

Department of Public Welfare State Documents

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Finding aid written in English

Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of the State Library

Forum Building
607 South Drive
Harrisburg, PA, 17120

Summary Information

Repository: Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of the State Library

Creator: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Title: Department of Public Welfare State Documents

Identifier: PUB-WEL

Date: 1958 - 2014

Date: Majority of material found within 2003 - 2012

Physical Description: 4 Megabytes (3 PDF files)

Language of English

Materials:

Scope and Contents

The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) administered a vast array of human-service programs, promoted local social services and planning activities, distributed federal and state funds to local agencies, and developed programs to respond to the human service needs of the Commonwealth's residents. Programs provided basic needs including cash, food, shelter, health care, heat, and job-funding assistance for individuals and families. The Department also provided treatment, care, and supported services in state-operated facilities and in the community for people with mental illness and developmental disabilities as well as children and families.

The publications of the Department of Public Welfare contain annual reports, bulletins, and educational guides. Selected topics from these publications include child abuse and intellectual disabilities. The bulk of the current material is dated from 2003 to 2012.

Biographical / Historical

The first Department of Welfare was established by the Act of May 25, 1921 (P.L. 1144). This legislation drew together in one agency activities previously performed by the Board of Public Charities, the Commission of Lunacy, the Prison Labor Commission, and others. The Administrative Code of 1929 further defined the powers of the new department. Acts of June 24, 1937 (P.L. 2003 and P.L. 2015) established a Department of Public Assistance and centralized relief and money distribution elements of state government. These acts also established the 67 county boards of assistance. The Act of July 29, 1953 (P.L. 1428) transferred supervision of penal and correctional institutions from the Department of Welfare to the Department of Justice. The former departments of Welfare and Public Assistance became the Department of Public Welfare on June 1, 1958, as authorized by the Act of July 13, 1957 (P.L. 852). Specialized institutions for juvenile offenders were established by the Act of November 21, 1959 (P.L. 1579). Also, restoration centers for older people were authorized by the Acts of June 19, 1964 (Special Session, P.L. 75 and 77). The legislative base for the Department's programs for people with mental illness and mental retardation was greatly expanded and codified by the Act of October 20, 1966 (Third Special Session, P.L. 96). All existing public welfare laws were consolidated and codified in the Public Welfare Code and Act of June 13, 1967 (P.L. 31), which has largely become the legal base of the Department's operation. On September 24, 2014, House Bill 993 officially changed the name of the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to the Department of Human Services.

Legacy Agency Names and Related Agencies

Department of Welfare (incorporated agency), Department of Public Assistance (incorporated agency),
Department of Human Services (successor agency)

Other Finding Aids

For more information concerning the records of the Department of Public Welfare (within the
Department of Human Services record group) at the Pennsylvania State Archives, please visit: [https://
gencat.eloquent-systems.com/pennsylvania-state-archives/permalink.html?key=class541](https://gencat.eloquent-systems.com/pennsylvania-state-archives/permalink.html?key=class541).

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Controlled Access Headings

- Public welfare
- Pennsylvania Politics and government
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