

APPENDIX III

SPECIAL TYPES OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE: PROGRAM FACTS

Purpose of programs

The purpose of the special types of public assistance is to provide needy persons—dependent children who are deprived of parental support or care, and the needy aged, the medically indigent aged, the blind, and the permanently and totally disabled—with income to supplement their own resources and thus enable them to secure the necessities of life, and with social services to help them achieve as much economic and personal independence as possible. Individuals are considered needy if all the income they have or can obtain from other sources is less than the cost of the minimum living standard set by their State. The assistance payment is intended to make up the difference. The special types of public assistance are a joint undertaking of State, local, and Federal Governments. Federal grants are made to States under the public assistance titles of the Social Security Act.

Trends in number of recipients

The number of persons receiving old-age assistance has declined consistently since 1950, despite the increase in the aged population, because of the continuing growth in the number who receive social insurance benefits. In aid to families with dependent children, the upward trend since 1953 has resulted primarily from an increase in the number of children in the population and in the total number of families, coupled with a comparable rise in the number of families broken by divorce, separation, or desertion, or headed by an unmarried mother. In recent years such families have had a smaller rise in income than normal families, with the result that more of them need assistance. The extension of the program for aid to families with dependent children to cover children of unemployed parents, effective May 1961 and by now adopted by 18 States, has recently contributed to the rise in the number of recipients. Part of the steady growth in the program of aid to the permanently and totally disabled, which was not established until 1950, is the result of the initiation of new State programs. In aid to the blind there was an upward trend to the end of 1958; since then there has been a downward movement in the caseload. The first payments under the program of medical assistance for the aged were made in November 1960.

Public assistance programs are intended to play a role secondary to the social insurance program in providing income maintenance. Old-age, survivors, and disability insurance benefits have reduced very substantially the need for public assistance among the aged and among children whose fathers are dead and, to a lesser degree, among children whose fathers are disabled. In the future, disability insurance payments will increasingly have the effect of limiting the number of disabled individuals and their dependents who receive public assistance.

No resource comparable with the social insurance program is available for children who need assistance because their parents are divorced, separated, or unmarried. Such children now represent the majority of those cared for under the program for aid to families with dependent children. For these children, assistance is the only resource when family income is lacking. If the child population continues to increase as it has in recent years, if the rate of family disruption does not decline, and if the income position of families headed by women does not improve, the number of persons—children and adults—receiving help under the aid to families with dependent children program will inevitably continue to increase. Beginning with December 1957 the number of persons receiving aid to families with dependent children has exceeded the number receiving old-age assistance, and the margin between the two programs widens as the number receiving aid to families with dependent children advances and the number of old-age assistance recipients continues to decline.

AID TO THE BLIND

1. Number of recipients, December 1964: 96,000.
 2. Number aided per 100,000 population aged 18 and over: 79.
 3. Caseload trend: Except for a period of decline during World War II, the number of recipients of aid to the blind increased slowly but rather steadily from the initiation of the program to the end of 1958. Since then there has been a gradual downward movement in the caseload.
- In calendar year 1963 assistance to 17,000 recipients was discontinued. This figure indicates an annual turnover rate of about 17 percent. The most common