

Collection #
M 1220

**FAMILY SERVICE OF CENTRAL INDIANA RECORDS,
1911–1971 (BULK 1960S)**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 4 manuscript boxes

COLLECTION
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NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Family Service of Central Indiana formed on Thanksgiving Day 1835 under the name Indianapolis Benevolent Society. During the nineteenth century the Society functioned as a relief agency providing services to the city's new arrivals, widows, orphans, and poor. In 1897 the organization's president established the Charity Organization Society to oversee the growing number of new welfare organizations in Indianapolis, including the Society of Friendly Visitors, Social Service Exchange, Dime Savings and Loan, Summer Mission for Sick Children, Fairview Settlement, and Legal Aid Bureau. The Charity Organization Society and Indianapolis Benevolent Society were part of the same organization but each had different responsibilities. The former investigated cases to identify those worthy of aid, while the latter provided assistance to those people approved for aid.

In 1922 the Charity Organization Society and Indianapolis Benevolent Society merged with the Children's Aid Association and Mother's Aid Society to form the Family Welfare Society, which aimed to address problems of the family. By 1941, however, two of the organizations had left to join outside agencies. This move prompted the Family Welfare Society to change its name to the Family Service Association (FSA) of Indianapolis in 1945.

By the postwar period, the Family Service Association of Indianapolis had ceased to be a relief agency and instead focused most of its efforts on family counseling services. Given the large amount of need for this type of aid, the organization decided to expand its operations. FSA opened its Hancock County branch in 1965, Boone County branch in 1980, Hamilton County branch in 1981, and Morgan County branch in 1983. These additions prompted the agency to change its name to the Family Service Association of Central Indiana in 1993. Ten years later it was changed again to the Family Service of Central Indiana. In 2011 the organization was renamed Families First. Despite these numerous name changes, the agency still has a historical connection to the Indianapolis Benevolent Society. As a result, Families First is the oldest non-profit human services organization in central Indiana.

Sources:

<http://familiesfirstindiana.org/about-families-first/our-history/#>

Information in collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains reports and studies, statistics, correspondence, minutes, clippings, and other miscellaneous papers pertaining to the Family Service of Central Indiana. Most of these items are either administrative records or agency files. Administrative records include information about the organization's staff and committee members, volunteers, correspondence with other agencies, etcetera. Agency files largely include reports, studies, and statistics on the organization's programs and services. All of these materials are from when the agency was known either as the Indianapolis Benevolent Society, the Family Welfare Society, or the Family Service Association (FSA) of Indianapolis. The bulk of these items, however, are from the 1960s which is when the organization was called the Family Service Association of Indianapolis.

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