

Aid to the Blind: Earned Income of Recipients, September 1950

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For many years national organizations for the blind and working blind persons themselves have pointed out that blindness reduces the earning power of an individual and at the same time increases his cost of living; they have urged that programs providing assistance to the blind should encourage rehabilitation of the blind person and development of his ability to earn. To compensate for the higher living costs of the blind and to provide an incentive to the development of their earning power the Social Security Act was amended in 1950 to permit States, beginning October 1950, to still obtain Federal participation while exempting up to \$50 in earnings of recipients of aid to the blind in determining their need for assistance.¹ This article presents the findings of a study made to determine the extent of employment and earnings among persons receiving aid to the blind in September 1950, the last month before the exemptions were permitted.

THERE is common agreement among persons concerned with the welfare of the blind that blindness alone need not relegate the visually handicapped person to the proverbial rocking chair. How many sightless persons are actually in remunerative work throughout the country is, however, unknown. Various estimates have been made, but they have been based on too sketchy information to be entirely reliable. The Bureau of Public Assistance has now obtained information on the employment and earnings of one segment of the blind population—recipients of aid to the blind.

A review of persons receiving aid to the blind in the 47 States administering the program with Federal financial participation in September 1950 shows that 4,438, or 5.7 percent of the total number of recipients, had some income earned through their own efforts. Either relatively or in absolute terms, the number of these

earners is not large. The size of the group assumes more significant proportions, however, when it is realized that all these individuals were handicapped by severe visual loss and that a high percentage had the additional disadvantage of being in the upper age brackets. Although specific information is lacking, it is probable that many of these employed blind persons had few educational, economic, or other advantages to equip them for gainful employment. Moreover, for them as for employable blind persons generally, work opportunities were limited. A large proportion of the recipient-earners worked only on a part-time basis. Earnings, as might be expected, were exceedingly small, and many of the workers also had families to support. The fact that the visually handicapped workers were receiving public assistance is itself evidence that what they were able to earn was inadequate.

There were, of course, wide differences among the States in the number of recipient-earners. The proportions range from 12.4 percent of the total number on the rolls in North Carolina to 0.4 percent (representing a single case) in the District of Columbia. It is of some significance, too, that seven States—all but one located in the South—accounted for more

than half the recipients with earned income.

Characteristics of Recipient-Earners

Age, Sex, and Race

The recipients of aid to the blind who earned a partial livelihood in September 1950 were, for workers, relatively old; half were between the ages of 45 and 64. Their median age of 52 years is not surprising, however, since blindness itself is predominantly a disability of old age. The age of this assistance group is in marked contrast to the median age of approximately 39 years for employed persons aged 14 and over in the Nation's civilian labor force in 1950. Male recipient-earners, who outnumbered the women in this study by almost 5 to 1, had the same median age as the entire group; for women, however, the median was slightly higher—55 years. There is no up-to-date information on the ages of recipients on the aid to the blind rolls generally, but in a study of 21,000 recipients conducted in 20 States in 1940-41² the median age was found to be 59 years. Thus the recipient-earners are only about 7 years younger, on the average, than were the recipients in the earlier study, which included both earners and nonearners.

The relatively large representation (28.6 percent) of nonwhite persons among the 4,438 workers can be attributed chiefly to the number of blind earners reported by States with substantial nonwhite populations. Negro earners constituted 26.6 percent of the group studied; most of the remaining nonwhites were Indians (1.8 percent). Nonwhite workers

*Division of Program Statistics and Analysis, Bureau of Public Assistance. For detailed tabulations based on the study reported here, see *Aid to the Blind Recipients With Earnings in September 1950*, Public Assistance Report No. 19, June 1952.

¹The amendment makes the exemption of the first \$50 in such income by the States mandatory, effective July 1, 1952, for obtaining Federal participation in the assistance payment.

²Ralph G. Hurlin, Sadie Saffian, and Carl E. Rice, M.D., *Causes of Blindness Among Recipients of Aid to the Blind*, Bureau of Public Assistance, Washington, 1947, p. 25.

aged 14 and over represented only 9.6 percent of the Nation's civilian labor force in the Census of 1950.

Amount of Vision

Blindness is a variable concept.³ It does not always indicate the complete absence of sight. Among the recipients with earnings were included some with total absence of sight and others with vision greatly reduced, though in varying degrees. The amount of remaining vision these recipients have is significant because it is one of the factors in their employment, affecting both the type of occupational activity and relative personal independence.

For the purposes of the study, persons who are totally blind, who cannot distinguish light or perceive hand movements or form at a distance of 3 feet, or who have central visual acuity only up to 5/200 (Snellen) are without "useful vision." Almost three-fifths of the recipient-earners in the study were in that group. The remainder had varying amounts of limited sight, ranging from 5/200 central visual acuity to 20/200 or better. When central visual acuity was greater than 20/200, there was either a limitation in the field of vision or an ocular defect severe enough to cause the individual to be considered "blind" under the State's definition of blindness. Relatively more nonwhite recipient-earners (64.5 percent) than white recipient-earners (55.8 percent) had no useful vision. A larger proportion (23.9 percent) of those with no useful vision were employed in or around their homes than of those (13.2 percent) with some minimal sight.

³ The term "blindness" as used here denotes economic blindness. The Bureau of Public Assistance has recommended the following definition expressed in terms of ophthalmic measurements: "Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses is considered as economic blindness. . . . An individual with central visual acuity of more than 20/200 in the better eye with proper correction is usually not considered blind unless there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees." This definition, either without change or with minor modifications, is in use in most States administering programs of aid to the blind.

Persons with central visual acuity ranging from 5/200 to 10/200 are regarded as having what is usually described as "traveling sight." More than two-fifths of the recipient-earners had at least that much or a greater amount of vision and were potentially independent in their travel. For one reason or another, however, some of those with "traveling sight" or better vision, particularly recipients with employment outside the home, did require aid in going to and from work. Approximately 3,600 recipients were employed away from home, and 2,000 of them had substantially no useful sight. More than half the latter group traveled alone. Of the remaining 1,600 with central visual acuity of 5/200 or better, approximately three-fourths required no help in travel. As a rule a member of the family or a friend acted as guide for those who needed aid in going about. Few of the recipients whose work took them away from home employed a paid guide or had a seeing-eye dog.

Earnings

Anything these recipients were able to earn through their own efforts was regarded as earned income. Such income could be in the form of cash or its equivalent in goods and services. The value of produce and similar items raised exclusively for home consumption, for example, was regarded as earned income, since it not only entailed work on the part of the recipient but also provided him with needed consumption items.

Form of Earnings

Most recipients' earnings consisted of money—wages, salaries, commissions, or profits or fees from self-employment in a profession or business. About 70 percent of the recipient-earners had all their earnings in cash. An additional 15 percent had income in both cash and kind. For the others the return for work done was exclusively in kind—for example, in the form of shelter or board, fuel, produce, and similar items. In a few instances it was learned that recipients with commodities—and little cash available with which to purchase needed items—engaged in barter. As far as is

known, this practice was not widespread and probably was limited to certain localities where circumstances favored it.

Some occupations were more likely than others to provide payment either wholly or partly in kind. Agriculture, fishery, forestry, and kindred occupations, as a group, had a higher proportion of workers with such earned income (61.5 percent) than any other occupational group. Service occupations were next, with about 26 percent. In each of the other occupational groups into which the jobs of the recipient-earners have been classified, fewer than 10 percent had noncash earnings.

Amount of Earnings

By any standard, the amount these blind workers were able to earn was unquestionably low. All their earnings, whether cash or noncash, averaged only about \$21 in September 1950.⁴ Approximately two-thirds of the 4,122 recipients whose earnings could be computed had less than that amount, however, and half of them earned less than \$13. Only 2 percent earned as much as \$100 a month. The average and median amounts for recipients with cash earnings only were about \$22 and \$14, respectively.

A number of different factors contributed to the level of reported earnings. Two groups of activities—agriculture and service occupations, which together account for nearly half the workers—are responsible for the high proportion of small earnings for all recipient-earners. Nearly 60 percent of the service workers and more than 70 percent of those in some kind of agriculture had monthly earnings of less than \$15. Work in service occupations, where domestic service jobs are the most numerous, is not only generally ill-paid but is often on a casual or part-time basis. Low earnings in agriculture result in part from the fact that farming is largely a seasonal occupation. It is probable, too, that even among the farm operators included in this study the amount of land cultivated and the marginal techniques employed

⁴ Based on data excluding 316 cases (7.1 percent of the total) for which the value of earnings in kind could be only roughly estimated.

were such as to make profitable farming impossible.⁵

Even less favorable earnings were reported for particular groups of recipients. Age is as much a factor in the earnings of these visually handicapped workers as among workers generally, particularly since the study group is dominated by the older worker. The relatively young and the aged worker tend to have a smaller earning capacity. Recipients between 25 and 34 years of age had the highest average monthly earnings—about \$30.00. As age increased, however, earned income consistently declined, so that those aged 65–69 averaged only \$14.49 and for those aged 70 or over the amount was even smaller (\$13.24). There were wide differences also in the earning power of men and women; for men the average was \$22.60 per month; for women,

it was only \$14.20. Earnings for white and nonwhite workers showed similarly wide differences. White workers had average earned income amounting to \$23.25 per month, while nonwhite workers averaged as little as \$15.81.

Full-time work, as might be expected, yielded the highest average earned income (\$38.73), and seasonal work paid the lowest (\$11.71). The average return from odd jobs or casual work—\$13.42—was not much higher than that from seasonal employment.

Recipients in sheltered work received much higher compensation for their work than those in nonsheltered work. The average monthly earnings in sheltered employment was \$34.06—about 63 percent more than the amount recipients got in private and governmental employment combined and 78 percent higher than the income derived from self-employment.

The degree of visual loss seemed

to have little bearing on the recipient's earnings. Those who were totally blind—nearly a fourth of the entire group—fared a little better than the rest, with average earnings of \$22.93.

Employment

The kinds of work done by needy persons on the rolls of the aid to the blind program in September 1950 and the circumstances of their employment shed light on the amount and form of their earnings. In addition, they are undoubtedly of interest to employment counselors and placement officials concerned with rehabilitants because the data relate to work that was actually being done by a special group of visually handicapped persons—the needy blind.

Occupations of Recipient-Earners

The more than 200 different occupations reported by the 4,438 blind

Table 1.—Number of recipients of aid to the blind with earned income, by occupation, and percentage distribution, by occupation and by extent and class of employment, September 1950

Occupation	Total number of recipient-earners	Percentage distribution of recipients, by specified characteristics										
		Occupation	Extent of employment					Class of employment				
			Full-time	Part-time		Seasonal	Not reported	Self-employment	Sheltered employment	Other employment, private or government	Not reported	
				Regular	Odd jobs or casual work							
Total.....	4,438	100.0	24.7	27.1	23.6	22.6	2.0	57.7	8.8	32.1	1.5	
<i>Professional and managerial</i>	581	13.1	48.5	30.1	14.1	4.6	2.6	78.3	.5	20.5	.7	
Professional.....	212	4.8	9.9	50.0	31.1	5.2	3.8	42.5	1.4	54.7	1.4	
Semiprofessional.....	13	3	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	
Managerial and official.....	356	8.0	72.5	18.0	3.7	4.5	1.4	99.2	(1)	.9	(1)	
<i>Clerical and sales</i>	517	11.6	28.4	45.5	13.5	7.5	5.0	66.9	3.5	29.4	.2	
Clerical and other.....	58	1.3	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	
Sales and other.....	459	10.3	27.2	46.0	13.1	8.3	5.4	73.9	2.6	23.3	.2	
<i>Service</i>	604	13.6	18.0	37.3	37.4	6.3	1.0	35.6	1.7	60.2	2.5	
Domestic service.....	384	8.7	9.1	32.3	50.5	7.6	.5	32.3	.8	63.8	3.1	
Personal service.....	122	2.7	38.5	44.3	12.3	2.5	2.5	72.1	3.3	24.6	(1)	
Protective service.....	7	.2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	100.0	(1)	
Building service workers and porters.....	91	2.1	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	
<i>Agricultural, fishery, forestry, and other</i>	1,511	34.0	18.3	12.6	13.7	54.0	1.4	65.5	.1	32.8	1.7	
Agricultural, horticultural, and other.....	1,490	33.6	18.5	12.5	13.4	54.2	1.4	65.6	.1	32.6	1.7	
Fishery.....	14	.3	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	
Forestry (except logging) and hunting and trapping.....	7	.2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	
<i>Craft and manual</i>	1,121	25.3	22.9	31.0	39.1	5.8	1.2	45.5	29.0	24.4	1.2	
Skilled.....	183	4.3	18.1	22.8	54.9	3.6	.5	71.5	12.4	15.0	1.0	
Semiskilled.....	640	14.4	27.7	36.9	29.8	3.9	1.7	48.3	39.7	11.6	.5	
Unskilled.....	288	6.5	15.6	23.6	49.0	11.5	.3	21.9	16.3	59.1	2.8	
<i>Ill-defined and not reported</i>	104	2.3	23.1	26.9	25.0	19.2	5.8	42.3	30.8	20.2	6.7	

¹ Not computed because number of recipients is too small.

Table 2.—Amount of earned income of recipients of aid to the blind with earned income, by occupation, September 1950

Amount of earned income (in cash and/or kind)	Total	Occupation				
		Profes- sional and managerial	Clerical and sales	Service	Agricul- tural, fishery, forestry, and other	Craft and manual
Number of recipient-earners ¹						
Total.....	4,122	558	499	545	1,335	1,085
Percentage distribution						
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under \$5.00.....	19.2	10.2	13.2	15.6	29.0	15.7
5.00-9.99.....	21.9	14.5	19.4	24.6	28.4	18.3
10.00-14.99.....	14.9	12.9	16.6	18.9	14.0	14.3
15.00-19.99.....	9.0	8.8	11.6	10.1	8.1	8.8
20.00-24.99.....	7.8	8.1	8.6	10.3	6.1	8.5
25.00-29.99.....	4.7	7.9	4.0	3.7	4.2	4.4
30.00-34.99.....	4.5	7.9	5.4	4.0	2.2	5.4
35.00-39.99.....	2.8	5.6	3.6	2.2	1.4	3.4
40.00-44.99.....	2.9	5.2	4.6	2.6	1.2	3.3
45.00-49.99.....	1.7	2.9	2.6	1.1	.7	2.2
50.00-59.99.....	3.1	4.1	4.0	2.4	1.8	4.1
60.00-69.99.....	2.4	3.8	2.8	1.3	.7	4.0
70.00-79.99.....	1.4	2.5	.4	1.1	.7	1.9
80.00-89.99.....	1.1	2.5	.4	.4	.3	1.9
90.00-99.99.....	.5	.7	.8	.4	.1	.6
100.00 and over.....	2.0	2.5	1.8	1.5	1.0	3.0

¹ Excludes 316 cases (7.1 percent of total) for which value of income in kind could be only roughly estimated. Total includes 100 cases for whom occupation was either ill-defined or not reported.

recipient-earners are at first glance impressive both for their variety and range.⁶ They run the gamut from professional pursuits, such as those of lawyer, clergyman, writer, and other professional occupations, to the most unskilled laboring work. These individuals performed work usually done by sighted persons as well as work that is identified primarily with the blind. Information that fully explains the earning activities of these recipients is unfortunately lacking. The necessarily limited objective of this study precluded the collection of data, for example, on educational background, on the extent to which rehabilitation services had ever been received, and on the number of recipient-earners — particularly those who lost their sight in late adult life — who were following their accu-

⁶ The classification of jobs used for this study is taken from the Occupational Classification and Industry Index of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles issued in 1949 by the U. S. Employment Service. Because of the great variation in job descriptions and because the purpose to be served by the data did not justify a more refined breakdown, the 3-digit rather than the full 6-digit breakdown of that classification was used to code individual jobs.

tomed vocations or had acquired new ones.

The initial impression of great diversity in occupations disappears when the concentration of the jobs in a few fields is noted.

Agricultural, fishery, forestry, and kindred occupations.—Of the five major areas of work, agriculture and related occupations top the list. More than a third of the earners obtained a part of their livelihood either as farmers or farmhands. Included in this group are 9.8 percent of the recipients who raised food exclusively for their own consumption. General and specialized farming, such as the growing of cotton or tobacco, animal and livestock farming, and poultry raising, were common agricultural pursuits. A negligible number of recipients (21) worked in fishing or forestry, hunting, and trapping.

The scale on which farming and related activities were conducted was undoubtedly small. Though many types of farming can be performed by visually handicapped persons, the prevalence of agricultural workers in this inquiry is primarily the result of the large representation of workers from Southern States, where the

economy is predominantly an agricultural one and where funds available for assistance are generally insufficient and the recipients' need to supplement inadequate payments is great. Nearly two-thirds of all the recipient-earners included in this study were from Southern States. Forty-four percent of the Southern earners had income from farming and similar work, a greater proportion of agricultural workers than that reported by any other section of the country.

Slightly more nonwhite than white recipient-earners were in agricultural and allied occupations—36.8 percent in comparison with 32.9 percent. Well over a third of the men in the study and a little more than a fifth of the women were engaged in farming.

Interestingly enough, fewer than half the recipient-earners in agricultural work (45.3 percent) were without useful vision. Only one other major occupational group had a smaller proportion of workers with less than 5/200 central visual acuity.

Craft and manual occupations.—Craft and manual jobs, usually of a semiskilled nature, furnished some income to the second largest group of recipients (25.3 percent). The kinds of work reported were generally of the type for which the blind

Table 3.—Average amount of earned income of recipients of aid to the blind with earned income, by age, sex, and race, September 1950

Age	Average amount of earned income (in cash and/or kind) ¹				
	Total	Sex		Race	
		Male	Female	White	Non-white
Total ²	\$21.09	\$22.60	\$14.20	\$23.25	\$15.81
Under 25 years.....	21.11	22.15	(3)	22.48	(3)
25-29 years.....	30.48	32.50	(3)	33.06	(3)
30-34 years.....	30.16	31.34	(3)	32.70	23.10
35-39 years.....	26.07	27.72	16.25	28.31	20.17
40-44 years.....	26.75	29.01	16.05	32.18	15.68
45-49 years.....	22.70	23.87	16.77	24.25	19.41
50-54 years.....	20.21	21.70	12.07	21.93	16.59
55-59 years.....	19.42	21.03	14.18	21.22	14.74
60-64 years.....	16.78	17.96	12.58	18.26	12.17
65-69 years.....	14.49	15.49	10.65	16.09	10.33
70 years and over.....	13.24	13.55	11.81	14.14	11.64

¹ Based on data excluding 316 cases and all income for these cases; value of income in kind could be only roughly estimated for these cases.

² Includes 9 recipients whose ages were not reported.
³ Not computed because number of recipients is too small.

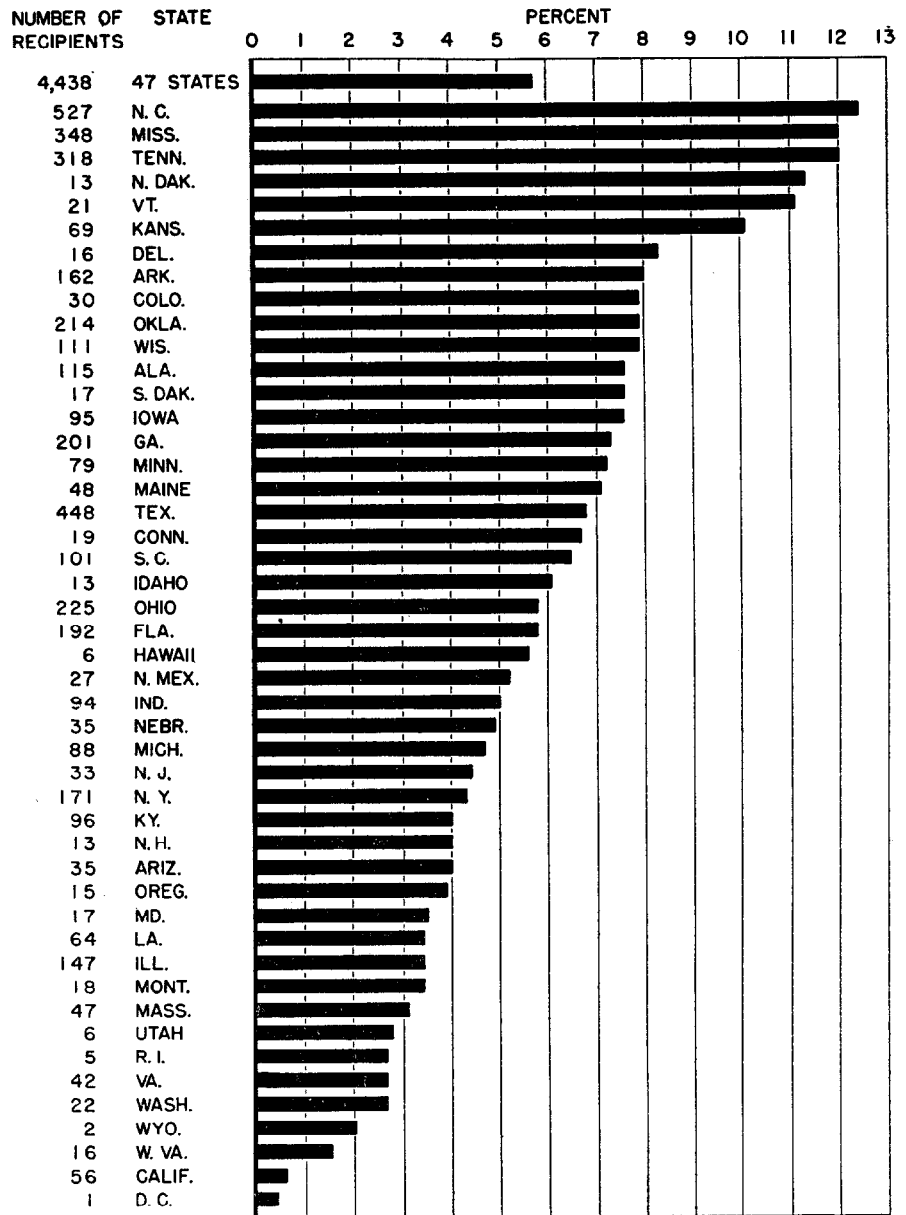
traditionally have been trained in sheltered workshops or by home teachers. Chair caning, rug weaving, broommaking, piano tuning, sewing (both hand and machine), and basket weaving were typical of occupations reported. Such jobs as boilermaker, telephone lineman, longshoreman, automobile mechanic, service station attendant, servicers of various types of machines, and factory workers were infrequent and, in some instances, reported by only a single individual.

Men and women recipient-earners were engaged in craft and manual work in about the same proportions, but relatively more of the women than of the men did semiskilled work. Percentagewise, there were fewer nonwhite than white recipients in such work (21.9 percent as compared with 26.6 percent), a fact attributable mainly to the presence of relatively fewer skilled workers among nonwhite workers.

Service occupations.—Blind recipients in service jobs numbered 604. These jobs accounted for 13.6 percent of the earners' employment, ranking third in the types of work done by these blind recipients. A variety of domestic service jobs made up the largest category of service occupations. Personal service workers—more than half of whom were boarding-house and lodging-house keepers—included also hotel and restaurant employees, midwives, and practical nurses. In some instances, persons classified as boarding-house keepers did not conduct activities on a commercial scale but merely supplied room and board and other services for which they received some return to a working member of the family or to a relative or friend.

Protective service and building service workers and porters numbered less than 100. The service jobs were, for the most part, those usually performed by women, and about a third of all the women recipients in the study were in some kind of service occupation. Only 10 percent of the men were so engaged. About 19 percent of the nonwhite recipient-earners but only 12 percent of the white earners were reported to be in service occupations. Relatively twice as many nonwhite recipients as white

Chart 1.—Percent of recipients of aid to the blind with earned income, by State, September 1950



recipients were in domestic service—14.3 percent as compared with 6.4 percent.

Less than half of those in service jobs were without useful sight—the smallest proportion of such persons in any of the five major occupational categories.

Professional and managerial occupations.—Almost three-fifths of those in professional and managerial work were small shopkeepers and vending-

stand operators. Recipient-earners having income solely from the professions—about 5 percent of all workers reported—were principally musicians or teachers of music, with ministers or preachers next in frequency. Other professions, numerically less important, included chiropractors, writers, and teachers of the handicapped. Less than 1 percent of the recipients were engaged in semi-professional pursuits; in this group,

work as masseur was the most frequent.

It is interesting to note that, among the occupational groups, the professional and managerial categories had the highest percentage of recipient-earners with less than 5/200 central visual acuity—79 percent.

Clerical and sales occupations.—Some 11.6 percent of the blind earners studied were engaged in clerical or selling activities—a group not much smaller than either the service or professional and managerial categories. Only a negligible proportion (1.3 percent) of the 4,438 recipients had clerical jobs. Hucksters, peddlers, canvassers, and newspaper vendors made up the bulk of those in selling jobs, which represented 10.3 percent of the jobs of all working recipients. To what extent some of these selling activities constituted bona fide employment and to what extent they constituted mendicancy would be difficult to determine.

Some 13 percent of all the men studied were engaged in clerical and sales occupations, compared with only 6 percent of the women; relatively more of the white (12.6 percent) than of the nonwhite (9.3 percent) recipient-earners derived their earned income in this way. Next to professional and managerial occupations, persons in this type of work had the highest proportion of those without useful vision.

Extent of Employment

An important element in the low earnings of these blind recipient-earners, though not the only factor, is the amount of employment available to them. Few of these workers—only a fourth—had employment of a nonseasonal nature as many as 30 hours or more per week, or what is here considered as full-time work. Almost three-fourths of those in managerial and official occupations—a category made up chiefly of recipients who conducted vending stands or other retail outlets—were occupied to that extent. No other type of occupation in which a significant number of recipients worked had as high a percentage of full-time work. Practically all of this group were in business for themselves. Full-time workers tended to be a young

group. More than a fourth of them were between the ages of 20 and 39; relatively fewer persons in that age span were found in part-time work of either a regular or occasional nature.

Most of the 4,438 blind earners (73.3 percent) had less than full-time employment. More than a fourth had continuing work at more or less regularly recurring periods. Half the recipients who followed a profession were occupied in this way. Almost half the recipient-earners in sales and kindred occupations and almost the same proportion of those in personal service jobs had part-time employment of a regular nature.

The amount of employment for 23.6 percent of the recipient-earners was exceedingly irregular and uncertain. More than half of those in skilled work and almost half the number in unskilled jobs had odd jobs or highly irregular work. Casual work is, of course, common in domestic service, and more than half the domestic service workers in this study were employed on that basis.

Some recipient-earners, on the other hand, were engaged in activities that did not keep them occupied during the whole year; 22.6 percent reported seasonal employment. Agricultural and related work is pre-eminently seasonal in character, as indicated by the fact that as many as 54.2 percent of this group were occupied only at certain times of the year. More than two-fifths of the seasonal workers were aged 60 or over, but less than one-third of those regularly employed, either full- or part-time, had reached that age.

Class of Employment

More (57.7 percent) of the recipient-earners were self-employed than were in the employ of some person, business, or organization. Substantial proportions (two-thirds or more) of those in professional and managerial occupations, in clerical and sales jobs, and in agricultural and kindred occupations operated on their own account. It may be assumed that many of these people were self-employed through necessity rather than because of any special aptitude or financial capacity to conduct entrepreneurial activities. The bulk of

those employed by others were in private employment (31.0 percent). Less than 2 percent of all recipients were in government employment; they held such jobs as bailiff, school janitor, or garbage collector. Only 389, or 8.8 percent of the 4,438 recipient-earners, were actually engaged in sheltered work.

Though the number in sheltered employment is small, employment of this type merits special consideration here because of the frequent association of handicapped workers, particularly the blind, with the sheltered workshop, and because a number of these blind earners, though no longer employed in such shops, were pursuing vocations usually acquired there.

Sheltered employment.—Any remunerative activity furnished by a nonprofit agency or institution for the purpose of rehabilitation or providing work under controlled conditions is generally considered to be sheltered employment. Though most vending-stand programs for the blind have certain characteristics of sheltered work, it was considered practicable, for the purposes of the study, not to regard such activities, except in special cases, as sheltered work.

Among the five main groups of occupations, craft and manual jobs had the highest percentage of earners working in or for sheltered workshops (29.0 percent). The more or less limited range of pursuits followed in that type of "protected" employment by recipient-earners has been mentioned elsewhere. Because of their non-commercial character, agencies offering sheltered employment provided relatively more full-time work than any other class of employment. For example, 42.9 percent of those in sheltered employment were occupied full time, as compared with 29.5 percent among the self-employed and 11.8 percent for private and governmental employment combined.

Only a few States reported relatively large numbers of blind recipient-earners working for such nonprofit organizations. The data do not necessarily reflect, however, either the full extent of this employment in the States reporting or the

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were contributing to its support. Of those still in the home who were employed, 80 percent were contributing to the family's maintenance.

Few of the boys married before age 18, but many of the girls had married at age 16 or 17. Among the members of the group aged 21 and over, 1 boy in every 2 was married and 3 girls in every 4.

Fully half the group aged 16 or over were trained or experienced in some occupation—boys more often than girls. The occupations extended over much of the range of jobs available in the typical American community. Eleven percent were white-collar workers; 7 percent, skilled craftsmen, foremen, or protective service workers; and 31 percent, skilled and semiskilled operatives and unskilled workers. Forty-three percent—a group including homemakers—had no usual occupation, and the occupation was not reported for 8 percent. More girls than boys were in the white-collar group, and fewer girls than boys were in skilled operative jobs.

There has been a tendency for many of these young persons to fall in their father's occupational grouping. Half of those who had an occupation had moved neither upward nor downward in relation to the father's occupation. On the other hand, 25 percent were in an occupation with generally higher income levels and social prestige and requiring educational attainment, and 23 percent had moved downward.

Girls were more successful than boys in achieving an occupation higher than that of their fathers or mothers. Differences from the parents' occupation were more noticeable among white children than among nonwhite children, and among those in large communities.

The young persons who had attained a higher occupational level than that of their parents were more often contributing to the support of the family, more often had been awarded some recognition for achievement, and were better educated, in general, than the others in the group. Achievement of an occupation relatively high in the socio-economic scale seems to have been aided by education. If the family had required aid to dependent children over a relatively long period of time (more than 4 years) the chances were less that the child would have a white-collar or skilled trade occupation.

Information was collected on criminal convictions for children aged 16 and over, to obtain an indication of possible failure in social adjustment. Few of the children who had formerly been receiving aid to dependent children were reported to have been convicted of a criminal offense—4 percent of the boys and 1 percent of the girls. Those convicted of criminal offenses were, in comparison with others in their age group who had been receiving aid to dependent children, more often living in cities of 100,000 or over and in families with lengthy crisis and assistance

periods, had a record of delinquency, and were in a low-ranking occupation, if any. They had received awards less frequently, and their families had more often been separated from aid to dependent children while they were still in need.

One in every 10 of the former recipients aged 20 and over had received some significant type of award or recognition in school or elsewhere. Graduation from high school and further education were positively associated with their chances of having received such an award. They were young persons who had a white-collar job more often than others in the group and had more likely moved above their father's occupational ranking.

Conclusions

In many areas of the country children who are receiving aid to dependent children are not being given the support that they need—in financial assistance, education, housing, health care, casework services, and simple community neighborliness. Increased support is needed if they are to develop their potentialities in a manner that is their rightful heritage and that will enable them to make the greatest contribution to the Nation's welfare. Despite inadequacies in the program, it is believed that the great majority of these children are growing into useful citizens. Much progress has been made since the inception of the program. Opportunity for further advance lies ahead.

EARNINGS OF AB RECIPIENTS

(Continued from page 8)

absence of programs in States that did not report any recipients in sheltered work. Among States with at least 75 recipient-earners, New York had the highest proportion in sheltered workshops (70 percent). They appeared to be concentrated in New York City, where there are several well-established facilities of that nature. Iowa was next with approximately 30 percent.

The 4,438 recipients of aid to the blind who were employed in Septem-

ber 1950 represent a selected group of blind workers in the sense that every one of the group was eligible for public assistance under the standards established in the State from which he received aid. Obviously, only visually handicapped workers who could not be self-supporting would be found on the rolls of the aid to the blind program.

The blind workers who are not dependent, however, doubtless differ from those receiving assistance in a number of important respects. As a group they are probably younger, better educated, and engaged in more

remunerative employment. One can expect to find more persons who have been rehabilitated through vocational rehabilitation programs among the self-supporting blind workers than among blind workers who receive assistance. The marginal character of the employment of blind recipient-earners and the limited amount of their earnings are therefore not surprising. They reflect, however, some of the past failures to provide positive rehabilitative services directed toward the best utilization of the productive capacities of these blind people.