

**PROGRAM AREA**  
**IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES AND**  
**INFORMATION PROGRAMS TO**  
**VICTIMS AND WITNESSES**



Prepared by:

The Evaluation Unit of the New Jersey  
State Law Enforcement Planning Agency

April, 1979

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This report is based on research supported by Grant Number 78-NI-AX-0004 awarded to the New Jersey State Law Enforcement Planning Agency by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions it contains are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the U.S. Department of Justice.

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## PREFACE

This report is concerned with three victim/witness assistance projects currently funded by the New Jersey State Law Enforcement Planning Agency. The projects serve Burlington County, Newark and Union City. Each was established out of recognition that more attention must be focused on the needs of crime victims and witnesses.

The intention of the victim/witness assistance center is to offer services in the hope of diminishing the alienation of victims and witnesses from the criminal justice system. It is assumed that these projects will encourage client willingness to report crimes and to cooperate with the criminal justice process.

This report describes and analyzes the operations of victim/witness assistance centers, the clients which are served and the types of services provided. On the basis of this analysis, recommendations for improving operations in existing projects have been made.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victim/witness assistance centers were established to assist crime victims in their recovery from victimization and assist witnesses through court proceedings.

### Research Findings

• Of the three victim witness assistance centers examined, Burlington County's was found to differ markedly from the others in respect to the kinds of services it provides and the kinds of persons assisted. Burlington County's project has a county-wide jurisdiction. It is based within the county prosecutor's office and this is the only project which routinely works with witnesses as well as victims. Most of Burlington County's clients are participating in prosecutions involving a violent offense. Subsequently, the services they receive are generally related to needs stemming from court participation.

In contrast, Newark's Victim Assistance Project falls under the administration of the Newark City Police Department, although the project operates independently of the department. The project has a city-wide jurisdiction and provides crime victims with services designed to lessen the impact of their victimization.

Union City's Victim Assistance Project is similar to Newark's. It is set up under the auspices of the city police department yet operates independently of the department. The project handles crime victims exclusively

and, like Newark, dispenses services aimed at reducing problems created by the victimization.

Although project operations are different, projects do not differ dramatically in the personal characteristics of the clients they serve. Most clients are representative of the ethnic composition of the community from which they are drawn. The majority are between the ages of 25 and 45 and a little over half are women. The more notable findings are presented in the recommendations section which follows.

#### Recommendations

1. Ten per cent of those clients served by the victim/witness assistance projects were senior citizens. It had been assumed by project administration that a larger portion of clients would be over 65. Therefore, it is recommended that projects determine the extent of victimization of the elderly within their communities. If persons over 65 are found to be underrepresented as clients, appropriate recruitment steps should be taken. 19\*

2. Almost all clients (85%) were found to come to the projects' attention only after project staff had initiated contact. Very few were referred by community and criminal justice agencies and fewer were self-referred. It is recommended that the victim/witness assistance projects

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\*The number following each recommendation refers to the page wherein supportive data and discussion are presented.

negotiate referral arrangements with criminal justice and community agencies and encourage prospective clients to contact projects for assistance. 25-27

3. Twelve per cent of all services provided by the projects consisted of referrals to community agencies. It is recommended that the victim/witness assistance projects increase their referrals to existing community services and facilities where appropriate. 29-31

4. Five per cent of the services provided by the projects were efforts to follow up on a client who had received services. It is recommended that the victim/witness assistance projects institute follow-up procedures when referrals are made and when projects advise clients about existing community resources. 29-31

5. Thirty-five per cent of injured victims were referred to the Violent Crimes Compensation Board. It is recommended that projects routinely advise all violent offense victims of the Board's availability. Additionally, projects should refer those clients incurring compensable expenses directly to the Board. 29-33

6. Two of the three projects have limited access to information on client progress through the courts. Because of the importance of client participation with the prosecutorial process, it is recommended that these projects establish court liaisons to enable case tracking of clients. 34-37 ,



### PROBLEM STATEMENT

Crime victims and witnesses encounter many problems. Immediate problems, such as physical injury, emotional trauma and the loss of property result from the criminal event itself. Others arise through participation in the criminal justice process. Responsibility for appearing in court, for example, may demand that a victim or witness spend time away from work or arrange for a babysitter. Both are costly in terms of lost pay and incurred expenses. The room in which the court appearance is awaited may be crowded and uncomfortable and contact with the alleged offender may be unavoidable. Long delays in court proceedings may have to be endured and unnecessary court appearances repeated. Ultimately, the victim or witness who does persevere and see a case through the criminal justice process may not even be informed of the final case disposition.

Victims and witnesses thus confront physical, psychological and economic hardship which is partly a consequence of participation in the criminal justice system. Continued frustrations often foster feelings of alienation and result in an unwillingness to cooperate in the criminal justice process. This is reflected in the large number of crimes that go unreported, the refusal of victims and witnesses to sign criminal complaints, and their reluctance to give testimony in court.

The victim/witness assistance center represents a response to this disaffection from the criminal justice system. Its main purpose is to provide victims and witnesses with needed information and services so that they will become less alienated from the criminal justice system, and as a result, more willing to cooperate with the criminal justice process.

### THE PROGRAM AREA

In 1975, the New Jersey State Law Enforcement Planning Agency created the program area Improvement of Services and Information Programs to Victims, Witnesses and Jurors\* in order to address the alienation of victims and witnesses from the criminal justice system. This program area was developed through subsequent state plans and is based on the following assumptions:

1. Victims and witnesses, particularly the elderly, require services as a result of a criminal event and in order to ease the burdens of ensuing court participation.
2. Clients served by a victim/witness assistance project will become more amenable to participation in the criminal justice system. They will be more cooperative in filing complaints and furnishing testimony in court.
3. The public's favorable attitudes will be manifest in increased reporting of victimizations and increased willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice process.

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\*Criminal Justice Plan for New Jersey - 1975, Dissemination Document #19, pp. 135-136. (This report does not address the "juror" portion of the program.)

Criminal Justice Plan for New Jersey - 1976, Dissemination Document #2, p. 169.

Criminal Justice Plan for New Jersey - 1977, Dissemination Document #24, p. 233.

Criminal Justice Plan for New Jersey - Applicants Guide 1978, Dissemination Document #28, pp. 105-106.

4. The public will become aware of the efforts of these projects and will develop a more favorable attitude toward the criminal justice system.

In keeping with the assumptions of the program area, projects have common operational objectives. Generally, projects have the following intentions:

1. Victim/witness assistance centers should serve crime victims, their families, and witnesses who are in need of services or information as a result of a crime or as a result of court processing.
2. Services may be addressed to a variety of client needs. Crime victims may require social services or referrals to community resources. Witnesses may be in need of information on court procedures, notification for a scheduled court appearance or accompaniment through the court proceedings.
3. Services may be provided directly by project staff or indirectly through referrals to community facilities.
4. Cooperation should be developed with community agencies and criminal justice agencies in order to facilitate referrals to and from the projects.

As these operational objectives indicate, there is considerable latitude permitted to projects within this program area. Projects may serve witnesses

and/or victims and their families. They may structure their service delivery to encompass direct services, such as counseling, or referrals to such facilities as local welfare departments. Services may also be geared toward mitigating the effects of a victimization and/or alleviating the burdens of court involvement.

The type of servicing strategy which a project employs is largely a function of its jurisdictional location. The type of victimization and the client's status as a victim or witness will affect his/her needs which, in turn, will determine the services which should be rendered. These connections will be explored fully in the data analysis section following a brief introduction to the projects examined and the methods of examination.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

The New Jersey State Law Enforcement Planning Agency funds four victim/witness assistance projects. These are located in Burlington and Somerset Counties, Newark and Union City. (Somerset County's project could not be included in this evaluation due to a delay in start-up and changes among key personnel.) The three projects under scrutiny are representative of differing approaches to addressing the needs of victims and witnesses.

### 1. Burlington County Victim/Witness Assistance Unit

The Burlington County Victim/Witness Assistance Unit serves victims and witnesses who are residents of Burlington County, their families, and those victimized within Burlington County. Staff provide both victims and witnesses with direct and court-related services as well as referrals. The project operates under the auspices of the prosecutor's office and is physically located within the prosecutor's offices. It is staffed by a director, assistant director and several volunteers.

### 2. Newark Victim Service Center

The Newark Victim Service Center serves crime victims living in Newark, their families, and nonresidents victimized within that city. The project furnishes direct, crime-related services and referrals to crime victims. Court-related assistance is occasionally provided to victims involved in prosecutions. Witnesses other than the victim, however, are seldom received by the project. The center

falls under the jurisdiction of the city police department.

It is separately situated and maintains a staff of four victim advocates, a director and several volunteers.

3. Union City Victim Service Center

The Union City Victim Service Center works exclusively with crime victims, providing direct, crime-related services, referrals and assessments of home security. The project is implemented by that city's police department. Yet, like Newark, the project operates independently and is located in offices outside of the police department. The staff is composed of two persons, a project director and one victim advocate.

## METHODS

The program area Improvement of Services and Information Programs for Victims, Witnesses and Jurors was selected for evaluation largely because of its innovativeness. Additionally, variance in types of projects within this program area allowed for the comparison of project types and the evaluation of different client-servicing strategies. These comparisons were thought to be particularly useful in molding the design of future projects.

The evaluation was designed to be responsive to the informational needs of both project sponsors and project management. In collaboration with project and State Planning Agency staff, necessary items of information were identified and developed into data collection instruments. The resulting three-page forms were composed of the following:\*

Form #1 - A client intake form capturing descriptive characteristics of the individual receiving the center's services as well as basic data on the victimization

Form #2 - A service and case progress form documenting those services furnished to the client as well as steps, if any, completed in the prosecutorial process

Form #3 - A worksheet to be used simply to tally information from the service sheet for transfer onto a quarterly summary form.

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\*Data collection instruments are located in the Appendix.

The quarterly summary form was designed for submission to the program analyst. It provides the analyst and project management with quarterly totals of that information routinely recorded on the three client forms.

The three projects were instructed to begin data collection on April 24, 1978. A package of three forms was to be completed for each client received by the project as of that date. Upon completion of the intake form, a copy was made for the Evaluation Unit while the original remained in the client's file.

When services were provided or progress was made in the client's case, the second form, the service and case progress form, was retrieved from the client's file and that information recorded. The service form allowed for an up-to-date accounting of the client's status. That form was also copied and submitted to the Evaluation Unit on June 30, 1978. Thus, the unit was furnished with intake data on all clients received between April 24, 1978, and June 30, 1978. Information was also received regarding services provided to clients and changes in the prosecution of cases.

During this two month period, close supervision of form coding was maintained. An average of five visits was made by the evaluator to each project to ensure the rapid resolution of problems encountered and, especially, to make certain that terms were being interpreted uniformly.

Following receipt of a sample of cases, a subsample was randomly chosen to be verified in a check against project informational sources (e.g. police reports and supplemental files). The projects were found to have accurate, consistent reporting patterns and no dramatic errors were



discovered.

The data was reviewed, keypunched and submitted for programming and analysis. Data analysis produced frequencies on all variables and identified meaningful relationships among the variables.

Although the data collected reflects a ten week period, the evaluation forms continue to be utilized as central file documents. In addition, the summary forms continue to be submitted to the State Law Enforcement Planning Agency on a quarterly basis to augment project narrative reports.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The information upon which this analysis is based is representative of project clientele and services for the period of April 24, 1978, to June 30, 1978. This is a reasonable basis for cautious generalizations about yearly project activities. There are also a sufficient number of cases in the total sample upon which to base generalizations about the victim/witness assistance program area.

Initially, this section will discuss demographic characteristics of each victim/witness assistance project. Client characteristics will then be described and services rendered to clients will be compared. Finally, client participation in the court process will be assessed. In general, data for each project will be presented separately to permit comparisons among them.

The Project Descriptions section of this report briefly described the characteristics of each of the three projects under study. The nature of victim/witness assistance centers is influenced by the character of the communities in which they operate. Table 1 presents demographic data pertinent to Burlington County, Newark City and Union City. The table is an important first step to data analysis for it presents a framework for examining project activities and problems. For example, it is clear from Table 1 that Burlington County Victim/Witness Assistance Center serves a sprawling suburban and rural area with a low population density. This may suggest that the clients of such a project might often require transportation to and from court.

Newark, on the other hand, is a densely populated urban center and Union

City is more than twice as densely populated as Newark. Both cities report lower than average per capita incomes. Assessment of these characteristics could lead to the supposition that the predominant problem these two projects encounter is client need for social services. Additionally, the jurisdictions' respective crime rates suggest that Newark should be receiving more requests for assistance than Burlington County and Union City. Thus, it is important to bear in mind the community(s) which projects serve when considering the types and extent of project activities.

Table 1 :

PROJECT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Project	1976 Estimated Population <sup>1</sup>	1976 Area in Square Miles <sup>2</sup>	1976 Estimated Density/ Square Miles <sup>3</sup>	1975 Average Income <sup>4</sup>	Crime Rate/ 100,000 <sup>5</sup>	Dominant Community Character <sup>6</sup>	#Municipalities <sup>7</sup>
Burlington County	331,745	817.64	405.7	5,030	3,904	Suburban/Rural	40
Newark City	373,025	24.14	15,452.6	3,517	9,259	Urban Center	1
Union City	57,560	1.40	41,114.3	4,340	5,474	Urban Center	1
New Jersey	7,431,751	7,509.5	986.6	5,514	5,334.5	35.1	--

Table

1. State of New Jersey, Uniform Crime Reports: 1976. pp. 12-16.
2. State of New Jersey, Uniform Crime Reports: 1976. pp. 12-16.
3. Population (Column 1)/Square Miles (Column 2).
4. State of New Jersey, Office of Demographic & Economic Analysis. Division of Planning and Research. Per Capita Income for New Jersey. May 17, 1978.
5. State of New Jersey, Uniform Crime Reports: 1976. pp. 114-121.
6. State of New Jersey, Uniform Crime Reports: 1976. pp. 10-25.
7. Number of municipalities on which statistics have been computed corresponding to those communities serviced by project.

Number of Clients Served

The number of clients served and the status of these clients within the criminal justice system vary among projects. Table 2 indicates the number and status of clients provided services during the data collection period. Clients are classified as crime victims or witnesses. Crime victims who also serve as witnesses are classified as victims. Compared to the other projects a large percentage of Burlington County's clients (30%) are witnesses. Newark handled very few witnesses (2%), while Union City serviced no witnesses. These

Table 2 :

NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED\*

Client Status	Burlington County		Newark		Union City		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Victim	52**	70	181	98	124	100	357	93
Witness	22	30	4	2	0	0	26	7
Total	74	100	185	100	124	100	383	100
Composite Total	74	19	185	48	124	33	383	100

\*Those provided services between 4/24/78 and 6/30/78.

\*\*This category contains one (1) relative of a victim.

results are consistent with project orientations. The projects in Newark and Union City are oriented to providing services to crime victims. In addition to meeting the immediate needs of the victims, the Burlington County project provides services to victims who are pursuing their cases through the court system.

Newark processed the largest number of clients (N=185), followed by Union City (N=124) and Burlington County (N=74). The number of clients served is partly a function of the types of services provided. This may be

explained by some clients receiving more services or assistance which requires more sustained contact. This will be explored further in the analysis of project servicing patterns appearing later in this section.

Clients are reflective of the populations from which they were drawn. Women comprise slightly over half of the total population. Ethnic characteristics of clients also correspond to the populations addressed. Burlington County's population of victims and witnesses is principally White, whereas Newark's clientele is primarily Black and Union City's clients are typically Hispanic.\*

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\*(Tables displaying client background characteristics are located in the Appendix.)

Age of Clients

Table 3 indicates that the principal clients in all projects range in age from 25 through 45. Burlington County's population tends to be younger with 36% of its clientele below 25 and 86% below 46. The lowest percentage of all project clients (10%) were senior citizens. This finding is surprising

Table \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_:

AGE OF CLIENTS

Age (Grouped)	Burlington County		Newark		Union City		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5 - 24	25	36	34	19	12	13	71	21
25 - 45	34	50	77	43	49	51	160	46
46 - 64	7	10	45	25	27	28	79	23
65 - 93	3	4	23	13	8	8	34	10
Total	69	100	179	100	96	100	344	100

Missing = 39

since so much emphasis had been placed, during project planning, on the victimization of the elderly and their consequent need for services. In view of this unmet expectation, it may be incumbent upon the projects to investigate the reasons for the small number of older clients. Subsequent remedies could take the form of intensified attempts to seek out elderly crime victims and public relations efforts directed toward senior citizens.

Age of Victim by Reported Offense

Table 4 indicates that senior citizens were more frequently the victims of robbery than they were victims of other offenses. 63% of all projects' clientele over 65 were robbery victims. A large percentage (40%) of 46 to 64 year olds were also robbery victims.

Table 4 :

AGE OF VICTIMS BY REPORTED OFFENSE\*

Reported Offense	5 - 24		25 - 45		46 - 64		65 - 93		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sexual and Other Assaults	22	38	20	14	4	6	3	9	49	16
Robbery	12	21	30	20	29	40	20	63	91	29
B & E and Thefts	24	41	97	66	39	54	9	28	169	55
Totals	58	100	147	100	72	100	32	100	309	100

\*Data for all projects

Missing = 74

The more common offenses in all other age groups were breaking and entries and thefts. Assaults were high (38%) only in the 5 to 24 year old age group.



Reported Offenses Involving Victims

Table 5 further breaks down reported offense and displays the numbers of victims (of each offense) received by the three projects. It is clear that Burlington County receives victims of the violent crimes of sexual assault, assault and robbery. A full 69% of Burlington County's clients were victims of personal, violent crimes. Moreover, the offenses coded as other in Burlington County were kidnapping and child abuse, thus raising the proportion of personal offenses to 77% of Burlington's victim population. It

Table 5 :

REPORTED OFFENSES INVOLVING VICTIMS

Reported Offenses		Burlington County		Newark		Union City		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Violent Offenses	Sexual Assault	12	23	8	4	--	--	20	6
	Assault	13	25	10	6	8	7	31	9
	Robbery	11	21	80	44	3	2	94	26
Property Offenses	B & E	4	8	56	31	76	61	136	38
	Theft	8	15	20	11	36	29	64	18
	Other	4	8	7	4	1	1	12	3
Total		52	100	181	100	124	100	357	100

should be stressed that the personal nature of these offenses is not reflective of crime trends within Burlington County but of the victimizations of the particular persons received as clients. In contrast, Newark handles an array of victims; 54% are victims of personal offenses and 42% are victims of

property offenses. Union City's clients are located at the opposite end of the spectrum with 90% being victims of property crimes.

Reported Offenses Involving Witnesses

As Table 6 depicts, all witnesses serviced by Burlington County and Newark were witnesses for cases involving violent crime. All of Newark's four witnesses were involved in cases of sexual assault. Burlington County handled seven witnesses who were involved in homicide cases (32%). Five witnesses were involved in cases of sexual assault (24%) and five participated in robbery cases (24%). Witnesses, also, generally conformed to the

Table 6 :

REPORTED OFFENSES INVOLVING WITNESSES

Reported Offenses	Burlington County		Newark		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Homicide	7	32	0	0	7	28
Sexual Assault	5	24	4	100	9	36
Assault	2	10	0	0	2	8
Robbery	5	24	0	0	5	20
Other	2	10	0	0	2	8
Total	21	100	4	100	25	100

Missing = 1

overall client population in sex, age and ethnic background.

As is evident in the preceding discussion, client profiles differ among projects. Client characteristics can be summarized briefly as follows. Burlington County serves many witnesses, although its principal service recipients are victims. Newark's clients are predominately victims and

Union City's are all victims. Burlington County's clients are typically White, Newark's victims are Black and Union City's are Hispanic. Burlington County concentrates on the 25 - 45 year age group who are victims of, or witnesses to, violent crimes. Newark's typical clients are 25 - 45 year old victims of robbery and breaking and entry. Union City's victims also range in age from 25 - 45, but are victims of breaking and entries and thefts.

Source of Referral

As Table 7 indicates, clients are infrequently referred directly to projects. Rather, project staff initiate almost all contact with potential clients.

Newark and Union City receive daily police incident reports. These are first screened by the police. (Sexual assault cases are referred to local

Table 7:

SOURCE OF REFERRAL

Referral Source	Burlington County		Newark		Union City		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Center Initiated Contact	34	47	173	94	123	99	330	85
Police	4	5	8	4	0	0	12	3
Prosecutor	26	36*	0	0	0	0	26	7
Friend or Relative	4	5	1	.5	1	1	6	2
Self Referral	4	5	2	1	0	0	6	2
Other	1	1	1	.5	0	0	2	1
Total	73	100	185	100	124	100	382	100

Missing = 1

\*Of these referrals, 22 were witnesses.

sex crimes units.) The reports are then examined by project staff who, in turn, intuitively determine those clients in need of assistance. An attempt is then made to contact these victims. In Union City, this involves staff sending a written notification of availability followed by a phone call. Newark employs a different approach. Possessing a large staff and several volunteers, this project has the capability to personally contact victims in their homes. Services are provided to those who indicate need.

Burlington County's project secures cases through both the police department and prosecutor's office. Prospective clients are notified by mail of the center's availability and those who respond are furnished appropriate services. In some cases (36% of all this project's referrals), the project is asked by the prosecutor's office to address the needs of a specific person. The majority of these clients specifically referred by the prosecutor's office are witnesses (85%).

It seems, then, that the projects do receive some measure of cooperation from criminal justice agencies. They receive names of victims and witnesses and case information most of which is furnished by the police and the prosecutors. However, very few clients are referred directly by the police (3%). As one will recall from prior discussion of project operating assumptions, police cooperation was expected to be developed by the projects in their initial stages.

Table 7 further points out that very few clients (2%) come to the attention of the projects through their own efforts. An explanation may be that awareness of the projects' existence is not widespread. Alternately, project-initiated contact may be so prompt that potential clients are prevented from requesting assistance on their own.

The small number of clients who, themselves, seek services raises an important question: what is the appropriate role of the project in securing clients? Could staff be better employed in broader and more organized efforts to reach potential clients? This effort could include increased advertising and enhanced public relations. Moreover, social service agencies and community facilities should be persuaded to convey information on the center's availability to all crime victims.

On the other hand, these projects are involved in publicly dispensing information about their services. The relative newness of this type of agency may, of course, be the reason for a lack of immediate response. Projects may also be correct in assuming that public alienation from the system is so great that only direct contact by concerned project personnel will overcome public distrust. However, as noted previously, victimization studies have shown that large numbers of persons do not report victimizations to the police. In view of the fact that these projects receive the great majority of their clients from amongst those who have had police contact, there may be little likelihood that projects are reaching those victims who are most divorced from the system. There may be a greater need to establish referral arrangements with criminal justice and community agencies. Further, it is suggested that victims and witnesses be encouraged (through the media) to contact the projects themselves.

Service Provision

Table 8 displays those services provided to clients in each project. The services included in this table were designed to encompass most of the projects' activities. However, because the category "other" was used so frequently when recording service provision, the projects were asked the nature of those services classified as other. Therefore, in addition to the named services, "other" services will be identified and discussed.

Burlington County's main services are related to court appearances (21%), advice rendered by telephone (21%) and insurance and claims forms assistance (13%). Advice by phone was often related to the caller's role as a participant in the court process. Additionally, most of the "other services" in Burlington County were court-related, consisting of such services as assistance with witness fees, vouchers and intervention with employers.

Newark's Victim Assistance Project primarily furnished clients with counseling (30%). Counseling includes both emotional counseling and the provision of practical advice. Practical advice consists of acquainting victims with crime prevention techniques and discussing the applicability of community resources to the victims' needs. "Other services" (consisting of 20% of all of Newark's services) usually entailed accompanying victims to community agencies. Referrals to community agencies was the third most frequently provided service (18%).

Union City handled most (42%) of its clients by telephone. A typical phone contact involves the counselor's informing a theft victim of the various avenues available for obtaining compensation. "Other services" (22% of Union



Table 8 :

SERVICES PROVIDED TO CLIENTS

Services Provided	Burlington County		Newark		Union City		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assistance With Court Appearance*	53	24	15	5	0	0	68	10
Assistance In Returning Property Held As Evidence	10	4	6	2	1	.5	17	2
Insurance And Claims Forms Assistance	28	13	6	2	32	19	66	9
Advice By Phone	48	21	23	7	69	42	140	20
Transportation	15	7	11	4	0	0	26	4
Referrals To Community Agencies	10	4	55	18	15	9	80	12
Referrals To Violent Crimes Compensation Board	7	3	28	9	1	.5	36	5
Counseling	13	6	92**	30	3	2	108	16
Follow-Up Contacts	19	8	8	3	8	5	35	5
Other Services	23	10	62	20	36	22	121	17
Total	226	100	306	100	165	100	697	100

\* Includes notifications of required appearances, notifications of case dismissals, continuances and dispositions and accompaniment to court.

\*\* Includes practical advice as well as emotional counseling.

City's services) usually consisted of interpreting for those Spanish-speaking clients who were reporting a victimization. This category, "other services", also captured crime prevention assessments of the homes of breaking and entry victims. Union City's staff further expended 19% of their services in assisting theft victims with the completion and submission of insurance claims.

A comparison of client characteristics (i.e. age, sex, etc.) with services rendered was made to determine if type of service provided differed according to client characteristics. No relationships were found. It appears that the types of services provided are more closely associated with the type of victimization which was experienced. For instance, many of Burlington County's clients were found to be pursuing their cases through the court system. Therefore, it was found that this project's service delivery was concentrated in court-related assistance to those clients.

As one will recall from an earlier discussion on nature of victimizations, most clients in Newark are victims of robberies and thefts. It seems appropriate, then, that clients receive counseling on alternative sources of compensation and referrals to appropriate community agencies. Additionally, escort to community facilities seems reasonable particularly when clients have just experienced a robbery. Also noteworthy in Newark is the small number of court-related services provided. This is in keeping with that project's small number of witnesses (N=4) and the small number of sexual victim clients who are pursuing prosecutions. Though it is not currently receiving large numbers of witnesses, Newark Victim/Witness Assistance Center does appear to be able to provide court-related services when called upon to

do so.

Union City's Victim Service Center also provides direct services to clients, most of whom are victims of thefts. Insurance and claims forms assistance and practical advice are services necessary to those who have lost property as a result of theft. Moreover, interpretive service is vital to a largely Spanish-speaking population.

The data suggests, however, that there may be some gaps in service provision. Table 8 reveals that referrals to community facilities, when compared with other services, represent a small portion of total services (12%). It may be that when a project acquaints clients with available community services it is indirectly facilitating a referral. As a result of the counseling and advice furnished by project staff, clients may feel knowledgeable about community services and hence, acquire these services on their own.

Nevertheless, follow-up contact is rarely undertaken by the projects (5% of total servicing activities). This indicates that the results of staff efforts to inform clients is largely unknown. It is recommended, therefore, that follow-up procedures be instituted within projects to determine if client-initiated and direct referrals were productive. If client-initiated referrals are found to be rare or to be unproductive, projects should make better use of existing community resources so that direct referrals can be made.

Another service-related problem emerges when the number of referrals to the Violent Crimes Compensation Board is examined. Table 8 shows that 36 referrals were made to the Board. This amounts to only 5% of the projects'

total service activity. Calculated by client, only 9% of all clients received referrals to the Board. To determine whether this seemingly low rate of referrals is in accordance with clients' needs, the number of referrals was compared with the number of clients who were injured as a result of the victimization.

Table 9 :

INJURED VICTIMS BY REFERRAL TO  
VIOLENT CRIMES COMPENSATION BOARD

Referral (Yes/No)	Burlington County		Newark		Union City		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Referred	7	25	28	42	1	11	36	35
Not Referred	21	75	38	58	8	89	67	65
Total	28	100	66	100	9	100	103	100

Table 9 reveals that the great majority (65%) of injured victims were not referred to the Violent Crimes Compensation Board. When asked about this, project directors explained that most victims do not qualify for compensation. Often this means that victimization-incurred expenses appear to be below the \$100 deductible or that the victim's expenses are covered by insurance. An additional disqualifying factor is suspected victim provocation of the criminal incident. The former criteria should certainly be invoked in order to spare any clearly ineligible clients from the efforts of a fruitless application. However, the latter criteria, or any such subjective criteria, should not be considered by project staff when making a referral decision, for it is the responsibility of the Violent Crimes Compensation Board to assess eligibility.

Use of these guidelines may keep ineligible clients from making an unsuccessful application and may prevent qualified clients from being deferred from application. It therefore seems to be advisable that all clients who are victims of violent offenses be routinely advised of the availability of the Violent Crimes Compensation Board and that those incurring compensable expenses be referred to the Board.

Table 10 :

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES PROVIDED

Project	Number Clients*	Number Services	Client/ Service Rate
Burlington County	74	226	3.05
Newark	185	306	1.65
Union City	124	165	1.33
Total	383	697	1.82

\*Those provided services between 4/24/78 and 6/30/78.

The average number of services provided to clients is computed in the client/service ratio in Table 10. Burlington County's client contacts are more frequent (3.05) because clients are usually involved in a prosecution and require repeated court-related assistance. Newark and Union City provide services more in the nature of verbal advice and therefore are not apt to require sustained contact with an individual. Thus, client/service ratios of 1.65 and 1.33 are understandable.

It is also clear from Table 10 that client/staff relationships are not long term. In general, clients receive an average of about two services (1.82). Of course, this data represents the number of service contacts within a ten week period and additional contacts may occur. However, study of the dates upon which services are provided indicates that in Newark's and Union City's projects, clients are provided one or two services, usually on the same day, and no longer require further contact. This observation was substantiated by directors of these two projects. Burlington County's clients, because they are involved in the court process, may require future assistance.

Client Participation in Court Process

Table 11 presents the data gathered by two of the three projects on items termed "incidents of client participation in the court process." These variables were included to indicate the client's willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice system.\* These consisted of the following four incidents as they relate to all clients.

Table 11 :

INCIDENTS OF CLIENT PARTICIPATION IN COURT PROCESS

Type of Participation	Burlington County			Newark		
	Victims	Witnesses	Total	Victims	Witnesses	Total
Formal Complaint	37	0	37	6	0	6
Civil Complaint	0	0	0	6	0	6
Trial Initiated	1	14	15	6	2	8
Client Testimony	6	12	18	3	1	4
Total	44	26	70	21	3	24

1. Formal complaint(s) signed against the offender(s).
2. Civil complaint(s) signed against the offender(s).
3. Initiation of a trial.
4. Client's furnishing of testimony.

\*Because it was known that the great majority of clients come to the projects by way of police records, there was little need to include a variable on clients' reporting to the police.

Obviously, witness involvement could not be determined from the signing of complaints and could only be measured by either of the latter two variables. Furthermore, none of the variables would be pertinent unless an alleged offender was apprehended.

One obstacle to the immediate collection of this data was the time frame of this evaluation study. A research effort covering ten weeks is not likely to capture court appearances occurring several months after the victimization. Moreover, offenders may not be apprehended for some time after the client reports the victimization. The data, then, cannot be interpreted as complete. By far, the greatest obstacle to interpretation of client participation data was the fact that Union City could not collect such data and Newark could collect information in a limited number of cases.

Newark's limited involvement in court processing and Union City's complete exclusion from court-related activities may be partially explained by the nature of their clients' victimizations. Newark's majority of violent, personal offense victims are mostly composed of robbery victims (82% of personal victimization). Of all violent, personal offenses, robbery presents the greatest difficulty in offender apprehension. Thus, Newark's clients may seldom become involved in a court case. Likewise, perpetrators of thefts are infrequently apprehended, keeping Union City's theft victims out of court. However, Union City Victim/Witness Assistance Center has no court liaison through which it can determine if any of its clients enter the court system. Newark, also, has no systematic method of obtaining this information.

Burlington County, because of its affiliation with the prosecutor's office, was able to maintain records of its clients' progress through



the courts. Thus, Table 12 displays the numbers of incidents of client participation in the court process in Burlington County and those incidents known to project staff in Newark. Burlington County's victims were participants on 44 occasions while its witnesses participated in the court process on 26 occasions. Newark recorded 21 incidents of victim participation and three of witness involvement.

It should be remembered that Newark's data is limited because of the project's lack of a court liaison. Similarly, Union City has no data also because it lacks a court liaison. It appears that in Newark, knowledge of a client's court participation is confined to cases of sexual assault. Eight victims and all four witnesses were involved in cases of sexual assault and these clients received court-related services from project staff. Not coincidentally, information on incidents of participation became available in their cases. Among Newark's victims, sexual assault victims were responsible for the signing of all civil complaints, all but one formal complaint, all but two trial initiations and all incidents of testimony. Unfortunately, Newark's staff could not determine its clients' statuses within the courts unless the staff was assisting the client through the courts, as in the few sexual assault cases.

These four indicators of client participation provide a good tracking mechanism in cases where an offender has been apprehended. They provide the project with the data upon which outcome inferences may be made. For instance, the impact of project service provision may be measured by a client's subsequent cooperation with the court process. Additionally, recordkeeping of this nature keeps projects informed on clients' court-related needs. For these reasons, it is recommended that projects, especially those receiving victims of personal

(and, therefore, more highly prosecuted) crimes establish court liaisons to enable case tracking. Moreover, court liaisons should be utilized in insuring that the victim's court-related needs are also addressed.

### CONCLUSION

The three victim/witness assistance projects examined within this report are providing appropriate services to crime victims, to victims who appear in court as witnesses and to other witnesses. Services which are dispensed most usually address the crime-related needs of clients and, somewhat less often, their court-related needs. Project staff time is not entirely devoted to the direct provision of the services measured in this report. It was found that much time is spent by the projects in publicizing their availability and in contacting prospective clients. Projects also seem to be very active in crime prevention efforts. It appears, on the basis of this evaluation, that the victim/witness assistance center is a valuable means of alleviating problems faced by crime victims and witnesses. As such, these projects can do much to enhance the administration of justice.

APPENDIX

NEW JERSEY STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING AGENCY  
VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER EVALUATION

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS ON THE COMPLETION OF DATA COLLECTION FORMS:**

1. A client is to be defined as any person who receives at least one service.
2. Routine phone calls and letters are not to be defined as services.
3. Beginning with the first day of data collection, information is to be recorded for all new clients and all continuing clients.
4. Each form is to include a jurisdiction identification number assigned by the evaluation staff. These jurisdiction numbers are:

<u>JURISDICTION NUMBER</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>
500	BURLINGTON COUNTY
510	NEWARK
520	SOMERSET COUNTY
530	UNION CITY

5. Each client is also to be assigned a five digit client identification number ranging from 00001 to 99999 which is to be assigned by the victim/witness center staff and recorded on each client form.
6. The numbers that appear after the answer spaces are for coding purposes and should be disregarded.

**SPECIFIC DATA COLLECTION FORM INSTRUCTIONS:**

**A. NO. 351 CLIENT INTAKE FORM**

- 1) The 351 form elicits information about client background and the nature of the victimization.
- 2) It is to be completed at the time of the first meeting with a client and as additional information becomes available;
- 3) A client who is both a victim and a witness is to be recorded as a victim;
- 4) In those instances where a third party makes arrangements for the delivery of services, the client is still to be recorded, in Item 3, as that person for whom the services are provided.
- 5) Items 1-10 refer to the service recipient identified in Item 3.
- 6) Items 11-14 refer to the crime victim even when the victim is not the service recipient identified in Item 3.

**B. NO. 352 CLIENT SERVICE WORKSHEET**

- 1) The 352 form is a worksheet on which to record the services provided a client and changes in the client's case status. It is to be kept in the client's permanent file folder and updated each time a service is provided.
- 2) Information is to be recorded on one horizontal line each time a service is provided.

**C. NO. 353 CLIENT SERVICE SUMMARY**

- 1) The 353 form elicits a summary of the services received by the client. It is not to be completed until requested by the evaluation staff. The summary information for the 353 form is to be derived by tabulating information from the 352 form.

**D. NO. 354 QUARTERLY SERVICE SUMMARY**

- 1) The 354 form is to be submitted along with the quarterly narrative reports. It is to be completed by tabulating the information on the 351 and 352 forms.
- 2) Four copies of the quarterly service summary are provided. One is to be completed per quarter. The four quarters are as follows:

QUARTER 1 ..... JANUARY - MARCH  
 QUARTER 2 ..... APRIL - JUNE  
 QUARTER 3 ..... JULY - SEPTEMBER  
 QUARTER 4 ..... OCTOBER - DECEMBER

NEW JERSEY STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING AGENCY  
VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED AT THE INITIAL INTAKE OF THE CLIENT.

3  5  1 CLIENT INTAKE FORM (1-3)

1. JURISDICTION (4-6)

2. CLIENT NUMBER (7-11)

3. CLIENT STATUS (12)  
1. VICTIM  
2. WITNESS  
3. RELATIVE OF VICTIM  
7. OTHER

4. AGE (13,14)

5. SEX (15)  
1. MALE  
2. FEMALE

6. ETHNIC BACKGROUND (16)  
1. WHITE  
2. BLACK  
3. HISPANIC  
7. OTHER  
8. UNKNOWN

7. EMPLOYMENT STATUS (17)  
1. EMPLOYED  
2. UNEMPLOYED  
8. UNKNOWN

8. OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_  
(18,19)

9. ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES (20)  
1. ECONOMIC HARDSHIP  
2. ADEQUATE FINANCIAL MEANS  
3. AFFLUENT  
8. UNKNOWN

10. SOURCE OF REFERRAL (21)  
1. CENTER INITIATED CONTACT  
2. POLICE  
3. PROSECUTOR  
4. SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY  
5. MEDICAL FACILITY  
6. FRIEND OR RELATIVE  
7. SELF REFERRAL  
8. UNKNOWN  
9. OTHER

11. REPORTED OFFENSE (MOST SERIOUS) (22)  
1. HOMICIDE  
2. SEXUAL ASSAULT  
3. AGGRAVATED ASSAULT  
4. ROBBERY  
5. BREAKING & ENTRY  
6. THEFT/LARCENY  
7. OTHER

12. WAS THE VICTIM INJURED? (23)  
1. YES  
2. NO  
8. UNKNOWN

13. MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO VICTIM (24)  
0. NONE  
1. FIRST AID ONLY  
2. EMERGENCY ROOM TREATMENT  
3. HOSPITALIZATION  
8. UNKNOWN

14. VICTIM RELATIONSHIP TO OFFENDER (25)  
1. RELATIVE  
2. FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE  
3. STRANGER  
8. UNKNOWN



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NEW JERSEY STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING AGENCY  
VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED EITHER WHEN THE CLIENT IS TERMINATED OR WHEN REQUESTED BY THE SLEPA EVALUATION UNIT. INFORMATION FOR THIS FORM IS TO BE TOTALED FROM THE CLIENT SERVICE WORKSHEET.

3 | 5 | 3 CLIENT SERVICE SUMMARY (1-3)

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. JURISDICTION (4-7)                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. CLIENT NUMBER (8-12)                           |
|                          | 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF SERVICES PROVIDED              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 01. COURT APPEARANCE ALERT (13,14)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 02. CASE PROGRESS NOTIFICATION (15,16)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 03. USE OF VICTIM/WITNESS ESCORT (17,18)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 04. ASSISTANCE IN RETURN OF PROPERTY (19,20)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 05. INSURANCE AND CLAIMS FORMS ASSISTANCE (21,22) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 06. ADVICE OR REFERRAL BY TELEPHONE (23,24)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 07. TRANSPORTATION TO HOSPITAL (25,26)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 08. TRANSPORTATION TO COURT (27,28)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 09. TRANSPORTATION ELSEWHERE (29,30)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. REFERRAL TO SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY (31,32)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. REFERRAL TO VICTIM COMPENSATION BOARD (33,34) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. REFERRAL TO MEDICAL FACILITY (35,36)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. REFERRAL ELSEWHERE (37,38)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. COUNSELING (39,40)                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. PROVISION OF EMERGENCY FUNDS (41,42)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. JOB RELATED ASSISTANCE (43,44)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. FOLLOW-UP CONTACT (45,46)                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. OTHER SERVICES (47,48)                        |
|                          | 4. CASE PROGRESS TOTALS                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 90. FORMAL COMPLAINT(S) SIGNED (49,50)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 91. CIVIL COMPLAINT(S) SIGNED (51,52)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 92. TRIAL(S) INITIATED (53,54)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 93. CLIENT(S) TESTIMONY (55,56)                   |



NEW JERSEY STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING AGENCY  
VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE QUARTERLY NARRATIVE REPORT.

3 | 5 | 4

QUARTERLY SERVICE SUMMARY

1. QUARTER (PLEASE CIRCLE) 1 2 3 4

2. JURISDICTION

3. CLIENTS PROVIDED SERVICES DURING  
QUARTERLY PERIOD

VICTIMS

WITNESSES

RELATIVES OF VICTIM

OTHER

4. SOURCE OF REFERRAL

CENTER INITIATED CONTACT

POLICE

PROSECUTOR

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY

MEDICAL FACILITY

FRIEND OR RELATIVE

SELF REFERRAL

OTHER

5. REPORTED OFFENSES

HOMICIDE

SEXUAL ASSAULTS

AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS

ROBBERIES

BREAKING & ENTRIES

THEFTS/LARCENIES

OTHERS

6. FORMAL COMPLAINT(S) SIGNED

7. CIVIL COMPLAINT(S) SIGNED

8. TRIAL(S) INITIATED

9. CLIENT(S) TESTIFYING

10. SUMMARY OF SERVICES PROVIDED

CLIENTS  
PROVIDED  
SERVICE

SERVICE  
CONTACTS

- COURT APPEARANCE ALERT
- CASE PROGRESS NOTIFICATION
- USE OF VICTIM/WITNESS ESCORT
- ASSISTANCE IN RETURN OF PROPERTY
- INSURANCE AND CLAIMS FORMS ASSISTANCE
- ADVICE OR REFERRAL BY TELEPHONE
- TRANSPORTATION TO HOSPITAL
- TRANSPORTATION TO COURT
- TRANSPORTATION ELSEWHERE
- REFERRAL TO SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY
- REFERRAL TO VICTIM COMPENSATION BOARD
- REFERRAL TO MEDICAL FACILITY
- REFERRAL ELSEWHERE
- COUNSELING
- PROVISION OF EMERGENCY FUNDS
- JOB RELATED ASSISTANCE
- FOLLOW-UP CONTACT
- OTHER SERVICES

Table 12 :

SEX AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF CLIENTS

Client Characteristics	Burlington County		Newark		Union City		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex								
Male	30	40	84	45	59	48	173	45
Female	44	60	101	55	65	52	210	55
Total	74	100	185	100	124	100	383	100
Ethnic Background *								
White	63	87	55	30	52	42	170	44
Black	9	12	103	56	1	1	113	30
Hispanic	0	0	27	14	68	55	95	25
Other	1	1	0	0	2	2	3	1
Total	73	100	185	100	123	100	381	100

\*Missing = 2

**END**