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STAFF DEVELOPMENT OF CASE WORKERS
IN THE INGHAM COUNTY BUREAU OF
SOCIAL AID, MICHIGAN,
FROM 1944 TO 1954

by
Rhoda Beatrice Pollard





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STAFF DEVELOPMENT OF CASE WORKERS IN
THE INGHAM COUNTY BUREAU OF SOCIAL
AID, MICHIGAN, FROM 1944 TO 1954

by

Rhoda Beatrice Follard

A PROJECT REPORT

Submitted to the Department of Social
Work, Michigan State College,
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THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is now rather generally accepted that staff training is a major administrative responsibility that must be assumed by social agencies if services are to be well and effectively rendered and if all staff, regardless of the amount of preparation at entrance to employment, is to have opportunity to develop professionally in the course of the day to day work.

- Ernest V. Hollis and Alice L. Taylor¹

This statement is particularly pertinent for public assistance which received its greatest impetus through federal participation. The depression in the thirties caught social work in the United States unprepared to undertake the colossal task of supplying aid to the millions of people who were rendered destitute. At that time, the great majority of social workers were in the employment of private agencies and these workers were not enough to cope with the situation. In order to carry out their programs of financial assistance and work relief, the federal and state governments were forced to use whoever was available. Applicants with an average education, either through high school or more, were considered for employment even though they lacked experience in social work.

¹ Ernest V. Hollis & Alice L. Taylor, Social Work Education in the United States, Columbia University Press, New York, 1951, p. 332.

When the Social Security Act of 1935 established federal-state-local participation in public assistance on a permanent basis, the situation as regards the qualifications of the staff remained unchanged. The distribution of financial aid which was almost the sole aim of the public assistance programs in that period of economic distress did not seem to offer a great enough challenge to trained social workers. In some quarters, it was felt that income-maintenance programs did not require the use of professional skills. Those who accepted positions in these programs were usually appointed to executive posts in federal and state departments. The local offices, on the other hand, had to depend almost exclusively on untrained workers.

Staff development became a necessity and was recognized as an essential administrative responsibility. From 1936 the Bureau of Public Assistance, through its Division of Technical Training, worked closely with state agencies encouraging administrators to develop plans for training staff and to experiment with various training methods. Principles of staff development were formulated and circulated among the states.² The result of these beginnings is that today in every state some type of training is being carried on in public assistance agencies and in more than half of the states full-time positions or

² Corinne H. Wolfe, "Group Training Methods in Public Assistance Agencies", Administration, Supervision and Consultation, Family Service Association of America, New York, 1955, p. 19.

units have been set up to give special attention to staff training.³

Within the last twenty years, the categorical relief programs have expanded enormously. In December 1952, a total of 5,400,000 people in the United States, or 1 in 29, were in the receipt of public assistance grants.⁴ But the situation in regard to the proportion of professionally trained workers in the staffs of public assistance agencies hardly improved.

In 1950, only about two out of ten persons holding social work positions in the public assistance program in the United States had any graduate professional training. Only 4 per cent of the social work positions in public assistance were filled with individuals with two years or more of graduate professional education.⁵

At the same time, the need for trained staff in public assistance is becoming more keenly felt. The rising costs of welfare services have created, both among social workers and in the community at large, a demand for more specific demonstration of the value of these services. Further, the social insurance programs and improved economic conditions are causing a proportionate reduction in the number of public assistance recipients. The result is

³ Ernest V. Hollis & Alice L. Taylor, op. cit., p. 332.

⁴ Anne E. Geddes & Charles E. Hawkins, "Public Assistance", Social Work Yearbook 1954, A.A.S.W., New York, 1954, p. 395.

⁵ Fedele F. Fauri, "The Shortage of Social Workers: A Challenge to Social Work Education", Social Work Journal, April 1955, pp. 47-48.

that most of these recipients today are persons whose poverty is due more to their own individual problems than to adverse economic conditions. These people are in great need of rehabilitation. Rehabilitative services require the skill of highly trained staff. Yet, it has not been possible to recruit for the public assistance programs workers who possess the requisite knowledge, understanding and skill. Without adequately trained staff, the demand for service of a better quality must be met by staff development activities.

In public assistance, staff development programs will, for a very long time, be the main source of training for staff. Schools of social work have not been able to keep pace with the demand for professionally trained workers.

From 1946 to 1950 there was a steady increase in the number of students enrolled. Beginning with 1951, there has been a decline each year in full-time students. The decline is substantial - from 4,336 in November 1950 to 3,512 in November 1954 - a decline of one-fifth in a four year period.⁶

Moreover, professional education requires two years of full-time graduate study, a process considered by most public assistance workers to be too long and expensive for the salaries generally paid.

In the circumstances, public assistance agencies have accepted responsibility for staff development and

⁶ Fedele F. Fauri, op. cit., p. 47

generally arrange programs aimed at improving workers' performance. Although not a substitute for professional education, this type of training can contribute much to the growth of workers and should be planned for the whole staff.

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the staff development provisions for caseworkers of the Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid from the time of its consolidation with the county department of social welfare in February 1944 until December 31, 1954. No attempt has been made to evaluate the effectiveness of the staff development activities, for such an undertaking is beyond the writer's immediate interests and abilities. Further, although scattered comments are to be found here and there about the adequacy of various activities, great effort has not been made to discuss the completeness of the Ingham County staff development program as a whole. This has been a descriptive study aimed mainly at obtaining a full appreciation of the content of the staff development program in the Ingham County bureau, and of the factors affecting it.

The knowledge gained from this experience is valuable because it can be applied to similar situations in which an untrained staff is charged with professional social work responsibilities. Many of the difficulties

encountered by the bureau, such as problems connected with supervision, lack of staff interest, staff turnover, large caseloads and insufficient funds are to be found in many social agencies. These must be taken into account in planning the staff development program. Further, all agencies have responsibility for installing new workers - helping them to understand their job, to make maximum use of their abilities and to develop knowledge and skills requisite for adequate performance. A great deal of experimentation has been done in this area in Michigan and so a study of the staff development program of the Ingham County bureau, one of the larger county bureaus, should provide useful information.

It is anticipated that the study would have special meaning for persons charged with administrative responsibility. For this reason, special interest has been shown in those aspects of administration which affect the process of staff development. It is recognized that administrative arrangements in different agencies are not identical, but the use of administrative devices for staff development is a practice that can be employed in most situations and should be encouraged.

Scope of Study

The period covered in the study was February 1944 to December 1954. The same director-supervisor was in office throughout that period and so it was convenient to

start the study from the beginning of his regime. This decision was also influenced by the fact that adequate records on the bureau were not available prior to 1944, which, as has been mentioned above, was the date of the consolidation of the bureau and the county department of social welfare.

Perhaps a more complete appreciation of the staff development program in public assistance in Michigan might have been gained if all of the county bureaus of social aid in the state were studied. However, for the purpose of limiting the study to a workable size, it was decided to examine staff development in the Ingham County bureau only.

Although consolidated under one director-supervisor, the Ingham County bureau and county department of social welfare are administered separately. The caseworkers of the two agencies are governed by severely different policies and requirements. For this reason, a combined study of both agencies would really have resulted in two studies. Since the administrative policies of the bureau are much more definite and standardized than those of the county department, it seemed more useful to study the staff development program in the bureau.

Within the bureau it was found necessary to limit the study to a particular classification of worker - Social Worker AI. This is the designation for the caseworkers,

whose primary function constitutes interviewing public assistance applicants and recipients for the purpose of determining their eligibility for financial aid.

Method of Study

In order to appreciate fully the several factors which affect the staff development program of the Ingham County bureau, it was necessary to examine not only specific educational activities, but also the total administrative structure and operational plan of the public assistance program in the state. It was realized that the caseworkers' participation in staff development activities was influenced by their interest. Thus, attention was given to the professional qualifications and personal characteristics of the workers. Further, the extent to which workers invest in plans for educational development is related to the returns to be gained from such investment. Consequently, the factors which it was felt could affect the use made of the staff development provisions were also examined.

Because categorical aid is a state administered program, it was impossible to exclude the State Department of Social Welfare from the study. The State Department takes responsibility for one of the most important staff development activities - the orientation program. Moreover, the personnel policies governing bureau caseworkers are formulated in the personnel division of the

State Department, in conjunction with the Michigan Civil Service Commission.

Data for the study were collected by means of reviewing literature on staff development; interviewing administrative and supervisory personnel and bureau caseworkers; attending a staff meeting of the bureau; and reading reports, manuals, minutes, studies and other agency material.

A review of literature was made in order to obtain a clear understanding of staff development and to know what activities, policies and practices to identify in studying the Ingham County bureau program. This procedure was necessary because staff development is interpreted variously by different writers.

Interviews were conducted with administrative personnel in the public assistance division and the personnel division of the State Department of Social Welfare, especially with those who have or have had responsibility for training programs. Staff members of the research and survey division of the Michigan Civil Service Commission and the associate-director of the Michigan Welfare League were also interviewed. In the bureau, conferences were held with workers from each classification. A schedule⁷ was used in the interviews with the director-supervisor and the senior casework supervisor. The other persons inter-

⁷ See Appendix A, page 103.

viewed were the other casework supervisor, the clerical supervisor and some of the caseworkers.

The agency material which was read included the Manual of Policies and Procedures, annual reports, minutes of staff meetings, personnel studies and other material. Records from the State Department consisted of orientation manuals, training material, minutes of the Social Welfare Commission, meetings, administrative studies, and biennial reports.

CHAPTER II

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Administration is the process of transforming social policy into social services. This is done by means of staff. Thus, an important administrative responsibility is finding ways for releasing the capacities of staff for the purposes of agency. This process is staff development.

In the literature there seems to be confusion regarding the meaning of in-service training and staff development. In some cases the terms are used interchangeably; at other times one or the other is used without special reason. Josephine Brown, writing on the subject in 1938, states:

In-service training is a phrase borrowed from other fields and relatively new to social work. During the Emergency Relief Administration we talked about 'teaching-on-the-job', and before that, in the pre-depression era, many social agencies gave their workers 'apprenticeship training'. These terms were applied to very different processes, designed to meet situations which varied sharply from each other and from the situation today in personnel needs and training facilities.

There is no question but that we now need a new term, and in-service training has an extensive, if somewhat confused, usage in other fields.⁸

⁸ Josephine C. Brown, "In-Service Training for Public Welfare", Survey Midmonthly, October and November, 1938, page 310.

A new term 'staff development' was introduced later, but 'in-service training' was still retained. In the following statement made in 1954, Evelyn Weller recognizes the distinction between the two terms:

As agencies gained experience, they became aware that within the agency setting and despite a heavy workload there were tremendous potentialities for staff growth and development in the performance of the day by day job. We gradually came to think in terms of staff development programs and by this we mean of course something much more comprehensive than what had formerly been viewed as in-service training programs.⁹

From the above it seems that staff development is more than in-service training. It encompasses rather than supplants in-service training. Arlien Johnson's concept of totality - seeing function and operation as a whole - is useful in understanding staff development. In-service training constitutes specific educational activities designed to develop the staff. Staff development, on the other hand, is conceived in terms of the total functioning of the agency. Arthur Miles substantiates this in his definition of in-service training:

In-service training is the part of staff development which calls for (staff) participation. It serves as an orientation of a new employee to the organization, the technical set-up, the routine work and rules and procedures of the agency. It aims at refreshing the skill and knowledge of the staff which regard the methods of work, new developments, changes in legislation and policy and the new professional point of view.¹⁰

⁹ Evelyn G. Weller, "Staff Development as an Integral Part of Administration", A.P.W.A. Central Regional Conference, June 17, 1954. (Unpublished material).

¹⁰ Arthur P. Miles, An Introduction to Public Welfare, D.C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1949, p. 358.

Walter Friedlander's definition further illustrates the current usage of the two terms, staff development and in-service training:

Staff development intends to improve the capacity and effective work of public welfare personnel. It uses in-service training and primarily conscientious supervision as its principal means. It seeks to secure continued professional growth of all staff members and to strengthen their skill and interest in performing the best possible service for the public. Staff development leads to an improvement of the quality of work performed in the social agency.¹¹

Aim of Staff Development

Staff development is "a means of strengthening administration through improving competence of staff". It is designed to "meet the needs of staff in relation to work expected of each employee towards achievement of the agency's purposes".¹² Its immediate concern is developing staff, but its ultimate goal, like that of administration, is offering effective and efficient service. This is appropriately expressed in a statement by the Bureau of Public Assistance as follows:

(Staff development) has as its general goal giving the staff member an opportunity to secure growth on the job and to develop an increased capacity for doing that job.....The ultimate objective of any social service in-training program is the improvement of quality of service offered by the agency. This implies program planning in accordance with the capacity of

¹¹ Walter A. Friedlander, Introduction to Social Welfare, New York, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1955, p. 581.

¹² Bureau of Public Assistance, Division of Technical Training, Staff Development Programs in State Public Assistance Agencies, December 2, 1940. (mimeographed).

staff members and the promoting of growth in staff members on the part of administrators and supervisors.¹³

Nature of Staff Development

In staff development it is envisaged that training would be of a continuous nature. Also, each staff member is expected to contribute towards the process in his own interest. Those who have authority over others have responsibility towards the growth of the staff under their control in addition to their own growth. Ray Johns describes this as:

a continuous process. It is both a personal and an agency responsibility. It involves everyone on the staff, new workers and experienced workers, persons in positions of lesser and greater responsibilities, in all types of positions.¹⁴

Staff development includes specific educational activities as well as facilitative devices calculated to predispose the worker for growth.

Principles of Staff Development

After many years of experience in offering consultation to state welfare departments on staff development, the Bureau of Public Assistance developed principles which have been generally accepted as bases for a sound staff development program. These are:

¹³ Bureau of Public Assistance, Division of Technical Training, Current Practices in Staff Training IV, October 1946, p. 5.

¹⁴ Ray Johns, Executive Responsibility, Association Press, New York, 1954, p. 103.

A. All members of the agency's staff should be included in the program of staff development.

B. The program should be planned specifically to meet needs of staff in relation to the work expected of each employee toward achievement of agency's purposes.

C. Staff members competent to plan and to give direction to necessary content and method should be provided for the program.

D. Because of the dynamic nature of public welfare and of workers' potentialities, it is expected that development of staff will be considered as a continuing process.

E. The program of staff development is recognized as an integral part of administration and as a means of strengthening administration through improving competence of staff.¹⁵

These principles definitely place staff development as an administrative responsibility. The Bureau of Public Assistance felt that "the development and maintenance of staff development programs were a proper part of the administration of state public assistance agencies and necessary to the achievement of their ultimate objectives."¹⁶ Arthur Miles states that staff development "is an important part of personnel administration and of the total administrative process".¹⁷ Indeed, several aspects of administration affect the staff development program.

¹⁵ Bureau of Public Assistance, Division of Technical Training, Staff Development Programs in Public Assistance Agencies, March 14, 1941. (mimeographed).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Arthur P. Miles, op. cit., p. 360.

Among these are the selection of personnel, leave regulations and even salaries. Hence Clyde White's remark, "The present salary level (in public assistance) is hardly conducive to investment in two years of professional education at the graduate level."¹⁸

Content of Staff Development

An adequate staff development program covers a wide range of activities. It makes use of resources within the agency and in the community. Responsibility for the program is assigned to a particular member of the administrative staff and the program is consciously planned and carried out by him. It deserves the name of program only if this is done.

Specific staff development activities include orientation; supervision through staff meetings, individual conferences, group conferences and evaluations; training opportunities, such as lectures, institutes, staff committees, educational leaves and work study plans; participation in policy formulation and public relation activities; and provision of adequate and up-to-date equipment, libraries and office amenities. A staff development program should also plan for fostering good morale, high standards and stimulating informal relationships.

Staff development, like budgeting or public re-

¹⁸ R. Clyde White, Administration of Public Welfare, American Book Company, New York, 1940, p. 154.

lations, is a process of administration. It includes both educational activities aimed at developing technical skill, and facilitative devices intended to enable staff to accept training. The latter are important to the staff development process because they influence the extent to which the educational activities are used. Staff members' set for using the educational activities is often influenced by seemingly unrelated events. For example, in planning its staff development program an agency might include plans for educational leave. However, the conditions of the leave might be so rigorous as to deter workers from making use of the opportunity. Similarly, there are a number of devices which might enhance participation in educational activities. In one agency the installation of new dictaphones was used as an opportunity for a course in case recording.

Staff development is an integral part of the administrative process and should be conceived in terms of the total process.

CHAPTER III

STATE AND COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Public assistance in Michigan today is the culmination of an experiment in the care of the destitute which started with the territorial and early statehood periods of the state. Early arrangements for the care of the 'poor and pauper' were based on the English Poor Law, which concentrated on providing indoor relief - institutional care in almshouses for the 'worthy'.

The period around 1824 marked a turning point in which the giving of outdoor relief - aid to the poor in their own homes - was first accepted as the responsibility of the township and county in Michigan. 'Superintendents of the poor' dispensed payments to those who qualified. Provisions for the care of dependent children were made through apprenticeship to people who would have them. The philosophy which is basic to the present day Aid to Dependent Children program was evidenced in Michigan in 1913 with the introduction of mothers' pensions. This program provided for giving financial aid to mothers in their homes in order to enable them to keep their children with them. However, the administration of the program of mothers' pensions was an activity of the probate court and not of the county or township public welfare office.

State interest in public welfare "came in 1871 with the organization of the State Board of Commissioners for the General Supervision of Penal, Pauper, and Reformatory Institutions, later named the State Board of Charities and Corrections, and the State Public School at Coldwater for dependent children".¹⁹

The participation of the federal government in relief activities during the depression was the first experiment in federal financing for any relief project. The several federal work relief programs were centered in the state welfare department with the counties sharing a bare minimum of responsibility. Under the Social Security Act of 1935, categorical assistance was made available to three groups of dependent persons - the needy aged, dependent children and the needy blind. In 1950 another category, the permanently and totally disabled was added. Funds for the operation of these programs were obtained from federal and state governments, but their administration involved federal, state and local participation.

However, the giving of direct relief continued in the counties.

From the establishment of the Emergency Relief Administration in 1933 to the enactment of the present welfare act in 1939....there entered the question as to who should pay the cost of relief, state or county, and the issue of local versus state administrative control.

¹⁹ Staff Report to the Michigan Joint Legislative Committee on Reorganization of State Government, The Michigan Department of Social Welfare, Report No. 24, October 1951, p. 2.

With the enactment of the 1939 act, however, the state emerged as a leader in public assistance....But the matter of integration of state and local agencies in direct relief administration was not resolved. Hence, Michigan has a dual system of welfare administration. In the area of categorical aids the programs are administered by the state with federal financial participation. In the area of direct relief there is local control with virtually no state supervision and with the state providing financial assistance of fifty per cent or more of the cost of direct relief.²⁰

In accordance with the provisions of the Michigan Social Welfare Act of 1939, a state department of social welfare was created:

which shall possess the powers granted and the duties imposed in this act. Such state department shall consist of a state social welfare commission hereinafter created, and of a director, and of the supervisor of the bureau of social security hereinafter created and such assistants and employees as may be appointed or employed in such department.²¹

Social Welfare Commission

The overall controlling, planning and coordinating responsibility for the State Department of Social Welfare rests with the Michigan Social Welfare Commission which is appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Senate. The Commissioners are a non-salaried bi-partisan body of five members each of whom serves a five-year overlapping term. They appoint the Director of the State Department of Social Welfare who performs the services of secretary to the Commission. On the basis of the authority given to the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

²¹ Act 280, P.A. 1939, Section 1.

Commission through the Act:

to appoint the same person as Director of the Department and Supervisor of the Bureau of Social Security, the Michigan Social Welfare Commission has developed a completely integrated Department of Social WelfareAs a result the Bureau of Social Security in the State Department of Social Welfare has entirely disappeared from the organizational framework.²²

State Department of Social Welfare

The present State Department of Social Welfare is divided into two sections - the administrative services and the social services. There are four divisions in the administrative section. One of them the personnel division, is of particular importance to this study. The formal functions of this division are: general departmental personnel relations and personnel development; maintenance of personnel records; preparation of payrolls; liaison with civil service on personnel recruitment, personnel need, and position specifications and classifications; and liaison with federal government in regard to personnel matters in which federal government reserves the right of final approval. It is clear that some of these activities affect the staff development programs for workers employed by the State Department of Social Welfare.

There are three divisions of the social services section of the State Department - the public assistance division, the children's division and the division of ser-

²² Michigan Social Welfare Commission, Eighth Biennial Report, July 1952 - June 1954, Lansing, Michigan, December 1954, p. 9.

vices for the blind. Each of these divisions is directly responsible to the Director of the State Department, but the head of the children's division also holds the title of supervisor of social services and has a consultative relationship with the heads of the other two divisions. The public assistance division with which this study is mainly concerned is described in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Public Assistance Division

Figure 1 on page 23 shows the organizational structure of the State Department of Social Welfare. The Public Assistance Division, a unit of which is the county bureau of social aid, is:

charged with the overall responsibility for administration of the various categories of assistance in which there is federal financial participation (Old Age Assistance, Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled).²³

Its functions include:

1) The preparation of changes in policy; preparation of rules and regulations relative to the categorical programs for submission to the Commission; and transmission of policies and procedures to the county bureau where the program is put into operation.

2) The conduct of hearings on appeals from dissatisfied applicants or recipients and the preparation of a

²³ Staff Report to the Michigan Joint Legislative Committee on Reorganization of State Government, op. cit., p. 29.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

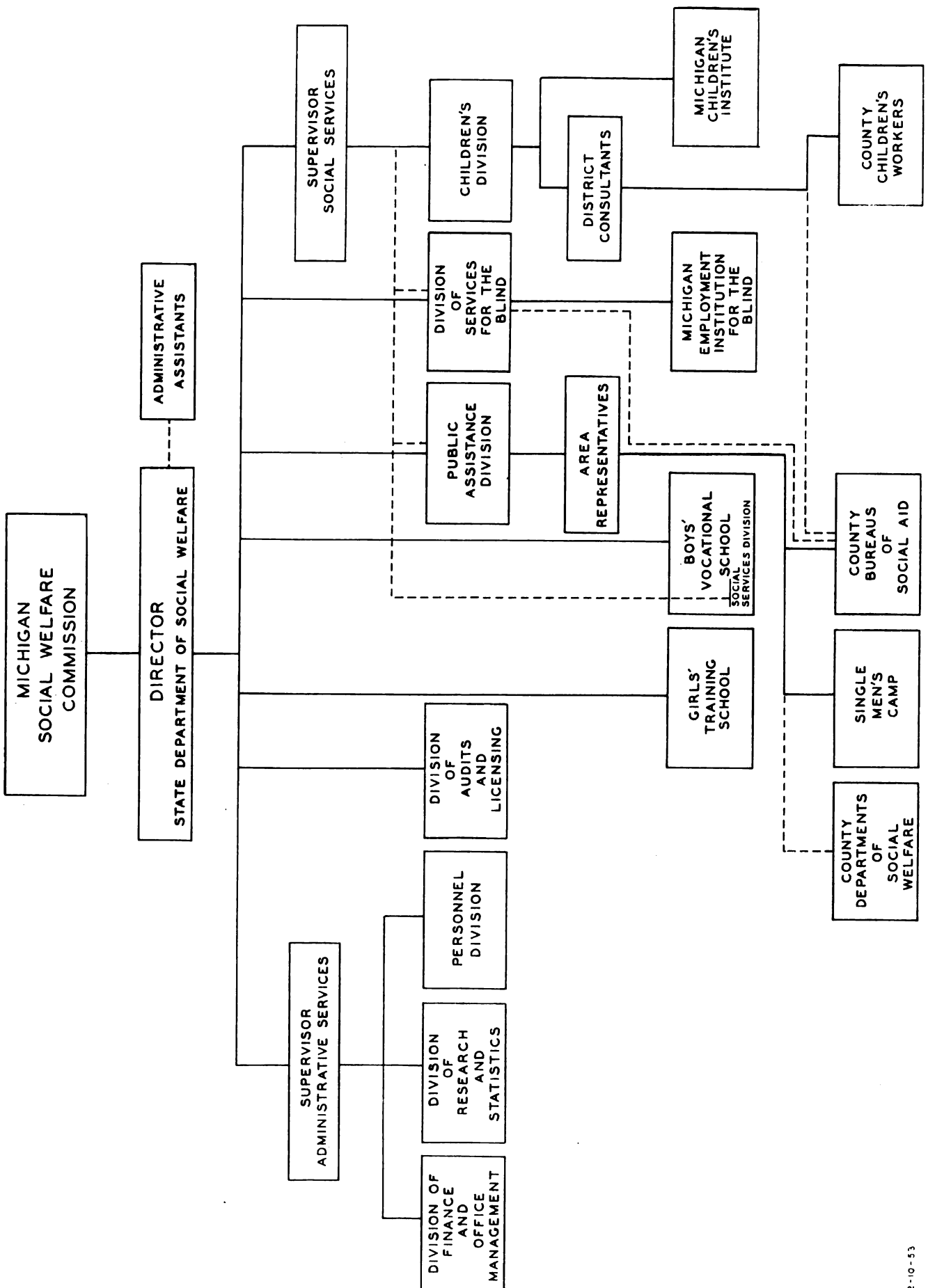


Figure 1. Organizational Chart, State Department of Social Welfare, Michigan.

report on such conduct for the director of the state department.

3) The approval of expenses for burial of deceased recipients.

4) The placing of claims against estates on burial and for reimbursements on grants given.

5) The recommendations to the director of the state department regarding property transfers.

6) The approval of action on fraud cases.

7) The arbitration of disputes as to legal settlement.

8) The inspection of county infirmaries.

9) The supervision and coordination of the inspecting and licensing of homes and institutions for the aged.

10) The rendering of consultative service to county departments of social welfare in the administration of the direct relief program.²⁴

The above functions are divided among three units - the state office; the field staff or area representatives; and the county bureaus of social aid.

(a) State Office

The state office staff includes the supervisor of the division and administrative assistants, one of whom is responsible, among other things, for the state orien-

²⁴ State of Michigan, Department of Social Welfare, Handbook for Bureau of Social Aid Supervisors, Lansing, 1955, pp. 1 - 4.

tation programs for new workers of the county bureaus of social aid. Consultation, legal and technical advice, out-of-state correspondence and supervision of county bureau matters are services offered by the state office. These include the services of medical, ophthalmological and medical social work consultants; consultation on administrative services, on private insurance practices, and on the licensing of homes for the aged and other boarding homes. Because of the technical nature of the services frequently required by public assistance clients, workers in the county bureaus have much need for these services.

(b) Field Staff

In order to offer the best services to the county bureaus (one of which is to be found in each of the 83 counties of the state) the supervisor of the public assistance division and one of his assistants maintain direct²⁵ supervision over a field staff of eleven area representatives. For convenience the state has been divided into eleven geographical districts and each area representative is responsible for one district.

The area representative is the link between central office staff planning and county bureaus of social aid direct operations in granting assistance to eligible recipients. The individual area representative has a dual role. On the one hand, he interprets to the county bureau centrally-developed policies, rules and regulations. On the other hand, he feeds to central office information and evaluations as to the actual

²⁵ The administrative assistant who is responsible for the state orientation programs is the same person who helps the head of the division in supervising some of the area representatives.

application of policies, rules and regulations, as to quality of performance by the bureau and the effect on the client. On the one hand, he is the eyes and ears of central office with respect to local operations. On the other hand, he assists the local bureaus in the solution of problems and represents them in the state office councils.

The specific statutory functions performed by the area representatives in relation to the social security programs are: (a) interpretation of rules and regulations and procedures and check for compliance; (b) collection of data relative to legal settlement disputes; (c) conduct hearings as an agent of the director of the department; and (d) exertion of state bureau authority to determine amount of assistance and allowance of recommended grant through general supervisory means. The area representatives also serve as the field unit for the division of services for the blind and the administrative services division.²⁶

In addition to his duties of consultation with the county supervisors and other staff members of the bureaus who have administrative responsibilities, the area representative also conducts periodic administrative reviews of the bureaus' practices in order to have a basis for objective evaluation of the actual operations of the bureaus.

(c) County Bureaus

The county bureau of social aid is the local agency of the public assistance division through which services are administered.

These services include investigation and determination of eligibility of applicants for categorical aid of four types specified and provided in the Social Security Act in 1935 as subsequently amended. They are: old age

²⁶ State of Michigan, Department of Social Welfare, Handbook for Bureau of Social Aid Supervisors, Lansing, 1955, pp. 1 - 4.

assistance (OAA), aid to dependent children (ADC), aid to the blind (AB), and aid to the permanently and totally disabled (AD); and such other services to recipients as may be needed by them and are within the framework of agency function and the ability of the bureau to provide; and periodic reinvestigation of eligibility of recipients. In the administering of these services, the bureau personnel is governed by Act 280 and its amendments, and the rules of procedures which the Michigan Social Welfare Commission formulates in accordance with the authority delegated by the legislature under the said Act.²⁷

In carrying out its responsibility for administering financial assistance, the county bureau maintains secondary relationships with other divisions of the State Department. The district consultant who is the field representative of the Children's Division works in close relationship with bureau. When questions concerning matters of a technical nature in regard to children's services arise in the county, such as the suitability of homes for ADC clients, the advice of the district consultant is sought. Each county bureau designates to a special worker the responsibility for special services to the blind. All recipients needing these services are assigned to this special worker who is under the general direction of the Division of Services for the Blind of the State Department. With this worker the area representative maintains a direct relationship.

²⁷ Staff Report to the Michigan Joint Legislative Committee on Reorganization of State Government, op. cit., p. 32.

Relationship with County
Department of Social Welfare

Public assistance at the county level is also rendered by the county department of social welfare. Provision has been made in the Social Welfare Act for the establishment of this department in each county of the state.²⁸ The department is managed by a county social welfare board. All expenses for administration of the department are met jointly by the state and the county, each contributing about fifty per cent of the total cost of administration. General relief, as outlined in Section 55 of the Act, is administered by the county departments which are not part of the organizational structure of the State Department of Social Welfare. General relief is provided for persons who are in need but are not eligible for assistance under the categorical assistance programs, or who, though receiving categorical assistance, need additional help.

The two local agencies responsible for the distribution of public relief in Michigan, the bureau of social aid and the county department of social welfare, work in close cooperation. The State Department of Social Welfare permits three types of relationships at the county level. The first type is a dual arrangement, whereby the county bureau and the county department operate in separate quarters with an executive for each agency functioning in

²⁸ Act No. 280, op. cit., Section 45.

a separate administration. Although this is an expensive system, it is the one most widely found in the state.

The second plan, known as the integrated arrangement, is almost the opposite of the dual system. In this case, the same agency administers both categorical and general relief and accordingly all workers must qualify at the state civil service examination, a necessary requirement for employment in a state program. Expenses are met on a joint basis by both the county and the state in proportion to the caseload for each type of assistance program. Those under the categorical program are paid for with federal-state funds and those under general relief with state-county funds.

The third plan is the consolidated system. It allows for separate operation of the county department and the county bureau, but in the same quarters. Further, the executive responsibility for both agencies is vested in one person known as the director-supervisor who is accountable to the State Department for the bureau program and to the county social welfare board for the county department's program. He is appointed by the director of the State Department and accordingly satisfies civil service standards. Fifty per cent of his salary is paid by the State Department, and the balance by the county social welfare board. All personnel of the bureau qualify under state civil service requirements and are paid by the State Depart-

ment. Employees of the county department are selected by the county social welfare board and are paid from county funds.

Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid

In Ingham County, the consolidated system obtains, therefore the county department of social welfare and the bureau of social aid are housed in the same quarters. Figure 2 on page 31 is a chart showing the organizational structure of the Ingham County public relief administration. Mr. Daryl Minnis, the director-supervisor, has executive responsibility for both agencies. As described above, the two agencies operate almost independently of each other. Mr. Minnis is responsible to the supervisor of the public assistance division through the area representative. In the bureau he has responsibility for the management of the entire staff, but delegates most of this responsibility to the senior casework supervisor. However, he directly supervises the caseworker in charge of the office caseload and the caseworker carrying responsibility for special services to the blind. His duties include: interpreting and putting into effect the rules and policies of the Michigan Social Welfare Commission; planning and directing work of the staff in general; planning and chairing monthly meetings; holding individual staff conferences on request; handling correspondence and complaints dealing with criticisms of the bureau program. He supervises the preparation of

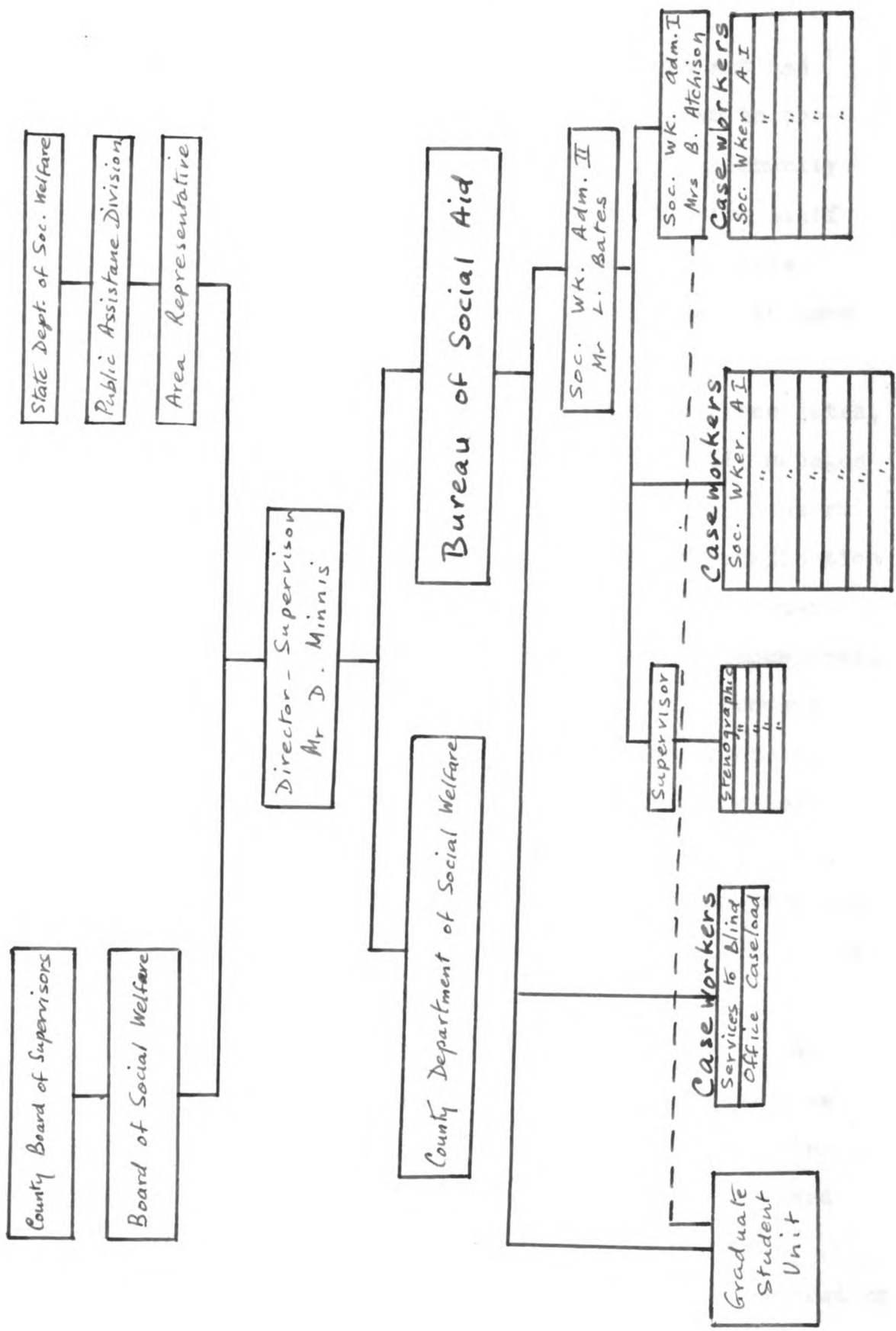


Figure 2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, INGHAM COUNTY BUREAU OF SOCIAL AID

monthly and annual reports compiled by workers and has obligation for interpreting the agency's program to the community for the sake of developing favorable community attitudes. Since this study's concern is with the staff development program in the bureau, Mr. Minnis' duties in regard to the county department of social welfare have not been enumerated.

The senior casework supervisor, Mr. Lawrence Bates, who is classified as Social Work Administrator II, manages the staff of the bureau and supervises the other casework supervisor. This latter practice provides for coordination of the casework program. Mr. Bates also directly supervises seven caseworkers. He reviews the intake procedures, requests for burial, CASI recovery on burials, recovery of estates of former recipients, some correspondence on complaints, and registration and assignment of applications. In addition, all casework records for the State Department are reviewed by him before transmittal from the bureau. In the absence of the director-supervisor, he has total responsibility for the bureau.

Mrs. Blanche Atchison, the other casework supervisor (Social Work Administrator I) supervises five caseworkers and assists in training, orienting and inducting new workers. She is in charge of the Homes for the Aged program. Also, she serves as consultant to the field instructor of the Michigan State College graduate student unit.

The civil service classification of all the caseworkers employed in the bureau is Social Work AI. Some workers have special assignments, such as the special services for the blind cases, the office caseload, cases in homes for the aged, and intake. Selection of workers for these special jobs is made by the director-supervisor who uses as criteria for selection the worker's ability, experience and initiative. The other caseworkers are assigned to cases on a geographical basis.

Because the Ingham County bureau is not centrally located in the county, it is inconvenient for some applicants to get to the office. The solution to this problem has been to set up district offices in Mason, Stockbridge, Leslie and Williamston. The offices are open on specific days for receiving applications by the workers assigned to the particular districts.

The Caseworker's Job

Whether caseworkers have special assignments or not their jobs include similar practices. They share the functions and responsibilities outlined for the bureau in the Social Welfare Act and further interpreted in the Manual of Policies and Procedures.

The central purpose of a public assistance program is to assure adequate money payments to each eligible individual promptly and in a constructive manner, so that his legal rights are protected, his self-respect and dignity as a person are maintained and strengthened, and so that he may live in the community in the same

way as other individuals.²⁹

However, this statement by Jane Hoey does not emphasize the rehabilitative objective of public assistance. Of increasing concern in public assistance is that the help given to recipients should not encourage a permanent dependency, but should aid them to make use of their own resources in order to maintain themselves again.

For the fulfillment of the objectives of the categorical relief program the caseworkers in the bureau are expected to offer service of a professional nature.

An application for public assistance is an application for a money grant and the expressed need is for financial help. Many clients will have no need other than financial and will require only information in order to understand and accept the terms on which assistance is given. Others may request help in adopting their way of living within the terms of the assistance grant. Some will have needs which they are not able to recognize or express.³⁰

These are situations which every caseworker in public assistance must anticipate and with which he must be prepared to deal if he is to give adequate help to clients.

(a) The Content

What then is the content of the caseworker's job?

Two broad areas of function are the determination of eli-

²⁹ Edith B. Elmore, "The Public Assistance Job", Tennessee Public Welfare Record, Vol XIV, No. 3, March 1951, p. 44. Quotation is by Jane Hoey.

³⁰ The Public Assistance Worker, A statement prepared by the Committee on Social Work Education and Personnel, American Public Welfare Association, April 1952, p. 1. (Unpublished).

gibility and service to clients; and other activities related to the job. The former group of functions includes interviewing clients and collaterals in the office, at home and in other places in the community; filling out forms, other than those done during interviews with clients or collaterals; case recording; conferences with supervisors; staff meetings; travelling on visits or other agency assignments; and case reading. The other related activities include the reading of instructions, regulations and policies; formal interpretation of the agency's program through talks before groups and the preparation of written material; planning of work; and miscellaneous functions.³¹

(b) Knowledges, Skills and Abilities

To perform a job which is satisfactory to the agency and the client, the caseworker in public assistance requires certain knowledges, abilities and skills. The Michigan Civil Service Commission which sets standards for employees of the state government, lists certain basic knowledges which caseworkers in the bureaus must possess. These include an elementary knowledge of sociology, psychology and economics; of the basic philosophy underlying social work; of the principles, practices and techniques of social casework; of social work terminology; of agencies in the social work field; of state and federal legis-

³¹ Bernice Madison, The Public Assistance Job and the Undergraduate Social Work Curriculum, San Francisco State College, 1954, p. 64.

lation pertaining to categorical relief; and of family budgeting techniques.³²

The needed skills and abilities are summarized in the following statement by the Committee on Social Work Education and Personnel of the American Public Welfare Association:

- 1) Ability to plan and organize work;
- 2) Skill in communication such as writing, interviewing, recording, community interpretation;
- 3) Skill in determining a client's eligibility for public assistance and his desire and need for other services;
- 4) Skill in the discernment and understanding of attitudes, reactions and relationships;
- 5) Ability to serve clients in a manner which contributes to the maintenance and further development of their self-reliance and self-respect;
- 6) Skill in utilizing the appropriate social services of the agency and in referrals to suitable community resources;
- 7) Ability to participate in a helpful way in the development, evaluation and revision of inter- and intra-agency policies, procedures and agreements;
- 8) Skill in establishing good working relationships with co-workers, workers in other agencies and other interested individuals.³³

³² Michigan Civil Service Commission, Examination Announcement for Social Worker AI, No. 3083 CC (92013) January 19, 1955.

³³ The Public Assistance Worker, op. cit., p. 2.

Civil Service Requirements

All of the caseworkers of the Ingham County bureau have qualified for their positions by meeting standards set by the Michigan Civil Service Commission for employees classified as Social Worker AI. It is necessary to describe in some detail these civil service requirements because the Civil Service Commission determines to a large extent the personnel policies of the State Department. Staff development programs are affected by personnel policies which must therefore be fully appreciated if an adequate understanding of staff development is to be achieved.

(a) Examination

Qualification for employment in the bureau is measured by means of an examination consisting of a written test, an oral interview and an evaluation of experience and training. The present requirements for the entrance examination are:

- 1) Two years of recent full-time paid experience in either social casework in a public or private social work agency, or experience within the last ten years in related fields such as teaching, nursing or home economics, and completion of the twelfth school grade; or
- 2) Completion of two years in an accredited college with courses in social science; or
- 3) An acceptable combination of the basic experience and training specified above.³⁴

The Civil Service Commission also expects persons

³⁴ Michigan Civil Service Commission, op. cit.

to comply with other requirements in order to be eligible to take the examination. Applicants must be United States citizens and must have resided in Michigan for at least six months. An application is filed with the examining commission before the date set for the examination. Any person up to 60 years of age who meets the above requirements may write the examination. The names of all those persons who pass the examination are listed in order of their rating.

(b) Selection of Worker

When a vacancy for a caseworker arises in the county bureau, the personnel division of the State Department makes available to the supervisor of the county bureau the three top names from the employment list for selection. A letter of inquiry is sent to any of the three persons named offering him employment. If no reply is received within 5 days, it is assumed that the person is no longer interested and the letter of inquiry is sent to one of the two remaining persons.³⁵ In this way, it is assumed that the best applicants are appointed.

(c) Probationary Period

A new worker serves a probationary period of six months. This provides an opportunity for him to learn about the job and for the bureau supervisor to assess his

³⁵ When a name is waived in this manner the supervisor may request an additional name from the certification list kept by the personnel division.

ability and interest. Service ratings are prepared by the immediate supervisor of the new worker at the end of the third and sixth months. At the termination of the probationary period, the supervisor fills out the acceptance or non-acceptance section of the rating form, depending on the worker's performance. If the former section is filled out the worker is entitled to permanent employment.

(d) Service Ratings

In addition to probationary ratings, two other types of service ratings are used. These are regular service ratings and promotional potential ratings. Regular service ratings are used for evaluating the performance of workers who are employed permanently. This rating is required annually. Three marks are used to sum up the evaluation - satisfactory, conditional or unsatisfactory. Only those workers who attain a satisfactory mark are eligible for salary increase. A worker who receives a conditional mark must improve his performance before the next rating is due or he is subject to demotion or dismissal. An unsatisfactory rating implies that the worker is ineligible for further step increases in salary and is subject to transfer, demotion or dismissal.

Promotional potential ratings are used along with promotional examinations in grading workers for promotion. The rating reflects the worker's potential ability to assume more important responsibilities.

(e) Salary

The present salary for caseworkers in the county bureau is \$137.60 to \$162.40 every two weeks. When a worker starts at the beginning figure, his next point in the scale is determined on his service rating. If in all successive years he maintains a satisfactory mark, he should reach the maximum point in the scale in four years. After the maximum has been reached a satisfactory rating is still necessary in order that he may retain his job.

(f) Promotion

The next classification in the bureau for which a Social Worker AI may qualify, if he satisfies the appropriate civil service requirements, is that of Social Work Administrator I. This is the classification of a beginning casework supervisor. The salary range for this post is \$148.80 to \$184.88 every two weeks. As mentioned earlier, the civil service requirements for promotion include an examination and a satisfactory promotion potential rating.

(g) Discipline

A worker may be dismissed for failing to carry out duties and obligations assigned by the county supervisor, for un-becoming conduct, or for service ratings below standard. However, only the personnel division of the State Department has the authority to dismiss or discipline a worker. Thus, when a worker has failed to measure up to the standards, a written report is sent to the state

office by the county supervisor.

(h) Grievances

Opportunities are provided for workers to have grievances investigated. A dissatisfied worker discusses his problem with his casework supervisor, the county supervisor and the area representative, in the order listed here. If the worker is still dissatisfied, a written complaint is filed with the director of the State Department through the supervisors of the public assistance division and the personnel division. If the worker continues to be dissatisfied, an appeal can be made to the Civil Service Commission which is the final authority on such matters.

(i) Lay-Off

A worker is subject to lay-off when there is a decrease in the agency's caseload or when there is a shortage of funds. However, the personnel division tries to avoid this situation by effecting a transfer whenever possible. In cases in which a lay-off is inevitable, those workers with the shortest employment records are retrenched first.

Maternity lay-off is available to pregnant workers after the sixth month of pregnancy. At the time of separation, the worker resigns officially but technically it is considered lay-off. If within three years from the date of resignation she becomes available for re-employment,

she is appointed to the first vacancy in the classification to which she belonged before separation.

(j) Educational Leave

Leave of absence without pay may be granted for a period of six months and extended for an additional six months for educational reasons. The casework supervisor, the county supervisor and the personnel division must approve the application for leave. Educational leave cannot be approved unless the worker is taking courses which would enable him to make a more valuable contribution to the State Department on return. Further, leave is only recommended for those workers who establish that they would return to the job at the expiration of the leave.

Workers who wish to attend workshops, institutes or conferences not sponsored or co-sponsored by the Michigan Social Welfare Commission must obtain approval for absence from the supervisors of the bureau. Approval depends on the relevance of the activity for the worker's job and also on the exigencies of the agency service. Moreover, not more than one person, or 20 per cent of the staff, whichever is greater, is permitted to attend an educational activity at the same time. The time spent in the activity is not deductible from annual leave, only the time spent in travelling to and from the activity. On the other hand, for conferences or workshops sponsored or co-sponsored by the Social Welfare Commission, there

is no limit to the number of workers who may attend, and travel time is included in non-deductable leave. All that is required in this case is the approval of the casework and county supervisors.

It is possible for the caseworker to attend school on a work study plan. This plan provides a worker with the opportunity to receive half of his salary while attending regular courses at college. In addition, the worker is expected to carry his usual agency caseload, and must make his own arrangement for doing so.

The Manual

The State Department is aware of the responsibilities which the caseworker's job entails. Consequently, the public assistance division has prepared a Manual of Policies and Procedures, a copy of which is available to each caseworker in the bureau. There is need for frequent revision, amendment and expansion of policies, and so the manual is a voluminous compilation that has become the 'bible' of bureau workers. It is an invaluable instrument for aiding the efficient administration of the program. Casework supervisors in the bureau make full use of it in explaining and interpreting policies and practices.

Caseloads

The personnel division of the State Department estimates bureau workloads on the basis of 200 cases to

each worker. While it is recognized that some cases, for example the Aid to Dependent Children cases, require more work time than others, it is felt that each worker would have about a similar proportion of the different types of cases in his caseload, since cases are assigned on a geographic basis. Casework staff are increased or decreased in proportion to the size of their caseloads. Usually workers are not dismissed on this basis, but are transferred to similar positions in other county bureaus.

CHAPTER IV

STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN THE INGHAM COUNTY BUREAU

Staff development, as explained in Chapter II, is a major responsibility of administration. For the case-workers of the Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid, this responsibility is shared by the public assistance division of the State Department of Social Welfare and the bureau itself. The state office, since 1943, has taken the initiative for providing orientation programs for new workers. Various experiments have been tried in conjunction with the local bureaus in an effort to achieve the most effective results for the good of the public assistance program. However, the local bureau has primary concern for the training on the job of its workers. This training includes supervision; staff meetings; opportunities for workers to attend institutes, workshops, area meetings, and regional and national conferences; opportunities for educational leave and work study plans; and provisions for workers' participation in community projects such as membership in various committees, cooperation with other social work agencies on matters of a professional nature, and identification with service groups.

The area representative, who serves as the liaison between the state office and the local bureau, also makes

contributions to staff development. Through his efforts the bureau staff participates in projects useful to both the local office and the state office. The influence of the Michigan State College graduate student unit on the staff of the bureau should also be noted. This project helps to keep the worker in close touch with the professional standards and practices taught in schools of social work.

The activities identified above do not affect each worker to the same degree. Workers can use only those programs for which they are ready. For example, there are workers who either do not have the necessary undergraduate education for admission to a graduate school of social work, or are not interested in pursuing further professional education. These circumstances eliminate them from using the educational opportunities provided. There are also included in the list some activities which are not available for every worker. Attendance at special institutes is available only to those workers who qualify for admission on the basis of individual attainment, since the opportunities offered by the bureau are limited. For these reasons, it was necessary to give attention to the characteristics of the staff - their age, length of service, marital status and educational qualifications.

In addition to the in-service training activities which are easily recognizable, there are other factors which contribute to staff development. It should not be

forgotten that staff development is an integral part of the administrative process. As such, it cannot truly be separated from other facets of administration like the organizational structure, informal staff relationships and administrative tools and devices.

Orientation Program

Prior to 1942, there seemed to have been no plans for the training of public assistance workers in Michigan. The Social Welfare Commission, in whom is vested the administration of the powers and duties of the State Department, deliberated this subject in their meeting of November 24, 1942. This was as a result of recommendations proposed by Dr. Kelso in his study of the Social Welfare Commission. The Michigan Civil Service Commission also conducted a similar assignment at that time. In comparing the two reports it was noticed that the recommendations on the subject of in-service training were similar. Dr. Kelso's study stated:

To be considered in close connection with staff skills is the question of special instruction in the practices and requirements of the Department. The new worker must spend some time 'learning the ropes' and it is only after some time on the job that he becomes a producing unit for the service. The greener the worker is at the beginning the longer it is likely to take before he becomes an asset. For the purpose of shortening this adjusting period, as well as the upbuilding of staff spirit, the most forward looking state departments in America maintain in-service training courses, in which a seasoned worker, found to be skillful at instruction, directs a course of study and discussion aimed at 'ripening' the newcomer in knowledge of the standards and methods followed by the Department.

It is not meant here that such training process should approximate a school for social work, though it would yield values to the State if the faculties of our several colleges in Michigan, especially the Graduate Curriculum in Social Work of the University of Michigan, were to collaborate with the State Department by contributing some teaching service for the purposes of this in-service training process.

It would be of further advantage to the system if under proper limitations as to numbers and guarantees of continuance on the job, certain promising workers could be given part-time leaves, or hours off, for purposes of technical training, as is done now by some states, notably West Virginia.³⁶

The Civil Service Commission recommended the development of a training program for employees. Their study further proposed that the training program should be coordinated with the recruitment and placement of workers carried on by the personnel staff of the State Department.

In response to the recommendations, the Social Welfare Commission approved a plan for the setting up of in-service training programs for all employees of the State Department. The plan included educational leaves (now operating only in the Children's Division). The program for all social workers was to be established in co-operation with the schools of social work, including Michigan State College. Responsibility for organizing the training program was to be assumed by the Director of

³⁶ Robert W. Kelso, The Organization and Functioning of the System of Public Welfare Services in Michigan: A Report and Recommendations to Governor D. Van Wagener, October 6, 1942, pp. 30 - 31.

Social Welfare in charge of the State Department of Social Welfare and the State Supervisor of Social Security who was in charge of the State Bureau of Social Security.³⁷

Following this meeting, in April of 1943, a training supervisor was appointed to draft a plan for the orientation of newly employed public assistance caseworkers. The final plan was approved by the Social Welfare Commission at their meeting on October 20, 1943. The first formal orientation course started shortly afterwards in the same year.

The purpose of the orientation program was to acquaint new caseworkers of the county bureaus with the public assistance program. The training was intended to last for six months. The first month was to be devoted to intensive training under a specially selected training supervisor in a training center away from the workers' local office. The daily program provided for two hours of group study and class discussion and six hours of field work. Each worker was given a carefully selected and limited number of cases. The two hours of group study was to be spent in reading and discussions, lectures and field trips. Reading material was made available by the training supervisor. Some of the areas of public assistance which were to be covered included the functions of the Social Welfare Commission, the philosophy of the program, its history, elements of the worker's practice, administrative procedures. The last day of the sessions at the training center was

³⁷ Minutes of the Michigan Social Welfare Commission meeting, November 24, 1942, Lansing, Michigan.

spent in the State Department where the executive heads of the various divisions attempted to acquaint the trainees with the functions of their offices. Included in the purpose of the visit was the opportunity for the trainees to learn from the State Bureau of Social Security about the administration of the services of his department.

After this general introduction to the theoretical foundations and field practice in the job at the training center, the trainees were assigned to permanent positions in the local county bureaus. The supervisors of these bureaus were each given a copy of the complete six-month orientation plan prepared by the training supervisor. The plan was divided into three sections. The first section gave a schedule of the daily activities of the trainees while at the training center; the second outlined in detail the day's visit to the state office; and the third was devoted to a weekly schedule of assignments for the five-month continued training in the county bureau. Two hours a week were to be set aside for training. The assignments to be covered were the history of the program in the county, discussions and field trips to health and welfare agencies in the local community. An adequate bibliography was attached to the plan for the use of the trainees.

It was emphasized that this project was experimental, although there was a proposal to keep a training center in continuous operation. The result of the experiment

was to be gauged in terms of the new worker's performance and her adjustment to the job. A comparison was to be made with the standards of other workers who did not take the course of instruction. The county supervisor was supposed to note the effect of the training on workers and to make recommendations consistent with his observations to the state office. Unfortunately, further information on the 1943 training project is not available either by way of follow-up recommendations from the county supervisors or progress reports from the training supervisors.

The next orientation course in October of the following year lasted eighteen days. On this occasion the venue was changed to the state office, but the Ingham County bureau cooperated in the plan by supplying the cases for assignment to the trainees for use in field work training. Another change which occurred was in respect to the training supervisor. The previous course was conducted by a training supervisor from the state office who was also responsible for the planning of the program. For the October 1944 course a new supervisor had charge of the program, but the original training supervisor maintained a supervisory relationship with him. It seems that from 1944 the supervisor was responsible for planning only the two-week orientation program in the state office. After the trainees returned to the local office, the county supervisor was expected to continue the training for the remainder of the six-month period. This arrangement made it

difficult for the state office staff to assess the quality and amount of the training that was given to new workers. However, the state office was considering developing a training guide for use in the local bureaus in order to effect some uniformity in the training in the local office.

In February 1948 the State Department discussed the prospect of revising the state office orientation program in conjunction with a training consultant from the Technical Training Services of the Federal Bureau of Public Assistance and an associate public assistance representative. The consultants' advice was requested on the following matters:

- 1) The length and content of the state office program;
- 2) The content of the training guide;
- 3) Ways of helping the county supervisors use the guide;
- 4) Methods for evaluating county practice, the use of the guide, and the state office program.

It was agreed that the two-week program would be more beneficial to the trainees and the bureau and more satisfactory to the training supervisor. The consultants advised that a committee of county supervisors be formed to work on certain sections of the training guide such as 'organization of work'. This enlistment of county participation was considered one means of making the county supervisors more interested in the plan. A periodic revision of the guide was planned to incorporate suggestions

offered by the county supervisors. The area representatives were given specific responsibility for introducing the changed program to the supervisors and for helping them to plan more adequately for the new worker. Criticism by the county supervisors of the guide as well as the orientation plan was encouraged by the area representatives. Suggestions for the putting into operation of the training plan emphasized the following:

- 1) The training plan was subject to change recommended by the county supervisors;

- 2) The state office was responsible for preparing an outline of the course content to be covered during the state office orientation program;

- 3) Orientees should follow the usual practice of returning to the county bureaus of their employment after the state office program;

- 4) As soon as the orientees were back on the job, the county supervisors should be asked for an evaluation of the effect of the state office program on the orientees.

It seems that the only criteria on which the county supervisors were to base their evaluation would have been the orientees' report of the course. The county supervisors were also expected to compare the current reports of the orientees with what they could remember of reports made by trainees who took part in similar orientation programs at the state office in the past. On this limited information

they were to attempt an evaluation of the prevailing orientation plan.

From 1948 to 1951 the orientation program continued almost unchanged. The daily schedules used over the two-week period indicate little variety. During the year 1951 a new Administrative Assistant, Mr. Thomas Cook, was attached to the state office staff. Among his other duties he had responsibility for the orientation program. For the October 1951 program which was the first conducted by him, the 1948 plan was again used. The curriculum was, however, so arranged as to be grouped in three main areas:

- 1) The history and philosophy of the public assistance program;
- 2) The characteristics and problems of each category of the federal-state program;
- 3) The organizational structure of the state and county administration.

However, the content of the course and the teaching methods remained unaltered. For the period October 1951 until March 1954, the two-week state office programs continued, although it might be more correct to say that the courses were held with irregular frequency. The 1948 proposal by the federal consultants and the state office personnel for providing a training guide materialized in December 1953. At that time the administrative assistant responsible for the orientation programs completed an

Orientation Manual for use by county and casework supervisors of the bureaus in training newly appointed public assistance caseworkers. In addition to the specific material intended for direct training of the new workers, there were also sections intended for preparing the supervisors for the training process. The sections of the manual dealing with planning the orientation, principles to be followed in orientation and the purpose of orientation contain helpful preparatory material for the supervisor's guidance. The text of the manual covers the historical background of public assistance; the public assistance worker and his role in the agency; the nature of categorical aid; social work ethics; the evaluation process for new workers; and typical case recordings related to the different topics worthy of discussion.

It was suggested that for the first day three or four hours of the supervisor's time might be required by the worker, but generally a minimum of two hours per day was preferable. In all cases supervisors were encouraged to make use of the manual. The purpose of the county bureau training program was to supplement the state office program but not to substitute for it. Around that time and continuing since fewer new workers have been employed. It is therefore possible that in some instances where new workers were employed, several months elapsed before a state office

course was planned.³⁸ In such cases, the new workers would need some kind of initial training, and it was felt that the orientation manual could be used for this purpose. Further, since the manual was distributed to the bureaus, it was anticipated that in planning for the orientation programs the trainees would have prior knowledge of its contents.

The first orientation course held following the distribution of the manual was from the 7th to the 18th December, 1953. Wide use was made of the orientation manual during the sessions. As yet, it was too early for workers to come with previous knowledge of the contents of the manual because its distribution was of recent date. The next state office program was held from March 29 to April 9 of the following year. The primary focus of this course was intended to be on the state social welfare program. It was presumed that orientees would have been acquainted with the material in the orientation manual, since they were all with the local county bureaus some months prior to the course. However, many of the workers were not prepared as was expected.

In response to the finding on the lack of use of the orientation manual by county bureaus, a memorandum was sent from the supervisor of the public assistance division of the State Department to all area representatives

³⁸ The state office requires a minimum of 5 workers to each course, although slightly larger groups are preferable.

on April 29, 1954. The memorandum contained a proposal for a change in the duration of the orientation courses from two weeks to one week. It also suggested that this change could only be effected if the counties would cooperate in preparing the new workers for the orientation prior to their attending the course. The preparation was to be done with the aid of the orientation manual. Some of the areas which new workers should cover before the course should include the basic eligibility requirements for categorical assistance; the administration of the local bureau; the worker's basic practice in determining eligibility; and the techniques involved in this practice.

The one-week state office program would then serve as an opportunity for correlating the material covered in the county bureau, and would also provide for trainees to share their ideas and practices with colleagues from other counties. During the state office sessions, the worker would acquire an understanding of the reasons for the specific policies and practices employed. It was emphasized in the memorandum that "the Orientation Manual is a necessary tool and the field staff must see that it is used in a constructive manner in each county". The county supervisors were encouraged to offer suggestions for incorporation into a revised issue of the orientation manual to be prepared at a subsequent date.

The memorandum suggested three plans for the orien-

tation program and the county supervisors, through the area representatives, were asked to consider them and to select the one they preferred. These proposals were:

1) A one-week program at the state office covering state services and the fundamentals of the worker's job. In this case, the more intensive overall training both prior to the state office course and as a follow-up afterwards would be the responsibility of the county bureaus.

2) A one-week course at the state office devoted entirely to services at the state level, with all other training necessary for the worker's understanding and practice left to the county supervisor.

3) A two-week course held at the state office in two one-week sessions. The first session, which would be at the end of the worker's third month of employment, would deal chiefly with the determination of eligibility. The second session, to be held at the end of the sixth month, would cover the public assistance services at the state level.

A summary of the replies received from the area representatives indicated a preference for the third plan. Eight of the eleven districts supervised by area representatives reported their opinions. Of these, six chose the third plan. Following these reports a one-week course was conducted at the state office in June 1954. This course seemed to be designed in accordance with the pro-

posal in the third plan, but there is no record that the second half of the course, which ought to have been held in October, was carried out.

Table 1 on page 60 shows a summary of the number of and attendance at the orientation courses held between October 1946 and June 1954. A total of 283 workers were included in the 27 courses held during the period. Further analysis of the figures shows that an average of 3 courses per year was held during the period, although in 1947 there were as many as 7 courses attended by 51 workers. An average number of 31 workers was trained per year and the average enrollment per course was 10 workers. During the 9-year period, 11 workers from the Ingham County bureau were trained. However, for the 4 years prior to 1950 no workers from this bureau were included in the courses.

From the information collected through interviews and examination of agency files, it appears that most of the new workers coming to the bureau during 1946 to 1950 were transferred from other agencies. Although orientation to any new agency is almost always needed, it was thought that a formal orientation course was not necessary. Rather, the workers, because of their past experience, were allowed to learn about the agency in the course of practice and through agency supervision.

Table 1. Caseworkers Attending Orientation Courses,
State Department of Social Welfare, Michigan, from
October 1946 to June 1954

YEAR	COURSES	Trainees	
		Total	Ingham
Total...	27	283	11
1946	2	14	0
1947	7	51	0
1948	3	24	0
1949	2	25	0
1950	4	51	3
1951	2	26	4
1952	3	40	3
1953	2	26	0
1954	2	26	1
Average..	3	31	

N.B. The average number of trainees per course is 10

Supervision

Supervision is the core around which staff development is built. It fosters growth in both worker and supervisor and to a large extent determines the quality of the service offered. It "exists for the purpose of insuring that in so far as possible, services shall be given both in letter and spirit according to the agency's stated policy, function and philosophy".³⁹

There are two main aspects of supervision - its administrative function and its educational function. The former is directly concerned with the mechanics of the job, with seeing that workers obey the rules and regulations of the agency. The latter is devoted to the professional growth of the worker so that better service may be rendered. However, it is hardly possible to separate the educational from the administrative functions of supervision. Whatever his emphasis, the supervisor must give attention to both aspects of the supervisory process.

In social agencies supervision is a highly valued function. Its importance is emphasized so strongly that even in agencies with a very small staff provision is made for a supervisor charged with responsibility for the professional growth and development of the staff. A number of activities are used in the supervisory process. In

³⁹ Genevieve S. Slear, "Some Administrative Aspects of Supervision", Journal of Psychiatric Social Work, October, 1954, p. 20.

the Ingham County bureau the main supervisory activities which can be identified are individual conferences, group conferences, evaluations and staff meetings.

(a) Supervisory Staff

For the purpose of analyzing the supervision given to caseworkers in the bureau, a detailed study of the director-supervisor's job and that of each of the two casework supervisors was undertaken. The following is an attempt to present the findings on this subject as seen by the supervisors in a self-description of their jobs.*

The director-supervisor spends 18 per cent of his working time on staff development activities. These include:

1) Interpreting and executing the rules and regulations of the Social Welfare Commission;

2) Planning and directing the work of the staff, including direct supervision of one casework supervisor and two workers who have special assignments in the agency (the office caseload and services for the blind);

3) Individual staff conferences on problem situations referred by the casework supervisors or requested by the caseworker; and planning and conducting staff meetings.

The senior casework supervisor invests 62 per cent of his working time in staff development activities. This constitutes:

1) Supervision of the other casework supervisor;

* State of Michigan, Department of Social Welfare, Administrative Review of Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid, 1954.

- 2) Direct casework supervision of seven caseworkers;
- 3) A weekly conference with the director-supervisor; and
- 4) Miscellaneous activities including:
 - (a) Study and interpretation of regulations, policies and procedures to the casework staff;
 - (b) Planning for staff meetings;
 - (c) Personnel management of bureau workers;
 - (d) Orientation and training of new workers;
 - (e) Recruitment of new workers;
 - (f) Annual service rating of workers;
 - (g) Checking and discussing with workers their mileage reports;
 - (h) Seeing that special surveys required by the area representative and the state office are accomplished.

The other casework supervisor devotes 80 per cent of her time to staff development activities. These include:

- 1) Direct supervision of caseworkers;
- 2) Inducting and training new workers;
- 3) Annual service rating of workers;
- 4) Liaison relationship with student unit.

From the above it is seen that 53 per cent of the agency's supervisory staff time is given to supervisory activities. Many of these activities are of an administrative rather than of an educational nature. The main methods employed in carrying out these activities are described below.

(b) Individual Conferences

Each caseworker in the bureau is seen in conference for one hour every week according to a fixed schedule.⁴⁰ The content of the conference is determined by both the supervisor and the caseworker. Usually the conference takes the form of a discussion of problems which have been encountered by the worker in her regular activities. It very often entails clarification of technical matters relating to agency policy and administrative procedures. The supervisor also prepares for the conference by making notations on any features of the worker's performance which come to his attention through reading case records. The notations are discussed in conference. Matters discussed during conference are followed up afterwards.

(c) Group Conferences

Group conferences, referred to as unit meetings in the Ingham County bureau, are held periodically. These meetings usually supplement the individual conferences.⁴¹ Matters of interest to all the workers in the unit form the subjects of discussion. Through this method, information concerning policies and plans are considered. The unit meeting also provides the opportunity for workers to weigh their opinions on agency matters against those of

⁴⁰ See Appendix B, page 106, a Conference Schedule.

⁴¹ A unit consists of all the caseworkers supervised by one casework supervisor.

other workers and the supervisor.

(d) Evaluations

Except for workers who are pursuing their six-month probationary period, all caseworkers regularly employed in the bureau have one service rating a year. This provides a useful basis for evaluation of the worker's performance and for discussing ways to increase the worker's competence. Preparatory to the evaluation the supervisor circulates among workers a copy of the service rating manual, which is the guide the supervisor uses in the evaluation. The worker is encouraged to evaluate her own performance over the past year and to write it down. These notes are shared with the supervisor when the two get together for the final evaluation. However, the supervisor's decision is also affected by his record of the worker's performance gathered from individual conferences, the worker's case records, and general observation. The final rating report which contains a detailed explanation of the worker's performance is shared with the worker. Similarly, promotional ratings which are prepared by supervisors in the agency are also shared with workers. This is not mandatory, but the supervisors in the bureau have made it their practice, since they feel that it is another educational opportunity for the workers.

(e) Staff Meetings

Staff meetings of the bureau are held regularly each month and they usually last for one and a half hours. They are the sole opportunity for workers from the bureau and the county department of social welfare to meet as a group and discuss problems of mutual interest. The meetings are chaired jointly by the director-supervisor, who represents both agencies, and the senior casework supervisor, who represents the bureau. It is obligatory on the staff members of both agencies to attend the meetings.

The room in which the caseworkers of the bureau do their office work is the setting for all meetings. It is spacious, with large columns occupying awkward positions. The workers' desks are arranged in school-room formation, in three rows one behind the other. This arrangement is not changed for staff meetings. The co-chairmen occupy positions at the head of the table and face the meeting. It is difficult for the workers to be heard readily and the columns usually exclude some workers from the view of the chairmen and vice versa.

Agenda for the meetings are prepared by the chairmen and may be regarded as consisting of two separate sections. The first section, for which the director-supervisor usually takes responsibility, includes items on problems of a general nature, educational topics on social work and allied subjects, matters of community interest, and the philosophy

of the public assistance program. The second section covers specific administrative policies and is usually conducted by the senior casework supervisor. Both sections are closely related to the bases of operation of the two agencies, but the latter tends to concentrate on matters of particular importance to the bureau. The reason for this is that categorical relief which is administered by the bureau is controlled by the massive manual of policies and procedures issued by the State Department. Attention to administrative details involving amendments to the law, changes in state policies and practices consume a large proportion of the caseworker's time. The county department does not function on a similarly extensive legal structure, but it is important that its workers be familiar with the work of the bureau.

Several methods are used to make the staff meetings of educational value. They make a significant contribution to the staff development in the two agencies. Opportunity is taken to share with the group information regarding community attitudes gathered from various sources. In several ways the need for workers to recognize their accountability to the public is emphasized. Professional ethics are encouraged. Opportunity is also taken to share with the staff complimentary and derogatory comments levelled at the agency. Thus, the staff meeting is a vehicle to help workers toward a clearer understanding of the professional foundations and

democratic responsibilities of public assistance.

Sometimes representatives of other community agencies, public and private, have been invited to the meetings to tell of the services offered by their agencies. Such agencies have included the Michigan Children's Aid Society, the Red Cross Home Service, the State Employment Exchange and a Camp for Underprivileged Children. In addition to the informational aspects of such visits, workers of the bureau become better acquainted with their guests. The value of this contact cannot be overestimated with reference to agency referrals. For instance, mothers of children two years of age and over who receive Aid to Dependent Children benefits, are expected to seek employment under Michigan law. The Michigan Employment Security Commission is regularly used in cases of this type.

Whenever workers attend institutes or conferences of a professional nature they are invited to share their experiences with the staff at the next monthly meetings. This helps workers to feel recognized and to identify with the agency. The supervisors make similar contributions after attending conferences. A like procedure is observed in reviewing published articles and books which have special pertinence for the agencies.

At a few meetings during 1944 and 1945 the greater part of the meeting time was devoted to a series of discussions on case recording. The area representative took

responsibility for this undertaking. In addition to the discussions at staff meetings, the area representative interviewed the workers individually on problems encountered in case recordings. The present area representative attends one staff meeting each year. This meeting is usually devoted to clarifying problems presented by the workers and supervisors.

The supervisor of the stenographic pool serves as secretary for staff meetings. Since 1954 she has prepared the minutes within a few days after the meetings and copies have been distributed to the workers. In this way, matters which may have escaped the workers' attention during the meeting are brought to their attention. Further, items which have special meaning for individual workers may be related to decisions reported in the minutes of previous meetings and may readily be discussed in supervisory conference.

Other Training Opportunities

All staff development activities available to the caseworkers are not conducted by the bureau. It has already been mentioned that the orientation programs are arranged by the state office. However, the state office and the bureau are both part of the same administration. The activities described in this section are those sponsored by other agencies, but since they are of educational value opportunity is offered for the workers to attend them.

Usually only a limited number of workers is permitted to attend any of these activities. This is to be expected because the content of the activities is as a rule not specifically related to the bureau program. It is therefore not mandatory on the workers to attend but the supervisors encourage their participation.

The educational activities sponsored by other agencies which may be considered part of the staff development of the bureau include lectures; institutes, conferences and workshops; educational leave; work-study plans; literature; public relations; and a graduate student unit.

(a) Lectures

Apart from the lectures given at staff meetings, the bureau does not provide such activities. Usually invitations are sent to the bureau when lectures of a professional nature are sponsored by other organizations in the community. These invitations are circulated among workers who are sometimes asked to indicate whether or not they propose attending. These lectures are generally sponsored by private social work agencies, divisions of the State Department, professional social work associations and the educational institutions in the community.

(b) Institutes, Workshops and Conferences

Some of the institutes and workshops which the workers of the bureau attend are sponsored by the State

Department. These are usually directly related to the public assistance program and are held specially for the benefit of bureau workers. Special concessions regarding leave as explained in Chapter III are afforded workers in these instances. There are, however, other institutes and conferences held by different organizations which workers attend. The content of these programs is usually of a more general nature but are nevertheless pertinent to the public assistance job.

In 1947 a plan was proposed by the Social Welfare Commission for summer institutes for the training of county supervisors and for workers carrying specialized caseloads. Through the cooperation of the state Civil Service Commission, facilities were secured for the use of a camp at Waldenwoods, Michigan. The first institute for the training of county supervisors was held there from September 8 to 12, 1947 and was continued in the three subsequent years until 1950. However, in 1948 caseworkers were encouraged to participate. Two caseworkers from the Ingham County bureau attended. The content of the course was related chiefly to case recording and case analysis. For the 1949 institute the theme chosen was the administrative aspects of supervision. The last of the Waldenwoods institutes was held in the summer of 1950.

Starting 1951 through 1954 summer institutes were conducted at the University of Michigan for caseworkers of

county bureaus. These institutes were sponsored jointly by the State Department and the university. The courses were available to all caseworkers, but the approval of the supervisors was required before the workers could attend. Three workers from Ingham County availed themselves of the opportunity. It was possible to obtain academic credits for the course.

A regular annual workshop is sponsored by the school of social work of the University of Michigan. Although there is no special connection between the workshop and the bureau, the caseworkers attend. Likewise periodic conferences and workshops of a professional nature at Michigan State College and in other parts of the community have sometimes been attended by bureau workers.

The Michigan Welfare League which is a state-wide organization specially concerned with welfare planning, holds an annual conference which workers are encouraged to attend. For the past two years a Children's Services Forum was arranged by the League for the purpose of drawing attention to the current services for children in Michigan and the multiple factors affecting them. This takes the form of a one-day conference and has attracted many workers from the bureau.

Fewer workers attend the National Conference of Social Work since the conference is held in other parts of the country. Despite this fact, one worker from the bureau

said that she attends the National Conference when leave is approved by the supervisor. The worker feels that this is important as she has opportunity to mingle with professional social workers from different agencies and to learn new techniques. She feels that these occasions present challenges which any social worker can use as an incentive to progress in the profession.

The worker responsible for the specialized services for the blind has also attended institutes in that field at her own expense. She attended a six-week course at Ypsilanti under the Rackham Foundation for special education, which is under the sponsorship of the University of Michigan. When a request for educational leave to attend this course was not entertained by the personnel division of the State Department the worker used her annual leave and in addition met the entire costs from personal funds.

(c) Educational Leave

As stated in Chapter III educational leave may be granted to a worker for a period up to one year. The worker receives no salary during this period but has the security of knowing that she can return to her job after the respite.

In considering provisions for educational leave attention must be given to the age of the workers, their educational qualifications, the length of their service, possibilities for promotion and the financial arrangements

for the leave. In the bureau, educational leave is only available for professional social work education at the graduate level. Accordingly, only the five workers who possess a college degree are eligible for this type of leave. As shown in Table 2 on page 75, all of these workers are over 30 years old and two of them are over 50. It is not to be expected that older workers would grasp educational opportunities. In the first place, they may find it difficult to adjust to an academic setting with much younger students. Secondly, the length of their service to the agency after completing professional education is very limited. In the circumstances, there is little likelihood that the opportunity for educational leave would be used by most of the workers who are eligible. Further, the average length of service of these workers is 12 years. This is a sign that they may not be interested in professional education or they would have grasped the opportunity before. Indeed, 9 of the 14 caseworkers in the bureau have already attained the maximum salary in their classification.

One worker has had educational leave during the period. She was on leave for one year, from 1952 to 1953. During this time she was enrolled as a regular full-time graduate student of Michigan State College, and completed her first year's work towards the Master of Social Work degree. In the Fall of 1954 she continued on her second year's work under a work-study plan.

Table 2. Number and Length of Service of
Caseworkers Possessing College Degrees,
December 31, 1954, By Age Groupings.

AGE	Number	Average Length of Service
Total.....	5	12
Under 30	0	0
30 to 50	3	9
Over 50	2	15

About six workers of the bureau have taken undergraduate courses in social work at Michigan State College, but no special arrangement had to be made since the workers took courses which were offered in the evenings. This obviated the need for the curtailment of their salary.

(d) Literature

The bureau has no library of its own. The director-supervisor has a personal library in his office and makes his books available to the workers. Other workers subscribe to various magazines of a professional nature and share these with their colleagues. The casework supervisors too lend their own literature to workers.

(e) Public Relations

Participation in community activities is an important element in a staff development program. It provides an opportunity for workers to meet other professional persons and the general public, and thus to learn more about the community. In social work, knowledge of the community is of paramount importance. In team relationships with other disciplines this is the special contribution that social work makes. The bureau worker with a large clientele is apt to become so absorbed with her cases as to lose sight of the community.

In the bureau, the director-supervisor and the other supervisors give considerable attention to developing

favorable public relations. The caseworkers are encouraged to take part in public relations activities also. Two workers are detailed at various periods to represent the agency on the Community Services Council. This responsibility is rotated so that all workers are given opportunity to represent the agency. Workers are also encouraged to speak to social groups and service organizations in the community. The Referral Committee of the Community Services Council consists of representatives of the various social agencies in the city. Meetings are held once monthly and all bureau workers are given the chance to serve on the committee at different times. This provides an opportunity for meeting with workers of other agencies in a professional setting. Workers also serve on the Christmas Clearing Bureau Committee and on other committees.

Most of the workers were members of the Social Workers Club which became defunct in 1954. It was an organization designed to promote acquaintanceship among workers in the helping professions. The program for club meetings usually consisted of a luncheon, lecture and discussion. Valuable contacts useful in cases necessitating referrals were made.

(f) Area Representative

Generally, the area representative does not deal directly with the caseworker, and so his influence on staff development is mainly an indirect one. In smaller and more

distant counties, the area representative is a real resource to the county supervisor, providing advice on policy changes and assistance with difficult staff problems. In Ingham County the need for the supervision of the area representative is limited. However, he contributes towards staff development by attending staff meetings periodically where he functions as a resource person, and by carrying out administrative reviews in which workers participate. The usefulness of the review for planning, management and supervision should not be underestimated.

(c) Student Training

For several years the bureau has made available its facilities for field work placement to students at Michigan State College. Up to 1950 an average of 15 students per year had placements with the bureau. The agency and school were, however, concerned with undergraduate students and one of the supervisors of the bureau was responsible for the training of the students. The students accompanied agency workers on some of their field calls. This experience certainly contributed to the growth and development of workers in that they had to explain their function to the students and probably to reconsider many of their practices. A tutorial experience almost invariably contributes to both student and tutor.

By the Fall of 1951 a change in the Michigan State College graduate social work curriculum to a two-year pro-

gram leading to the Master of Social Work degree caused an adjustment in the student field work arrangement with the bureau to be made. In the change, placement was provided with the agency for four to six first-year graduate students under the direct supervision of a faculty member of the Social Work Department of the college. This group, referred to in the bureau as the Student Unit, spends two days a week in field work in the agency. One of the casework supervisors in the bureau serves as liaison with the student unit. The caseworkers participate in the program too by handing over temporarily some of their cases which the students use for casework experience.

The 1951 Annual Report of the bureau, in a section on the student unit, states "Since the public assistance programs are constantly expanding it becomes more necessary to prepare greater numbers of new workers for this field."⁴² Despite this statement, the greater number of students do not accept employment with the bureau upon graduation. Yet the training program has continued. However, the greatest value of the project to the agency is reflected in the staff development program of the bureau. It offers to the workers a challenge and also a demonstration of the possibilities available to public assistance

⁴² Ingham County Board of Social Welfare, Annual Report 1951, Lansing, Michigan, page 18.

workers in giving to clients service of a professional type somewhat different from that regularly in public assistance agencies. Before students return cases to their regular workers a conference including the worker, the student and the supervisors of both is held. It is hoped that when the workers resume service to cases that have been carried by students, they would gain a wider perspective of their function.

Staff

The most important factor in staff development is the staff. Without full knowledge of the workers for whom the program is intended, it is not possible to see staff development in the Ingham County bureau in its true form. Objective data on the caseworkers, insofar as staff development is concerned, include their age, marital status, educational qualifications, length of service, reasons for leaving, job status and caseloads. These matters are described below.

At December 31, 1954 there were 14 caseworkers in the Ingham County bureau carrying a total caseload of 2,210 clients. Of this total, 1,770 were CAA cases, 344 were ADC cases, 42 were AB cases and 54 were AD cases. This makes an average of approximately 180 cases per worker.

The average length of service of the caseworkers was over 7 years at the end of 1954. However, the actual range of service was from less than 6 months to over 17 years.

As shown in Table 3 on page 82, during the period 1946 to 1954, 33 caseworkers left the agency. A comparison of the length of service of the 33 who left with the 14 in employment at December 31, 1954 indicates that the former group was employed for a much shorter period. The average length of employment for those who left was 2 years and 7 months as compared with 7 years and 9 months for the present employees. Also of importance is the fact that only 7 of the 33 ex-employees were on the job for more than 5 years.

It appears that all the workers in the bureau during the period under review have not regarded their jobs as temporary employment. Five of the present staff have been steadily with the bureau throughout the period, and more than half of the 14 have been on the job for more than 5 years. On the other hand, there has been a large mobile group whose number far exceeds the stable group. In the last 9 years there have been 26 of these workers who have joined and left the agency staff within 5 years. If the workers of the current staff who have been with the bureau for under 5 years are representative of this mobile group, as shown in Table 4 on page 83, it seems that there are workers of all ages in this group.

In addition to finding out the number of workers who left the agency, it was considered pertinent to the study to find out the reasons why they left. Significant among the reasons is that only 3 workers were promoted to

Table 3. Length of Service, Caseworkers Employed December 31, 1954 and Caseworkers Who Left 1946 to 1954, Ingham County Bureau.

Years	Workers Left 1946-1954	Workers Employed December '54 ^a
Total.....	33	14
Under 5	26	6
5 under 10	7	3
10 under 15	0	4
Over 15	0	1
Average	2 yr. 7 mo.	7 yr. 9 mo.

^a Length of service to December 1954.

Table 4. Relation of Length of Service to Age of Caseworkers, Ingham County Bureau, December, 1954.

AGE in Years	Length of Service in Years				
	To- tal	Under 5	5 Under 10	10 Under 15	Over 15
Total.....	14	6	3	4	1
Under 30	2	2	0	0	0
30 under 50	5	2	1	2	0
Over 50	7	2	2	2	1

higher classifications and for these, promotions did not occur within the agency. Nearly one-third of the workers left on transfer to other jobs, either in other county bureaus or in other sections of the State Department. A similar number resigned because they had to leave the district. This information is presented in Table 5 on page 85.

Half of the number of workers, 7 of the 14, was over 50 years of age, and only 2 were under 30 years old. As explained earlier, 9 of the 14 workers have not completed a full undergraduate education. A similar number have attained the maximum salary in their classification. As at December 31, 1954 all of the workers were women. Of the 14, 7 were married, 3 widowed and 4 single. All of the widowed workers and 4 of the married ones had children. For the sake of confidentiality information correlating the age and marital status of the workers was not obtained, but it is believed that the single workers were representative of the age groupings among the married workers.

Administrative Policies and Practices

To obtain a true picture of staff development, not only the specific activities must be considered, but also the administrative arrangements affecting them. Thus, each of the activities that have been described in this chapter is influenced by the administrative policies and practices outlined in Chapter III. Adequate administrative policies are closely related to the needs of the staff and aims of

Table 5. Caseworkers' Reasons for Leaving
Ingham County Bureau, 1946-1954.

Reason for Leaving	Number
Total.....	33
1. Transfer	10
2. Left District	9
3. Maternity	4
4. Promotion	3
5. Death	2
6. Other Employment	2
7. Educational Leave	1
8. Retired	1
9. Not Known	1

the agency.

Most of the policies governing the administration of the Ingham County bureau are framed by the State Department on a state-wide basis. In such an arrangement it is not to be expected that the policies would cater to the peculiar needs of any single county bureau. Another consideration seems to be the attitude of the State Department with regard to the type of staff that is needed to carry out the public assistance program. It appears that the State Department does not emphasize the use of professional casework skills. Consequently, many of the provisions for staff training are not such as would foster an intensive staff development program.

It is not within the scope of this study to point out the numerous ways in which the administrative policies facilitate or impede staff development effort. However, in the succeeding chapter an attempt has been made to show the implications of state office policies, county bureau programs and local community resources for staff development.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Staff development aims at providing effective service through well-equipped staff. To do this requires an understanding of what good service is and how it may be rendered, as well as knowledge of the staff carrying out the service and ways of improving their skills. In Michigan, the State Department of Social Welfare determines the type of service offered in the public assistance program and therefore has a major responsibility for staff development. On the other hand, the county supervisor has knowledge of and authority over the staff in the bureau and therefore must share the responsibility for training. Both the State Department and the local bureau accept their responsibility, the former for the orientation program for workers entering the service, the latter for the day-to-day training on the job.

More specifically, the State Department plays its role in the staff development of caseworkers in the Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid by establishing the administrative policies governing the bureau and by conducting the orientation program at the state office. It is the function of the State Department to define the purpose of the public assistance program and to describe how this

purpose is to be attained. It seems that this purpose is viewed from the limited perspective of administrative procedures developed to carry out the provisions of the Social Welfare Act. Merely carrying out the provisions of the law is a much too limited objective. Law is based on difference of opinion and at best represents a compromise of many opposing views. The purpose of a program should reflect clearer conviction.

It is true that the central purpose of the public assistance program is distributing financial aid, but surely the goals of the program should go beyond this. The aims of public assistance ought to be consistent with the aims of social work, which regards service to clients as not just a palliative but as a means of restoring the client to a state of adequacy. This purpose of rehabilitation requires the services of professionally trained staff. The public assistance program in Michigan and throughout the nation does not possess such a staff. Consequently, it is understandable that the State Department concentrates on providing the type of service which the present staff is equipped to give. Although this is a practical approach, it tends to lose sight of the broader goals. In the opinion of the writer the rehabilitative aims of public assistance should be clearly stated and examined at orientation and workers should be stimulated to keep these aims in view when carrying out the practical functions of

their job. It is the responsibility of the State Department as the policy-making body to provide this emphasis. The whole staff development program would be conceived differently if rehabilitation were accepted as the ambition of the public assistance program.

The administrative policies of the State Department reflect a lack of interest in professional education. The provisions for educational leave and work-study plan make it difficult for workers to take advantage of the opportunities. The maximum educational leave is one year, whereas professional social work training requires two years of graduate education. Financially there is not much incentive to pursue professional training. The caseworker on educational leave receives no salary and must therefore be prepared to meet from her own resources all expenses for her education and maintenance. If, for instance, a caseworker from Ingham County obtains a Master of Social Work degree after two periods of leave, she would apparently be eligible for promotion to the post of Social Work Administrator I, the salary for which is very little higher than what she received as a caseworker. Moreover, she could have attained this position without the degree.

The work-study plan is not much easier on the caseworker. The half portion of salary which she receives assists her in meeting her expenses in school, but for this she must carry her usual agency caseload. This reduces

considerably the time she would have available for her studies.

A positive contribution to staff development is the use of Civil Service by the State Department in connection with personnel policies. Civil Service provides for equity in the selection, rating and promotion of workers and determines standards for grading them. In working with Civil Service the State Department has not surrendered its responsibilities for recruiting staff and for sharing in the development of the personnel policies. The head of the personnel division maintains the liaison with Civil Service. His handbook 'Information for the New Employee' provides useful information on the procedures governing employment in the State Department. It is written in simple language and should promote teamwork, cooperation and the best interests of the employee.

As mentioned earlier, recruitment and personnel policies are important aspects of staff development. In this regard, the service ratings are of special value to supervisors of county bureaus. Usually casework supervisors make service ratings and promotional potential ratings a shared experience with the workers concerned. Thus, the evaluative process not only fulfills an administrative requirement, but also fosters the growth of the staff.

As is to be expected, the main responsibility for

staff development is based in the county bureau. In Ingham County the mainstay of staff development is supervision carried out by means of individual conferences, unit meetings and staff meetings. This supervision seems to lay stress on the mechanical process of administering financial aid. Much attention is given to determining eligibility through interviewing and verification of statements made by clients. Prompt service after eligibility has been established is the main goal. It is felt by the writer that more interest should be shown in the intangible needs of clients. Since most of the workers have been with the bureau for many years, it is to be expected that they are quite familiar with the administrative aspects of their work. To prevent the job from becoming mere routine, the use of casework skills in offering service should be encouraged. It would appear that the supervision in the bureau has not ventured out into this area. This is to some extent due to the position taken by the State Department. It might in part be attributed to the lack of professional training of the supervisors.

The staff meetings at the bureau are an important staff development activity and are well conceived and carried out. One flaw noticed is the lack of participation of the workers. The setting in which the meetings are held might be contributory to this result for it does not lend itself to group discussion. A pleasanter room not assoc-

iated with daily office routines, allowing the workers to face each other and in which they do not have to stand when participating might make it easier for workers to speak at meetings. The recreation room in the basement of the building seems to have these desirable qualities. The coffee break might be combined with staff meetings since it is customary for this break to come just before or after the meetings.

Another factor which might be considered in connection with staff meetings is the planning of the agenda. If workers participate in preparing the agenda, it is possible that they would take a greater interest in the discussions at meetings. Some public assistance agencies in other states have developed a regular staff meeting committee consisting of caseworkers and supervisors. In planning meetings, this committee works with the area representative who is in a position to advise the local agency in administrative policies emphasized in the state office.

Not enough use is made of staff committees in the bureau. In agencies where this practice is employed regularly the workers become a more integral part of the agency. The supervisors of the Ingham County bureau were aware of the virtue of this practice when a social committee was appointed to cater for the coffee break. In many other areas the staff can make a contribution to the administrative process and should be encouraged to do so by being

invited to serve on staff committees. Participation in formulating policies is important for getting the staff interested and aiding their growth.

However, the morale of the bureau is good and this is of cardinal value in staff development. The majority of the workers have been with the agency for several years and have developed amicable working relationships both with their colleagues and with their supervisors. The importance of satisfactory working conditions for growth and efficiency of staff is not to be underestimated. In the bureau, planning for staff needs is a major consideration of the supervisors. Office routines are clearly planned and are conveniently distributed among workers. Equipment is adequate and kept in good order. The provisions of amenities like good parking space, coffee break, recreation room and neatly kept premises, help to give workers the feeling that they are valuable to the agency.

A noticeable lack is the absence of appropriate literature for staff use. Social work is a growing profession in which new ideas, methods and techniques are continually being introduced. Workers should keep in touch with current trends. It is realized that there is not much time and energy left for reading after a busy day's work. However, magazines, periodicals, bulletins and reports do not consume much time for reading and could make a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the workers.

The use of community resources both by the State Department and the county bureau for staff development seems to be satisfactory. For Ingham County the most important of these resources are the two universities in East Lansing and Ann Arbor, the Michigan Welfare League, the Community Services Council, the government departments, the private social agencies, and professional organizations. The director-supervisor of the bureau is very interested in developing good public relations in the community and has encouraged the staff to participate as fully as possible in community activities. This is undoubtedly an enriching experience for the workers and has earned them contacts and information which are put to good use in giving service to clients. Community contacts are maintained both by inviting representatives from other organizations into the bureau to meet with the staff and by delegating workers to represent the bureau before groups in the community. Further, the bureau workers make full use of the joint services provided by the Community Services Council, particularly of the Social Service Exchange, the Volunteer Bureau and the Referral Committee.

In permitting the Department of Social Work of Michigan State College to use the agency's facilities for graduate student training, the bureau is making an important contribution to social work education. Benefits to both the bureau and the college accrue from this project. Of significance is the conscious introduction of casework

philosophy, knowledge and skills into public assistance service. Arrangements like this one help to bridge the gap between the practice of public assistance workers and that to which professional social work subscribes.

The State Department, too, is conscious of the value of a public assistance program that is in touch with the community. It works closely with the universities in planning and carrying out programs for the training of bureau caseworkers. Both in joint projects with the universities and in relevant projects sponsored by the schools the State Department makes provisions for caseworkers to participate. Sometimes the department relaxes its policies regarding attendance at conferences and institutes in the interest of staff development.

Staff development in the Ingham County bureau is not neglected. Depending as it does on the initiative of the State Department, it is handicapped to some degree in that there is no full-time person in the state office responsible for staff training. The present training supervisor has other important administrative responsibilities which limit severely the amount of time he can devote to staff training. Further, the State Department has no clear policy determining responsibility for staff development. Both the personnel division and the public assistance division have at different times assumed this responsibility. As mentioned in Chapter II, responsibility for staff devel-

opment in any agency should be located at a definite point in the administrative structure.

However, considering the characteristics of the staff - their age, marital status and lack of professional training; the outlook of the State Department - its emphasis on administrative procedures, its apparent lack of interest in professional education and its limited objectives; and finally the type of service to be rendered - its size, legal basis and economic nature, the provisions for the growth and development of staff are reasonable. Much more can be done in staff development in the Ingham County bureau, but this depends very much on a complete acceptance of rehabilitation as the goal of public assistance.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWING SCHEDULE

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR CASEWORKERS OF THE INGHAM
COUNTY BUREAU OF SOCIAL AID FROM THE INCEPTION OF THE SER-
vice to December 1954.

1. History as far back as possible:

What provision for staff development
Extent of supervision
Composition of initial staff
Any kind of 'blanketing-in' system for workers from
any other program
Any changes in attitude of original or early staff
members to staff development. What might be
possible for change?

2. Present System:

Which of these aspects of staff development are pro-
vided for and to what extent does state depart-
ment participate -

Orientation	Staff meetings	Conferences
Supervision	Institutes	Leave & Scholar- ship Opportun- ities.

Indicate recent programs in list above.

What is caseworkers' attitude towards the staff
development?

Any success stories of workers who have used training
opportunities.

How did this affect colleagues' attitudes?

What evaluative system for testing results of training?

3. Present case work staff:

Number	Age Range	Educational background	Length of Service, Sex Classification	Salary Range	Probationary Period	Staff Turnover	Reasons for Leaving	Type of later employment	Use of training opportunities.
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4. Merit System:

Is there special merit system for public assistance
workers or general statewide system for all state
employees

Promotional plans

Recruitment - whose responsibility - state or local.

5. Relationship to State Department:

Function of area field representative to county office
Training personnel
The training manual - any advice solicited from administrative personnel of county office
Casework supervisors' attitude to staff development in county office

6. Finance:

Federal and state appropriations for staff development
Is this provision made in state laws of Michigan?

7. Miscellaneous:

Changing trends in training program
Suggestions for other contacts in county office, e.g. casework supervisors: casework on an individual basis.
Changes in training program over period - likely reasons, e.g. in administration, type of worker, law, organizational structure of state or local office, socio-economic factors in community.

Material to be requested:

Organizational charts
Earliest annual reports
Agency's plans for promotion of caseworkers
Files to show casework staff turn-over.

APPENDIX B

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

June 2, 1955

Mrs. Atchison

MONDAY	Mrs. Dunham	10:00 - 11:00 A.M.
	Miss Labbe	1:30 - 2:30 P.M.
TUESDAY	Miss Hetznocker	8:30 - 9:30 A.M.
WEDNESDAY	Mrs. Sweeney	11:00 A.M.
	Mr. Bates	2:00 - 3:00 P.M.
Thursday	Mrs. O'Brien	9:30 - 10:30 A.M.
	Mrs. Rushton	1:30 - 2:30 P.M.
FRIDAY	Mrs. Masten	10:00 - 11:00 A.M.

Mr. Bates

MONDAY	Mr. Minnis	9:00 - 10:00 A.M.
TUESDAY	Mrs. Upham	8:30 - 9:30 A.M.
	Mrs. Eames	1:30 - 2:30 P.M.
Wednesday	Mrs. Leoser	8:30 - 9:30 A.M.
	Mrs. Wilkins	10:00 - 11:00 A.M.
	Mrs. Atchison	2:00 - 3:00 P.M.
THURSDAY	Miss Houston	8:30 - 9:30 A.M.
	Mrs. Friberg	2:00 - 3:00 P.M.
FRIDAY	Mrs. Cowell	8:30 - 9:30 A.M.

Except in the case of real emergency, Visitors will follow this schedule.