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THRESHOLDS IMPACT EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

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## Introduction

This study is an impact evaluation of the Thresholds project, a juvenile diversion project in East Oakland. Thresholds has operated under a one-year contract (LEAA No. D-3360-1-76) which began officially on July 1, 1976. The project was delayed by innumerable difficulties in its initial stages. One problem encountered was late funding: The project did not receive its first monies for over three months into the contract year. Based on this delay in funding, Thresholds applied for and was granted a three-month contract extension through September 30, 1976. The present evaluation deals with the project's impact upon the community through September 30, 1976.

Besides providing a measure of the project's impact upon the community, we have a second purpose in presenting the evaluation data in the manner we have chosen. We want to provide the Bay Area Urban League (BAUL), Self-Advancement Through Education (SATE), and Thresholds staff with constructive feedback obtained from various groups within the community who have been associated with the Thresholds project. The feedback sought from these groups focuses on what the respondents perceived as strong points and problem areas of the Thresholds project.

Our interviews consisted of open-ended questions which were designed to draw out the respondent on particular subjects but at the same time to leave him/her great freedom in the form and content of response. For the most part the respondents offered their views openly with a view toward helping Thresholds develop.

We would like to thank all who have assisted us in the evaluation. Special thanks go to Ms. Carolyn Price and the rest of the Thresholds staff for their cooperation and openness in the evaluation process. We are indebted to Ms. Sheila Tarbet and Mr. Robert Thombs of BAUL whose helpful suggestions and feedback greatly aided the evaluation effort. Regretably we can't mention everyone by name. However, thanks also go to all those who gave of their time to discuss the Thresholds project with us: members of the Technical Assistance Group; police, probation and school personnel; members of the Thresholds Neighborhood Council; and the Thresholds youth participants.

### Impact Evaluation Summary

Data for the impact evaluation were gathered from: (1) examination of relevant project documents; (2) regular observations of project operations; (3) numerous discussions with staff from Thresholds and the Bay Area Urban League; and (4) interviews with a total of 59 persons who have had significant involvement with the Thresholds project (see Table 1 for composite responses to open-ended questions regarding the strengths and problems of Thresholds).

The composite results of the 59 persons interviewed provide a good picture of how the Thresholds project was perceived by the community it served. The majority of persons interviewed felt that Thresholds was meeting a vital need of the community and would like to see the program continue. As Table 1 shows, for the most part the respondents felt that Thresholds was doing a good job of dealing with the problems of the youth in the East Oakland community. Also, the Thresholds staff were viewed as capable and available to youth when needed. Although most of the respondents were quite favorable to Thresholds, they all had suggestions on problem areas that they felt the project needed to address. These problem areas are listed in Table 1.

Thresholds did a respectable job of approaching each of its goals and objectives for the first year. The project's accomplishments take on an added significance when one considers the environment in which the project operated. The obstacles which hampered the

development of the project included the following:

1. The Thresholds Refunding Application set forth extremely ambitious goals and objectives which were to be implemented by a small staff in only one year's time. Yet it is common knowledge that it usually takes new organizations three or more years just to put together a workable staff. It is generally expected that 80%-90% of the energy expended in an organization's first year goes for organizational survival (e.g., the project didn't receive any monies until it was into the fourth month of its contract year). This leaves only 10%-20% of the staff's energy to go into the actual tasks of the project.

2. The problem known as the "soft money merry-go-round" compounded Thresholds' problem mentioned above. A soft money project must constantly be seeking sources of continued funding. When funding periods come to an end without a committed source of refunding, the staff's anxiety level rises which further inhibits the progress of the project.

3. An innovative project such as Thresholds must deal with a peculiar paradox which was expressed quite openly by an agency staff person: "A program has to prove that it can survive before [my] department will use it." As with all new innovative projects, Thresholds needs to be legitimized by established institutions in order to survive, and yet it needs to survive before it will be legitimized.

4. Thresholds was jointly administered by the Bay Area Urban



League (BAUL) and Self-Advancement Through Education (SATE). There are inherent problems with co-administration of a project. Too often when two parties share responsibility for doing something, that thing goes undone. For example, one shared function was to provide Thresholds with a Coordinating Committee (see Appendix A). However, no Coordinating Committee was formed.

These are some of the major obstacles which hindered Thresholds development during the past year, and they should be kept in mind when reading the following table and the rest of the report. Table 1, which follows, summarizes the strengths and problems of Thresholds as perceived by 59 persons who had contact with the project during the past year.

TABLE 1

Composite Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Strengths of Thresholds

<u>Strength</u>	<u>T.A.G.</u> <u>(N=11)</u>	<u>Agency</u> <u>(N=9)</u>	<u>Neigh.</u> <u>Council</u> <u>(N=10)</u>	<u>Youth</u> <u>(N=29)</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N=59)</u>
1. Thresholds is doing a good job.	3	7	7	21	35
2. Thresholds provides constructive activities for the youth.		7	4	20	31
3. The Thresholds concept is good.	9	9	8		26
4. Thresholds provides a center for recreational activities.				24	24
5. Thresholds promotes social interaction among the community's youth and adults.		5		17	22
6. Thresholds counselors are available when youth need them.				19	19
7. Thresholds staff is capable and dedicated.	7	9	1		17
8. Thresholds shows youth how to look for jobs and how to act in an interview.				10	10
9. Thresholds provides needed role models for the youth.		7	2		9
10. Youth can trust Thresholds staff, especially the counselors, because "they know where it's at."				9	9
11. Youth feel "free" at the project as long as they follow the "rules."				6	6

<u>Strength</u>	<u>T.A.G.</u> (N=11)	<u>Agency</u> (N=9)	<u>Neigh. Council</u> (N=10)	<u>Youth</u> (N=29)	<u>Total</u> (N=59)
12. Thresholds school counseling classes worked well.	2	3			5
13. Thresholds staff provides support for youth during court appearance.				5	5
14. The Thresholds facility is in a prime location to serve the community's needs.	2	2			4
15. Thresholds has provided constructive employment for ex-offenders.	1		2		3
16. Thresholds staff possesses special skills for dealing effectively with problems in the East Oakland community.	3				3
17. Thresholds counselors do a good job of handling crisis situations.		1	1		2
18. Thresholds has no strengths.	1				1

Composite Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Problems of Thresholds

<u>Problem</u>	<u>T.A.G.</u> (N=11)	<u>Agency</u> (N=9)	<u>Neigh. Council</u> (N=10)	<u>Youth</u> (N=29)	<u>Total</u> (N=59)
1. Thresholds staff needs better administrative and management skills.	9	9	5		23
2. Thresholds needs more recreational equipment and activities	3			14	17

<u>Problem</u>	<u>T.A.G.</u> <u>(N=11)</u>	<u>Agency</u> <u>(N=9)</u>	<u>Neigh.</u> <u>Council</u> <u>(N=10)</u>	<u>Youth</u> <u>(N=29)</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N=59)</u>
3. Interaction between Thresholds and the community needs to be improved.	8		6		14
4. To handle such a large job, Thresholds needs more staff.	2	3	1	7	13
5. The Thresholds program has suffered from a high rate of staff turnover.	3	9	1		13
6. Communication needs to be improved between Thresholds and outside agencies.	6	5			11
7. Thresholds staff needs to develop professional counseling skills.	5	4			9
8. Thresholds staff needs written job descriptions.		7			7
9. Thresholds needs to concentrate more on counseling youth than on providing recreation.		6			6
10. The project has been slow in getting started.		6			6
11. Thresholds staff needs to be more clearly focused on the task of the project	6				6
12. Thresholds staff needs to be more professional in keeping appointments and returning phone calls.	3	2			5
13. Thresholds needs more emphasis on job counseling.				5	5
14. Thresholds needs more creative group projects (e.g., drama classes, etc.).				3	3

<u>Problem</u>	<u>T.A.G.</u> <u>(N=11)</u>	<u>Agency</u> <u>(N=9)</u>	<u>Neigh.</u> <u>Council</u> <u>(N=10)</u>	<u>Youth</u> <u>(N=29)</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N=59)</u>
15. Thresholds needs to combine non-offenders with ex-offenders on staff.			3		3
16. Thresholds needs an active Board of Directors.	3				3
17. Typical of most new social programs, Thresholds has had to spend a lot of time dealing with conflicts and frustrations.	3				3
18. Thresholds staff appears defensive. It needs to be more open to observation.	3				3
19. Thresholds staff needs to follow through on its commitments.		2			2
20. Thresholds staff needs to "prioritize" around time spent in court.		2			2
21. Thresholds needs to advertise its services more.			1	1	2
22. Thresholds has suffered from job insecurity due to lack of funding.			2		2
23. Thresholds staff seems abrasive.	2				2
24. Thresholds needs to focus more on outreach counseling efforts than on inhouse counseling.	2				2
25. The project needs more time to become functional.	2				2
26. Thresholds needs to do more outreach counseling in areas where youth "hang out."		1			1

<u>Problem</u>	<u>T.A.G.</u> <u>(N=11)</u>	<u>Agency</u> <u>(N=9)</u>	<u>Neigh.</u> <u>Council</u> <u>(N=10)</u>	<u>Youth</u> <u>(N=29)</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N=59)</u>
27. Thresholds counselors prassure youth too much.				1	1
28. Staff received and main- tained jobs through per- sonal friendships.	1				1
29. Thresholds does not have adequate youth involve- ment.	1				1

### Historical Chronicle\*

In this section of the report, we would like to present some of the practical, historical issues which we feel may aide the reader in better understanding the development of the Thresholds project. The history of Thresholds dates back to 1969. In that year Self Advancement Through Education (SATE) and the Bay Area Urban League (BAUL) began working together to develop a proposal for a juvenile diversion project based on the New Careerists concept and recommendations of the President's Council on Crime and Delinquency, Task Force Report on Juvenile Delinquency (1967). The original Thresholds proposal was funded in 1972 by LEAA for \$700,000 which was to be spread over a period of three years.

No doubt much of the history of the original Thresholds project from 1972 through 1975 has carried over to affect the current Thresholds. However, for purposes of this report, only some highlights will be mentioned.

The original Thresholds project ran out of money and was closed in August, 1975. At that time SATE and BAUL were making efforts to obtain new funding. However, these refunding efforts were stalled

\*Data for the Historical Chronicle are taken from (1) interviews with the Thresholds project director and the evaluation and research specialist in January, 1977, (2) examination of Thresholds records, (3) observation of Thresholds operations, (4) talks with BAUL staff, and (5) interviews with agency personnel.

by difficulties with developing an acceptable Refunding Application and by budget disagreements between SATE and BAWL.

After a year was spent developing a workable Refunding Application, LEAA signed off on the current Thresholds one-year grant effective July 1, 1976 with the stipulation that 12 special conditions be met. It was not until September 23, 1976 that the State Office of Criminal Justice Planning approved the grant (with special conditions satisfied), and Thresholds did not receive its first monies until November 4, 1976.

The person who was the assistant administrator for approximately the last year of the original Thresholds project eventually became the first project director of the current Thresholds.\* It might be mentioned that he was also the Vice President of SATE. This person played a key role in the development of the Thresholds Refunding Application, and he worked very hard (for nearly a year without pay) on both local and national levels to get the project refunded. He has been referred to by several community and agency persons interviewed as "the person who got Thresholds refunded."

However, the first project director for Thresholds did not have experience with developing new programs and he lacked necessary administrative and management skills with which to put his good ideas

\*The current Thresholds project has had two directors. The first project director served from July, 1976 through May, 1977 at which time a staff reorganization took place, and the title of the position was changed to "project administrator." The second director (referred to in this report as the project administrator) has served from June, 1976 to the present.



into operation. It is remarkable that, mostly due to high energy and commitment, he was able to accomplish as much as he did. With the expectation of monies to come, he took occupancy of the building at 8924 Holly Street on July 1, 1976. Job announcements were posted in August and the core staff were hired by the end of September. This was all done before the project had received any funds.

At first staff morale and commitment was very high; all staff members (all but one were ex-offenders) were excited by the Thresholds concept and were pleased to be part of the project. None of the staff expected the impending problems which are part of the normal development of an organization. It is important to keep in mind that Thresholds is vulnerable to all the normal problems and pressures that confront developing organizations as well as problems unique to Thresholds itself. All young organizations struggling for survival inevitably encounter threats to their existence and to their optimism. Their survival depends on such factors as dedication, understanding, hope, and a great deal of support. Problems encountered by developing organizations can be viewed from two basic perspectives: (1) if expected, the problems are seen as normal developmental stages that must be worked through; or (2) if not expected, the problems are seen as threats to the new organization and are cause for alarm. Threshold's early development seemed to be characterized by viewing problems in the latter way.

When the problems began, the staff's excitement turned to

confusion and frustration. The main problems during the months of October, November, and December, 1976 included: (1) difficulties in getting monies for staff salaries and consultant fees; (2) lack of administrative and management skills with which to keep staff focused on the tasks to be performed; (3) lack of adequate clerical help and office equipment; and (4) lack of outside support for the project.

It should be mentioned here that Thresholds has been jointly administered by SATE and BAUL (see Organization Chart, Appendix A). SATE has been charged with personnel issues and project operations, while BAUL has been responsible for fiscal management and technical assistance. In addition, SATE and BAUL were to provide representatives to serve as Threshold's Coordinating Committee. However, no Coordinating Committee has yet been formed. There seem to be inherent difficulties with having two parties responsible for the administration of a project. Without specific designation of responsibility, important functions often get overlooked.

In January, 1977, Thresholds was provided with a technical assistance person from BAUL. However, the project's contract year was already half over, and the potential helpfulness of this person to the project was hampered by a strained relationship between Thresholds first director and BAUL. This strained relationship seemed to be due to a difference in style between Thresholds first director and BAUL staff. BAUL had the fiscal responsibility for the Thresholds grant, and BAUL staff paid close attention to the contractual constraints

under which the project was to operate. In contrast, Thresholds first director was an "action" person who viewed the contractual constraints as hindrances to the project. The first Thresholds director was frustrated when BAUL staff acted according to constraints, and he began to view BAUL as trying to impair the Thresholds project.

The Social Action Research Center (SARC) began its nine-month involvement as the impact evaluator of Thresholds on January 3, 1977. Within the first week of observing project operations and discussing the project with staff, a couple of significant issues became apparent.

First, it was obvious that, although the project was already half way through its one year contract period, Thresholds was still in a pre-operational stage of functioning. The staff were still dealing with internal problems, and no significant progress had yet been made on any of the project goals and objectives.

A second significant issue was that although staff was talented and highly motivated, the project leadership lacked necessary organizational and management skills and were not receiving training in this area. The project administration was obviously unaware of the intricate dynamics of developing organizations. It was expected that the project would bloom naturally, and the staff became frustrated and discouraged when they found that this wasn't the case. Vague assignments were being delegated without accountability, and it seemed as if the project was just spinning its wheels. Internal communications had broken down, and scheduled weekly meetings had not met for over a month.

In discussing our observations with the staff, we found them to be open and responsive to any feedback and suggestions we could offer. Over and above contractual obligations, SARC consultants offered to provide Thresholds staff with a program development model for organizational self-study.\* Briefly, SARC assisted Thresholds staff in re-examining the organization's needs, clarifying its goals, analyzing its force field, and developing an ongoing planning and feedback system. The basic goal was to promote the more effective functioning of the Thresholds organization--to focus on the organization's task and to create a feedback system which would continue to provide the information required to make regular, effective decisions.

Thresholds staff members quickly adopted the program development techniques. Regular weekly staff meetings were once again held with SARC staff in attendance. In the meetings wall charts were utilized on which Thresholds staff wrote the plans for the coming week: who will do what by when. At the following meeting, they referred to the charts for the past week and heard reports from each person who was assigned a specific task. Positive reinforcement was given for completed tasks, problems were discussed for troublesome tasks, and the entire staff was provided with the overall picture of what the Thresholds "team" was doing.

\*Blanton, Judith and Alley, Sam, Program Development: A Manual for Organizational Self-Study, published pursuant to Contract No. HSM-42-72-143, National Institute of Mental Health, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1975.

As the Thresholds staff began to work together again, some interpersonal conflicts from the early months of the project were rekindled. During the spring months there was a high rate of staff turnover, a problem common to developing organizations. As one experienced TAG member said in an interview, "It often takes two to three years for a program like Thresholds to develop a workable staff."

Vacant staff positions were filled with competent new people, and Thresholds began to make significant progress. Agencies began referring youth to the project, school counseling classes began, Neighborhood Councils were formed, and in-service training sessions were instituted.

During the month of May, the SATE Board of Directors performed a vital function. The Board determined that internal difficulties were hampering the project, and they decided that a staff reorganization would give the project additional flexibility to accomplish its goals. The BAUL provided technical assistance, such as formulating job descriptions, for the new organizational structure which was put into effect on June 1, 1977 (see "Revised Organizational Chart," Appendix B). Shortly following the staff reorganization, Thresholds' first director left the project.

Coinciding with the staff reorganization, the project received a monitoring visit from the State Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) during the first week in June. The monitoring visit was in response to the project's application for a three month extension.

The State OCJP representatives were favorably impressed by the project and recommended that the extension be granted. Toward the end of June Thresholds received notice that the project would be extended through September 30, 1977.

Our evaluation team interviewed staff members one month before and again one month after the staff reorganization and the OCJP monitoring visit took place. In the eight interviews conducted before, the staff mostly pessimistic about the future of the project, reported a high degree of frustration. They indicated that they were discouraged for two reasons: (1) they were unhappy with the project's administration; and (2) they were anxious about the scheduled ending period for the Thresholds grant. Some representative quotes from the interviews demonstrate the mood of the staff before the reorganization and extension. One staff member said, "The project will fail unless some drastic action is taken." Another stated, "It's a maze of confusion. We are given the responsibility for a job but no authority to do it." Yet another said, "The project lacks proper administration. It's a charade." Another member responded, "The staff can only be as strong as the administration." And finally, another member said, "On paper the project seems beautiful, but it's not working."

The eight staff interviews conducted after the reorganization and successful monitoring visit showed an amazing change in staff morale. The staff were unanimous in their support of the reorgan-

ization. Representative quotes depict the change in attitude. One staff member said, "The reorganization is beautiful. It's really working. I feel 100% more effective. I'm now freed up to do my job." Another stated, "The reorganization served a much needed purpose. Communications have drastically improved. People are now free to do their jobs. Seeing that the board (SATE Board) will make decisions that are not popular, seeing that they are really interested in the project and its goals, really gave me a boost." Another member said, "There has been an entire change of morale. There has been a renewal of commitment on everybody's part. The staff are hopeful and optimistic. We now have a nonthreatening type environment. We're now getting volunteers, and the Neighborhood Council attendance is up 1000%." Another staff member responded, "The change was the best thing that could ever happen to this project. The place is happening now. People are told what needs to be done, and they're set free to do it." Finally, another member said, " Before, action was always about something controversial rather than work oriented. Too often staff time was used to defuse a dispute. And this was so frustrating! We've still got a ways to go, but now it's much easier to do things. People have been released to do things, and they get to immediately see the fruits of what they're doing."

The evaluation staff observed this change in morale and how it positively affected the project's operation. The staff restruc-

turing and the three month extension to the life of the project both appeared to give new energy to the project staff.

The summer months were characterized by a favorable high level of activity on the part of Thresholds line staff, while the administrative staff was kept busy with the issue of keeping the project alive by trying to locate a source for continued funding.

As the project's extension expiration date approached without a committed source for refunding, project staff once again began to show signs of discouragement and depression. During late August and all of September, discussions with Thresholds staff and observations by SARC staff showed a noticeably high rate of absenteeism and illness among Thresholds staff. This fluctuation in morale seems to be characteristic of programs that operate on "soft" money. A great deal of insecurity is generated around the question, "Will we still be here next month?"

In September the project again applied for, and was granted, a three month extension. However, not enough funds were left in the Thresholds grant to support the whole project, and decisions had to be made about which staff functions were most essential and which would be eliminated.

In an effort to keep the program going until hoped for funding would come through, the project was reduced in scope in October. It was decided that continuing direct counseling services to youth referrals was most essential. Therefore, the streetworker unit along with a skeleton administrative/clerical staff was maintained while nearly half the project's staff positions were terminated.



## Thresholds Goals and Objectives

The Thresholds project was designed to meet certain needs of the East Oakland community. In this section we will paraphrase the needs as they are discussed in the Thresholds Refunding Application. Following this will be a presentation of Thresholds goals and objectives as they appear in the Refunding Application.

### Needs

#### A. Need for Organizing to Make Service Delivery More Effective

According to the refunding proposal, the community needs to organize in order to make service delivery to its citizens more effective. The East Oakland community is composed largely of minority and low-income persons who face a network of social problems. They encounter differential treatment by public institutions, and they are rarely involved in decision-making processes which ultimately determine the quality of life in their community. The effects of a worsening economy--small businesses closing, larger businesses and industry leaving the area, twice the number of persons unemployed as compared to the overall city unemployment rate--have especially harsh impact on this community.

Past experiences of the community have not been very encouraging. For example, the proposal describes how over the past two decades citizen groups in Oakland have voiced criticism of various policies and practices of the criminal justice system. Sometimes

the system listened but, without actually dealing effectively with the problem, enacted measures designed to somewhat appease the complaining community. Consequently, over the years, some of the citizenry has developed a sense of apathy which, in too many instances, has advanced to the stage of alienation or even hostility.

The proposal describes how the community needs to reverse this sense of powerlessness and to accept the responsibility for their problems. They can then begin to work toward the resolution of those problems. The process of changing institutions so that service delivery is effective has historically been accomplished through mass community involvement. Any program designed to serve as an alternative to the existing system must involve citizens in order to broaden the impact of the program.

B. Need for Developing Local Competence

The proposal describes how the community needs to develop local competence. As stated above, the citizenry must accept the responsibility for the community's problems and they need to develop competencies necessary for correcting those problems. In order to overcome the public apathy and tacit acceptance of the situation in East Oakland, a broad effort must be made to make it understood that the existing practices are neither effective nor necessary, and more appropriate alternatives can be developed and implemented.

For example, the proposal states that too often a youth

charged with criminal or with noncriminal offenses are subjected to the injustices of the juvenile court without being accorded due process. If it is the lack of knowledge by parents of their rights which allows the perpetuation of this practice, then the citizenry must be educated and exposed to what possible alternatives there may be to this system.

C. Need for an Alternative to the Juvenile Justice System

The refunding proposal describes the need for alternatives to the juvenile justice system. Even in the most favorable environment, limitations within the juvenile justice system make it virtually impossible for the system to respond positively to youth needs. Theoretically, the disposition of juvenile offenders relies heavily on a thorough investigation of the youth's background, leading to an accurate assessment of need and delivery of service. The reality is that most courts lack the necessary staff to carry out this function; and even if sufficient staff were available, there is an acute shortage of dispositional alternatives.

The refunding proposal states that the juvenile court was established ostensibly as a means of removing the juvenile offender from the criminal justice system. Yet the initial proposal describes how this civil commitment procedure has drawn even more youth into the system of control by state intervention. This situation is compounded by evidence that criminal processing often does more harm than good.

D. Need for a Youth Resource and Activity Center

There are very few recreational facilities for youth in East Oakland, and there are virtually no other youth resource and counseling facilities in the neighborhood.

Goals and Objectives

Thresholds was set up, then, to fill a variety of needs of the East Oakland community. As a means of addressing these needs, Thresholds proposed three goals with corollary objectives. These goals and objectives are part of the "Program Narrative" portion of the grant contract, and they provide a useful framework for evaluating the project.

Goal I: To increase the level of citizen involvement and cooperation with criminal justice and other public agencies in the planning, implementation, and coordination of crime reduction programs.

Objective A: To organize a Technical Assistance Group (TAG) for the purpose of expanding and improving the coordination of public resources directed at the reduction of youth crime.

Objective B: To develop three Neighborhood Councils to elicit local support for implementation of crime reduction programs.

Objective C: To sponsor a community education forum to discuss with representatives of criminal justice agencies

cooperative ways of reducing crime and alleviating the circumstances which promote it.

Objective D: To develop widespread community support of the program through a formal plan of outreach activities.

Goal II: To divert East Oakland youth from the criminal justice system and to reduce their contact with criminal justice agencies.

Objective A: To enroll 120 youth in a comprehensive, nontraditional program that will include: individual and family counseling, recreational and enrichment activities, and coordination of additional supportive services to enrollees and their families and friends.

Objective B: To establish at least one group counseling class in each of seven East Oakland elementary and secondary schools.

Objective C: To provide crisis-intervention services to East Oakland schools, businesses and residents.

Objective D: To increase program acceptance within the criminal justice diversion network.

Goal III: To reduce the rate of recidivism among ex-convicts employed by the project.

Objective A: To employ not less than 10 ex-convicts as Thresholds staff.

Objective B: To provide in-service training and technical assistance to ex-convicts employed by the project to increase their professional skills and management capability.

Objective C: To provide ex-convicts assistance in career development through a career counseling and educational reimbursement program.

#### Organizational Description

Thresholds is jointly administered by the Bay Area Urban League, Inc. (BAUL), and the Self-Advancement Through Education organization (SATE). Under this joint sponsorship arrangement, BAUL serves as fiscal agent for the project and as a technical assistance resource. SATE is responsible for administration and project operations. According to the Thresholds refunding proposal, the two agencies were to serve the project through a Coordinating Committee. (See "Thresholds Organizational Chart," Appendix A, and Revised Organizational Chart," Appendix B.) However, no Coordinating Committee has been formed to date.

As of September, 1977 Thresholds employed 14 staff members. The staff positions were: project administrator, inter-agency affairs director, associate director for community affairs, community development specialist II, community development specialist I, research and evaluation specialist, head counselor, four streetwork-

er/counselors, administrative secretary, team steno I secretary, and intake receptionist.

The project administrator has been responsible for coordinating, supervising, and directing the overall program. The inter-agency affairs director (position eliminated due to budget constraints) has had the tasks of (1) developing and maintaining working relationships with community organizations and criminal justice agencies, and (2) generating funds for the continuing operation of the project.

Two functional units were established to address the first two project goals: (a) a community development component, and (b) a streetworker/counselor unit.

The community development component (component eliminated in September, 1977, due to budget constraints) consisted of the associate director for community affairs and two community development specialists. This unit was primarily responsible for accomplishing the first project goal. The progress of this component will be discussed in the following section.

The streetworker/counselor unit consists of a head counselor and four streetworker/counselors. The accomplishment of Goal II is the primary focus of this unit. Its progress will be discussed later in this report.

## Evaluation of Goal I

Threshold's first goal is "to increase the level of citizen involvement and cooperation with criminal justice and other public agencies in the planning, implementation, and coordination of crime reduction programs.

As described in the program narrative of the Thresholds contract, the Community Development component has had the main responsibility for implementing Thresholds' first goal. Goal I has been divided into four objectives and we would like to discuss and evaluate each of these objectives in turn.

Objective A: To organize a Technical Assistance Group (TAG) for the purpose of expanding and improving the coordination of public resources directed at the reduction of youth crime.

The Technical Assistance Group (TAG) met a total of five times. The first meeting was held on March 9, 1977 followed by meetings on April 7, April 28, June 23, and, July 28. Of 17 persons who were invited to join TAG, 11 came to at least one meeting. The number of meetings attended ranged from one to four meetings with the average number of meetings attended being 2.5. The 11 members of TAG represent the following groups and organizations: Alameda County Juvenile Probation Department, Alameda County Office of the Public Defender, Bay Area Rapid Transit, California Youth Authority, Department of Parks and Recreation, East Oakland



Switchboard, Elmhurst Board of Directors, Oakland Police Department, Oakland Public School District, and Urban Outreach.

We have interviewed individually all 11 members of TAG. The average length of the interviews was approximately 45 minutes. The TAG members were asked about their feelings regarding TAG and about their opinions of the Thresholds project. (See Table 2.)

For the most part, the members were disappointed with the progress of TAG. They experienced a lot of confusion around the role that TAG was to play in the overall Thresholds plan. As one member put it, "Thresholds did a poor job of explaining TAG's role. I have to keep asking over and over again, what am I here for? What is my function?"

Some of the TAG members felt that TAG had potential and that given time it could develop into a productive group. One of these persons stated, "I've worked in programs like Thresholds before. I know that it takes five or eight years just to get the program established and plug the leaks. You can't expect to bring a group like TAG together without having some problems. Most people want you to prove yourself before they'll give you their sanction."

Our evaluation staff would tend to agree with this TAG member. The TAG had too little time to develop into a productive group. On the average, members attended only 2.5 meetings. Perhaps Thresholds could have provided more clear leadership in defining the role that TAG was to take. However, it is expected that a certain degree of

confusion would arise in a group of quite unrelated persons coming together for the first few meetings. It is difficult to give a fair evaluation of the impact of TAG based on only five meetings.

A clearer picture emerged when the TAG members discussed the Thresholds project. On the whole, the TAG members felt that the Thresholds concept was good and that the project had the potential to be very beneficial to the East Oakland community if some serious problems which were hampering its progress could be solved. The TAG interview indicated two general problem areas.

Regarding the first problem area, most of the TAG members stated that Thresholds staff need to develop more professional attitudes toward their jobs and that they need to improve their management and administrative skills (see Table 2). Comments in this area included: "Staff lack direction"; "due dates come and go without any action taken"; and "staff usually don't show up or are late for appointments."

The second general problem area indicated by TAG members was that Thresholds needs to foster more supportive relationships with criminal justice and other community agencies, and with the community at large. Over half of the TAG members made such comments as: "Thresholds people always appear defensive"; "Thresholds staff seem abrasive"; and "They [Thresholds staff] treat us as if we were an inconvenient necessity."

In order for Thresholds staff to relate better to TAG members,

TABLE 2

Responses of the T.A.G. Members to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Strengths of the T.A.G.

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 11 Who Cited Strength</u>
1. The T.A.G. has given constructive feedback to Thresholds staff.	5
2. T.A.G. has potential and is moving in the right direction.	4
3. T.A.G. has helped to improve communications between the Juvenile Probation Department and Thresholds staff.	2
4. Members of T.A.G. are enthusiastic and concerned.	2
5. Through the T.A.G. various agencies and organizations have come together around problems of youth in East Oakland.	1

Responses of T.A.G. Members to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Problems of the T.A.G.

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 11 Who Cited Problem</u>
1. The goals and objectives of T.A.G. need to be clarified.	7
2. The purpose of T.A.G. needs to be clarified.	6
3. Participation on T.A.G. needs to be improved.	6
4. The relationship between T.A.G. and Thresholds needs to be clarified.	5
5. Ideas and suggestions given to Thresholds by T.A.G. were not followed up on.	4

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 6. T.A.G. needs to offer more support to Thresholds.   | 3 |
| 7. Thresholds has treated T.A.G. as an inconvenient necessity rather than as a meaningful part of the project. | 3 |
| 8. T.A.G. needs more time to develop into a productive group.  | 2 |
| 9. T.A.G. needs more representation from members of East Oakland community.                                    | 1 |

Responses of T.A.G. Members to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Strengths of Thresholds

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 11 Who Cited Strength</u>
1. Thresholds concept is good.	9
2. Thresholds staff is dedicated, capable and persistent.	7
3. Thresholds staff possesses special skills for dealing effectively with problems in the East Oakland community.	3
4. The youth counseling services have been effective.	3
5. The school counseling program has been effective.	2
6. The Thresholds building is in a good location.	2
7. Thresholds has provided constructive employment for ex-offenders.	1
8. Thresholds has no strengths.	1

Responses of T.A.G. Members to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Problems of Thresholds

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 11 Who Cited Problem</u>
1. Thresholds staff needs necessary management and administrative skills.	9
2. The project needs to foster a more supportive relationship with the community.	8
3. Thresholds staff needs to be more clearly focused on the task of the project.	6
4. Thresholds needs to improve communications with criminal justice and other community agencies.	6
5. The project needs to improve the professionalism of staff through better in-service training.	5
6. A Board of Directors for the project needs to be formed.	3
7. Thresholds staff often doesn't show up or is late for appointments.	3
8. Typical of most new social programs, the project has had to spend a lot of time dealing with conflicts and frustrations.	3
9. Thresholds staff appears defensive. It needs to be more open to observation.	3
10. Thresholds has been hampered by a high rate of staff turnover.	3

11. The project needs more recreational equipment and activities for youth. 3
12. Thresholds staff seems abrasive. 2
13. Thresholds needs to focus more on outreach counseling efforts rather than on inhouse counseling. 2
14. The project is too ambitious. Staff is spread too thin. 2
15. The project needs more time to become effective. 2
16. Staff received and maintained jobs through personal friendships. 1
17. Thresholds need more adequate youth involvement. 1

it might be advisable for Thresholds to address these two general problem areas through in-service training sessions. Sessions could focus on such topics as: (1) improving the staff's professionalism through developing administrative and management skills which would enhance the ex-offenders' natural talents for relating to community problems; and (2) exploring the political realities of Thresholds as a developing organization.

Objective B: To develop three Neighborhood Councils to elicit local support for implementation of crime reduction programs.

Data for the evaluation of the Neighborhood Council have been collected from first hand observation of most Council functions, minutes of Council meetings, interviews of community development staff, and interviews with Neighborhood Council members.

Attempts to elicit community involvement varied from personal contacts with community organizations, businesses and churches to door-to-door canvassing of neighborhoods. The first Neighborhood Council function was a luncheon meeting on April 6, 1977, which was attended by 51 adults and 22 youth. From April through mid-August Council meetings were scheduled bi-weekly. The Neighborhood Council was terminated in August due to the discontinuation of the Community Development component.

Attendance was sparse at times due to conflicting community activities and breakdowns in scheduling communications, but there appeared to be 15 to 30 regularly attending Council members. During

the initial meetings the Thresholds staff discussed the purpose and function of the project and oriented the Council members to the role they would play. On May 19, 1977, elections of Council officers were held, and leadership of the meetings was turned over to them. While the original plan called for three Neighborhood Councils, the Council continued to meet as one body. This strategy was adopted in order to generate more energy among the members. However, the members identified themselves as belonging to three neighborhoods of residence within the Thresholds catchment area, and the future goal was to form three Councils.

The Council members were slow to take on their responsibilities; they appeared hesitant to raise and deal with issues. However, as an indication of action, two committees were appointed: (1) a membership committee which worked on strategies to recruit new members; and (2) an information committee whose function was to inform the Council of issues which affect area residents, especially topics relating to criminal justice programs.

The staff faced innumerable delays in getting the Council started, but it appeared to be gaining momentum monthly until it was terminated in August. For example, meetings were being held regularly and attendance was picking up. Citizens were slowly becoming involved in Thresholds and their community, and it was felt that the Council represented an important potential resource for developing local competence and improving the living conditions of East Oakland.



It is unfortunate that the Neighborhood Council was terminated just as the community was becoming involved. This action tends to reinforce the community's negative experience with social programs that come and go; their perception is that these programs can't be depended upon. Thresholds community development staff was well aware of the community's experience, and they felt bad about "letting the community down." The Neighborhood Council was terminated in August because, according to one Thresholds staff member, "If we aren't going to be around next month, we should quit leading the community on."

We interviewed individually 10 regular members of the Neighborhood Council. The interviews averaged approximately 40 minutes and focused on (1) the members' opinions of the Council, and (2) their perceptions of the Thresholds project. The 10 Council members had resided in East Oakland for an average of nine years, and they all had children living in East Oakland. However, most of the children were either too young or too old to participate in the Thresholds youth program. Only two members had children involved in Thresholds. Eight of the 10 members interviewed represented East Oakland organizations. These organizations included: Alameda County Health Services, Alameda County Mental Health Association, Bay Area Rights Management, Black Veterans, East Oakland Community Mental Health Program, Elmhurst District Board, Juvenile Probation Department, Oakland Head Start, and the Parent-Child Center (see Table 3).

In general the Council members interviewed were very positive

TABLE 3

Responses of Neighborhood Council Members to Open-Ended  
Questions Regarding the Strengths  
of the Neighborhood Council

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 10 Who Cited Strength</u>
1. The Thresholds Neighborhood Council concept is good.	8
2. The Neighborhood Council meetings have provided a forum for community members to discuss mutual problems.	5
3. The regular members of the Neighborhood Council have been motivated and have had good ideas.	3
4. Being part of a brand new social service program, the fact that the Neighborhood Council has survived the first year shows strength.	1

Responses of Neighborhood Council Members to Open-Ended  
Questions Regarding the Problems  
of the Neighborhood Council

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 10 Who Cited Problem</u>
1. Thresholds Neighborhood Council needs more community involvement.	9
2. The Neighborhood Council needs more time in order to develop into an effective community organization.	7

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3. Communication has been one-way: from Thresholds to the Neighborhood Council. A mechanism needs to be developed for Thresholds to accept input from the Council. | 4 |
| 4. The Neighborhood Council needs to be better organized and implemented.  | 4 |
| 5. The Neighborhood Council needs a more clearly defined role.   | 3 |
| 6. The Council meetings need more leadership and direction.  | 3 |
| 7. The Neighborhood Council needs input from the community's youth.  | 3 |
| 8. The Council needs to develop a sense of accomplishment by achieving some results.   | 3 |
| 9. The Neighborhood Council meetings need more publicity.  | 2 |
| 10. Some community residents are leery about ex-offenders. This issue needs to be addressed.   | 2 |
| 11. The Neighborhood Council needs more representation from the business sector.   | 1 |

Responses of Neighborhood Council Members to Open-Ended  
 Questions Regarding the Strengths  
 of the Thresholds Project

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 10 Who Cited Strength</u>
1. The Thresholds concept is good.	8
2. Thresholds has been doing a good job of counseling youth who have problems.	7

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3. Thresholds has been providing constructive activities for youth.  | 4 |
| 4. Thresholds has provided youth with positive role models.          | 2 |
| 5. Thresholds has provided constructive employment for ex-offenders. | 2 |
| 6. Thresholds has a dedicated staff.                                 | 1 |
| 7. Thresholds 24-hour crisis line has been a valuable service.       | 1 |

Responses of Neighborhood Council Members to Open-Ended

Questions Regarding the Problems

of the Thresholds Project

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Respondents of 10 Who Cited Problem</u>
1. Interaction between Thresholds and the community needs to be improved.	6
2. Thresholds staff needs better administrative and management skills.	5
3. Thresholds needs to combine non-offenders with ex-offenders on staff.	3
4. Thresholds has suffered from job insecurity due to lack of funding.	2
5. The Thresholds program has suffered from a high rate of staff turnover.	1
6. Thresholds needs more publicity.	1
7. To handle such a large job, Thresholds needs more staff.	1

with regard to both the Neighborhood Council and the Thresholds project. They viewed the Council and the project as being beneficial to their community and expressed concern about the problem of continued funding.

The Council members indicated that they would like to see more two-way communication between Thresholds and the community. The community members tended to agree that Thresholds staff "talk good, but they don't always listen too well."

Objective C: To sponsor a community education forum to discuss with representatives of criminal justice agencies cooperative ways of reducing crime and alleviating the circumstances which promote it.

On August 3, 1977, Thresholds presented a one-day community education forum entitled "The Criminal Justice System: Impact on Youth Today." Hosted by the Thresholds project administrator and staff, the morning speakers presentation included: "Keynote Address" by the mayor of Oakland; "Crime Trends and Treatment Resources" by Acting Chief of Police; "The Juvenile Probation Process" by the director of the Probation Department's Juvenile Division; "Current Laws Affecting Juveniles" by the supervisor of the Juvenile Division of the Public Defender's Office; and "Dynamic Processes which Contribute to Delinquency" by a psychologist from San Francisco State University.

The afternoon presentation included a talk on "Legislative Matters and the Soft Money Merry-go-round" by the Executive Director

of the State Office of Criminal Justice Planning and a message from a personal representative of the Governor. This was followed by a spirited interaction between the audience and a panel consisting of representatives from the Police Department, Probation Department, Public Defender's Office, Thresholds project, and moderated by the consulting psychologist.

Approximately 90 people participated in the forum. Our evaluation staff distributed a questionnaire to obtain feedback on the forum (see Community Education Forum Questionnaire Results, Table 4). Feedback from the audience indicates that the forum was very well received. The participants felt that this type of forum is a good structure for bridging the gap between the community and the criminal justice agencies. Additional forums like this were requested by 88% of the respondents.

A highlight of the forum was an offer from the Governor's personal representative to bring the entire Governor's Cabinet to meet with citizens of Oakland. Thresholds staff followed up on this offer and helped organize and co-hosted a "Governor's Cabinet Townhouse Meeting" in East Oakland on September 28, 1977. Approximately 900 people participated in this meeting which centered around a discussion of potential state resources and programs for Oakland.

Thresholds staff's efforts on this objective were commendable and the project was highly successful in achieving interaction between the community and criminal justice agencies.

TABLE 4

Community Education Forum Questionnaire

(N=25)

1. Are you a resident of Elmhurst?

a. Yes	24%
b. No	72%
c. No response	4%

2. Do you represent an agency or organization?

a. Yes	52%
b. No	48%

If yes, what agency or organization?

Afro Craft Association  
Alameda County School Attendance Review Board  
Alameda County Probation Department  
Barrio Youth Service Center  
California Youth Authority  
Children and Youth Project  
Community Reformed Church  
Inter-Agency Collaboration Effort  
Juvenile Probation Department  
Kairos Residential Crisis Community  
Self-Advancement Through Education  
Sobrante Park Home Improvement Association

3. Are you attending the forum?

a. Morning only	52%
b. Afternoon only	4%
c. All day	44%

4. Do you feel that this forum was well organized?

Agree	- - - - -	Disagree	No Response		
1	2	3	4	5	
(44%)	(28%)	(24%)			(4%)

5. Do you feel that this forum has improved relations between community residents and public agencies?

Agree - - - - - Disagree No response

1	2	3	4	5	
(48%)	(4%)	(40%)	(4%)	(8%)	(8%)

6. Has this forum helped you better understand the criminal justice system?

Agree - - - - - Disagree No response

1	2	3	4	5	
(48%)	(16%)	(36%)	(8%)		

7. Do you think that forums like this could help improve the criminal justice system?

Agree - - - - - Disagree No response

1	2	3	4	5	
(64%)	(28%)	(4%)			(4%)

8. Before coming to the forum, were you familiar with the Thresholds project?

Agree - - - - - Disagree No response

1	2	3	4	5	
(72%)	(4%)	(12%)	(4%)	(4%)	(4%)

9. Would you like to see another forum like this?

Agree - - - - - Disagree No response

1	2	3	4	5	
(88%)	(8%)	(4%)			

(Numbers 10 - 12 are open-ended questions.)

10. What did you feel were the strengths of the forum?

Diversity and quality of speakers 40%



Good information both about the juvenile justice system and the problems of the community	32%
The Moderator (Consulting psychologist)	24%
Well organized	12%
Good lunch	12%
Question and answer discussion between community residents and agency personnel	12%
Offer to bring the Governor's Cabinet to meet with the citizens of Oakland	4%

11. What did you feel were weaknesses of the forum?

Would like to see more community representation (especially youth) in audience and on panel	36%
Morning speakers (higher officials) left before question and answer session	24%
Would like to have more time for question and answer session	20%
Would like a clearer picture of the juvenile justice system and how it relates to youth and the community	16%
Concluded without any resolutions or solutions to problems	8%
Began late	4%
Should have had more media coverage	4%
Some questions too long	4%

12. If you have other comments or suggestions about the forum, please write below.

Hold the next forum at Thresholds to allow community residents to attend (or else provide transportation)	16%
---	-----

Need more discussion of innovative ways to deal with problems facing youth	16%
Please follow up on offer to meet with the Governor's Cabinet	8%
Thank you for a good day	4%

Objective D: To develop widespread community support for the program through a formal plan of outreach activities.

Thresholds staff members have approached this objective in many ways. Although few records are kept pertaining to outreach activities, staff interviews revealed some examples.

The Thresholds staff have made speaking engagements to a wide variety of community groups, schools, colleges, and radio stations. Their talks focus on the Thresholds project as well as on the general field of delinquency.

A group called the Community Neighborhood Alert Patrol (CNAP) makes Thresholds their base. CNAP is made up of 30 youth and 30 adults who patrol the neighborhood after dark and report any seeming irregularities to the police.

The Thresholds staff solicited local businesses and received enough food to serve lunch to over 70 people at one Neighborhood Council function. And, on another occasion, the project hosted a "Parents Night" with the Zodiac Youth Club which was attended by 165 people. (For list of additional activities see Table 7.)

#### Evaluation of Goal II

Thresholds second goal is: To divert East Oakland youth from the criminal justice system and to reduce their contact with criminal justice agencies.

As described in the program narrative of the Thresholds contract,

the streetworker/counselor unit is the main vehicle for implementing Thresholds second goal. It is composed of five ex-convicts, one of whom is the head counselor. In order to implement the goal of delinquency diversion the streetworker/counselor unit has four objectives. Briefly, they are: (A) To enroll 120 youth in a non-traditional counseling program which involves recreation and exposure trips; (B) To establish counseling classes in East Oakland; (C) To provide crisis intervention services; and (D) To increase program acceptance within the criminal justice network.

The evaluation data which is discussed under each objective is collected through: (1) interviews with Threshold staff; (2) with youth referrals; (3) with students in counseling classes; (4) with junior high school guidance coordinators; (5) from observations of class sessions; (6) from sitting in on case management sessions; as well as (7) through the firsthand examination of filed reports. The initial interviews were conducted for a minimum of one hour with the entire staff of the streetworker component, and periodic formal and informal discussions with them kept the evaluation facts updated. In some cases, discrepancies were found in various records which are kept. This suggests that better coordination of in-house data collection is needed. It should be noted, however, that observations over time have shown that improvements have been made in tightening up the written record-keeping procedures.

Objective A: To enroll 120 youth in a comprehensive, non-traditional program that will include: individual and family counseling, recreational and enrichment activities, and coordination of additional supportive services to enrollees and their families and friends.

At the end of October, talks with the Project Administrator and firsthand examination of files indicate that 87 youth have been officially referred for individual counseling. Most of the referrals were made during two peak periods, February-March and then July. The pattern of referrals from outside agencies declined steadily toward the contracted end of the Project, June 30 (see Figure 1). It should be noted that in addition to the youth who have been officially referred to the project, many more of the community's youth have participated in Thresholds activities (e.g., see Table 7).

In interviews, several probation officers pointed out their dissatisfaction with Thresholds' early administration and added that since the Project was folding it made little sense to continue sending referrals. The upsurge in referrals from outside agencies during June and July corresponds to two important factors: (1) a successful monitoring visit from the Office of Criminal Justice Planning which led to a three month extension of the project; and (2) a restructuring of Thresholds administrative staff.

In contrast with the pattern of referrals from Probation and

Police, the category of self-parent referrals peaked during the same two periods, February-March and July, as agency referrals, but also peaked a third time in May when other sources were declining.

As the graph (Figure 1, Number of Referrals by Month and By Referring Agency), and the Profile of Youth Referrals indicate, the Probation Department sent 53% of youth referrals to Thresholds while the Police Department sent 17.8%. One agency person said in an interview that a project such as Thresholds has "to prove itself" before his department would seriously consider using it. The number of self-parent referrals (24, or 28.6% of total referrals) suggests that Thresholds was known in the local community and also that they were viewed as a resource for recreation and counseling.

The data for the Profile of Youth Referrals were collected through firsthand examination of 84 individual folders in the files of the Thresholds project. As indicated (see Table 5), most of the referrals were male (84.7%) while 15.3% were female. The referrals were predominantly black and a large number (79%) were recorded as attending school. The reasons for referral covered three main areas: theft; burglary; and school adjustment, which involved such problems as truancy and poor academic performance (see Table 5).

Now, with a picture in mind of the pattern of youth referrals in terms of agency and month referred along with the profile of youths and their problems, we will look at the structure of the Thresholds' counseling component and then examine the impact of service delivery.

TABLE 5

Profile of Youth Referrals\*

1. Sex (N = 84)			
	Male		84.7%
	Female		15.3%
2. Age (N = 75)		Average Age: 14.2 years	
8 years	1.3%	13 years	17.3%
9 years	1.3%	14 years	21.3%
10 years	1.3%	15 years	25.3%
11 years	4.0%	16 years	13.3%
12 years	5.3%	17 years	9.3%
3. Ethnic Group (N = 51)			
	Black		98.0%
	Puerto Rican		2.0%
4. Attending School (N = 43)			
	Yes		79.0%
	No		21.0%
5. Reason for Referral (N = 74)			
	Theft		23.0%
	Burglary		18.9%
	School Adjustment		18.9%
	Battery		9.5%

\*Data for this profile were collected from Thresholds case files.  
The variance in N is due to some files lacking information.

Property Violation	5.4%
Robbery	4.1%
Rape	4.1%
Family Problems	4.1%
Grand Theft	2.7%
Assault	2.7%
Arson	2.7%
Auto Theft	2.7%
Fighting	1.4%

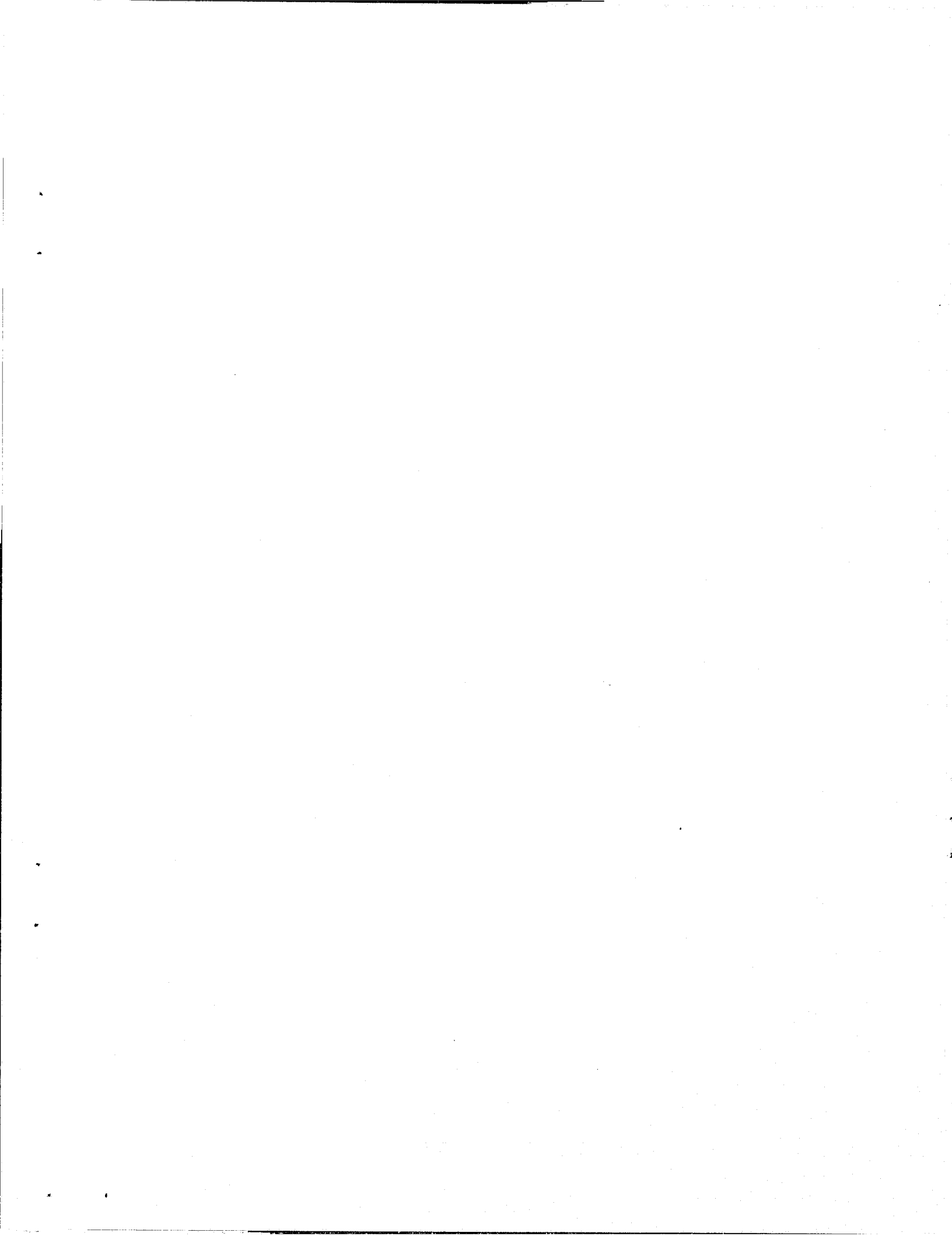
6. Number of Referrals by Agency (N = 84)

Probation	53.6%
Self/Parent	28.6%
Police	17.8%

7. Location of Contact with Thresholds Counselor (N = 394)

Thresholds	38.2%
Phone	36.8%
Home/Other	25.0%





NUMBER OF REFERRALS  
BY MONTH AND BY REFERRING AGENCY

Number of Referrals

Key  
Probation ■■■■■■  
Police ————  
Self/Parent ++++++  
Total ○○○○○○

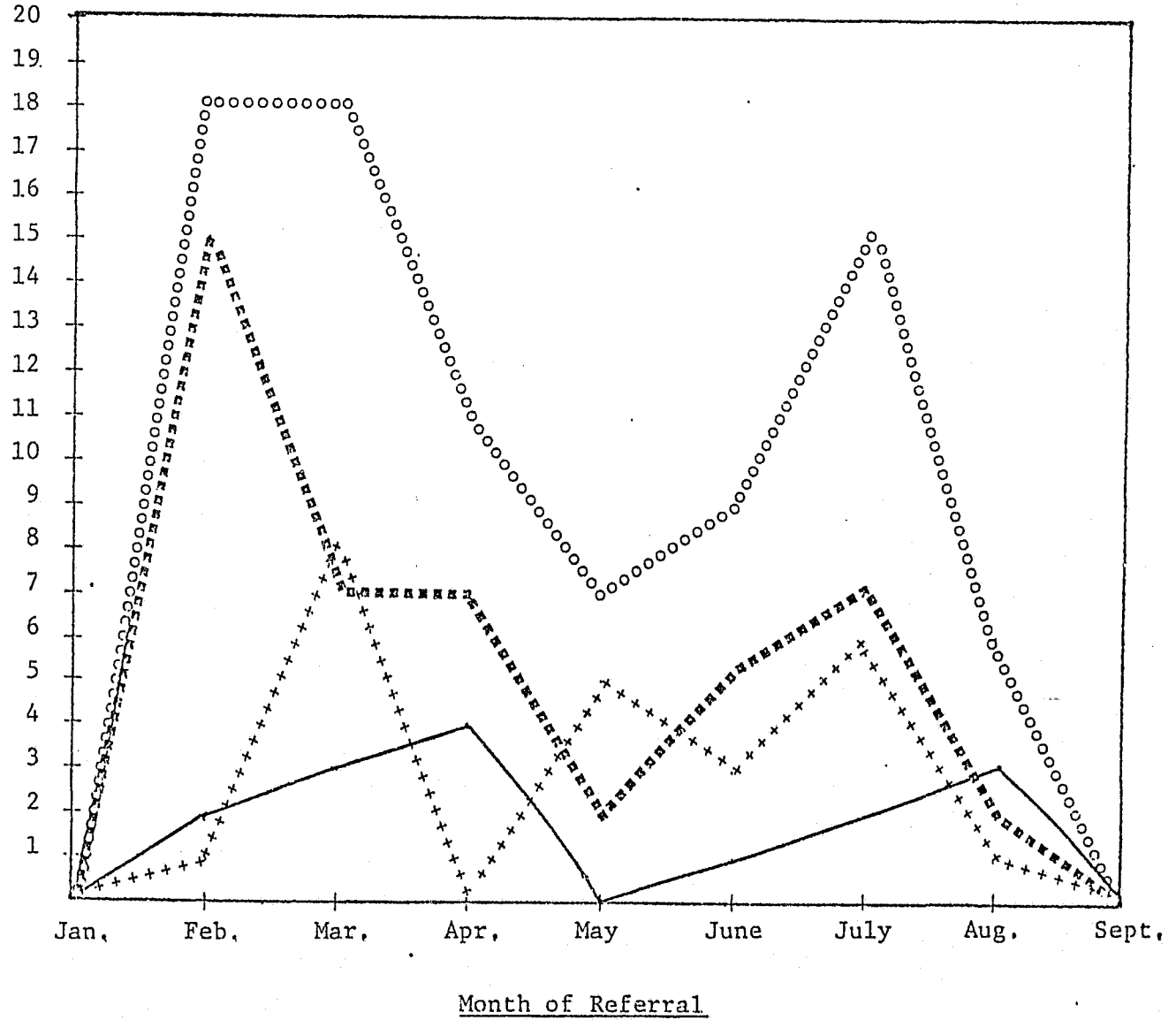


FIGURE 1

The street/worker counselor unit is composed of ex-offenders, one of whom serves as head counselor. First we offer a description of the functions of the head counselor.

The head counselor is responsible for client flow, which includes:

- a. Screening initial referral forms to determine their appropriateness, and giving prompt feedback to the referring agency. This step is crucial in helping to further program acceptance within the criminal justice diversion network and should be given top priority.
- b. Delegating the case at hand to a streetworker who secures the appropriate signature on the parental agreement form.
- c. Having the intake form filled out by the streetworker.
- d. Approving the case assignment to a specific streetworker.

Although steps regulating the initial stages of client flow have been formalized, there is not a functional system, e.g., formal letter, for giving prompt feedback on each client to the referring agency. The evaluators believe that prompt feedback in formal rather than informal terms would further program acceptance within the criminal justice diversion network. In meetings with police and probation department representatives, it has been noted that the departments are not receiving notification.

What actually happens in the individual counseling session is largely determined by the streetworkers. They explain the rationale behind the Thresholds project, the philosophy of self-

advancement through education, and conduct what might be referred to as "reality therapy" in terms of making absolutely clear what the inevitable consequences are of continued delinquency, i.e., getting hooked into criminal life and eventual prison terms. Although the streetworkers do not assume that ex-convicts automatically make good counselors, they feel their life experience with prison and crime tends to make it easier to deal with problems surrounding the self-image of the delinquent, more particularly, the pressures and rewards of peer group recognition for being the "tough guy." They attempt to foster alternative models for building self-esteem. More details of this approach will be given in the discussion of the school counseling classes. Findings on the effects of Thresholds counseling on the youth will be discussed later.

While the initial stages of client flow look good, and the content of the first counseling sessions is sound, questions can be raised regarding follow-up procedures with youth. In-house records suggest this problem by documenting a comparatively low number of mean counseling sessions per youth. The Thresholds monthly report cites a figure of 1.7 for April, 0.5 for May, and 0.6 for June. Staff interviews indicate that they believe clients are seen more often but some visits are unrecorded. We suggest that the proposed service delivery plan be instituted at the final stage of the intake procedure in order to further guarantee a sustained client

flow. The service delivery plan would encourage a written assessment of client needs and a treatment plan which would include a schedule of future appointments for counseling sessions. Written records show no implementation of this essential device.

The streetworkers also concern themselves with problems besetting the families of youth enrollees. From our observations, what is called "family counseling" on the Thresholds' monthly report forms often involves interactions with single family members (e.g., helping a youth's brother find a job). For family counseling, the figures from the monthly report are 39 for April, 7 for May, 13 for June, and 16 for July, totalling 75 families (family members) receiving counseling service. Unfortunately, no process notes were available to corroborate the stated number of families participating in group counseling. Evaluation staff recommend that in-house records differentiate between the informal home visits and contacts with families and extended counseling sessions, and that they be documented via the appropriate forms.

A core feature of the Thresholds referral counseling program is the case management concept. A case management team, consisting of a Thresholds administrative person, head counselor, streetworker, consulting psychologist, probation officer (when applicable), and the youth referral's parent(s), is to convene around each referral's case in order to develop an individualized service delivery plan. The case management team addresses the uniqueness of each youth's

situation: why is this particular youth in trouble, and what is the best approach for dealing with the youth's problem? The case management team is a focal point of the Thresholds program insofar as it serves a variety of needs: (a) to provide counseling to the enrollee's mother and input on the handling of the youth; (b) to analyze client needs and adopt a service plan; (c) to provide in-house training for streetworkers by sharpening their diagnostic skills with the aid of the consulting psychologist; and (d) to provide collaborative experience with probation officers.

Threshold's monthly reports indicate that case management sessions were held only three times (with a total of 12 cases handled) from April through June. However, Thresholds staff report that unrecorded case management sessions were held regularly without the consulting psychologist being present. The low number of sessions reported was due to contract difficulties during the month of May which prevented attendance of the consulting psychologist. In July, the project ran out of consulting funds, and Thresholds was forced to sever relations with the psychologist.

One of the evaluators attended two of the recorded case management sessions (a total of four cases) and observed that they were conducted in a professional and efficient manner. A few composite examples will be given to convey the counseling skills of the staff, which were supplemented and synthesized by the outside psychologist. In one case session, the team displayed sophistication in addressing

the intricate problems of estrangement in the mother-child relationship of troubled youth. Using everyday language, the team talked to the referral's mother about complex psychological issues. They took her personal concerns into consideration but helped her expand her perspective to include the impingements of social reality (i.e., the courts, the "joint"). They gave her sympathy while cautioning against self-pity. A streetworker tactfully approached the enrollee's mother's conviction that the judge was racist, and pointed out how she had prejudged the court. The youth who was charged with "battery and malicious conduct" was sentenced to "home supervision" which showed leniency, explained Thresholds counselors, rather than racism on the part of the judge and court. The mother was relieved to hear the court's verdict explained.

Another difficult issue tackled by the case management team was evasion of responsibility for wrong doing. To avoid blame, and to preserve something of their battered self-esteem, juveniles often disown the legal and social consequences of their acts. They frequently defend and excuse their actions by invoking the injustices of a racist society. Thresholds' counselors pointed out to the mother that "two wrongs don't make a right." While acknowledging the hardships caused by prejudice and poverty, the Thresholds' streetworkers showed the mother how social ills are often used to deny individual responsibility for delinquent behavior. In the sessions observed by evaluation staff, all the mothers expressed

verbal appreciation for the Thresholds program and the help they received in dealing with their problems.

We felt that the counseling skills of the case management team in the cases observed demonstrates the potential power of providing quality service delivery. Unfortunately, after the contractual arrangements with the consulting psychologist were settled, the unit only met twice thereafter. According to an interview with the Project Administrator the case management sessions were discontinued in July due to lack of funds for outside consultation. Since the case management team functions to serve a variety of needs, it is unfortunate that some means could not have been found to maintain its activity.

One further point might be noted. It was observed that the youth was not brought into the session at any point. We would suggest that, when appropriate, the youth referral be brought into the session at one point to benefit from the exchange of insights and to learn more about his/herself and his/her problems. In addition, this process would (1) allow the youth to have a voice in what happens to him/her, and (2) would help agency personnel develop a more complete understanding of the youth and his/her problems. The evaluation team also suggests:

1. That the Service Delivery Plan be recorded in written form. Although a procedure was developed, examination of referral folders show no written data around treatment procedures.



2. That a section be included in the Thresholds monthly report which covers case management meetings. Both the number of meetings and the number of cases would be useful information.

3. That written referrals be provided to the enrollee's parent or guardian and the youth, with copies going to in-house records. The monthly reports indicate that few, if any, referrals to other agencies are ever made. Yet observations made during visits to the project do indicate that such referrals are made more often than are recorded. Accurate record of these referrals would provide some evidence of an attempt to coordinate services for the youth.

#### Impact of Youth Counseling

In order to assess the impact of Thresholds counseling on the youth, evaluation staff conducted interviews with 29 enrollees in the project. Most of the interviews were scheduled, while some were undertaken spontaneously on the spot with enrollees, using the project's facilities. Each interview ranged from a minimum of 15 minutes to a maximum of half an hour (see Table 6).

As stated before, the counseling objectives center around personal growth and self-understanding, emphasizing acceptance of responsibility, which it is hoped will lead to improved social conduct. Regular school attendance, a stable family atmosphere, and non-involvement within the criminal justice system are taken as indices of enhanced self-esteem. Insofar as effective counseling

relies on close ties of friendship between counselor and client, the Thresholds concept of employing ex-offenders had the distinct advantages of establishing early rapport and trust. Indeed, favorable predispositions toward Thresholds counselors on the part of the youth were shown in frequently repeated phrases such as "You can trust 'em; they know where it's at"! Several youth also expressed the view that the Thresholds counselor "checks up on you because he cares," while the probation officer "checks up to see if he should send you to jail."

The main thrust of the counseling relationship is frequent rap sessions in which questions are raised, problems identified, and alternatives posed so that the youth can develop an understanding of his problems and how they interfere with establishing a harmonious environment at home and school, as well as among his peers. Much attention is given to the psychology of peer group pressures and how they function to draw youth into criminal activities. The enrollee is cautioned not to act impulsively, but to think in terms of the consequences of behavior--of the interlocking network of cause and effect. A behavior which might have some short-term benefit, such as stealing or fighting which establishes peer group recognition, is placed within the broader perspective of long term consequences, i.e., arrest and jail.

Unfortunately, what might be an advantage in terms of counseling style, namely the street-level approach with its emphasis

on informality and open-ended discussions, may very well be a disadvantage in terms of record-keeping insofar as the Thresholds counselor is likely to shun the bureaucratic hassles of paperwork. Firsthand examination of client files raises three issues which make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the counseling efforts: (1) no way of determining case load; (2) no way of determining inactive status; and (3) no written program of treatment. The importance of written reports and data collection generally could be a subject in staff development sessions in that they are an essential aid in planning and evaluating the counseling component of the Thresholds program.

From the standpoint of responses of youth referrals to questions regarding what they liked and disliked about Thresholds, the overwhelming majority voiced the opinion that the project helped youth "stay out of trouble." The referrals indicated that Thresholds was a "home away from home" and that it gave them a sense of belonging; they had a place to go instead of wandering on the streets. The youth spoke of Thresholds counselors in terms which generally showed respect and admiration, suggesting to evaluation staff that the streetworkers functioned as good role-models. Another striking feature was the enthusiasm expressed for the exposure trips conducted by the project which gave the referrals valuable educational and recreational experiences outside their normal frame of reference. As is generally known, employment is a prime need

of juveniles in East Oakland. In this regard, a significant number of enrollees showed appreciation for the project's job counseling sessions which involved instruction on how to act in an interview.

It is difficult to ascertain with certainty what conclusions may be justifiably drawn from the interviews with the youth referrals. One result, however, is clear, namely, the fact that the interviews present strong evidence of the acceptability of the program among enrollees. To be sure, a measure of the acceptability of the program is not the same as a test of its effectiveness. Still the enthusiasm and high regard evidenced toward Thresholds are sincere and convey an accurate picture of their embrace of the program. In short, the potential effectiveness of counseling endeavors could not be achieved without the willing cooperation and hopeful participation of the youth referrals.

Another index of the effectiveness of the Thresholds counseling program is the responses of seven out of nine agency line staff (Probation and Police) who said they thought the project was doing a good job counseling youth (see Table 9).

In conjunction with individual and family counseling, another function of Thresholds is the coordination of recreational and enrichment activities, or as they are sometimes called, exposure trips (see Table 7). The external activities range from picnics, dances and football games to visits to theaters and jazz festivals. The calendar of Thresholds activities gives a detailed account of their

numbers and diversity (see Table 7). The internal recreational activities include pool, ping-pong, Karate classes and weight lifting. During the summer months, according to the daily sign-in sheet, recreational use of facilities ranged from 13 to 47, averaging 27 youth per day.

The biggest problem with the recreational and enrichment aspects of Thresholds is the lack of facilities. From the interviews with youth referrals, 14 out of 29 stated the need for more equipment. A basketball court and pinball machines were frequently mentioned as desirable additions. Also stated as a problem was the need for more creative group projects, e.g., drama classes and painting murals.

Additional supportive services to enrollees and their families and friends have been introduced. One example is the Thresholds Newsletter (the first issue was six pages long) designed and executed by the combined effort of enrollees and staff. Continued publication is intended as a valuable tool in raising the level of citizen awareness as well as providing the youth with an introduction to the responsibilities of journalism. Arrangements are being made to expose youth to various newspaper and printing facilities.

Although the request was turned down, Thresholds did submit an application to the City of Oakland for summer youth employment. The project had collected over 100 applications for jobs prior to their proposal being turned down. Job counseling and placement have also been functions of the project, but records do not indicate outcome (i.e., number of youth using the service).

TABLE 6

Responses of Youth Referrals to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Strengths of Thresholds

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 29 Who Cited Strength</u>
1. Thresholds provides a center for recreational activities.	24
2. Thresholds helps youth stay out of trouble.	21
3. The project provides educational field trips.	20
4. Thresholds counselors are available when youth need them.	19
5. Thresholds does a good job counseling youth.	18
6. Thresholds provides a place to meet people.	17
7. The project shows youth how to look for jobs and how to act in an interview.	10
8. Youth can trust Thresholds staff, especially the counselors, because "they know where it's at."	9
9. Youth feel "free" at project as long as they follow the "rules."	6
10. Thresholds staff provides support for youth during court appearances.	5

Responses of Youth Referrals to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Problems of Thresholds

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 29 Who Cited Problem</u>
1. Thresholds needs more re-creational facilities.	14
2. Thresholds needs more counseling staff.	7
3. Thresholds needs more emphasis on job counseling.	5
4. Thresholds needs more creative group projects (e.g., drama classes, etc.)	3
5. Thresholds counselors pressure youth too much.	1
6. Thresholds needs to advertize its services more.	1

TABLE 7

Thresholds Activities

<u>Date</u>	<u>Thresholds Activity</u>	<u>No. Person Involved</u>
April 6, 1977	Neighborhood Council Luncheon Food Provided by Thresholds	50 adults
April 22	"Evolution of the Blues" Play in San Francisco	12 referral youth
May 13	Parents and Youth Pot Luck Dinner	180 youth and adults
June	Thresholds Connection Youth Club Formed	65 youth (including 28 referral youth)
June	Newsletter #1 Printed	28 youth (12 referral youth, 16 counseling class youth)
June 4	Thresholds/Zodiac Youth Club Dance	apx. 350 youth
June 4	Hayward Plunge Trip Swimming, Hiking, Picnicing	20 referral youth
June 6	Horseback Riding Trip Lunch Provided by Thresholds	10 referral youth
June 12	Bowling Trip	10 referral youth
June 18	Thresholds/Zodiac Youth Club Dance	apx. 350 youth
July	Newsletter #2 Printed	20 youth (including 9 referral youth, 11 counseling class youth)
July 8	Jazz Festival, Oakland Coliseum Lunch Provided by Thresholds	15 referral youth
July 15	Thresholds/Zodiac Youth Club Dance	Apx. 350 youth
July 16	Talent Show Turkey and Soda Donated by Food King, Food Preparation Donated by East Oakland Hickory Pit	apx. 375 youth and adults



July 19	Thresholds Classes Begin Drama Class (3 weeks) Glass Blowing/Stained Glass Class (5 weeks) Dance Class (6 weeks)	12-15 referral youth 10-12 referral youth 20-25 referral youth
July 28	Oakland A's Baseball Game	58 youth (22 referral youth, 36 community youth)
July 29	Thresholds/Zodiac Youth Club Dance	apx. 350 youth
July 31	Raider Family Day Trip Santa Rosa Food Prepared and Donated by East Oakland Hickory Pit	48 youth (18 referral youth, 30 community youth)
August	Radio Station KSFJ Donation 1,500 Record Albums (Some to be used as incentive awards and some to be sold for money for exposure activities.)	
August 3	Community Education Forum (Speakers included Mayor of Oakland, Agency Department Heads, Governor Representative)	apx. 90 people
August 8	Oakland A's Baseball Game	51 youth (41 referral youth, 10 community youth)
August 10-12	Camping Trip to Joaquin Miller Park	38 referral youth
August 12	Thresholds Pool Tournament	11 referral youth
August 18	Paramount Theatre of the Arts Tour	15 referral youth
August 20	Thresholds Connection Youth Club Dance	apx. 300 youth
September 8	Oakland Estuary Boat Ride Donated by the Port of Oakland	25 referral youth
September 9	Thresholds/Zodiac Youth Club Dance	apx. 450 youth

September 28	Governor's Cabinet Townhouse Meeting Co-Sponsored by Thresholds (Speakers included Mayor of Oakland, Governor's Cabinet, District Assemblyman)	apx. 900 people
Planned for October	"Up With Youth Program," KSFX Radio (News show put together by and for youth)	10 referral youth
	Thresholds Prison Concert	8 youth (3 referral youth 5 community youth)
	Thresholds Connection Basketball Team Elmhurst League	12 youth (7 referral youth 5 community youth)

Thresholds staff also provided frequent support to enrollees during court appearances.

Objective B: To establish at least one group counseling class in each of seven East Oakland elementary and secondary schools.

According to Thresholds monthly reports, counseling classes were set up in three junior high schools (Elm, Dewey, and Madison) and a total of 22 weekly classes were held. Firsthand examination of filed reports indicates that 17 classes were held with the class size ranging from 6 to 15. Some discrepancies between monthly reports and streetworker attendance sheets suggests that improvement is needed in data collecting and coordination of records.

Judging from random interviews with 10 students, interviews with school guidance coordinators, and visits to two classes, the performance of streetworkers within the class was commendable (see Table 8). Attendance records from the voluntary Thresholds classes indicate that these students did attend regularly. Since most of the students had been referred for truancy and fighting, this suggests the classes had some appeal to students and may indicate a positive change in attitudes.

Two movies were shown to students. One dealt with Martin Luther King and the early civil rights movement in the South while the other dealt with the impact of poverty on youth. The classes discussed topics such as black leaders, black culture in terms of different styles of humor (e.g., imagery in newspaper cartoons) and appearance (hair and clothes), and American history (with emphasis on minorities).

TABLE 8

Responses of Students to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding Strengths of Counseling Classes

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 10 Who Cited Strength</u>
1. The Thresholds classes encouraged regular attendance,	7
2. The Thresholds classes were entertaining.	7
3. The youth looked up to Thresholds counselors.	5
4. The classes were educational.	4
5. The Thresholds classes provided opportunities for youth to talk about school problems.	3

Responses of Students to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding Problems of Counseling Classes

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 10 Who Cited Problem</u>
1. The Thresholds classes were too noisy.	3
2. The students did not learn anything.	3
3. Thresholds needs to provide substitute teachers when they are unable to attend.	2
4. Thresholds needs to develop more constructive methods of discipline in the classroom.	1

Evaluation staff observed during visits to the classes that students were encouraged to participate and that the level of involvement was high. Two guidance coordinators from the junior high were interviewed, and they voiced approval of the counseling classes. They said the classes helped students to improve their self-control and their self-concept as well as encouraging regular attendance. One guidance coordinator volunteered that she hoped the Thresholds classes would be continued next year.

Objective C: To provide crisis-intervention services to East Oakland schools, businesses, and residents.

Thresholds has been called upon occasionally to handle crisis situations by members of the East Oakland community. Evaluation staff have talked informally with some parents of referral youth who have expressed appreciation for the times Thresholds staff have responded to their request for help to calm potentially troublesome situations. An agency staff person who was interviewed also volunteered his opinion that Thresholds staff were especially effective in defusing tense situations among the youth.

A 24 hour crisis "hot line" was tried during March and April, 1977, but was discontinued due to a demonstrated lack of need. Most crisis calls came during regular working hours. Only two or three nighttime calls were received during the two month trial period.

Although some crisis interventions have not been recorded, a partial list was collected from the files and gives a picture of

the Thresholds intervention activities.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Unusual Occurrence</u>
June 14, 1977	Elmhurst Library, youth gambling incident.
June 14	Gang fight in Arroyo Park calmed.
July 13	Family crisis, youth runaway.
July 16	Small fight at Talent Show calmed.
July 28	Family crisis, court appearance.
August 20	Fight at Youth Dance calmed.
August 25	Family crisis, youth runaway.
August 26	Family crisis, youth stole money from mother. Money recovered, youth counseled.
August 29	Family crisis, youth stole a stereo; youth counseled, stereo returned to owner.
August 30	Family crisis, court appearance.
September 6	Family crisis, 24 hour care of youth referral.
September 8	Family crisis, gang fight calmed.
September 12	Fight in recreation room calmed.
September 16	Family crisis, court appearance.

Objective D: To increase program acceptance within the criminal justice diversion network.

The peculiar paradox of an innovative diversion program such as Thresholds is summed up in a comment made by an agency staff person: "A program has to prove that it can survive before the Police Department will use it." The problem of increasing program acceptance for Thresholds is compounded by the fact that it was funded once for three years, then discontinued for a year and later refunded. Agency staff naturally prefer to refer youth to established programs where they will receive at least durable service delivery.

All agency line staff interviewed (police, probation and school personnel who directly utilized Thresholds' services) felt that Thresholds was filling an important community need and that the project's staff was capable and dedicated (see Table 9). In general, the agency personnel felt that although Thresholds had problem areas to be addressed, the project was providing a valuable and necessary service to the youth of East Oakland.

Interviews with agency line staff revealed that on the administrative level, communication needs to be improved between Thresholds and outside agencies. Initially, the program suffered from a high rate of staff turnover and thus was late in getting started. Inadequate record keeping has also hampered program acceptance. In this regard, prompt feedback to the referring agency as to the appropriateness of the referral was missing. Also, a couple of respondents

TABLE 9

Responses of Agency Line Staff to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Strengths of Thresholds

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 9 Who Cited Strength</u>
1. The Thresholds concept is good.	9
2. Thresholds staff is capable and dedicated.	9
3. Thresholds provides needed role models for the youth.	7
4. Thresholds is doing a good job of counseling youth and their families.	7
5. Thresholds provides constructive activities for the youth.	7
6. Thresholds promotes social interaction among the community's youth and adults.	5
7. The Thresholds school counseling classes worked well.	3
8. The Thresholds facility is in a prime location to serve the community's needs.	2
9. Thresholds counselors do a good job of handling crisis situations.	1



Responses of Agency Line Staff to Open-Ended Questions

Regarding the Problems of Thresholds

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Respondents out of 9 Who Cited Problems</u>
1. Threshold staff needs better administrative and management skills.	9
2. The Thresholds program has suffered from a high rate of staff turnover.	9
3. Thresholds staff need written job descriptions.	7
4. Thresholds needs to concentrate more on counseling youth than on providing recreation.	6
5. The project has been slow in getting started.	6
6. On the administrative level, communication needs to be improved between Thresholds and outside agencies.	5
7. Thresholds staff needs to develop professional counseling skills.	4
8. To handle such a large job, Thresholds needs more staff.	3
9. Thresholds staff needs to be more professional in keeping appointments and returning phone calls.	2
10. Thresholds staff needs to follow through on its commitments.	2
11. Thresholds staff needs to "prioritize" around time spent in court.	2
12. Thresholds needs to do more outreach counseling in areas where youth "hang out."	1

said that Thresholds staff needs to be more professional in keeping appointments and returning phone calls.

On the other hand, the Thresholds staff reorganization in June was viewed favorably by several agency people. The pattern of referrals shifted upwards during the same period suggesting renewed confidence in the project. Outside agencies were also encouraged by the extension granted to the project at the same time as staff reorganization occurred.

#### Evaluation of Goal III

Thresholds' third goal is to reduce the rate of recidivism among ex-convicts employed by the project. Through useful employment and in-service training the project expects a low rate of recidivism among ex-offender employees.

Objective A: To employ not less than 10 ex-convicts as Thresholds staff.

As of September, 1977, the project had nine ex-offenders on payroll. The project has employed a total of 21 ex-convicts at various times throughout the past year. Only one of these persons was re-arrested. He was returned to prison for six months for a parole violation. It is difficult to determine what effect working at Thresholds has had on this low rate of recidivism, but a recidivist rate of 4.76% among a population of 21 ex-convicts is quite remarkable.

Objective B: To provide in-service training and technical assistance to ex-convicts employed by the project to increase their professional skills and management capability.

The information for the evaluation of this objective comes from interviews with Thresholds staff, observation of case management sessions, and reviews of the project's monthly reports.

The Thresholds proposal indicates that in-service training for streetworkers will focus on three subject areas: (1) counseling practices and techniques, (2) collaborative activity with the police, probation department and schools, and (3) preparing written plans and reports.

In April, six staff participated in case management sessions, five staff attended a presentation of probation rules by a member of the juvenile probation department, and two staff attended a workshop on juvenile court process and law. In May there were four communication workshops conducted by a consultant psychologist. Staff attendance at these workshops ranged from two to nine. In the interviews the staff report that they find the communication workshops particularly helpful in dealing more effectively with fellow staff as well as clients.

All Thresholds staff participated in a three-day spring retreat facilitated by a consultant psychologist and a management consultant. A similar retreat for all staff was held in the fall and was facilitated by the consultant psychologist alone. Both workshops focused on

communication skills and the development of team work. Staff reported that both workshops were enjoyable and helpful in their work.

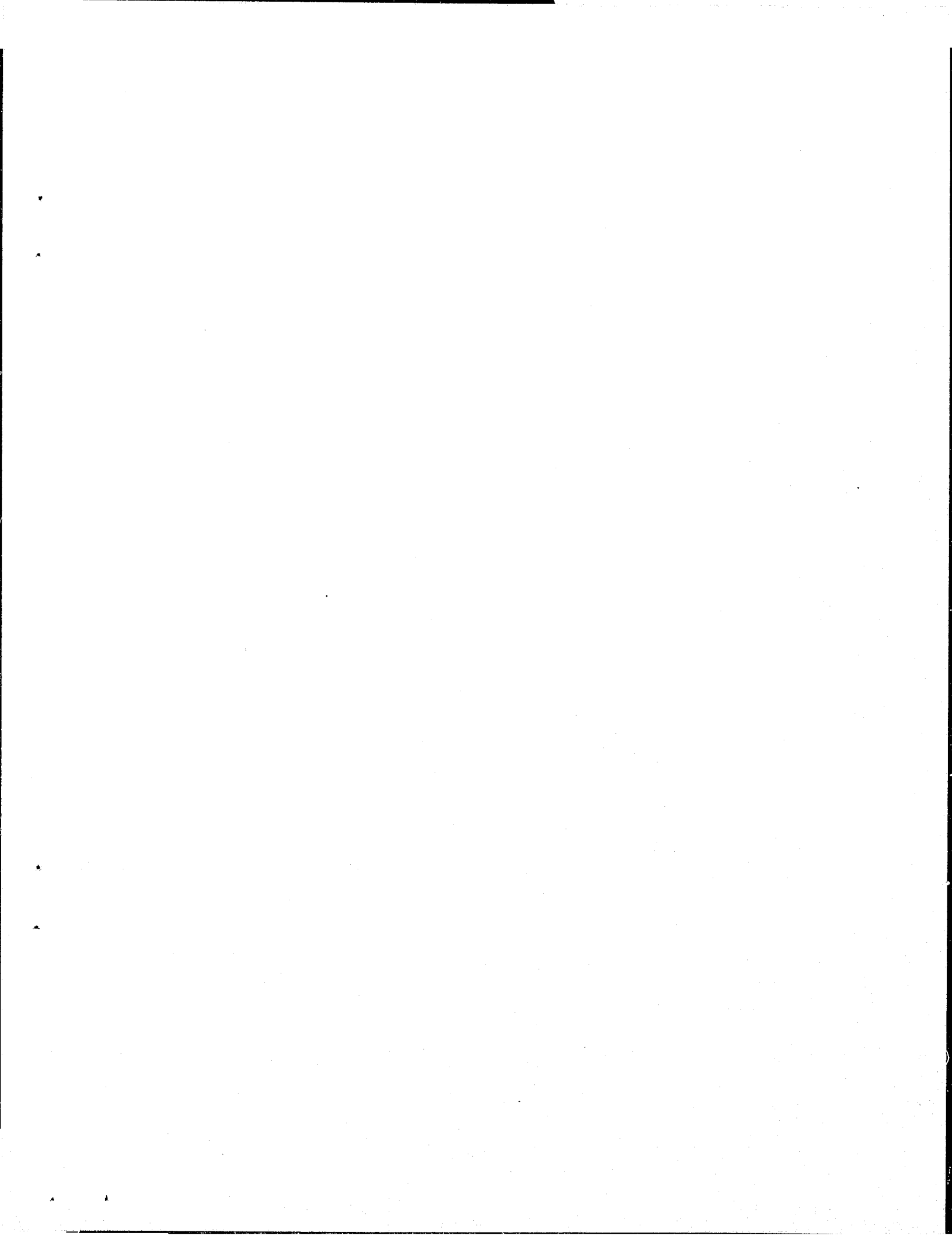
From our observations the case management sessions, discussed under Goal II, provided valuable training for the streetworkers. With the aid of a consulting psychologist, the counselors sharpened their diagnostic skills, assessed the needs of the client, and developed a service plan based on the youth's needs.

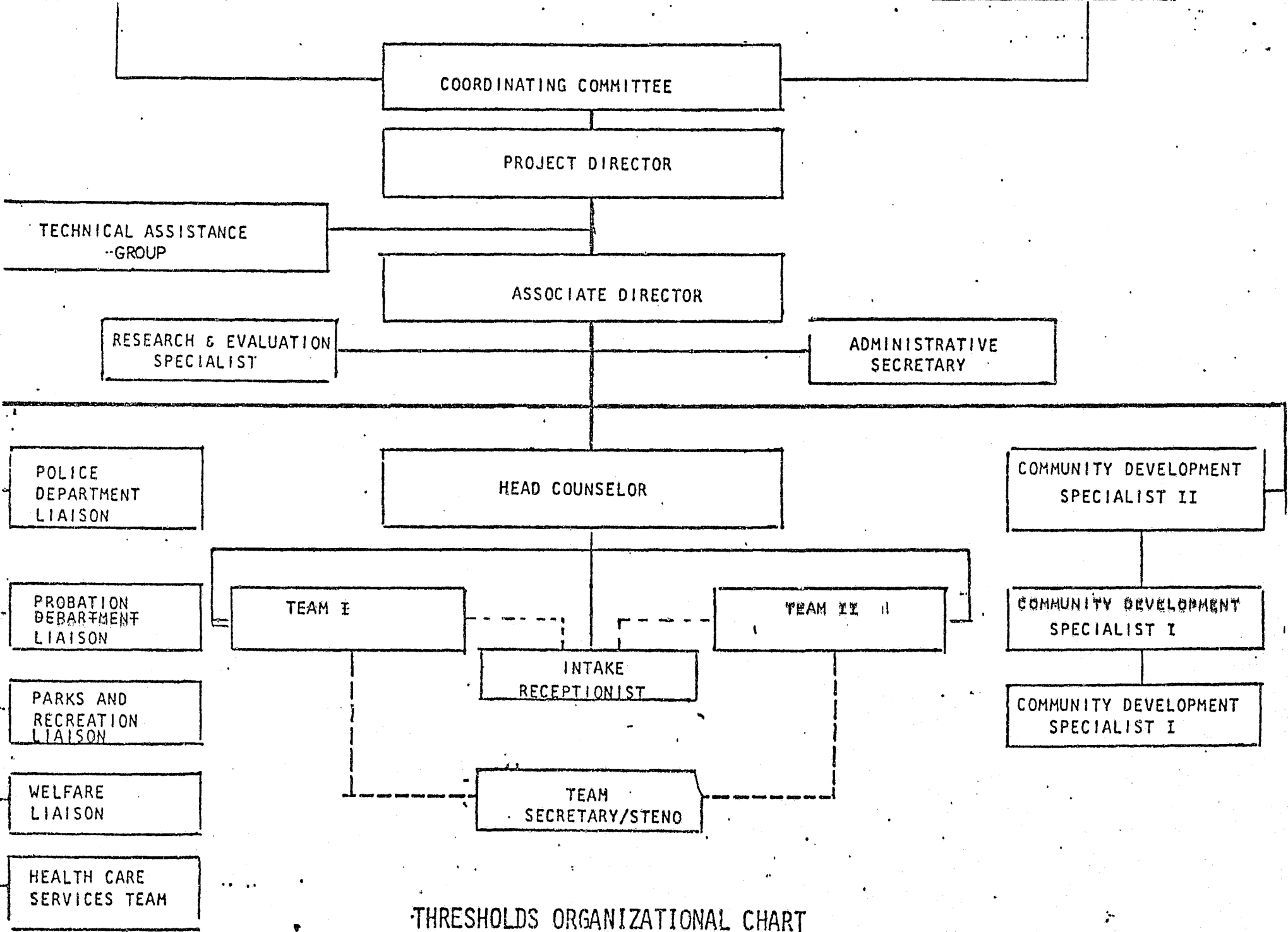
During the months of June and July the consulting psychologist conducted communications workshops on Wednesday afternoons and case management sessions on Thursday afternoons. The project administrator noticed a significant improvement in staff counseling techniques which she attributed to the comprehensive in-service training package. She felt it was very unfortunate that the project funds ran low and the consulting psychologist's contract had to be terminate. No in-service training sessions have been held since July.

Interviews with staff members supported the project administrator's observations on the in-service training sessions. The staff feel that the sessions are valuable and would like to participate in more in-service training. Suggestions for training which have been mentioned in this report include: (1) general record keeping practices; (2) professional administrative and management skills to enhance ex-offenders' natural talents for relating to community problems; and (3) political realities of Thresholds as a developing organization.

Appendix A

Thresholds Organizational Chart



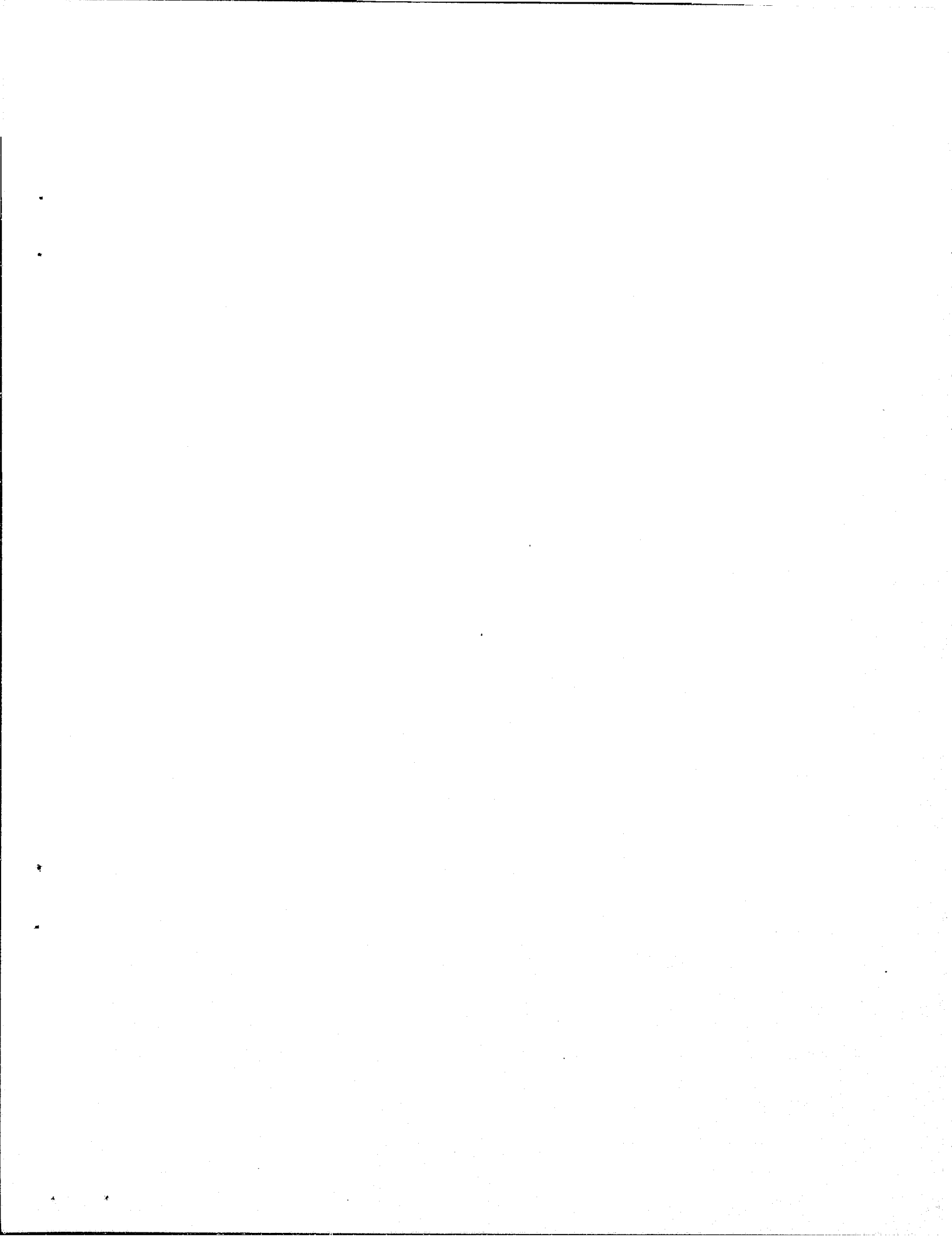


THRESHOLDS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Appendix B

Revised Thresholds Organizational Chart





AREA URBAN LEAGUE  
Management and  
LOCAL ASSISTANCE

--- LETTER OF AGREEMENT ---

Self Advancement  
Through Education  
Administrative Operations

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
GROUP

INTER-AGENCY AFFAIRS  
DIRECTOR

RESEARCH & EVALUATION  
SPECIALIST

ADMINISTRATIVE  
SECRETARY

POLICE  
DEPARTMENT  
LIAISON

HEAD COUNSELOR

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

ADJUTANT  
GENERAL  
SON

TEAM I

TEAM II

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
SPECIALIST II

ADJUTANT  
GENERAL  
SON

INTAKE  
RECEPTIONIST

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
SPECIALIST I

ADJUTANT  
GENERAL  
SON

TEAM  
SECRETARY/STENO

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
SPECIALIST I

ADJUTANT  
GENERAL  
SON

THRESHOLDS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Revised May 19, 1977

Appendix C

Thresholds Letters of Recommendations

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

August 23, 1977

Mr. M. Thomas Clark  
Regional Administrator  
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration  
1860 El Camino Real  
Burlingame, CA 94010

Dear Mr. Clark:

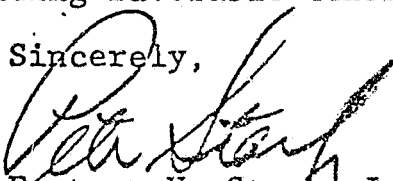
This is to recommend continued LEAA funding for Project Threshold, an exemplary Oakland based juvenile delinquency prevention and diversion project.

Because of escalating juvenile crime throughout the country, we are all aware of the ever increasing need for community involvement/diversion programs such as Project Threshold.

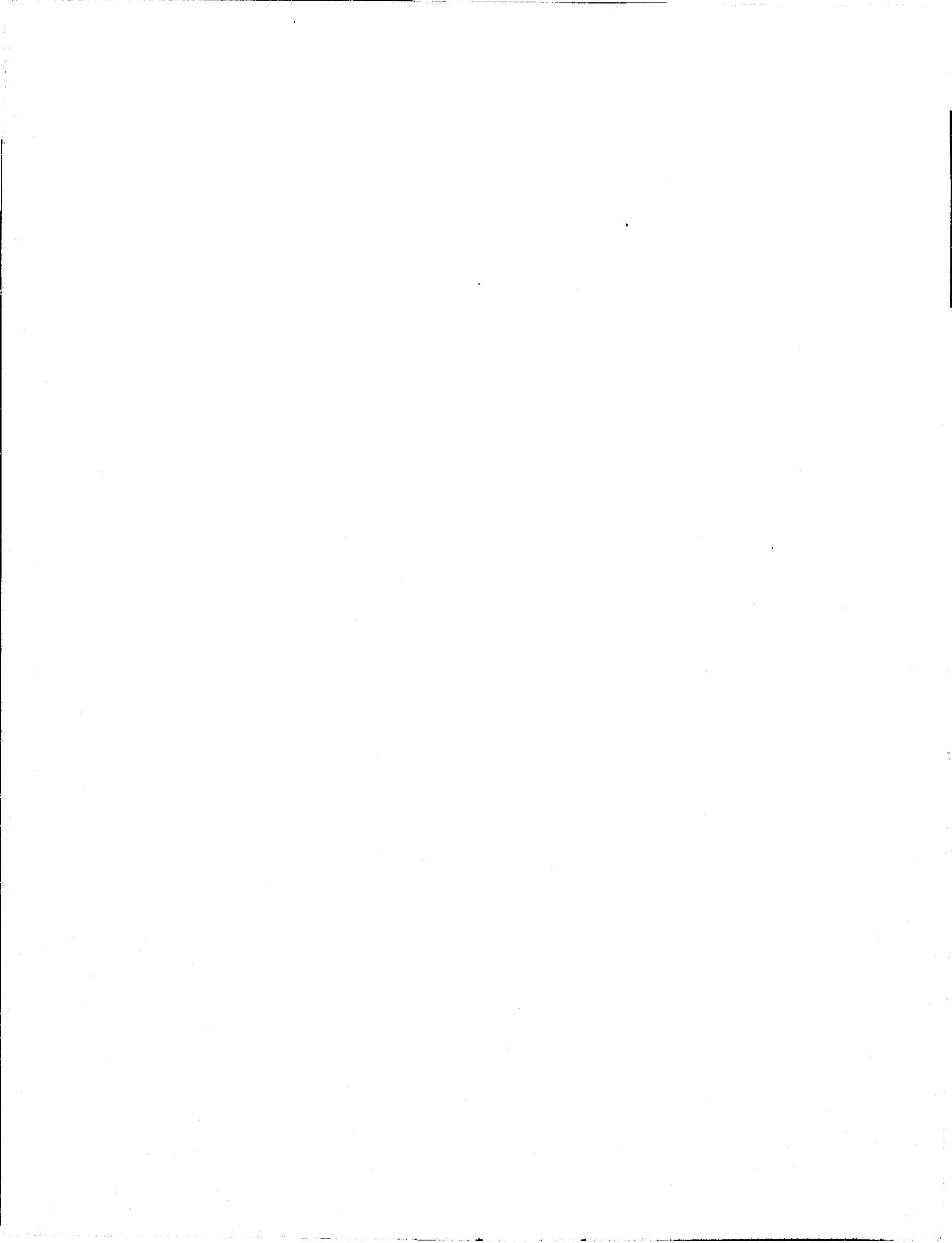
Hundreds of youth have participated in the Project's programs, which have encouraged them from initially committing crimes or prevented recidivism. In addition, it is my understanding that there has been no recidivism from the Project Threshold staff, which is composed of ex-offenders. I think this aspect of the program is indicative of the project's merits and proven effectiveness.

I hope you will give Project Threshold's proposal for second year LEAA funding favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Fortney H. Stark, Jr.  
Member of Congress

FHS:jc



**CONTINUED**

**1 OF 2**

## OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
7171 BOWLING DRIVE  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95823



August 11, 1977

Carolyn Price, Director  
THRESHOLDS  
8924 Holly Street  
Oakland, CA 94621

Dear Ms. Price:

This is in response to your request for a letter of support from the Office of Criminal Justice Planning regarding your project.


As you know, my staff completed a monitoring report on Thresholds in June of this year. We found your project to be in full compliance with our requirements and further, it was and is our feeling that Thresholds is an effective Community Involvement/Diversion Program.

It is extremely unfortunate that the discretionary funding from LEAA that was assured you is apparently no longer available. The timing of the withdrawal makes it very difficult for you to locate and compete for some other source of funds.

We will grant your request for an extension until December 31, 1977 of your current funding at this level. Our approval will then be forwarded to LEAA for their action.

Once again, we do support your program and will stand ready to provide service to you as we are capable and as you request.

Sincerely,

  
DOUGLAS R. CUNNINGHAM  
Executive Director

Telephone: (916) 445-9156

DRC:JA:rd

# CITY OF OAKLAND



CITY HALL • 14TH AND WASHINGTON STREETS • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the Mayor  
Lionel J. Wilson  
Mayor

September 1, 1977

Mr. M. Thomas Clark  
Regional Administrator  
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration  
1860 El Camino Real  
Burlingame, California 94010

Dear Mr. Clark:

Recently I had the privilege of keynoting Project Thresholds Community Education Forum. The Forum was an all-day event in which some really vital information was shared between community leaders and others regarding the issues of crime and the administration of juvenile justice. The complex problem of juvenile delinquency seems to emanate in Oakland from poor school achievement, youth unemployment, and a breakdown in family motivation.

As well as presenting the kind of information which could help to alter these conditions, Project Thresholds has been extremely active and successful in diverting youth in our city from wasted lives of crime and delinquency. The project, its concepts and goals, are heartily supported by my office and if there is any other way I can positively endorse their work, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lionel J. Wilson".  
Lionel J. Wilson



# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

RONALD V. DELIUMS  
8TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISCAL  
AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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1417 LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515  
(202) 225-2661

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
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(415) 763-0370  
3557 MT. DIABLO BOULEVARD  
LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA 94549  
(415) 283-8125  
2490 CHANNING WAY, ROOM 202  
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94704  
(415) 548-7767

DONALD R. HOPKINS  
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

August 15, 1977

Mr. Thomas Clark, Regional Administrator  
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA)  
1860 El Camino Real  
Burlingame, CA 94010

Re: Project Threshold Funding Application

Dear Mr. Clark:

The purpose of this communication is to offer the support and encouragement of this office for the application of Project Threshold, an Oakland-based juvenile delinquency prevention program, for continuation funding from LEAA. Inasmuch as this program has been previously funded by LEAA, I am certain that your files reflect the nature of the program and the extraordinary success it has achieved in the Oakland community since its inception. This office has previously supported its application for federal funding, and would simply update the file to indicate our continuing support for its efforts.

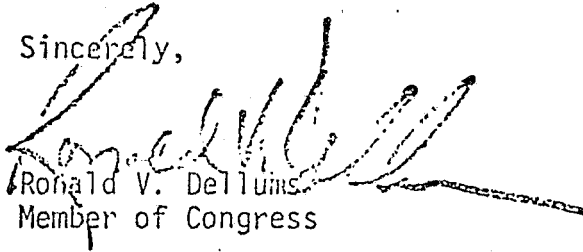
In recent years the need for the type of program being run by Project Threshold has increased, rather than diminished. Records in the city indicate that young people are committing more crimes, and more serious crimes. The energy and talent of many of our public administrators are increasingly being directed to diversion programs that will be an encouragement to young people not to commit crimes, and to prevent the recidivism of those who have once been in trouble. Project Threshold is one program to which the community has looked to play this vital role, and because it has a record of acceptance and achievement, it is our opinion that the role it will play in the years ahead is a critical one to the success of our efforts. As you will note, Project Threshold is unique in that it has a number of ex-offenders acting as counselors in the program; this aspect has been highly successful, and has contributed, not only to the counseling effectiveness of the project, but also to the constructive utilization of the talents and interests of the former offenders.

In sum, we believe we have a program of proven effectiveness that merits the continued support of LEAA. The Project failed to receive continuation funds as a result of administrative reorganization, but we understand that this reorganization has been

Mr. Thomas Clark  
August 15, 1977  
Page 2

salutary to the program's future. For these reasons, we are pleased to convey this expression of support for the application, and appreciate your receiving these comments on its behalf.

Sincerely,



Ronald V. Dellums  
Member of Congress

RVD:ak

Appendix D

Thresholds Enrollee Survey

(Administered by Thresholds staff to youth participants  
on the Joaquin Miller Park camping trip,

August 12, 1977.)

Survey of Opinions and Attitudes  
of  
Thresholds Enrollees (N=20)

1. Having once heard about Thresholds, how often do you visit the Center at 8924 Holly Street?
 

a. More than once a week	75%
b. About once a week	10%
c. More than once a month	10%
d. About once a month	0%
e. Every few months	5%
f. Never	0%
  
2. Do you feel that Thresholds provides the services you are looking for?
 

a. Yes	85%
b. No	0%
c. Some of them	15%
  
3. Do you feel the staff of Thresholds is helpful to you?
 

a. Yes	90%
b. No	5%
c. Don't know	5%
  
4. Since you have been in the program, about how often have you talked to a Thresholds streetworker?
 

a. More than once a week	40%
b. About once a week	20%
c. More than once a month	10%
d. About once a month	0%
e. Never	30%
  
5. Do you think your Thresholds streetworker is easy to talk to?
 

a. Yes	65%
b. No	10%
c. Don't know	15%
d. No response	10%

6. Do you like your Thresholds streetworker?
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| a. Yes         | 65% |
| b. No          | 0%  |
| c. Don't know  | 25% |
| d. No response | 10% |
7. Where do you usually talk to the streetworker?
- |                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| a. At the Thresholds office | 75% |
| b. On the street            | 5%  |
| c. In school                | 0%  |
| d. At my home               | 5%  |
| e. No response              | 15% |
8. Have you gone on any of the Thresholds exposure trips?
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| a. Yes         | 90% |
| b. No          | 0%  |
| c. No response | 10% |
9. Have you changed any of your attitudes because of your talks with Thresholds streetworkers?
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| a. Yes         | 50% |
| b. No          | 25% |
| c. Don't know  | 10% |
| d. No response | 15% |
10. Do you think your attendance at school has improved because of your talks with a Thresholds streetworker?
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| a. Yes         | 35% |
| b. No          | 25% |
| c. Don't know  | 25% |
| d. No response | 15% |
11. Do you think you are less likely to get into trouble with the police because of your talks with a Thresholds streetworker?
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| a. Yes         | 45% |
| b. No          | 25% |
| c. Don't know  | 15% |
| d. No response | 15% |

12. We would like to compare the Thresholds streetworker with other kinds of people who work with youth. For each person that is listed please tell us whether you think the Thresholds streetworker is more helpful than that person, less helpful, or about the same.

	More helpful	Less helpful	Same or don't know	No response
School Principal	40%	15%	5%	40%
School Counselor	40%	30%	5%	25%
Teacher	35%	20%	15%	30%
Juvenile Police Officer (in suit)	30%	15%	10%	45%
Police Officer (in uniform)	30%	20%	5%	45%
Probation Officer	20%	15%	10%	55%