

to light the many factors that must be considered in determining the size of visitors' work loads. Among the more important are the standards of work performance that an agency expects to maintain, the quality of staff, and the amount and kind of clerical services available to handle routine tasks. In addition, the number and types of eligibility factors that must be explored to determine eligibility for assistance, the frequency with which determinations of continued eligibility must be made, and the volume of applications in relation to cases receiving assistance have an important bearing on the number of cases a visitor can carry. In the last analysis, however, the weight that an individual administrator can give to these factors, either singly or collectively, is determined by the amount of money available to the agency for administration.

The data on the number of cases per visitor are estimated and thus are subject to some margin of error. Most workers in most agencies carry case loads comprising different types of assistance cases; usually the amount of time required to handle an old-age assistance case is less than that for cases of aid to dependent children or general assistance. As a result, other things being equal, average case loads per visitor are likely to be higher in agencies that have a relatively large proportion of old-age assistance cases in their total case loads. In the tabulation shown below, agencies have been classified by the average number of assistance cases per visitor without regard to the types of programs ad-

ministered. In the three agencies with average case loads per visitor of 300 or more, old-age assistance cases comprise from 75 to 90 percent of the total load. Among the four agencies at the other extreme—those in which the average case load is less than 100—are two that do not administer old-age assistance and two in which old-age assistance cases comprise less than half the total case load.

Number of assistance cases per visitor	Number of agencies
Total	152
Less than 100	4
100-149	11
150-199	13
200-249	13
250-299	8
300 or more	3

¹Data for 3 agencies (Commissions for the Blind in New Jersey, North Carolina, and Virginia) combined with those for another agency. Not computed for Delaware Board of Public Welfare and Delaware Commission for Blind because number of cases is less than 1,000 or for Alaska and Massachusetts Departments of Public Welfare because of the relatively large number of part-time employees.

To eliminate the effect of program differences, therefore, average case loads have been estimated by program. The estimates of case load per visitor by program show, on the average, how many cases of a given type a full-time visitor would carry if she worked on one program only. The wide range in the average case load per visitor, both by agency and by program, is shown in table 6 and in the following tabulation.

While these data do not supply the

Agency	Number of cases per visitor, ¹ June 1949			
	Old-age assistance	Aid to dependent children	Aid to the blind	General assistance
Highest	441	241	515	506
Median	224	113	228	108
Lowest	107	49	100	44

¹ Equivalent full-time visitor if she were working on 1 program only.

answer to the question of how many cases a visitor can or should carry, they show how many cases, on the average, visitors do carry. As such, the data afford a point of departure for further exploration of the factors underlying these wide differences among agencies and their significance in terms of efficient administration.

Table 6.—State public assistance agencies, by number of cases per visitor,¹ June 1949

Number of cases per visitor	Number of State agencies ²			
	Old-age assistance	Aid to dependent children	Aid to the blind	General assistance
Total number of agencies	49	45	25	27
Cases:				
Less than 100	0	16	0	11
100-149	6	18	6	8
150-199	11	9	4	4
200-249	8	2	7	2
250-299	14	0	2	1
300 and over	10	0	6	1

¹ Equivalent full-time visitor if she were working on one program only.

² Excludes agencies in which total case load for specified program was less than 1,000.

Notes and Brief Reports

Why Insured Older Workers Have Quarters Without Wage Credits

The average monthly wages, and therefore the monthly insurance benefits, of many beneficiaries under old-age and survivors insurance are low because in the years before they became entitled to benefits they received no wage credits in some calendar quarters. This fact is shown by the wage records regularly maintained by

the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, but the wage records do not show why these persons had no work in covered jobs in some quarters. The reasons—unemployment and layoffs, disability, work in noncovered employment, retirement before entitlement—are important, however, in an appraisal of the probable effectiveness of various plans for raising average monthly wages and benefits under the insurance program.

To obtain this information the Bu-

reau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, in the course of a survey of 442 primary beneficiaries in the Boston metropolitan area late in 1946, interviewed 250 primary beneficiaries with no wage credits in some of their divisor quarters.¹ The 442 beneficiaries in the survey formed a 26-percent sample of all persons in the Boston

¹ For the primary beneficiaries studied, the divisor quarters included all calendar quarters after 1936 and before the worker became entitled, excluding, for workers who attained age 65 before 1939, any quarter after that in which age 65 was attained.

Table 1.—Quarters without wage credits, by employment status of worker during quarter¹

Employment status of worker	Number	Percent
Quarters without wage credits, total.....	2,067	100.0
Did not work.....	1,380	66.8
Disabled (temporarily or permanently unable to work).....	645	31.2
Unemployed (able to work, and seeking employment).....	416	20.1
Retired (able to work, but not seeking employment).....	295	14.3
Had covered job, but did not work.....	24	1.2
Worked in noncovered employment.....	587	28.4
Full time.....	484	23.4
Less than full time.....	103	5.0
Other ²	100	4.9

¹ For number of workers reporting divisor quarters with no wage credits by employment status during such quarters, see table 2.

² For 74 of these quarters the survey interviewers accepted the beneficiaries' assertion that they had worked in covered employment, although their taxable wages had not been reported; employment status of the beneficiaries in the remaining 26 quarters not reported.

metropolitan area who became entitled to benefits in 1944 and who were living in the area in December 1944. Thus, in this representative sample, 57 percent of the aged persons who were entitled to primary benefits had been absent from covered employment in 1 or more quarters prior to their entitlement.

The 250 primary beneficiaries were asked to describe their employment experience in all the calendar quarters in which they received no wage credits before the quarter in 1944 when they became entitled to benefits. The persons interviewed were not only advanced in age when they were visited, but they had been past middle age during the entire period investigated. The period during which they could have earned taxable wages before entitlement varied from 5 years to 7 years and 9 months. The comparatively short period of time covered by the study, the unusual conditions in the labor market during this period, the limited geographical area included in the survey, the fact that only urban workers who had become beneficiaries were interviewed, and the age of the older workers whose experience the survey reflects—all must be borne in mind in considering the findings reported.

The number of divisor quarters without wage credits ranged from 1 to 25. On the average the workers visited had 8.3 such quarters. Chiefly because the divisor quarters without

wage credits reduced the average monthly wage, the number of such quarters in the beneficiary's wage record declined sharply as the average monthly wage increased. None of the 16 beneficiaries whose average monthly wage was \$150 or more had more than 6 quarters without wage credits. By contrast, 21 of the 101 beneficiaries whose average monthly wage was less than \$50 had between 18 and 25 such quarters.

During two-thirds of the divisor quarters in which they had not received wage credits the beneficiaries in the survey had not been engaged in gainful work; in slightly more than one-fourth of such quarters they had been employed in noncovered jobs; in 4.9 percent, either the beneficiaries claimed that they had worked in covered jobs but that their taxable wages had not been reported or they gave no explanation of their failure to receive wage credits (table 1).

In nearly a third of all the divisor quarters during which the beneficiaries had not received wage credits—almost half their divisor quarters with no employment—they had been ill or otherwise disabled and unable to work. While there may have been some overstatement of the number of quarters during which illness caused an absence from covered jobs, careful examination of the data suggests that the overstatement was slight.

Beneficiaries in the survey group undoubtedly were ill more frequently than the workers past retirement age who remained employed and did not file for benefits. Furthermore, illness undoubtedly was relatively more important among the factors causing older workers to be without wage credits in 1937-44—a period including the war years—than it would be in years during which there was less demand for labor and consequently more quarters in which older workers lacked wage credits because they were unemployed.

Illness and disability were particularly significant reasons for the lack of wage credits in quarters before entitlement among the beneficiaries in the youngest age group included in the survey—persons who became entitled to retirement benefits at age 65 in 1944. The beneficiaries in this age group reported that they were ill dur-

Table 2.—Beneficiaries with divisor quarters without wage credits by employment status during such quarters and average number of quarters without wage credits

Employment status	Beneficiaries		Average number of quarters
	Number ¹	Percent ¹	
Total.....	250	100.0	8.3
Did not work.....	206	82.4	6.7
Disabled (temporarily or permanently unable to work).....	119	47.6	5.4
Unemployed (able to work, and seeking employment).....	63	25.2	6.6
Retired (able to work, but not seeking employment).....	38	15.2	7.8
Had covered job, but did not work.....	12	4.8	2.0
Worked in noncovered employment.....	68	27.2	8.6
Full time.....	56	22.4	8.6
Less than full time.....	15	6.0	6.9
Other ²	23	9.2	4.3

¹ Figures add to more than the totals because many beneficiaries without wage credits for more than 1 quarter reported more than one reason for their absence from covered jobs.

² Survey interviewers accepted assertions of 15 beneficiaries that they had worked in covered employment although their taxable wages had not been reported in some quarters (an average of 4.9 quarters per person); nine beneficiaries had an average of 2.9 quarters without wage credits for which their employment status was not reported.

ing 55 percent of their quarters without wage credits; the corresponding proportion for all the aged beneficiaries studied was only 31 percent. The great majority of the quarters in which workers aged 65 lacked wage credits because they were disabled were quarters immediately preceding their entitlement to benefits; before their withdrawal from the labor force, most of this group had worked fairly regularly in covered employment. This situation reflects the fact that workers over age 65 could file for benefits when they became ill, while younger workers had to wait until their sixty-fifth birthday to become beneficiaries.

Although the beneficiaries surveyed had not worked during most of their divisor quarters without wage credits, they reported that they were unemployed (that is, able to work and seeking employment) in only a fifth of these quarters. Of all quarters during which the workers were unemployed, only 17 percent fell in the 3-year period 1942-44; the great majority were in the 5 prewar years. More than half these quarters of unemployment occurred before the worker's first covered job or before his

reentry into covered employment after 1940.

Workers having covered jobs at which they did not work during the quarter accounted for 1.2 percent of the quarters without wage credits. Usually these beneficiaries explained that seasonal or slack work had caused their temporary lay-off. They had expected to return to the jobs they had held and had not hunted other employment; those who reported that they were unemployed, by contrast, had little likelihood of being called back to the same employment and had actively sought other jobs.

During 1 out of every 7 divisor quarters without wage credits before entitlement the beneficiary was retired—he was able to work but was not seeking employment. More than half (55 percent) of these quarters of retirement occurred before the workers had entered covered employment. They were reported by a few persons who, having retired before the beginning of the insurance program, entered covered jobs for the first time in the war years. Most of the remaining 45 percent represented benefit loss due to delay in filing application for benefit. Of the aggregate number of quarters without wage credits on account of retirement, 36 percent represented retirement before the worker's attaining age 65.

The beneficiaries reported that in 28 percent of their divisor quarters in which they had no wage credits they were at work in noncovered jobs; in most of these quarters they were employed full time. Two-thirds of the quarters of absence from covered jobs because of noncovered employment were reported by persons who had shifted their employment only once. These workers either had shifted to covered jobs after 1937—many of them making the change in the war years—or they had worked in covered jobs during most of the early years of the program and then shifted to noncovered employment. As would be expected, the length of time worked in noncovered jobs was markedly longer for persons who were late entrants to covered employment than for those who withdrew from covered jobs and undertook noncovered employment after they had gained insured status.

The remaining third of these divisor quarters were reported by persons who had shifted between covered and noncovered jobs more than once. Many of these workers had transferred to noncovered employment early in the insurance program and had returned to covered jobs in the war years.

Most of the persons in noncovered jobs during quarters without wage credits held only one type of noncovered employment. Work for Federal, State, or local governments was reported by approximately half the beneficiaries who had been in noncovered jobs; nearly a fourth had been self-employed. The various other types of noncovered jobs reported included railroad employment, domestic service, and work for churches, colleges, national banks, or benevolent associations. The amount of government employment was large both because of various government relief programs instituted during the depression of the thirties and because of war work in government plants.

During the interview a detailed description was obtained of the industries and occupations in which the workers had been employed. Thus a considerable degree of accuracy was assured in reporting the extent of shifting between covered and noncovered employment. The findings may understate but certainly do not overstate the significance of this in-and-out movement as a cause of lack of wage credits for a calendar quarter or longer among the sample group of beneficiaries.

Of the 2,067 divisor quarters in which the sample group of aged beneficiaries were without wage credits, 952 or 46 percent occurred before the worker reached age 65. Because hereafter, as a rule, only the quarters with no wage credits that occur before age 65 will lower retirement benefits, it is significant that unemployment and work in noncovered employment were responsible for a relatively larger number of quarters without wage credits before age 65 than at ages 65 and over. Illness and retirement, on the other hand, were more frequently the causes of absence from covered jobs among workers at ages 65 and over.

The significance of the reasons for

quarters with no wage credits can also be judged from data on the number of workers who reported each type of explanation for absence from covered employment. Table 2 shows the proportion of persons who reported the various reasons for the lack of wage credits in 1 or more quarters, and the average number of quarters with no wage credits for the specified reason.

Nearly half the beneficiaries had been ill or disabled in 1 or more quarters without wage credits; slightly more than one-fourth had worked in noncovered employment; a fourth had been unemployed in 1 or more quarters. Many beneficiaries, of course, reported several reasons for their various quarters without wage credits.

On the average, noncovered employment accounted for the largest number of quarters without wage credits. Beneficiaries who had noncovered employment in some or all of their quarters with no wage credits had such employment in an average of 8.6 of these quarters, or the equivalent of a little more than 2 years. Similarly, the beneficiaries who were retired and those who were unemployed in some quarters had an average of 7.8 and 6.6 quarters without wage credits for these reasons. Lay-offs, by contrast, accounted for an average of only 2 calendar quarters with no wage credits.

Disability was the only factor with respect to which the relative number of workers affected was significantly larger than the relative number of resultant divisor quarters without wage credits. Of the 119 beneficiaries who had been ill or disabled in 1 or more quarters without wage credits, 71 percent reported only one continuous period of disability; the other 29 percent reported two or more noncontinuous periods without wage credits due to illness. A fourth of the 119 beneficiaries reported only 1 quarter in which they were ill; at the other extreme, a fifth reported illness in 10 or more quarters. The average number of quarters without wage credits due to illness (5.4 quarters) was smaller, however, than the average number due to work in noncovered employment (8.6 quarters), retirement (7.8 quarters), or unemployment (6.6 quarters).

No single corrective measure, obviously, would have increased the amount of wage credits received in more than a small proportion of these divisor quarters. Extension of the coverage of the insurance program, for example, would have reduced by approximately a fourth the aggregate number of divisor quarters with no wage credits. A provision to disregard the divisor quarters during which the worker was disabled would have eliminated approximately three-tenths of the quarters investigated in this study.

The relative importance of the various factors that caused the older workers in the Boston survey to be absent from covered jobs might not be the same for the entire group of aged beneficiaries under old-age and survivors insurance. This study is chiefly significant as evidence of the number of factors involved. It also shows that beneficiaries are able to supply the information needed in such studies of their wage histories with what appears to be a considerable degree of accuracy.

Social Security Agreements in Western Europe

Social security cooperation in Western Europe was significantly advanced at Paris on November 7, 1949, when multilateral conventions on social security and social assistance were signed by the foreign ministers of the five countries that are parties to the treaty at Brussels on economic, social, and cultural collaboration and collective self-defense. The countries—Belgium, France, Great Britain, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands—thus approved the work of the Social Committees of the Brussels Treaty Permanent Commission in these fields.

The multilateral convention on social security is supplementary to a series of bilateral social security agreements among these Nations. Some of the bilateral agreements had been signed before the conclusion of the multilateral treaty, others have been concluded since, and others are still being negotiated. The general aim of each agreement is to treat the citizens of both contracting countries equally with respect to the social se-

curity programs specified in the agreements. The multilateral convention provides for reciprocity of treatment among all five countries in the field of social security legislation, which is defined to mean the laws specified in the bilateral agreements. The programs common to all the agreements thus far negotiated are old-age, invalidity, and survivors insurance, health and maternity insurance, and insurance against work accidents and specified occupational diseases. In some instances family allowances have been included.

Under the multilateral convention, a citizen or national of any of the five countries who has been covered by social security legislation will benefit from any of the bilateral agreements. When the latter provide for totaling periods of covered employment in two countries for the establishment or maintenance of right to benefit, the multilateral agreement extends this privilege to employment in all five countries. "For instance, where a Frenchman has worked in the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands, his contributions or insurance periods in those three countries will be added together so as to give him pension rights."¹ When different bilateral agreements govern the combining of covered periods in a given country, the more favorable agreement into which the country has entered will apply.

When coverage under a special system (as for miners) is required for receipt of benefit, the multilateral convention affirms this requirement but also liberalizes it by validating, for benefit purposes, any work performed in the occupation in a country that covers the employment in question in its general social security system, though not in a special program.

In old-age and survivors insurance—and in invalidity insurance when bilateral conventions do not specify that invalidity benefits shall be charged to one country only—the cost of the benefits is to be prorated among the countries in proportion to the duration of the individual's cover-

age in each country. The benefit itself is determined by the country where the claim is made, under its own laws, but without any distinction between coverage in the country of residence and in the other signatory nations. When it is necessary, under a benefit formula, to take account of average earnings, the portion of the benefit charged to a particular country is to be based on the beneficiary's earnings while covered by the system of that country.

A retired beneficiary may, under terms of the multilateral convention, continue to receive his pension after moving to another of the contracting countries. Most European retirement systems, unlike that of the United States, impose restrictions upon the payment of benefits to nonresidents.

The reciprocity conferred by the agreement extends to cases in which a worker and his dependents are not in the same country. In such instances the dependents will ordinarily be entitled to the medical benefits provided by the program effective in the country where they live, and no settling of accounts between the social insurance agencies concerned is contemplated. If the application of the convention would otherwise give rise to double title to maternity benefit, the country where the child is born will provide the benefit.

A second multilateral convention among the five countries deals with social assistance of a medical and institutional character. The basic principle is that of equality of treatment. Each of the countries, at its own expense, will treat nationals of the four other countries on the same basis as it treats its own needy citizens. Furthermore, an individual will not be repatriated solely on the ground that assistance is likely to be long-continued or costly if he has close family ties in the country of residence or if he has lived there for more than 5 years (10 years if he entered the country after age 55), or if he is not in fit condition to be transported.

Bilateral Agreement Between France and Great Britain

The country most active in promoting bilateral agreements has been France, which concluded agreements with Belgium on January 17, 1948;

¹Brussels Treaty Permanent Commission, Communiqué, "Social Security in Western Union," Annex I, November 4, 1949.