Welfare Not a Bonanza
For Those Truly in Need

Food, Clothing, Household Benefits
Are Minimum for the Honest, Gravy to the Cheats

This series of articles on public welfare follows six months of research and study by the staff of The News, including service by a reporter as a caseworker for the Erie County Department of Social Welfare.

The welfare program, not confined to Erie County, is generally more costly each year. The costs and details of the system, as intended to aid officials who are struggling to confine welfare to the needy and thus benefit the taxpayer. All manner of clients and places are felicitous to comply with New York State law.

By ED MAY

"I'm wasting my time working. I'd be better off on the welfare.

The man holding the steaming cup of coffee could have been your neighbor, the worker at the next machine, or the worker across the hall sharing a seat.

What he said is repeated often in the mounting public distress over high costs of living. It is the tale of revelations of laziness, chiseling, laziness and dishonesty.

It is also wrong. Because a man would be better off "on the welfare" only if he is prevented from working and from clothing each of his children for less than a dollar a day.

Monthly Total $98.60

To qualify, he also would be required to give up his car and an occasional present for his family.

This is what a family of four persons receives:

- $35.50 for the father, who has a weekly salary of $70.
- $3.25 for the wife, who is working.
- $18.30 for the son, who is attending school.
- $10 for the daughter, who is not working.

This monthly total of $98.60 must pay for food, clothing, personal needs and household incidentals for the entire family. Rent and utilities are provided extra by the government department.

If you want to figure the welfare budget for your family, refer to the table on page 104 giving the allowance for each member.

Today thousands of men and women in Erie County—particularly in the older age categories and aid to the blind categories—live within these financial limits.

Gets Nighttime Job

For many of these needy recipients, welfare is as unpopular as it is attractive to the cheats and chiselers who use it as gravy on top of other earnings.

Mr. A, a 64-year-old man reared in rural Erie County, who called his caseworker to say he had a night-time job as an elevator operator.

Mrs. S., the mother of two children, who found a job doing housework at $3.50 a week, said the money just about equalized her welfare check, but she told her caseworker she would rather work because "I don't want my children to be raised by the welfare.

Mr. F., a man with seven children, who now has a part-time job as a paperboy and maintenance man. Every week he brings his pay stubs to his caseworker and she deducts his earnings from his allowance.

Saves for Typewriter

Many welfare budgets there is no such thing as "change." Nickles, dimes and quarters are counted carefully if the bills are going to be paid.

Occasionally a client will express concern about the welfare check or she considers a necessity.

For example, while I was a caseworker for the Erie County Department of Social Welfare, made a home call on a client requiring aid to the disabled. She suffered from tuberculosis.

Shorthand notes were scattered over the kitchen table with an inscription book nearby, in a corner. It was a dictionary, not a Bible. I was proucing on an ancient typewriter.

The New York State Vocational Rehabilitation Division, who sent her to a business school. But sickness interrupted her training.

Needy Can Be Hurt

I asked her about the type-w

The receipt showed she was charged $90.60 with interest and was making $5 payments every month. The money for the over-reduced machine was coming from her work in a small old clothing, personal and house- hold allowance of $3.85.

Sometime by then it's only the taxpayer who loses because of what the welfare office is apparently doing is really and hurt, too.

"I'd appreciate it if you'd look into this," she said over the telephone. It was the caseworker who put her in contact with me. She was a caseworker who was struggling with a caseload of nearly 1,000 clients.

The woman had dropped 50 cents of her monthly allowance, and she asked me to phone an official question.

Money in the Bank

A man who might not be on welfare at all today—and living below the poverty line—hadn't gotten slammed several years ago.

John and his wife have been on and off relief since 1938. Today they have $405 in the bank. They live in a small flat where carefully cut cards square substitutes for furniture.

Yet in 1935 a routine bank check showed $404 in trust for John W., in a Buffalo bank. In 1956 another routine check showed $404, $200 more than $200 increase in the account, and the indication was that the trust fund had grown by $200.

Periodically John was questioned about the money.

"... About the trust fund, he states his sister who lives in Buffalo paid the bank in this trust and that he knew very little about it.

Name in Phone Book

"Mr. W., states that this money is not, at his disposal, and that he is only able to take the account over in case of his sister's death.

When the money first was located, the Welfare Department made an effort to find the sister. But her name was spelled three different ways in the case. No record in the telephone book or Social Security card. And the search was dropped.

However, the correct spelled name was finally found in a telephone book. There is only one line it. A long distance call confirmed the relationship. Yes, she could help a little. and her brother and sister in Buffalo could also help.

John W., was receiving the taxpayer's charity.

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Table of Welfare Benefits

If you were on welfare this is what you would receive.

The figures include food, clothing, household and personal expenses;

First check the age and sex for each member of the family. See if the take the food figure that covers the size of your family group. The larger the family, the lower the individual allowances.

Then compare the monthly welfare allowance with your weekly budget you must multiply your own expenses by 4.5 times the number of weeks in an average month.

Monthly Allowance of $98.60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allowance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food: $35.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing: $3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal needs: $18.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household incidentals: $10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The total is $98.60 for a family of four persons.

NEXT: Some welfare or...