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Circular No. 23 – Depression-Era Agencies

During the Great Depression a number of state and federal programs were established to help Michiganians cope with the consequences of widespread unemployment and dislocation. Some evidence of this assistance can be found in records at the Archives of Michigan, as revealed in the following descriptions.

Civilian Conservation Corps

On March 31, 1933, the Emergency Employment Act was signed, thereby authorizing President Roosevelt to sign Executive Order 6101 on April 5, 1933. This order established the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) as an independent agency. Its purpose was to provide employment for young men in the performance of useful conservation work and public service. The ECW was succeeded on June 28, 1937, by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC, in turn, was discontinued on June 30, 1943.

Record Group	Description	Dates	Cubic Feet
66-02	Camp facilities.	1936	0.1
58-14	General correspondence relating to airfield construction.	1932-1940	1
60-5	The main CCC files from the Department of Conservation which contain general information on the program.	1935-1940	9
60-5	Dossiers on completed and uncompleted projects.	1938-1941	
60-5	Ideas for proposed projects.	1939-1941	
60-5	Blueprint plans for over 100 construction projects.		
60-12	Mainly correspondence pertaining to efforts to improve fishing in Michigan by development of hatcheries, feeding stations, and stream improvements.	1933-1937	0.7
84-48	Correspondence, planning sheets and newspaper clippings dealing with forestry matters like tree planting, fire fighting, and road construction.	1933-1941	1
61-31	Letters, reports, and personnel records concerning Genesee County involvement in the CCC.	1935-1942	0.1
66-73	Applications for enrollment and discharges from the Ionia County program.	1936-1941	1
68-100	Applications to enter and discharges from the Monroe County program.	1934-1943	1.1
62-22	Applications for admission to, and discharges from, the St. Clair County program.	1935-1942	1.7
66-15	Applications for admission to, and discharges from, the Lapeer County program.	1933-1942	0.8
78-20	Enumeration of CCC laborers working in Lake County.	1933-1934	0.2

Federal Emergency Relief Administration

The Emergency Relief Administration was formed in May of 1933 under the National Industry Recovery Act, and subsequent legislation extended its operation until June 30, 1943. The purpose of this agency was to work through local offices to distribute relief funds to the needy and provide food, shelter, money, jobs, and training to the destitute.

Record Group	Description	Dates	Cubic Feet
35	The Welfare and Relief Study Commission operated for the purpose of investigating and reporting on the effectiveness of emergency relief	1936-1938	7



Federal Emergency Relief Administration - Continued

Record Group	Description	Dates	Cubic Feet
35	activities in Michigan. Included are minutes, data on board members, general correspondence, research and information files, facts on public assistance legislation, and surveys of programs in 16 selected counties.	1936-1938	7
53-5	Contracts between certain townships and the Attorney General for welfare aid.	1932	1.2
55-28	The State Emergency Welfare Relief Commission maintained camps in Michigan for the homeless, transient, and unattached single males. This collection contains the records of Camp Muskegon, Camp Alpena, Camp Gibbs, and Hagerman Lake Camp, the latter 2 being near Iron River.	1934-1952	3.3
61-31	A sampling of case files for transient and single men in Genesee County.	1936-1940	0.2
72-89	Memoranda, forms, rules, and regulations received by Isabella County from State Emergency Welfare Relief Commission.	1935-1936	0.1
62-22	Audits of the St. Clair County emergency welfare relief commission.	1935-1939	0.1

National Youth Administration

The National Youth Administration was created on June 26, 1935, as part of the Works Progress Administration. Its purpose was to provide work training for unemployed youth and part-time work for needy students. The NYA was placed in the Federal Security Agency on July 1, 1939, and then transferred to the War Manpower Commission on September 17, 1942. The program was liquidated on July 12, 1943.

Record Group	Description	Dates	Cubic Feet
88-63	Manuals, reports, publicity, and bulletins pertaining to the Michigan Division of the NYA. The materials relate to vocational guidance and placement, apprentice training, work-study arrangements, and projects undertaken.	1935-1938	0.4
62-32	Letters pertaining to programs at Northern Michigan College (University) to employ students.		0.1
55-19	Armstrong Collection (manuscript for book on FERA) Photographs moved to the General Collection under "Welfare."		

Work Projects Administration

The Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 authorized the establishment of a Works Progress Administration, an agency which was created by executive order on May 6, 1935. The office operated under this name until July 1, 1939, when it became known as the Work Projects Administration. Liquidation of the program was ordered on December 4, 1942, and the WPA ceased to exist on June 30, 1943.

Record Group	Description	Dates	Cubic Feet
81-49	WPA project reports on various Michigan programs.	1935-1943	2
82-61	Tabulation of WPA Projects in Michigan. Reveals the number of dollars allocated by federal, state, county, township, school districts, and municipal governments for various projects like roads, bridges, sidewalks, conservation, recreation, and general services.	1936-1939	

Work Projects Administration - Continued

Record Group	Description	Dates	Cubic Feet
55-19	Photographs of Manistee County program. (Moved to the General Collection under "Welfare.")		
63-6	Fort Wilkins State Park Historical Project.	1938-1952	

State Planning Commission

The State Planning Commission was created on January 16, 1934, for purpose of planning, prioritizing, and coordinating public works projects in Michigan. This office collected information, inventoried needs, studied problems, provided information, and rendered advice, mainly with respect to the use and development of the state's resources. The SPC was abolished on July 1, 1947, when the Department of Economic Development was created.

Record Group	Description	Dates	Cubic Feet
34	Reports on a wide variety of issues, reference materials, technical research manuals, data accumulated by the Rural Resettlement Administration, and suggestions for postwar public works programs.	1930-1946	3
58-05	Reports on resource development and public improvements.	1943-1952	1