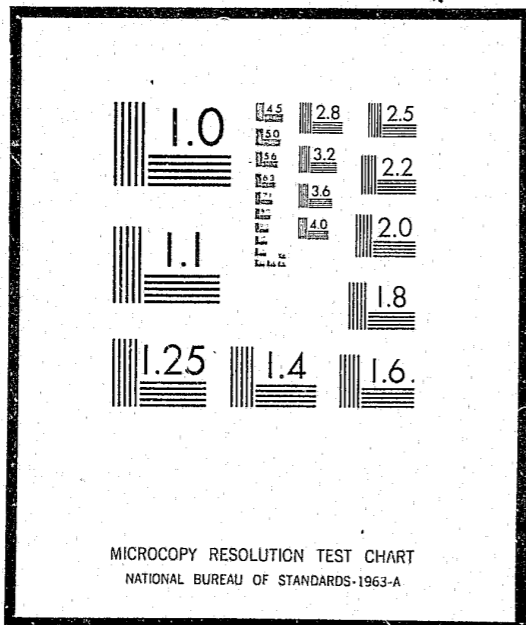


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Delaware - JJDP ACT

- I.3. Specialized Community-Based Programs for Status Offenders
- I.4. Community-Based Counseling for Status Offenders in Lieu of Incarceration

A Program Summary

NCJRS

FEB 28 1977

ACQUISITIONS

Submitted to the Executive Committee  
of the  
Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime

by  
Division of Evaluation - DARC  
December, 1976

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Training and reform schools for delinquent and other youth were once viewed both with pride and optimism; today the view is considerably less sanguine. The contemporary rhetoric and the recommendations of recent national commissions have stressed the need to develop community-based alternatives to incarcerative settings. The urgency of this task was reflected in the recently enacted Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, which created a national Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention within LEAA.<sup>1</sup>

In keeping with the philosophy and directives of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime awarded five subgrants totalling \$197,623 to establish alternative counseling and educational projects for selected status offenders. The purpose of these projects was to redirect status offenders from incarceration and/or further involvement with the juvenile justice system by means which included, but not limited to, family counseling, individual tutoring and vocational instruction. The focus of the five projects was based on alternatives in lieu of incarceration, after adjudication for a status offense.

Clearly, this program summary<sup>2</sup> cannot undertake the in-depth and quantitative focus that is the aim of a long-term undertak-

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew Rutherford and Osman Bengur, "Community-Based Alternatives to Juvenile Incarceration: National Evaluation Program Phase I Summary Report", National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Washington, D.C., October, 1976, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Program Area B.3., Juvenile Planning and Monitoring was not included within this evaluation.

ing (the period of operation for the five JJDP projects ranged from four to nine months). Therefore, the intent of this summary, rather, is to provide an up-to-date description of the current level of practice for policy makers and planners concerned with the issues that arise in the use of JJDP funds.

The objective of this report is to provide a qualitative perspective of community-based alternatives to incarceration based upon; (1) a review of the literature, and (2) findings from the field research covering five community-based projects.

## II. PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the program area were:

1. To provide a specialized residential treatment program for the juvenile multi-drug abuser who has been unsuccessful in an out-patient set up. (I.3. SODAT)
  - a. To provide in-patient care to at least 10, but no more than 25, drug dependent adolescents.<sup>3</sup>
2. To encourage foster home placements for status offenders in lieu of incarceration. (I.3. People's Place II)
  - a. To provide foster care placement for 15 - 25 status youth.<sup>4</sup>
3. To provide alternative services for status offenders who, in the absence of these alternatives, would be incarcerated at Ferris School for Boys or Woods Haven-Kruse School for Girls. (I.4. Peer Group Influence Project, Newark Counseling Center and Union Baptist Church)

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<sup>3</sup>To date, sixteen (16) drug dependent adolescents have been provided with in-patient care.

<sup>4</sup>To date, four (4) status offender youth have been placed in foster homes.

- a. To provide individual counseling to status offenders and their families.<sup>5</sup>
- b. To provide coverage twenty-four hours per day to the needs of status offenders and their families.<sup>6</sup>
- c. To improve the status offenders reading, writing and mathematical skills by two grade levels.<sup>7</sup>
- d. To develop<sup>8</sup> the status offenders vocational interest or skills.

Not all program area objectives were addressed by each applicant. For example, the Newark Counseling Center never indicated in their application that they would provide 24 hour coverage, improve reading, writing and mathematical skills by two grade levels or develop vocational interests or skills.

### III. PROGRAM INFORMATION

(Site Visit Findings)

Tables 1 through 4 attempt to reflect the major activities and characteristics of the program, including whenever possible, budget allocations, personnel employed, client profiles, cost analyses and legal status of youth at the time of referral.

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<sup>5</sup>To date, 96 status offenders and 284 family members have received individual and/or group counseling.

<sup>6</sup>Only one of the projects (Union Baptist Church) provided a twenty-four hour per day hotline service for their clients.

<sup>7</sup>In none of the projects were the clients reading, writing and mathematical skills improved by two grade levels. Only the Peer Group Influence Project demonstrated a formal remedial educational program of which the results indicated a significant difference in reading, but no significant change in spelling or arithmetic.

<sup>8</sup>Only the Peer Group Influence Project established a formal vocational program. Each student received fifteen hours of vocational training each week at the Howard Vocational Park.

TABLE 1  
Budget Allocations: 1975 JJDP Program

| Budget Categories     | PIP      | Newark<br>Counseling Center | SODAT     | Union Baptist Church | People's Place II | Total     |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| a. Personnel          | \$27,803 | \$40,847                    | \$60,121  | \$30,142             | \$3,671           | \$162,584 |
| b. Consultants        | 0        | 0                           | 0         | 1,000                | 200               | 1,200     |
| c. Travel             | 44       | 115                         | 0         | 1,500                | 200               | 1,859     |
| d. Supplies           | 573      | 594                         | 0         | 380                  | 280               | 1,827     |
| e. Operating Expenses | 985      | 0                           | 0         | 1,640                | 668               | 3,293     |
| f. Equipment          | 0        | 0                           | 0         | 2,138                | 0                 | 2,138     |
| g. Other              | 4,390    | 0                           | 0         | 0                    | 50                | 4,440     |
| Match                 | 3,755    | 4,617                       | 7,257     | 4,090                | 563               | 20,282    |
| Total                 | \$37,550 | \$46,173                    | \$67,378* | \$40,890             | \$5,632           | \$197,623 |

\*A total of \$16,878 Part C funds were included within this amount.

TABLE 2

Personnel Employed: 1975 JJDP Program

| PIP   | Newark Counseling Center   | SODAT  | Union Baptist Church                      | People's Place II                   |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1) Education Specialist<br><br>(1) Social Service Specialist | (1) Supervisor/Counselor<br><br>(1) Social Worker<br><br>(1) Secretary | (3) Special Instructors<br><br>(3) Counselor I's<br><br>(1) Counselor II (full-time)<br><br>(2) Counselor II's (part-time)<br><br>(1) Cook | (1) Center Director<br><br>(2) Counselors | (1) Shelter Care Worker (part-time) |

Total: 2 (F/T)

3 (F/T)

8 (F/T)  
2 (P/T)

3 (F/T)

1 (P/T)

Subtotal: 16 (F/T)  
3 (P/T)  
19 (F/T & P/T)

Ratio: 5 clients to 1 staff member

TABLE 3  
Client Profile: 1975 JJDP Program

| Characteristics  | PIP     | Newark Counseling Center | SODAT   | Union Baptist Church | People's Place II | Total   |
|--|---------|--------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Number of direct clients                                       | 23      | 31                       | 10**    | 28                   | 4                 | 96      |
| Male   | 15      | 15                       | 7       | 14                   | 0                 | 51      |
| Female   | 8       | 16                       | 3       | 14                   | 4                 | 45      |
| White  | 6       | 31                       | 9       | 6                    | 4                 | 56      |
| Black  | 12      | 0                        | 0       | 22                   | 0                 | 34      |
| Spanish Surname  | 5       | 0                        | 0       | 0                    | 0                 | 5       |
| Oriental   | 0       | 0                        | 1       | 0                    | 0                 | 1       |
| Number who have completed program                              | 10      | 8                        | 0       | 8                    | 2                 | 28      |
| Number of indirect clients                                     | 28      | 144                      | 0       | 112                  | 0                 | 234     |
| Number who have returned to Family Court on additional charges | 2       | 6                        | 0       | 5                    | 0                 | 13      |
| Cost per direct client*  | \$1,633 | \$1,489                  | \$6,086 | \$1,460              | \$1,408           | \$2,059 |
| Cost per total clients* (direct and indirect)                  | \$ 736  | \$ 264                   | \$6,086 | \$ 292               | \$1,408           | \$ 520  |

\*This is the cost to date. New clients who enter the projects prior to the end of the project period will decrease this figure.

\*\*Six new clients have entered the project subsequent to the evaluation.



TABLE 4

Legal Status of Youth at the Time of Referral: 1975 JJDP Program

| Legal Status                     | PIP | Newark<br>Counseling Center | SODAT | Union<br>Baptist Church | People's Place II | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Status Offense Only              | 12  | 14                          | 4     | 28                      | 4                 | 62    |
| Criminal Offense Only            | 8   | 3                           | 3     | 0                       | 0                 | 14    |
| Status and Criminal<br>Offense   | 3   | 8                           | 3     | 0                       | 0                 | 14    |
| No Charge                        | 0   | 5                           | 0     | 0                       | 0                 | 5     |
| Charge Brought Against<br>Parent | 0   | 1                           | 0     | 0                       | 0                 | 1     |
| Total                            | 23  | 31                          | 10    | 28                      | 4                 | 96    |

The data reflects only a nine month period (several of the projects have been operating for even a shorter period of time) and does not depict program accomplishments in relation to the total project period. As the program continues to operate, the number of clients will increase and the cost per client will decrease.

#### IV. PROGRAM CONCERNS

This summary has briefly assessed the contemporary state of five community-based alternatives to incarceration. An attempt has been made to focus upon issues which have relevance for policy considerations. Although there has been a desire to concentrate on immediate issues, there must also be a concern for more extrinsic factors which place community-based programs within the context of the juvenile justice process. These extrinsic concerns which have been raised in the field research will now be discussed in the hope that they will receive considerably more attention from planners and decision-makers alike.

##### A. Community-Basedness

1. Instead of keeping as many youngsters as possible out of the juvenile justice system, the JJDP Program may, in practice, be "widening the net" of that very system. It would be more correct to talk in terms of minimizing the penetration into the system rather than diverting from the system. As a consequence, the net of the juvenile justice system will have been widened rather than narrowed. Nationally, there is a growing

trend to refer for services youth whose minor delinquent behavior they might have simply tolerated in the past.<sup>9</sup>

2. Does a child who enters a community-based program actually perceive himself as less stigmatized in an informal program than in formal adjudication? If not, this perspective suggests that exposure to criminal justice agencies often labels an individual as a criminal and that persons so stigmatized tend to act in conformity with societal expectations based on these labels. Existing research has not demonstrated that doing something (counseling, treatment) is necessarily better than not doing anything.<sup>10</sup>

3. The dimensions of extent, quality and frequency of remedial education and vocational aspects of the separate projects within the program were quite apparent. If these are paramount objectives in determining the projects community-basedness, these aspects need considerable strengthening.

#### B. Program Discretion

1. Since 20 out of 96 youth were admitted to the program as a result of an offense other than a status offense, one must conclude that either the screening and referral process was weak or the planning process incorrectly projected the potential number of adjudicated status offenders who were in need of an alternative program to incarceration. If the former is the case, immediate steps should be taken to clarify and strengthen the

<sup>9</sup>"Juvenile Diversion: Catching More Youths in the Net?", Criminal Justice Newsletter, A publication of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, VII, No. 21, October 25, 1976, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

referral process. If the latter be the case, the criteria for the disbursement of JJDP funds should be re-examined by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group and the Supervisory Board in order that future plans could more accurately reflect the needs and problems of the system.

2. Findings of this report conclude that the wide use of discretion by project personnel results in ad hoc policy making which has direct consequences for youth in the program. Some of the consequences of discretionary decision-making include; (1) admission criteria, (2) length of stay in program, (3) degree of control over youth, and (4) termination criteria. Except for PIP and SODAT, there did not appear to be any well delineated policy of how a youth successfully completed the program and when termination would occur.

3. The target population for the program area was defined as "adjudicated status offenders". According to Family Court personnel, a scarcity of target group youth was available for referral. Therefore, an informal decision was made to refer both pre and post adjudicated offenders. The referral of pre-adjudicated youth to counseling and treatment programs, may by implication, be coercive and not in accord with a child's right to due process of law. In other words, a child is sentenced without first being proven guilty.

4. It was difficult to determine if the five projects were dealing with shallow or deep end offenders. From a subjective point of view, it appeared that at least 30 percent of the clients were shallow end offenders who in all likelihood would not have been incarcerated had a community-based program not been

available.

#### C. Costs

1. To date, the cost per direct client averaged \$2,059. If one were to include family members whose association with the client brings them into contact with the services provided by the program, the cost would be reduced to \$520. It should be noted that if all the direct clients had been incarcerated - which is highly unlikely - the cost of incarceration would have approximated \$345,600 as compared to a program area cost of \$197,623. It would appear, however, that for the type and extent of services being rendered, the cost is inordinately high and a client/staff ratio of 5 to 1 is extremely low.

#### D. Recidivism

1. Most research efforts in both juvenile and adult corrections have centered upon attempts to measure programs in terms of their impact upon recidivism. The accumulated research to date, indicates that community-based programs are no more or less successful than incarceration programs.<sup>11</sup> Although it is impossible to determine the recidivism rates for those youth (28) who have successfully completed the program, due to the fact that they have only recently been terminated, we do know that the percent of recidivism for those youth while in the program was 14. Measures of recidivism are clearly important, but they should not be used as the sole determinants of future policy.

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<sup>11</sup>Andrew Rutherford and Osman Bengur, op. cit., p. 30.

2. Even if it is not possible to demonstrate that community-based programs are more effective in reducing crime, it is necessary to show that the public is not being exposed to greater danger as a consequence of their operation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>ibid.

**END**

*7 ables/more*