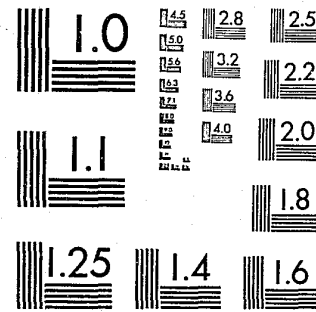


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United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C. 20531

6-9-83

86814

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A Historical Perspective

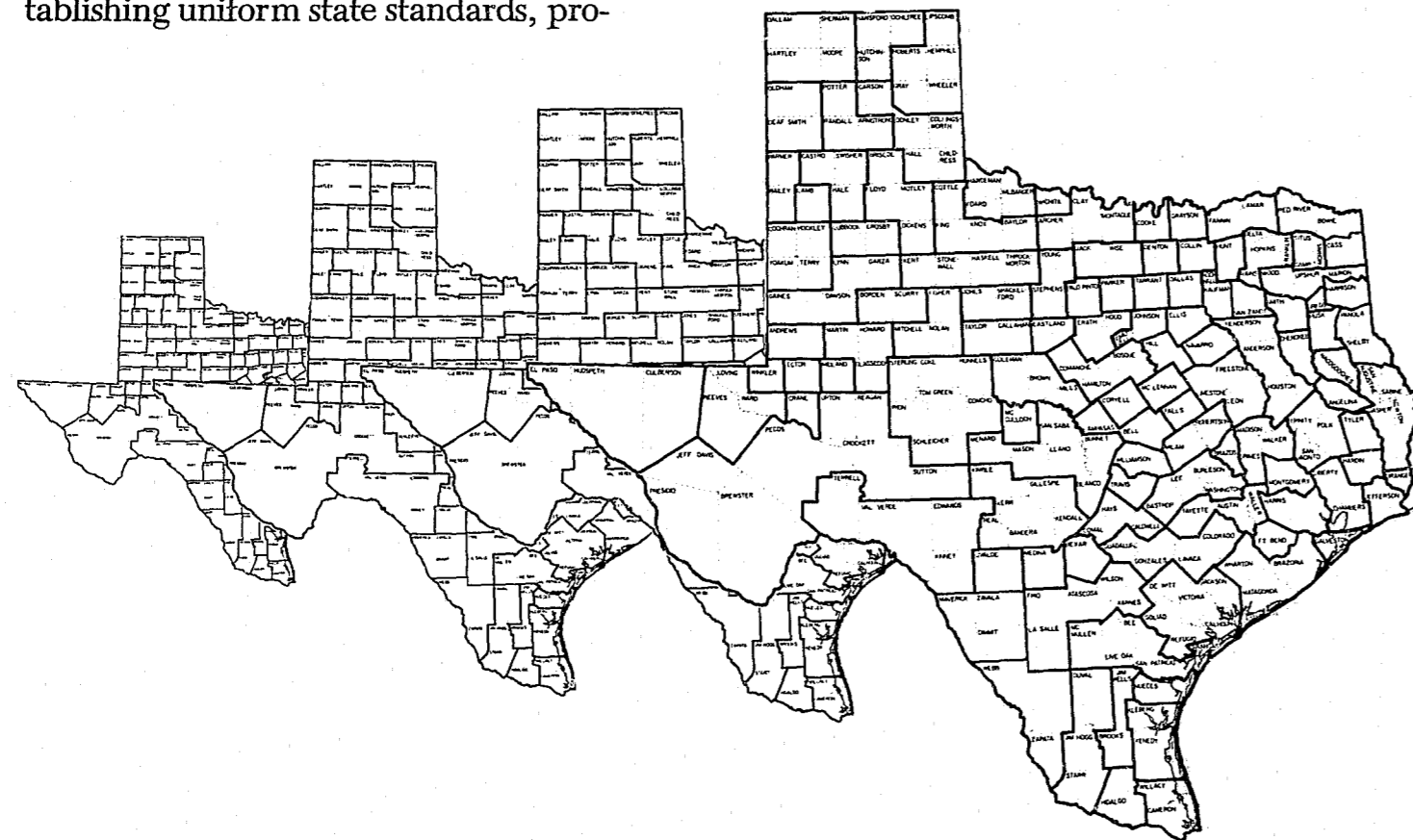
Prior to 1977, the probation system in Texas was virtually an unknown element in the criminal justice system. The degree of services varied from county to county according to available resources. In some instances, confusion about jurisdictional boundaries resulted in a duplication of effort.

Emerging from the 65th Texas Legislature was a revision to the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (Article 42.121) which created the Texas Adult Probation Commission. For the first time in Texas history, a state agency existed to oversee and improve the adult probation system. The Commission was charged with establishing uniform state standards, pro-

viding and improving adult probation services through the disbursement of state funds to local departments in compliance with the standards.

As the Commission began its organizational process the adult probation system was further defined. In the Spring of 1978, the Commission adopted the first set of uniform standards for probation services in Texas. The standards addressed not only the administrative operations of the local adult probation departments, but also the quality of services delivered.

Cooperatively working with the local departments, the Commission began ar-



1913	1947	1965	1977
7-23 W21	9-25 W21	11-29 SW21	13-29 W21
15-29 SW21	17-29 SW21	19-29 SW21	21-29 SW21
23-29 SW21	25-29 SW21	27-29 SW21	29-29 SW21
31-29 SW21	33-29 SW21	35-29 SW21	37-29 SW21
39-29 SW21	41-29 SW21	43-29 SW21	45-29 SW21
47-29 SW21	49-29 SW21	51-29 SW21	53-29 SW21
55-29 SW21	57-29 SW21	59-29 SW21	61-29 SW21
63-29 SW21	65-29 SW21	67-29 SW21	69-29 SW21
71-29 SW21	73-29 SW21	75-29 SW21	77-29 SW21
79-29 SW21	81-29 SW21	83-29 SW21	85-29 SW21
87-29 SW21	89-29 SW21	91-29 SW21	93-29 SW21
95-29 SW21	97-29 SW21	99-29 SW21	101-29 SW21
103-29 SW21	105-29 SW21	107-29 SW21	109-29 SW21
111-29 SW21	113-29 SW21	115-29 SW21	117-29 SW21

anging a network needed to achieve the uniformity of services. The new program was voluntary and receipt of state aid was contingent upon compliance with state standards. The local departments had to indicate their intent to participate in the program by designating the appropriate management and fiscal personnel to oversee the operations and expenditures in their departments. This approach was to result in the elimination of any duplication of effort and more cost-efficient services being delivered.

On September 12, 1978, 89 local adult probation departments received the first disbursement of state aid. Basic probation services were supported through a per capita formula disbursing funds on a per probationer basis; while funding of

innovative projects and additional programs were achieved through a grant process. These funding mechanisms are in place today and facilitate the equitable allocation of resources by the Commission.

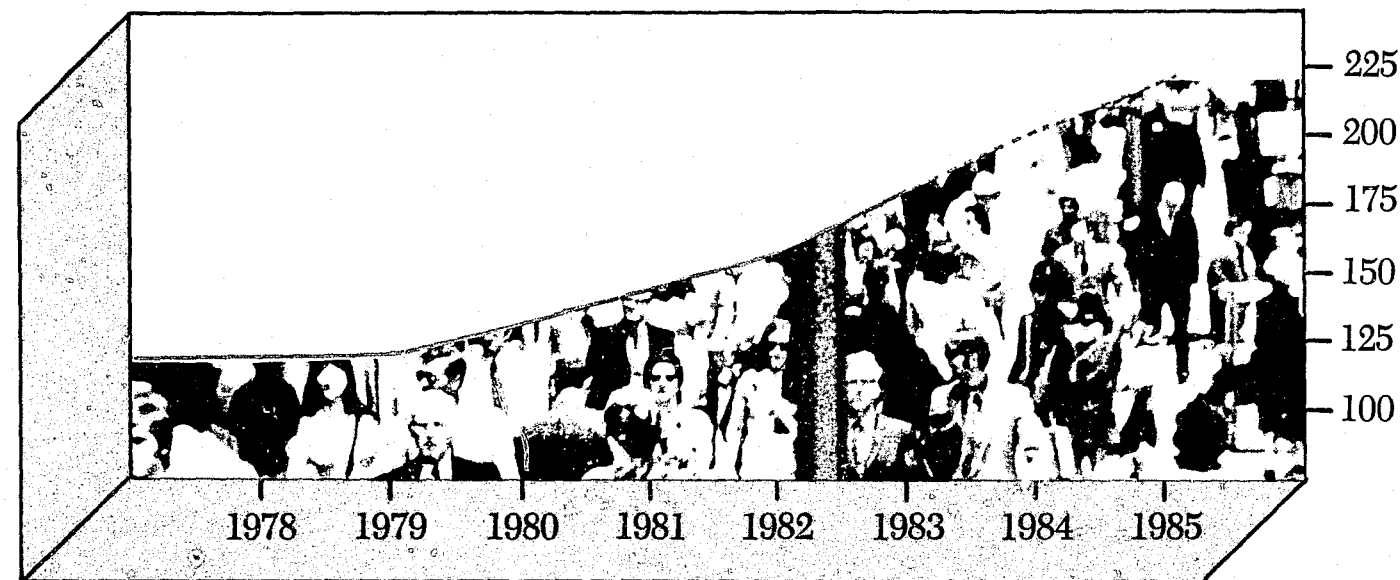
A new era in Texas adult probation had begun. Later this new era would find the adult probation system involved in more sophisticated approaches to community based corrections such as: intensive supervision probation, residential programs, systematic classification of cases, and improved methods of pre-sentence investigations.

Today, of the 113 adult probation departments in Texas, 100 are participating in the Commission's program.

Texas Adult Probation. . . An Evolving System

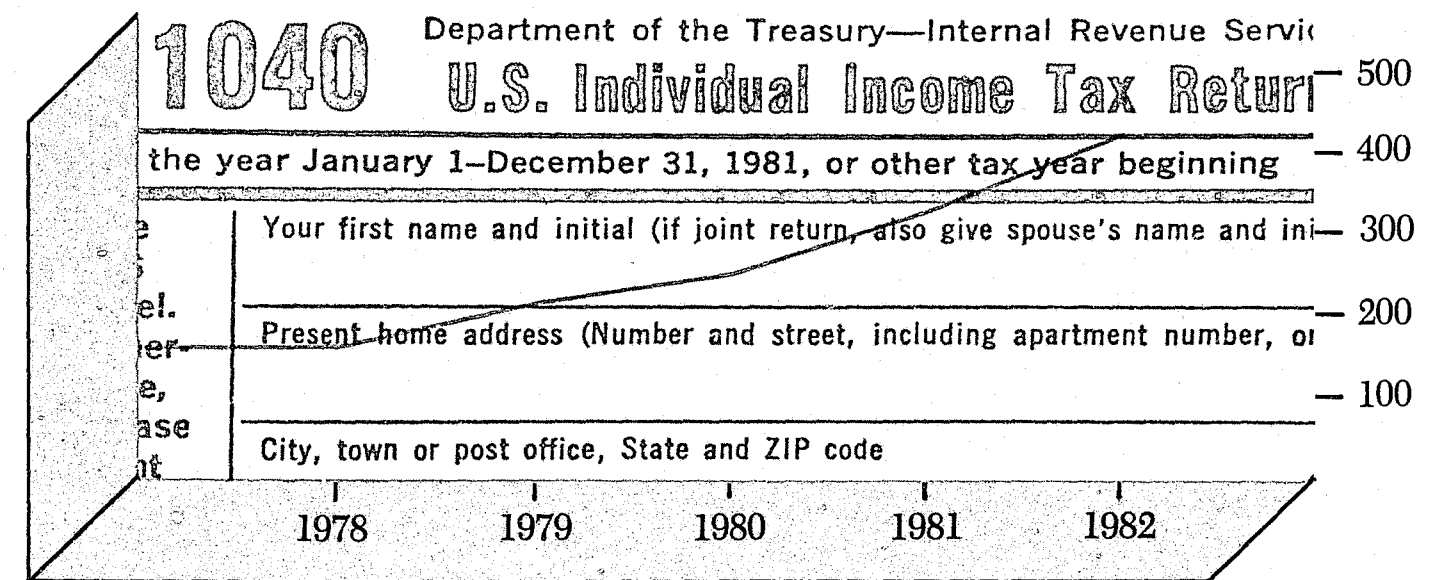
Growth and Economics

Growth of Probation



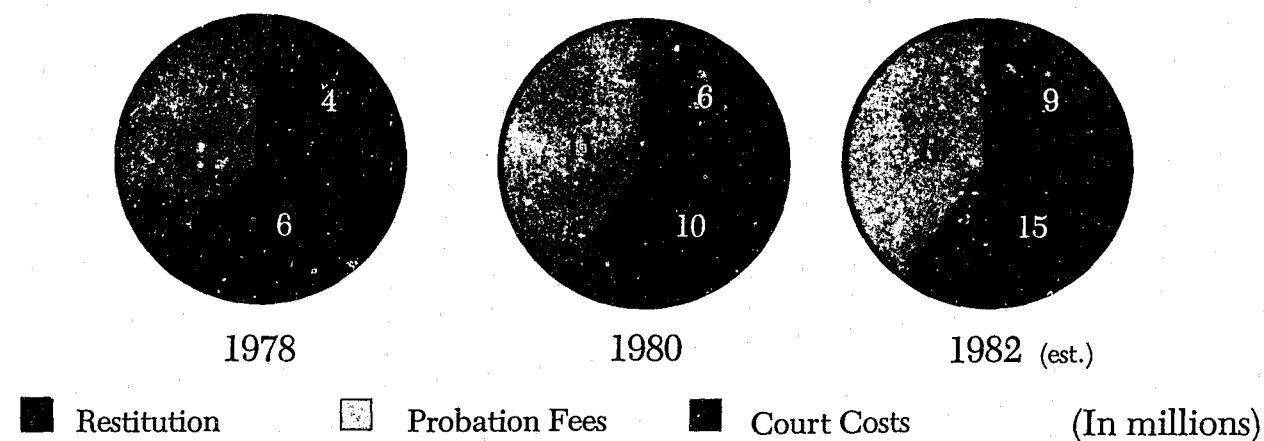
(In thousands)

Estimated Taxes Paid by Probationers



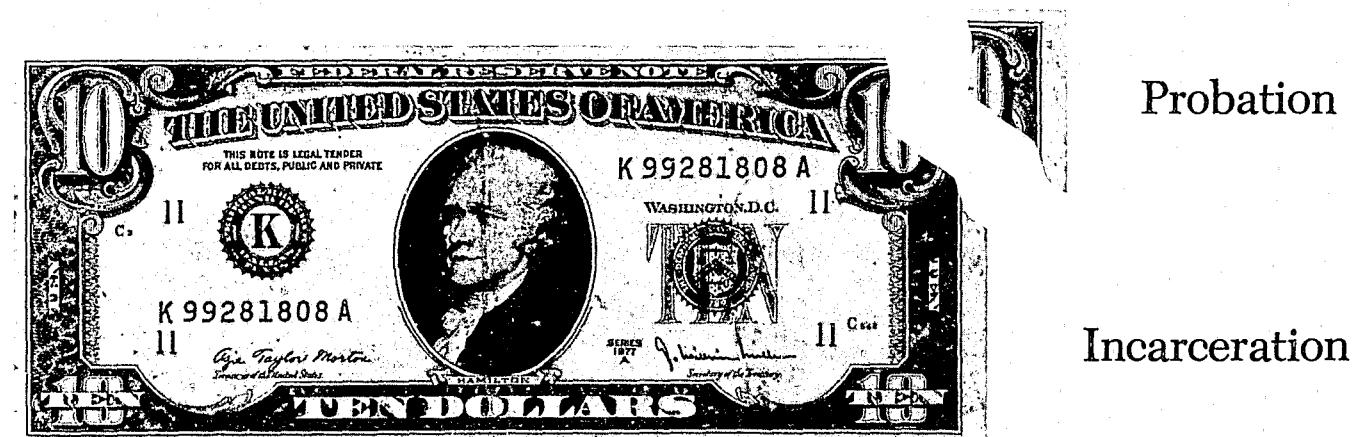
(In millions)

Collections From Probationers by Departments



(In millions)

Cost Comparisons



Innovations

Case Classification System

Recognizing the need to establish a systematic approach to objectively evaluate an offender, the Commission adapted a Wisconsin system of case classification for use by Texas adult probation departments.

The system goes beyond simply ranking the probationer by offense committed and strives to isolate the problems of the offender. Becoming an initial diagnostic process, the case classification system can better determine an appropriate supervision plan for the probationer.

Community Residential Programs

For the probationer needing a more structured environment, community residential programs offer yet another alternative corrections tool for adult probation departments.

The court, as a condition of probation, may order the probationer to live in a residential center. During the typical stay in the center of between 90 to 120 days, the probationer is required to participate in programs and activities designed to make the offender a responsible citizen again. As a resident, the probationer must continue to meet all the probation conditions and may be required to help pay for a part of the costs of residency.

Intensive Supervision Program

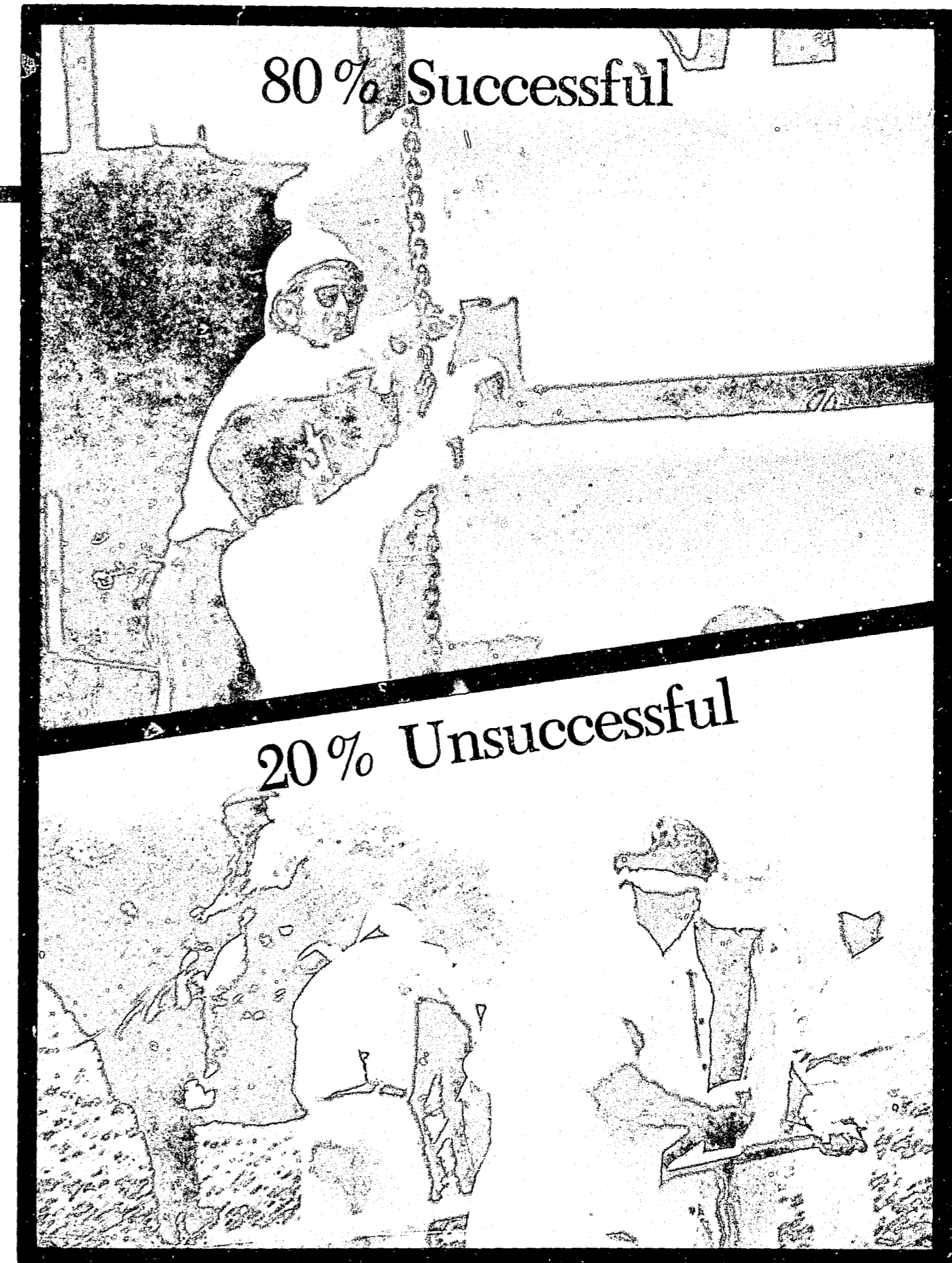
Assisting in the response to the overcrowding of Texas prisons, the Legislature and the Commission established a program to divert offenders into a highly supervised probation program.

Concentrating the program in areas of the state with high rates of prison commitments, the Commission provided additional funding to local adult probation departments and adopted guidelines which set the maximum caseloads of intensive supervision probation officers at 40 probationers. By having experienced probation officers and limiting the caseload size, the high risk probationers could be more effectively supervised.

Pre-Sentence Investigation Models

Acknowledging the request of adult probation departments for a better presentencing investigation system, the Commission joined a national project funded by the American Justice Institute to develop model PSI procedures and report formats.

Since the development of the models, the use of pre-sentence investigation reports has increased and with the increased usage has come more uniformity among the departments.



The Future

As population continues to grow in Texas, so will offenses and the number of offenders to punish. With the overcrowding in Texas prisons and jails, probation has emerged as an effective alternative to incarceration for those offenders who do not pose a threat to the safety of the community.

With the knowledge and experience of the past five years and considering future projections, the Commission envisions the continued improvement of probation services in the following ways.

- Reduction of the average caseload size of probation officers. With a majority of the adult probation departments currently exceeding the suggested state standard of 100 probationers per officer, a standard already twice the recommended national average, the safety of the community and reasonable supervision levels must be considered.
- Expansion of the intensive supervision program could increase the number of prison diversions from the current 2,600 to possibly 4,400 by 1985.
- Expansion of the community residential programs into additional jurisdictions, where probation departments do not currently have access to such services.
- Increase the use of the pre-sentence investigation models by probation departments to achieve more uniformity in the information used by the courts and other sectors of the criminal justice system.
- Utilization of the case classification system by all adult probation departments in the state.
- Development of specialized caseloads in departments whose situations warrant such, to concentrate on repeat DWI offenders, substance abusers, and offenders with learning disabilities.
- Preparation of a five year strategic plan to meet the future needs of the Texas adult probation system. The plan will address effective means of administration and delivery of services.
- Enhancement of the training of adult probation officers to increase their professional skills in management and case supervision.
- Better inform the public and decision-makers of the adult probation system in Texas through increased communications.

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