

summary of major findings and recommendations

The responsibility of this Steering Committee, having examined the available data, was to try to advance some proposals which are more clearly able to meet both the best interests of those in need and the public interest as well.

In arriving at its recommendations the Committee was guided by the principal conclusions drawn from the Arden House materials, workshop discussions, and all supporting data. Its major findings and recommendations follow:

1. THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DOES NOT WORK

Public assistance fails to reach three-quarters of those in need and delivers inadequate sums and inefficient services—on an uneven basis—to the remaining one-fourth.

The present system is demeaning. It frequently violates privacy through regular searches of recipients' homes. It has so many disincentives built into it that it encourages continued dependency on welfare. It is virtually impossible for recipients to determine what rights they have and to what assistance they are entitled.

The vast majority covered by public assistance are either too young, too old, too sick or too disabled to be self-supporting. Only a small proportion of the adults can be helped to be self-supporting. Lack of clear understanding of the composition of this group leads to frequent misunderstanding and proposals to force the "loafers" off the rolls. Deeply-rooted myth and misconception are a frequent basis for these moves.

Without adequate awareness about the composition of the public assistance rolls, expectations for such new programs as "work aid," now under consideration, will be disappointing because only a small percentage of those receiving welfare payments can participate or benefit from them.