

Y3. W 89/2:5L52



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Social Research Division

Legislative Trends in State and Local Responsibility for Public Assistance

August 1, 1934 to January 1, 1936

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March 1, 1936

## Preface

This analysis is based on an examination of the statutes and on correspondence with the states. Tables III, IV and V are a presentation for the 48 states of state and local responsibility for 7 forms of relief (grants, pensions, and assistance) as of August 1, 1934, August 1, 1935, and January 1, 1936, respectively. Tables I and II summarize certain aspects of Tables III, IV and V, presenting state and local variation in financial and administrative provisions according to the types of relief. As used in this analysis, the term "financial responsibility" means the responsibility of supplying funds for the actual granting of relief; "administrative responsibility" means the responsibility of actually granting relief to a recipient; "supervisory responsibility" means the responsibility of directing, overseeing, or supervising the agency actually administering the relief.

Prepared by  
Robert C. Lowe and John L. Holcombe  
Legal Research Section  
under the supervision of  
Henry B. Arthur, Assistant Director  
Division of Social Research

Legislative Trends in State and Local Responsibility  
for Public Assistance

Recent legislative developments in the field of public assistance reflect a marked trend away from the concentration of welfare activities in the local units. In all classes of public assistance, with the exception of soldiers' and sailors' relief, the number of states placing full financial and administrative responsibility upon local units has decreased since August 1934. In most types of assistance the strongest trend has been toward state supervision of local administration and division of financial responsibility, with a less marked tendency for the state to assume full administrative and financial responsibility.

The granting of poor relief has always been and is still almost exclusively a local function in the United States. During the period covered, the incidence of financial and administrative responsibility has remained little changed. In 40 states financial responsibility is still entirely local; only one state has taken over any part of the financial responsibility since August 1934. Six states have assumed some supervision of local units since August 1934, but on January 1, 1936, the local units in 34 states still had complete administrative responsibility. In none of the states is the financial responsibility entirely centralized in a state agency, and only one state system is exclusively state administered.

The tendency toward centralization in the other types of relief makes the peculiarly local character of poor relief even more striking. The caption "general relief" set forth in Tables I to V is an arbitrary term utilized for the purpose of this analysis to include state and local relief programs which do not fall within the limits of the poor law or any of the specified categories. All of the legislation classified under this head has been enacted since 1931 and has generally been designated "emergency" or "unemployment relief". At the present time the administration of this relief in several states has been transferred from emergency agencies to permanent state departments and it is felt that the terms "emergency" or "unemployment relief" are no longer applicable in these states. It is impossible, however, at this time to define specifically this type of relief because the present period is one of transition. It is difficult to indicate a trend in the responsibility imposed by the legislation, as in a great number of states the general relief program has not, because of its emergency aspects had the necessary continuity upon which a trend could be based. Changes indicated by Tables I and II are more likely to have been caused by new and independent legislation than by changes within an established system. This class had been included to give a true picture of the relief situation as of the dates portrayed rather than for the purpose of indicating a trend within an established classification of relief activities.

The legislation granting aid to dependent children through agencies and institutions has been only moderately affected by recent enactments. Since August 1934, two states have assumed part of the financial burden, making a total of 27 states which now share this responsibility with local units. Two states have undertaken the supervision of local activity in this field and one state has undertaken part of the actual administration. Two others have assumed supervision along with the direct administration of certain phases of this type of relief. In ten states the administration is still wholly local.

In contrast with provisions for institutional care of dependent children, considerable change has taken place in the legislation providing for aid to dependent children in their own homes, known under various state statutes as "Mothers' Aid" or "Widows' Pensions". All but three states had some provision for this category before August 1934; one additional state has entered this field since that date. Six states have assumed a share of the financial burden, bringing the total number so doing to twenty. The number of states exercising supervision over local administration has more than doubled since August 1, 1934, most of the changes occurring since August 1, 1935. Meanwhile the number of states actually administering this type of aid has remained unchanged.

More changes have occurred in the category of old age assistance than any other. The number of states without any such assistance has decreased from nineteen to nine since August 1, 1934. Fifteen states bear the full financial responsibility, eight of which have taken over this responsibility since August 1934. Five states have assumed a share of the financial burden and at the present time only six place this responsibility entirely on local units. The number of states in which the administration is fully centralized has increased from four to nine and responsibility for the supervision of local units has been imposed upon some state agency in fourteen others, bringing the number in which administration is exclusively local down from fourteen to four.

The change which has taken place in the field of blind assistance is comparable to that in old age assistance. Seven states have enacted blind assistance legislation during the period studied, though there are still seventeen states without provision. The number of states with complete financial responsibility has increased from four to ten. Seven states actually administer blind assistance. Fourteen more supervise local activity, an increase of eight states since August 1934.

The field of soldiers' and sailors' relief has always been highly centralized and the only change which has taken place is that one state has assumed part of the financial and administrative responsibility.

Summary

The recent legislation marks a definite shift from the traditional conception of responsibility for welfare activities. Since the largest part of the legislation has been in categories which were not specifically provided for previous to this period, it is in these classes that the trend toward centralization of responsibility has been most evident. The main currents in the trend of this legislation have been:

1. Assistance has been extended to categories for which specific legislation did not previously exist.
2. States have assumed some or all of the financial responsibility.
3. States have imposed supervision on local agencies, and, to a lesser extent, have taken over actual administration.

TABLE I  
 DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY  
 Number of States

Type of Relief	Exclusive State Administration			Full State Responsibility			Responsibility Shared			Full Local <sup>a/</sup> Responsibility			Exclusive Local Administration			No Provision		
	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936
Poor Relief																		
Poor Relief				-	-	-	7	8	8	41	40	40	-	-	-	-	-	-
General Relief				11	17	16	18	19	19	5	4	4	14	8	9	14	8	8
Dependent Children Agencies & Institutions				4	4	4	25	27	27	16	14	14	3	3	3 <sup>b/</sup>	4	4	4
Aid to Dependent Children in Their Own Homes				2	2	2	14	17	20	29	26	24	3	3	2	3	3	2
Old Age Assistance				7	12	15	13	17	18	9	6	6	19	13	9	19	13	9
Blind Assistance				4	6	10	6	9	8	14	13	13	24	20	17	24	20	17
Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief				25	24	24	18	19	19	-	-	-	5	5	5	5	5	5

a/ Any political subdivision of a State.  
 b/ One State has the financial responsibility without the corresponding administrative responsibility. (See Table II, last column, 4th line.)  
 c/ in 2 States subject to review by local court.

TABLE 11  
DISTRIBUTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY  
Number of States

Type of Relief	Exclusive State Administration			Complete State Supervision, Divided Administration <sup>b/</sup>			Divided Administration (State and Local) <sup>b/</sup>			Local Administration State Supervision			Exclusive Local Administration <sup>a/</sup>			No Provision		
	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936	Aug. 1934	Aug. 1935	Jan. 1936
Poor Relief	1	1	1	-	-	-	4	4	4	3	7	9	40	36	34	-	-	-
General Relief	10	17	17	3	3	3	4	7	7	13	11	10	4	2	2	14	8	9
Dependent Children Agencies & Institutions	1	1	1	7	8	9	15	16	16	6	8	8	15	11	10	4	4	4
Aid to Dependent Children in Their Own Homes	5	5	5	-	-	-	1	2	1	13	17	29	26	21	11	3	3	2
Old Age Assistance	4	6	9	-	-	-	-	-	1	11	23	25	14	6	4	19	13	9
Blind Assistance	4	6	7 <sup>c/</sup>	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	9	14	14	12	10	24	20	17
Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief	25	24	24	6	6	6	12	13	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	5

<sup>a/</sup> Any political subdivision of a State.

<sup>b/</sup> Actual administration of relief of definite classes within a specific category placed in State, while actual administration of other definite classes within the same category placed in local unit.

<sup>c/</sup> In 2 States subject to review by local court.

TABLE III

LEGEND: A - ACTUAL RESPONSIBILITY  
S - SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY  
X - FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

STATUTORY PLACEMENT OF FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR VARIOUS WELFARE ACTIVITIES IN THE SEVERAL STATES AS OF AUGUST 1, 1954



STATE	POOR RELIEF			GENERAL RELIEF 1A			AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN			OLD AGE ASSISTANCE			BLIND ASSISTANCE			SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' RELIEF					
	STATE	COUNTY	LOCAL UNITS	STATE	COUNTY	LOCAL UNITS	STATE	COUNTY	LOCAL UNITS	STATE	COUNTY	LOCAL UNITS	STATE	COUNTY	LOCAL UNITS	STATE	COUNTY	LOCAL UNITS			
	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL	F- CIAL			
ALABAMA	S	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
ALASKA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
ARIZONA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
ARKANSAS	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
CALIFORNIA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
COLORADO	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
CONNECTICUT	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
DELAWARE	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
FLORIDA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
GEORGIA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
IDAHO	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
ILLINOIS	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
INDIANA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
IOWA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
KANSAS	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
KENTUCKY	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
KY/ A 3/	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
LOUISIANA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MAINE	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MARYLAND	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MASSACHUSETTS	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MICHIGAN	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MINNESOTA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MISSISSIPPI	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MISSOURI	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
MONTANA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NEBRASKA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NEVADA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NEW HAMPSHIRE	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NEW JERSEY	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NEW MEXICO	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NEW YORK	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NORTH CAROLINA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
NORTH DAKOTA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
OHIO	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
OKLAHOMA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
OREGON	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
PENNSYLVANIA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
RHODE ISLAND	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
SOUTH CAROLINA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
SOUTH DAKOTA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
TENNESSEE	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
TEXAS	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
UTAH	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
VERMONT	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
VIRGINIA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
WASHINGTON	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
WEST VIRGINIA	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
WISCONSIN	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A
WYOMING	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A



- 1A/ AN ARBITRARY TERM USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS ANALYSIS TO INCLUDE WHAT HAS BEEN USUALLY DESIGNATED AS EMERGENCY, UNEMPLOYMENT, OR OTHER UNSPECIFIED TYPES OF RELIEF (USUALLY DIRECT OR WORK RELIEF), WHICH DO NOT COME WITHIN THE POOR LAW OR ANY OF THE SPECIFIED CATEGORIES.
- 1/ ACTUALLY ADMINISTERED INSTITUTIONAL CARE.
- 2/ CITY OF WILMINGTON.
- 3/ PARISHES.
- 4/ CITY OF BALTIMORE.
- 5/ CITY OF ST. LOUIS.
- 6/ CITY OF NEW YORK.
- 7/ POOR DISTRICTS.
- 8/ CITIES OF CHARLESTON AND COLUMBIA.
- 9/ ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY IN STATE BUREAU OF PUBLIC RELIEF AND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS JOINTLY.
- 10/ COUNTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS MATERIAL AID; STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC RELIEF ADMINISTERS SEPARATE SYSTEM OF AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN THEIR OWN HOMES.
- 11/ STATE HAS BOTH SUPERVISORY AND DIRECT ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY.
- 12/ NEW CASTLE CITY ONLY.
- 13/ STATE ALSO SUPERVISES ADMINISTRATION OF STATE RELIEF FUNDS BY THE CITY OF BALTIMORE.

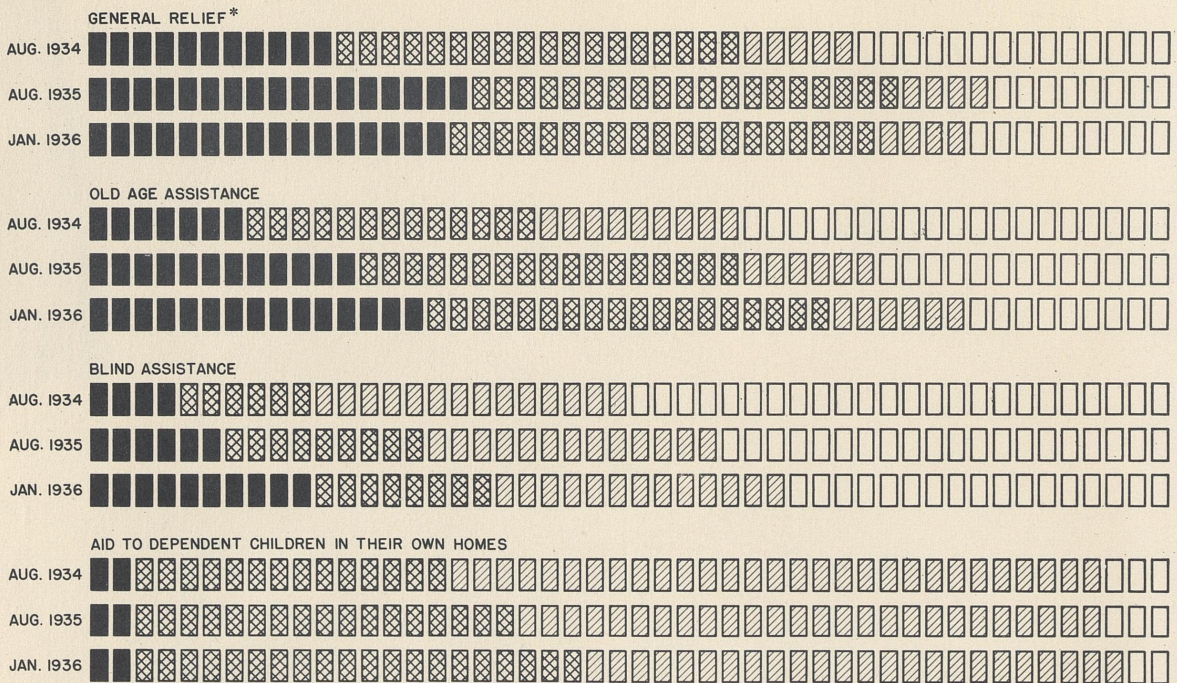






 STATES WITH FULL STATE RESPONSIBILITY  
 STATES WITH SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

 STATES WITH FULL LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY  
 STATES WITH NO PROVISION



CHANGES IN STATE AND LOCAL FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR SELECTED PUBLIC WELFARE ACTIVITIES

(NON-INSTITUTIONAL)

EACH RECTANGLE REPRESENTS ONE OF 48 STATES  
\* DIRECT OR WORK RELIEF (OTHER THAN POOR LAWS AND SPECIFIED CATEGORIES)

DIVISION OF SOCIAL RESEARCH  
NO. AF-1021

