1952

An Analysis of the Applications Made to Family Service of the Rockford Catholic Charities

Rita Kortendick
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/1081

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master’s Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.
Creative Commons License
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1952 Rita Kortendick
AN ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATIONS
MADE TO FAMILY SERVICE OF
THE ROCKFORD CATHOLIC
CHARITIES

by
Rita Kortendick

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of
Social Work of Loyola University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Social Work

February
1952
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.  BACKGROUND INFORMATION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANTS.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE PROBLEMS OF THE APPLICANTS.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE SERVICES OF THE AGENCY</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF THE FORTY APPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO MONTH OF APPLICATION AND WHETHER THE CASE WAS NEW OR REOPENED.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>SOURCE OF REFERRAL TO THE AGENCY IN THE FORTY APPLICATIONS.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>THE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE PERSON INITIATING THE CONTACT WITH THE AGENCY.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>THE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE PERSON FOR WHOM SERVICE WAS REQUESTED.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>THE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE APPLICANT'S FAMILY.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>THE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE AGES OF THE CHILDREN.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE FORTY APPLICATIONS.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

This study is based on an analysis of applications made for family service to the Rockford Office of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford. The study included all applicants whose requests came within the function of a family agency and whose applications were open at least six months within a stipulated period. The foster home and adoptive home applications were not considered, although they are a part of the agency's total program. The applications considered were those in which there had been no prior contact with the agency and those which had been known to Catholic Charities previously and were again requesting service.

The purpose of this study is to analyze these applications to secure pertinent information about the applicants and about the function of the agency in these long-term cases. To show the nature of these cases and their relation to the entire program three aspects were considered: (1) pertinent information of those requesting service, (2) the applicant's request and the problems as the agency saw them, (3) the services offered by the agency. The applications considered were those that were open or reopened from January 1, 1949 through June 30, 1949 and remained open through December of that year. It excludes those applications in which there was only a short contact.

One other study had been done in the agency, prior to 1951, which
included all applicants that were seen for at least one personal interview from January 1, 1949 through June 30, 1949. The study showed that almost 50% of the requests were made by single individuals. This incidence was due to the large number of requests from transients with whom ordinarily there is but one contact and little is apparently done in the way of casework service. These findings raised the question of the agency's function.

Data were secured from the Rockford Office of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford. The names of those cases considered were obtained from a caseload report which was compiled monthly. The case records were read in order to complete the schedules which had been compiled and mimeographed. The schedules were numbered according to a corresponding key of names of the cases for the use of the writer for reference in giving case summaries. For the background information, personal interviews were held with the Director of Catholic Charities who was also Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The Catholic Big Brother and Sister Associations. Recorded minutes of the Board Meetings, financial and service reports and the annual reports of the agency were used for purposes of data presented. Minutes of meetings of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Big Brother and Sister Associations were read for additional background information.

It was anticipated that this study would present information regarding the number of applicants served on a long-term basis, pertinent
data about the applications, the problem of the applicants and the services of the agency.
CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The organization of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois was an important step in the coordination of the existing Catholic social welfare programs and in the expansion of social welfare services to the Catholic people in the Diocese. The movement began when the Bishop expressed concern, in 1937, about the need for a centralized organization which would serve the Catholic people in the Diocese. He asked a young priest who had been working in the Juvenile Court in Rockford to make a study of the welfare needs of the Diocese and, as a result of the findings, the Bishop proposed that some central organization be established. He formally appointed that priest as the first Diocesan Director in September, 1937 and approved a Board of Directors, consisting of six members, who were chosen by that Director. This Board met for the first time on May 20, 1938 and this date marks the birth of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford.

The newly formed organization embraced three welfare programs, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Big Brother Association, and the Catholic Big Sister Association which were already in existence but
whose separate functions were not coordinated and whose scope was necessarily limited. In addition, it extended services, not covered by these three, to individuals and to families and it became a child-placing agency licensed by the State of Illinois. It fulfilled many of the unmet needs in the field of Catholic family and child welfare in the Diocese.

Catholic individuals and families needed consultation service and there was no Catholic agency to provide this service. Financial assistance was provided by the St. Vincent de Paul Society but this program was limited and needed reactivation. Child welfare problems could not be handled apart from the total family group. There was no service to the problem child who had not been declared delinquent by the court and little was done in regard to delinquency prevention. No foster home plans were made for children in orphanages, where they often remained until adolescence. Catholic unmarried mothers were not served under Catholic auspices and there was no guarantee that the children of these illegitimate pregnancies were placed in Catholic adoptive homes.

Of the three welfare programs that the new agency included, the first of these, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, had been in existence since about 1897 but there is no documentary material in existence concerning its origin. The Catholic Big Brother Association and the Catholic Big Sister Association were organized in 1931 and in 1934, respectively, when

---

1 Information obtained through personal interview with the Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, 1938-1950, Rev. Francis P. McNally,
the Bishop recognized a need for a welfare program for the protection of the Catholic boys and girls.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society was established for a two-fold purpose: to sanctify its members and to administer to the spiritual and material needs of the Catholic people of the Diocese. Originally, the members of each participating parish formed a conference and carried out the work under the immediate direction of the pastor. Representatives from these conferences formed the Particular Council, which was the central organization, under the Director of the Society, so that all of the conferences were joined together in working toward their common aim.

The original program emphasized the care of economically dependent persons through the allocation of relief and this was their function until the relief load became so heavy during the depression of the 1920's that it was necessary to secure public agency funds.

When public funds were expended for the care of the economically dependent persons, the Society expanded its work into other areas with the primary emphasis upon the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Its members performed the following services: encouraging individuals and families to return to the practice of their Catholic religion, arranging for baptisms, influencing parents to send their children to parochial schools, distributing prayer books and rosaries, visiting individuals and families in their homes, in the jails, in the hospitals, and in other institutions,
securing medical assistance or hospital care, and providing material or financial assistance.

In 1938, the year the Catholic Charities began its services, the Society worked cooperatively with that agency. The Director of Catholic Charities was also made Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The members of the Society made a report to the Director of the families with which the society had contact and the nature of the contact. If the Director and the member of the Society thought the family would benefit by casework service from the Catholic Charities, the Vincentian either encouraged the family to contact the agency directly or he made a referral to the agency. The agency also referred to the St. Vincent de Paul Society families whom it thought would benefit by the services of the Society. This practice assured a cooperative relationship between the two organizations and extended more adequate service to a greater number of Catholic people.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society became one of the charter members of the first Rockford Community Chest established shortly after World War I and continued its membership until 1938, when Catholic Charities became a participating agency and the Society was included in its budget. In addition to these funds, each conference had its own project such as the sale of the diocesan paper and maintaining the St. Vincent de Paul poor boxes.

By 1950, there were eight conferences within the Diocese and the
St. Vincent de Paul Society was a necessary part of the diocesan welfare work. The Society had a well-defined program which the members endeavored to perform in the Vincentian spirit as taught by the founder, Frederic Ozanam. The services of the Society were continued more adequately and the services of the Catholic Charities were executed more effectively with the cooperation of both organizations.

In 1931, the Bishop was concerned about the high delinquency rate and appointed a priest to establish a Catholic Big Brother Association in Rockford to help pre-delinquent boys, to assist in avoiding the necessity of commitment to institutions, and to prevent juvenile delinquency. The Association was organized and officers elected. The primary function of the Association was to assist those Catholic boys who were known to the courts. The courts cooperated by referring these boys to the Association. They were assigned by the President or the Director of the Association to one of the members who was known as the "big brother". This big brother worked on an individual basis with the boy and assisted him with his personal problems. He attempted to see the boy regularly and give him the counsel and direction he needed.

In 1938, the work of the Catholic Big Brothers was placed under the direction of the Catholic Charities which was organized during that year. The Director of the Association became the Director of the newly-formed organization. Since the Catholic Charities was interested in child
welfare problems, the referrals of these boys from the courts were made to that agency. The caseworker assisted the boy and his family and, if she thought the boy would benefit by a relationship with a big brother, the President of the Association was notified and a big brother was appointed. The caseworker referred other boys to the Association who had not become known to the courts but who would benefit by the service. The big brother and the caseworker discussed the situation regularly so that there was unified effort in handling problems. The caseworker, with her specialized training and skills, was able to help the big brother in his work and he, in turn, was able to share with the caseworker the information he received as a result of this personal relationship.

In 1950, the Big Brother Association was a necessary part of the welfare program in the city of Rockford where the delinquency rate was high. The program of the Association was developed so that some of the big brothers gave individualized attention to particular boys and the entire membership provided financial assistance for entertainment and material needs to all of the boys known to the organization. The program of both the Catholic Big Brothers and the Catholic Charities was carried on more effectively through their united efforts.

In 1934, the Catholic Big Sister Association was organized as a result of an appeal to the Bishop by the Juvenile court. The Bishop appointed the Director of the Catholic Big Brother Association to form a
similar organization to be known as the Catholic Big Sister Association to help Catholic girls who were known to the court and to attempt to reduce the delinquency rate among that group. It was originally organized through the Rockford Catholic Woman's League, which was an organization composed of Catholic women for spiritual and temporal purposes. The Director appealed to the League to organize a committee which would become the Catholic Big Sister Association and assume the work of counseling and directing the Catholic girls who needed this service. This was accomplished and the members of the Association who were "big sisters" assisted those girls who were referred to the Director from the court and also expended its services to those girls whom the members thought would benefit by such a relationship. Other members assisted in the program by planning entertainment for the entire group of girls and by providing for the material needs of some of them.

In 1938, the year in which the Catholic Charities began its service, the program of the Big Sister Association was closely united with that agency. The referrals from the courts as well as other referrals, were made to the agency and the caseworker assisted the girl and her family. If it appeared that a particular girl would benefit from relationship with a big sister, the worker made the referral to the Association. These referrals were made on the basis of the caseworker's relationship, from the friendly relationship of a big sister, or from a combination of the two.
The caseworker discussed the situation with the big sister so that a unified effort was achieved in handling the problems of the girl.

By 1950, the program of the association was expanded to include the underprivileged, the dependent, the pre-delinquent, the delinquent, and other Catholic girls who might benefit from it. In addition, the members of the Association offered volunteer services to Catholic Charities which were beneficial to its program. The coordination of the two programs comprised an important development in providing more adequate Catholic social welfare services to the community.

With these three existing agencies as a background, the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford was established in 1938 following the review of the unmet needs. Its function was that of a private casework agency engaged in family and child welfare. In order to determine the type of agency best suited to the Diocese, the newly appointed Director visited, personally, the Catholic Charities offices in the Diocese of Davenport, Dubuque, Peoria, and Springfield and corresponded with Green Bay and several other Diocese whose population was similar to that of the Diocese of Rockford. He also consulted other Directors who assisted him in a variety of ways, including, organization, financing, relationship with Community Chests, record keeping and personnel.

The agency was officially designated as the Rockford Catholic Charities with the Chancellor of the Diocese acting as honorary president,
and the Director of the agency as secretary. The original board members, including four industrialists, a doctor, and a banker, devoted their first efforts to the securing of enough equipment and personnel to open an office and to ways and means of financing. Office quarters were secured in a bank building in Rockford; the National Youth Administration offered the services of a stenographer, and a caseworker was secured. These three persons, the Director, the caseworker and the stenographer composed the original staff.

In the beginning the agency was wholly dependent upon donations from individuals, organizations, and benefit projects in order to meet expenditures. The first donation was the result of an appeal made to the Catholic Women's League in Rockford, which contributed $100.00 to begin the work. The Board of Directors recognized the need for a more stable program of financing and asked the Director to contact the Rockford Community Chest to request admission as a member agency entitled to support from the community. This request was granted and the agency was admitted to the Community Chest in November, 1938.

The Catholic Charities was designed to serve all of the Catholic people in the Diocese of Rockford. In 1939 and 1940, the volume of work increased in Rockford and in other cities of the Diocese to such an extent

2 Minutes of the Board Meetings of the four divisions of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford, 1938.
that a Diocesan Board was appointed to provide and guide the services needed outside of the city of Rockford. This board was composed of thirty-one members, in addition to the Rockford board members who were automatically selected to serve on the Diocesan Board. The board's first efforts were in the area of financing. A successful appeal was made to the Knights of Columbus, and the Board felt that in the future the Charities would be admitted to Community Chests in other cities throughout the Diocese.

In 1942, because of the pressures of work, a broad program of expansion was undertaken. This included the employment of additional staff members and the establishment of a new branch office. A caseworker was employed to serve all cities in the Diocese, with the exception of Rockford and Aurora. She worked out of the Rockford office and the total cost of operation of the office was shared proportionately by the Rockford and Diocesan divisions. Another caseworker devoted two full days to the work in Aurora and, as the demand for the services grew, plans were made by which a permanent office was established in that city. A board of twelve members, including those members of the Diocesan board, whose residence was Aurora, was formed. A successful appeal was made to the Knights of Columbus and that organization proceeded with plans for an office in Aurora. The new branch office began operation in October 1942, and the caseworker who had been serving Aurora from the Rockford office was transferred to that city. The Aurora branch secured membership in the Community Chest
of Aurora the same year. The Aurora office was also to serve Kane and Kendall counties.

In 1943 and 1944, as a result of the increase in the demand for the services of the agency, additional personnel was secured and the organization of another branch office was indicated. In Rockford and Aurora additional caseworkers were employed, as well as another clerical worker in Rockford. The two Diocesan board members from Elgin recognized a need for greater concentration of services in that city, and in 1945 an office was established there. A board was formed, consisting of eleven members whose immediate concern was the problem of financing the office. In February, 1945, the office began operation with the funds from the Diocesan Office and, in the same year, the branch office secured membership in the Community Chest of Elgin. A caseworker and a secretary were employed to provide service to DeKalb and McHenry counties and areas in Kane county, not covered by the Aurora office.

In October, 1945, the Catholic Charities was officially incorporated under the general not-for-profit corporation act of the State of Illinois. The four divisions, Rockford, Aurora, Elgin and the Diocesan office were included. A set of by-laws was drawn up and adopted. The official name of the agency became the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford. 3

The members of each board in Rockford, Aurora, and Elgin were also members of the Diocesan board, in addition to members from cities in the Diocese where there was no established office.

Between 1946-1949 there were some changes in the sources of funds and in the territory covered by the agency. In January, 1947, the Diocesan office was admitted to the budget of the Woodstock Community Chest but this Chest was abandoned a short time later. In September, 1948, the Catholic Charities was admitted to the Sterling Community Chest of which it continued to be a participating agency. In 1949, Kendall County was withdrawn from the Diocese of Rockford and was included in the newly-formed diocese of Joliet. The Rockford diocese included the following counties: JoDaviess, Lee, Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, McHenry, Ogle, Carroll, DeKalb, Whiteside and Kane.

In 1950, the total number of cases served by the agency was 1520 as compared with the first service report which covered two months in 1938, when the total was 129 cases. The statistics for 1938 included the Big Brother and Big Sister cases, the financial assistance applications, and the requests for securing jobs on Works Progress Administration or in industry. The statistics for 1950 included family welfare cases, 883; child welfare cases, 259; adoptive homes, 162; boarding homes, 149; little brother cases, 49; and little sister cases, 18. 4

4 Service Reports of the four divisions of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford, 1938-1950.
The latter two divisions were those in which the Catholic Big Brothers and Big Sisters Associations worked cooperatively with Catholic Charities.

As the services increased, the expenditures became greater. In 1950, the Diocesan office spent $39,555.84 compared to the first year of operation when about $2,000.00 was spent; Rockford expended $24,971.57 as compared to $5,000.00 in 1938; Aurora spent $18,528.19 as compared to the first budget of $5,500.00 from the Community Chest; Elgin expended $13,334.10 in contrast to $6,000.00 allotted by the Community Chest. The total expenditures of the four divisions in 1950 was $96,389.70.5

There were fifteen members of the staff in 1950. The Diocesan Director, appointed by the Bishop, had full responsibility for the administration of the four divisions. He maintained his office in Rockford and visited the Aurora and Elgin offices weekly, in addition to attending the board meetings of the four divisions. In Rockford, there were five caseworkers, one of whom was the Diocesan worker and three clerical workers; in Aurora, there were three caseworkers and one clerical worker; in Elgin, one caseworker and one clerical worker. All of the caseworkers in the agency had had or were receiving, training in a graduate school of Social Work.

The four divisions of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford worked cooperatively with one another. An overall policy governed each office of the agency. A staff meeting, composed of the Director and caseworkers was held every three weeks and the meeting place was rotated among the three established offices. All adoptive homes were approved or rejected, all placements for children were considered, and some family welfare cases were discussed at these meetings.

In summary, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford was established as a private casework agency engaged in family and child welfare. The program grew from this initial purpose by coordinating three existing organizations and by providing further distinct services. Its services, as summarized and attached to the 1950 budget request submitted to the Rockford Community Chest, were described as follows:

The Catholic Charities attempts to supply social protection, social development, and practical aid to Catholic families and individuals through the following casework services: individual and family consultation; temporary emergency relief; arrangements for maternity home and confinement care for unmarried mothers; evaluation and selection of adoptive homes; recruitment, evaluation, and selection of boarding homes; placement and responsibility for care of children in boarding homes; placement and visitation of children in institutions; placement, visitation, observation of children in adoptive homes, and specialized help to adoptive parents; counselling service to adolescents presenting special needs or problems and to parents of children presenting special problems.

CHAPTER II

INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANTS

The present study is focused on an analysis of the forty applications which came to the Rockford Office of Catholic Charities between January 1949 and July 1949, and which remained open through December of that year. The number included new as well as reopened applications, that is, those in which there had been no prior contact with the agency and those which had been known previously, had been closed, and were again requesting service. For purposes of the study, these cases were considered long-term, since they remained open from six months to one year. Of the forty applications, thirty were concerned with families and ten included single individuals. Of the thirty families, there were twenty-one in which both parents claimed to be Roman Catholic and nine in which there was one Catholic parent. The single individuals were Catholic.

The distribution according to the month of the application, and the classification of the case as new or reopened is interesting in terms of the agency program. This distribution is shown in Table I.
### Table I

**Distribution of the Forty Applications According to Month of Application and Whether the Case Was New or Reopened**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>New</th>
<th>Reopened</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifty percent of the applications considered had been known to the agency prior to 1949, had been closed, and were reopened during this period. This might indicate the need for an evaluation of the total case before closing, since it leads to a speculation that the cases were closed too readily, and before the needs of the applicants were adequately met.

It is noteworthy that in June there were eight applications, all of which were reopened, in contrast to March during which all six applications were new to the agency. The largest number of applications were made in April,
with an almost equal distribution of new and reopened cases; the smallest number were made in February and were evenly divided between new and reopened. There were no cases that were opened, closed, and reopened within the six month period itself.

The source of referral of these forty applications is important in terms of the agency’s place in the community. This distribution is shown in Table II.
### TABLE II

**SOURCE OF REFERRAL TO THE AGENCY IN THE FORTY APPLICATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Referral</th>
<th>Number Referred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Agencies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent de Paul Society</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 40

The largest number of applications were direct personal referrals, as would be expected, since fifty per cent of the applicants had been known to the agency prior to the period covered by the study. It is possible that some, or all, of these persons may have come at the suggestion of another person but this fact was either not discussed with the applicant or, if
discussed, was not recorded. It is also possible that, in many of the
fourteen reopened cases, the applicant returned to the agency at his own
discretion because he knew it through an earlier experience. However,
no attempt was made to break down the number in terms of this classifica-
tion. Since according to Table I there were twenty reopened cases, at
least six of these applicants were referred by some other source, the
second time they approached the agency with their problem.

"Other Agencies" accounted for thirteen of the referrals, or
thirty-three per cent of the total. Ten of these were made by agencies in
the city of Rockford and three by agencies outside of the city. The remain-
ing thirteen cases were referred by seven other sources. Although the
total was comparatively small, the distribution is significant since it
reflects the extent to which the agency's program has been interpreted in
the community.

Information on the nature of the first contact of the applicant with
the agency was included in the study. Whenever such a contact was made
other than through an office interview, it represented some relaxation of
agency policy which was flexible. Adjustments could always be made if an
office interview would bear a hardship on the client; that is, in cases in
which there were small children in the family, or in cases of illness. In
twenty-five out of the forty cases, the first contact with the applicant was
made through an office interview. In most of the cases of direct personal
referrals, the applicant came to the office unannounced but when the applicants were referred by other sources, the office interview was usually preceded by a telephone call or by a letter. In nine cases the initial contact involved a home visit. In all of these nine the person or agency making the referral had requested this method of contact and the applicant expected the visit. There were six interviews that were conducted in places other than in the office or in the home. These included hospitals, the office of a policewoman, and the client's place of employment.

The case records included data on the individual or the member of the family who initiated the contact, and on the person for whom the service was requested. Since the person was not always requesting service for himself, these two sets of data have to be considered together. They are shown in Table III and Table IV.
### TABLE III
THE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE PERSON INITIATING CONTACT WITH THE AGENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Initiating Contact</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Person for Whom Service was Requested</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Husband and Wife</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mothers were responsible for initiating the contact with the agency in fifteen of the applications. Their requests included those for the entire family, such as housing or financial assistance and those for children such as placement plans. In contrast, the father initiated the request in four cases, three of which concerned his children and one which was a financial
request involving the entire family. In three instances both parents approached the agency with their problem.

Ten of the applicants, all single persons, requested assistance for themselves. Seven of these were unmarried mothers who were requesting maternity care and assistance in making future plans; three other single persons requested assistance upon their release from institutions and from jail.

The family composition of the forty applications was covered in the study. There were thirty families and ten single persons in the six month period. Of the thirty families there were two adults, usually parents, in twenty-six of the applications and three adults in four of the families. In the calculation of the twenty-six families both parents were included even though they were separated for some reason such as marital difficulties or illness. The cases in which there were three adults include: 1) the case of a brother, sister and father in which the brother, who was in the Armed Forces became overly concerned about the welfare of his sister who left home and was making her own living arrangements, 2) the case of a mother and two daughters in which the mother was demanding that one daughter assume the responsibility for the care of the other daughter, 3) the case of a sister, brother, and mother in which the sister was requesting that the brother be released from a state mental institution to support his mother who was in financial stress, and 4) the case of a father and two
sons, in which the father demanded that the two sons provide financially for the family.

The ten cases of single persons included the unattached persons in institutions and the unmarried mothers, who were over eighteen years of age.

In reviewing the family composition, it is also necessary to consider the number of children in the applicant's family. This distribution is shown in Table V.

**TABLE V**

THE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE APPLICANT'S FAMILY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Children</th>
<th>Total # Children</th>
<th># Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only the children who were minors and living in the family at the

time of the application were included in this count. The children born to

unmarried mothers were excluded. On this basis there were seventy-five

children, forty-one boys and thirty-four girls, included in the thirty

families. The largest number in one family was seven and there were four

families with no children. The eight families with two children each was

the largest single grouping. There were six families with one child and

six with four children.

The ages of these seventy-five children are shown in Table VI.
TABLE VI
THE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE AGES OF THE CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th># Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - 11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 - 19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the seventy-five children twenty-six, or about one-third of them, were under five years of age. It is interesting to note that these children were born during the war period and it could be speculated that the war crisis affected the birth rate. The ages of the remaining fifty-nine children
are comparatively evenly distributed.

Data in the case records included information on the employment of the wage earner, ten of whom were unemployed when the initial contact was made. The largest employed group were factory workers, while the others held a variety of occupations. \(^1\)

Closely allied to the employment of the applicant is his economic status. For purposes of this study the classifications of dependent, independent, and marginal were used. The dependent group included those who were receiving assistance from any of the public assistance programs; the independent group included those who provided for themselves and their families without supplementation; the marginal group was made up of persons who were sometimes, but not always, dependent upon financial assistance from outside sources. On the basis of this classification, ten of the applicants in the study group were dependent; eighteen were independent; ten were marginal. The economic status of the applicant was not recorded in two cases.

This review of the study group covered pertinent information on the forty applications. Data included the month of application and whether the case was new or reopened, the source of referral, the nature of the first contact, the person initiating the contact, the person for whom service

---

\(^1\) Baker, Boxer, Cab Driver, Domestics, Engineer Draftsman, Janitor, Laborer, Radio Repairman, Tailor, Telephone Operator, Truck Driver, Waitress.
was requested. The family composition in terms of the number of adults, the number of children, their ages, and sex were reviewed. The analysis also included data on the economic status and the occupations of the applicants.
CHAPTER III
THE PROBLEMS OF THE APPLICANTS

This analysis considers the problems which the applicants presented to the agency, including the specific problems which prompted the applications and the related problems which the caseworker recognized. For purposes of this study, they were classified in five categories. The problems and their frequency are shown in Table VII.

TABLE VII
DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE FORTY APPLICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic and Social</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Mental Health</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those in which children were specifically involved</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those involving marital difficulties</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The economic and social problems primarily entailed difficulties that could be attributed to external factors. They included unsatisfactory housing, unemployment, financial dependency, and the social adjustment of unmarried mothers and of individuals released from institutions. Of the forty applicants twelve were faced with the problem of unsatisfactory housing. Five of the twelve had to leave their residence during this period. In two of these cases legal action was taken to remove the families from their homes; in a third case the landlord, who was a relative, demanded that the family find other housing; in the other two cases the individuals were released from institutions. In the latter two cases, these persons were seeking housing only for themselves; there were fewer complicating factors and it was easier to make the necessary arrangements. Of the forty applicants three were single individuals released from institutions but in one instance housing was not a problem since he secured it independently.

Four families were living in extremely crowded quarters. For two of these, the overcrowding followed a fire which destroyed their own homes; in the other two instances, the financial situation was such that the families could afford only one room. Three families were living with relatives; two with the maternal and one with the paternal in-laws. In each instance this arrangement proved to be unsatisfactory and was closely allied to the marital difficulties apparent in the families. Of the total
number for whom housing was a problem ten had secured more desirable
living arrangements by December 1949.

There were ten unemployed applicants. Three of these were un-
marrried mothers who had discontinued employment prior to their first con-
tact with the agency. This left seven applications in which unemployment
was of major importance. In three of these cases the father was unem-
ployed due to personality disturbances rather than to actual shortages in
employment. Two other fathers were out of work due to illness. The re-
mainning two cases in this group were those of the individuals released from
institutions. Of the seven applicants for whom unemployment was a major
problem, four were employed by December 1949.

Financial dependency was the major problem with twenty out of the
forty families. As previously shown, ten applicants were known to public
assistance agencies at the time of their initial contact with the private
agency and financial problems rested primarily with those agencies. This
left ten applications in which financial dependency was of major importance
to the Catholic Charities. Four of these families required assistance when
an unusual crisis faced them; such as, a premature birth of a baby, ill-
ness, unemployment, and increased rent. Three families were in need of
financial assistance until their eligibility was established for public
assistance. Three applicants were financially dependent when released
from mental and penal institutions. In all instances, the assistance was
provided only on a temporary basis.

The seven unmarried mothers and the three single individuals released from institutions presented problems of economic and social adjustment and are considered in connection with that category. The unmarried mothers encountered many problems in relation to their own welfare and to the welfare of their children, including problems of securing adequate medical attention in surroundings that were safe-guarded. In most instances it was necessary for these mothers to leave their own communities and go into maternity homes, wage homes, or hospitals. In the latter two such arrangements these mothers were employed, whenever possible, in order to help pay for their confinement care. Such arrangements undoubtedly added to the fears that these girls were already experiencing and required considerable adjustment. In addition, they had to make decisions regarding their children. In some instances, the mother chose to keep the child and, in doing so, encountered numerous difficulties with her family as well as in regard to physical care. For example, in one instance the mother wanted her parents to care for the child until plans for her intended marriage to the father of the child were completed. The father of the child was assisting the mother with such plans but her parents were opposed to this because of the social stigma involved. The caseworker assisted the mother's parents in becoming more understanding and accepting of the situation so that they were able to help their daughter with these
plans in order to make it possible for her to keep her child. In other cases the mother recognized her inability to provide for her child and was faced with the problem of relinquishing her custody of him. An example of this was the case of an immature mother who did not want to assume the responsibility of her offspring but who had considerable guilt about this. The caseworker helped to relieve her of this guilt so that she was able to release her child for adoption.

The problems of the three single individuals released from institutions were complex. In addition to the problems of unemployment, housing, and financial dependency, there were many social factors involved. In each instance the applicants were confronted with the stigma attached to such confinement and with the difficulty of developing social contacts. For example, one applicant was released from a state penal institution where he had served a three-year term for forgery. He was fearful in making applications for employment, securing housing, and renewing old acquaintances because he felt he would not be accepted as a result of his past record. The caseworker gave him the necessary support and encouragement so that he was able to make these contacts with society. In addition to the social problems of these ten applicants the caseworker was aware of the psychological problems involved in solving old conflicts and in the fulfillment of deep personality needs.

The second category of problems considered were those relating
to physical and mental health. There were six cases in which the problems of poor physical health played a major role. In three families the physical condition of the father contributed to the total problems of the families. Two of these resulted in unemployment and, in the third instance, the father had a physical injury which required expensive medical treatment, resulting in financial strain. In three families the mother's illness contributed to a variety of difficulties, such as temporary placement for the children, financial assistance, and arrangements for adequate medical care.

There was one family in which the problem of mental health was of primary importance. Although the mother was receiving out-patient treatment, her condition contributed to marital difficulties and to poor parent-child relationships.

The third group of problems considered were those in the religious category. It was the policy of the agency, to encourage the person to take such problems to his pastor or to the Director of the agency. However, there were five cases in which the caseworker assumed a definite role in connection with such problems. In three of these families there were children who were not baptized but whose parents were Catholic. The parents were reluctant to approach their pastor but apparently had a sincere interest in having their children baptized. With the permission of the parents, the caseworker talked to their pastors who, in turn, approached
the parents about the children's baptism. In two cases the parents wanted their children in Catholic Schools but thought this was impossible for financial reasons. The caseworker talked with the school authorities and arrangements were made so that the children were able to attend the parochial schools.

The problems in which children were specifically involved is the fourth category of problems considered. These included placement problems, problems of handicapped children, and difficult adult-child relationships. Temporary care was involved in eleven of the cases. Six children, born of unmarried mothers, required temporary placement prior to permanent placements. This left five families in which temporary placement plans for the children were made. Three foster home placements were necessary because, in two families, the mothers were ill, and in the other family there were serious marital difficulties. Two families required institutional placements for their children. In one of these families there were seven children, ranging from two to thirteen years of age, whose home had been destroyed by fire. In the other family, in which there were three children, from five to eight years of age, the father had deserted.

In all five instances these placements were only temporary and the children were returned to their own homes. In some instances the parents requested placement plans but the agency did not consider this the advisable
solution and the problem was met through other means, such as, more adequate housing or financial supplementation.

Permanent placements were indicated in seven cases; six were those of children born to unmarried mothers and released for adoption. The other instance was that of a child for whom the mother requested adoptive placement because her husband was not the father of the child. Adoption was requested in one other case by the child's parents but the caseworker realized that permanent removal of the child from the home was not the solution to the problem. The parents made the request as a result of pressures from relatives. The caseworker helped the parents to achieve some insight into the circumstances that probably led them to the decision to place the child for adoption. With this assistance and the opportunity to think through their request, the parents decided to keep their child.

Included in the problems specifically related to the children in the families, were four cases of handicapped children. In one of these families a six year old son was mentally retarded and epileptic. The child was extremely dependent upon his mother and much of this dependence was created by her. She did not permit him to become independent and did not provide the necessary stimuli to augment his pre-school training.

In another family an eleven year old daughter had a serious speech defect of which she was extremely self-conscious. Her school adjustment
was poor. The mother was understanding and a good relationship existed between her and the child; however, relationship with the father was less satisfactory and this created a problem. In one of the other cases an eight year old child was mentally retarded and it was necessary to arrange for his admission in a special school. In the fourth family a five year old daughter was placed in a convalescent home for treatments necessary as a result of poliomyelitis. The mother attempted to take the child home indicating that she could provide adequate care which, according to the physician, was impossible in the home setting. The caseworker helped the mother understand how important it was for the child to receive medical treatment in the convalescent home and made her aware of the complications that would result if the child did not have that type of care. With this understanding, the mother was agreeable to leave her child in the convalescent home until she was released by the physician.

There were three cases in which adult-child relationships was the major problem. In one of these families a seventeen year old boy ran away from home to be free of his overprotective parents. He was struggling for independence and self-expression which was impossible in his home environment. Another case involved a child who was living with her guardian. The guardian was indifferent toward the child and particularly careful that she did not spend anything on her that exceeded the payments for her care. This created tension and there were many complicating problems as a re-
sult. In the third family, the parent-child relationship was affected by the father's incarceration and the mother's promiscuity. In this instance the children were neglected physically and emotionally, which resulted in a complexity of problems.

The fifth category of problems considered were those which involved marital difficulties. In many instances the marital problems were either the cause or result of the other problems which have been presented but there were sixteen families in which the major difficulties were marital. Of these sixteen, there were nine families in which the parents had been separated at some time during 1949; three others in which proceedings for legal divorce had been initiated; and four families in which conflict in the marital situation was caused by relatives.

The separations in the nine families were caused by various difficulties. In one case the husband had not been completely emancipated from his parents and they encouraged him to return to them. He was confronted with the unresolved conflict of wishing to remain dependent on them and of wishing to free himself completely from them. In two other cases the husbands had many unmet dependency needs and in their escape through alcoholism, they would leave their families for days at a time. In two other instances the husbands were emotionally immature and unable to accept adult responsibilities; they deserted their families whenever they were confronted with a crisis.
In another family the husband showed signs of immaturity and of character problems resulting from his passivity and from his feelings of failure in the role of husband and father. At such times he returned to his mother. In one other case the parents were separated because of the husband's incarceration. Upon his release, the wife had strong feelings about this and numerous marital problems resulted. In still another family the extremely dependent wife returned to her parents periodically in order to meet her own dependency needs. Another family in which there was a separation was that of an immature wife who had been accustomed to higher social standards than her husband was able to provide. She left him until he secured more desirable housing.

In three instances, proceedings for legal divorce were initiated but in no case was it secured. The reasons for which divorce was contemplated included adultery, cruelty, and habitual drunkenness.

There were four families in which the husband and wife had made a satisfactory adjustment between themselves but this was broken down because of a conflict with relatives. The "in-laws" precipitated disharmony by their possessiveness of one of the marriage partners. This confronted the individual with the problem of separating himself emotionally from his relative. In most instances these were his parents. He was faced with the problem of separating his own wishes from those to whom he was emotionally tied.
The problems of the applicants were as varied as were the personalities involved. It is interesting to note that the problems took on a different significance in each individual case depending upon the maturity with which each applicant was able to accept his problems. Because of the complexity of the problems and because many problems were intermingled in each of the applications, it was difficult to consider them in an isolated manner. They were presented in five classifications in order to indicate the types of problems encountered by the applicants and to show the frequency in which they occurred.
CHAPTER IV

THE SERVICES OF THE AGENCY

The services of the agency are as diversified as is necessary to effectively meet the needs of the applicants. They are flexible and can be adapted to the particular circumstances and needs of clients. This is important since the requests come from a complex variety of human situations. The following cases are presented in summary form to illustrate the types of cases included under family service, as well as to indicate the kind of services the agency gave. They include an individual who was released from an institution, an unmarried mother, an unfortunate parent-child relationship, and a family who requested placement of a new-born infant.

Often the agency was asked to supervise a client upon his release from a mental or penal institution. The services included assistance with housing and employment; consultation relative to the institutional experience itself; and, consideration of the many problems which accompanied the person's situation at the time of his release.

Mr. L, age 28, was referred to the agency by the social service department at a State Hospital. They requested that the agency assist Mr. L in securing housing and employment and that the agency assume supervision of him upon his release. He was committed to the hospital about
six years previous or from the time he was 22 years old. His work record at the hospital was good. He was given psychological examinations which classified him as "Dull Normal" in intelligence. As a result of a court hearing initiated by Mr. L.'s family, he was released on order of the court. The agency accepted supervision and the worker secured housing, employment for him, and arranged for a Catholic man to act in the role of a Big Brother.

Mr. L. was extremely inadequate in terms of unmet dependency needs and experience. Continual guidance and supervision were necessary. He feared new experiences and the worker gave him the necessary encouragement and support. Mr. L. was able to continue employment, although he found it extremely difficult to budget his earnings. For some time he found it necessary to keep his earnings in the office of the agency and the worker allotted them to him on a daily basis. As he matured and learned to manage on his own, this plan was discontinued. He gradually became less dependent upon the worker and was able to function quite well on his own.

The L. case shows the function of the agency when it assumes supervision of an individual released from an institution. The caseworker offered Mr. L. assistance in meeting the problems he encountered when he was released from the protective environment of the institution. The worker was understanding of Mr. L.'s fears in meeting new experiences and was aware of his many problems he had during this difficult period of adjustment. With the encouragement and support from the worker, Mr. L. was able to make the adjustment more readily and satisfactorily.

The services which are considered to be important functions of the agency in cases of unmarried mothers include assistance with maternity
care, plans for the child, and consultation on problems relative to confinement and to the emotional disturbances that are involved in the total situation. The following illustration involves requests for these services, with particular emphasis upon the psychodynamics of the mother. This understanding enabled the worker to help her with her practical planning and with her adjustment after confinement.

Marie, aged 19, was referred to the agency by her pastor in order that arrangements might be made for maternity care outside of the city. She wanted to place her baby for adoption. Her contacts with the worker primarily centered upon hospitalization, medical care, plans for her child, and for herself after her confinement. Marie's relationship with the worker was accompanied by anxiety and emotional turmoil but the worker was able to give her some help at the supportive level.

Marie was physically attractive, was of average intelligence, in good health, and considered herself "better than the general run of people". She had completed one year of High School, then discontinued school to help financially at home. She was in unskilled employment. Her father was deceased and her mother was living and in good health. Marie was the oldest of five siblings, all of whom were single and living at home, with the exception of one brother, who was married and lived in another city. Her mother was aware of her condition and offered to keep the child until Marie would marry. During her contacts with the worker, Marie considered this plan but later realized it was unsound for the baby and for herself.

The father of the expected child was single but Marie never considered marrying him "since he was of Mexican descent and spoke very little English". She spoke negatively about him but had been attracted by his good looks and had enjoyed the places he took her for dinner and dancing.
Marie was referred for psychological and psychiatric examinations in order to assist in placing the baby for adoption and also as an aid in understanding Marie for future planning. On the Wechsler Bellevue Intelligence Scale - Form I, Marie earned a Full Scale IQ of 93. The examiner sensed a hidden undercurrent of anxiety, suspicion, and resistance, which hampered her performance. The psychiatric examination revealed conflict with anxiety, constriction, defensiveness, and evasiveness. Almost all of her inner life was being held in rigid suppression and the effect of anxiety pervaded all spheres of adjustment. It was the psychiatrist's impression that Marie was subject to fixed attitudes and was rather inflexible in her thinking and not readily swayed by outside attitudes and opinions. Her relationships with people were accompanied by anxiety, which she could only handle through negativism, denial, and resistance. There was evidence of an unresolved Oedipal entanglement. It was indicated that her mother censured her behavior but did little in the way of offering firm guidance. Marie did have a fairly strong tie to her family and felt some responsibility toward them.

Maternity care was arranged for Marie outside of the city and a worker in that city was given pertinent information which she utilized in her contacts with Marie. After confinement Marie returned home, released custody of her child to the agency, and continued contact with the original worker for about three months, during which time the child was placed in an adoptive home. The worker's acceptance, reassurance, and help with practical planning during this period, had strengthened Marie's relationship with her. She was given sustained support by the worker in her readjustment at home, in her new job, and in her entire social situation.

The case of Marie is quite indicative of the services the agency offers to unmarried mothers. The caseworker assists the unmarried mother in her planning for herself and for her child. In most cases the unmarried mother is referred for psychological and psychiatric
examinations or the worker sees the psychiatrist on a consultation basis, which is a valuable contribution to the psychodynamic understanding of the unmarried mother. The caseworker assists the unmarried mother not only with her immediate problems but, whenever possible, offers help with the more basic problems that contributed to the pregnancy. In planning for the child the caseworker offers sustained casework help whether the decision of the mother is to keep her child or to make adoptive plans.

In some instances placement of a child outside of the home is the most effective way of meeting the needs of the family and of the child. Placement was necessary in the following case because of a relationship in which the emotionally immature mother rejected her son, and the resulting emotional deprivation was complicated by the fact that he did not have a strong adult figure in his home environment.

Mrs. K. was referred to the agency by her pastor to discuss plans for her son Dick, age 15, who had become involved with the court authorities on a charge of petty larceny. He had been in jail for one day and released to his mother after she promised to devise a plan for him whereby he would be closely supervised. Mrs. K. requested a list of manual training schools where she thought Dick would be happier, as he was dissatisfied with his present school work. The agency was reluctant to offer recommendations about schools without a better understanding of Dick's behavior. The worker suggested psychological and psychiatric examinations in order to choose the best plan for Dick, and his mother was agreeable to this suggestion.

Within a few days, Mrs. K. notified the worker that a
court hearing was scheduled for Dick on another charge of petty larceny. The worker attended the hearing with Mrs. K. and her son. The States Attorney requested that Dick be removed from the community immediately and placed in a state training school for boys. Mrs. K. and Dick were opposed to this plan. The worker requested deferment of such action on the basis that Mrs. K. had begun plans for Dick and that the agency was willing to help her in this. The worker explained that an appointment had been made at the Clinic and on the basis of their reports, the agency would help Mrs. K. in her planning for him. The Judge agreed to delay action after Mrs. K. agreed to stop working and closely supervise Dick for two weeks, during which time some plan had to be made for him.

History showed that Mr. K. had died when Dick was thirteen years old. He had been the one strong figure and the stabilizing influence in Dick's life. Mrs. K. had rejected Dick since the age of 4 and, up to that age, he was the subject for fighting between the mother and the paternal grandmother, who lived in the same household. Dick had one brother, age 6, who was normal for his age and who mixed well with the children at school. The mother had an obvious preference for this child.

Dick was extremely obese and weighed 287 pounds. He was in the eighth grade and did poorly in his school work. He was domineering in play with younger children but when he was with his classmates, he was shy and was usually seen standing alone sucking his thumb. He did not enter into active recreational pursuits but rather enjoyed listening to the radio and reading comic books. At the age of 9, coincidental with the birth of his brother, he began to steal and overeat as compensatory measures for his emotional deprivation. His physical appearance created a secondary problem of great intensity in that, because of his size, he was an object of ridicule and felt even more rejected as a result.

The psychological examination showed Dick had an
average rating and that he should be able to do work in the eighth or ninth grade. The psychiatric examination showed that he was suffering from a deep emotional problem and that his symptoms of stealing and overeating appeared to stem from his strong sense of emotional deprivation. Dick was thought to be an immature youngster who should be away from his own home and who could profit by the maturing influence of a relationship with a strong adult. Because of the pressures from the court authorities, and because the boarding school was unable to admit him immediately, Dick was placed in a local training school on a temporary basis. He was given a thorough medical examination and put on a strict diet. Although his adjustment was good, Mrs. K. wanted her son in a school with a regular academic curriculum. At the beginning of the new school term, Dick was transferred to a military academy. His scholastic record showed marked improvement and he related well to his classmates. He adhered to his diet and lost a great amount of weight, which was helpful to him in making a better social adjustment. Therapy was continued with Mrs. K. so that she was more accepting of her son.

The K. case shows the services of the agency in a situation in which a difficult parent-child relationship existed. The caseworker was not only concerned with alleviating the immediate problems that Dick was presenting but also the underlying cause of his behavior. The psychiatrist, the psychologist, and the caseworker collaborated their impressions, with the aid of the report of Dick's medical examination, in arriving at a diagnostic evaluation. On this basis, it was decided that Dick should be placed in a boarding school where he could benefit by the maturing influence of a strong adult and that controls be placed on his diet. It was also decided that therapy be continued with Mrs. K. so that she would have
a better understanding of her feelings for Dick and become more accepting of him.

There are many applications made to the agency for child placement in boarding or adoptive homes or in institutions. The reasons for such requests may be due to pressures from relatives, illegitimate pregnancies, marital conflicts, difficult parent-child relationships, or to some environmental situation. The initial request for placement is not always the most effective way to meet the needs of the applicant, and the subjective as well as the objective elements must be understood. The worker must evaluate the request in these terms and maintain the family as a unit whenever the well-being of the family or its members is not damaged.

This is illustrated in the following case:

The A. family was referred to the Catholic Charities by their family physician who believed that their new-born infant should be removed from the home as he "feared for its life". Mrs. A. had given birth to the child in her home the previous night and the family expressed their unwillingness to keep him. For this reason the doctor was concerned about the physical care that the child would receive from his parents.

The worker visited Mr. and Mrs. A. at their home the same day. Mrs. A. was tense and anxious as she explained that they wanted to place the infant for adoption. There were three other children in the family ages five, three and thirteen months and they had always wanted only two children. Although Mr. A. was employed he was unsure of his job and they were not financially able to care for a fourth child. Mrs. A. refused to give any care to the child and insisted that he be removed immediately for fear that the neighbors and relatives
would become suspicious of what they had done. Although Mrs. A. was insistent, she evidenced a great deal of guilt about this decision. She thought it was better to bring a child into the world and give it up for adoption than to do away with it as others had done. She knew it was wrong to keep a child in a family where it was not wanted because the child certainly sensed the feeling. A good adoptive home would be able to provide for the child more than they would ever be able to do. Mr. A. remained silent when questioned as to whether or not this was also his decision. Mr. A.'s only comment in this interview was that he would pay for the child's care in a boarding home until it could be placed for adoption. After a consultation with the doctor it was decided, in the interest of the child, that it should be removed from the home as soon as possible.

The child was removed to a boarding home on the same day. The worker explained to Mr. and Mrs. A. that, if the infant was placed for adoption, more information would be necessary and that she would make further visits to the home. She told them that they could think through their decision during this period. Subsequent visits were made to the A. home, during which time both Mr. and Mrs. A. were ambivalent about whether or not they should keep the infant. They were encouraged to talk with a psychiatrist to receive help in arriving at a decision but, since they refused to do this, the worker saw the psychiatrist on a consultation basis. Mrs. A. expressed hostile feelings toward her own parents and stated that they criticized everything that she did. It seemed that this constituted some of the basis for her feelings toward the infant, since she also said that her parents never wanted her to have any children. After numerous interviews, Mrs. A. gained some insight into the combination of circumstances that probably led her to the decision to place the child.

After about two weeks of indecision, the family notified the worker that they definitely wanted to keep the child. At this time both Mr. and Mrs. A. seemed cheerful and more relaxed. They inquired in some detail about the child, and upon inquiry, Mrs. A. said that her husband
had always wanted to keep him and now that she was feeling better, she knew that a fourth child would not be too much for her. She was able to verbalize the influence of her own parents as this had been discussed in previous interviews. Her husband was working and she knew they could manage financially. Two more visits were made to the home in order to make sure that Mr. and Mrs. A. were satisfied with their decision to keep the child. When the infant was about a month old, he was moved back into the home and the family readily accepted him. Visits were continued for six months during which time the child made marked progress and it appeared that he had been completely accepted into the family circle.

The A. case shows that the agency's function is not simply to fulfill the requests of the applicant but rather to evaluate those requests in terms of whether or not they are the solution to the problem. Often families who are under pressures make a request that they think will solve their difficulties but, after discussing the situation with the caseworker, who is objective, understanding, and non-judgmental, they realize the request will not provide them with a satisfactory solution. When the A.'s requested that the infant be removed from their home, the caseworker did this for the protection of the child, although she realized that Mr. and Mrs. A. were coping with their problem under emotional strain. Interviews were continued with the A.'s in order to help them think through their decision, and the caseworker consulted the psychiatrist to acquire a better understanding of the total situation.

On this basis, Mrs. A. gained some insight into the circumstances that probably led her to the decision to place the child for adoption. The
A. 's requested that the child be returned to them and, when the case-worker thought the family was certain of the decision, the request was granted. Visits were continued for six months, to make certain that the A. 's were satisfied and that the infant was receiving adequate care.

Usually a constellation of services existed in an individual case, depending upon the particular services necessary to meet the special needs of the applicant. Counselling and interpretation were frequently combined with other services. There are numerous examples of this. When children were accepted for placement, there was counselling with the applicant in terms of evaluating the need for placement, and in an attempt to dissolve the problems which necessitated separating the members of the family. Maternity care was given to the unmarried mother in addition to consultation in regard to her personal problems, her feelings surrounding her condition, her feelings for the father of the child, and with the difficulties involved in the disposition of her expected child. In instances in which there was a health problem, in addition to giving assistance in arranging for medical care, interpretation of the illness and its effects upon the entire family was given.

Financial assistance, as previously stated, was given in 20 out of the 40 applications. It was provided in various forms, such as clothing, furniture, fuel, food, and payment of rent. It is not the policy or function of the agency to provide the basic financial needs or to supplement
inadequate earnings for a long period of time. The agency does provide financial help on a casework basis after a diagnostic evaluation of the total situation. In no instance was financial assistance given without additional services.

In addition to the services within the agency, referrals were made for further help. For example, in a number of cases after some form of supplementation was given, the applicant was referred for employment or to the Rockford Township Relief Office or to one of the State Public Assistance programs. Another example is a case in which the agency offered consultation with a child with behavior problems and later referred the family to the Child Guidance Clinic. Another referral was made to the Juvenile Court following consultation with the parents when it was found necessary to make the children wards of the court.

The agency was established primarily to make available to the Catholic people in the Diocese, the social services needed to protect the welfare of the families and of the individuals who were subjected to external or internal stress. The services were directed to assist the families and the individual members to a more comfortable, satisfying life.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The forty applications reviewed in this study were continuously active in the agency for at least six months. Fifty percent of these applications had been known to the agency prior to 1949 and were again requesting service. This raises the question of whether the needs of the applicant were met adequately at the time of their first application. The distribution of the applications over the six month period fluctuated but there is no apparent reason for the manner in which they were distributed according to month. The largest number of applications were made in April, while the smallest were made in February.

The forty applicants were referred to the agency by a variety of sources. The greatest number were direct personal referrals, as would be anticipated, since twenty applicants had been known to the agency previously. "Other Agencies" accounted for the second largest number of referrals, which would seem indicative of the amount of cooperation and understanding that exists among the agencies in the community.

The study group included thirty families and ten single individuals. The person initiating contact with the agency in most of the cases requested service for his family or for particular members of his family.
Each of the ten single individuals requested service for himself. The applicant's first contact with the agency was an office interview in the majority of the cases. In the applications, the Catholic religion was predominant in number, but this would be expected since the agency was organized primarily to serve Catholic people. The majority of applicants were factory workers and were included in the "Independent" classification economically.

The problems of the applicants were considered under five categories, although a combination of the problems usually existed in an application. Social and economic problems were most frequent in the study group. The social and economic problems and those involving children were often prevalent in those families in which there were marital difficulties. It appears that these problems were the cause or result of the marital problems.

The services of the agency were diversified and flexible in order to meet the special needs of the applicant. Usually a constellation of services existed in a particular case because of the complexity of the situation. The agency is a set up to give service to both family and child welfare cases which makes it unnecessary to refer families to other agencies when children are accepted for placement. The agency does make referrals to other agencies when the applicant is in need of further help. The study shows that casework service was given in each application and only a
minority of applicants were given financial assistance. This is indicative that the primary area of concentration in the agency's program is one of service rather than that of giving relief.
**APPENDIX SCHEDULE**

I. **Initial Data:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referred by</th>
<th>Date Opened</th>
<th>Date Closed</th>
<th>Date Reopened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Initial Contact with__ Nature of First Contact__ (home__ (office__ (other__

*Member for whom service is requested__ Religion__

*Initial Request__

II. **Identifying Information:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Family</th>
<th>Number in Home</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whereabouts of Father</th>
<th>Whereabouts of Mother</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others in Home</th>
<th>Relatives</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status of Parents</th>
<th>Of Applicant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of Wage Earner(s)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Status of Applicant</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Social Agencies Interested:</th>
<th>Prior to Contact</th>
<th>Referred by Cath. Char.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55
III. Problems:

Problems in Family

Specific Problem

IV Service:

Financial Assistance

Service

Services Offered by the Agency
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Minutes of the Board Meetings of the four divisions of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford, 1938-1950.

Minutes of the Meetings of the Catholic Big Brother Association, 1934-1950.


Summary of Services, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford, 1950.