

the educational level. Twenty-eight percent of all employees in 1955, compared with 19 percent in 1950, had full professional training, and the number with less than 1 year of training dropped from 15 percent to 8 percent. The number with a bachelor's degree but no graduate social work education rose from 24 percent to 31 percent, and the number without a college degree dropped from 15 percent to 7 percent. In view of the increase and turnover in child welfare personnel the progress made is perhaps even greater than appears.

During the year ended June 30, 1956, educational leave from the child welfare programs was granted to 468 employees (8 percent of the total number in professional positions). All but a few enrolled in professional schools of social work. Only six States had no educational leave program in operation in that year.

Educational leave programs are supported almost entirely from Federal funds. In 1956 these funds amounted to \$538,226—8 percent of all Federal funds spent by States under grants-in-aid for child welfare services. Federal funds met the entire cost of salary, stipend, or travel for 68 percent of all persons granted leave and part of the cost for 6 percent. State and local funds met the full cost for 13 percent, and no agency payment was made to 14 percent. In 32 States all educational leave payments came from Federal funds.

Of the 468 persons granted educational leave during the year ended June 30, 1956, 388 had completed their leave by that date. Ninety-two percent of them returned to the agency from which leave had been granted, since persons given leave ordinarily make a commitment to return. Four out of 5 of the returning workers went to casework jobs. Of those completing leave, 55 percent had enrolled for the first year of professional social work education and 45 percent for the second year.

Ten percent more persons completed educational leave in 1956 than in 1955, and thus the downward direction of the immediately preceding years was reversed. A decline that had followed 1952, when Federal balances to the credit of the States were being exhausted, had been so sub-

stantial that the number in 1956 was still 24 percent less than that in 1952.

It seems clear that the Federal grant-in-aid program has contributed to the progress made in the past 10 years in the public child welfare services. These grants have greatly strengthened personnel resources, especially in rural and low-income areas. Despite this progress, in 1956 half of all the counties in the United States, with a fourth of the Nation's children, still did not have access to the services of a full-time child welfare worker. There remains a long road to be traveled toward the goal of an adequate, nationwide, public child welfare program.

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## Public Assistance Terms

Data on the operations of the public assistance programs are carried each month in the BULLETIN in the *Current Operating Statistics* section and are also presented in the *Annual Statistical Supplement*. The following definitions explain briefly the meaning of the terms used in these tables.

Public assistance programs, financed from Federal, State, and, in some instances, local funds, provide aid to families or persons on the basis of need and usually, also, of other eligibility conditions. The programs furnish assistance primarily to families or individuals in their homes, although they may also assist recipients living in boarding or nursing homes or in some types of public or private institutions. The assistance may be in the form of money (cash or check) or vendor payments for goods or services, including payments for medical care. The cost of remedial care may be included in vendor payments for medical care. Public programs providing allowances or benefits to persons on a basis other than need are not considered public assistance. There are four special types of assistance—the State-Federal programs—and the State-local program of general assistance.

### *Special Types of Public Assistance*

Old-age assistance, aid to the blind, aid to dependent children, and aid to

the permanently and totally disabled are designated as special types of public assistance because they aid special groups of needy persons. These categories of persons are broadly defined by the assistance titles of the Social Security Act and are specifically defined for each State by State law and administrative regulation.

The data presented in the monthly series are for programs administered under plans approved by the Social Security Administration for Federal financial participation. For States with plans that go beyond the Social Security Act's definition, the data also cover program operations that are outside that definition and are administered without Federal financial participation.

### *General Assistance*

General assistance is administered and financed by State and/or local governments and is designed to aid individuals and families when their needs are not otherwise met. General assistance is variously called general relief, home relief, direct relief, indigent aid, and so on. The term excludes programs that are limited to special groups, such as statutory veterans' relief or foster-family care for children, but it may include programs limiting eligibility on the basis of employability. Since the unifying influence of Federal participation is lacking in general assistance, variations in State and local practices affect the comparability of such data even more than they affect data for the special types of assistance.

### *Recipients*

Data on recipients of old-age assistance, aid to the blind, and aid to the permanently and totally disabled represent the number of persons to whom or in whose behalf payments are made for a specified month. Recipient data for aid to dependent children are shown in terms of (a) the number of children in whose behalf payments of this type of aid are made, (b) the number of families in which these children are living, and (c) the number of recipients, which includes the children and one parent or other adult relative in families in which the requirements of at least one such adult are

considered in determining the amount of assistance. In some cases the needs of more than one parent may be included in the budget for families receiving aid to dependent children, but not more than one adult is counted as a recipient in each family.

Under general assistance, the unit of count—the case—follows the administrative practice of the agency. Thus two families in a single household may be regarded as a single case by one agency and as two cases by another agency. The number of general assistance cases is increased in some States by the practice of supplementing payments of the special types of assistance. Such supplementation may be for either maintenance or medical care. General assistance cases for which only vendor payments are made for medical care or for burial are generally excluded.

The numbers of recipients in the several States are imperfect gauges of differences in the numbers of needy individuals because of variations in eligibility conditions and the unequal ability of States to aid needy persons.

Because some recipients receive more than one type of assistance, the total number of recipients of public assistance in a State may be smaller than the sum of the recipients of the various types.

### **Payments**

The data represent payments for a specified month made to or in behalf of recipients and charged by the State or local agency to the specified type of assistance. Payments for the special types of assistance are primarily money payments to recipients and vendor payments for medical care. They may also include small amounts for assistance in kind and

vendor payments for needs other than medical care.

Data on general assistance show payments to cases in cash or kind and orders on vendors for goods or services supplied to general assistance cases. Because of a relatively high rate of turnover among general assistance cases, many payments are for periods shorter than a month; for this reason the average payment is lower than it would be if all payments were based on a full month. Likewise, the practice in a few States of using general assistance to supplement other types of assistance for maintenance needs increases the caseload and lowers their average general assistance payments. On the other hand, the average payment is raised in those States in which supplementation takes the form of payment of large medical bills.

For all programs, expenditures for burials are generally excluded.

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## **PROGRAM OPERATIONS**

*(Continued from page 2)*

year to a low of 308,000 in April. Although it has since increased slightly, the proportion of all adult beneficiaries with benefits withheld in June 1957 was 3.4 percent—0.6 percentage points less than at the beginning of the year.

Benefits withheld because of the employment or self-employment of beneficiaries under age 72 accounted for 81 percent of the suspensions in effect in June; wife's or husband's benefits withheld as a result of the old-age beneficiary's employment or self-employment represented 12 percent. About 600 benefits were suspended because the beneficiary or the old-age beneficiary on whose earnings the wife's benefits are based was working in noncovered employment outside the United States. Some 4,600 young wife's or mother's benefits were suspended because they did not have a child entitled to benefits in their care, and payments to about 2,700 persons were temporarily held up pending determination of the proper payee.

● The decline in the number of families receiving aid to dependent children, the first since October 1956,

highlighted the changes in public assistance caseloads in July. Nearly two-thirds of the States reported decreases in the number of families receiving assistance. Nationally about 3,100 fewer families, and 5,400 fewer children, received aid to dependent children in July than in June. There were also slight decreases in the national caseloads for old-age assistance (3,100 recipients) and general assistance (4,000 cases). The gradual growth in the number of recipients of aid to the blind and aid to the permanently and totally disabled continued. The net result of all these changes was a slight decrease in the total number of recipients of all types of assistance.

In most States, changes in caseloads in July were in the same direction as the changes for the country as a whole. The number of families receiving aid to dependent children dropped 9.4 percent in Arkansas and 4.5 percent in North Carolina when assistance was withdrawn from families including an employable person for whom seasonal employment was presumed to be available. Oregon withdrew assistance from able-bodied children aged 14 or over, and as a result the number of families receiv-

ing aid to dependent children dropped 11.9 percent and the number of children decreased 18.1 percent. Nevada discontinued assistance to all children aged 16-17, but the effect on the total number receiving aid to dependent children was slight.

The largest increases in the number of recipients of aid to the permanently and totally disabled were in the States that have comparatively new programs or that recently liberalized their definitions of incapacity. In general assistance, although some States reported substantial changes in the number assisted, most of them were States with relatively small caseloads.

Assistance payments under all programs totaled \$256 million. Each of the special types of public assistance except aid to dependent children showed an increase from June; the net rise for the four programs combined was \$850,000. Payments for general assistance increased slightly.

For the Nation as a whole, average payments under the four special types of public assistance rose slightly in July. As a result of widely diverse influences, however, fairly substantial increases or decreases occurred in a number of States. The average old-

*(Continued on page 23)*