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**APPROACHES TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT
«SOCIAL SERVICE» IN THE THEORY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

The article deals with the terminological debate around the concept of «social service», an analysis of its regulatory and scientific interpretation. The author emphasizes that in terms of reforming the social security system in Ukraine we should focus on social services provided by the state, because social services affect living standards, on the basis of which we can indirectly estimate the effectiveness of governmental social spending. Analysis of scientific and regulatory sources leads to the conclusion that there is no clearly regulated range of services in regulatory documents, but there are certain categories of people, who may be provided by social services: children, families, youth; pensioners, veterans; disabled; other social groups. Among the author's points of view, it may be noted the approach to the definition of social services as a process, guaranteed by the state and aimed at supporting of vital functions of certain social categories of the population. The most authors' definitions are based on the description of the activities of social services providing. Thus, the author concludes some discrepancy of scientific views on an understanding of the nature of social services and the definitions contained in the normative legal acts.

In the legislation of Ukraine definition of social services is limited to «difficult life circumstances» that are a part of «social exclusion». Accordingly, social services are designed to help the citizen to overcome these circumstances. That could potentially have a wide range of activities.

Definition of «difficult life circumstances», as it is proposed in the law «About social services» (in the edition of 21.02.2016) shows a narrower understanding of social exclusion in the Ukrainian legislation, and, respectively, the understanding of the nature and purpose of social services.

The author is staying on the position that is in opposition to the logical nature of social services which was adopted as the social services base in the European concepts, of social exclusion to Ukrainian perceptions of this phenomenon. The concept of social services must first reflect such aspects as target orientation of services, nature, and results of work, the number of components of the service process, the complexity of the service,

form of ownership of economic entity, reimbursement of expenses for the provision of services, and the social status of the consumer.

Analysis the regulatory framework of Ukraine, the views of scientists and identifying the nature and the meaning of the «social» word can formulate a definition of social services – activities of economic entities of different ownership forms to provide vital public goods and services for supporting the sustenance and improvement of living standards.