FIELD WORK FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE PRE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENT

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This manual was prepared by a committee of school and agency staff in the Greater Philadelphia Area who have participated in a program of field work for undergraduate students intermittently from 1955-1960. The program as here described is the culmination of ten years of effort by the Council on Volunteers in its work with the undergraduate preprofessional student.

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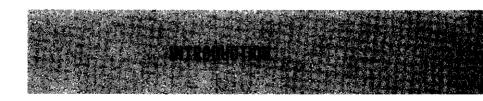
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The total health and welfare field is today aware of two vital needs—

- 1. A larger number of professionally trained personnel
- 2. Greater community understanding of its work

Experience shows that one method of breakthrough lies in the direct involvement of the community through citizen and student service. This booklet is aimed at considering the potential of one of these segments of the community—the undergraduate college student—as a reservoir of future social workers. For many social agencies the chief motivation in helping to develop a program of field work for these students has been their concern for increased recruitment of potential social workers. Clearly, such undergraduate experience cannot take the place of graduate training, which we consider essential.

We recognize that the primary purpose of an undergraduate college program is to provide a general or liberal education. This well includes providing students with an opportunity to explore and test their vocational interests through field experience. Field experience in social agencies is designed to meet the needs of four groups of students:

- Those who wish to have a general orientation in the field of health and welfare and a knowledge in particular of social agencies
- 2. Those for whom such experience may serve as a basis for decision about social work as a career
- 3. Those who are taking pre-professional studies in preparation for graduate social work
- 4. Those who are interested in the behavioral sciences in preparation for various careers

Field experience refers to the placement of the undergraduate student in an agency or institution which provides some form of community social service. A three-way partnership of school, agency and a coordinating group (here referred to as Council on Volunteers) makes possible a sound procedure as will be shown. Such placements cover an extended period of time which is specifically designated in the college or university curriculum. During his field experience the student is assigned under supervision to selected and limited responsibilities for service appropriate to his knowledge and capacities and in keeping with the educational objectives defined by the college or university. Field experience is distinguished from agency visits or observation by the extended and consecutive time involved and by the sequence and scope of experiences provided by the agency and the responsibility undertaken by students in commitment thereof. To assure clarity and purpose during this experience, the three partners have their individual and specific goals.



A. THE SCHOOL AND ITS GOALS

The fundamental purpose of the field experience on the undergraduate level is to deepen and enrich the academic content of the classroom. Implicit in an experience in a social agency is the concept of learning through experience. The student learns about social work and society on a theoretical level in the classroom and sees the integration of theory and practice in the agency.

There are other goals which are related to this basic one.

- 1. Developing the student's knowledge about:
 - a. the process of social change, and concomitant problems
 - b. the social, cultural, economic and ethnic composition of the community
 - c. individual and group behavior
 - d. public and private services and the resources of the community
- 2. Helping to develop the student's ability in:
 - a. communicating (as with supervisor, co-worker, client)
 - b. planning and organizing work; budgeting time
 - c. observing, perceiving, critical thinking, analyzing
- 3. Developing understanding and awareness about himself within his capacity:
 - a. his motivation and suitability for the profession
 - b. his participation in the continuing self-evaluation process with the help of his supervisor and teacher
 - his ability to take and use help in the supervisory relationship
 - d. his sensitivity to individual and group differences
 - e. his attitude toward individual and social needs and conflicts

B. THE AGENCY AND ITS GOALS

The responsibilities taken on by agencies in the placement of undergraduate students are directly related to the stated goals of the student field work program:*

- 1. To contribute to the recruitment of future social workers through a program which is professionally sound
- To acquaint college students with the health, welfare and recreation field and increase their understanding of social services
- To help enrich the theoretical college courses in the social sciences, behavioral sciences and pre-teaching sequences by a direct experience in practice

^{*}Some agencies may choose to accept only those students who have indicated inclination toward graduate study for the social work profession.

Through a mutually productive field work experience the student may further be enabled to:

- Experience the agency through carrying responsibility for a specific productive task
- 2. Learn to know realistically what a social agency is, its value and place in the community
- 3. Understand the general role of the professional social worker and why this entails post-graduate training
- 4. Explore and realize his own relation to the social services and the social work profession as a member of the community
- Discover any specific interest or motivation for training in social work and make a responsible choice or decision in this respect



C. THE COUNCIL ON VOLUNTEERS AND ITS GOALS

The Council has always had as its purpose the offering of leadership on a community-wide basis in matters relating to the participation of citizens in the health and welfare services of the community. One of its functions has been that of helping agencies to expand and enrich their programs through the productive use of volunteers. It is always the hope that a volunteer will have an enlightening and worthwhile experience so that he may become more aware of the needs and services in the community.

The general purpose holds equally true for a student program as for any other. (The student in this particular program differs, however, from the volunteer in that he receives academic credit and has a responsibility to his school as well as to the agency). In this three-way partnership, the Council plays the specific role of so coordinating the program as to enable

the school and the agency each to achieve its goal in a mutually productive fashion. For, in the final analysis, it is the school and the agency who carry the major professional responsibility for the development of the student through his field experience. (See page 13 for specific procedures which demonstrate the role of the Council.)



The answer to this question can be relatively simple if the foundation has been laid. There are several cornerstones which are essentials:

- 1. There has been agreement by both agency and college that the foregoing goals are mutually acceptable and that adequate *time* and personnel will be allocated to help achieve them.
- 2. There is a commitment among the partners that the program is educationally sound and professionally valid (i.e., according to social work practice).
- 3. The program is administratively accepted by the college to the extent of relating the field work experience to a specific course with some social work content. This may take the form of a seminar or a class with a laboratory experience attached. The actual field experience may or may not carry additional credit.
- 4. The agencies must meet the standards of the appropriate local or national organizations and be able to provide the qualified personnel for supervisory purposes.
- 5. After an early joint meeting during which needs and goals are clarified, each of the three is then prepared to proceed with the specific mechanics for operating the program as follows:

A. THE COLLEGE AND ITS PROCEDURES

- 1. At registration (or pre-registration advising)
 - a. Students are instructed to leave appropriate blocks of time (schools vary in their requirements from 4-6 hours per week).

b. Students fill out two face sheets with the appropriate identifying data.

One form remains with the instructor for record purposes. The other form may serve as a basis for the "student profile" which is sent to the Council on Volunteers. (This serves as a tool in the screening and referral process. See page 20.)

c. The student is given name, address and phone number of the Council on Volunteers and instructed to call for an appointment.

2: Student's responsibility:

- a. make and keep appointment with the Council on Volunteers
- b. discuss placement; follow instructions re contacting agency
- c. keep all commitments to agency—with promptness, reliability, responsible conduct and dress
- d. notify faculty advisor of placement and relevant information
- e. arrange for conference with instructor when indicated or necessary

3. Instructor's responsibility:*

- a. notify Council on Volunteers of approximate number of referrals to be made
- b. advise Council on Volunteers of any special circumstances re: student and/or placement. (Student Profile may serve this purpose.)
- c. establish relationship with agency and designated supervisor
- d. provide agency with:
 - (1) copy of course objective sheets
 - (2) calendar for school year
 - (3) evaluation forms—midterm and final (see appendix b.)
- e. make clear school's aims and objectives, course content, and pre-social work program to agency (such sharing may be done at the three-way meetings convened by the Council on Volunteers).
- f. review prospective agency experiences for student with agency supervisor

^{*}It is most helpful when the college gives primary responsibility for this program to a faculty member with a sound orientation to social work practices and principles and an awareness of concepts of field work on the undergraduate level as differentiated from the graduate.

- g. keep in personal or telephone communication with supervisor re anything significant which will affect performance in placement
- h. keep informed of student's activities and program through seminar, class discussion, written assignments
- i. bring to Council any questions or problems which cannot be handled directly with agency or student
- avoid any supervision of student re agency activity. Help student understand division of responsibility and differences in function
- k. attend meetings with agency and Council representatives

B. THE AGENCY AND ITS PROCEDURES

The steps involved may be listed succinctly and quickly. But it is their actual carrying out which is of major significance:

- 1. Decision regarding participation in the program
- 2. Integration in agency program
- 3. Job description and plan
- 4. Choice of supervisor
- Approach to Council on Volunteers Submit:
 - (1) written statement re: experience and supervision available
 - (2) requirements re: age, hours, etc.

1. Decision

For many agencies the decision to use volunteers raises fundamental questions as to the nature of their program, personnel standards, confidentiality, and client needs. Such a decision, therefore, must be made only after self examination and an honest philosophical belief that undergraduate students have a valid role. Once this is seen, then it becomes a matter of so planning the field work assignment that the educational experience to the student and the valid professional concerns of the agency are both equally protected. Students should not be used to substitute in jobs requiring professional training. (It is at this point that the Council on Volunteers makes a major contribution.)

2. Integration in agency program

It is apparent that such a decision involves the agency on various levels—board, administration and *staff*. It is particularly important that the staff be involved and be able to play a role in the program. For the attitude of every staff member impinges upon the learning experience of the student volunteer.

3. Job Description and plan

The job description and plan for the student become meaningful to the extent that the student is helped to come to grips with problems that are real, work which actually needs doing and professional people who care about his growth and learning sufficiently to help him in the development. The content must be related to the capacity and maturity of the student as well as to his academic standing and learning. (See appendix for suggested appropriate jobs and job descriptions.)

The student profile, description of course content and purposes provided by the college are indispensable at this point.

4. Choice of supervisor

The school must be satisfied that adequate supervision is provided. For it is the supervisor who becomes the key agency person in the student's experience. It should be made clear that the nature of supervision for the undergraduate is different from that offered to the graduate student who is preparing for a professional career. The pre-professional student is learning about social work. He is not becoming a social worker. Thus the supervisory relationship remains within well defined purposeful limits. It is not aimed at teaching professional skills. It is aimed at imparting information, pointing up principles, raising questions and helping the student gain clarity. In short, it is a teaching-enabling relationship based on awareness of the fact that the student is not in professional training. The appropriate supervisor is the person who can sustain such a relationship. Preferably this should be an agency supervisor or competent practitioner who is ready for such an experience. It may also be another competent professional person, depending upon the function of the agency and the department in which the student is placed.



C. THE COUNCIL ON VOLUNTEERS AND ITS PROCEDURES

The Council on Volunteers stands at a point midway among the three sides of a triangle, representing in its role the needs and interests of the school, the agency and the student. It is concerned with helping each to achieve its goals. In order to accomplish this, the Council must also be concerned with facilitating the procedures of each. And, of equal importance, the Council plays its role with due concern for its own principles concerning the valid use of volunteers. This validity is derived from recognition of such standards as earlier indicated:

- 1. School and agency commitment
- 2. Thoughtful screening
- 3. Appropriate job descriptions
- 4. Adequate supervision
- 5. Sound evaluation

These standards apply to both school and agency.

Assuming the initiative to have been taken by the college in seeking the development of an undergraduate pre-social work field work placement program, the Council takes a number of steps:

1. Uncovers needs

Through conference and consultation the potential of agencies regarding field work opportunities for undergraduate students is discovered, examined and clarified. By the same token the appropriate needs of a given college must similarly be examined.

2. Gathers job opportunities

Needs and interests must be made sufficiently concrete so that a meaningful job description may be put into writing spelling out such details as:

- a. work load and content
- b. days and hours
- c. type of student preferred
- d. nature and extent of supervision

Such job opportunities must be evaluated as to their validity for students and their appropriateness for volunteers.

3. Assures balance

Where possible the Council sees value in seeking out job opportunities in a variety of agencies, tending to show the broad structure of health and welfare services in a given community; i.e., family service, child guidance, medical social work, psychiatric social work, geriatrics, clinic and hospital, day care, neighborhood center, Y, settlement house, etc.

4. Determines school needs

The determination of the school's needs, interests and standards are the reverse side of the "job opportunity coin". The Council must gather the following pertinent data in writing from the college instructor or supervisor:

- a. course description and goals
- b. student profiles (elsewhere described)
- c. requirements as to: hours, holidays, readings, supervision, etc.

5. Brings the partners together

a. Plan together

Once the "fact finding" period is over, the Council finds the greatest value lies in the face to face conference method whereby school instructors, agency supervisors and Council consultants share their views and come to know one another. At such a meeting, differences may be resolved and individual needs of agency or school may be accommodated.

b. Screening

Upon occasion the school instructor may wish to meet individually with the agency supervisor, thus eliminating the screening and referral step on the part of the Council. By and large, however, it has been found to be efficient and helpful to all concerned for the Council to play this screening role.

With both job description and student profile in hand, the Council then proceeds to refer each student. That is, an individual interview is held on the basis of which a sound referral may be made to one or two field work openings which are deemed appropriate.

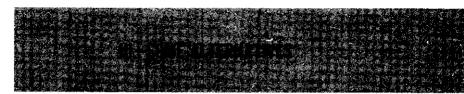
c Referral

It is possible that an agency supervisor may, after interviewing the referred student, find such a student not acceptable for any of a number of reasons. In such an instance, the student may be referred elsewhere by the Council.

Once a tentative plan is made, the *student* then follows through by making an appointment with the supervisor in a given agency. The Council makes available the student profile for use by the agency supervisor. Once this is effected, copies of job descriptions are placed on file with the school instructor.

d Evaluation

Ongoing free communication among all partners (including the student) is indispensable to a sound program. This may take the form of individual conference, agency and school visits and using the services of the Council consultant as the "middle man". In addition, however, there is real value in a mid-year and end-year group meeting among school and agency personnel to share experiences, discuss problems and gain perspective. (For the student such evaluation may take the form of term papers, "self evaluations", etc.)



This entire manual has been prepared on the assumption that there are three partners available, one of them being an appropriate coordinating body such as a social work oriented Council on Volunteers. But—if there aren't—the following steps may be appropriate.

A. THE COLLEGE AS THE INITIATOR

Where there is real interest by one or more colleges, it may be sound to call together the representative of appropriate agencies in order to establish an "undergraduate field work committee". Such a committee might then develop a program. Or—it may also be wise for the college to approach the local Health and Welfare Council (or its equivalent) which may undertake to help develop such a program.

B. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS AS THE INITIATOR

A strong local or area National Association of Social Workers Chapter might find it possible to initiate such a program or even to fulfill the role of coordinator.

Note: Whatever the approach or vehicle used, the philosophy, the procedures, the principles earlier described, would still obtain.



A. SOME STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

- 1. Prepare seriously for the assignment
 - a. discuss expectations with instructor and in class, if the placement is part of a college course
 - b. read textbook material as assigned by the instructor
 - c. be prepared for an interview with agency persons, if required
 - d. in any case attend a briefing session (or several) as arranged by the college or the Council

2. Have flexible expectations

- a. a capable supervisor is more important than the type of agency or the type of experience available
- b. realize that the growth is gradual, that it may be well along in the year before the true worth of the experience becomes apparent



- 3. Manifest a keen sense of responsibility
 - a. report to the agency regularly, on time and for the whole time agreed upon
- 4. Show flexibility as to time available for field work
- 5. Make periodic reports to the proper college person(s)
 - a. to the instructor and the class, if the placement is part of a credit course; otherwise to the person through whom the placement was arranged

B. SOME SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PLACEMENT PROGRESS

- 1. After placement has been made college faculty should establish contact with the agency supervisor through personal conferences as needed for continued planning and consultation in regard to the following:
 - a. interpretation of course objectives and classroom activities in relation to student's agency experience
 - b. individualization of student needs as reflected in classwork and conferences
 - c. evaluation procedure—develop specific forms and methods appropriate to field work as differentiated from class lectures (see page 21.)
- 2. Faculty activity with students is focused on objectives shared jointly with the agency and should include the following:
 - a. lectures, discussion and collateral readings to increase student knowledge and understanding of the philosophy, concepts, methods, fields and structure of social work, and opportunity for critical thinking on these in the light of field experience

- b. class discussion to help students understand some new concepts and techniques in the agency such as: professional conduct, confidentiality, vocabulary, recording, interviewing
- c. class discussion and individual conferences to give support to students in understanding the field experience, agency expectations, personal attitudes and limitations, supervision and evaluation

(The school assumes that the content of an agency evaluation has been shared with the student in an appropriate manner and forwarded to the instructor.)

C. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR OFFERING APPROPRIATE FIELD WORK ACTIVITIES

1. In all agencies

- a. participating in staff, committee and board meetings and reporting on these activities in class
- b. serving as receptionist as part of orientation to agency function
- c. reading, summarizing and reporting on reference material for agency records
- d. making district maps
- e. checking on clients' employment records

2. Case work aides

- a. assist the Travelers Aid in transportation centers
- b. visit families, escort patients to clinics, take children to parks, circuses or doctors' offices
- c. instruct clients in arts, skills, hobbies
- d. act as foreign language interpreters, or shoppers
- e. read case records to become familiar with the services of the agency
- f. prepare record summaries for various purposes, such as reports on closed cases
- g. learn use of agency's forms, procedures, filing system, statistical method and research activities
- h. collateral telephone contacts and visits, such as with schools, clinics, etc.
- i. direct responsibility for relatively simple cases involving the giving of concrete services

3. Community aides

- a. in such fields as housing; interview for housing surveys; inspect dwellings; list vacancies; recruit suitable boarding homes for old people, children or the handicapped
- b. canvass day care centers, libraries, recreation facilities to discover neighborhood resources

4. Education and recreation agencies

- a. club leaders and advisors—with Scouts, YMCA's, YWCA's, Catholic Youth Organizations, Jewish Community Centers, Salvation Army, Red Cross, Camp Fire Girls, 4-H Clubs, Boys' Clubs, churches, settlements, etc.
- b. instructors, teachers, coaches—in sports, games, arts and crafts, nature lore, homemaking, sex education, public affairs, vocations, etc.
- c. assistants in surveys and research—to discover, interpret and publicize facts about recreation and education needs

5. Health agencies

- a. assist in clinics—help with audiometer and testing of visual functions—assist in such classes as lip reading, home nursing, first aid, etc.
- b. assist with diversional therapy—arts, crafts, hobbies
- c. assist with community health projects such as immunization campaigns, chest X-rays, dental or medical examinations, etc.—make surgical dressings or other medical supplies
- d. organize a health library; collect reference material; take charge of medical supply closet



- a. sample profile
- b. evaluation form
- c. a case work agency job description
- d. a community organization job description in a neighborhoodserving agency
- e. list of participating schools and agencies, 1955-1961 Sample a.

Student's Name
Address
Telephone No.
Personal Data
Birth date
Marital status
Health
Academic Data
College
Class
Department and Course
Career Goals
Work Experience (list-include current employment) Paid: Unpaid:
Skills—Indicate specific skills such as typing, swimming, driving, la guages:
Field Work Preferences (indicate field of interest) Days and hours available:
Instructor's Comments:

(use reverse side)

The following outline is designed to assist the agency supervisor in providing information which may help the college instructor perform these functions:

- 1. arrive at a grade
- 2. offer guidance
- 3. provide references

Accordingly, it is divided in two parts. The first emphasizes academic learnings and level of job performance. The second emphasizes personality factors and potential for the field of social work. Both parts are essential and should be included as far as possible in both the mid-year and year reports.

STUDENT	SUPERVISOR
AGENCY	DATE
Dates of assignment:	Days and Hours:
Attendance: times present	times absent
No. supervisory confere	nces No. related agency meetings
Description of agency assignme	ent: (Please attach a separate statement)

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- I. ACADEMIC LEARNING AND JOB PERFORMANCE (Please organize your evaluation according to the following headings)
 - A. Function, purpose and general structure of agency
 - B. Place of agency in total social welfare program
 - C. Relationships: (Use of supervision, seeks and uses help—accepts criticism, expresses feelings)
 - D. Personal organization (recording, planning, use of time, etc.)
- II. PERSONALITY AND GROWTH POTENTIAL (Include information appropriate for use in guidance and future references)

Please attach a statement to include such factors as student's poise and stability, intelligence as seen at work, initiative (enthusiasm), sensitivity to others, awareness of self, way in which student relates to people in the agency and community, nature of motivation in relation to social work, potential for social work education and becoming a professional social worker, areas in which difficulty might lie, etc.



In offering a field work placement to a senior sociology student we would plan his program in the Jewish Family Service with the general objective of providing an introduction to social work. With such an objective in mind, field work content would be geared to offering as broad a picture as possible of agency services and the ways in which they are related to overall community services. We would hope to provide experience to the student in offering concrete services to those in need within a supportive, closely supervised setting. More specifically, the field work experience might include any and all of the following, depending upon their availability and the student's own interests and capacities.

1. Direct responsibility for relatively simple case involving the giving of concrete services.

We have in mind at the moment one ongoing case which should be particularly suitable. It concerns a middle-aged couple to whom the agency is giving financial assistance in conjunction with a disability allowance from DPA. There has been and will continue to need to be contact maintained with DPA and also with a hospital as both husband and wife have serious health problems. Both partners are very lonely people who need to have someone to talk to and are responsive to anyone who takes an interest in them. In this sense, this could be an encouraging case for the student even though it is unlikely that there will be any major change in the family's situation. This case offers, too, an opportunity to learn about agency budgeting methods both within a scientific and a practical framework. In addition, these clients are also served by another department of the agency since they have received a business loan. The student, then, through his own case could learn directly about another agency service.

When the student becomes more acquainted with the agency we would be ready to consider assigning another case in line with his capacity.

- Handling certain one-time contacts in cases for which the student does not carry major responsibility; for example, helping new immigrants with shopping. (Here a knowledge of German would be helpful, but not essential).
- 3. Attendance at agency staff and district meetings, as appropriate, if these coincide with the days the student is in the agency. (Most meetings are held on Fridays).
- Certain case records could be made available for reading to give the student a broader picture of agency services than he could obtain from his own cases exclusively.
- 5. Assisting the statistician so that the student may become familiar with a family agency's statistical method.

All the student's activity in the agency will be under the close supervision of a competent caseworker.

Student's placement is designed to

- (1) provide an introduction to the field of community organiza-
- (2) offer an action test for social work potential

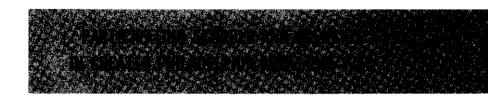


Under supervision, student will move through at least four (4) stages of experience during the year's field work. These include:

- (1) Orientation to the agency, its function and area of service by recording, reading records, observing intake interviews
- (2) Orientation to the wider community, its resources, the people and the complex problems of urban living—home visits with supervisor in block organization, visits to schools, churches, etc.
- (3) Observation of community groups such as councils, neighborhood associations and committees as they work on a wide range of civic improvement problems

(4) Assignment to two (2) primary block groups organized around specific projects, developing activities to meet these needs and doing related work as required—e.g., block meetings

The student will be expected to maintain records of activities and to be available for periodic conferences with agency supervisor. Where possible, attendance at staff meetings is encouraged, since this provides an over-view of the agency and numerous relationships.



Schools:

Beaver College Immaculata College LaSalle College Pennsylvania State University Rosemont College Temple University

Agencies:

Abington Memorial Hospital
Albert Einstein Medical Center
American Red Cross, Home Service
Associated Day Care Service
Association of Jewish Children
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Central Rehabilitation Referral Service, Inc.
Child Study Center of Philadelphia
Children's Aid Society of Montgomery County
Children's Heart Hospital
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Community Health and Civic Association
Delaware County Chapter, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded
Children

Delaware County Child Care Center Association

Family Service of Delaware County

Family Service, Neighborhood League of Wayne*

Family Service of the Main Line Neighborhood

Friends Neighborhood Guild

Germantown Settlement

Hahnemann Medical College Hospital

Ivy House (Salvation Army)

Jewish Family Service

Knit Goods Union Local 190

Lighthouse

Magee Memorial Hospital

Misericordia Hospital

Nicetown Club for Boys and Girls

Pennsylvania Prison Society

Pennsylvania Society to Protect Children from Cruelty

Philadelphia Association for Retarded Children

Philadelphia Association for Youth

Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic

Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations

Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Alcoholism Control Unit

Philadelphia Department of Public Welfare, Children's Division

Philadelphia General Hospital, Children's Psychiatric Center

Philadelphia Housing Authority, Social Service Division

Philadelphia Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Inc.

Philadelphia State Hospital

Presbyterian Hospital

Reed Street Neighborhood House

Shut-In Society, Philadelphia Branch

Southern Home for Children

Temple University Hospital

Travelers Aid Society

United Neighbors Association

University of Pennsylvania Hospital

Urban League of Philadelphia

Willow Crest for Convalescents

York House

Young Women's Christian Association of Germantown

Young Women's Christian Association of Philadelphia

^{*}Since merged with Family Service of the Main Line Neighborhood

