numbers of urban workers, the development of railroads, and growth in manufacturing—did not need slavery to prosper. The large-scale agriculture of the South depended on the inexpensive labor of slaves. As the North became more prosperous and economic growth in the South became more uncertain, differences between the two areas produced social unrest. The Civil War began in 1861 and ended four years later.

The Civil War resulted in tremendous economic and social change. The devastation and upheaval caused by the war contributed to a national realization that some social concerns were well beyond the reach of families and local communities. During the Reconstruction period after the war, the federal government tried to aid displaced families and make reparations for losses incurred in the war. As part of Reconstruction, the Freedman's Bureau became the first federal social service program (Jansson, 2015). Launched in 1865, its goals were to provide temporary assistance to newly freed slaves, help reunite families, provide medical care and food rations, and make property available. The Civil War and this program were the first organized federal efforts to ensure social justice. Chapter 4 discusses the concept of social justice in more detail.

Values Reflecting the Civil War and Post–Civil War Period Although the Freedman's Bureau lasted only until the country had recovered from the war, it firmly established federal intervention on behalf of people in need. No longer were families and localities seen as the only resources against poverty and other social problems. Since Reconstruction, policy makers have introduced, and the public has supported, numerous plans and programs that rely on federal intervention for people's social well-being.

The Civil War brought an official end to slavery, but racism was deeply embedded in American society. The dehumanizing view of Africans and African Americans held by many white people did not disappear. Being freed did not give the former slaves access to education and employment, legal rights, and civil rights. Although some former slaves were able to overcome the oppressive legacy of slavery, the vast majority continued to live and work on land owned by white southerners who controlled their livelihoods. The white majority did not welcome African American citizens, who were theoretically free, into their economic and social world. The result of this segregation was another 100 years of subverted civil rights and further entrenchment of the racial disparity between African Americans and whites in this country.

The Progressive Era

The decades following the Civil War were years of rapid economic growth and social change. The period from about 1875 to 1925 is referred to as the Progressive Era. Characterized by economic and social transformations, this period saw major changes in social welfare and the birth of the profession of social work.

The turn of the nineteenth century was a time of significant economic change, with particularly rapid industrialization. Mass manufacturing, the expansion of railroads across the nation, and cheap labor (ensured by rising immigration and relocation to the North of former slaves) radically changed the typical American's way of life. Fewer people earned their livelihoods directly from agriculture. Increasing numbers of workers labored in industry, producing such items as clothing and steel. Work in manufacturing was very different from work in the agricultural sector, where people were closer to the creation and distribution of the products of their labor. Manufacturing jobs were totally unregulated and very dangerous, and placed workers at the mercy of factory owners.

In addition, there was a huge influx of immigrants and a large-scale movement toward urbanization. These changes contributed to crowded living conditions, which in turn resulted in poor health and overall poverty for many people. The gap between the rich and the poor increased, and reformers called for increased social intervention.

The tremendous social, economic, and political changes of the Progressive Era gave rise to new ways to address societal problems, including the birth of the social work profession. As discussed in detail later in this chapter, the Progressive Era was the time when two major social welfare organized efforts, the Charity Organization Societies and the Settlement Movement, evolved. Together these nongovernmental movements served as the foundation for the social work profession.

Values Reflecting the Progressive Period The Progressive Era was the first time in US history when the rights of workers were at the forefront of debate. The beliefs that workplaces should be safe and that laborers were entitled to protection became accepted social values. Acceptance by native-born Americans of immigrants and of increasing diversity also increased.

Possibly the most significant social value that influenced social welfare services during this period was an awareness of the influence of environmental or structural factors on an individual's life. For the first time, many social problems came to be seen as consequences of imbalances in the social and economic structure of the nation. It followed that socioeconomic structures had to be changed if people's lives were to improve. A new pattern of social values and beliefs evolved, including an unprecedented awareness of the need for social responsibility.

During the economic upturn following World War I, the commitment to social responsibility waned, and the belief in individual responsibility for social well-being reemerged. The pendulum seemed to swing from a strong belief in social responsibility during economic upheaval to emphasis on individual responsibility when the economy was strong. The same pattern persists today. When more people (particularly middle-class people) are affected by an economic downturn, they tend to believe that there are structural reasons for their poverty. Surely, they reason, the many hardworking people who have lost their jobs cannot all be at fault. On the other hand, when the economy is strong and jobs are plentiful, it is easier to explain the plight of poor people by blaming individuals. Chapter 4 discusses the way entrenched structural obstacles can keep people in poverty.

The Great Depression and the New Deal

From colonial times through the 1920s, social services were provided by private agencies, communities, and local government, with some intervention at state levels. Other than the brief foray into social services following the Civil War, the federal government did not provide social services. The Great Depression of the 1930s changed that permanently.

The Great Depression was the most significant economic downturn in US history. At least one out of four workers was unemployed, and a large portion of those still working were underemployed, earning too little to support themselves and their families. Hundreds of people waited in line outside banks to withdraw their life savings, only to discover that the institutions were bankrupt and their money gone. For many people, food was scarce and poverty was widespread.

Economic ups and downs have traditionally been seen as normal aspects of the US economy. The balance between production and consumption has not always been perfect. Simply stated, sometimes manufacturers produce too much too quickly and have a surplus of products. To attract buyers, they drop prices, and to ensure that they will make a profit, they lay off some workers and minimize other costs of production. Eventually, fewer new products are made, and consumers begin to compete to get them. Prices go up, profits increase, and manufacturers rehire workers and increase production. If too many products are produced, the cycle begins again. Though an oversimplification, this general principle of the balance between supply and demand drives our economy.

During the Great Depression, the imbalance between supply and demand was so great that it destroyed social well-being on an immense scale. The scope of problems and social need overwhelmed existing state, local, and private agencies and programs. One of the outcomes of this severe economic imbalance was the permanent involvement of the federal government in both the provision of social services and the regulation of the economy.

The social and economic reforms introduced in response to the Great Depression were called the New Deal, reflecting President Franklin D. Roosevelt's pledge that he would develop a new approach to provide relief from the devastation. One principle behind his program was the idea that federal economic relief could be used as a stopgap measure to alleviate unemployment and economic slowdown. Another was that major public investment was required to address poverty (Schwartz, 1993). Thus, the New Deal consisted of immediate relief efforts coupled with the creation of long-term programs, all supported by the federal government.

The goal of the New Deal programs was to first respond with immediate financial relief and short-term employment, and then follow up by investing public funds to promote long-term employment. Immediate efforts included the distribution of funds through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and job placement through the Civil Works Administration, both established in 1933. With an eye toward more organized and permanent solutions, these efforts were folded into the Works Progress Administration in 1935. The Social Security Act was enacted simultaneously (Stern & Axinn, 2018).

The **Social Security Act of 1935** provided long-term protections through a federal program of social insurance and public assistance. It was the first comprehensive federal effort to ensure economic security and address poverty. Social insurance is what we refer to today as Social Security. Part of each worker's earnings is paid into this system and matched by an employer contribution. Workers collect benefits when they leave their jobs because of retirement or disability. The amount a worker receives is determined primarily by work history. In contrast, public assistance provides cash to poor individuals or families through general tax dollars and bases benefits on economic need. (Public assistance programs are discussed in Chapter 3.) Although Social Security programs have undergone numerous changes since 1935, they remain the backbone of our country's federal social welfare efforts.

Federal policies designed to maintain economic stability were also instituted in response to the Great Depression. These include monitoring financial markets through the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and safeguarding personal savings through the creation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). These innovations in government regulation of the marketplace have remained in place.

Values Reflecting the Great Depression and the New Deal The Great Depression made many Americans reconsider how larger social and economic conditions contribute to people's economic distress. The focus on structural reasons for poverty led to the creation of numerous social welfare programs designed to provide a variety of services. Although changes have been made to these programs and policies over the years, Americans continue to believe that the federal government should help correct steep imbalances in economic and social well-being.

For example, suppose a major employer closes a manufacturing plant because the cost of production is cheaper in another country, putting hundreds of laborers out of work. In the residual approach, each person would be regarded as an individual case. The institutional approach, on the other hand, considers the large-scale factors that led to the layoffs, such as a broad economic downturn or the availability of cheaper labor abroad. This approach focuses on anticipating and dealing with such problems through public policy. Programs that stress community economic development or job creation are efforts to approach problems through structural change. Such measures were originally used to mitigate the devastating impact of the Great Depression. Many of the programs instituted during the 1930s, including Social Security and public assistance, remain our strongest social welfare programs today.

World War II and the Postwar Economy

Although the New Deal programs of the 1930s and 1940s created public economic and social service support in response to the Great Depression, the advent of World War II forced the nation to focus its economic and social resources on war. The war effort sharply increased employment as people joined the military and went to work in war-related industries. The federal government became even more involved in the economy as it managed the