

No systematic report on client response is available at this writing though New York City includes this in its research plans. Agencies report that clients welcome the change since it gives them "confidence and dignity." Some initial uncertainty and suspicion is reported. Clients need to be told about the change and the reasons for it; some were concerned about "losing their caseworker" and others resented the validation review.

No one need doubt that clients place secondary priority on services, or even humane administrative processes until adequate financial assistance standards are set and implemented. Recognizing this, Declaration may still meet some important client demands.¹³

Declaration can speed up eligibility determination and provide more rapid access to assistance. A group of applicants whose need is temporary may receive assistance and be encouraged to risk leaving the rolls for a job since re-application when need arises is seen to be rapid and simple. New York City's experience suggests this possibility.

Public assistance has often been criticized for reinforcing or creating feelings of powerlessness and dependency among their recipients. Briar lists agency characteristics which contribute to this and recommends structural and policy changes which might reduce this effect. He criticizes complex eligibility and budgeting procedures, distant and obscure decision-making processes, snooping over daily activities and linking assistance to other services. To reduce powerlessness he suggests radical simplification of eligibility and budgeting, high visibility of agency decision-making including enabling applicant to understand criteria applied to his own claim, and high visibility and accessibility of agency procedures.¹⁴

Declaration produces or can lead to many of the desired reforms. For example, eligibility criteria are more visible, particularly on applicant-completed forms. Separation of eligibility from assistance reduces the implicit assumption that aid and services are linked. Introducing Declaration into the agency often produces critical examination of policies and procedures and may initiate or reinforce simplification efforts. Though few clients are now actively demanding Declaration, it can be a means for effectively meeting some of their demands.

THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY

At the federal level state letters asserting federal interpretations of policy, contain strong references to Declaration. A recent example is found in a major revision of a section of the federal *Handbook* which includes within its references to policies which would apply should the state adopt a "declaration form in determining eligibility."¹⁵ The 1967 administrative reorganization which created the Social and Rehabilitation Service explicitly separates the service and assistance payments function.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A persistent force for change stems from the American Public Welfare Association's Technical Assistance Project (TAP). Sponsoring conferences, providing consultation and publishing new organizational designs, this group serves as a source of innovative ideas and as a communication channel for State and local agencies.¹⁶

POLITICAL OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

There are very few special interest groups who maintain a set of persistent sustained demands upon public assistance policy.¹⁷ Compared to highway policy

¹³ Declaration was an explicit demand of the Representatives of the Poor Peoples March in a recent meeting with Secretary Cohen. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, "Conference of the Secretary, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, with Representatives of the Poor Peoples March," Washington, April, 1968, p. 15 (Mimeographed).

¹⁴ Scott Briar, "Welfare from Below: Recipients' Views of the Public Welfare System," *California Law Review*, 54:370, (1966), pp. 383-385.

¹⁵ Stephen P. Simonds, "Application Determination of Eligibility and Furnishing Assistance—Handbook IV—2000-2400," *Handbook Transmittal 139*, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Washington), February 8, 1968.

¹⁶ American Public Welfare Association, *Public Welfare—Challenge to Validity*, (Chicago, Illinois), Technical Assistance Project, pp. 21. (Mimeographed.) For an authoritative discussion of Maine's experience, see Stephen P. Simonds, *Declarations and Incentives: New Approaches to Public Assistance, Public Welfare*, 26, 1 (January, 1968), pp. 67-71.

¹⁷ As the medical care component grows, interest groups have emerged whose activities belie that generalization. This is one reason that medical care costs in public assistance have risen more steeply than any others. Support for the basic generalization is found in Gilbert Y. Steiner, *Social Insecurity, The Politics of Welfare*, (Chicago), Rand McNally and Co., 1966.