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Juvenile Welfare Board : About this collection

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Introduction to the Collection

Through an agreement with the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, the USFSP Digital Archive hosts online documents related to the history, mission, and operations of that organization. Materials include agendas, meeting minutes, associated documents, reports, publications, and other items that illustrate the programs and partnerships of JWB in Pinellas County.

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Organizational Background

The Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County came into existence out of necessity. As World War II came to an end, few options existed for Florida’s children at risk, those living in difficult living conditions, or those suffering from neglect. A judge and attorney worked with other concerned citizens to change this dire situation in Pinellas County. Lincoln C. Bogue arrived in St. Petersburg just before 1920 and graduated from the University of Florida’s law school in 1926. Elected as Judge of the Pinellas County Juvenile Court in 1943, he realized that many of the “delinquent” children who appeared before him came from difficult home situations and that he often had few choices available to him as a judge other than to incarcerate them.

Judge Bogue met with members of an advisory group of the Community Welfare Council in December 1944 to seek better alternatives. Leonard W. Cooperman, an attorney serving in this group, worked with Bogue and others to pursue members of the Pinellas County Commission to allocate some funds. When commissioners refused, Cooperman wrote a bill that called for the creation of a board to do what the Pinellas County Commission had failed to do. Members of the Pinellas County legislative delegation sponsored this bill and voters approved the referendum creating the Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) during the 5 November 1946 general election.

The JWB because the first Children’s Services Council (CSC) established in Florida, a countywide special taxing district created for the purpose of improving the lives of children and families. Dr. Herbert Williams was hired as the first director. The original seven-member board included three elected officials (the County Judge, the Juvenile Judge, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction) along with four lay members.

JWB of Pinellas is the largest CSC in Florida and serves as a model that others throughout the nation have followed. The meeting minutes and documents in this collection illustrate JWB’s long and successful history of working with funded agencies and other governmental and non-governmental partners to use administrative data for advocacy, community organizing, program planning, and policy development.