ance, OASDHI benefits, and any other public programs aiming to help families with insufficient income of their own. Many receive no such help. It has been estimated that only about a fourth of all persons counted poor receive any public assistance and the proportion of poor households receiving help is even less. In 1965 only a sixth of all households with income for the year below the poverty line had received any public assistance payment.

Of the 60½ million households in the United States in March 1966—counting as a household an unrelated individual as well as a family of two or more—19.5 million or just under one in three reported that someone in the household received payment from a public income-maintenance program sometime during 1965. For two-thirds of these households, social security benefits made up at least part of the public income payment. As one would expect, households with an aged head were much more likely to receive support from a public program than households with a head under age 65—6 in 7 of the older households, compared with only one in five of the younger ones. Even among young families of a woman with children under age 18, only half received any help from a public program, and the program involved was more often public assistance than social security.

Among the households with payment from public assistance, which makes payments only to those considered in need by the standard of the State in which they live, 81 percent of the recipient households in 1965 had so little income otherwise that they would fall below the poverty line in the absence of any public assistance payments. But the amounts of assistance were so small that even with the payments counted in, two-thirds of all households receiving public assistance were found among the 11.2 million households designated poor in 1965—as the poor are counted in terms of money income including public transfer payments. In other words, of the households poor before receiving any public assistance, 5 out of 6 were still poor after they got it. By contrast, among households with a payment from the social security program, which doesn't limit its payments with a means test, only about half of those poor before they drew their OASDHI checks were still poor afterward. Before OASDHI benefits were added to income, about six out of 10 households receiving benefit checks fell below the poverty line; after OASDHI benefits were added to income, only three in 10 were still below the poverty line.

A household that had received program payments, but was not presently counted among the 11.2 million poor, is considered to have been removed from poverty by the program if the amount paid was more than the amount by which after-transfer income exceeded the appropriate poverty income threshold. The estimates were made separately for OASDHI, public assistance, other programs taken as a unit, and finally total payments from all programs combined. All transfer payments combined succeeded in averting poverty for about 1 in 3 of young payee households—that is, households headed by a man or woman under age 65—whose total income from sources other than public income programs was below the poverty line, and about 1 in 2 aged households that would otherwise be poor. Compared with social security or other programs taken as a group, public assistance—with its payments limited by State standards of need generally well be-