



Russell Lee, 1946

## Commissioner's Report

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s we celebrate our 50th year of service to the state's needy and vulnerable citizens, the department welcomed a newly expanded board of six members; acquired new federal mandates on welfare reform, nursing

home reform and catastrophic care; and received new state legislative mandates and funding. These changes provide an opportunity for a fresh evaluation of goals, programs and performance.

The year has been one of transition, a year of preparation for a new decade of concern about self-sufficiency and care for those in need. Expansions in federal and state programs will require a renewed emphasis on accountability, fiscal responsibility and efficiency. We will develop a new strategic plan to incorporate these new directions into the goal of better serving our clients. The plan will

recognize that this department exists primarily to serve our state's needy children and their families, elderly people and disabled people.

The new federal nursing home reform mandate requires improvements in care for nursing home residents. Combined with our own case-mix reimbursement initiative, we can expect increased patient care. The federal catastrophic care legislation provides access to Medicare benefits to help elderly patients maintain their health. We will continue to work within these new programs to improve the quality and availability of care.



Russell Lee, 1949

One of our greatest challenges continues to be the protection of vulnerable children and elderly people. Through a restructuring of our approach to planning, budgeting and service delivery, we hope to better protect those at risk and identify those most in need of intervention.

With the help of public awareness campaigns, we hope to find more foster homes for children who have suffered too much.

To see that the special needs of disabled people of all ages are addressed, we will establish an Office of Services to Persons with Disabilities. This office will provide increased leadership and focus for department initiatives to improve and expand needed services. We are forming a Task Force on Disabilities that will be charged with identifying and refining initiatives to be addressed. And, of course, we will cooperatively work with other state agencies to coordinate services to more effectively meet the identified needs.

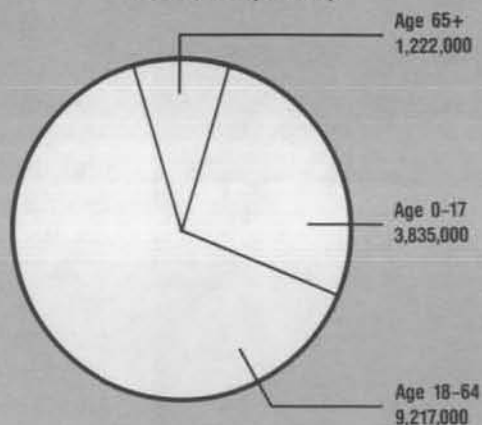
The federal welfare reform mandate presents a challenge to establish public-private partnerships for the development of meaningful jobs for our clients. Through proper education and training, welfare recipients can enter the job market and end their dependency on the welfare system. We must, however, ensure the availability of quality child care and jobs with a future to help them on their way. With interagency efforts and community involvement, the goal of self-sufficiency can be a reality for many dependent families.

This new decade must bring an environment receptive to creative solutions and interagency cooperation to prevent future problems. Our concerns about the effects of drug and alcohol abuse and teen-age pregnancies on the families at risk of dependency can be resolved through joint efforts with other agencies. Our skillful use of case management techniques and automation can enable us to successfully help our clients to become self-sufficient.

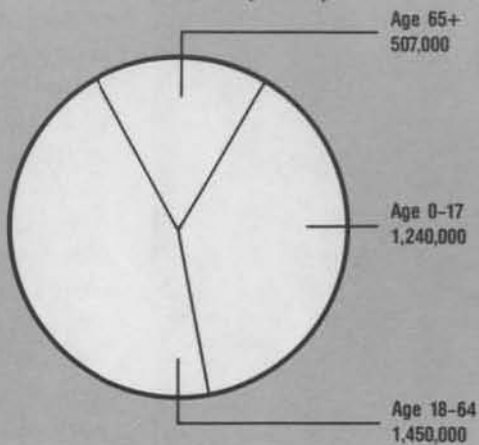
### Texans by Age Group and Poverty Status

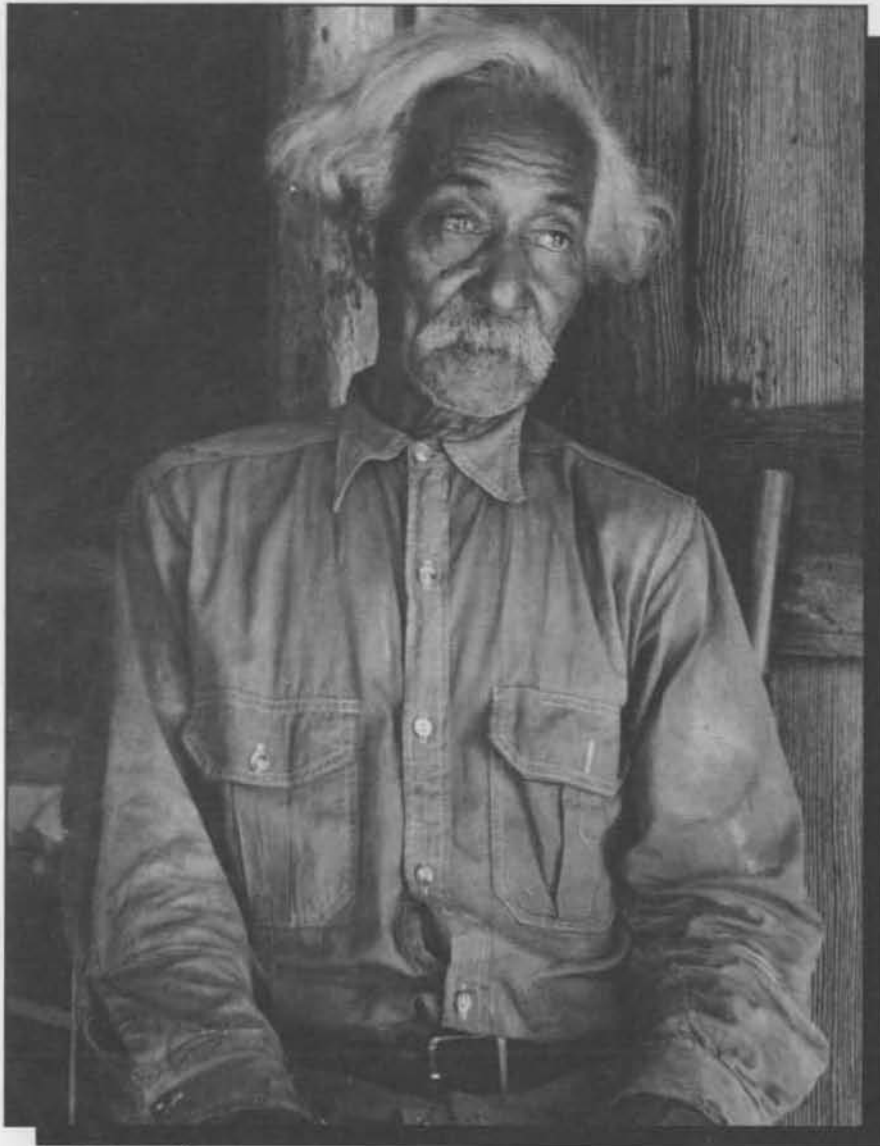
Total = 17,471,000  
FY 1989

Above Poverty  
14,274,000 (81.7%)



Below Poverty  
3,197,000 (18.3%)





Dorothea Lange, 1936

We will emphasize communication by listening to the concerns and suggestions of our diversified communities in Texas. Through public hearings in each region, the ongoing work of advisory committees, and community forums on needs of aged and disabled people, the department will receive information to be used for the legislative appropriation process as well as policy decisions.

As we look to our next 50 years of service, we are entering a new era with new visions of clients served by a more sensitive, productive system that can clearly account for its resources, its products and its successes. ■