of the results have been published from time to time in *Alabama Social Welfare Magazine* and, also, in the First Annual Report of the Department. Strikingly significant is the reduction in number of almshouses in Alabama from sixty-five to fifteen in two years' time. An article regarding almshouses in Alabama has been released for publication in the March issue of the *American Public Welfare News*.

#### Arkansas

1. *Almshouses in Arkansas*, by A. C. London.

2. *Social Characteristics of C.C.C. Enrollees*, by A. C. London.

3. *Four Arkansas Boys and the C.C.C.*, by A. C. London and others.

4. *Social Characteristics of Cases Opened and Cases Closed, Nov. 1, 1936-June 30, 1937*, by London, Reeves, and Witsell.

The Department's monthly publication *Arkansas Public Welfare Review* also contains accounts of small scale research projects.

#### Florida

*Florida Social Security Survey*. Published in June, 1937, by the former State Board of Social Welfare in coöperation with the Works Progress Administration. This report includes a picture of the relief situation in Florida during 1936, and a detailed study of 15,505 aged persons in need of assistance and 21,648 dependent children.

#### Virginia

*The Virginia Jail System, Past and Present*, by R. B. DeVine. Published by the State Printer, 1936. 33 pages.

#### Tennessee

1. *Study of Relief Loads of State Welfare Commission, Works Progress Administration, County Almshouses, Mothers' Aid, and County Out-door Relief*. May, 1937. Not published.

2. *Study of Population, Housing, Financing, and Supervision of All County Almshouses in Tennessee*. Conducted in coöperation with the State Conference of Social Work, November-December, 1937. To be published.

#### Georgia

1. *A Report of the Social Security Survey in Georgia*, by Miss Ada M. Barker. This study, sponsored by the State Department of Public Welfare and carried out as a W.P.A. project, was published in March, 1937. 128 pages. It includes an intensive study of persons sixty-five years of age and over and of dependent children made from the records of the Emergency Relief Administration from July 1933 to November 1935, the cases on county outdoor relief rolls in November 1935 and the records of the inmates of the county almshouses in the same month, for the purpose of estimating the extent to which Georgia might participate, both in receiving the benefits of the Federal Social Security Act and in paying its costs. Receiving relief from public funds in 1935 were 23,850 persons 65 years of age or over, and 53,075 children.

2. *A Survey of Crippled Children in Georgia*, supervised by Ben H. Askew, III. Published in 1937 as a W.P.A. project. 31 pages. The main purpose of the study was to secure a census of crippled children,

21 years of age or under, including basic data which would be useful in establishing a coördinated program for the care and training of crippled children living in the state during the period January–April, 1937. Of the 7,557 crippled children included in the survey, infantile paralysis was found to be responsible for 21.8 per cent of the cases.

3. *Survey of Criminal Court Procedure in Georgia*, directed by Edward A. Terry and William Taylor Thurman. Sponsored by the Georgia Department of Public Welfare and carried out as a W.P.A. project this study of 176 pages was published in 1937. The survey covered the decade closing December 31, 1935, and included 234,324 cases from the trial courts of 57 representative counties out of the total 159 counties. It is expected that the findings will furnish material to the proper authorities by which they may judge whether the workings of the court machinery have been successful. A large portion of the labor of our law enforcement and court department was found to be non-productive. Only half the cases in the Superior Court resulted in convictions. It was estimated that during the year 1935 in Georgia the sum of three and a half million dollars was spent for officers' fees alone. If all the other costs of crime could have been obtained the total would be profoundly startling.

*South Carolina, Kentucky, Mississippi,  
Louisiana*

In these states the department of public welfare has been established so recently that no research studies have been completed.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS AS OF JANUARY  
1938

*North Carolina*

1. *Survey of County Home Inmates*, by

Dr. J. W. Nygard, Director of the Division of Institutions and Corrections. Each case will be studied with a view to determining whether suitable placement can be made outside of the county home. Expected date of completion, April 1, 1938.

2. *Survey of Mental Patients and Feeble-minded Persons Confined in County Jails During the Year 1937*. This study also made by Dr. Nygard. Survey will be completed April 1, 1938.

3. *Survey of Children Confined in Jails During 1937*. By Dr. J. W. Nygard. The purpose is to learn the race, sex, and age of the child, the charge against him, the length of time he was held in jail, and the disposition. Tentative results, recently announced, indicate that 1070 children under 16 years of age from 72 counties were confined in jail during the year 1937, or approximately 39 per cent of the children handled each year by the juvenile courts. Expected date of completion April 1, 1938.

4. *Survey of County Public Welfare Organization, Facilities and Resources*. By R. Eugene Brown, Assistant Commissioner, and members of the Field Social Work Service. The purpose is to obtain a general picture of the program in each county and to measure its effectiveness in meeting the needs in the counties. The study will also provide the basis for a directory of social agencies in North Carolina. The survey will be completed some time during 1938.

5. *Survey of Boarding Homes for Children*, by Miss Lily Mitchell, Director of Child Welfare. This study to determine the effectiveness of the boarding home program in North Carolina will include unlicensed as well as licensed boarding homes.

6. *Survey of Children in County Homes*. Likewise by Miss Mitchell. The purpose

is to determine whether the child might be removed and placed under boarding home care.

7. *Survey of the Population of Child-caring Institutions*. By the same director. To find out how many of the children in the institutions would be eligible for aid to dependent children if they were not in institutions. A study of the waiting list will also be made. It is expected that these three child welfare studies will be completed during 1938.

Other studies planned by the State Board but not actually begun are (1) a study of low grade feebleminded children in their own homes and their effect upon other members of the family, and (2) a study of the effects of institutional treatment upon juvenile delinquents.

#### *Alabama*

*Social Characteristics of Almshouse Residents as of November, 1937*. This study will be completed at an early date.

Other types of studies suggested as needed in Alabama are an analysis of social characteristics of public assistance cases and of children receiving foster home care, studies of farm tenancy, juvenile delinquency, etc.

#### *Arkansas*

No plans have been made for research for the year 1938, though it is suggested that a detailed study of personnel would be helpful; also some cost of living studies in various sections of the state.

#### *Florida*

No research is being carried on at present.

#### *Virginia*

1. *Virginia in Welfare Work*, by Arthur W. James. In preparation. Approximately 500 pages.

2. *The Story of Dr. J. T. Mastin, Secretary Virginia Board of Charities and Corrections*. By Emily W. Dinwiddie and Arthur W. James. 1938.

3. *Public Welfare Interpretation in Virginia*. By Arthur W. James. 1938.

#### *Tennessee*

This state has perhaps the most comprehensive and clearly defined program for social research of any state welfare department in the South. The act creating the department authorizes the Commission "to appoint, with the consent and approval of the Governor, a committee or committees of citizens to act in an advisory capacity on any matter within the jurisdiction of the department." In accordance with this provision six advisory committees of citizens from all parts of the state have been appointed "to conduct a study of the present Public Welfare set-up and consider possible improvements based upon the needs of the people." The six committees cover the following fields: (a) public assistance and direct relief, (b) child welfare, (c) mental hygiene, (d) paroles, probation, and pardons, (e) correctional institutions, and (f) prevention at the source. That the research work of these committees will be of a high quality is evidenced by the fact that they have as consulting experts to assist them several prominent Tennessee members of our Southern Sociological Society. According to the preliminary announcements these committees were expected to begin their work on February third and would complete their study and submit a written report of their findings by October 15, 1938, with recommendations.

#### *Georgia*

1. *Indexing Records Department of Public Welfare*. Data pertaining to agricultural



and industrial resources and property distribution, tax values, and property ownership is being indexed and filed county by county from existing data in Government offices for the newly created Division of Public Assistance of the State Department of Public Welfare. This project, under the supervision of Albert Jenkins of the Department, should be completed during March, 1938.

2. *Statewide Survey of the Blind*, supervised by T. W. Anderson. This study covers the number, race, sex, education, handicaps, and abilities of blind persons in Georgia, and the efficiency of existing programs for the blind. Expected date of completion is September 1, 1938.

3. *Social Security Survey*, by E. A. Terry.

(a) *Chronic Relief Cases*: This study embodies some important facts regarding those cases which have received relief in each of the years 1933, 1934, and 1935, and have been employed by the W.P.A. in the years 1935, 1936, and 1937, and were actively engaged in W.P.A. employment on December 31, 1937. This study is scheduled for completion in March 1938.

(b) *Prolificness of Families on Relief*: This project consists of a comparison of the birth rate for families which have been benefited by the Emergency Relief Administration's program from 1933 to 1935 and Works Progress Administration's work program 1935 to 1938 with the birth rate of the same families during the years 1928 to 1929. Probable date of completion, July 1, 1938.

(c) *Sociological Facts Relating to Families Which Received Relief during the Years 1933 to 1935*: This study includes size of families, education, type of employment, home ownership, place of residence, and race. It is scheduled to be available by July 1, 1938.

4. *Survey of Criminal Court Procedure in Georgia*, by E. A. Terry.

(a) *The Time Element in the Disposal of Criminal Cases*: Covers trial courts in 57 counties. Will be published probably in March, 1938.

(b) *The Superior Court of Madison County, Georgia*: This is a summary of criminal cases docketed in the Superior Court of Madison County for the period 1816 to 1935. Will be completed prior to July 1938.

(c) *Differences Between Treatment of Cases in Which Pleas of Guilty and Pleas of Not Guilty Were Entered*: Covers sentences given in the trial courts of 57 counties in Georgia for selected crimes. Completion expected during spring of 1938.

In addition to the above studies now in progress in Georgia it may be noted that arrangements are being made for a study by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene of the present institutional care of the mentally diseased looking toward a program for more adequate facilities.

#### Mississippi

A study is now being made "to determine whether or not old-age assistance has had any effect on the number of persons cared for in the county almshouses." Expected date of completion, March, 1938.

#### Kentucky

*Reorganization of the Houses of Reform (Juvenile Correctional Institutions)*. By J. M. Watters.

#### South Carolina

A study is in progress to determine a fair and practical formula for allocating funds to the various county units. By A. T. Moore, Jr., Chief of the Division of Research and Statistics. Not to be published.

#### Louisiana

Expects "within the next few months to get a regular research program under way."

## CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a definite need for a more adequate medium of exchange of information between state welfare departments in regard to results of research and special studies.

2. Engaging in research, making special studies, compiling statistics on welfare problems, etc., is clearly set forth as a necessary function of the state welfare department in the welfare laws of all the Southeastern states except one, Mississippi.

3. Definite provision for research has been made in the organizational set-up of the state welfare departments in all the states in the Southeast, and the term *Research* is included in the title of one of

the sub-divisions of the department in eight of the eleven states studied.

4. Although eight of the eleven state welfare departments have been established or reorganized during the past two years a considerable amount of research has been completed or is in progress.

5. As soon as newly established welfare departments have completed their administrative organization, there is reason to hope that still more emphasis will be placed upon research.

6. For the stimulating effect of such an inquiry upon the state welfare departments themselves, and for the possible value it may have for social workers and sociologists, it is hoped that reports on research in progress by these agencies may be presented from year to year as long as the need is indicated.

## THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF PUBLIC WELFARE WORKERS\*

WILMA VAN DUSSELDORP

*Georgia State Department of Public Welfare*

IT IS important to draw as fully as possible upon accumulated knowledge and experience, if what is done in the field of public welfare work in the near future is to serve the public to best advantage. Due to the emergence of a new volume of need, and a greater awareness of our limitations for meeting that need, it is necessary to devise plans for giving guidance to the program of work, which, so far as we know, is sound and helpful. From this combination of situation and feeling of responsibility, the term In-Service Training has arisen.

\* Read before the third annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society in Chattanooga, Tennessee, April 1, 1938.

During recent years, the public's general conception of responsibility to people has grown faster than have the resources for meeting that responsibility. That is true with regard to both financial resources and adequate service which carries the quality of the best we know about public welfare practice. Facing this situation squarely, there seems at times to be a threat that unless the quality of the best of practice we know, will accompany the financial assistance given to people, there may be loss of opportunity to apply a good quality of service at all.

During the administration of emergency relief funds all over our country the service given people in the name of social work