



PERSONNEL STANDARDS IN SOCIAL WORK IN OKLAHOMA

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(Abstract)

Until a few years ago social work was unheard of in many parts of Oklahoma. Even the term "social work" meant nothing to most of the people. But in September, 1933, the F. E. R. A. was organized in Oklahoma. There was established in each county a social service department which consisted of a director and a staff of case workers. These positions were created over night and it was necessary to fill them with people who lacked training or experience in social work. Face cards, case histories, budget sheets and reference visits meant nothing to many of them.

Many of these workers were unemployed college graduates. For the most part they were young, energetic, ambitious, and eager to learn. About six months after the F. E. R. A. began its work, a circulating library of books on social service was established; it now contains more than 800 volumes and they are in constant use. During the past three semesters, the University of Oklahoma has offered one or two evening courses in

social work; 25 to 50 persons, exclusive of the regularly enrolled students, have attended these classes.

These untrained workers made many mistakes. Their duties would have been difficult enough for one adequately trained. Yet they were given approximately five times as many families to care for as were formerly given to trained workers in agencies boasting only fair standards. They received little instruction because frequently the supervisor knew little more than her staff.

The ideal situation. (1) We should like to have the same type of people which we have had, with the same courage, ambition, energy, good sense, and good humor which they have displayed, but we should like to have them better trained; intelligence and a willing heart are not the only requisites. (2) We should like to have the public recognize that training is necessary. (3) The local units of government should select their own personnel subject to the approval of a state organization; this approval should be based on certain minimum requirements approximating those for membership in the American Association of Social Workers. Since the government has gone into the business of social work, it has been suggested that these positions be filled through civil service; this suggestion is well taken by professional social workers. (4) The salary scale should be based upon the type of work and the qualifications of each individual. Rural workers should be given a higher rate of pay than urban workers.

