

# OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING

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GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN  
GOVERNOR

Programs for Runaway and Homeless Youth  
Annual Report  
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# Office of Criminal Justice Planning

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PROGRAMS FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

ANNUAL REPORT

The concern of the Governor and the Legislature of the problems facing runaway and homeless youth resulted in the passage of Assembly Bill 3836, Chapter 1612, Statutes of 1984.

The legislation requires that the State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, with the assistance of the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, the Department of the Youth Authority, and the California Child, Youth and Family Coalition, perform specified activities relating to programs for runaway and homeless youth. The activities included identifying existing runaway and homeless youth programs and developing a statewide directory of service providers. The legislation asked for a feasibility study on the establishment of a state runaway hotline and the compilation of statistics on runaways and homeless youth in California. The identification of existing and potential funding sources and the requirement to provide advice to administrators of runaway and homeless youth programs on federal funding is also called for in the legislation.

Five comprehensive reports have been prepared in response to the legislative requirements. This annual report summarizes the development and conclusions of those reports.

We are pleased with the results of this effort. The information that has been produced should prove very valuable in addressing the problems of runaway and homeless youth. Requests for copies of the individual reports, this report, or questions concerning the projects can be directed to William Deguchi, Chief of the Juvenile Justice Division or Patric Ashby, Consultant, Juvenile Justice Division, at (916) 324-9108.

Sincerely,



G. ALBERT HOWENSTEIN, JR.  
Executive Director  
Office of Criminal Justice Planning



ROBERT L. CARDENAS  
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Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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MAY 29 1987

ACQUISITIONS

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

ANNUAL REPORT 1987

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Foreword	
I. Introduction and Background.....	1
II. Program Description.....	2
III. Program Accomplishments.....	3
IV. Conclusions.....	10
V. Recommendations.....	11

## RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

### ANNUAL REPORT

#### Foreword

The concern of the Governor and the Legislature of the problems facing runaway and homeless youth resulted in the passage of Assembly Bill 3836, Chapter 1612, Statutes of 1984.

This annual report reflects the efforts of the State Advisory Group (SAG) on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP), the Department of the California Youth Authority (CYA), and the California Child, Youth and Family Coalition (CCYFC) in meeting the requirements of AB 3836. The legislation calls for the completion of four major tasks and providing advice related to federal funding of runaway and homeless youth.

A separate document has been prepared for each of these tasks. California programs working with runaway and homeless youth were identified and incorporated into a "Directory of Service Providers." A feasibility study on the establishment of a statewide toll free youth emergency telephone referral system "runaway hotline" was completed and statewide statistics were compiled on runaway and homeless youth. The separate document includes existing and potential youth social service funding sources at the federal and state level as well as from private organizations.

The information that has been compiled should prove essential to the future decision-making processes concerning runaway and homeless youth programs in California. Requests for copies of the individual reports, this report, or questions concerning the projects can be directed to William Deguchi Chief, Juvenile Justice Division or Patric Ashby, Consultant, Juvenile Justice Division, at (916) 324-9108.

## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### A. Purpose of the Legislation

Assembly Bill 3836, Chapter 1612, Statutes of 1984, requires that specified activities relating to programs for runaway and homeless youth in California be performed. The purpose of the legislation is to:

- o Identify existing programs dealing with runaway and homeless youth and develop a directory of service providers;
- o Study the feasibility of the establishment of a statewide referral system (a "hotline") for runaway and homeless youth;
- o Compile statistics on runaway and homeless youth;
- o Identify existing and potential funding sources for services to runaway and homeless youth; and
- o Coordinate and provide advice to administrators of programs relating to runaway and homeless youth on issues relating to federal funding of these programs.

### B. History of the Program

The Legislature expressed concern over problems associated with runaway and homeless youth but was unable to determine the severity. Neither statistics on the number of runaway and homeless nor a comprehensive source listing the kinds of services currently operating to work with these youth was available. Due to the lack of reliable information, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed AB 3836.

In an effort to address some of the basic problems additional legislation was enacted at the same time to establish a statewide toll free emergency telephone referral system (a "runaway hotline") for runaway and homeless youth (AB 3075, Chapter 1614, Statutes of 1984).

## II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The legislation stipulated that CYA, OCJP, and the CCYFC, an association of community-based agencies provide staff support to the State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The legislation specifically directed that a request for funding to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) for discretionary funds in the community services block grant program be submitted to allow for program implementation.

The OCJP staff support was provided from existing resources. OCJP applied for and received funding from OEO to provide for the performance of the various tasks required by the legislation. With the OEO grant funds, CCYFC was contracted to perform the research and to compile the information required by the legislation. OCJP monitored progress, and prepared the annual report.

### III. PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### A. Existing Resources

In order to carry out the legislative requirement to identify existing programs in California dealing with runaway and homeless youth and develop a directory of service providers, a survey was sent to all county administrators in the state. They were requested to provide information on local programs designed specifically for the needs of runaway and homeless youth. Fifty-four of the fifty-eight counties, or 93%, responded. Eighteen of the fifty-four counties responding indicated they had no specialized services available for runaway and homeless youth. These eighteen counties were relatively small, rural counties. Although specialized services are unavailable in some areas, all responding counties reported that some services were available to youth, ranging from alcohol abuse counseling to suicide prevention.

Directory of California Programs Available to Youth. The information gathered through the surveys was used by CCYFC to prepare the project reports. The directory lists the service providers by county and includes services provided directly or indirectly to homeless and runaway youth. These services include, but are not limited to, counseling, shelter, financial assistance, crisis intervention, and employment. A youth service classification system was developed as an appendix of the directory to identify the types of services provided by each agency. The services directory meets the purpose of identifying existing programs working with runaway and homeless youth and provides the development of a listing of service providers.

#### B. Hotline Feasibility

The second major task was to study the feasibility of establishing a statewide toll free emergency telephone referral system (a "hotline") for runaway and homeless youth.

Legislation enacted at the same time, AB 3075, Chapter 1614, Statutes of 1984, provided for the implementation of the statewide "hotline." Therefore, it was reasonable for the feasibility study to be completed before the implementation of the "hotline." Because of the time constraints imposed by the legislation and the budget, existing operations of hotlines were contacted for information.

The Feasibility Study focused on the following areas:

- o Who should the hotline serve?
- o What call volume can be expected?
- o What are the characteristics of runaway and homeless youth?
- o What are the service needs of runaway and homeless youth?
- o What operational considerations must be made?
- o What conclusions can be drawn?

Based on the study, it was concluded that the establishment of a hotline is not only feasible but there are definite benefits to a publicly funded statewide runaway hotline. A hotline will provide law enforcement and probation an alternative means of dealing with runaways. It could provide parents with information in locating children, as a message center for parents and youth, and serve as a means of documenting the needs for shelter beds to serve runaway and homeless youth.

CCYFC staff conducted interviews with the directors of six operational hotlines. The hotlines contacted were of a mixed variety. Three were from other states. One was a statewide drug abuse hotline, while the other two were runaway hotlines. A national hotline for missing children was also contacted. Two of the hotlines were in San Diego, California. One is a national and statewide runaway hotline and the other is a local youth and community service hotline. All provided information as to the numbers of runaways, numbers served, and services required. Seven different studies and/or reports were researched to develop statistics on runaway and homeless youth who may use the hotline.

The study provides a great deal of information essential to the successful implementation of a runaway hotline. Based on the information gathered, the feasibility study concluded that the general requirements for a successful hotline include the following:

1. Establishment of a data base to include all types of resource information on services available;
2. Maintenance of quality control over referral resources and regular information update;
3. Use of volunteers with provision of adequate training;
4. Coordination with other local, state, and national hotlines;

5. Publicity on the availability of the hotline; and
6. Collection of data in a non-threatening and confidential manner.

C. Statistics

To comply with the legislation, statistics were compiled on the California runaway and homeless youth population. The California Runaway and Homeless Youth Population Study was conducted through a coordinated effort of public and private agencies concerned with runaway and homeless youth. A total of 1,192 questionnaires was sent to agencies throughout the state. Approximately one-fourth of the questionnaires were returned, with the highest percentage of participation coming from probation departments (56%) and social services agencies (54%). Law enforcement had a 37% response rate. Responses were received from fifty-seven of the fifty-eight counties. Because of this, a statewide picture did emerge that California does have a significant runaway problem. The report contains a large volume of information on reporting policies, referrals, numbers served, and numbers of runaways and homeless youth contacted.

In addition to the statistics on the numbers of runaway and homeless youth, valuable information was obtained as to the characteristics of youth now served by specialized agencies. Sixty percent of the youth served are female. Almost half are between 12-15 years of age. Approximately two-thirds are caucasian. Hispanics and Blacks represented the next largest ethnic groups served.

While the report does not provide absolute statistical evidence, it does contain indicators of the serious problems faced by runaway and homeless youth throughout the state. It can also be stated that, with few exceptions, the agencies contacted do not have the resources to respond to the needs of a majority of runaway and homeless youth.

D. Potential Funding Sources

Existing and potential funding sources for services to runaway and homeless youth were identified in a report prepared by CCYFC. All are listed in the FY 85 Fund Sources for Runaway and Homeless Youth-Serving Agencies. The funding sources were broken down into three categories: primary sources, possible primary sources, and secondary sources.

There are currently two primary sources of funding for runaway and homeless youth services. One is a federal program authorized by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The federal fiscal year 1985 funding level is \$23.25 million, with California's share being \$1.8 million. A 25% state match is

required. The other is a state program approved to establish one homeless youth pilot project in Los Angeles County and one in the city and county of San Francisco. The state funding is available as the result of the passage of the Homeless Youth Act of 1985.

There are others that could be primary funding sources for these programs which are not presently involved. Two federal programs which fall in this category are Social Services Block Grants and Child Welfare Grants. The state has two potential sources in the County Justice System Subvention Program and Funds for the Homeless Program through the Department of Mental Health.

There are many possible secondary sources of funding for runaway and homeless youth services. As an example, some programs not specifically youth oriented, may consider projects which benefit youth or for which youth service agencies can compete for funding. Eighteen such program areas funded with state and federal dollars were identified.

In excess of 170 foundations outside California express interest in youth programs and do not exclude California applicants. They award grants in amounts up to \$1 million.

There are over two hundred and twenty California foundations that either identify children and youth as a priority, or have funded community-based, youth-serving programs. One hundred and nine of these provide funds throughout California while the remainder have geographical restrictions. They award grants in amounts up to \$1.25 million.

#### E. Coordination

The final legislative requirement is to coordinate and provide advice to administrators of programs relating to runaway and homeless youth on issues relating to federal funding of those programs.

The information is provided to administrators in two ways. OCJP annually distributes information on the availability of federal funding for youth programs in California. The SAG on JJDP provides overall policy guidance and plays an active role in the funding made available by the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Information is disseminated through public meetings conducted throughout the state and an annual request for proposals is issued.

In addition, the CCYFC conducts an annual conference which is attended by administrators of various youth programs and state agencies. The annual conference covers various issues and includes federal funds available for youth programs.

#### IV. Conclusion

The studies and reports required have all been completed. The documents individually provide valuable information pertaining to runaway and homeless youth. Together they paint a larger picture of the problems involved and resources available. They point out areas with inadequate resources.

The legislation provides no mechanism to update the information generated in the studies and reports. Where possible, the OCJP has built in updating requirements to insure that the documents remain current and continue to serve as a functional tool.

#### V. Recommendation

OCJP recommends continued funding for the California Runaway Hotline. The hotline provides a critical link between the many runaway youth living on the streets in California and the services they need.

OCJP also recommends that the annual reporting requirement be waived. The activities required by the legislation are of a one time nature. Future annual reporting would be of little value.

CHAPTER 1612

An act to add Article 5.3 (commencing with Section 1785) to Chapter 1 of Division 2.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to youth.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 1984. Filed with Secretary of State September 30, 1984.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 3836, Condit. Youth.

Existing law provides that certain minors, including so-called "runaways," may be adjudged to be wards of the juvenile court on the basis of noncriminal conduct.

This bill would require a specified state advisory group on the subject of juvenile justice required to be established by existing federal law to perform certain specified activities relating to programs for runaway and homeless youth.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Article 5.3 (commencing with Section 1785) is added to Chapter 1 of Division 2.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

Article 5.3. Runaway and Homeless Youth .

1785. The state advisory group established pursuant to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5601 et seq.) shall perform the duties imposed by this article.

Staff services shall be provided to the advisory group for the purposes of this article by the Youth Authority, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, and the California Child, Youth and Family Coalition, an association of community-based agencies.

1786. The advisory group shall do all of the following:

(a) Identify existing programs dealing with runaway and homeless youth.

(b) Develop a directory of service providers.

(c) Study the feasibility of the establishment of a statewide referral system (a "hotline") for runaway and homeless youth.

(d) Compile statistics on runaway and homeless youth.

(e) Identify existing and potential funding sources for services to runaway and homeless youth.

(f) Coordinate and provide advice to administrators of programs relating to runaway and homeless youth on issues relating to federal funding of those programs.

The advisory group shall report to the Governor and the Legislature annually.

The staff provided to the advisory group for the purpose of this article shall seek funding for the activities specified in this section from existing agencies, both federal and state, as well as from private funding sources.

SEC. 2. The Legislature recognizes that the Office of Economic Opportunity possesses discretionary funds in the community services block grant program that can be utilized for the purposes of this act. In this regard, the staff provided to the advisory group pursuant to Section 1785 of the Welfare and Institutions Code shall submit a formal request that a portion of those funds be awarded for the purposes of this act, in order to assist the Office of Economic Opportunity in the identification of the projects to be funded by that agency, as well as to meet the purposes of this act.