

**Record Group 8  
Social Services**

**Series 1: Director**

1945-1972  
(bulk 1945-1966)  
1 linear foot

**Japanese American Service Committee Legacy Center  
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**Record Group 8: Social Services  
Series 1: Director  
Finding Aid**

## **Introduction**

The records of the Social Services Director described in this finding aid cover 1945 to 1972 with most records dating from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. They include one liner foot forming Record Group 8: Series 1. Currently, the JASC does not have an overall Social Services Director. Each department including Adult Day Services, Casework and Counseling, Home Support Services, and Cultural and Community Affairs maintains current records in their offices. These records may be available for use at the discretion of the department supervisor. These four departments' records dating from approximately the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s can be found in Record Group 8: Series 2 through 5 respectively. This record group contains some material written in Japanese without an English translation.

These records were surveyed and appraised in Spring 1997 and processed during Summer 1999 by King and Kumata. These activities were generously supported by a grant from McDonald's Corporation's Diversity Initiatives.

There are no restrictions on use of these records. They will be administered in accordance with the JASC Legacy Center Access & Use Guidelines provided to all researchers.

The preferred citation for these records is: [Item name]. Record Group 8, Series 1, Social Services Director Records. Japanese American Service Committee Legacy Center, Chicago, Illinois.

Container lists available upon request, [archives@jasc-chicago.org](mailto:archives@jasc-chicago.org) or (773) 275-0097 x224.

## **Brief History of the JASC and its Social Services Director**

The Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) is a non-profit, community-based organization providing social services and cultural and community programming. It was founded in 1946 to assist in the resettlement of 20,000 newly arrived Japanese Americans to Chicago who had been interned during World War II. Originally called the Chicago Resettlers' Committee (CRC), in October 1954 the agency renamed itself the Japanese American Service Committee.

After resettlement the JASC undertook a new priority and began to provide comprehensive services for the aged. The agency constructed a 200-unit home for the elderly in 1980 and a 180-bed skilled nursing care facility that opened in 1993.

The JASC has been a center of the Japanese American community in Chicago since its founding. As a Japanese American social service agency, the JASC has been keenly aware of the important role it can and should play in preserving, promoting, and passing on Japanese and Japanese American traditions, history, culture, and arts. The JASC has made that heritage an integral part of its programming and services.

Currently the JASC serves the Japanese American community in the Chicagoland area as well as various parts of the Midwest. The JASC distinguishes itself by being the only Japanese American social service organization in the Midwest, but it has also grown into a community center used by many other Japanese American and Asian American organizations to hold meetings and events. The primary population the agency serves is Japanese American, but through its various social service programs, the JASC serves a diverse group of people regardless of age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

Today the JASC runs a wide variety of programs including Adult Day Services; Casework and Counseling; Home Support Services; educational workshops on topics such as health insurance, social security, senior driver's education, and estate planning; health screening and flu shot clinics; arts and cultural classes such as ceramics, ikebana (flower-arranging), origami, and tai chi; Japanese American community events and festivals; and the Legacy Center (an archive and library). The JASC also serves as a meeting place for many community groups such as the Chicago Nisei Post (veterans), New Horizons (a senior singles group), the Nisei Minyo Dance Group, the Ukulele Club, the Quilting Club, and the Nisei Cooperative Investment Club. The JASC is a partner with other groups in

**Record Group 8: Social Services**  
**Series 1: Director**  
**Finding Aid**

programs such as a citywide Japanese American community organizations' picnic, youth basketball clinic, periodic Intergenerational Dialog programs, and the Tohkon Judo Academy. Today the JASC extends its services not only to Chicago's Japanese American population, but also other Asian American groups and seniors.

Originally the CRC staff consisted of a part-time executive director and a support staff person. From 1947 to 1949, Mr. Abe Hagiwara served first as the Recreation Director and then from 1949 to 1950 as the CRC Assistant Executive Director responsible for overseeing the social services, recreational, and cultural activities. Mrs. Chizu Iiyama and Mr. Daniel Kuzuhara served as the CRC and then JASC Associate Director from 1951 to 1953 and from 1953 to approximately 1959 respectively. During their tenures both oversaw social services, recreational, and cultural activities.

Initially the CRC focussed on helping Isseis (first generation Japanese Americans) to become "useful" members of the community by providing information about housing, employment, business opportunities, and information referral services. In addition, the CRC sought to provide recreational opportunities for Japanese Americans especially the Niseis (second generation). Immediately after World War II many Isseis and Niseis were new to Chicago coming from internment camps. The United States government through the U.S. War Relocation Authority office in Chicago emphasized assimilation of Japanese Americans into the larger community. Many social service agencies and individuals helping Japanese Americans relocate to Chicago followed the lead of the government emphasizing assimilation into the broader community. The agency believed that organized recreation was important for integrating into the community. After resettlement the JASC began to coordinate more comprehensive social services such as job placement, group discussions, and community and cultural activities in addition to information referral services and recreational programs.

Currently, the JASC does not have an overall Social Services Director. Each department including Adult Day Services, Casework and Counseling, Home Support Services, and Cultural and Community Affairs has its own department supervisor.

## Scope and Content

This record group consists of the Social Services Director's files dating from 1945 to 1972 with the bulk of the records dating from 1945 to 1966. Currently, the JASC does not have an overall Social Services Director. Each department including Adult Day Services, Casework and Counseling, Home Support Services, and Cultural and Community Affairs maintains current records in their offices. These current records may be available for use at the discretion of the department supervisor. These four departments' records dating from approximately the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s can be found in Record Group 8: Series 2 through 5 respectively.

This record group reveals how the CRC and JASC evolved from providing information referral services and recreational opportunities to becoming a comprehensive social service and community center. These records are extremely vital because very little information remains from the agency's early years.

Some notable material includes:

- An overview of the agency's employment referral service including information about underemployment of Japanese Americans. For example, many people had professional training as architects or accountants, but had difficulty acquiring jobs in those professions. Also, the agency had many domestic labor positions available, but had difficulty filling them. (Box 1, Folder 1)
- A report titled, *For Participation in the Larger Community: The Recreation-Education Program of the Chicago Resettlers' Committee* by Abe Hagiwara dated December 1948. This report provides information about facilities used, affiliated agencies, and names of Japanese American social clubs. (Box 1, Folder 3)
- Discussion sessions called *Our Sansei Children* about assimilation, housing especially how Japanese Americans served as a "buffer" between Caucasians and African Americans, Japanese Americans' prejudice, discrimination against Japanese Americans, and gender and family issues. (Box 1, Folder 4)
- A proposal to expand services to non-Asian Americans in the Uptown neighborhood. (Box 1, Folder 6)
- A report titled *Special Study Committee Interim Report of the 1960 Study*, an overview and analysis of the JASC's history, programs, activities, and future plans. This committee studied the needs of Japanese Americans in Chicago; surveyed Japanese Americans, other agencies, and city leaders for their opinions of the JASC; and explored other agencies' programs to ensure

**Record Group 8: Social Services**  
**Series 1: Director**  
**Finding Aid**

effective use of resources. (Box 1, Folder 11-12. For a similar study done in 1978 see also Record Group 3: Executive Director, Box 35, Folder 12)

- The CRC's 1945 introductory statement outlining the community's needs, the agency's programs, its purpose, and its administrative structure. (Box 1, Folder 15)
- Effects of the Korean conflict on Chinese and Japanese Americans in Chicago. (Box 1, Folder 22)
- The final report of the *Special Study Committee 1960 Study* including recommendations for the future direction of the agency such as establishing a sheltered workshop, a library and information center, and a lounge for social and recreational purposes. The study also recommended that the agency routinely create brochures, a newsletter and an annual report; hire a full-time administrator; and redefine Board members' role from solely honorary to truly functional status. (Box 1, Folder 40)

Note: The JASC fiscal year is from July to June. For example, fiscal year 1999 is July 1998 to June 1999. Generally information and dates listed on the folders and container list were copied directly from the original folders. Information added by the processor is indicated in brackets [ ]. Also, this record group contains some material written in Japanese without an English translation.

### **Restrictions**

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