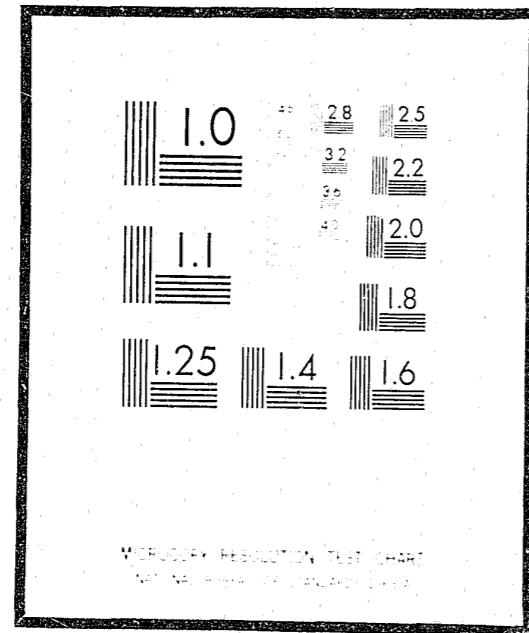


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VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Experimental Action Program

Prepared for the
 City of Rochester
 and the
 Rochester Police Department

By

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ABSTRACT

The Victim Assistance Program is an action project developed by the Rochester-Monroe County Criminal Justice Pilot City Program in cooperation with the Rochester Police Department, the courts and court-related agencies. Primary objectives of the project are: (1) to decrease the alienation of victims and witnesses from the criminal justice system by providing them with improved, coordinated, and new services tailored to remedy the major problems they have with the system, and (2) to increase the proportion of victims and witnesses assisting in the prosecution of cases.

The police, who have the first and most sustained contact with victims and witnesses, will administer the program, with input and participation from other criminal justice agencies and citizens. Civilians will staff the program.

Services to be rendered by the program include the operation of a central information center providing victims and other concerned citizens with specific information and assistance in such matters as how to file for victim compensation, where courts and courtrooms are located; how to file a complaint, etc. The program staff also will serve as a resource to victims, acting as a referral link between victims and those community agencies which can provide services relevant to victim needs. Additionally, the staff will provide direct services to victims on an as-needed basis, such as transporting them to court, upon request responding to the crime scene to answer questions and relieve apprehensions of victims, expediting return of stolen property to victims, etc.

Working with the District Attorney's Office and the courts, the staff will develop information designed to orient victims and witnesses to the operation of the court system and will serve as victim-witnesses advocates in working to establish new procedures designed to alleviate problems victims and witnesses may have with criminal justice agencies. Since lack of information regarding the status of their cases can be a source of major frustration to victims and witnesses, the staff also will develop and expand feedback mechanisms for them, providing information on the status of cases as well as scheduled court appearances and other relevant data.

Other integral parts of the program include a small, in depth, survey of victims to provide definitive data pinpointing the services necessary to decrease the victim's alienation from the system and increase his participation in assisting in prosecution. Also, police officers of the Rochester Police Department as well as other related criminal justice system personnel will participate in a short, intensive training session designed to improve sensitivity and response to victims and witnesses. The training will address such areas as initial approaches to victims, how to conduct interviews

with sensitivity while still gathering necessary information, and how to assist a victim or witness with his concerns and fears.

The program will be placed in an evaluation framework enabling an assessment of its effects in regard to victims and witnesses, the police, and the prosecution of criminal cases.

In June, 1975, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration awarded \$150,000 in discretionary funds to the City of Rochester for implementing the 18-month Victim Assistance Program.

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OVERVIEW

By the nature of its operation, the criminal justice system focuses its attention on the processing of criminal offenders. Evaluations of the criminal justice system, its various agencies, and operations are looked into this offender processing view. The standards of comparison within and between jurisdictions are from the offender processing model -- crimes committed, crimes cleared by arrest, bail or no bail, guilty plea or jury trial, days held awaiting trial, unconditional discharge, probation, length of prison sentences. At every step in the criminal justice system alleged offenders are processed, sorted, and passed along.

In the time of computer based data storage and of increasingly better and more accurate data about the daily operation of the components of the criminal justice system, we have tended to lose sight of another large personal interface of the criminal justice system -- with its citizens who are the victims of and the witnesses to crime. Up until recently little data had been systematically gathered on the experience of victims and witnesses with the criminal justice system and few questions had been framed concerning their point of view on the efficiency and/or effectiveness of the system.

In 1967, the President's Commission noted that it is from serving as witnesses and jurors that many citizens form their impression of the system:

"In recent years there has been a growing concern that the average citizen identifies himself less and less

with the criminal process and its officials. In particular, citizens have manifested reluctance to come forward with information and to participate as witnesses in judicial proceedings ... The causes of these negative attitudes are many and complex, but some aspects of the problem may be traced directly to treatment accorded ... [such citizens]."¹

It has been equally clear that although the alienation of the citizenry from the courts and its related agencies is serious,

"...hostility, or even lack of confidence of a significant portion of the public, has extremely serious implications for the police ... Poor police community relations adversely affect the ability of the police to prevent crime and apprehend criminals. People hostile to the police are not so likely to report violations of law, even when they are the victims. They are even less likely to report suspicious persons or incidents ... or to come forward and provide information."²

The most important part of the report of the President's Commission in changing our thinking about criminal justice effectiveness was not the insights already mentioned, but rather the pioneering victimization studies that the Commission sponsored. A consistent finding of federally sponsored victim surveys in the last seven years has been that the large proportion of crimes go unreported. Estimates indicate that the amount of crime may be two and one half times the reported rate for some offenses.³ Among the reasons given by victims

¹The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Task Force Report: The Courts (Washington, D.C., 1967), p. 90.

²The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Task Force Report: The Police (Washington, D.C., 1967), p. 144.

³Failure to report depends upon the crime. Homicides have nearly a 1:1 ratio between occurrence and report, but with other crimes, such as theft from autos, burglary, and robberies without violence, the ratio may be between 2.5:1 and 5:1. Degree of reporting also depends on the neighborhood. City areas are far more lax than suburban areas. National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Criminal Justice System (Washington, D.C., 1973), p. 38.

for not reporting crimes were the belief that nothing could be done (about 40 percent); a lack of conviction that the event was "important enough" (about 30 percent); concern that the event was private or personal (about 5 percent); and the judgment that the police would not want to be bothered (about 5 percent).¹ It is only through the lens of victimization studies that we are beginning to see the alienation from the operation of the system on the part of victims and witnesses.

With the publication of the report on the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals in 1973, the importance of maintaining the confidence of the public was highlighted; and victim surveying began to expand the scope of inquiry beyond offense and offender characteristics to inquiry into the victims' experiences with and attitudes toward the criminal justice system.

Although, to date, the majority of victimization studies and projects have focused on larger metropolitan areas, there is increasing evidence that, throughout the nation, the criminal justice system is failing to give serious consideration to victims and witnesses, and that this failure is leading to increasing dissatisfaction with and alienation from the system on the part of victims, witnesses, and other concerned citizens.

¹National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Criminal Justice System (Washington, D.C., 1973), p. 38.

NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES

Needs

Rochester is one of four major population centers in "upstate" New York. It has a population of 291,300, with an additional 455,900 in the surrounding towns of the County of Monroe.¹ The Rochester Police Department, which is the largest police agency in the County, has a force of 635 serving the City of Rochester. In 1973, 67% of all felonies reported in the County and 54% of all misdemeanors reported occurred in the City of Rochester.²

In 1973, 8,917 felonies and 23,262 misdemeanors (excluding traffic misdemeanors) were reported to the Rochester police. Using the crime rate as an index of the exposure of residents to crime, Rochester has roughly twice the per capita crime of the County outside the City. Violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) are concentrated in the City -- in 1973, 84% of violent crimes reported in the County occurred in Rochester.³

Appendix I documents the characteristics of 1,259 persons who were victims of violent felony crimes in 1973, and also points out that 4,560 private homes were targets of burglary, larceny, and arson felonies.

¹ Monroe County Department of Planning, Housing and Population Towns and Villages of Monroe County, New York. 1973 projected population for City and County.

² Cox, Roger, Crime Indicators for Rochester-Monroe County, New York (1974), Pilot City Program Information Paper.

³ Ibid.

These numbers, of course, do not include the thousands of persons who were victims of other felonies or misdemeanor crimes. For example, nearly 4,000 misdemeanor assaults occurred in 1973.

In 1974, 11,296 felonies and 27,764 misdemeanors (excluding traffic misdemeanors) were reported to the Rochester police -- an increase of 27% in felonies from 1973 and 19% in misdemeanors. Although 1974 crime data have not yet been analyzed in detail, substantial increases have occurred in robbery (up 28%), burglary (up 30%), grand larceny excluding auto theft (up 21%), and assault, with felony and misdemeanor assault up 15%.¹

From this brief overview of crime data, it is evident that annually several thousand Rochester residents are victims of crime. Of these, a substantial proportion are requested to appear as witnesses in the prosecution of arrested offenders. In 1974, for example, there were 3,513 arrests in felony cases and 9,131 in misdemeanor cases.

While an in-depth study of victims in Rochester has not been undertaken to date, it seems reasonable to assume that alienation of victims from the criminal justice system is just as prevalent in Rochester as elsewhere throughout the nation. That this alienation does exist is corroborated to some extent by the experience of personnel of the Rape Crisis Program who report on victim anxiety,

¹ Rochester Police Department, F.B.I. Consolidated Report (1974).

ignorance of the system, and frustration and dissatisfaction with their treatment, particularly as it relates to court processing. Officials of both the police department and the District Attorney's office also indicate that because of witness-victim lack of interest, inability to appear, lack of understanding of the judicial process, etc., many cases are lost because of the victim's failure to prosecute or appear in court. Although dismissal of cases in court can occur for a variety of reasons, one, undoubtedly, is the failure of victims and witnesses to assist in the prosecution of cases. It is noted that in 1973, 48% of the non-traffic misdemeanor cases processed through Rochester City Court were dismissed, and 26% of the felony cases presented to the Grand Jury were dismissed.

Objectives

It is proposed that a Victim Assistance Center project be established in Rochester, New York, under the auspices of the Rochester Police Department. The two primary objectives of the project are: (1) to decrease the alienation of victims and witnesses from the criminal justice system by providing them with improved, coordinated, and new services tailored to remedy the major problems they have with the system, and (2) to increase the proportion of victims and witnesses assisting in the prosecution of cases.

Since the police have the first and most sustained contact with victims and witnesses, they will be responsible for project administration. The project, however, will have a system-wide orientation and, as detailed later, input into the project will be obtained from

other criminal justice agencies as well as citizens.

Assuming that all victims of felony and non-traffic misdemeanor crimes utilized some of the services of the Victim Assistance Center, the potential target population of the project could be as high as 40,000 persons annually. While it seems reasonable to assume that many victims would not want or require the services of the project, it also seems reasonable to assume that many prior victims will contact the Center for information and that several other victims who might otherwise not report crimes to the police will be contacting the Center. Additionally, as indicated below, several services rendered by the Center will be available to victims or concerned citizens who may not necessarily be Rochester residents.

While it is anticipated that several thousands of persons will be contacting the Center for general information and advice, the Center's services will be geared not only to meeting this need, but also to providing an additional array of services to those Rochester victims and witnesses (an estimated 12,000 to 13,000 annually) who can assist in the prosecution of their cases.

An integral part of the total project will be a relatively small, but in-depth, survey of Rochester victims. As discussed in the section concerning the project's evaluation, this survey will not only constitute an important component of the project's evaluation but will also provide definitive data pinpointing what services are required to decrease the victim's alienation from the system as well as to increase his participation in assisting in the prosecution of

his case. The results of this survey should lead to further clarification and refinement of the services and operating procedures involved in the following components of the project:

1. A Central Information Service for Victims

The Victim Assistance Project will operate a central, well-publicized information center serving victims (real and perceived), their families and/or concerned citizens. Persons desiring information may either "walk in" to the Center or telephone.

The Center's staff will have the capability to provide information on such matters as where and with which police department to file a complaint; where courts, courtrooms, and court related agencies are located; how to file for victim compensation; etc. The Center also will develop a variety of brochures for dissemination providing basic information on questions such as these, as well as information on the steps involved in processing a criminal case through court, and on the various victim and witness services available through the Center.

2. Coordinating and Expediting Services

The Center staff will provide a variety of services directed toward coordinating and expediting existing services to victims. One such service will involve acting as a resource to victims for obtaining information on and filing for victim compensation.

The New York State Crime Victim's Compensation Board has a program for assisting innocent victims of crimes of violence suffering personal injury. Eligible victims may receive unreimbursed medical expenses and lost wages (up to \$100 per week) up to a maximum award ceiling

of \$15,000. Although the Rochester Police Department has made efforts to increase the number of Rochester victims filing for compensation, in the six month period July through December, 1973, it received only 75 requests from citizens concerning crime victim compensation and, after review, determined that only 18 were eligible to file. Currently, there is no way for the police department to find out what cases received awards or even what proportion of the cases they referred were settled. Additionally, the police department is not the sole source of claim forms, since the Probation Department and several of the area hospitals have claim forms available for victim use.

In addition to providing victims with information about the compensation program and assisting them in filing claims, the Victim Assistance Center will work with other agencies to develop a coordinated and/or centralized procedure within the Center regarding all compensation claim activity involving Rochester victims.¹ In this manner the Center should be able to obtain definitive data on the number of Rochester victims filing for claims, the disposition of the claim, the amount received, etc. This data, in conjunction with information from the victim survey indicating the number of victims eligible but not filing for claims, should yield information of interest to New York State's Victim Compensation program. Several recommendations and proposals have been advanced to revise New York's program. Few, if any, studies however, have been undertaken to indicate the impact of the program upon the victim. Thus, information gained from the Victim Assistance Project may be of real value to decision makers on the State level.

¹ Since all those filing claims require a copy of the crime report from the police department, it would seem to make sense to centralize the entire operation in the Victim Assistance Project. In any event, the project should be able to establish the mechanism to monitor all claim activity involving Rochester victims.

The Center also will work closely with the Rape Crisis Program existing in Rochester and Monroe County. While this 24-hour volunteer service has been effective in responding to rape victims and providing supportive services, they indicate that their program could be strengthened by maintaining liaison with the Victim Assistance Center, particularly in the area of information feedback to victims, orientation of victims to the court system, and improved court scheduling.

3. Orientation to Court System

Many sources, including the Witness Cooperation Study in Washington, D.C., indicate that victims and witnesses frequently do not receive sufficient attention in matters relevant to their assistance in the prosecution of criminal offenders. In Rochester and Monroe County, the Rape Crisis Program indicates that their experience has been that victims frequently have problems regarding their court appearance such as not knowing where to go or where to park, whom to report to upon arrival, what to wear, what they will be asked to do, etc. Scheduling also presents a serious problem with victims frequently arriving to find the case has been postponed or arriving at nine a.m., and not being called until three p.m.

The Victim Assistance Center, working with the District Attorney's Office and the courts, will develop information designed to orient victims and witnesses to the operation of the court system. This will range from developing brochures providing basic information on court processing of criminal cases, including such specific information as maps showing buslines to courts, location of courts and courtrooms, per diem fees, parking lots, etc., to experimenting with

establishing small group court orientation sessions with victims/witnesses.

4. Improved Court Scheduling Services

With some 12,000 to 13,000 felony and misdemeanor arrests, and with a large proportion of these being prosecuted annually in the City and County courts, it would be unrealistic to expect that the project could solve the several court scheduling problems that plague victims and witnesses. It is anticipated that the Center staff, serving as victim-witness advocates, will work with court clerks and the Judges to establish new procedures designed to alleviate as many problems as possible. For example, an attempt might be made to develop a "stand-by" procedure whereby the Center staff attended the daily court calendar call and then notified victims and witnesses, who were "standing by" at home, as to whether their case was ready for trial or adjourned to a later date.

5. Improved Information Feedback

Lack of information regarding the status of their cases can be a source of major frustration to victims and witnesses. A special project of the Rochester Police Department, focusing on improving investigative effectiveness, has already demonstrated the need to provide feedback information to victims and witnesses as well as to provide mechanisms whereby they, in turn, can furnish any new information which may be of relevance to the police and/or prosecutor.

The staff of the Victim Assistance Center will work with police department investigators to develop and expand feedback procedures and mechanisms to witnesses and victims, which will include

relevant court-related information such as scheduled court appearances, present status of case, etc. Additionally, it is proposed that the staff also provide a special telephone service to victims and witnesses, providing them information on the status of their cases in terms of the next scheduled court appearance, etc.

6. Liaison with and Referral to Services Relevant to Victims and Witnesses

Rochester and Monroe County have a variety of public and private agencies that provide medical assistance, counseling, emergency shelter, clothing, day care and foster care, civil and legal assistance, short-term employment, etc. The staff of the Victim Assistance Center will serve as a referral link between the victims of crime and those community agencies providing services relevant to victims' needs. For example, there is a strong suspicion that much of the attrition of witnesses and victims in the investigation-prosecution process is due to a lack of resources to meet the appearance requirements of the criminal justice system. Those victims and witnesses who work regular hourly jobs must be prepared to sacrifice a half or a whole day's pay. Small businessmen may lose a day if they close their shops. Mothers with small children must find and pay babysitters for the time they spend in court. It is anticipated that in many cases the Center may be able to arrange for services, such as child day care, which could mitigate some of the problems.

In addition to acting as a referral source, the Center's staff will work with volunteer groups to obtain their assistance in

victim-oriented programs. For example, volunteers could staff information booths in the courts, distributing the Center's brochures which provide information on the courts and court processing of criminal cases. At the present time, several volunteer groups in Rochester and Monroe County direct their attention to criminal justice problems as they pertain to offenders. With the establishment of the Victim Assistance Project, it is anticipated that concerned citizens also will be interested in providing volunteer assistance to help alleviate some of the problems experienced by victims and witnesses of crime.

7. Provision of Direct Services on An "As Needed" Basis

The Center also will provide a number of direct services to victims and witnesses on an "as needed" basis. For example, the Center will have the capability to provide transportation to and from the courts for those victims and witnesses who otherwise would be unable to appear. Procedures will be developed for police officers filing crime reports to flag cases where, in the opinion of the police officer, the victim requires special information or supportive services from the Center. In these instances, Center members will provide telephone, and where needed, on-scene contact with the victims.

The Center's staff will be totally familiar with resources of the police department and will arrange for these services to be provided victims when appropriate. For example, it will work with the burglary prevention squad to develop procedures for bringing to the squad's attention those victims who would benefit from a security check of their residences and assistance in learning crime prevention techniques. The

staff also will work with the property clerk to develop procedures for facilitating the return of property belonging to victims. The staff also will experiment with serving the subpoenas to the victims and witnesses. At this time, they will provide victims and witnesses with information on the courts and case processing, and will attempt to answer questions and relieve any apprehension of the victim or witness.

Throughout the project, the staff will be analyzing the problems of victims and witnesses -- ranging from hospital room procedures for injured victims to internal police department procedures regarding victims -- and will recommend and develop new or improved services where they appear desirable and feasible.

8. Improving Police Response to Victims

A significant component of the Victim Assistance Project will be the development of a short, intensive training course to improve sensitivity and response of police officers and detectives to victims and witnesses. It has been pointed out that police interrogation of victims frequently results in the victim feeling that he has done or neglected to do something that could have contributed to the crime. In such instances, rather than feeling comforted and supported, the victim may feel ashamed, isolated, and somehow contaminated. A training package will be developed addressing such areas as initial approaches to victims, how to conduct interviews with sensitivity while still gathering the necessary information, and how to assist the victim with his concerns and fears.

Since the police usually are the first persons to have contact

with victims after the crime, their interaction with the victim at this time may be a critical factor in the victim's perception of the criminal justice system. The Victim Assistance Project calls for all police officers and detectives of the Rochester Police Department to participate in the short, intensive training session which will discuss police techniques and approaches designed to minimize alienation of the victim and maximize his cooperation with the system.

During the training session, the Victim Assistance Center staff will discuss their services in detail, answer questions, distribute their informational brochures, and discuss procedures for assuring that the Victim Assistance Center becomes an integral part of police department operations.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

It is anticipated that the results and benefits of the Victim Assistance project will impact on: victims and witnesses, the police, and prosecutor of criminal cases.

1. Victims and Witnesses

The most obvious impact will be on the victims and witnesses of crime. The overall objective and anticipated benefit of the project is to minimize the alienation of victims and witnesses from the criminal justice system and increase their participation in assisting in the prosecution of their cases. The project services directed toward this goal should have the following results:

- (1) improved police response to and interaction with victims and witnesses, thus minimizing feelings of anxiety and alienation on the part of victims and witnesses,
- (2) improving victim-witness understanding of the criminal justice system by providing them basic information on the system, court case processing procedures, etc.,
- (3) improving victim-witness attitudes toward cooperating in the prosecution of their cases by providing them with information feedback on the status of their case, orienting them to the requirements and operation of court case processing, minimizing court scheduling problems, and providing, where appropriate, direct services such as transportation to and from court, and
- (4) gaining victim-witness confidence in the system by expediting services to them such as filing for victim compensation, receiving crime prevention services, etc., and, through referral to appropriate agencies, assisting in alleviating problems of victims and witnesses.

2. The Police

Both the training component and other services of the Victim Assistance project should have the following impact on the Rochester Police Department:

- (1) greater sensitivity on the part of the police officer to the effects of crime on victims, and development of skills for more effective interaction with victims, thus improving the "helping" image of the police,
- (2) improving police investigative effectiveness through improved victim-witness cooperation, and
- (3) relieving uniformed manpower from some routine functions -- thus providing time savings that can be reallocated to other police functions -- by the project's activities in coordinating such services as burglary prevention and property return as they pertain to victims, relieving complaint desk personnel of client requests for general information, relieving police officer time by serving some subpoenas, etc.

3. Prosecution of Criminal Cases

The Victim Assistance project should have an impact on the prosecution of criminal cases, as follows:

- (1) an increase in the proportion of criminal cases in which the victim-witness cooperates in the prosecution,
- (2) since victim-witness cooperation frequently is a critical factor as to whether a felony case moves on to the Grand Jury, increased victim-witness cooperation should result in an increase in the proportion of cases presented to the Grand Jury,
- (3) with improved victim-witness cooperation, the proportion of cases dismissed in court should decrease, and
- (4) there should be a slight increase in the proportion of cases resulting in indictment as well as a slight increase in the proportion of cases resulting in conviction.

A fourth area where the project will have impact is its contribution to the body of knowledge regarding victims and witnesses. As a by-product of the research and evaluation components of the project, it is anticipated that new insights may be gained regarding the impact of crime on the individual victim. Further, information gathered will enable an assessment of the adequacy of the current victim compensation program in meeting needs of victims. Also, information will be available to document the impact of court scheduling problems on victims-witnesses and this, in turn, could serve as the basis for a revision of court scheduling procedures.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Research and evaluation constitutes an integral part of the Victim Assistance project. During the planning stage of the project, a survey will be undertaken of a random sample of Rochester victims. The survey will be designed to elicit the following information: basic demographic information on the victim such as age, education, etc.; specific experiences of the victim with the criminal justice system process, from the initial complaint through disposition of the case; specific experiences as a witness in the case; attitudes toward the system; system problems from the victim's viewpoint and recommendations for improvements, etc. Additionally, the survey will obtain information on the impact of crime on victims. Data will be gathered on whether or not the crime had a significant impact on the lifestyle of the victim (such as whether the victim moved out of the area after the crime, put new locks on the door, stopped walking on the streets during the evening, etc.), whether an injury occurred and its seriousness, whether the victim lost wages due to the crime and/or participation in the court processing of the case, whether the victim filed for compensation and if not, why not, etc.

As indicated previously, information gathered in the victim survey should yield new insights into the impact of crime on victims and at the same time the survey will provide definitive data on what specific changes and/or new services are necessary to decrease victim alienation and maximize victim cooperation.

In addition to providing information for the development of the project, the survey also will serve as a pre-test for evaluation of the project. A follow-up survey (a post-test) of victims passing through the criminal justice system during the project's operation also will be undertaken. An analysis of the findings of the pre- and post-surveys will enable an evaluation of the project's success (or failure) in such areas as the victim's knowledge of and use of the project's resources, knowledge of and use of the victim compensation program, improved victim attitudes toward and satisfaction with the criminal justice system relative to the police handling of the case, experiences at court, etc.

In addition to the victim surveys, a research analyst attached to the project will undertake "in-house" research directed toward evaluating other aspects of the project. During the planning stage, the research analyst will draw a sample of cases from the records of the Rochester Police Department and follow these case records through the courts to develop information on the proportion of cases in which the victim cooperated in the prosecution, the proportion of cases presented to the Grand Jury, the proportion of cases dismissed in court, the proportion of cases resulting in indictment, and subsequently, in conviction. Using the results of this survey as a pre-test, the research analyst will undertake a similar survey at the end of the project to determine what impact the Victim Assistance Project has had on the prosecution of criminal cases.

The research analyst also: will compile information on the number of victims served, by service components -- such as the number

of victims transported to court, the number contacting the Center regarding court scheduling of their cases, etc.; and develop information on the impact of the project internally in terms of possibly expediting property return, victim utilization of the burglary prevention squad services, time savings of uniformed police manpower, etc.

Finally, and importantly, the research analyst will evaluate the project in terms of the cost-effectiveness of its various components, and, based upon these findings, will develop a plan for institutionalizing those aspects of the project which prove most effective.

PLAN OF ACTION

Project Organization

Administration

The Director of Research and Evaluation of the Rochester Police Department will be responsible for overall administration of the project. In order to provide a firm link with the investigative staff of the department, the Project Director will be a Sergeant Detective.

Policy Committee

Since this project cuts across a number of different components of the criminal justice system -- following and assisting victims from initial police contact possibly on through County Court disposition -- a project Policy Committee will be established, with representatives from the various criminal justice agencies involved in the project and other groups. The Policy Committee will consist of the Chief and the Director of Research and Evaluation of the Rochester Police Department, the District Attorney, the Administrative Judge of City Court, the Administrative Judge of County Court, the Director of the Rape Crisis Program, a representative from the media, a representative from the Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of neighborhood associations of citizens. This Policy Committee will meet periodically to review the status and impact of the program, make recommendations for program refinement, and review and attempt to resolve any problems the project may be having.

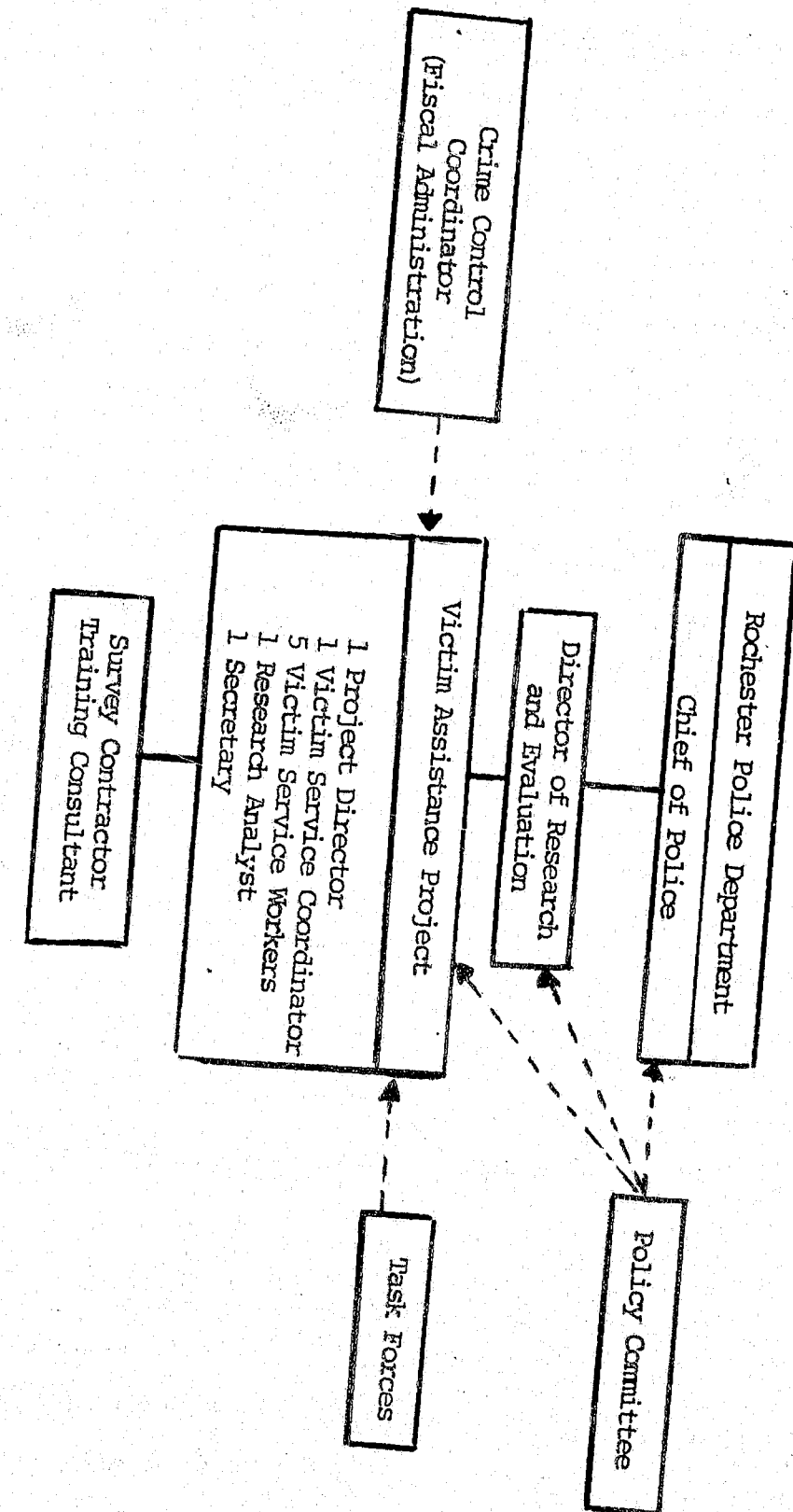
Task Forces

In order to accomplish the goals of the project, the staff will need to develop both internal and external links to various parts of the investigation and prosecution process. Internally, there is a necessity for good and rapid communication between the staff of the project and the police department's investigative force and shift and areas commanders. The success of the project, and its credibility, depends to a large extent on the staff being aware of the facts in the case of a particular victim so that they can be responsive to victim query. One or more Task Forces, composed of a cross section of police personnel, will be established to provide relevant input into the development of the project's procedures. Depending upon the task under consideration, members will include police officers, command personnel, investigators, and personnel from training, community relations, the property clerk's office, the communication and records unit, etc. Additionally, the project staff will establish links with the District Attorney's Office, criminal case screeners, and the City and County Court Clerks to assure that project staff will have full information on the status of cases in the criminal justice process.

Staffing

As indicated on the following chart, the project staff will include the Project Director, a Victim Service Coordinator, five victim service workers, a research analyst, and a secretary.

The Project Director will be a Detective Sergeant and will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the project, maintaining



liaison with command personnel within the department, directing planning and training activities, developing project publicity information brochures, procedures, etc.

The Victim Service Coordinator will be a civilian with work experience in dealing with people and a demonstrated knowledge of the police and/or court system. In addition to supervising the staff, the Coordinator will be responsible for assisting the Project Director in the development and implementation of the project, will work with the various task forces and criminal justice agency personnel for developing project procedures, and will become familiar with and develop contacts with community agencies whose services may be relevant to victim needs. Working with the Project Director and the research analyst, the Coordinator will assist in developing the several informational brochures of the project, the publicity for the project, project procedures, etc. It is also anticipated that the Victim Service Coordinator will work with the staff in providing direct services.

The five victim service workers will be civilians with previous work experience dealing with the public. As indicated later, they will rotate in assignment, working on all of the various service components of the project.

The project secretary will be responsible for answering the Victim Assistance Center's phone, maintaining records on the status of victims' cases and their scheduled court appearances, handling the correspondence of the office, and maintaining the filing systems.

The research analyst will assist the Project Director and staff in the development of the required recording and reporting forms, in gathering information on court schedules and status of victim's cases, in the preparation of the information brochures, etc. Additionally, as discussed previously, the research analyst will be responsible for undertaking several components of the project's evaluation, and developing a detailed plan for institutionalizing cost-effective components of the project. Further, the analyst will assist in developing the specifications for the victim survey subcontract and will work with the contractors in selecting the samples of victims to be surveyed.

In recruiting for the project, an effort will be made to obtain a well-qualified staff which also will be bi-racial and include both males and females. At least one staff member should be Spanish-speaking.

Deployment of Project Personnel

The Victim Assistance Center will operate nine a.m. to five p.m., five days a week, out of the central headquarters of the Rochester Police Department. Since the project will receive a lot of publicity, it is anticipated that several persons will "walk in" to the Center for service and thousands will phone the Center for information. It is anticipated that it will require a minimum of three staff persons plus the secretary to be available at the Center to respond to the public. As discussed previously, services would not only include providing information on the criminal justice system but also assisting victims with filing victim compensation forms, attempting to solve

their problems by appropriate referrals, giving them information on the status of their cases and their next scheduled court appearances, etc.

It is anticipated that the other three staff members will be involved in transporting victims to and from court, visiting victims (flagged by the police for follow-up) to provide services, checking the status of cases and court schedules, etc.

It is intended that staff members will rotate among the various duties of the project and that assignments will be flexible, so that workers in the field can be called into the Center when the volume of business becomes too great. In any event, the service staff of six (including the Victim Service Coordinator) appears to be the minimum level of staffing possible.¹ Contacts with the Center for information could number in the thousands. If all cases where arrests are made are monitored and tracked through the system to expedite victim cooperation, up to 13,000 cases could be involved. Assuming that only 10% of the arrest cases involve victims requiring transportation to and from court, somewhere around 1,300 victims would be transported. Assuming they average one court appearance each, this would involve transporting approximately 8 to 10 victims a day to and from court (on the days the courts are open). Additionally, of course, several hundreds of persons will receive services such as assistance in filing compensation forms or referrals to other agencies.

¹An effort also will be made to recruit citizen volunteers to assist staff in delivery of some services, as described earlier.

Training

In addition to the training program for police officers and investigators, the victim service workers will be hired approximately one month prior to the operational phase of the program and, during this month's period, will undergo an intensive training course designed to familiarize them with all aspects of criminal justice victim and witness case processing, the victim compensation program, and the internal procedures and resources of the Rochester Police Department.

The staff training program will involve on-site visits to the courts, District Attorney's Office, all relevant units of the police department, etc. The purpose of the training is to assure that at the time the project becomes operational, the entire staff will be thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the project and have the capability to provide appropriate information and assistance correctly and quickly. The entire project staff also will participate in the training program designed for the police where they will review the project services in detail and answer any questions regarding the project.

Project Timeline

The project will run 18 months with 4 months devoted to the planning phase, 12 months to the operational phase, and an additional 2 months for completion of the project's evaluation.

Planning Phase - 4 Months

Since the Victim Assistance Project involves substantial contact with citizens, it is essential that once the project commences it has the capability of providing real and credible services to its clients. It is proposed, therefore, that four months be devoted to the detailed planning and preparation for this project to maximize its effectiveness.

Key points in the planning process include: early subcontracting of the victim survey so that the results are available for the project development process; careful development of the various information brochures that the project will be disseminating; and the development of a publicity campaign regarding the project. The planning phase will include formation of the Policy Committee and the relevant Task Forces. The Project Director, Victim Service Coordinator, research analyst, and secretary will be selected early in the planning stage. Working with the Policy Committee and the Task Forces, this group will not only work to expedite the victim survey but also will be involved in planning the many procedural details of the project, developing its record system, and completing the information brochures and publicity campaign so that they will be ready for the start of the project.

Working with a consultant who has experience in victimology, as well as police department investigators and trainers, the project staff will develop the training program for the police and the additional training program for the victim service workers. Commencing

the last month of the planning phase, the victim service workers will be hired and undergo one month of training. During this period, training sessions also will be conducted for all police officers and investigators of the Rochester Police Department. Throughout the planning phase, the research analyst will be collecting and analyzing the information necessary for a pre-test of the impact of the project on the prosecution of cases.

Because of the critical nature of the planning phase, the Pilot City staff will offer technical assistance on this project, assisting in the development of the victim survey and expediting its implementation, assisting in the development of the informational brochures, etc.

Operational Phase - 12 Months

The Victim Assistance Project will be operational for a 12-month period. During this time, the Policy Committee and Task Forces will meet regularly to provide additional input into the project. Near the end of the operational phase, the subcontractor will commence the post-test of the victim survey. During the operational phase, the research analyst will gather the data necessary to complete the survey on the cost-effectiveness of the program and also will be gathering the information for the post-test of the project's impact on the prosecution of cases.

Completion of Evaluation - 2 Months

During this period the subcontractor will prepare a final evaluation report on the impact of the project on victims. The

research analyst will complete the report providing an overall summary of the services rendered by the project, the evaluation of the project's impact on the prosecution of cases, a cost-effectiveness analysis of the project, and a plan for institutionalizing the project components.

Appendix I
Victims in Rochester (1973)

In preparing baseline data for the victim project, we analyzed all the victim data from offenses in 1973. There were eight basic felonies with which we were concerned. The first five are crimes against persons. For these five crime types the Rochester Police Department records personal victim information, including the age, race, and sex of the victim. The number of victim cases for the five felonies against persons are:

1. homicide	31
2. kidnapping	1
3. sex offenses	140
4. assault	395
5. robbery	692
TOTAL	1,259

There are in addition three basic felonies that are categorized as crimes against property. Because there is no one identifiable victim for many of these crimes, the Rochester Police Department does not record personal data. For purposes of our analysis, it was sufficient to identify the crimes in the three categories that were against private and/or residential property, i.e., those that were not against commercial establishments. The police record a premises code that indicates the location of the offense. From the 40 codes, we selected three as the best indicators of private or residential crime. The number of victim cases from home (01), apartment (17), and home yard (29) for the three felony crimes against property are:

1. arson	84
2. larceny	368
3. burglary	4,108
TOTAL	4,560

The total number of basic felonies in both categories in 1973 was 5,819.

From the five basic felonies for which there is victim information, it is possible, using the census breakdown of the number of persons in each age, race, and sex subgroup, to establish rates of reported victimizations. The most recent census data available for the City of Rochester, New York, is the 1970 U.S. Census. The U.S. Census distinguishes only White and Negroes in its tables of Social Characteristics (Tables P-1, and P-5). The census has a table (P-7) on the Social Characteristics of Persons of Puerto Rican Birth or Parentage but these individuals of the Spanish community fall into both the racial categories, i.e., some are counted as White and some as Negro. The Rochester Police Department on the other hand records victim information in six racial/ethnic groups - White, Black, Spanish-speaking, Indian, Oriental and Other. In order to construct victimization rate tables for Rochester, we had to group the two sets of data, crime victims and population, in a similar manner. The tables that follow have only two racial categories - White and Black. The White category was obtained by subtracting the Black age-specific totals in Table P-5 from the Rochester population age-specific totals in the Table P-1. For the crime victim data, the categories Spanish-speaking, Indian, Oriental, and other were combined with the White totals; the Black victim data was analyzed as a separate category. The bias introduced by this combination is relatively small because the four racial/ethnic groups "lumped" with the White had only four percent of the total victim population in 1973.

A more serious problem is related to the use of 1970 Census data to standardize 1973 crime data. The change in the distribution of age, race, and sex characteristics in the years 1971 to 1973 is unknown. The best method

of correction would have been to start with the 1970 census counts and age the whole population by three years, then to add the net in-migration or out-migration counts for each of the age/race/sex subgroups in the population and finally to correct the distribution with the inclusion of the known birth and death figures for the city. No in-or out-migration figures broken down into the necessary age/race/sex groups for the years 1970-1973 are available. In using the victimization rates, it should be kept in mind that the rates are based on two simplistic assumptions: first, the crime data is based on crimes reported to the police; and second, the population data used to standardize the rates was three years old. The implicit assumptions are that crimes reported to the police are less than, but in a constant proportion to, all crimes committed across every age, race, and sex group; and second, that the basic age/race/sex distribution of population in the City of Rochester did not change significantly between 1970 and 1973.

Table I and Figure I represent the age-specific victimization rates for White and Black males and White and Black females. This is the rate based on all five of the felonies against persons. The overall male rate (5.7) is almost twice that of females (2.9).

In each of the nine age categories, the male victimization rate is consistently higher than the rate for females. In the most divergent groups, the 25-34 year olds, the male rate is two and one half times greater than that for females. Within the thirty-six (36) age specific subpopulations, the rate for Blacks is higher in all but three groups; males 0-9, males 10-14, and females 60+. (All three of these groups have small numbers of offenses making the rates unstable). With the exception of these three groups, the rate of victimization is consistently higher for Black than for Whites. The greatest divergence in the racial subpopulations is between White and Black males ages 45-54. The victimization rate for these Black males is almost six times as great as that for the same age White population.

The most victimized age group according to these rates are the 15-18 year olds with rate of 9.8 per 1000 for males and 5.6 per 1000 for females.

In an analysis of the victimization rates for the five offense groups, only assault and robbery were sufficiently numerous to generate meaningful rates. For homicide, kidnapping, and sex offenses the events were sufficiently rare that many of the age specific rates were zero. The small number of incidents from group to group caused the rates to fluctuate widely.

Table II and Figure II represent the age specific victimization rates for all felony assaults in Rochester during 1973. The results are similar to the overall victimization rates for the five felonies against persons. The rate per 1000 for all males is 2.2, more than four times as great as the female rate of 0.53. Again the rate for Blacks is higher than for Whites. The victimization rate for Black males was 7.3 per 1000 more than six times the White rate of 1.2 per 1000. For females the Black rate of 2.2 per 1000 was more than 10 times the White rate of .21 per 1000. (In the case of the females, the number of cases analyzed was quite small. Note that there were no assault cases with female Black victims in the age categories 0-9, 55-59, and 60+.)

In terms of age and assault victimization, the highest rates are for the three young adult population groups 15-18, 19-24, and 24-34. For both males and females, the highest rated age category was the 25-34 year old group. When the population is subdivided by race and sex, there are some minor variations, particularly in the female population; i.e., the highest rates for White females were 0.68 per 1000 in the 10-14 year old age group and the highest rate for Black females was 4.8 per 1000 in the 35-44 year old age group.

Table III and Figure III represent the age-specific victimization rates for all robberies in Rochester during 1973. These rates depart somewhat from the general pattern seen in the summary table (Table I). Again as in the prior tables, Blacks predominate in victimization, but the rates for robbery across sexes are much closer than for assault. The overall rate for males is 3.3 per 1000 only a little more than twice the rate for females of 1.5 per

1000. The racial differences in the victimization rates for males is in the same direction as in the other tables; i.e., the rate for Blacks (5.2 per 1000) is higher than Whites (2.9 per 1000). For females, the rates are reversed with the White rate (1.6 per 1000) being slightly higher than the rate for Black females (1.3 per 1000). There is a clear racial differentiation in the victimization pattern of robbery for both male and female Blacks; the peak age group for victimization is rather late; 45-54 for males and 55-59 for females. The peak for White males is quite early; the rate for 10-14 year olds is 5.4 and for 15-18 year olds, 4.9. The rate for White females is very low in all age groups (never exceeding 3.0 per 1000 and does not show much change with age). Figure III illustrates the different victimization patterns for Blacks and Whites very clearly.

In addition to the five felonies against persons described above, there were three basic felonies that were categorized as felonies against property. The number of felonies reported in Rochester for 1973 for each of the property felonies was:

1) burglary	6,341
2) larceny	1,695
3) arson	<u>123</u>
TOTAL	8,159

There is no useful way to demographically describe the victims of these crimes because many of the victims are corporations or households that do not have definable age, race, or sex. The most useful and interesting breakdown of the total offenses is by premises code. Of the more than thirty individual premise codes, three can be clearly classified as residential; (01) home, (17) apartment, and (29) home yard. The rest of the codes are identified as commercial establishment liquor stores, dry cleaners, banks, etc., or public buildings, i.e., schools, churches, etc. The main purpose of this analysis of the eight basic felonies is to determine what groups within the populations could be expected to benefit from the Rochester Police Department Victim Assistance Project. The assumption implicit in the project is that institutions like businesses and organizations have the resources to manage their loss due to victimization for property crimes more easily than do private persons. Changes in marketing strategies or the bonding of employees are just a couple of the ways businesses can deal with victimization. This project is clearly addressed to victims as private persons and to providing help to citizens in their roles as private persons, and as a consequence, therefore must look at residential

property crimes. Table II provides a breakdown of the three property felonies into the three residential categories (home, apartment, and home yard) and one other category that includes all the unusual and public premises. The percentages in parentheses represent the proportions from the different premise codes within the offense groups.

For felony burglaries, the proportions from residential premises was 65 percent while the percentage from commercial and public premises was 35 percent. Burglary appears in this analysis as a serious problem of private citizens. The proportion for felony larcenies from residential premises was, by comparison, only 22 percent, with the largest proportion, 78 percent of larcenies, from commercial and public premises. The percentages for arson are similar to those for burglary, i.e., 68 percent from residential premises and 32 percent from other premises. The fact that many housing units are owned by persons or corporations other than their occupants makes it difficult to determine how serious a problem this is for individual private citizens. The fact that many arsons are committed against vacant, publically owned property that is awaiting demolition and against privately owned and vacant premises that are awaiting sale or restoration makes it difficult to assess without knowing the ownership and occupancy status of the premises.

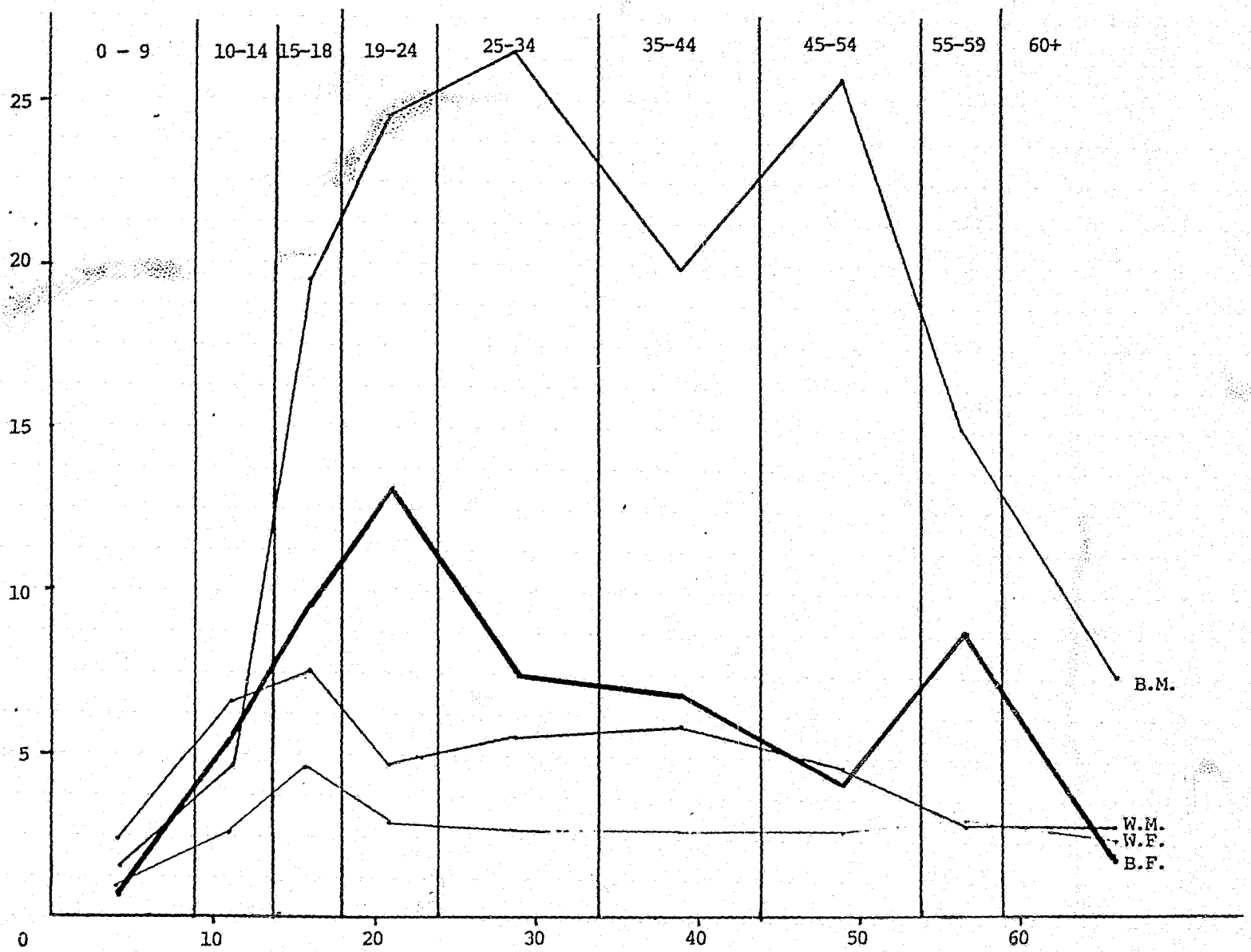


Figure I: Felony Victimization Rates for Five Basic Felonies (per 1000) By Age, Race, and Sex (1973)

TABLE I: Victimization Rates (per 1,000) by Age, Race, and Sex for Homicide, Kidnapping, Sex Offenses, Assault and Robbery. (1973)

AGE	MALES			FEMALES		
	White	Black	Races Combined	White	Black	Races Combined
0-9	2.3	1.5	1.7	.90	.94	.91
10-14	6.6	4.6	6.1	2.5	5.3	3.2
15-18	7.4	19.5	9.8	4.4	9.5	5.6
19-24	4.8	24.4	7.4	2.9	13.0	4.4
25-34	5.3	26.4	9.1	2.6	7.3	3.6
35-44	5.7	19.3	8.4	2.3	6.8	3.3
45-54	4.3	25.6	6.9	2.5	4.0	2.7
55-59	2.8	14.9	3.8	2.9	8.6	3.2
60+	2.8	7.1	3.0	2.3	1.7	2.2
All Ages Combined	4.3	11.9	5.7 (all males)	2.4	5.6	2.9 (all females)

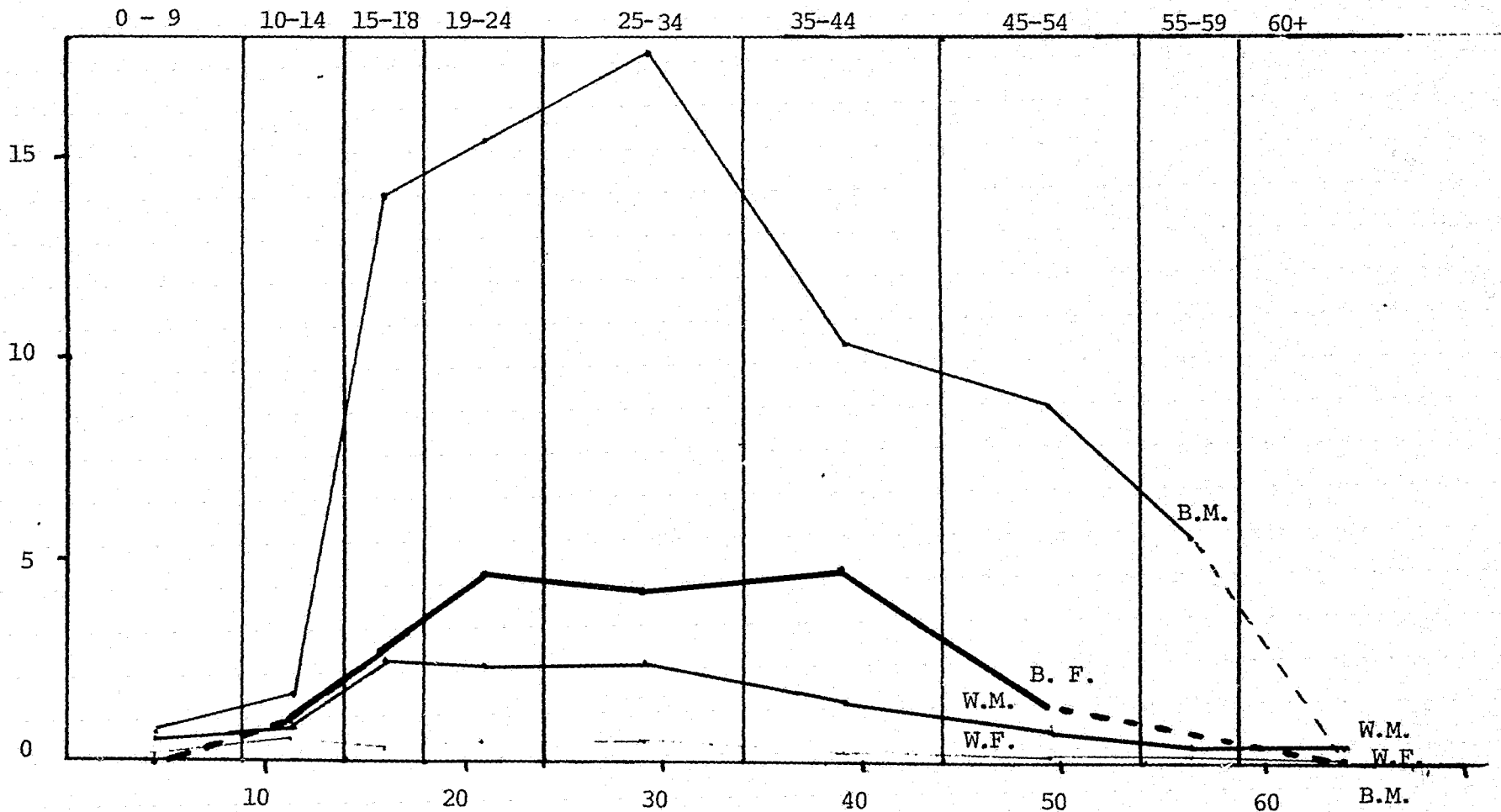


Figure II: Victimization Rates for Felony Assaults (per 1000) By Age, Race, and Sex (1973)

TABLE II: Victimization Rates (per 1,000) for Assault (Felony) by Age, Race, and Sex (1973).

AGE	MALES			FEMALES		
	White	Black	Races Combined	White	Black	Races Combined
0-9	.66	.69	.67	.05	—	.04
10-14	.88	1.6	1.1	.68	.99	.76
15-18	2.4	14.0	4.7	.27	2.8	.84
19-24	2.2	15.3	4.0	.42	4.7	1.1
25-34	2.3	17.5	5.0	.49	4.1	1.3
35-44	1.5	10.2	3.2	.19	4.8	1.2
45-54	.80	8.9	1.7	.07	1.2	.18
55-59	.31	5.6	.72	.13	—	.12
60+	.29	—	.28	.03	—	.03
All Ages Combined	1.2	7.3	2.2 (all males)	.21	2.2	.53 (all females)

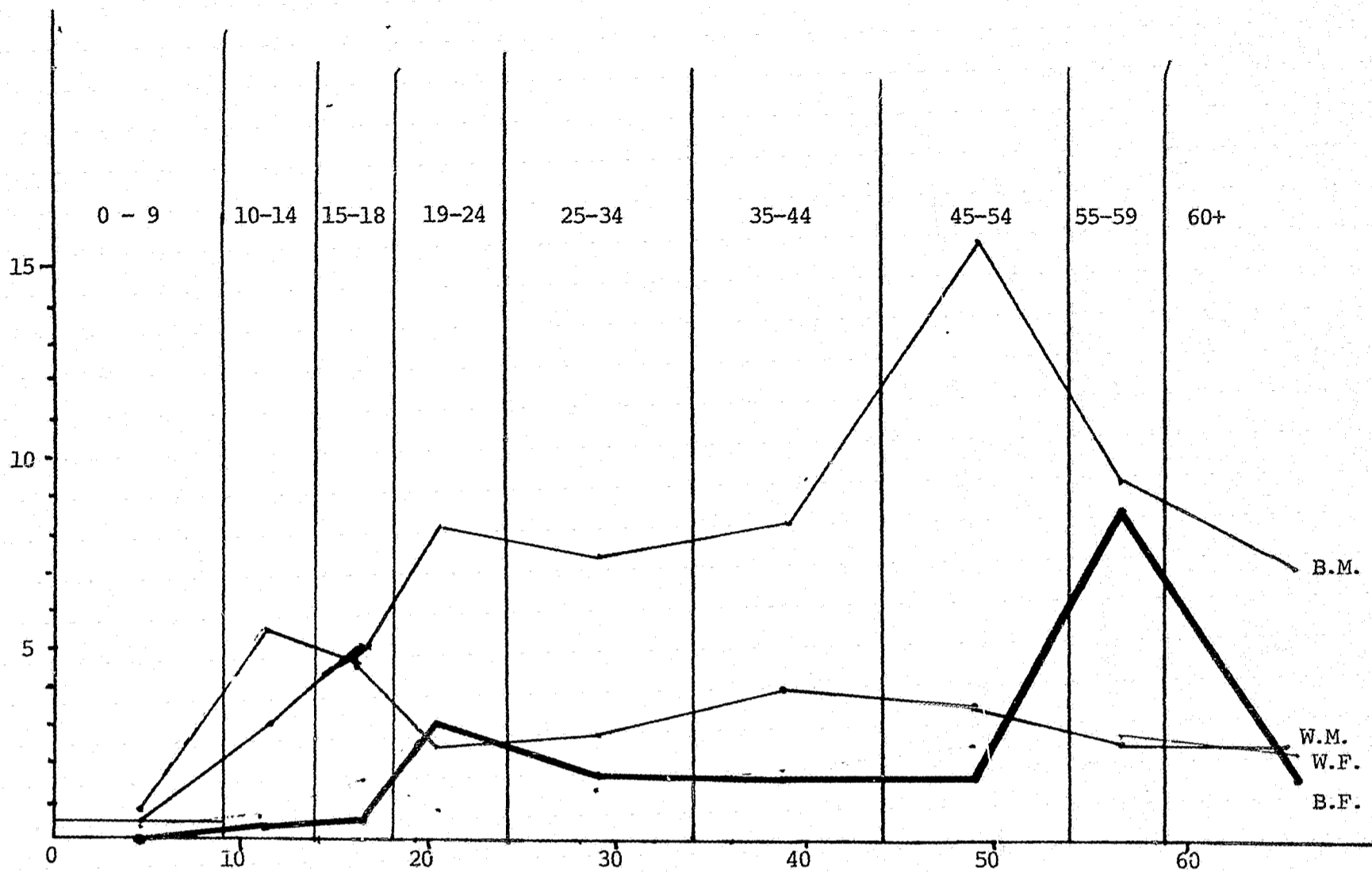


Figure III: Victimization Rates for Robbery (per 1000 population) by Age, Race, and Sex (1973)

TABLE III: Victimization Rates for Robbery (per 1,000) by Age, Race, and Sex. (1973)

AGE	MALES			FEMALES		
	White	Black	Races Combined	White	Black	Races Combined
0-9	.76	.41	.76	.43	—	.30
10-14	5.4	3.0	4.8	.57	.33	.51
15-18	4.9	5.0	4.9	1.7	1.47	1.5
19-24	2.4	8.1	8.5	.90	3.0	1.2
25-34	2.9	7.4	3.7	1.4	1.9	1.5
35-44	4.0	8.3	4.8	1.9	1.7	1.9
45-54	3.4	15.9	4.7	2.5	1.7	2.4
55-59	2.4	9.3	2.9	2.8	8.6	3.2
60+	2.5	7.1	2.8	2.1	1.7	2.1
All Ages Combined	2.9	5.2	3.3 (all males)	1.6	1.3	1.5 (all females)

Population Profile (1970)

White	Male	Female
0 - 9	19,673	18,801
10 - 19	18,701	18,859
20 - 59	56,453	62,223
60+	20,588	31,343
SUBTOTAL	115,415	131,226
Black	Male	Female
0 - 9	7,290	7,451
10 - 19	5,119	5,588
20 - 59	10,065	11,790
60+	1,123	1,165
SUBTOTAL	23,597	25,994
TOTAL	139,012	157,220

Table IV: Victimitizations for Reported Burglary, Larceny and Arson by Premise Code. Rochester, 1973.

Offense Group	(01) home	(17) apartment	(29) home yard	other
Burglary	2,657 (42%)	1,274 (20%)	177 (3%)	2,233 (35%) 6,341 (100%)
Larceny	156 (9%)	79 (5%)	133 (8%)	1,327 (78%) 1,695 (100%)
Arson	54 (4%)	16 (1%)	14 (1%)	39 (32%) 123 (100%)
	2,867	1,369	324	3,599 8,159

Location Classifications for Burglary

Residential

- 1) home (01)
- 2) apartment building (17)
- 3) house trailer/camper (24)
- 4) boat (25)
- 5) home yard (29)

Commercial

- 1) liquor store (02)
- 2) drug store (03)
- 3) department store (05)
- 4) grocery store (06)
- 5) supermarket (07)
- 6) other store (08)
- 7) bar/restaurant (09)
- 8) service station (10)
- 9) theater (12)
- 10) office building (15)
- 11) hotel/motel (16)
- 12) doctor's office (19)
- 13) box car (22)
- 14) truck trailer (23)
- 15) industrial plant (33)
- 16) car lot (34)
- 17) warehouse (36)
- 18) cleaner/laundry (39)
- 19) construction site (40)

Other

- 1) school (11)
- 2) hospital/nursing home (18)
- 3) parking lot (27)
- 4) playground (28)
- 5) war memorial (35)
- 6) city property (37)
- 7) church (38)

END