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[Madison, Wisconsin]: [Wisconsin Emergency Relief
Administration], 1934

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(R.R. 1)

WISCONSIN EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

Madison

May 15, 1934

TO ALL RELIEF DIRECTORS

RURAL PROGRAM - STATEMENT OF POLICY

I

DIRECT RELIEF PROGRAMS AS AT PRESENT CONDUCTED IN RURAL AREAS WHICH ARE DEFINED AS OPEN COUNTRY AND TOWNS HAVING LESS THAN 5,000 POPULATION, WILL BE REPLACED AS OF JUNE 1ST, 1934 BY A PROGRAM OF RURAL REHABILITATION.

The objective of this program is to make it possible for destitute persons eligible for relief in such areas to sustain themselves through their own efforts.

It is evident that where dwellings with even very small tracts of land are available for the production of home gardens and for feed for domestic livestock and poultry, the average family, when provided with such livestock and poultry, can produce a major part of its food requirements.

Supplementary to these self-sustenance measures, assistance should be given in securing employment either in crop preparation or other private enterprises, or on local public works.

II

LOCAL EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATIONS WILL BE PERMITTED LIMITED DISCRETION AS TO METHODS EMPLOYED IN CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM WITHIN THE LIMITS OF FUNDS AVAILABLE AND TO THE EXTENT THAT IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT CAPITAL GOODS AND OTHER NECESSITIES FURNISHED WILL LEAD TO THE REHABILITATION OF THE PERSONS RECEIVING THEM.

It is recognized that complete rehabilitation cannot be accomplished immediately and that methods employed must vary with conditions prevailing in the various counties. Therefore, while this program should be inaugurated as of June 1st and certain definite steps, as hereinafter directed should be taken as of that date, the procedure to be followed from then on will

be determined by evolutionary developments resulting from the initial steps taken by the local emergency relief administrations, and directed and coordinated by this office.

III

PERSONS DESIRING ASSISTANCE WILL BE REQUIRED TO FILE APPLICATION WITH THE LOCAL RELIEF DIRECTOR.

It is believed that there are now arising many opportunities for employment in rural areas, and that a large proportion of persons now receiving aid from the government will soon be able to secure employment in crop preparation and kindred activities as well as on road jobs and in the increasing public works projects.

Before granting relief, administrative officials should definitely assure themselves of each applicant's inability to utilize any other resources, and should see that it is clearly understood that relief is extended only in the transitional period pending the applicant's becoming self-supporting.

Every resource possible to the applicant should be examined, the following being given specific attention:

- (a) The availability of a job at a living wage in either private or public enterprise.
- (b) The availability of credit, either from private sources or from government agencies.
- (c) Status of the applicant as to receipt, or prospective receipt, of government benefits accruing from crop reduction contracts.

IV

WORK PROJECTS, WHICH MAY BE A CONTINUATION OF UNFINISHED-PREFERRED CIVIL WORKS PROJECTS NOW UNDER WAY-SHALL BE PROVIDED AS A MEANS OF AFFORDING WORK IN EXCHANGE, EITHER FOR ADVANCES OF FOOD AND/OR OTHER CONSUMABLE ITEMS OR FOR CAPITAL GOODS FURNISHED FOR SELF-SUSTENANCE PURPOSES. IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES APPROVED BY THE STATE EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION PAYMENT FOR WORK MAY BE MADE IN CASH INSTEAD OF IN KIND.

Work on these projects should be performed currently in

VII

exchange for consumable items, but where capital goods are being worked out, work may be credited either in whole or in part as performed against the assigned value of such capital goods, title to which will be retained by the State or other properly constituted public body until fully paid out. No interest shall be charged.

Payment in cash instead of in kind should be confined to workers, who, for any valid reason, cannot be properly aided by grants in kind to rehabilitate themselves, such as clerks and other workers in small towns. Any plan for payment in cash must have the approval of the State Emergency Relief Administration.

It should always be borne in mind that the final objective of this program is the placing of the individual family in position to become self-supporting. Work projects, therefore, should be designed as nearly as possible to accomplish this direct result. Community projects, as distinguished from projects designed to aid the individual family, are desirable only to the extent that they directly affect the social and/or economic welfare of the families whom it is desired to aid.

Unquestionably many local relief administrations have heretofore seen in the relief program an opportunity to prosecute local Public Works enterprises, and have, unconsciously perhaps, attached greater importance to the accomplishment of such projects than to the welfare of individual destitute families within their respective communities. It is imperative that this conception, where held, be corrected. Bulletins suggesting types of work projects for rural areas will be issued by this office from time to time.

V

WORK SHALL BE VALUED ON THE BASIS OF THE PREVAILING WAGE SCALE, BUT IN NO EVENT AT LESS THAN THE RATE ADOPTED BY THE INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN FOR WORK DIVISION PROJECTS.

VI

HOURS PER WEEK SHALL NOT EXCEED TWENTY-FOUR, EXCEPT WHERE CAPITAL GOODS ARE BEING WORKED OUT, IN WHICH EVENT TOTAL HOURS NECESSARY TO DISCHARGE THE OBLIGATION THEREFOR INCURRED SHOULD BE ALLOCATED BY THE LOCAL RELIEF DIRECTOR IN THE MOST FEASIBLE MANNER.

VII

WORK PROJECTS IN RURAL AREAS ARE TO BE HANDLED IN THE SAME MANNER AS ALL OTHER WORK DIVISION PROJECTS.

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WISCONSIN EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

Every care should be used, however, to devise projects providing a maximum proportion of direct labor.

VIII

IT IS POSSIBLE FOR ALMOST EVERY FAMILY LIVING EITHER IN THE COUNTRY OR IN TOWNS OF 5,000 OR LESS POPULATION TO OPERATE A GARDEN. WITHOUT REFERENCE TO OTHER SELF-SUSTENANCE MEASURES WHICH MAY BE PUT INTO EFFECT LATER, IT SHOULD BE THE POLICY OF COUNTY EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATIONS TO REFUSE TO EXTEND RELIEF TO ANY FAMILY FAILING TO PLANT AND PROPERLY CARE FOR AN ADEQUATE GARDEN WHEN THE FACILITIES THEREFOR ARE AVAILABLE.

IX

THE COSTS OF THIS PROGRAM ARE TO BE MET WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL FUNDS IN THE PROPORTION AS OTHER RELIEF COSTS.

WISCONSIN EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

James H. Dance
James H. Dance
Director, Rural Rehabilitation

1. Be eligible for relief.
2. Have made a sincere effort to secure employment in crop preparation, private industry, or public works.
3. Have a desire and aptitude for gardening or farming to the extent necessary for sustenance.
4. Be physically able to perform duties incident to a Rehabilitation Work Program.
5. Have exhausted available sources of credit or sustenance from private or public lending agencies, (such as are available from Production Credit Associations, Federal Seed Loan Agencies, Federal Farm Loan Association or other Farm Credit Administration sources and benefits from Crop Rehabilitation Programs.)

WISCONSIN EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

Madison

June 22, 1934

Regulations Pertaining to Rural Rehabilitation Program

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration contemplates making funds available to the Wisconsin Emergency Relief Administration for a Rural Rehabilitation Program in rural areas, which are defined as open country and towns having less than five thousand population. This program may be conducted in rural sections of those areas now organized for the receipt and distribution of Federal-State relief funds.

Object

The object of this program is to make it possible for destitute persons eligible for relief in such areas to sustain themselves through their own efforts.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for Rural Rehabilitation, the following requirements must be complied with. The applicant must:

1. Be eligible for relief.
2. Have made a sincere effort to secure employment in crop preparation, private industry, or public works.
3. Have a desire and aptitude for gardening or farming to the extent necessary for sustenance.
4. Be physically able to perform duties incident to a Rehabilitation Work Program.
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- 2 -

Terms and Conditions

1. Rural Rehabilitation clients will be expected and may be required to work on approved work projects in return for relief benefits granted under this program.
2. The title to capital goods furnished by the relief administration will remain with said relief administration until fully paid for by the rehabilitation client in cash or labor as approved by the relief administration.
3. The rehabilitation client shall, during the period of said rehabilitation, use the income made available to him by this program for the purpose of maintaining his family, unless otherwise allowed by the relief administration.
4. The rehabilitation client shall make a sincere effort to make himself self-sustaining as far as possible through the benefits of this rehabilitation program.

WISCONSIN EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

MADISON

June 30, 1934

RURAL REHABILITATION

TO RELIEF DIRECTORS

Attached please find (R.R.2) Regulations pertaining to the Rural Rehabilitation Program which are self-explanatory.

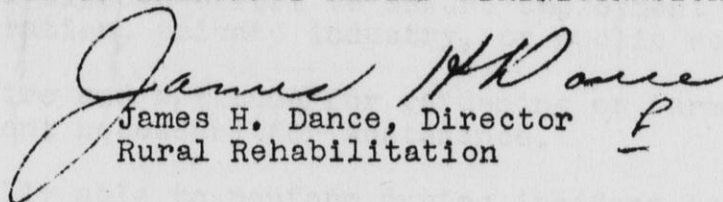
Following is the procedure covering the filing and handling of applications:

Procedure

The standard application blank (R.R.3) should be filled out by the applicant or by the case worker in conference with the applicant. All applications should be carefully examined by the local relief departments. Any applications about which uncertainty exists should be reviewed with the rural relief adviser from the state headquarters. Where the staff of the local office does not include persons whose training and experience qualifies them for this type of work, the employment of properly qualified persons will be approved by the State Administration upon the recommendation of the rural relief adviser from the state headquarters.

Very sincerely,

WISCONSIN EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION


James H. Dance, Director
Rural Rehabilitation

JHD:MEB

WISCONSIN EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

Madison

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