

TRENDS IN THE AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN CASELOAD IN ILLINOIS

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In January 1965, Illinois had an ADC caseload of 55,200 families which included 60,000 adults and 201,100 children. These families were spread over the entire state however, Cook County which includes the City of Chicago was the home of 70 per cent of them. As a ratio of the population there were 58 ADC children for each 1,000 children under 18 in Illinois. This ratio varied over the state from 1 per thousand in a county in the suburbs of Chicago up to 265 per thousand in the southern tip of the state at Cairo. Cook County, itself had 86 per thousand. For the next two years this caseload declined reaching a low point of 52,200 families in December 1966. Beginning in January 1967, the number of families receiving assistance began to move slowly upward and by August of that year, was increasing at the rate of 1,000 cases per month. In January 1969, the number had reached 71,400. During this four year period then, we saw the end of a decline in the caseload that had continued since 1962, and the beginning of a period of impressive caseload growth that is still moving upward today. In fact, the July caseload stands at 76,400.

Because of the problems created by this increasing caseload, the data available to us has been studied to determine the characteristics of these ADC families as they currently exist and to compare these characteristics with previously known data. In this way, we hoped to be able to answer some of the questions raised by Legislators, Administrators and the general public.

We had two sources of information; one, concerned with the families added and removed from the payrolls each month, and the other concerning characteristics of the families receiving assistance each month. This characteristics information is updated with each change made by the caseworker and, as an indication of its currency at any given time, Illinois requires contact with the family each quarter with appropriate changes being made at that time.

This paper then, covers a period of four years—1965, 1966, 1967, and 1968. The data relating to the additions and removals from the payrolls was accumulated for each calendar year—the data relating to characteristics is available for the month of June each year.

First, let me point out that ADC families in Illinois are dependent for three basic reasons, and these primarily refer to the father of the children although they could equally apply to the mother—physical or mental incapacity, absence from the home, or unemployment. Most of our characteristics are concerned with the parent or parents who are in the home with the children and thus subject to our scrutiny.

Secondly, policy changes relating to eligibility for ADC have been made throughout this period and we have attempted to avoid those statistics that would be most subject to these changes.

Now for some characteristics data of the caseload in June of each year:

The proportion of families in Cook County, which was 70 per cent in 1965 has slowly been increasing each year, in 1968, the percentage was 72 per cent.

The non-white portion began at 73 per cent, moved up to 74 in 1966 and eased back to 73 per cent again in 1968.

The number of children per family was 3.64, increased to 3.70 in 1966 and since then has declined to 3.55.

Ten per cent of the families in 1965 had received ADC continuously for ten years or more and this percentage has steadily risen to 14 per cent.

The average age of the adult payee remained constant at 34 years until 1968 when it moved down to 33 years.

The proportion of families who have always lived in Illinois was 32 per cent—this slipped downward slightly in 1966 but has since remained at 31 per cent.

The remaining almost 70 per cent of the families, living elsewhere before coming to Illinois show the following distribution which has remained almost constant for the four years:

Adjoining states of Iowa, Missouri, Indiana and Wisconsin—6 per cent, southern states—55 per cent and the balance of almost 9 per cent from all other states and countries.

The proportion of children living only with their mother has risen from 75 to 80 per cent.

The status of the children's father has changed over the four years to some extent—the leading situation is "*Father Not Married to Mother*" which remained somewhat constant at about 38 per cent, "*Father Deserted*" has increased each year from 27 per cent to 29 per cent, "*Divorced or Separated Father*" had also increased each year from 11 to 13 per cent—"*The Father In The Home*" situation has declined steadily from 18 to 11 per cent, "*Father Deceased*" remains very constant at 3 per cent—"*Father In Prison*" has declined slightly each year from 3 per cent to 2 per cent, and "*All Other Status*" remains constant at 2 per cent.

The educational attainment of the adults in the family has increased each year—50 per cent in 1965 had 8th grade education or less—this per cent is now 43; 37 per cent had completed some high school and this has moved up also to 43 per cent—the remaining 13 per cent in 1965 who had completed high school or more, is now at 14 per cent.

The type of work experience these adults had had remained fairly constant—approximately 40 per cent had been "service" workers—"farm or other labor" accounted for 15 per cent in 1965 but the proportion has declined to 13 per cent in 1968, "Operatives" amounted to 10 per cent in 1965 and in 1968 this was 13 per cent, "All Other" work experience moved from 11 per cent to 12 per cent and the proportion with "No Work Experience" declined from 24 per cent to 22 per cent.

In terms of "Age of Children", the large group, between 6 and 16 years of age remained steady at 58 per cent, the 3 to 6 year olds dropped from 20 per cent to 18 per cent, the "Under 3 Year Olds" remained almost constant at 15 per cent and the "16 and Over" increased from 7 to 9 per cent.

From these descriptive statistics of the families on ADC for the four year period, one fact stands out clearly—the changes that have taken place have been small or insignificant. I can summarize the findings briefly in terms of the current picture—the families are somewhat smaller, a few more live in Cook County, the non-white portion is remaining constant, families are staying longer on public assistance, there has been little change in the age of the adult payee, the proportion who have always lived in Illinois has not materially changed nor has the proportion from other places, the number of families headed by a mother has

increased somewhat—the status of the father indicates a large continuing proportion are not married to the mother, desertion is increasing slightly, as is divorce and separation, the proportion of fathers in the home is declining and so is the father in prison—the adults are better educated than they were—the majority have had work experience in “Service occupations” or farm or other labor and a sizeable proportion have had no work experience at all—the age of the children in the families have not changed significantly with about 2/3 of them of school age and 1/3 under school age.

Now the additions and removals:

As you may realize, a growth or decline in a caseload is the direct result of the number of families added and removed from the payrolls each month. During this four year interval, 96,200 families were added and 80,700 were removed. At the same time, when the caseload was examined in 1968, 49 per cent of the families receiving aid in January 1965 had remained on the payroll since January 1965. This means 49 per cent of the original caseload, in January 1965, were still with us and had not been included in the numbers added or removed. All of the turnover in the four years had occurred in just over 50 per cent of the original caseload.

This turnover in families on ADC does not represent new families necessarily. In fact, some of the families have received ADC on 5 or more different occasions—a parent returns home or is remarried and it doesn't work—a job is found which is later lost due to illness or layoff. My data is based on occasions not on unduplicated families.

As families are added to the payrolls, the reasons for their dependency are coded by the caseworkers. A compilation of these reasons year by year show the following information:

Total additions each year were 21,300, 19,400, 24,300 and 31,200 for a total of 96,200 for the four years. Although provisions have been made to code many reasons for dependency, 5 of these account for over 80 per cent of the total. The leading reason is “Loss or Reduction of Earnings due to Layoff or Discharge”. In 1965, this accounted for 34 per cent of all additions; in 1966, the percentage dropped to 27 per cent where it remained through 1968. Next was “Loss of Support by Parent Leaving Home” with 22 per cent in 1965, rising to 24 per cent in 1966 and 1967 and dropping to 23 per cent in 1968. “Loss or Reduction of Earnings Due to Illness or Injury” amounted to 19 per cent in 1965, moved up to 23 per cent, back to 22 and was 21 per cent in 1968, “Living Below Agency Standards at Time of Application” moved from just under 4 per cent to 7 per cent during this period—which represents an actual increase of over 200 per cent in the numerical values, “Transferred From Another Program—usually local General Assistance” remained constant at about 5 per cent.

In general terms, we see very little significant changes in the reasons for dependency with the exception of “Living Below Agency Standards”.

The families added to the payrolls for reasons other than “Unemployed Parent” were further examined in relation to the “Status of the Father”. In this group, which constituted over 80 per cent of all families added, the single largest status of absent father was “Deserted” which amounted to 32 per cent in 1965 and remained almost constant through the period—“Unmarried Father” moved from 23 per cent up to 25 per cent, “Divorced or Separated Father” began at 20 per cent and climbed to 22 per cent, “Father in Home” situations decreased from 12 down to 10 per cent and “All Other Absent Father Status” including Imprisonment, in Military Service, Incapacitated and Other Status decreased from 13 per cent down to 11.

From this data, we see a small increase in Father Absent due to Divorce, Separation and Unmarried and a corresponding decrease in Fathers in the Home and “Other Absent” Status.

Examination of the data on families removed from the payrolls indicate first a general decline in the numbers removed in relation to the numbers receiving assistance. The last two years of increasing caseloads has 37,400 removals compared to 43,300 during the earlier two years. In terms of reasons for removal, the major occurrence was “Employment of Person in Home”. In 1965, this accounted for 54 per cent and has been declining each year to the 1968 figure of 44 per cent. “No eligible Child in Home” moved from 6 per cent to 8, “Whereabouts of the Family Unknown” rose from 5 to 9 per cent, “Support from other benefits or pensions” held steady at 7 per cent, “Family Requested Removal” increased from 4 to 7 per cent. “Absent Parent Returned or Parent Remarried” has gradually risen from 9 to 10 per cent, and “All Other Reasons” remained constant at 15 per cent.

In summary, the last two years revealed the number of families removed from the payrolls because of “Employment of Person in Home” dropped 6,300 while all other reasons actually increased in number.

A large segment of the ADC population is missing from these statistics—according to a recent study approximately 114,000 absent fathers were involved in our caseload of 74,000 at the time of the study.

We attempted to collect some statistics in relation to them but at this time the results have not been completely tabulated.

Additional trend data is available to us and most of it is tabulated County by County within Illinois. As with this data presented today however little analysis is being made at this time.