

*Title of Brochure: ①*

*Background of the National Evaluation Program*

ABOUT THE NEP

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Criminal justice policymakers at all levels of government are hampered by a lack of sound information on the effectiveness of various programs and approaches. To help remedy the problem, the National Institute sponsors a National Evaluation Program to provide practical information on costs, benefits and limitations of selected criminal justice programs now in use throughout the country.

Each NEP assessment concentrates on a specific "topic area" consisting of groups of on-going projects with similar objectives and strategies. The initial step in the process is a "Phase I" study that identifies the key issues, assesses what is currently known about them, and develops methods for more intensive evaluation at both the national and local level. Phase I studies are not meant to be definitive evaluations; rather, they analyze what we presently know and what is still uncertain or unknown. They offer a sound basis for planning further evaluation and research.

Although completed Phase I studies have been conducted on a short-term basis (approximately 6 to 8 months), they have examined many projects and collected and analyzed a great deal of information. Current program revisions are being introduced to allow longer term (approximately 18 months), more comprehensive assessments.

This brochure describes the background and general approach of the National Evaluation Program and highlights some of the key findings of Phase I Assessments to date.

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BACKGROUND

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The National Evaluation Program was developed as a part of LEAA's response to the evaluation mandate of the 1973 Crime Control Act. In that legislation, the Congress directed the Institute to evaluate LEAA-funded projects wherever possible and to share the findings with state and local officials and planners. Fulfilling the mandate posed a dilemma for the Institute. Given the large number of projects, full-scale evaluations of each would have been enormously expensive, far beyond the Institute's annual budget. The apparent alternative was to fund a limited number of expensive evaluations each year, with the payoff far in the future.

To resolve this dilemma the Institute devised a new approach to evaluation -- a series of phased studies that would collect relevant information in an orderly sequence. This would lower the initial cost of evaluation and increase the number of programs that could be examined. Equally important, it would accelerate the process of providing valuable information to policymakers.

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THE NEP APPROACH

PHASE I ASSESSMENT <sup>UN-11-B</sup>  
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Each year the Institute surveys State Planning Agencies and LEAA Central and Regional Offices to identify possible subjects for evaluation under the NEP. The resulting recommendations are grouped together into specific topic areas.

Phase I begins with an assessment of what is currently known about a particular topic area. Then the researchers determine what additional information could be obtained through a more intensive evaluation

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estimating its cost and value.

□ In addition, Phase I assessments often identify fruitful areas for further Institute research. The link with Institute research is reinforced by the way the NEP operates. Each study is jointly monitored by the appropriate division of the Office of Research Programs -- Police, Courts, Corrections, Community Crime Prevention and Advanced Technology -- and the Special Programs Division, which also provides overall management for the program.

□ Each Phase I assessment includes the following products:

- □ A review of what is presently known about the topic area;
- □ An overview of how the typical project operates in each topic area;
- □ Analysis of available information on project efficiency and effectiveness;
- □ Alternative strategies and designs with cost estimates and anticipated benefits for an LEAA-sponsored in-depth study of the topic area to fill gaps in existing knowledge, and
- □ An evaluation guide for typical projects in each topic area to assist project administrators in assessing their own operations.

□ Phase I assessments have been conducted without extensive data collection and analysis by reviewing completed evaluations of the projects being studied and by conducting a limited number of site visits. While the available information may not permit drawing definitive conclusions, it generally allows an assessment of the project's potential effect and an estimate of its cost and benefits.

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The Phase I assessments give the Institute a sound basis for deciding whether intensive evaluation is warranted. Where appropriate, the design for intensive evaluation is implemented as a "Phase II" evaluation. Where the available data and prior research are insufficient for assessing potential effects, the Phase I field work lays the groundwork for the development of strategies for obtaining the necessary data. Included are definition of data requirements, recommendation of measurement techniques and identification of measurement points.

In 1977, the Phase I assessments were restructured to include a limited pretest of the Phase II evaluation design in a small number of test sites. Original data are collected and analyzed. The results are then submitted along with any necessary revision of the Phase II design. The pretest gives more conclusive results at the Phase I stage, a better estimate of the feasibility of the Phase II evaluation, and an opportunity to improve the Phase II design.

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PHASE II EVALUATION - U.T.L.C. UN-11-B  
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Selection of Phase II topic areas is based on the competitive review of Phase I estimates of the value, feasibility, and cost of in-depth evaluation. The Institute works with the Phase II evaluator in refining the research design.

In developing alternative long-term evaluation strategies and designs, the grantee begins with five basic options:

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- Using on-going LEAA block or discretionary grant projects;
- Modifying existing or planned block grant or discretionary programs;
- Replicating a specific project design in a number of locations;
- Collecting all similar LEAA-funded projects;
- Using a research design not based on particular projects.
- The Institute research staff gives special attention to coordinating Phase II evaluations with other LEAA offices. Phase II evaluations of Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) and Pretrial Release are currently underway. It is anticipated that a third Phase II evaluation will be funded during the fall of 1977.

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DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

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Summary reports of the Phase I findings are widely distributed to LEAA Regional Offices, State Planning Agencies, Regional Planning Units, and appropriate criminal justice agencies by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS). The full Phase I reports are available on microfiche or on loan from NCJRS. Phase II reports will be disseminated in a similar fashion. For information on how to obtain copies of the reports, please write

National Criminal Justice Reference Service  
 P.O. Box 24036  
 S.W. Post Office  
 Washington, D.C. 20024

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NEP ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FINDINGS

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The NEP studied 25 topic areas during 1975 and 1976:

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Operation Identification Projects

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Pretrial Screening Projects

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Early Warning Robbery Reduction Projects

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Pretrial Release Programs

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Alternatives to Juvenile

Incarceration

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Traditional Preventive Patrol

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Team Policing Projects

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Patrol Support Systems: Crime Analysis Units

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Security Survey: Community Crime

Prevention Programs

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Court Information Systems

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Intensive Special Probation

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Street Lighting Projects

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Institutional Education Programs for Inmates

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Treatment Alternatives to Street

Crime (TASC)

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Select Patrol Strategies: Specialized Patrol Operations

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Citizen Crime Reporting Programs

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Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency

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Juvenile Diversion

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Youth Service Bureaus

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Citizen Patrol Projects

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Detention of Juveniles and Alternatives to Its Use

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Residential Inmate Aftercare Projects (Halfway Houses) for Adult Offenders

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Institutional Furlough Programs

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Employment Services for Releasees in the Community

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Policing Urban Mass Transit Systems

In 1977 two additional Phase I grants were awarded to study Police Juvenile Units and Coeducational Correctional Institutions.

Five additional topic areas are being considered:

Alternative Schools for Disruptive Youths

Basic Police Training Programs

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- Citizen Victim Service Projects
- Correctional Data Systems
- Crime-specific Prosecution Units

The Appendix lists the 27 Phase I studies funded to date and their current status.

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GENERAL FINDINGS

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Evaluation in criminal justice is a relatively recent development. Not surprisingly, the NEP assessments have revealed a compelling need for a clearer understanding of evaluation and for training in evaluation methods. Frequently, NEP evaluators find that many researchers are unable to design or conduct field evaluations. In addition, policymakers often have difficulty in understanding the tasks involved in such evaluations and the confidence they can place in evaluation findings. Another general finding of the program is that the availability and usefulness of data varies greatly. Although relevant information does exist in many cases, it often is not satisfactorily related to performance and usually does not lend itself to comparative analyses.

An assessment of pre-trial screening, for example, found abundant data. However, much of the data on case dispositions were misinterpreted simply because the prosecutor's charging policy was unknown or misunderstood.

When performance measures are selected locally or nationally without a valid evaluation framework, meaning and interpretation will necessarily vary from project to project, making overall comparisons

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impossible. The results of the Phase I studies should help to create a foundation for developing standard measurement models.

□ A number of the assessments have uncovered discrepancies between what the project was theoretically designed to do and what it actually does. Juvenile diversion projects, for example, were created to reduce the flow of juveniles through the juvenile justice system but in some cases, they have the opposite effect. Instead of "softening the blow" these projects often bring many more juveniles into contact with the criminal justice system.

□ In cases such as these, the Phase I study can pinpoint gaps between policy and implementation and, by focusing on actual field operations, identify the real strengths and weaknesses in criminal justice practices.

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Specific Findings - UN-11-B

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□ By June 1977, reports from 20 NEP Phase I assessments had been published and disseminated to national, state and local criminal justice decision-makers and/or introduced into the NCJRS loan library. The findings of several studies are briefly summarized below.

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Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime

The Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) program identifies drug abusers who come into contact with the criminal justice system, refers them to drug treatment projects, and monitors

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their progress during treatment. As a relatively new program, the impact of TASC has not yet been thoroughly analyzed. Little is known, for example, about its long term effects on either addiction or criminality because no follow-up studies have been made of TASC clients after they leave the program. A Phase II evaluation has been funded to address these issues and to identify the most effective and economical methods of treatment.

□ On the positive side, the Phase I assessment reported encouraging findings for those in treatment. Only 8 percent of TASC participants were arrested while in the program, an unusually low rate of recidivism since the typical TASC participant is a heroin addict charged with a felony and with a lengthy prior criminal record. Surprisingly, the study found that 55 percent of the TASC clients were receiving their first treatment for drug abuse. Although not originally designed as an outreach program, it is clear that TASC has been able to reach many drug abusers who might otherwise never have sought or received treatment.

□ In another encouraging development, local governments have assumed financing of all six TASC projects that have completed the maximum Federal funding period. In view of the fiscal pressures facing many jurisdictions, this support reflects considerable local confidence in the TASC approach to drug treatment.

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□ Operation Identification Projects *UN-11-B*

This study examined the effectiveness of burglary prevention programs in which citizens mark their valuables with a unique

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traceable number or name. Results show:

- There were only a small number of participants in Operation Identification Projects
- Participants had significantly lower burglary rates than nonparticipants, but city-wide rates did not decline.
- The number of burglars apprehended did not increase.
- Marking did not increase the recovery and return of stolen property.

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Security Survey: Community Crime Prevention Programs

To reduce burglaries, police departments in more than 300 communities now assist citizens in improving security in their homes and businesses. Police departments offer to survey the home or business of any interested citizen and to recommend appropriate security measures.

The NEP assessment confirmed the utility of security surveys as individuals who followed survey recommendations proved less likely to be burglarized. The report also suggests that security surveys help improve police-community relations. A number of units have been established or maintained solely with local funds -- impressive evidence of community support.

Despite their benefits, security surveys are not being used to fullest advantage. They are not well understood by the general public, and many police departments lack the resources to reach

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their entire jurisdiction. To realize their full potential, continued experimentation is called for: first, to develop more economical and efficient means of deploying survey units; and second, to stimulate citizen participation through more effective promotional campaigns.

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□ Citizen Crime Reporting Programs *UN-11-B*

The types of citizen crime reporting projects (CCRP's) studied fall into two major categories, each having three types of projects. The first category consists of projects that make it easier for citizens to report suspicious criminal activity:

□ Whistlestop Projects equip citizens in a given community with special whistles to be used when a crime in progress is observed. Another person, hearing the whistle, then telephones the police.

□ Radio Watch Projects usually involve persons with ready access to two-way radios such as taxi-drivers. The radio dispatcher relays calls for help to the police by telephone.

□ Special Telephone Line Projects utilize special telephone lines and numbers for reporting anonymous tips, sometimes with a reward-upon-conviction incentive.

□ The second category consists of projects that educate and encourage witnesses to report suspicious or criminal activity:

□ Group Presentation Projects provide speakers to local groups like the PTA, church groups, and civic and service organizations.

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□□ Membership Projects invite citizens to join an organization whose purpose is to show its members how to report suspicious or criminal activities and to prevent crime.

□□ Home Presentation Projects consist of presentations made to neighborhood gatherings in a resident's home.

□ Citizen Patrol Projects *line # UN-11-B*

According to the Phase I study, more than 800 resident patrols are currently active in a wide variety of neighborhoods. They often arise in response to a sudden spurt in local crime and continue on an average for five years. Most have been initiated since 1970 and are voluntary efforts, operating on low budgets independent of public funding.

□ The study identified four types of patrol: building, neighborhood, social service, and community protection. Of the four, building patrols appear to be effective in reducing crime and increasing a sense of security. In public housing projects they seem to act as a mediating force in encounters between residents and the police. Lack of data makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the other types of patrol, although there is evidence that neighborhood patrols perform valuable services. Overall, those patrols with carefully selected and well-trained members, established administrative procedures, affiliations with community organizations, and positive contacts with local police are most likely to succeed.

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□ These findings suggest that citizen patrols can be an economical way to help prevent crime in the community. A common concern about such groups -- the threat of vigilante activity -- is not borne out by this study. It appears only an occasional problem, and one that can be minimized by careful planning and review of patrol operations.

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□ Traditional Preventive Patrol *UN-11-B*

This study produced perhaps the first systematic description of the traditional preventive patrol function. It specified the interrelationships among its components and identified inputs and processes for each subsystem. The analytical framework focused upon two categories of patrol inputs: type of transportation and characteristics of officers; and analyzed three patrol processes: supervision, task assignment and deployment.

□ Major findings show that:

□□ An unprecedented opportunity exists for increasing productivity by concentrating on directed patrol activities oriented toward serving explicit community needs.

□□ Existing technology and equipment are adequate to allow better use of officers' time through the fine tuning of deployment patterns based on explicit patrol command strategies and consideration of community needs.

□□ While the patrol car remains the choice for general patrol duty, alternative modes can also be effective. In high-density areas, foot patrol may have a favorable impact upon the

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community; bicycles are useful in patrols aimed at preventing burglaries and motor scooters have been used effectively in urban areas. However, considerable vehicle reliability problems are associated with the alternative modes of transportation.

Increased emphasis on officer initiative, the participation of officers in the planning process, and assigning officers according to the level of demand for services all improve the officer's orientation towards duty and may minimize the need for close supervision.

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Specialized Patrol Operations

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This assessment studied 21 projects using patrol tactics such as civilian dress or uniformed tactical units. The projects were classified into three groups: low visibility, high visibility, and combined patrols. The researchers found that the combined high/low visibility patrols are more effective at apprehension than deterrence. Operating in isolation of each other, both the high visibility patrol and the low visibility patrol appear to be more effective at deterrence than apprehension. Although sound knowledge of specialized patrols does not yet exist, the researchers tentatively concluded that the combined use of civil dress and uniformed tactical units may be the most successful approach.

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Early Warning Robbery Reduction Projects

In these projects a police-owned radio alarm system is installed in stores to signal police that a robbery is in progress. Stake-out

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patrols, usually cruising in unmarked cars, are stationed near vulnerable, storefront businesses such as convenience stores and gas stations. The goal is the apprehension of the offender at or near the scene of the crime with the stolen money or goods.

□ Early Warning Robbery Reduction Projects are too new to firmly assess their value, but the results so far show promise. A field survey of 22 EWRR projects -- approximately half those currently in operation -- showed that almost all communities surveyed reported robbery reductions in stores participating in EWRR. By enabling police to respond quickly, the program appears to increase both apprehensions and convictions.

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□ Team Policing Projects *UN-11-B*

This report describes the impact of team policing programs on crime control, police-community relations, and the role of the patrol officer. The report relies heavily on formal evaluations of team policing programs in 14 cities, including Albany, Charlotte, Detroit, Dayton, New York City, Palo Alto, and San Diego. Team policing projects are classified into four program types: basic patrol teams, investigative teams, community relations teams, and full service teams.

□ The most serious shortcoming in assessing team policing has been the failure of evaluators to carefully monitor the extent to which planned program activities have actually been implemented by team

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managers and officers. As a result, it has not always been possible to determine whether team policing or extraneous variables are responsible for the evaluation findings.

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 Pretrial Screening Projects *UN-11-B*

This study reviewed pretrial screening of cases by prosecutors, its utility as a decision-making tool and the factors governing its use. The key finding is that the prosecutor's policy on the prosecution and disposition of cases -- however derived and communicated to subordinates -- is directly and measurably related to charging procedures. Without knowledge of the policy, data on dispositions may be misinterpreted. When the policy is known, charging practices become understandable and, on the whole, rather predictable. Despite the importance of a clearly defined charging policy, however, the study found that prosecutors typically pay little heed to developing and articulating charging practices.

The study identifies four distinct charging policies, ranging from one which accepts for prosecution virtually all cases with the required legal elements to another which accepts only those cases which have been judged likely to result in conviction after trial. Other policies include one which emphasizes the defendant's rehabilitation through diversion from the criminal process and another which stresses efficiency, i.e., early disposition of as many cases as possible.

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□ In any prosecutor's office, a mixture of policies may be operating for different types of cases. Using this study as a guide, however, a prosecutor who articulates his charging policy can interpret aggregate dispositional data more coherently and can predict what the data will show. For example, in a system that emphasizes accepting only those cases likely to be won at trial, a high percentage of rejections at the charging level and of guilty pleas to original charges would be expected. When the existence of the legally-required elements of the offense is the chief criterion controlling the charging decision, a low percentage of guilty pleas to original charges can be predicted.

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 □ Pretrial Release Programs (b)

During the past 15 years, major reforms have taken place in the pretrial release of criminal defendants. This study found that the traditional reliance on money bail obtaining release has been largely replaced by extensive use of release on recognizance and other nonfinancial terms of release. Unfortunately, the study also found that very few attempts have been made to determine relative levels of criminal activity associated with various types of release. Even the failure-to-appear rate, which appears to be universally accepted as a measure of program effectiveness, has not received the kind of careful documentation that would permit drawing definitive conclusions about the success of these programs or about the comparative value of different types of pretrial release.

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□ Because of the importance of these issues, the Institute has awarded funds for a more intensive, Phase II evaluation of pre-trial release projects. The evaluation will concentrate on pre-trial crime by defendants on release, the fairness of criteria for release, and the effectiveness of the criteria in identifying defendants who fail to appear or represent a risk to the community while on release.

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□ Court Information Systems ← UN-11-B

There is a growing awareness that information handling within the courts is significantly important in the processing of cases. This realization, together with increased caseloads, has aroused considerable interest in information systems among those concerned with judicial administration. Thirty jurisdictions have already developed and are operating comprehensive court information systems. Thirteen of these were visited during the course of this study. Those court information systems provide not only day-to-day court operational information processing but data useful for court management as well.

□ The study found that system development projects often suffered from inadequate management practices. For example, system goals and objectives have not been clearly defined; requirements have not been carefully analyzed before system development; and court personnel have been only minimally involved in the development process. Yet, at the time of this study, 90 percent of these information systems were on-line, operating, processing data and yielding reports. No formal quantitative evaluations of such systems were uncovered --

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despite the fact that system development project costs were in the range of \$500,000 to more than \$4 million, and annual system operating expenditures require from \$100,000 to more than \$1 million.

□ The assessment concludes that court information systems are evolving into a useful, integral part of normal court operations. However, their potential for aiding court administration and caseflow management has not yet been realized. Recommendations have been presented to provide (1) a more rational approach to system implementation, (2) a method for evaluating existing systems, and (3) greater utilization of system capabilities.

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□ Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency ← UN-11-B

According to this study, major theoretical explanations of delinquency fall into one of three categories: the individual, social institutions, and social interaction. Little attention has been given to relationships among the three.

□ In looking at efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency, this assessment found:

- Programs are weak in two crucial aspects -- identifying appropriate clients and evaluating effectiveness.
- Intervention strategies are seldom linked either to assumptions about causes or methods of identifying youngsters who need help;
- Parental consent requirements and program screening procedures inhibit the delivery of services to large numbers of youth;

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□□ Practitioners, administrators, and policy makers have largely  
 □ been unable to address the individual, interpersonal, and  
 □ societal conditions from which delinquency emerges.

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 □ Juvenile Diversion ⊙

This study examined projects to divert youngsters from the formal juvenile justice system, which may stigmatize them and encourage delinquent behavior. In theory, and as traditionally defined, diversion is the process of removing a juvenile from the system altogether, with or without referral to another social agency outside the system. In practice, however, the study concludes that diversion has come to mean referral to a program within the system or to one closely related to it. According to this report, a program within the juvenile justice system has a greater chance of adding to the system's costs and to the number of juveniles within its control.

□ This change in diversion program emphasis leaves open the question of how to view the experience of juveniles in diversion projects. Will there still be stigma attached if diversion programs are perceived to be an integral part of the formal juvenile justice structure? There is little research to answer this question, or the question of whether diversion to programs completely outside of the system is just as damaging.

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Alternatives to Juvenile Incarceration

According to this study, the trend toward increased use of community-based facilities has not resulted in a major decline in the use of training or reform schools. Many programs supplement incarceration rather than replace secure institutional care. A major exception is the network of community-based programs developed in Massachusetts since that state closed its training schools during 1970-1972.

The study highlights the need to assess community-based programs as an integral part of the juvenile justice process. Unless the impact of alternatives are scrutinized, these programs run the risk of "widening the net" - a pervasive problem in major programmatic reforms.

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Residential Inmate Aftercare (Halfway Houses) for Adult Offenders

This study reviewed 55 evaluations of halfway house programs and surveyed an additional 153 halfway houses. The study concluded that few methodologically sound evaluations of halfway houses have been completed because outcome measures used are insensitive and program goals and objectives are vague. However, the existing evaluations suggest that:

- Halfway houses are as effective in preventing further criminal behavior as alternative forms of community release;
- Halfway houses neither increase crime in a community nor decrease property values;

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- Houses assist clients in locating employment but not necessarily
- in maintaining it after they leave;
- At full capacity, houses cost no more, and probably less, than
- incarceration although they cost more than parole and outright
- release;
- The available capacity of halfway houses is only partially
- utilized at present, thus driving up actual per diem costs;
- Evaluations of halfway houses tend not to produce changes in
- actual operations.

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□ Intensive Special Probation

This assessment investigated the efficacy of probation projects that attempt to increase supervision and service by reducing caseloads or providing special treatment. Some interesting and even surprising conclusions can be derived from the results.

□ For example, while decreased caseloads do increase the amount of time the probation officer spends with the probationer, it does not appear to improve success rates. The projects surveyed used various measures of success, but most related to reduced recidivism. The evidence indicates that caseload reduction alone does not significantly reduce recidivism among adult probationers. In fact, the expanded supervision appears to increase revocation rates for adults. Very small caseloads have proven effective with juveniles, however.

□ Certain special approaches, used in conjunction with caseload reduction, seem to increase the likelihood of success. Small,

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specialized projects that focus on specific types of offenders -- such as drug offenders or Spanish-speaking probationers -- appear to be productive. Volunteer programs, using peers, ex-offenders, or para-professionals, may prove more effective in obtaining employment for probationers, although lower recidivism rates may not result.

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TO SUM UP

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The studies reviewed in the booklet are those for which reports are available. The status of all Phase I NEP assessments appears in the following chart, along with information on how to obtain reports.

The findings of the Phase I studies are continuously reviewed to determine the implications for future research, evaluation, and program design. The Phase II evaluations and other follow-up efforts will help to realize the full potential of the National Evaluation Program.

For more information on the NEP, please contact:

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