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## Administrative Office of the Courts

### Report On Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Units

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*In Consultation with the Department of Human Services*

*December 1, 1989*

**Report On Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Units****Table of Contents**

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## I. Introduction

### A. Background

This report was prepared by the Administrative Office of the Courts, in consultation with the Department of Human Services. To help it prepare this report the Administrative Office of the Courts conducted survey and monitoring visits of the twenty-one Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Units. These visits were conducted in 1987 and in early 1988. The survey information used in this report describes that time period, although where some important changes have occurred since the date of the survey visit, those changes have been noted.

The survey and monitoring visits consisted of an Administrative Office of the Courts staff person interviewing the Director of each Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit (hereinafter referred to as "CIU") and completing a twelve page survey instrument. Information was collected regarding unit organization, resources, staffing, procedures and compliance with requirements of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice, Court Rules, and the Supreme Court approved *Crisis Intervention Manual*. Capsule descriptions of all twenty-one CIUs are attached to this report in Appendix I.

In preparation for this report the Administrative Office of the Courts revised its monthly statistical reporting form in an effort to provide more reliable and complete data on CIU operations. The revised statistical form was developed in conjunction with ten CIU Directors and a representative of the Department of Human Services. In February 1988 it replaced the prior form. This form, along with the instructions for completion, is attached hereto as Appendix II. It provides insight as to what the statistical categories referred to in this report represent.

The statistical data used in this report was collected from February 1988 to the end of the 1988 court year, June 30, 1988. All percentages in this report have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent. This rounding accounts for those instances in which a group of percentages may not total 100%.

### B. History

The New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice (*N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-20 et seq.*) became effective on December 31, 1983. Among the Code's innovations was the elimination of the Juvenile In Need of Supervision (JINS) offense category which consisted of status offenses<sup>1</sup> such as truancy, incorrigibility and running away from home. Instead, the Code

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<sup>1</sup>"Status offenses" are those acts that would not be offenses if committed by an adult. Generally, in status offense cases the primary harm is to the offender himself. These acts would not result in intervention by the juvenile justice system if it were not for the juvenile "status" of the offender. Although "status offenses" no longer exist in New Jersey, they are still treated as offenses

required that each county establish one or more 24-hour on-call Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Units (*N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-76*); "... a mechanism which will provide troubled juveniles and their families a non-coercive opportunity to resolve conflicts and receive needed services."<sup>2</sup> Eight county CIUs were established prior to the effective date of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice. Some of the early court related family counseling initiatives undertaken by counties were started as grant funded programs. The other thirteen units were established when the Code went into effect.

Underlying the creation of Juvenile Family Crisis Intervention Units was the legislative conclusion that much juvenile misconduct is a result of troubled family circumstances. Therefore, CIU's were structured to treat juvenile problems within the context of the family. CIU's stabilize the immediate crisis existing in a family unit by offering short term counseling services and making referrals to appropriate agencies. If a family does not cooperate with the CIU, or when all community resources are exhausted and a juvenile-family crisis continues to exist the matter may be referred to court through the filing of a petition (*N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-83*). An out-of home placement petition may be filed when a juvenile refuses to go home, or the parents or guardians refuse to allow the juvenile to stay at home, or the physical safety of the juvenile is threatened (*N.J.S.A.2A:4A-87*).

The New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice defines a juvenile-family crisis as follows:

"Juvenile-family crisis" means behavior, conduct or a condition of a juvenile, parent or guardian or other family member which presents or results in (1) a serious threat to the well-being and physical safety of a juvenile, or (2) a serious conflict between a parent or guardian and a juvenile regarding rules of conduct which has been manifested by repeated disregard for lawful parental authority by a juvenile or misuse of lawful parental authority by a parent or guardian, or (3) unauthorized absence by a juvenile for more than 24 hours from his home, or (4) a pattern of repeated unauthorized absences from school by a juvenile subject to the compulsory education provision of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes. (*N.J.S.A.2A:4A-22(g)*)

The units use early intervention to handle cases that would otherwise consume court time and resources. The Legislature felt that most children involved in a juvenile-family crisis it would be more appropriately helped by interventions that did not result in hearings before the court. The Assembly Judiciary Committee's Juvenile Justice Task Force Advisory Committee on "Alternative Dispositions/Community-Based Programs" anticipated that "...almost 80% of the children currently labelled as JINS offenders and processed through the court system and their families would benefit from ... services designed to

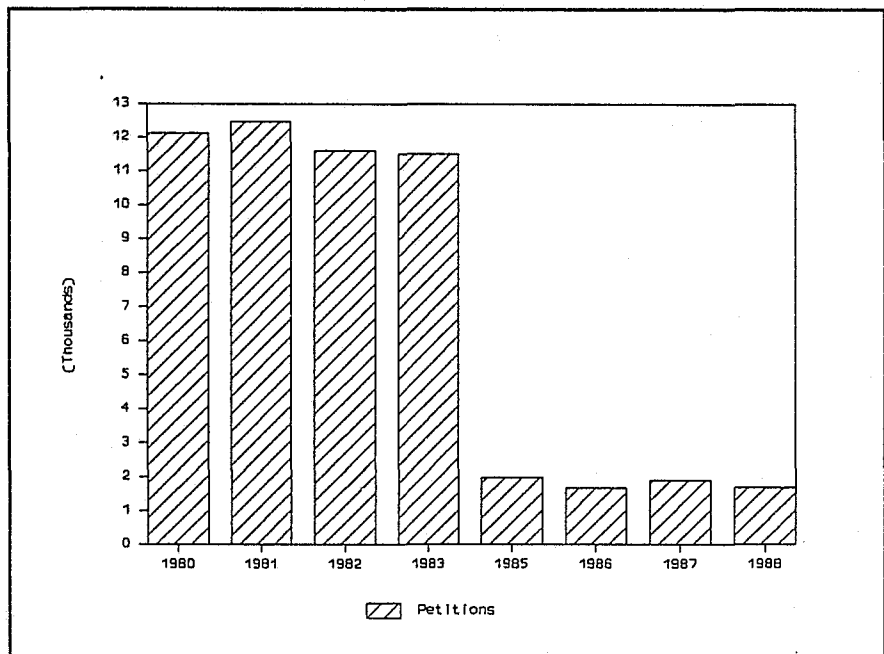
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in most other states.

<sup>2</sup>New Jersey Senate Judiciary Committee, Statement to Assembly Bill No. 644, (February 1982), p.1.

avoid formal court processing".<sup>3</sup>

This graph comparing JINs petitions to CIU petitions in the court years from 1980 through 1988 demonstrates the dramatic decrease in formal court involvement for status type cases. The data on JINS petitions was obtained from the New Jersey Judiciary 8 Year Superior Court Caseload Guide 1979-1986; statistics on CIU petitions were compiled from



Comparison of JINS and Juvenile-Family Crisis Petitions

Administrative Office of the Courts Monthly Trial Court Reports. No data is provided for the 1984 court year (July 1, 1983 to June 30, 1984) because the transition from JINs to CIUs was made in the middle of that year.

The transfer of these cases to CIUs avoids labeling children as "status offenders" as were those who became involved in the JINs system. The legislative intent of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice confirms this:

The Advisory Committee recommended that current JINS categories be eliminated to prevent the court labelling of thousands of youngsters who have family-related problems or are in need of protection. Instead, court intake should be required to divert JINS families from the court to resolve conflicts and problems by providing a range of social services. While the court would have general jurisdiction over all of the procedures for families in crisis, jurisdiction for the purpose of formal court processing would not attach until community alternatives had been attempted and/or there was a risk of a child being placed out of the home. However, once such court jurisdiction attached, it would extend over the child, parents and any agencies involved in the case. "Final Report of the Juvenile Justice Task Force Advisory Committee on 'Alternative Dispositions/Community-Based Programs'", January, 1981.

<sup>3</sup>New Jersey Assembly Judiciary, Law, Public Safety and Defense Committee, *Final Report of the Juvenile Justice Task Force Advisory Committee on "Alternative Dispositions/Community Based Programs,"* (January 1981), p. 16.

## II. Compliance

The Administrative Office of the Courts survey of CIUs also monitored for compliance with provisions of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice and the Rules of Court and with the provisions of *The Crisis Intervention Manual*. While high levels of compliance with requirements were found, some problems were encountered.

Staff from two units did not meet the statutory educational and experiential requirements for personnel employed as counselors and hired after the effective date of the act:

The Supreme Court may issue rules concerning the duties responsibilities, training and practices of the juvenile-family crisis intervention units consistent with the provisions of this act, but in no instance shall the minimum qualifications for personnel employed as counselor and hired after the effective date of this act be less than a master's degree from an accredited institution in a mental health or social or behavioral science discipline including degrees in social work, counseling, counseling psychology, mental health or education. Equivalent experience is acceptable when it consists of a minimum of an associate's degree with a concentration in one of the behavioral sciences and a minimum of 5 years' experience working with troubled youth and their families or a bachelor's degree in one of the behavioral sciences and 2 years' experience working with troubled youth and their families. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-79).

Although the counselors may have gained the necessary experience after being hired, it is clear that the intent of this section was that these requirements be met at the time of hiring.

Three counties were found to not be in compliance with a requirement in *The Crisis Intervention Manual* ("Chapter IV" B. (27), page 9) that "In cases where an out of home placement into a non-family setting...is required an in-person interview with the juvenile and other family members involved in the crisis is required prior to such placement." The Code does not require that the after-hours intervention be made in person prior to placing a juvenile into a non-family setting and all counties provided telephone intervention in these circumstances.

Finally, one county did not comply with the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice requirement that "The unit shall make all reasonable efforts to keep the family intact consistent with the physical safety and mental well-being of the juvenile *by obtaining, where possible, written agreement of the family to accept recommendations* [emphasis supplied] which may include, but are not limited to referral to appropriate services and agencies", N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-78. The practice in one county was that family service agreements are not used as a matter of policy. The unit reported that clients complain about the family contract, and that the unit feels that its use interferes with the counseling relationship.

All of these items of non-compliance have either been corrected, or are now in the process of being corrected. Some items, such as after hours in-person interviews prior to placement into a non-family setting, may require that a unit arrange for additional funding, and therefore will require additional time to implement.



### III. Operations

#### A. Case Types

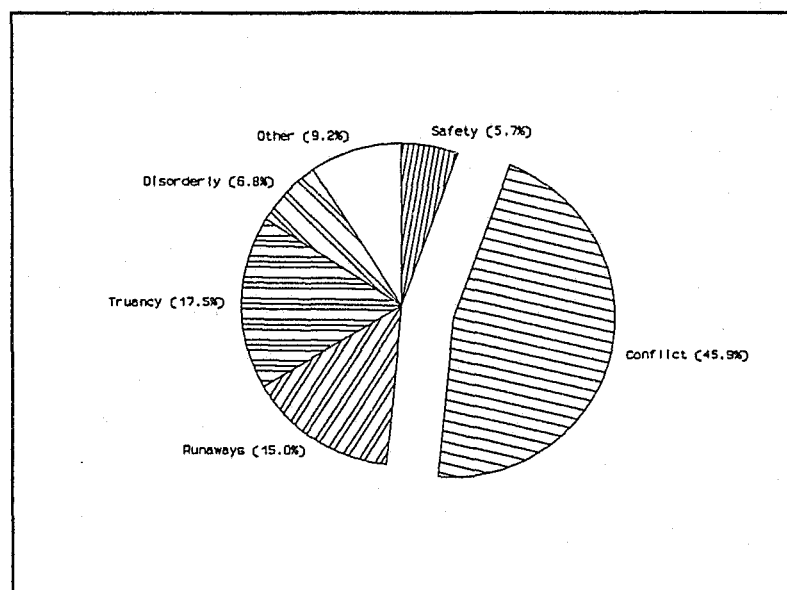
The New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice defined a juvenile-family crisis as:

...behavior, conduct or a condition of a juvenile, parent or guardian or other family member which presents or results in:

- (1) a serious threat to the well-being and physical safety of a juvenile, or
- (2) a serious conflict between a parent or guardian and a juvenile regarding rules of conduct which has been manifested by repeated disregard for lawful parental authority by a juvenile or misuse of lawful parental authority by a parent or guardian, or
- (3) unauthorized absence by a juvenile for more than 24 hours from his home, or
- (4) a pattern of repeated unauthorized absences from school by a juvenile subject to the compulsory education provision of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22(g))

This definition includes situations which prior to the Code were known as "Juvenile in Need of Supervision" (JINS) cases but is much broader in scope since it includes the behavior of other family members. Juvenile-family crisis cases do not include cases of child abuse, child neglect or domestic violence.

In addition to diverting complaints to Juvenile Conference Committees or Intake Service Conferences, the Code provides that the Court may dispose of a minor delinquency complaint, alleging



CIU Cases Added By Type of Case

a disorderly persons or petty disorderly persons offense, as a juvenile-family crisis, when it is apparent that such a crisis exists. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-73)

On occasion CIUs handle cases that fit none of these definitions, either because of a gap in services that would otherwise go unfilled, or because the CIU in providing intervention services discovers underlying facts that eliminate the case from CIU jurisdiction. These cases are reported as "Other" on the CIU monthly statistical reporting form. Many cases involve circumstances that would fit more than one of these

CIU Cases Added By Case Type February 1988 - June 1988							
	Threat to Safety	Serious Conflict	Unauthorized Absence	Truancy	Disorderly Diverted	Other	Total Cases Added
Five Month Total	330	2,659	868	1,013	395	534	5,799
Twelve Month Projection	792	6,382	2,083	2,431	948	1,282	13,918
Percentage	5.7%	45.9%	15.0%	17.5%	6.8%	9.2%	100.0%

CIU Cases Added by Case Type  
February 1988 - June 1988

descriptions. For statistical purposes CIU cases added are deemed to fall within the definition that resulted in the initial referral to the CIU even if they also involve other types of juvenile-family crises.

## B. Counseling

Another measure of the work being done by CIUs is the number of counseling sessions per closed case. The cases in the adjacent table represent only those contacts that required enough

Number of Counseling Sessions Per Disposed Case February 1988 - June 1988				
Telephone Contact Only	1-2 Sessions	3-5 Sessions	6 or More Sessions	Total Cases
1,925	2,300	1,193	283	5,701
33.8%	40.3%	20.9%	5.0%	100%

time and effort to justify opening a case file on the family. The category "Telephone Contact Only" represents either telephone counseling sessions or numerous efforts to contact a family reluctant to accept help. While many of the closed cases included in this category may represent cases that were not serious enough to warrant face to face contacts, a large number of these cases represent extensive telephone intervention and contacts with families that, for some reason, never appeared for scheduled counseling sessions. This category does not include "information and/or referral" contacts where no CIU case was involved. For this same time period, February 1988 through June 1988 an additional 2,723 information and/or referral contacts were reported by CIUs statewide.

### C. Placements

One of the mandates for CIUs included in the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice is: "The unit shall make all reasonable efforts to keep the family intact consistent with the physical safety and mental well-being of the juvenile..." *N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-78*. In the survey conducted by the Administrative Office of the Courts all CIUs reported that they seek to place a juvenile outside of his or her home only as a last resort. During the five month period extending from February 1988 through June 1988 706 out-of home placements were made by CIUs statewide. Of these placements, 331 were reported as voluntary placements and 375 were involuntary placements. Voluntary placements are those placements that are made with friend, relatives or others, by voluntary agreement of the family and for which no petition need be filed with the court. Placements in a county shelter, which must be reviewed by the court, are included in the involuntary placement category even if they are not contested by the juvenile or the juvenile's family. The total number of placements during this period is equivalent to 12.2% of the cases added during the same time period.<sup>4</sup> If informal, voluntary placements with friends and relatives are excluded this ratio drops to 6.5%. It therefore appears that CIUs are successful in keeping families intact in the large majority of the cases they handle.

Another way of looking at this is to count the number of juveniles placed, rather than the number of placements made, during this time period. The total number of juveniles placed from February 1988 through June 1988 was 567, 139 fewer than the total number of placements (706) made. This indicates that some troublesome cases, such as those involving chronic runaways, or families with ongoing difficulties, are resulting in multiple placements.

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<sup>4</sup>The Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit statistics are aggregate statistics collected on a monthly basis. It is possible that some of the placements made during this period were of juveniles for whom an open case already existed and therefore it cannot be said that exactly 12.2 percent of CIU cases added during this period resulted in placements. It is also possible that additional placements may have been made for some of these cases at a later date. These two factors would tend to cancel each other out, so the estimate of 12.2 percent of CIU cases added resulting in placements is probably fairly accurate.

## D. Interaction with the Court

### 1. Petitions

For all cases disposed statewide between February 1988 and June 1988 column 1 in the adjacent table represents those cases in which a either a juvenile-family crisis petition or an out of home placement petition was filed at some time during the course of the case. Column 2 represents those closed cases in which no petition was ever filed with the court. Only 10.8% of the cases disposed during

this time period ever required the attention of the court. Most cases disposed (89.2%) were handled without the need for court involvement. As these percentages demonstrate CIUs have been very successful in diverting large numbers of cases from the court.

Cases with Petition(s)	Cases w/out Petition(s)	Total Cases
614	5,087	5,701
10.8%	89.2%	100.0%

**Cases Disposed**  
**February 1988 - June 1988**

### 2. Hearings

The Administrative Office of the Courts survey of CIUs included questions related to hearings in those cases which do go before the court. Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit Directors were asked to assess whether CIU staff attend juvenile-family crisis court hearings; 1) always, 2) very often, 3) sometimes, 4) seldom, or 5) never. Sixteen CIUs reported that someone from their staff always attends hearings, two CIUs reported that someone very often attends, one CIU reported that someone sometimes attends, and two CIUs reported that CIU staff seldom attend hearings. Attendance at hearings usually does not mean that a CIU counselor is sworn in and asked to testify regarding a case. When CIU directors were asked to assess how often members of their staff were called on to testify only one CIU responded "very often." Ten units responded that staff seldom testifies at hearings, and the remaining ten units responded that staff never testifies at hearings.

## E. Referrals

Statistics collected by the Administrative Office of the Courts from February 1988 to June 1988 also include data regarding the total number of referrals made during that time period. These referral counts are not dependent upon either cases added or cases closed, and there may be multiple referrals made per case. Column 1 in the table below represents all referrals made to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) during this time period. Column 2 represents all referrals to some type of substance abuse

program. Column 3 represents referrals to all other programs, most of which are county specific. These referrals may be for the child involved in a juvenile-family crisis, a family member, or any combination thereof.

DYFS	Substance Abuse Programs	Other	Total
702	589	2,493	3,784
18.6%	15.6%	65.9%	100.0%

**Total Referrals Made  
February 1988 - June 1988**

#### **F. Relations with the Division of Youth and Family Services**

CIU staff and Division of Youth and Family Services (hereinafter DYFS) staff must interact on an almost daily basis. Many services to which CIUs refer clients are available only through DYFS. Often DYFS makes referrals to CIUs of cases that are more appropriately handled as a juvenile-family crisis. Each county has an affiliation agreement that governs the division of responsibilities in key areas between DYFS, the CIU and Family Division Intake. These agreements are all based on a model agreement included in *The Crisis Intervention Manual*, but may contain additions that address problems unique to the county.

In 1988 a DYFS--CIU affiliation agreement workgroup containing representatives of the Department of Human Services, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Association for Children of New Jersey, CIUs, DYFS district offices, and others was convened. This workgroup identified several problem areas.

Among the problems identified were misperceptions by both CIUs and DYFS of each others role and jurisdiction, inadequate services and resources, a system of funding and allocation of beds in many county shelters that places CIUs and DYFS in competition with each other for shelter placements, and disagreements over the handling of out-of-county runaways.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Report of the DYFS--CIU Affiliation Workgroup, Department of Human Services, 1989.

## **G. Problem Areas**

The Administrative Office of the Courts survey of all CIUs revealed that all units are meeting minimum required standards of service, but that there are some problem areas.

### **1. Funding**

One major problem is funding levels or operating budgets, which vary from county to county. Some units function solely on the appropriations received from the AOC and the Department of Human Services. The AOC gives each unit funds in amounts ranging from approximately \$6,000 - \$26,000 a year, which are determined by the volume of cases added; the monies provided by the Department of Human Services to each unit range from \$41,000 - \$61,000 a year, based on county population. Other units receive additional funding from the county budget, and a few units receive grant funding for special programs. In the counties where units subsist solely on appropriations received from the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Department of Human Services there is usually little money available for anything other than personnel costs, and funding for supporting services such as training may be non-existent.

A related area of concern arises as a result of proposals for State funding of New Jersey's court system. Under these proposals the State would pay the salary expenses of in-court CIUs, but not those of out of court CIUs. In effect, this would penalize those counties that maintain out of court units, and jeopardize the existence of those units.

### **2. Staffing**

Another area of concern relates to staffing. The Code of Juvenile Justice provides minimum standards for the education and experience of unit personnel employed as counselors (*N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-79*). These minimum qualifications are being met in CIUs but the salaries which are offered for these skilled positions are generally low due to limited budgets.

In addition, the size of the staff component differs from county to county. In units which have a limited number of professional staff, the responsibility of responding to juvenile-family crises on a 24-hour basis is especially burdensome since staff may have to be on-call as much as one week in every four. While it may be difficult for a staff member who has had to respond to calls for intervention during the previous night to put in a full day's work the following day, this is necessary in many counties with limited staff. In some counties, individuals outside of the units have been given special training so that they can respond to after hours calls. In many counties there is little or no compensation for after hours work. Several counties do, however, pay staff a combination of flat fees and their regular salaries for on-call duties and responses.

Low salaries and the demands of being on-call may be contributing factors to the high turnover which many CIU's have experienced among the directors and counseling staff. Since January 1987, there have been eleven changes in CIU directors; some units have had two changes in directors and one county has had four directors. Three counties have had complete changes in their CIU's staff and organization.

### 3. Enforcement of Court Orders

Another problem about which many CIU directors interviewed expressed concern about was that of enforcement of court orders issued in juvenile-family crisis cases. For some cases involving chronic runaways, or chronic truants it is possible for juveniles to defy court orders entered in juvenile-family crisis cases without any effective sanctions.

The New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice specifically provides for the use of enforcement of litigant's rights procedures against any person who fails to comply with a Juvenile Family Crisis order.

In case of failure of any person to comply with any orders entered pursuant to this section, the court may proceed against such person for the enforcement of litigants' rights. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-86).

But another section of the Code provides that:

No juvenile involved in a juvenile-family crisis shall be committed to or placed in any institution or facility established for the care of delinquent children or in any facility,...which physically restricts such juvenile committed to or placed in it. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-46(b)).

*State in the Interest of M.S.*, 73 N.J. 238 (1977) (hereinafter *M.S.*), dealt with the issue of enforcement of court orders in status offense cases under the JINS laws. JINS has been replaced by juvenile-family crisis, but in most respects *M.S.* still controls. The statutory bar on incarceration of JINS contained language identical to the current prohibition of incarceration as a disposition in J/FC cases. The New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice simply replaced "juveniles in need of supervision" with "juveniles involved in a juvenile-family crisis" (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-46(b)) and left the remainder of this section unchanged.

In *M.S.*, JINS who had run away from shelter placements were adjudicated delinquent on the ground that this conduct would have constituted the crime of escape if committed by an adult. The court in *M.S.* concluded that the concept of escape could not be applied in these circumstances. The court distinguished delinquency from status offenses in the following manner:

Under the statute a delinquent is one who is guilty of serious antisocial conduct which, depending on circumstances, may require detention. On the other hand, a JINS is one who has not really committed an offense against society but only against his or her own best interests. *M.S.*, 73 *N.J.* 238, at 243 (1977).

*M.S.* went on to hold that, "It would be incongruous to classify a juvenile as a delinquent for the same kind of conduct which under the Act constitutes him or her as being in need of supervision only." *M.S.*, 73 *N.J.* 238, at 245 (1977). While *M.S.* dealt with the use of escape rather than criminal contempt proceedings, the rationale expressed would seem to apply equally to the use of criminal contempt proceedings to adjudicate a status offender delinquent.

In *M.S.*, the court dismissed the argument that treating runaways from shelters as delinquents was the only way to deal with a JINS who repeatedly runs away from a shelter. The court felt that this approach had two adverse consequences in that the JINS would be burdened with the stigma of a delinquency adjudication, and would be subject to institutionalization with delinquents. Both of these adverse consequences would also result from the use of criminal contempt proceedings.

The court in *M.S.* further suggested:

It may be that the Juvenile Act should make some alternative provision for stricter control over the incorrigible JINS who demonstrates an inability to conform to shelter discipline. If the necessity for this becomes apparent, we are confident that the Legislature will take appropriate action. *M.S.*, 73 *N.J.* 238, at 246 (1977).

Although the Legislature may have hoped that these juveniles would be better handled by CIUs, the problem of dealing with non-compliance still exists. This issue has recently been considered by the Delinquency Decision Making Committee of the 1989 Judicial Conference on Juveniles, Justice and the Courts, and by the Juvenile Delinquency Commission. Neither of these groups, nor any of the CIU directors interviewed, advocated revising the law to allow incarceration of children involved in a juvenile-family crisis. But all did feel that a problem exists that should be addressed.



#### IV. Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit Organization

##### A. Alternative Structures

The New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice provides that each unit shall operate either as part of the Family Division Intake Service, or where provided for by the county, through any appropriate office or private service pursuant to an agreement with the Administrative Office of the Courts. It further provides that all Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Units shall be subject to the Rules of Court (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-76).

Counties have used the flexibility built into this section of the code to create a wide variety of CIUs. At the time of the Administrative Office of the Courts survey of CIUs there were eleven out-of-court units and ten in-court units. As of September 1989 Hudson County transferred its in-court unit to a private service provider. Therefore, there are now twelve out-of-court units and nine in-court units. There have been two other transfers of units since 1984. Both took place in January 1988. Salem County converted an out-of-court unit to an in-court unit, while Morris County reversed the process and converted its in-court unit to an out-of-court unit.

Past reports and discussions of CIUs have distinguished only between in-court and out-of-court units. In fact, there is more variation among CIUs than this simple distinction discloses. Among out-of-court units there is at least as much variation between units that are based in executive branch youth service agencies and those that are based in some type of mental health service provider as there is between in-court and out-of-court units. Furthermore, Essex County has a unique CIU system that is very different from any other County's CIU.

The in-court CIUs are all part of Family Division Intake Services. As such they share many features. In these units the CIU director is usually

Unit Type	County
In Court	Camden
In Court	Cumberland
In Court	Gloucester
In Court	Hudson*
In Court	Mercer
In Court	Middlesex
In Court	Monmouth
In Court	Ocean
In Court	Passaic
In Court	Salem
Executive Branch	Atlantic
Executive Branch	Bergen
Executive Branch	Cape May
Executive Branch	Essex
Executive Branch	Union
Mental Health	Burlington
Mental Health	Hunterdon
Mental Health	Morris
Mental Health	Somerset
Mental Health	Sussex
Mental Health	Warren

\*As of September 1989 Hudson County is an out-of-court unit.

##### Unit Organization Types

directly supervised by the Family Division Case Manager or Assistant Case Manager. Although some of the staff of in-court units come directly to the CIU with some type of family counseling training and background, often the staff of in-court units has prior experience in the field of juvenile probation or intake. Most in-court CIU staff usually have few, if any, duties beyond those related to the CIU. In a few counties this is not the case and those Family Division employees who staff the CIU also perform other intake functions.

County executive branch CIUs are located in youth or family service bureaus. These generally use a social work model. Many of their staff members have Masters degree in Social Work (M.S.W.) but some have degrees in other areas such as family counseling or psychology.

Mental health based CIUs are located in hospital or community mental health centers. Staff in these units must reconcile the competing demands of their professional responsibilities and the function they serve for the court. For example, the court uses cases as its most basic unit of count, while in some mental health based units records of face-to-face counseling hours are a basic measure of work. Staff in these units must maintain additional records in order to provide information for the court, and still maintain the clinical case records that their parent organizations demand.

Finally, Essex County, which has an executive branch CIU, contracts with nine private service provider agencies that perform the actual crisis intervention functions of a CIU. These agencies serve clients on a regional basis and the executive branch CIU performs case management functions, controlling the opening and closing of all cases. No other county has a similar system.

## **B. Comparisons**

In the discussion below all data have been aggregated into three groups: mental health based units, executive branch units and in-court units. Percentages have been computed using the aggregated data. For the purposes of these comparisons Essex County statistics have been included with those of other executive branch CIUs. There are wide variations within these groups and individual counties in each group may have percentages for these categories that are very different from the group percentages.

The following statistical comparisons of these types of units provide valuable information about differences in the way units handle their caseload. But we must be careful not to draw unwarranted conclusions. For example, the table below discloses that mental health based units report a significantly smaller percentage of their caseload as being truancy cases than do either executive branch or in-court units. There are many possible reasons for this, but it is impossible to determine from this data which cause or combination of causes is responsible for this difference. It may be that mental health based units are more effective in dealing with truancy and so have less recidivism and a smaller caseload. On the other hand, it may be that mental health based units feel less comfortable dealing with truancy than with other cases within their jurisdiction and

**Percentages of Cases Types Handled by Unit Organizational Type**

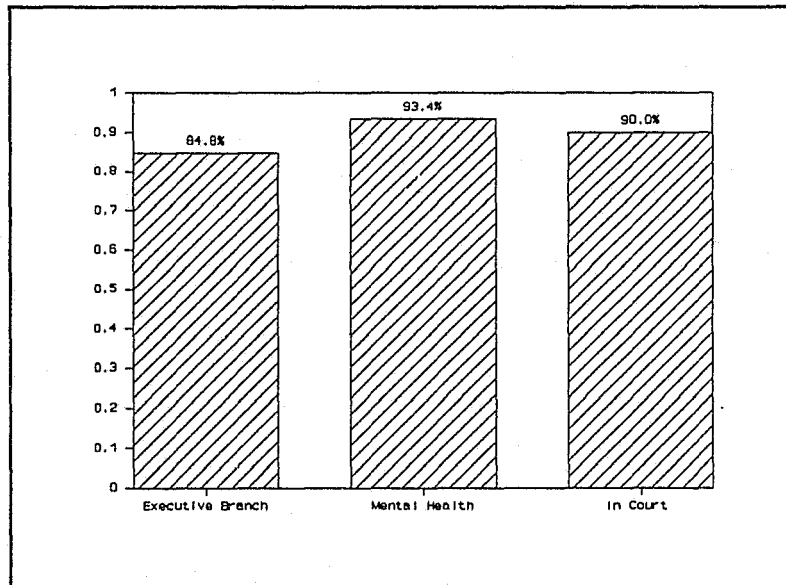
	Threat to Safety	Serious Conflict	Runaways	Truancy	Disorderly/ Diverted	Other
Executive Branch Units	6.1%	39.6%	13.9%	17.4%	16.0%	7.0%
Mental Health Units	4.8%	53.9%	18.9%	8.3%	3.1%	11.0%
In Court Units	5.7%	46.6%	14.4%	20.2%	3.3%	9.8%
Out of Court Total*	5.6%	44.9%	15.7%	14.0%	11.2%	8.5%
Statewide Percentage	5.7%	45.9%	15.0%	17.5%	6.8%	9.2%

\* Executive Branch plus Mental Health Units

**Comparison of Caseload Data  
February 1988 - June 1988**

therefore discourage truancy referrals. Or the difference may be completely unrelated to the organizational structure and may be the result of mental health based units being fortuitously located in counties with relatively lower truancy rates. This is just one example of the cautions that should be kept in mind when reviewing this data.

One significant area of comparison is the percentages of disposed cases that have required the filing of a petition at some time during the course of the handling of the case by the CIU. Interestingly, although it may have been expected that the greatest pressure to avoid filing a petition and thus adding to the judicial calendar would exist in court based units, it is the mental health based units that have the lowest percentage of disposed cases where one or more petitions were filed (6.6%). This percentage is 10.0% for in-court units and 15.2% for executive branch units.



**Cases Disposed Where No Petition Was Filed  
February 1988 - June 1988**

Another interesting area of comparison is that of the number of counseling sessions held during the course of a case. Administrative Office of the Courts statistics gather this information in the form of numbers of closed cases falling into the ranges of counseling sessions provided, as depicted in the table below. It should be kept in mind that what constitutes a face to face counseling session may vary greatly from unit to unit. This data does not provide any information upon the length of counseling sessions or the type of professional conducting the sessions.

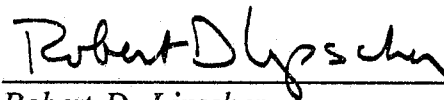
Disposed Cases February 1988 - June 1988 By Number of Counseling Sessions					
	Telephone Contact Only	1-2 Sessions	3-5 Sessions	6 or More Sessions	Total Cases
Executive Branch	388	635	338	83	1,444
Mental Health	232	315	243	104	894
In-Court	1,305	1,350	612	96	3,363
Out-of-Court Total	620	950	581	187	2,338
Statewide Total	1,925	2,300	1,193	283	5,701
Percentage of Disposed Cases in Each Category					
Executive Branch	26.9%	44.0%	23.4%	5.7%	100.0%
Mental Health	26.0%	35.2%	27.2%	11.6%	100.0%
In Court	38.8%	40.1%	18.2%	2.9%	100.0%
Out of Court Total	26.5%	40.6%	24.9%	8.0%	100.0%
Statewide Total	33.8%	40.3%	20.9%	5.0%	100.0%

As one might expect, mental health based units have the highest percentage of closed cases in which six or more counseling sessions were held (11.6%) and in-court units have the lowest percentage of closed cases falling within this category, 2.9%.

## VI. Conclusion

The Juvenile in Need of Supervision (JINS) system which existed prior to the enactment of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice focused primarily on the child's behavior, which, in many instances, was simply a symptom of a larger, more pervasive family problem. The juvenile-family crisis intervention system of treating juvenile-family problems in the context of the family as a whole has proven to be a superior approach. It has been successful in diverting most cases from the court, not only avoiding the stigma of court involvement for most children involved in a juvenile-family crisis but also conserving court resources. CIUs have also been successful in keeping families intact by handling most of their cases without the need to place children out of their homes.

Although some problem areas exist, juvenile-family crisis intervention units continue to be one of the most humane and successful components of the Family Division System. While we can measure statistically the benefit that these units provide to the court system by diverting cases that would otherwise be depleting the scarce time of Family Division Judges, the value of the assistance these units provide to troubled youth and their families is immeasurable.



*Robert D. Lipscher*

*Administrative Director of the Courts*

*December 1, 1989*

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit**

#### **Capsule Descriptions**

The brief descriptions below are based on the survey of all twenty-one CIUs conducted by the Administrative Office of the Courts in 1987 - 1988. These descriptions are based upon the units' organizational structure, resources and the needs that each unit director felt to be most pressing at the time of the survey visit. Where significant changes have occurred since that time they are noted below.

#### **Atlantic County**

Atlantic County's CIU is an out-of-court unit, located within Atlantic County Office of Youth Services, Department of Social Services. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter. Atlantic County also has an active program of providing training for schools and community organizations, including providing training on juvenile-family crisis cases for all police recruits in the county.

The resources felt to be most needed by the unit are a full-time substance abuse professional, a transitional living arrangement for juveniles returning from shelters or detention, and more primary prevention programs.

#### **Bergen County**

Bergen County's CIU is an out-of-court unit, located within Bergen County's Department of Youth Services. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a group home. The Bergen County Department of Youth Services, the CIU's parent organization, has many other services to which the CIU can refer families in crisis.

The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is state wide or regional meetings or exchanges for staff as well as for CIU directors. Additional funding for training was also felt to be needed.

#### **Burlington County**

Burlington County's CIU is an out-of-court unit, located within the Drenk Mental Health Center. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are

programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter.\* Drenk Mental Health Center provides some mental health treatment in-house. Drenk also has an in-house drug and alcohol program (PATH). Burlington County maintains a Crisis Intervention Network that meets bi-weekly to review cases and decide which agency should take the lead on various cases. This system helps avoid conflicts and overlaps between agencies. The unit felt that the resource it most needed was one more staff member and additional space.

\*On June 30, 1989 Burlington County replaced its residential shelter with a Host Homes program.

### **Camden County**

Camden County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. The unit has ten intake officers who serve as professional staff members for the CIU as well as performing other duties. Intake also has three family therapists who serve CIU clients as well as those of other programs.

Camden County's CIU provides short-term counseling for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter. The resource felt to be most needed by the unit was additional funding.

### **Cape May County**

Cape May County's CIU is an out-of-court unit, located within Cape May County Office of Youth Services. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for family preservation services, alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter.

The resources felt to be most needed by the unit are residential placement beds, mental health services, additional substance abuse treatment programs and a crisis group home.

### **Cumberland County**

Cumberland County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. Cumberland County's CIU provides short-term counseling for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter. The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is additional staff and funding.

## **Essex County**

Essex County's CIU is an out of court unit, located within the County Executive Branch Division of Youth Services. The unit performs primarily supervisory and case management functions for nine lead agencies that Essex County contracts with to provide juvenile/family crisis intervention for their communities. The unit closely monitors the performance of the nine lead agencies and must give its approval before a lead agency can close a case.

Essex County's nine lead agencies provide short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, an after school tutorial and recreational program and a residential shelter.

The resources felt to be most needed by the unit are:

1. Community based residential treatment for abusive children. The unit felt there is a significant problem with juveniles who abuse their parents or other family members that is not addressed by any service provider.
2. Training.
3. Mental Health treatment, both inpatient and outpatient.
4. Inpatient substance abuse treatment programs for juveniles without private medical insurance.

## **Gloucester County**

Gloucester County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. In addition to the unit's in-court staff there are also two family therapists, who are employees of the Community Mental Health Center, who are attached to the Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit. Gloucester County's CIU provides short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, long-term mental health treatment and a residential shelter.

The resource felt to be most needed by the unit at the time of the survey visit was computer support for the unit.

## **Hudson County**

At the time of the survey visit Hudson County's CIU was an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. Hudson County has now changed its unit into



an out-of-court unit. The unit is now located in the YWCA of Hudson County, a private social service provider in the county.

Hudson County's CIU provides short-term counseling for families involved in a juvenile-family crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter. The resource felt to be most needed by the unit at the time of the survey visit was additional staff.

### **Hunterdon County**

Hunterdon County's CIU is an out-of-court unit, located within Hunterdon Medical Center. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter. Hunterdon County also has an active Host Homes program and has developed its own Host Homes Manual. The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is funding and additional staff.

### **Mercer County**

Mercer County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. Mercer County's CIU provides short-term counseling and a six-week drug/alcohol prevention group educational program for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter.

The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is homes under county supervision for the placement of adolescents (12 and over).

### **Middlesex County**

Middlesex County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. Middlesex County's CIU provides short-term counseling for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter. The resource most felt to be needed by the CIU at the time of the survey visit was additional services by the Division of Youth and Family Services.

## **Monmouth County**

Monmouth County's CIU is an in-court unit. Although formerly located within Family Division Intake, due to the reorganization for Family Division staff into integrated case management teams, the CIU is now separate and apart from the Intake unit. Monmouth County's CIU provides short-term counseling for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are the Adolescent Court Treatment Team and programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a Host Homes program.

The resources felt to be most needed by the unit are in-patient substance abuse treatment beds and adolescent psychiatric in-patient care.

## **Morris County**

Morris County's CIU is an out of court unit, located in the Morris County Division of Family Intervention Services, Inc. This is a private service provider, not a branch of Morris County government. Morris County's CIU provides short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, long-term mental health treatment and a residential shelter. The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is additional funding for space and personnel.

## **Ocean County**

Ocean County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. Ocean County's CIU provides short-term counseling for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment, a group home and a residential shelter. The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is a locally available in-patient drug/alcohol alternative residential placement program for older juveniles.

## **Passaic County**

Passaic County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. Passaic County's CIU provides short-term counseling and crisis resolution services for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, mental health treatment and a residential shelter.

The resources felt to be most needed by the unit are private counseling rooms, group homes for longer term placements and an emancipation program for older teenagers.

### **Salem County**

Salem County's CIU is an in-court unit, located within Family Division Intake. Salem County's CIU provides short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, long-term mental health treatment and a residential shelter.

The resources felt to be most needed by the unit are additional funding, residential substance abuse and in-patient psychiatric treatment programs.

### **Somerset County**

Somerset County's CIU is an out of court unit, located within the Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center. Somerset County's CIU provides short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis. Somerset County's CIU also provided the following services that are not routinely found in other units.

1. A sexual abuse group.\*
2. A single parent group.
3. Visitation and custody mediation.

\* Somerset County's CIU has lost a counselor since the survey visit and is no longer able to provide the sexual abuse group.

### **Sussex County**

Sussex County's CIU is an out of court unit, located within the Center for Mental Health at Newton Memorial Hospital.<sup>6</sup> Sussex County's CIU provides short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment and long-term mental health treatment. The County does not have a shelter and relies on a combination of Host Homes and the use of shelter space in Warren and Morris

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<sup>6</sup>On January 1, 1989 Sussex County's CIU will be transferred to another private service provider within the county: Outreach Psychological of Franklin New Jersey.

Counties. The resources felt to be most needed by the unit are community based programs and additional Host Homes.

### **Union County**

Union County's CIU is an out of court unit, located within the County Executive Branch Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services. Union County's CIU provides short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis, as well as host home placements. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, long-term mental health treatment and a residential shelter.

The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is funding to purchase services for families without insurance or other resources.

### **Warren County**

Warren County's CIU is an out of court unit, located within the Family Guidance Center of Warren County. Warren County's CIU provides short-term counseling and mental health treatment for families in crisis. Among the services that the CIU refers families to are programs for alcohol and drug abuse treatment, long-term mental health treatment and a residential shelter.

The resource felt to be most needed by the unit is more intensive outpatient family therapy services for long term treatment.

## **APPENDIX II**

**Administrative Office of the Courts**

**Monthly Statistical Reporting Form**

**For Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Units**

# MONTHLY CRISIS INTERVENTION UNIT (CIU) REPORT – AD0167(1/88)

## Instruction Sheet

While some items to be completed are self-explanatory others need clarification. If you still have questions about the information to be collected after reading the following, please call the Family Division at (609) 984-4853.

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### I. Unit Caseload

#### 1. Beginning Pending

This is the number of cases already open at the start of the month. This number should equal the number you reported as active pending in Item # I. 4. in last month's report unless you are reporting a recount.

#### 2. Cases added

Each referral of a juvenile and his/her family should be treated as a separate case. Face to face contact is not necessary to consider a matter a case if telephone contact was extensive enough to open a file for the juvenile and maintain an individual written record of the contact. Each new case should be counted under ONLY ONE of the categories (a) through (f) and should be listed under the category which represents the primary reason for referral of the case to the CIU.

#### 3. Cases disposed

This total should reflect the number of cases closed during this month and should include all cases closed meeting the definition of a case under Item #I. 2. Cases described in Item II. 1. Information and/or Referral should not be included.

#### 4. Total active pending

This number should represent the unit's total open caseload, as defined in Item #I. 2., at the end of the month. If all cases added and disposed have been accurately reported, Total Active Pending should equal Beginning Pending plus Cases Added minus Cases Disposed.

### II. Information and/or Referral

#### 1. Contacts during the month resulting in information and/or referral only.

This category should include contacts which were not extensive enough to require the maintenance of an individual written record. Contacts reported here should not be counted as cases added or disposed.

### III. Case Outcome

Responses for this section are for cases closed during the month only. Report the number of cases closed during the month that fall into each of the categories listed. Do not include information relating to cases that have not been closed. The total for each subsection of this section should equal the total number of cases disposed as reported in Item #I. 3.

#### 1. Counseling sessions per closed case.

Report totals only for cases closed during the month. The counseling sessions held during the handling of each case need not have been held during this month in which the case was closed.

# MONTHLY CRISIS INTERVENTION UNIT (CIU) REPORT – AD0167(1/88)

## Instruction Sheet, Side 2

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III. Case Outcome (continued for cases CLOSED during this month only. Counseling sessions need not have been held during month.)

2. Referrals—closed cases only.  
Report totals only for cases closed during the month. Referrals need not have been made this month. Referral to an outside agency does NOT include referral to an agency that operates as a CIU by contract with the county.
3. Petitions—closed cases only.  
Report totals only for cases closed during the month. Petitions need not have been filed this month.

### IV. Placements

1. Total placements.  
Report total number of placements made by CIU during the current month. More than one placement per juvenile may be reported.
  - (a) Number of placements of juveniles with friends, relatives or others, by voluntary agreement of the family.  
No Out of Home Placement petition is needed.
  - (b) Number of involuntary placements of juveniles outside of their home.
2. Juveniles placed during the month.  
Report the number of juveniles placed during the month. Do not report more than one placement per juvenile.

### V. Petitions

Report totals for petitions filed during the current month.

### IV. Referral types

Report all referrals made during the month which fall into the three categories listed. Multiple referrals for one case should be reported.

3. Number of referrals to all other outside agencies.  
DO NOT report cases referred to agencies that act as a CIU by contract with the county.

# MONTHLY CRISIS INTERVENTION UNIT REPORT Side 1

COUNTY	
MONTH	YEAR

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Complete Sides 1 and 2 of this form.
- Refer to the Instruction Sheet for detailed explanations of the information requested.
- Report to be reviewed and signed by the Trial Court Administrator, and mailed no later than the fourth working day of the month to:

Statistical Services Unit, Administrative Office of the Courts, CN-989, Trenton, NJ 08625

**PREPARER'S NOTE:**

This month's beginning pending is (check one): ☐ Identical to, or ☐ Different than, last month's pending.  
If different, I am reporting a recount of \_\_\_\_\_ cases.

**I. Unit Caseload**

1. Beginning pending (Should equal #1. 4. from last month unless recount from above.) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Cases added (Count each new case under ONLY ONE category below.)

(a) Serious threat to the well-being and physical safety of a juvenile. \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Serious conflict between a parent or guardian and a juvenile. \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Unauthorized absence by a juvenile for more than 24 hours from his/her home. \_\_\_\_\_

(d) Truancy \_\_\_\_\_

(e) Disorderly persons or petty disorderly persons offense diverted to CIU. \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Other \_\_\_\_\_

(g) Total cases added [Add Items (a) through (f).] \_\_\_\_\_

3. Cases disposed \_\_\_\_\_

4. Total active pending (Items 1. + 2. - 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Information and/or Referral**

1. Contacts during the month resulting in information and/or referral only. \_\_\_\_\_

(No extensive contact or written record. DO NOT count as a case added or disposed.)

**III. Case Outcome (For cases CLOSED during this month only. Counseling sessions need not have been held during month.)**

1. Counseling sessions per closed case.

(a) Telephone contacts only. \_\_\_\_\_

(b) 1-2 face to face counseling sessions. \_\_\_\_\_

(c) 3-5 face to face counseling sessions. \_\_\_\_\_

(d) 6 or more face to face counseling sessions. \_\_\_\_\_

(e) Total [Add Items (a) through (d).] \_\_\_\_\_

(This total should be the same as the total reported in Item #1. 3.)



# MONTHLY CRISIS INTERVENTION UNIT REPORT Side 2

COUNTY	
MONTH	YEAR

### III. Case outcome (continued for cases CLOSED during THIS month only.)

#### 2. Referrals--closed cases only

- (a) Cases closed where no family member was ever referred to an outside agency. \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Cases closed where a family member was referred to an outside agency. \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Total [Add Items (a) and (b).] \_\_\_\_\_  
*(This total should be the same as the total reported in Item #I. 3.)*

#### 3. Petitions--closed cases only.

- (a) Cases closed where one or more J/FC or Out of Home Placement petitions were filed during the course of the case. \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Cases closed where no J FC or Out of Home Placement petition was ever filed during the course of the case. \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Total [Add Items (a) and (b).] \_\_\_\_\_  
*(This total should be the same as the total reported in Item #I. 3.)*

### IV. Placements (Report cases PLACED during THIS month only.)

#### 1. Total placements.

- (a) Number of placements of juveniles with friends, relatives or others, by voluntary agreement of the family. \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Number of involuntary placements of juveniles outside of their home. \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Total [Add Items (a) and (b).] \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Juveniles placed during the month. (DO NOT report more than one placement/juvenile.) \_\_\_\_\_

### V. Petitions (Report petitions FILED during THIS month only.)

- 1. Juvenile Family Crisis petitions filed. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Out of Home Placement petitions filed. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Total petitions [Add Items 1. + 2.] \_\_\_\_\_

### VI. Referral types (Report referrals made during this month which fall into the following categories. Multiple referrals for one case should be reported.)

- 1. Number of referrals made to DYFS during the month. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Number of referrals made to substance abuse programs. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Number of referrals to all other outside agencies. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Total referrals [Add Items 1. through 3.] \_\_\_\_\_

NAME of Person Preparing this Report	APPROVED BY (TCA or ATCA Signature) _____ DATE _____
(Area Code) TELEPHONE NO _____	