

Chapter XVI

Personnel Policies

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AFTER HIRING, WHAT? Employment is only the beginning of personnel relations. The whole area of efficient social service depends primarily on qualified and skilled personnel working under good employment conditions. Community councils of social agencies, community chests, national and local social work agencies, and bodies of professional social workers have been interested for many years in promoting and operating good personnel practices. Community chests and councils in a number of cities have made personnel studies in recent years which have clarified job descriptions, job titles, and personnel specifications and have developed principles of personnel practice. This chapter is a distillation of some of this recent diversified material condensed through the "worm" of our own experience. We trust it is not too strong a potion for general consumption.

**PUBLIC PERSONNEL PROCEDURE PRESCRIBED IN LAWS OR REGULATIONS.** Public agencies have necessarily developed definite personnel policies and procedures as merit systems and civil service programs were established. You cannot operate a government without rules! Personnel procedures are usually prescribed in detail in the laws, manuals, rules, and regulations which control the operation of tax-supported agencies. Where the prescribed standards are low, there is not much that can be done to improve them quickly. The progressive administrator may have to wait for legislators, auditors, and attorneys general to change their minds. Of course he may discreetly stimulate change while doing the best he can through liberal thought and action within the limitations placed upon him. On the other hand, many public agencies have sound personnel policies which private organizations and other public agencies would do well to emulate.

**STANDARD PRACTICE MORE DIFFICULT IN PRIVATE AGENCIES.** Private agencies represent a personnel horse of a different administrative

color. They are free to establish sound and progressive procedures.

Yet the classification of employees and other aspects of personnel policy in private agencies present certain problems with respect to acceptance and administration. Member agencies of community chests and councils are autonomous. To them usually the community chest or council of social agencies can only recommend standards. Such recommendations can be quite effective, however, if personnel procedure is studied co-operatively and common decisions are reached through shared, informed discussion.

Recent studies in a number of cities show that there are few common personnel standards and practices among the agencies and that few personnel policies are in written form. In some known (and we fear in many unknown) instances the employees' ideas of what is current practice and what the executive describes as current practice do not always agree. Of course, the ideas will be divergent if the holders of the ideas do not read or remember what is written down—as in the case of the girl in our office who just could not work on the Saturday morning after Labor Day because she had made a date for it. She forgot (how conveniently) that the office manual called for Saturday morning work from Labor Day to the close of the fall campaign.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEES ESSENTIAL.** Group studies and recommendations regarding personnel policies may be made through the collaboration of agency representatives in a community council. In addition, individual agencies may well develop their own policies through the operation of a personnel committee.

Personnel committees may be organized in several ways. It is preferable that the committee should be composed of representatives of both the board and the staff. If joint study and action is impracticable, statements of personnel practice should be developed by board and staff committees separately but with the co-operation of the agency executive. He is the human link between the protectiveness of the board and the hopes of the staff—and he may find things so hot that he will wish he was a missing link. At any rate, full opportunity should be given for the discussion of differences of opinion between the board and staff groups before final action on the personnel policies by the agency's board of directors.

The personnel committee should be a standing committee responsible for: (1) drawing up adequate personnel policies and presenting them to the board of directors for approval; (2) establishing and maintaining a job classification plan; (3) keeping constantly

alert and informed regarding the working relationships of the staff and the board; and (4) taking care of individual cases as they may occur. (The committee must apply with judgment and discretion the policies that the board has approved as its working rules.)

Work of the personnel committee is usually on the basis of long-time planning rather than emergency decision. The committee attempts to develop definite standards that are desirable, although these may be difficult for some agencies to put into practice quickly. The standards developed are not made retroactive or applied to eliminate current employees, but they are used in the promotion of employees from one position to another.

**ADMINISTRATION OF PERSONNEL PRACTICE.** The personnel policies should be recorded (usually they are made a part of the office manual). The record should contain all practices that have been formulated and should be available for every staff member to read. The personnel policies should be reviewed as conditions change and as new questions of policy arise. If unusual emergencies or crises make it advisable to modify the personnel practice, both the board and staff should discuss temporary alterations to fit the transitory situations.

**STANDARDS OF PERSONNEL PROCEDURE.** In recent years a considerable degree of common opinion has been reached by national and local personnel groups in social work. An excellent statement of standards has recently been developed by a committee of the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) and approved by its Board and by its 1946 Delegate Conference. That is authoritative enough for most social agencies! A large part of the material in the rest of this chapter will be quoted from that generally sound and excellent statement. Our own independent comment and material will be given without quotation marks.

**BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PERSONNEL PROCEDURE.** "We support the merit principle in the selection, retention, promotion, and dismissal of employees. The person best qualified to do the job should be selected without regard to race, color, sex, creed, marital status, residence, or national origin, except as the function or auspices of the agency limits the personnel who might be used effectively. There should be no discrimination on the basis of political or union affiliation.

"Selection and maintenance of personnel on the basis of competence should be supported by a continuous operation of personnel procedures mutually understood by employer and employee.

"Employer and employee alike have a responsibility for honesty in preliminary discussion of the position, and both are responsible for carrying out the terms of their joint agreement.

"The right of individuals to bargain collectively and to be represented by a union of their choice is recognized and approved by the Association." It is legal, too!

"There should be machinery to enable and encourage staff members to participate in the development of agency policy and program."

**CLASSIFICATION PLANS.** "Agency administration is responsible for defining all positions within the agency, classifying them on the basis of kind and degree of responsibility, so that employees may have a clear understanding of their duties and the agency may have a proper basis for paying its employees." We mentioned this in the previous chapter.

"The procedure for establishing a classification plan includes: (1) an analysis of the duties of each employee as currently assigned; (2) the evaluation of these job analyses to determine the degree of responsibility involved in each; (3) the grouping of similar positions in one class; (4) a written job description for each class of position; (5) the determination of the personnel qualifications [we would say position specifications] requisite to adequate performance in each class; and (6) the arrangement of the classes of positions in an orderly sequence based on the degree and kind of skill and responsibility required for the various classes.

"In social work, as in other professions, there is a wide range in the competence and skill of the practitioner [worker], and agencies requiring skilled service should provide in their classification plans for utilization and recognition of various degrees of skilled service by appropriate position classification and compensation. The practitioner's service may be equal to or exceed that of some of the supervisory or administrative staff. In setting up the classification plan to allow for great variation in the skill required, it is essential to have several classes, arranged in a series, rather than to allow a long range within the one class."

This principle applies also to non-professional positions. Put them all in classes, in series.

"There should be staff participation in the establishment of the classification plan and an understanding of the basis for assigning the respective positions to a particular place in the classification plan. The machinery for careful, periodic review of the agency's

classification plan should be established and followed. Use should be made of personnel standards promulgated by appropriate standard-setting groups, such as technical personnel agencies, professional associations, national social agencies, councils of social agencies, and others. Uniform job titles and uniform terminology used to describe agency operations greatly facilitate the use of standard-setting material and simplify national and community-wide personnel administration."

**PAY PLANS.** "Agencies should have a pay plan, made up of salary scales for each class of positions, based upon a comprehensive, carefully worked out position classification plan. There should be provision for a minimum and maximum for each class and a series of intermediate steps which will permit periodic increases in compensation for satisfactory performance. There should be provision for automatic continuity increases on the basis of acceptable performance and for additional increment based on outstanding performance. Increases should be considered at regularly specified intervals.

"Factors to be considered in establishing a salary scale for a position are: (1) the value of the service to the community; (2) the degree of responsibility of the employee for exercising judgment affecting others, both in number of persons affected and extent to which affected; (3) the skill required to perform adequately; (4) the rates of pay for comparable service in other agencies and services in the community and nation; and (5) the right of the professional worker to a salary which will afford basic economic security and allow him to participate in the professional and cultural activities of the community and to develop and maintain his professional skills."

These factors apply to the non-professional worker too. He also needs satisfactory community relations and a chance for vocational development.

"In addition to salary, special expenses incident to the performance of the job, such as transportation on the job and fees for luncheons and conferences important to the full functioning on the job, should be a charge against the agency and not against the employee's salary. Per diem and automobile mileage payment should be sufficient to cover the employee's actual expenses.

"There should be a definite number of hours specified as the employee's work week, and the pay plan should allow for adjustments if the work week is extended or reduced.

"In order that an agency maintain a sound salary plan it is necessary that it make a systematic and periodic review of its pay plan and an evaluation of its jobs and the way in which their functioning carries out the purpose of the agency, making changes as current conditions indicate. Modifications should be based on scientific, objective study of changes in job responsibility, the current standard of living, and trends in salary plans in the social work field and in related fields. A standing committee, a personnel division, or some group especially appointed for this purpose should be charged with the responsibility of maintaining the current and the best information available in relation to salaries and the problems interrelated with them for the agency. This should be a regular function and not a casual or emergency assignment.

"Agencies doing similar work in local communities should develop comparable wage standards for similar positions; these wage scales when applied uniformly throughout the community should make for greater stability of personnel and also stimulate agencies to maintain higher standards of service for the community."

**PERQUISITES AS PART OF COMPENSATION.** In addition to compensation in actual cash, the social agency should consider what its employees receive in board, lodging, uniforms, laundry, automobile expense, and other perquisites which may add to the actual compensation. All these items should be taken into consideration in figuring the total salary paid and its relation to current practice either in the community or in the profession.

**DAILY RATES OF PAY.** Not only a monthly or annual rate of pay but a daily rate as well has to be computed in organizations when temporary help is employed or when an employee begins work at some time other than the first of the month. Some social agencies figure on a thirty-day month, including Sundays and holidays, and pay a worker one-thirtieth of his salary for each day. Others do not include Sundays but use instead a twenty-six-day month and pay each worker one twenty-sixth of his monthly rate for each day on which he actually works. On this basis a day-to-day employee is not paid for holidays which happen to occur during his employment. A worker on a monthly pay roll, however, would be paid for holidays. The twenty-six-day month in this case would be used only for figuring the daily salary due the employee if he had not begun work on the first of the month. The basis of payment for days of service, whether it rests on a thirty-day or a twenty-six-day month, must be thoroughly understood if employees are to be satisfied with the amount of their pay.

If the agency is on a five-day week, the twenty-six-day month for day-to-day workers would be amended to a twenty-two day month—by deducting four Saturdays, which count as a full day each, from the 26.

**FREQUENCY OF PAYMENT.** Payment is usually by the month rather than by the day or week. Most social agencies pay their staffs semi-monthly, on the fifteenth and the last day for the half-month completed on each of those days. Weekly payment is more frequent than is usually necessary, considering the trouble involved in making up a pay roll.

Prompt payment is essential even though the money should have to be borrowed. You cannot borrow in a governmental agency, and you should not have to in an agency supported by a community chest, which should advance funds as needed within the total annual approved budget.

**PROMOTION.** Important as is the initial salary, the rate of advance is equally important. Ordinarily every employee, whether professional or clerical, expects to grow in technical skill and usefulness to the organization and to have that growth reflected by an increase in his pay. The ideal situation exists when the organization is so aware of the increased skill of its employees and so liberal in its terms of advance that no one has to ask for an increase. The employee's expectation should be surpassed by the recognition of his service rather than dampened by the thought that he is not getting adequate recognition. Funds, however, are not always available to sustain this ideal.

Some social agencies, like many business firms, have a plan of salary increases at the rate of five or ten dollars a month every six or nine months up to the maximum figure for the position. It should be understood that this rate of increase is granted only if the employee has earned it and that those who cannot earn it are not wanted in the organization.

In times of rising costs of living, proportionate increases or cost-of-living bonuses may be authorized. The latter are preferable. When prices go down, it is less painful to the victim's morale to reduce his bonus than to cut his pay!

**EMPLOYEES ELIGIBLE FOR OPEN POSITIONS.** Promotion obviously may not be merely within a given job, on the basis of skill rather than of seniority. It may also be from one job to another. The best-conducted organizations fill all their higher positions in this way as far as possible. These agencies believe in using people who know the

organization and endeavor to make every worker feel as each soldier in Napoleon's army was said to have felt—that he had a marshal's baton in his knapsack. A worker should be encouraged to train for higher positions in the organization for which he is otherwise qualified. Even if there is doubt as to his ability to fill the job as well as someone from the outside he should be given a chance if there is a possibility that he can make good. "Employees should have an opportunity to apply for open positions. There should be a definite plan for informing staff members of openings in the staff and opportunity provided for them to apply."

**WORK ASSIGNMENT.** "Assignment of responsibilities and duties should be covered in a written statement. As major changes in the employee's responsibilities are made, he should be advised in writing. The areas in which he is expected to use his professional discretion should be delineated. Rating of his performance should be based on a clear understanding of both parties as to the responsibilities and duties assigned."

**ORIENTATION.** "Employees, regardless of the relevance, kind, and amount of previous education and experience, require a designated and carefully planned orientation period [for adjustment] to the specific duties for which they are being employed. Such an orientation should be provided for employees promoted or transferred to other positions within the same agency as well as for employees newly appointed to the agency. Previous education and experience should be fully utilized in the orientation period.

"Such an orientation program should provide the employee with sufficient knowledge to meet the responsibilities assigned to him as they are assigned. This knowledge may be imparted to the employee through conferences with his immediate superior and other agency staff members, through group meetings [regular staff meetings, special programs for new employees, and seminars and study groups for the regular staff], through actual practice in performance of the duties of the job with supervisory consultation, through review of agency manuals, history, policy, and procedure, and through related reading. Where new employees are appointed in sufficient numbers, there are additional values to the employees in having much of the orientation material presented to the group rather than given individually."

**OPPORTUNITY FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT.** "In the interest of rendering the highest possible service to clients, employees should have opportunity for development of their skills. Agencies should facili-



tate such learning by the provision of well qualified supervisors and consultants, by safeguarding the supervisory time allotted for conferences, by carefully planned staff meetings for discussion of agency plans and social work problems and methods, by planning for participation in staff committee work around agency and professional problems, by providing professional literature, and by allowance of leave for attending social work conferences, seminars, and institutes and for protracted leaves for professional education.

"As a further aid to development, employees should be encouraged to participate in and provide leadership for staff meetings, inter-agency meetings, and community or neighborhood meetings. Participation in state conferences of social work, regional or national agency meetings, and social work professional associations contribute largely to the development of strong professional personnel and pay dividends to the agencies encouraging their employees to participate in such groups."

**STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING AND PROGRAM OF AGENCY.**

"The agency should utilize the experience and professional resources of the staff to the fullest extent in the formulation and revision of policies, administrative procedures, and program. There should be definite avenues for participation of the staff in determining agency policies, procedure, and program."

This goes for non-professional workers, too, up to the limit of their capacities.

**STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE.** "The agency should develop written standards of performance for all positions in its classification plan. Such standards are necessary as a basis for objective evaluation of the performance of staff members. Standards of performance should describe the quality and quantity of performance expected for each duty in a job. The full participation of staff members concerned with the use of standards for a particular position is essential in the development of such standards."

This also applies to non-professional workers. An agency should be a little segment of democracy.

**PERSONNEL RECORDS, MEASUREMENT OF PERFORMANCE, REFERENCES.**

Various records, evaluations, and ratings are of great value in personnel administration.

(a) *Records.* "Agencies should maintain a personnel record for each employee containing applications, references, contracts or agreements, work assignments, evaluation and service ratings, and

correspondence. This material should be carefully protected against review or use by unauthorized persons."

(b) *Evaluations.* "Evaluations are used (a) as the basis for personnel action; (b) to assist the worker in his professional development; and (c) to assist the agency in strengthening its program of service.

"Agencies should provide for each employee, regardless of size of agency staff or length of time the employee has been in his present position, evaluations and ratings at the end of regular intervals on a series of job elements mutually agreed upon as composing the employee's work assignment. Informal evaluation of the employee's work should be a continuous process by employer and employee, with the periodic evaluation summarizing and crystallizing the judgment of evaluator and evaluatee. All persons to whom the employee is directly responsible should participate in the evaluation and in the establishment of the final rating. It is imperative that the employee be evaluated on the degree to which he has performed satisfactorily the jobs actually assigned to him during the period under consideration.

"The best procedure in evaluation includes preparation by both evaluator and evaluatee, by review of examples of the evaluatee's work carefully selected so as to give a true sample, by conference in which there is full discussion of the employee's work, and by understanding on the part of each as to the basis for establishment of a rating on each aspect. The final responsibility for determining the evaluation rests with the evaluator. This evaluation should then be read by the employee and he should have opportunity to file a statement covering any points on which he disagrees with the evaluation. At such time as the worker or his supervisor leaves the agency, the evaluation should be brought up to date."

The executive's work, also, should annually be evaluated by a committee of the board. Sometimes, too, objective and responsible staff members may be invited to aid in the evaluation of the executive. He should benefit by such evaluations. He, too, must grow!

In addition, every three to five years, there should be an evaluation of the work of the agency itself, including the executive and persons in supervisory positions, by a qualified person from outside the city.

Evaluations in their final form, though confidential, should be available for the employee to read and should be discussed with him by the evaluator.

(c) *Service Ratings.* "In agencies operating under a merit system or civil service, it is common practice to reduce the narrative evaluation to numerical terms for purposes of comparing an employee's work with that of others in the same classification as a basis for personnel action. This is known as the service rating. It is possible to do so if the check sheet or form used is directly related to the factors covered in the narrative evaluation and if the rating sheet has been developed with appropriate weights given to the job elements of the worker under consideration.

"The same principles apply to the determining of the service rating to be given the employee as to the written evaluation; that is, the employee has a right to know how he is scored and to file a demurrer if he is not in agreement with the decision. The responsibility for determining the service rating is not the employee's but the evaluator's."

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION. "As already indicated, the agency should have a written office or staff manual of personnel administration containing its current classification and pay plans and other policies and procedures. This manual should be available to all staff members at all times. Changes in policy and procedure should begin operating under a given policy only when it has been fully adopted and publicized to all concerned. Areas of personnel administration on which the agency is currently developing new policy should also be known to all the staff.

"The manual should include a clear, well-defined statement as to lines of responsibility in administration of the agency's personnel policies, where final authority rests, how it is delegated, and the duties and responsibilities of the governing board. This statement should also include information as to policy formulation and modification, how it is initiated and carried forward to a definite decision and implementation."

We shall have more to say about office manuals later on.

TENURE, CHANGE OF STATUS, AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT. Provisions with respect to tenure, change of status, and termination of employment have been suggested by the AASW as follows:

(a) *Probation.* "A probationary period up to one year is valuable to employer and employee, to permit the employee to demonstrate his capacity for performance and to determine whether or not each wishes to continue the association on a more permanent basis. Less is expected of the probationary employee because of his lack of familiarity with the position he has assumed than with employees who

have completed probation in the same position, and the agency accepts responsibility for proper orientation and supervision during this period.

“The employee should be told in advance of the length of the probation period and any specific agency expectations for this period. Any extension should be made for a definite length of time. Circumstances may make it desirable for the probationary period to be waived or shortened by mutual agreement. There should be appropriate supervision and fair evaluation during and at the end of the specified period. There should be official notification, in writing, of termination of probation. Prorated sick leave should be allowed during the probation period. The probationer's salary should be within the salary range of the classification in which he is on probation.”

Although as long as a year's probation may be desirable for some complex professional positions, three months is generally long enough for non-professional jobs.

“All of the above should apply to the probationary period for newly promoted employees. During the period of probation on the job in the higher category the employee should be entitled to return to the previous position if the probationary period is not successfully completed.

“A statement of reasons for dismissal or demotion should be given in writing if the probationary worker wishes. The agency need hold no hearing unless the employee charges the agency with discrimination as the basis for releasing him or a charge of discrimination is made on behalf of the employee. In case the probation period is not to be completed, two weeks' termination notice should be given by either party.”

(b) *Temporary Employment.* “Temporary workers employed for a six months' period or less, or to substitute for permanent staff on leave, should be subject to the same conditions of employment which apply to the permanent staff. The scope and duties of a temporary position should be clearly defined, as well as the length of time for which the employee is employed. At least the minimum salary for the classification for which the employee is hired should be given to the temporary employee.

“The same hours of work, including days off and holidays falling within the period of temporary employment, accrued vacations, and sick leaves which apply to the permanent staff should also apply to the temporary staff.

(c) *Tenure*. "Continuation of employment in the position should be based on the employee's continuing satisfactory performance as indicated by continuous and periodic evaluations. An employee who has successfully completed a probationary period in a position and continues to meet the agency's standards of performance has the right to continue in that position without fear of demotion or dismissal unless the agency retrenches or substantially reorganizes its program and no longer needs his services. In any event, an employee who has successfully completed probation has the right, if demoted, laid off, or dismissed, to the reasons in writing for this action and to a hearing through the agency's personnel appeals procedure if he feels he has been unjustly treated."

(d) *Seniority*. "Seniority means the length of time that a staff member has worked in an agency or in a particular position. In taking personnel actions, seniority should only be considered in conjunction with evaluation of performance."

(e) *Promotion*. "Promotions and transfers to more desirable positions should be based on seniority, evaluation of performance, and capacity for the new position. Staff members within the agency should have the first consideration in filling such vacancies."

We have had something to say about seniority and promotion earlier in this chapter. A good summation is to promote the oldest of the best.

(f) *Lay-Off, Demotion, Dismissal*. "Where reduction in force is indicated because of lack of funds or curtailment of work, such action should be regularized through the application of a lay-off formula based on seniority and evaluation of performance. A method of arriving at such a formula is to assign numerical value to the elements included in the evaluation and in seniority. When rehiring employees following a lay-off, the inverse of the lay-off procedure should be followed, and employees still laid off should first be offered employment in work which they are qualified to do.

"The employee should be given written notice of such action; permanent employees should have at least 30 days' notice and probationary or temporary employees 15 days' notice. The amount of notice due an employee should be definitely stipulated in the agency's personnel manual. The employee is entitled to definite reasons for such action, in writing if requested, and to a fair hearing if he believes there has been discrimination. The agency may reserve the privilege of relieving the staff member of his duties during this period. If dismissed for incompetence, the employee should be paid

for the required notification period. If dismissed for malfeasance, he need not be compensated. No notice is required where the length of employment was specified at time of hiring, as in the case of temporary workers."

(g) *Resignations*. "An employee who resigns should give written notice as far in advance as possible, observing the agency's minimum requirements. A 30-day notice is recommended as minimum. The more responsible the position, the greater the amount of notice the employee should give. The employee's services should be available to the agency during the notice period in order that he may complete his work and that the agency may secure a replacement."

(h) *Severance Pay*. "Except in unusual circumstances, the agency owes the employee only accrued salary and unused vacation pay. When an employee is dismissed for reasons beyond his control, and that individual has contributed substantially to the development of the agency over a long period of time, he should be compensated by additional salary as severance pay, based on length and caliber of service."

There is no uniform practice in providing separation allowance for staff members who are ready to retire. These situations usually call for individual consideration. As participation in retirement plans becomes more general this problem will cease to exist.

"Participation in a retirement system should be helpful in discharging the employer's responsibility at the time of severance. In a retirement system under which the benefits are all vested in the employee, such contributions as the employer has made to the retirement system remain to the credit of the employee and may properly be taken into consideration in calculating the severance pay to which the worker is entitled."

Under a good retirement system such as that recently established by the National Health and Welfare Retirement Association, the agency does not owe the employee anything beyond unpaid salary and accrued vacation pay.

(i) *Retirement and Superannuation*. "The agency should have a definite plan for superannuation and retirement of staff, flexible in regard to the point at which an employee should be retired but the decision being based upon definitely established and readily known criteria. Until such time as social workers are eligible for federal social insurance, the agency has full responsibility for providing through the best available means an adequate protection for its employees. When social workers are eligible for federal social insur-

ance, there will undoubtedly need to be a retirement benefit plan which will supplement the federal insurance. The retirement plan should be adequate as to amount of benefits and protection to all workers regardless of length of time in the agency's employ. It should recognize the need in the social work field for provision for retirement or restricted activity for many workers at 60 years or younger."

The National Health and Welfare Retirement Association, to which all employees of all health and welfare agencies become eligible if their agencies will adopt the plan, meets almost exactly the requirements stated above.

**APPEALS PROCEDURE.** "Regardless of the size of the agency, there should be provision for the adjustment of personnel issues and a procedure for hearing appeals, properly described in the agency's personnel manual. Normal channels for adjusting differences should be utilized first. If the employee feels dissatisfied with any personnel action taken by the agency toward him, he has the right to a written statement of the basis for such action. He is responsible for written presentation of specific bases for his dissatisfaction. The appeal board should provide for equal representation of persons selected by the employee and employer and that they should select one or more persons acceptable to both parties.

"The hearing should be set at an appropriate time, with adequate notice to all parties but as soon as possible after the action against which the employee is appealing. The employee has the right to be represented by legal counsel, if he wishes. A transcript should be taken of the testimony and findings. The findings and decision of the appeals board should provide for the agency and the appellant. Although under ordinary circumstances the decision of the appeals board will be acceptable, it should not be mandatory upon the agency. Final responsibility for taking and carrying out personnel action rests with the agency board. When the decision indicates that the individual has been discriminated against, the agency should make every effort to compensate the individual for the loss which the employee has suffered."

This sounds to us like an unnecessarily elaborate procedure. We have been connected with private agencies for nearly thirty years, and in that time we have never been in personal contact with the need for such procedure. We have heard of one or two instances, in other communities than those in which we were employed, where it would have been helpful. It seems to be a sound plan to follow, if

ever the need arises. But such a need probably will not occur if the principles of participative administration are followed.

**HOURS OF WORK.** "In social work, as in any profession, the element of individual judgment and the constant need to render a highly individualized type of service to individuals or groups place a high premium on quality of work rather than on the quantitative repetition of stereotyped operations. For this reason, social work personnel serve agency and community more effectively if hours of work are carefully limited and there is adequate provision for annual leave. The work week should not exceed 40 hours except as unusual or community-wide emergencies may temporarily create extensions. For group work agencies or for institutions the following specific limitations are also recommended: (1) no work day should have more than two work periods; (2) evenings worked should be limited to four per week; (3) a consecutive 36-hour period off should be allowed in each weekly period; and (4) at least one week end per month off. Extensions should be compensated with extra pay.

"Employees should be employed for a definite work week. If, in the development of the agency's program, circumstances or experience should dictate a change in hours, a revised agreement should be sought between the worker and the agency. The agency should not expect or require continuous overtime. The principle of the five-day week has proved sound in many agencies and an effective method of maintaining a high quality of service."

The above general principles of working hours apply to non-professional employees, too. What is sauce for the professional goose should be sauce for the non-professional gander, too. What would the goose be without the gander?

Social work hours in general should be those of the progressive businesses of their communities. The usual hour for opening ranges from 8:30 to 9:00 A.M., with an hour for lunch and closing at 5:00 P.M. During the summer months many agencies close at 4:00 or 4:30 P.M., with a correspondingly earlier opening. The ordinary social agency has a working day of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 hours, with a half-day on Saturday and a working week of from 38 to 44 hours. In the majority of community chests Saturday is a half holiday except at campaign time.

In some communities there is a tendency, in line with the practice of the local community, for social agencies to close or to maintain only a skeleton staff on Saturday mornings during the summer months. In some cities social agencies give their employees every



other Saturday off or one Saturday a month. This practice is usually in effect where overtime work is required of the staff during an emergency period such as a campaign. Some agencies, however, must maintain a skeleton staff even on holidays.

An organization with hours conspicuously shorter than those of the community at large would be criticized on this score. Remember, the agency is part of the community which supports it!

For example, the hours of the Community Chest of Houston and Harris County, Texas, are from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., with half an hour for lunch, five days a week. Saturday mornings belong to the employees, except that one-fourth of them in rotation work each Saturday to serve the public. Saturday morning work may be required of all, if necessary, from Labor Day through the annual campaign in late October. Similar hours are observed by the Harris County Red Cross Chapter, except that half the employees work each Saturday morning in turn.

**RECESSES.** Within the hours which have just been discussed, some organizations allow clerical workers morning and afternoon recesses of varying length. These agencies believe that the rest more than pays for itself both in the greater enthusiasm with which the employees return to work and in the larger amount of work they turn out. The idea of a recess has many advocates, not only in social work but also in business and industry, where the idea gained great and enduring acceptance during the Second World War.

**TARDINESS.** Even though office hours are established for a social agency, this does not always mean that the employees arrive on time, stay until the day is over, or come regularly every day. The problem of tardiness and absence is difficult to handle. In the smaller organization, if the executive is on time the chances are that the staff will also be prompt.

It is hardly necessary for a social agency to install a time clock for its employees. One chief clerk calls out "Good evening" to staff members who are as much as thirty seconds late. This method, although not official, is said to be as effective as a time clock, and it is never resented (at least, so says the chief clerk).

Some organizations keep a day book which clerical workers are expected to sign as they enter, giving the time of arrival. Promptly at the opening hour the chief clerk draws a line under the last name entered. Those who come in late sign under the line, with the hour of arrival, meanwhile giving the clerk as good an explanation as they can contrive for their lateness. The pay roll is made up from

this day book. Unless the worker signs he is counted absent—a cause for further explanation. This works well in a large office.

Another plan is to have, beside the door, a rack of cards with the names of the office force and, on a table by this rack, two cardboard boxes with slots in the lids. One box is marked "On Time" and the other "Tardy." Employees drop their cards in the "On Time" box until the opening hour; then it is removed. All other cards must be dropped in the "Tardy" box. Cards left in the rack indicate absentees. Both tardiness and absence require explanation. This method is impersonal and seems to meet with satisfaction on the part of those who use it.

Workers should understand that office hours mean work from the beginning of the opening hour until the noon hour, and from the opening of the afternoon session until the closing hour. Some clerical workers devote the ten or fifteen minutes before closing time to getting ready to leave. These enthusiasts for departure of course must be remonstrated with. If they continue in their schedule cutting, they should be dropped from the staff. The office hours of social agencies are not too long for members of the business and professional staff to work continuously within them.

**OVERTIME.** The specified hours are understood to mean that overtime in general will not be required. Executives of social agencies and professional staff members may make up for overtime work by taking additional time off at other periods of the year. On the other hand, the clerical staff, whose vacations are limited by regulation, should be paid for overtime and allowed supper money. Some organizations during financial campaigns pay workers the regular hourly rate of pay for overtime and allow a reasonable amount for supper money. Careful planning and scheduling of office operations will ordinarily eliminate most overtime except in times of emergencies. Short periods of overtime such as keeping an employee a few minutes after the closing hour naturally are not paid for; indeed, when necessary, they are expected of him.

**HOLIDAYS.** In general the holidays customary in the community should be granted. New Year's Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas seem to be generally observed. Many states have special legal holidays. In this respect the policy of the more progressive business houses rather than that of public offices and banks should be followed. The agency might follow the example of the Chamber of Commerce, which is very sensitive to business opinion. That

opinion is one of the facets of the community mind which we, too, have to regard.

Many agencies, however, are unable to close on legal holidays because of the exigency of the work. If some employees have to work a half or full day on holidays, they should be given time off on another day during the week. Special religious holidays which are requested by some staff members should be granted but deducted from annual leave.

**LEAVES.** Daily attendance records should be maintained in the office, as part of the personnel record of each employee.

(a) *Vacation or Annual Leave.* "As indicated above it is believed that because of the kind of responsibilities and duties involved in social work positions an adequate vacation allowance is desirable. A definite period of vacation with pay should be part of the remuneration for services performed and is due the regular employee whether he leaves the agency or continues in its employ. Vacation based on an accumulation of annual leave at the rate of  $2\frac{1}{8}$  working days for each month employed by the agency is recommended. A staff member begins to accumulate vacation credit with the first month's employment. If a worker leaves before taking vacation, he should be entitled to pay for the annual leave which he has earned."

The above provision applies to professional employees. It will vary with the vacation attitude of the community. Clerical employees usually receive shorter vacations than do the members of the professional staff. Several agencies that we know allow one business day (six business days to a week exclusive of holidays) for each month of service up to the beginning of the vacation period, plus one day for each year of service, up to 18 business days for clerical, stenographic, and accounting workers; one and one-half days for each month plus one day for each year of service up to 24 business days of leave for non-professional sub-executives; and at the rate of one month a year (26 business days), for the executive and professional staff.

(b) *Vacation Schedules.* The vacations or leaves of absence which are granted must be arranged on a definite schedule, so that the absence of workers may be spread out through the vacation period with the least possible hardship to the organization. Usually those workers who have been in the employ of the organization longest are given first choice in selecting vacation periods. The younger ones in point of service take what is left. The executive must so plan

the vacations that every essential operation of the agency may be continued without serious interruption. In some organizations the staff doubles up to take care of one another's duties, if summer work is light. In others, such as visiting nurse organizations, where summer sometimes means heavier work, extra employees must be brought in and definite provision made in the budget for their salaries. Workers in such agencies are sometimes required to take their vacations at other times of the year. At any rate, the problem of vacations must be carefully studied and handled so that the absence of employees will not handicap the work of the organization but so that each employee may have as nearly as possible the specific time he wishes.

(c) *Sick Leave.* In addition to time voluntarily taken and mutually agreed on for vacations and conferences, every social agency involuntarily loses a great deal of time in the course of a year through the sickness of its staff members. The cost of illness is great from the standpoint of the amount of time lost in productive labor while the employee is away, of the salary paid him which he has not earned, of the slowing up of his work if he attempts to do it when he is partly sick, and of the possible continued effect of sickness which may greatly reduce his efficiency over a long time. The Art Metal Construction Company found that each cold an employee had cost it \$24, according to its report on Office Standards. If other illnesses than colds were included, this cost would be raised.

"Sick leave with pay should be allowed for a definite period per year sufficient to serve as adequate protection against the employee's incapacity even during the first year of his employment in the agency. It is recommended that sick leave of 24 working days with pay in any one year be allowed and that it be available to the employee as needed. The agency has the right to require a doctor's certificate for sickness beyond a specified number of days. The maximum amount which can be accumulated by an employee working continuously for the agency over a period of years should be generous and be at least 48 working days. In cases of prolonged illness it should be possible to extend the leave with pay; both length of service and the amount of previous sick leave should be taken into consideration for extension."

For the staff as a whole, a practical rule is to allow the same amount of sick leave as annual leave, with more in special cases if approved by the board.

"Agencies may wish to make provision for a separate allowance of leave with pay for necessary personal business; in such event only the employee's own illness should entitle him to sick leave."

(d) *Leave for Personal Business.* Leave with pay in case of a death or critical illness in the immediate family should be allowed on a limited basis. Leaves for personal business should be charged to vacation, or a salary deduction should be made.

(e) *Educational Leave.* "Opportunities for leaves of absence for study should be provided so that employees may develop skill and thus provide better service to the client and community.

"Educational leave plans should provide opportunities for study for all members of the staff in relation to their abilities and their need for completing their professional preparation and for keeping in touch with new developments in the field. Such a plan should be known to all staff members, and the criteria by which persons are selected for educational leave should be clearly indicated in the agency's manual.

"Such leave may be on a full-time basis for a part or all of an academic year; for part-time school attendance; or for taking a single course in a school of social work. Such leaves may be subsidized by the agency in whole or in part. Professional education is most effective when taken full-time in consecutive quarters or semesters for at least a year. This should be kept in mind in planning for educational leave.

"At the time the worker is granted leave, there should be a definite understanding as to the terms under which the leave is granted. If the worker on leave is considered an employee, he should have all the benefits which would accrue to him if working—sick leave, annual leave, seniority and retirement benefits, etc. Agencies having several students on scholarship should establish suitable personnel practices for students."

(f) *Conferences, Institutes, and Other Meetings.* "Time off with pay should be allowed for attendance at conferences, seminars, and institutes related to the employee's work. There should be opportunity from year to year to include all members of the professional staff. To the extent that it is possible, at least partial expenses should be provided by the agency."

Although social work conferences are usually of primary value to social workers and executives, it may pay the organization to send also to these conferences members of the business staff, such as chief clerks, office managers, and public relations directors. Those persons

thus may get the feel of social work and a perspective which will be valuable in their future relationship to the organization's social work program. Nor should the value of conferences and conventions on office management, purchasing, and public relations be forgotten in the case of these employees.

Social work conferences usually represent hard work and are anything but a vacation. On the other hand, they are generally of direct benefit to the individual himself through the professional knowledge and acquaintances he gains.

Traveling expenses should be available so that the executive or his representative may represent the agency at important state, regional, or national meetings—as, for example, expenses for attendance at a meeting to determine policies of his national organization.

Under other circumstances, however, it seems only fair to provide that those who attend conferences shall share the cost of attendance. In some agencies it is the practice for the organization to finance the expenses on a fifty-fifty basis. Another device is to pay travel expense plus a moderate per diem allowance. The sharing of expenses will often make it possible for more workers to attend than would be possible if the organization paid the full expense of a smaller number of employees.

Time off to attend state, regional, or national conferences must be arranged within the practical possibilities of release from the job.

A good way to make sure that each staff member gets something out of a conference is to require on his return a written report of the significance of the meeting he attended, the personal conferences he had on various phases of his work, the suggestions which he thought of value, and the benefits he feels he received from the conference.

(g) *Maternity Leave.* “Employees who have been on the staff for six months or longer may be granted maternity leave without pay for a definitely specified period of time, preferably at least six months and not more than one year. It may be possible and desirable to allow the individual to use all or part of accumulated sick leave for this purpose. It may be practical to establish a maternity subsidy to be based upon length of service to the agency and salary of the employee.”

Personally we are not aware of any agencies which allow sick leave or maternity subsidy for having babies. We may come to it, though. Pregnancy in this post-war period seems the chief reason for labor turnover in our office. The trouble is, the girls seem to want to stay

home afterward and take care of their babies, and we think they ought to.

(h) *Military Leave.* "In the event of a national program of military service necessitating induction of employees, the agency should grant military leave for employees entering the armed forces and provide: (a) leaves of absence; (b) earned vacation salary; (c) specific cash settlement grants at the time of leaving, if cash settlements are given; (d) maintenance of *status quo* in agency insurance plans; (e) continuation of seniority rights; and (f) machinery for re-assignment at the earliest possible date after discharge from the service."

We hope it will not be necessary to consider military leave again in our lifetime or in that of any of our readers.

(h) *Sabbatical Leave.* "Sabbatical leaves increase continuity on the staff as well as bring new ideas to the staff. At the end of every six consecutive years of service, not interrupted by maternity leave or leave for study, it is good practice to allow members of the professional staff a sabbatical leave, for educational purposes, of at least three months with pay in addition to the annual vacation. Sabbatical leaves should be arranged in relation to the needs of the agency and the convenience of the worker and should be contingent on the worker's return to the agency for a period of one year."

We think sabbatical leave would be swell, but no one has offered it to us. Perhaps that is because we never stayed long enough on any of our jobs but one—new fields to conquer, and so on!

**HEALTH SERVICE.** In addition to the physical examinations for new employees already suggested, periodic health examinations by physicians, paid fully or in part by the organization, should be encouraged for all workers. It is generally admitted by progressive executives that social agencies might even demand that all employees take annual physical examinations. Actually, routine health examinations are now required by many business and industrial establishments, and an increasing number of social agencies is following this practice. All should.

Social workers themselves sometimes object, ostrich-like, to such examinations because of the fear of learning the existence of some condition of which they are unaware. Neither do they wish to have an adverse health report made to the organization for fear of losing their jobs as a result. The usual procedure in such examinations is to make the report direct to the worker so that he may follow the treatment recommended.

Definite arrangements may be made with physicians or clinics to

provide health examinations at low cost. If the organization pays the entire cost, the worker may be more willing to take the examination. On the other hand, if the employee has to share the cost, he may be more likely to follow the doctor's recommendations. If examinations are provided, they should not be merely routine check-ups, which are likely to be superficial and of little value. Organizations connected with hospitals and clinics can without charge provide examinations as well as free medical service and hospital care upon the first sign of illness. One hospital executive reported that the loss of time through illness of workers was cut almost in half in one year because of the provision for clinical service for all his employees.

INSURANCE. Of vital concern to social agencies is the matter of employee insurance.

(a) *Workmen's Compensation.* "The agency should be responsible for seeing that the employee injured in line of duty receives the equivalent of his full salary for at least six months while incapacitated, and medical costs. If operating under Workmen's Compensation, the agency should supplement sufficiently to provide full salary and medical costs for six months. The agency has a continuing responsibility to the employee whose disability or need for medical care exceeds six months."

(b) *Group Plans for Hospital, Medical Care, and Life Insurance.* "Wherever possible the agency should assist employees to develop group medical and life insurance plans."

Wide use is being made by social agencies of the Blue Cross plans of group hospitalization and medical care. Often the community chest and council will serve as the central agency for promoting, recruiting, and collecting under these plans.

(c) *Retirement.* As already suggested, "the agency should provide for its employees, through the best available means, adequate protection for retirement. In general each year of service with any employer should bear its fair share of the cost of ultimate retirement. Both employer and employee should contribute to this fund. The employer should pay at least 50 per cent. Public employees should be covered by a public pension system. The annuity plan should provide for paid-up policies, including the agency's contribution, in the event of the employee's separation from the agency. In this connection, no service period should be required beyond the minimum required by the insurance company."

Social agencies should continue to work toward the inclusion of



their employees under the provisions of the Federal Social Security Act. The National Health and Welfare Retirement Association is so organized that adjustment can be made if the provisions of the Social Security Act are amended to include health and welfare agencies.

(d) *Accident and Liability for Car Operators.* "Employees who are required to operate an automobile as part of their work should be fully protected by the agency, and the agency should carry sufficient insurance to provide adequately for persons who may receive injury or loss at the hands of the employee while he is in pursuit of his duty. Such insurance should cover privately owned automobiles used by employees as well as agency-owned cars."

UNION MEMBERSHIP. Union membership is a matter for determination by employees. The executive and board should not oppose union organization and activity, so long as it does not take place on staff time. Both executive and board should be willing to meet with union representatives at any mutually agreeable time and to discuss any matters of mutual concern, with the purpose of securing common understandings and agreements. It is to be hoped that the personnel policies described in this chapter, if effectively applied, would leave little room for controversy between employee unions and social agency management.

BETTER PRACTICES, BETTER PERSONNEL. Social agencies which as far as practicable follow the above personnel policies, adapted to their own types of service and their own communities, will be able to attract and keep better employees and to render better service than would otherwise be possible.

#### QUESTIONS

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1. If yours is a public agency, what laws, rules, or regulations cover its personnel procedures?
2. If yours is a private agency, what provisions are there in its constitution, bylaws, office manual, or other official documents regarding personnel?
3. Does your agency have a personnel committee? If so, what is its make-up and status?
4. Are the personnel practices of your agency written out in complete detail? If so, how do they compare with the proposals set forth in this chapter?

5. Are all positions within your agency classified as to kind and degree of responsibility?
6. Is there a written job description for each position?
7. Are written position specifications set up for each job?
8. Does your agency have a definite salary scale for each position?
9. Does your agency pay special expenses incidental to the performance of the job?
10. What perquisites, if any, are allowed in addition to salary and wages?
  11. How are daily rates of pay computed?
  12. How often are salaries paid?
13. What provision does your agency have for salary increases within the various job classifications?
14. Does it make promotions from one position to another within the organization whenever possible?
15. Are employees appointed to specific positions with duties and conditions of employment defined in writing?
16. Are assignments, responsibilities, and duties covered by written statements?
  17. How are employees oriented on a new job?
  18. How does the agency provide for staff development?
19. Does the staff participate in policy making and in the development of the agency program?
20. Are written standards of performance provided for all positions in the classification plan?
  21. Are adequate personnel records kept?
  22. Is the work of all employees periodically evaluated and rated on a participative basis?
23. Does your agency have a well-developed office manual? If so, what does it include?
  24. What is done about a probationary period for new employees?
  25. What is the status of temporary employees?
  26. What tenure of employment is provided?
  27. What weight is given to seniority in reference to lay-off, promotion, and re-hiring?
  28. What is the basis of promotion?
  29. What is the procedure in case of lay-off, demotion, dismissal, or resignation?
  30. What provision, if any, is there for severance pay?
  31. What provision does the agency have for retirement and superannuation, if any?

32. Does the agency have an appeals procedure? If so, what?
33. What are the hours of work?
34. Is any provision made for recesses or rest periods?
35. How is tardiness handled?
36. What is done about overtime?
37. What holidays are observed?
38. What is the provision in respect to vacation or annual leave?
39. What provision is there for sick leave?
40. What is done about leave for personal business?
41. What arrangements, if any, are made for educational leave?
42. How is attendance at conferences, institutes, and other meetings handled?
43. Is there any provision for maternity leave?
44. Is there any arrangement for sabbatical leave?
45. What health service, if any, is provided?
46. Are employees covered by workmen's compensation insurance?
47. Does the agency have in effect any group plan for hospital, medical care, and life insurance?
48. What provision, if any, is there for retirement insurance?
49. Are automobile operators covered for accident and liability?
50. What relations, if any, are there with unions?
51. How could the practices of the agency be improved in any of these respects?