



The New Deal United States

A comprehensive program to address the effects of the Great Depression encompassing a series of direct job creation programs and other economic reforms

Summary

The New Deal was a response by president Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration to the massive unemployment, poverty, and financial instability of the great depression. Direct employment programs were a core piece of this legislative movement to stimulate the economy by increasing employment, providing wages, and improving infrastructure. The programs helped construct essential public infrastructure, provide opportunities to youth, and supported the arts throughout the entire country (1).

Rationale

Unemployment is beyond the control of people, direct employment is key for economic stabilization and security.

Defining Principles

Everyone is employable, employment should be a right, government should provide direct employment.

Dates of Operation

1933 - 1944 (by which time the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the National Youth Administration (NYA) had ended) (2).

Number of Program Participants

Over the duration of the programs the Works Progress Administration employed 8.5 million people (3); the Civilian Conservation Corps employed 3 million people (4); the National Youth Administration employed 2.6 million youth (5).

Criteria for Participation

18 years and older.

Pay and Benefits

There was no minimum wage at time - many projects set wage that eventually became minimum wage. Housing was often provided. The WPA paid USD 41.57 per month (6). The CCC paid USD 30 per month (7). The NYA paid USD 15-22 monthly (8).



The New Deal United States

A comprehensive program to address the effects of the Great Depression encompassing a series of direct job creation programs and other economic reforms

Financing

USD 41.7 billion over its lifetime from federal funding. Spending in dollar terms peaked at USD 5.1 billion in 1936 (4.3% GDP) (9).

Implementation

“The New Deal used an array of federal agencies, local governments, and private contractors to upgrade and expand the nation’s infrastructure,” (10).

Types of Work

Small and large scale infrastructure projects: road construction, expanded the postage system, manual labor, construction, electrification, forestry and land management, watershed management. Industry training. Historical preservation. Arts: visual art, music, dance, and crafts. (11)

Notable Features

While not perfectly inclusive some programs were gender, race, and disability inclusive in a time where the private sector was gender and race segregated, arguably setting improved standards and hastening the movement towards a more inclusive economy over the 20th century (12).

Challenges

While the New Deal benefited women, African Americans, and people with disabilities at a crucial moment, the work programs were certainly not wholly inclusive and in many cases segregation was built into the organizational structure of projects (13). The programs ultimately ended due to stabilization of the private sector and the WWII demand for prime-age enlistment, and wartime labor and production (14). The Federal budget was constrained and despite its size, the New Deal was still too small relative to the scale of need in the United States.

Program Website

<https://livingnewdeal.org/>



The New Deal United States

A comprehensive program to address the effects of the Great Depression encompassing a series of direct job creation programs and other economic reforms

Citations

- (1) Brent McKee and Richard A. Walker. New Deal Programs. The Living New Deal website. <https://livingnewdeal.org/what-was-the-new-deal/programs/>
- (2) The Living New Deal. New Deal Timeline. <https://livingnewdeal.org/what-was-the-new-deal/timeline/>
- (3) Library of Congress. Works Progress Administration. Today in History. <https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/april-08/#:~:text=Created%20by%20President%20Franklin%20Roosevelt,it%20was%20disbanded%20in%201943.>
- (4) National Park Service. (2015). Civilian Conservation Corps. <https://www.nps.gov/thro/learn/historyculture/civilian-conservation-corps.htm>
- (5) Tally D. Fugate. National Youth Administration. The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. [https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=NA014.](https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=NA014)
- (6) PBS. (2023). Surviving the Dust Bowl: The Works Progress Administration. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/surviving-the-dust-bowl-works-progress-administration-wpa/>
- (7) National Park Service. (2015). Civilian Conservation Corps. <https://www.nps.gov/thro/learn/historyculture/civilian-conservation-corps.htm>
- (8) Federal Security Agency and War Manpower Commission. (1944). Final Report of the National Youth Administration, Fiscal Years 1936-1943. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 113
- (9) Thomas A. Firey. (January, 2009). Did the New Deal 'Help'? The Cato Institute. <https://www.cato.org/blog/did-new-deal-help>
- (10) The Living New Deal. What was the New Deal? <https://livingnewdeal.org/what-was-the-new-deal/>
- (11) Brent McKee and Richard A. Walker. New Deal Programs. The Living New Deal website. <https://livingnewdeal.org/what-was-the-new-deal/programs/>
- (12) The Living New Deal. The New Deal and Race. <https://livingnewdeal.org/new-deal-and-race/>
- (13) The Living New Deal. The New Deal and Race. <https://livingnewdeal.org/new-deal-and-race/>
- (14) The Living New Deal. New Deal Timeline. <https://livingnewdeal.org/what-was-the-new-deal/timeline/>



For more information visit www.jobguarantee.org