

RELOCATION PROSPECTS - ILLINOIS, INDIANA, WISCONSIN

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There are still plenty of opportunities for evacuees to relocate in the Chicago area and I hope more people from the centers will come here to live and work with those who have already successfully relocated. There are many good jobs to be had, not only in the city of Chicago, but in the nearby smaller towns and rural areas of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana.

The people here are very friendly. That friendliness will increase now that they have had a chance to become acquainted with the evacuees who are already here and who have made a definitely good impression. In helping these evacuees get established, our WRA office has had the finest kind of cooperation from the leading church, social and civic groups, and unpleasant incidents resulting from discrimination have been few and far between.

Our most difficult problem right now, especially in Chicago, is in finding housing. That problem, however, is not limited to evacuees. Even Army and Navy officers are having a hard time finding places to live. It is particularly difficult for families with children to find suitable accommodations and my advice is for the heads of such families to come out first, take a job and locate a house or apartment before bringing their families out.

It is much easier for couples without children to find places to live, and single persons have little or no difficulty in finding rooms. All evacuees coming into Chicago can be provided with temporary housing at one of the three hostels in the city, or at private hotels and rooming houses.

In view of the difficulty in finding housing in Chicago for families with children, my suggestion is that evacuees give greater consideration to the possibility of relocating in smaller cities nearby and in rural areas. The wages may be a little lower in such areas, but the cost of living is also less (from 10% to 15%). It is easier to find living quarters and the housing will generally be better and cost less than in Chicago.

There are still plenty of jobs to be had - all kinds of jobs - and of course, the more experience you have had, the better the wages. Those who have not had experience should not expect to receive top wages to start, but pay raises will come as experience is gained. Even unskilled workers get from 50¢ to 62¢ an hour in Chicago, plus time and a half for overtime in excess of 40 hours per week. Fields in which job opportunities are greatest at present include office work of all kinds, farm work, jobs in hospitals, hotels and restaurants, work in factories, work as machinists, domestics, and mechanics.

This is one of the richest agricultural areas in the United States and we have many offers of employment in practically every type of farming -- small grain, livestock, poultry, vegetable, dairying, fruit and specialty crops. Farming here has the advantage of being closer to the big markets;



but of course differs from the kind of farming that is done on the West Coast. There are opportunities for evacuees to buy or lease land, but before doing that, it would be advisable for them to take farm jobs working for other employers and thus obtain first-hand information on soil conditions, climate, crops and markets before investing their own money.

It seems to me that these farm jobs offer the best opportunities for the issei and their families. I would also like to see more issei coming out to take some of these good domestic jobs in which the man would work in the garden and take care of the grounds while his wife does the housework. With such jobs they wouldn't have to worry about finding a place to live, or about the high cost of living since living quarters and food are provided by the employers. Such jobs pay all the way from \$125 to \$200 per month, depending on skill, and would give the older people a chance to live outside crowded city districts and in the friendliest of surroundings.

Most of the evacuees who have settled in Chicago like it very much. It offers all the advantages of a big city, while the people are as friendly as one would expect to find in a small town. As is true all over the country, living costs are considerably higher than before the war, but even so they were not much higher when I came here in January than they were at Klamath Falls near the Tule Lake center during the same period.

Rents and food costs are under OPA ceilings. The thing we Californians miss most is an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables at low cost. And, of course, evacuees who expect to find five or six-room California style bungalows to live in are likely to be disappointed. Most of the residential districts are in the suburbs, while people living close to the downtown section generally make their homes in flats and apartment buildings. As is true in Los Angeles or San Francisco, people consider themselves fortunate if they live within 40 minutes of where they work, but transportation lines into Chicago from the suburbs are fast and convenient.

Schools in Chicago and the surrounding area are among the best in the country and practically all are open to evacuees. There are many small colleges as well as trade and vocational schools of all kinds. Some of the world's most famous art galleries and museums are located here; there are opportunities for all kinds of sports and all types of entertainment; the area abounds in lakes and beautiful parks and playgrounds.

All in all, the Chicago territory, embracing the states of Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin, offers a fine opportunity for evacuees to relocate and establish new homes for themselves, and WRA offices in Chicago and other towns in the area are prepared to help them in every way possible.