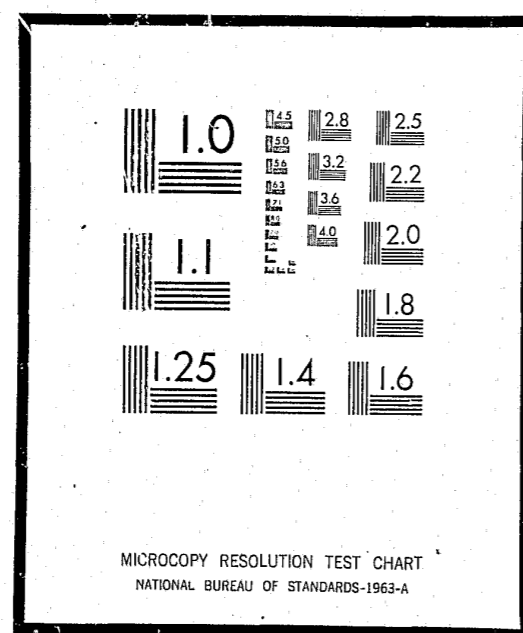


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Date filmed

4/5/76

VIRGINIA -
The Department of
Welfare and Institutions,

1970-1974

November 30, 1973

28859

Division of General Welfare

The year 1973 was the last in which Virginia - or any state for that matter -- will have the primary responsibility for providing financial assistance to the elderly, the disabled and the blind.

These categories of public assistance which The Department now supervises -- and local welfare departments administer -- will be assumed by the United States Social Security Administration on January 1, 1974.

The establishment of The Supplementary Security Income program for the elderly, blind and disabled under the Social Security Administration represents the most drastic change in the public welfare programs since the basic format came into being with the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935.

Anticipating these changes in the State Welfare Programs, the Department sought enabling legislation from the 1973 General Assembly.

As a result, the State statutes were changed so as to eliminate the federally-reimbursed adult assistance categories of Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled and Aid to the Blind on December 31, 1973, and to authorize the State Board of Welfare and Institutions to establish a program for supplementing the grants of certain recipients who would receive less in January, 1974 from the Federal Government than they now receive in public assistance.

The General Assembly provided that the cost of the State's supplemental payments, to be known as the Auxiliary Grants Program, shall be shared with the localities--the State paying 62 1/2 per cent and the localities paying 37 1/2 per cent.

The Social Security Act was further amended to require that the State assure that no recipient on the rolls in December, 1973 will have his payment reduced when the Federal SSI program goes into effect in January.

Under the 1972 Social Security Amendments the Federal Government guaranteed aged, blind and disabled persons \$130 for an individual and \$195 for a couple.

Under the new law, the Federal guarantee will be increased in July 1974 to \$140 for an individual and \$210 for a couple.

In addition to preparing for the transfer of the adult categories to the Federal Government, our Department is embarked on a number of other changes affecting the operation of the welfare program.

These include:

1. Plans for simplifying the determination of financial need for an applicant for public assistance.

Under our present system, determination of financial need for public assistance is a time consuming process, involving substantiation of individual costs of shelter and of special items allowed under prescribed conditions.

To facilitate greater accuracy and more effective use of workers' time, the Division of General Welfare has developed a plan for "flat" allowances.

This means that under this plan we would provide specific dollar amounts which would represent the total needs. These amounts would vary only according to the number of persons in the family unit and according to the area of the State since the cost of shelter varies widely.

From the total amount needed by the family would be deducted the family's earned income, if any.

These allowances reflect a statewide fair averaging of those items currently being included in assistance payments under present policy.

Our plan has been approved by the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Presently, however, the Code of Virginia appears to require determination of need on an individual basis and we will seek a legislative change at the next General Assembly session to permit implementation of the flat allowance system.

2. An all-out effort to reduce the number of errors is being made by the local welfare departments in determining whether a person is eligible for assistance and, if so how much he is eligible to receive.

To reduce our error rates of ineligibility and overpayments, we have launched a four-pronged attack:

Updating and keeping current the reviews of all local agencies;

Establishing monitoring units in each locality, supervised by our Regional Office Staff;

Intensifying eligibility training for all technicians;

And, implementing a validation review process which samples 15% of the case load in each agency. This system is a supplement to the regular quality control program and is intended to provide additional insurance against both agency and client errors.

The Federal Government has decided to permit states to cut its unacceptable margin in three time periods of six months each before it penalizes the state financially.

We must reduce the excessive portion of the error margin by one-third during each of the three periods to avoid losing federal reimbursement.

3. The division of the functions of determining who is eligible to receive public assistance and of providing social services. These are now performed by separate staffs.

Traditionally, the social worker in a local department of welfare carried responsibility for the provision of social services to the recipient of public assistance and for the determination and re-determination of eligibility for a money payment.

Federal regulations issued in 1972 required that there be at both the State (Central and Regional) and local levels a social services delivery system operated independently of the assistance payments system, including separate administrative lines.

Virginia's approved plan for dividing these functions is now in operation.

4. And, finally, the Department has been engaged in a research and development effort in which a new approach to social service delivery is being undertaken.

Virginia's redesign of social service is unique. It is based on an interactive systems approach with heavy emphasis on the need to provide the local service worker with the decision making and information base needed to manage his activities.

From this base, the data needed at other levels of management will be generated.

Virginia's approach differs from that of the federal agency and other state welfare agencies where the focus has been on gathering

information for state and federal requirements without due regard to the needs of the service worker.

Lynchburg has served as the developmental agency where the generic service design has been developed through involvement of the caseworkers themselves.

Chesapeake is serving as the second research agency where the major contributions consist of testing the generic quality of the design, the identification of patterns appropriate for local customization, and the emergence of methods for installation which lay the groundwork for beginning pilot projects in each region.

From these two experiences, a plan for statewide installation is emerging.

Other developments -

Virginia was among the first states in the Southeast Region to meet the requirements for implementing new Food Stamp regulations requiring all able-bodied persons between 18 and 65 to register for employment as a condition of eligibility.

The Work Incentive Program was expanded to additional localities.

Day care services were boosted and minimum standards for licensed child placing agencies and child caring institutions were revised.

Regional citizens' advisory committees were formed with the goal of improving the quality of services that local welfare departments deliver to recipients.

Provisions were made for assistance applications to be filed for potential recipients, who are unable to file applications on their own, prior to the appointment of a guardian or committee.

State welfare operations moved toward decentralization with the establishment of seven regional welfare offices. This decentralization in conjunction with reorganization of welfare operations at the state level, provided improvements in existing programs and facilitated the development of specialized services at the local level.

Division of Corrections

Plans for abandoning the outmoded State Penitentiary were intensified and sites were selected for two of the proposed facilities which will replace it - a reception and diagnostic center and a maximum security institution.

A Pre-Release Center opened on July 1, 1971, to provide an intensive 90-day training program for inmates due to be paroled or discharged from the correctional system. The program of study at the Pre-Release Center includes employment counseling and job acquisition, social reorientation, management of personal finances, and auto operation and highway safety. The Center's basic function is to provide an adjustment period to ease the inmate back into society.

Under a program developed in cooperation with the State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, greater assistance is now being given to inmates upon their release from the correctional system.

Work release and educational release for inmates have been expanded. Inmates may engage in a work release or educational training program at any hour of the day or night.

A number of inmates engaged in the educational release program commute daily from their institution to an area community college.

Since the work release program began in 1969, a total of 1,651 prisoners have participated in the program (through November, 1973) and 527 are currently engaged in work release or being processed for entry into the program. Their cumulative gross earnings are in excess of two million dollars.

Since 1970, college courses have been added to the curricula of all the major adult institutions and many of the correctional field units in cooperation with Virginia Commonwealth University and a number of community colleges around the state.

Furlough programs for inmates were initiated in 1972, permitting carefully selected men and women to maintain ties with their families and communities and to pave the way toward employment upon their release. More than 97% of those furloughed have returned, entirely without custodial supervision, as scheduled.

Jaycee chapters have been established at the major adult institutions and at many of the correctional field units. These inmate-Jaycees are involved in service projects benefiting their fellow inmates and their communities.

Professional volunteers are instructing inmates in art and drama. Shows featuring inmate art were held in Norfolk and in Richmond. Two dramas, written by inmates and featuring all-inmate actors have been produced and videotaped and presented to large audiences. The Spring Street Free Theater, composed of Penitentiary inmates, was formed, with performances open to the public.

The number of counselors in the Division of Corrections has increased from one in 1968 to 38 in 1973.

Programs in correctional industries which did not provide meaningful training for inmates have been phased out. In place of these programs, the Division of Corrections has instituted work programs aimed at preparing inmates for gainful employment in today's society.

The traditional "convict camp" using inmate labor for highway work is gradually being replaced by specialized work, education, and training programs for inmates.

Training courses for new employees in the Division of Corrections have been expanded. Also, employees are now able to take advantage of academic instruction at area colleges.

In 1971, the Jails Section of the Division of Corrections launched an intensive training program for sheriffs and jailers in all areas of the State. This ongoing program is believed to be the first of its kind in the country to be administered by a State Jails Section.

Almost \$15 million has gone into constructing 24 new jails for the Commonwealth. This has seen the demise of the "18 worst" jails list compiled in 1967.

The Division of Corrections' system of record-keeping on inmates has been studied, and changes are being implemented.

Under a federal grant, prisoner classification seminars have been held for staff in several areas of the state.

A pilot program to provide incentive pay for inmates got underway in 1973.

Inmate speaking groups have been established at most of the major adult institutions and at many of the correctional field units. These groups appear before church, school, and civic groups throughout the State.

Drug therapy groups are functioning at several of the adult institutions.

A minimum standards committee was assembled to include some of the most able people within the Division. This group is developing minimum correctional standards for every phase of institutional operations.

Unresolved problems -

Corrections in Virginia, and throughout the country, is moving, as it must, to the implementation of the community-based correctional program. The continuation of construction of huge institutions that serve little more than a "warehouse" purpose must be abandoned.

The second area that will receive emphasis is the development of treatment-type programs in all of our institutions. At present, the Southampton Correctional Farm maintains what is considered the ultimate in treatment in the Virginia system. Even though we are proud of this facility, we cannot continue to pump money into this location at the expense of other institutions throughout the state.

On August 1, 1973, the Division began moving towards the development of diversified institutions throughout the system, even though this is limited to a degree in our present budget. Because of many factors, not the least of which is our inability to plan and project at this point in time, we hope that appropriate funding can be available to make the potential that presently exists into a system that will be looked upon by every other state as a model. Virginia, unlike most states, has available thirty-seven separate facilities. Utilization of these institutions can be developed into a model system unlike any that presently exists or has ever existed.

Division of Youth Services

In 1973, new legislation mandated that the Division of Youth Services become the pivotal point of a new state-administered juvenile court service system.

The Division was entrusted with the monitorship of the State Board of Welfare and Institution's minimum standards for probation and related court services in all Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts.

By January 1, 1974, it is expected that at least 61 per cent of the State's population will be served by State-administered District Court Service Units.

The new area covered by the units are those jurisdictions which prior to July 1, 1973 were included in the 11 Regional Juvenile Courts, the 41 localities where local Departments of Public Welfare provided the court services, and 17 locally operated probation departments which have requested state administration.

The Southeastern Virginia Pendleton Project moved toward an operational status. The project is a community-based program to coordinate and channel a variety of social and health services toward dealing with pre-delinquent and delinquent youth and their families.

Staff members of the Delinquency Prevention Service, formulated guidelines which localities may use in evaluating their present services against the community's needs in order to devise a delinquency prevention strategy.

Innovations at the training schools included the opening of a self-contained cottage for the more seriously maladjusted girl at the Bon Air School for Girls. With the assistance of volunteer groups,

a three-year landscaping project got underway at the Hanover School for Boys, and student canteens were opened at the Janie Porter Barrett and Bon Air Schools for Girls.

The detention home construction program that started in Virginia more than a decade ago neared completion.

The Tidewater area of the State diversified its detention program with the utilization of a "less secure" facility serving the Virginia Beach area. A second "less secure" facility is planned for Norfolk.

Legislation has made it possible for smaller localities to establish and operate probation houses. It is expected that within the decade of the seventies most areas of the State will have access to such a facility.

The Division is currently operating five community youth homes which primarily serve children returned from institutions back to the communities. Projections call for continuing and enlarging this program. Currently under study is a plan to simplify the group home program and reorganize these services in such a way that the resources of the state and localities can be better utilized.

The Division of Youth Services has undertaken a plan to change to its emphasis from care and custody to that of treatment. In the past, the major services that have been provided in the treatment facilities have been fragmented at best. The emphasis will be placed on facilitating the child's treatment progress at all times. This will be the result of a 24-hour treatment or learning environment.

Under the plan, treatment will encompass education, medical, care and custody, and specialized treatment. Houseparents will be

considered part of the specialized treatment program rather than care and custody, in recognition of their value as major treatment agents. The institutions are also initiating double coverage in the cottages in an effort to provide greater supervision at all times.

The basic philosophy incorporated in this approach is that the children instead of being "sick or well" are children in need of learning experiences.

This can include relearning or learning for the first time those abilities to cope with society to the extent that they are no longer in conflict at the community level.

Herein lies the major thrust of the route that Division of Youth Services' programming will follow in the years to come.

Probation and Parole Board

Under a grant from the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention the Board is demonstrating in its Norfolk district what can be done when adequate staff is made available.

With this level of added support, the board has begun to cut

The delays in completing investigations

To improve case services

To make available added services to courts

And to provide special emphasis on education and treatment in the drug abuse area.

A similar program to that operated in Norfolk was begun in Northern Virginia's 10th District at Arlington last March. It has the same goals and staffing pattern.

Both the Norfolk and Northern Virginia Programs seek to demonstrate the results of reducing workloads to manageable levels.

Special projects to assist probationers and parolees in obtaining jobs are being established in population centers around the State.

Again utilizing federal funds, these projects provide employment assistance to some 230 offenders in each area.

The first project was opened in the Richmond area. A second project is now operating in Portsmouth.

The American Bar Association is sponsoring the National Volunteer Parole Aide Program through which it seeks to encourage young lawyers to serve as community contact persons for criminal offenders on a one-to-one basis.

The Young Lawyers' Section in Richmond is cooperating with the Board to establish a pilot project in Richmond.

Some 15 young lawyers have agreed to give as much as 8 hours per month to a parolee.

They have gone through a period of orientation which included a day at the Penitentiary talking with prisoners and staff about the problems of crime and prisons.

For the first time, inmates of Virginia's correctional system who are denied parole are being given reasons for the unfavorable decisions.

The new policy, results from the report of an eight-member committee at work since January, 1973 on ways and means by which prospective parolees could be told the reasons for denial by the board.

The committee, composed of three members of the Probation and Parole Board's staff and five employees of the Virginia Division of Corrections, recommended adoption of a comprehensive system for parole preparedness and notification of board action.

END