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BY
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JUVENILE JUSTICE MODELS FOR CALIFORNIA

**NEW APPROACHES FOR TROUBLED YOUTH
IN THE NATION'S LARGEST STATE**

by

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T ABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Chapter One: Innovative Approaches to Juvenile Detention</i>	4
<i>Chapter Two: Local Alternatives to Commitment and Private Placement</i>	14
<i>Chapter Three: Alternatives to the California Youth Authority</i>	22
<i>Chapter Four: Can We Afford to Invest in New Juvenile Justice Models?</i>	27

INTRODUCTION

Not long ago California was considered a model in the juvenile justice field. By 1970, California's youth corrections administrators could point proudly to the nation's largest and most progressive system of training schools for juvenile offenders. The state was considered fortunate to have juvenile detention facilities, separate from adult lockups and jails, in most of its 58 counties, as well as a network of county ranch and camp facilities for wayward youth. Thousands of Youth Authority employees and county probation officers were dedicated to the task of reforming juvenile offenders, and they had resources to invest in a variety of rehabilitative programs for youth.

By the mid 1970s, storm clouds had gathered over the state's juvenile justice system. Californians had grown angry about cult murders, political assassinations and ghetto riots that occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Elected officials campaigned on "get tough" crime platforms. By 1978, a wave of punitive legislation transformed the adult criminal justice system, eliminating the indeterminate sentence and restoring the death penalty. This wave of reform washed over the juvenile justice system as well. The word "punishment" was added to the purpose section of the Juvenile Court law. The district attorney was brought into juvenile court proceedings. The law made it easier to try minors as adults. The Youthful Offender Parole Board embarked on a new sentencing plan which, in the ten years to come, would double the length of time served by wards at Youth Authority institutions.

As the Juvenile Court law in California changed to reflect new social values, an economic crisis settled on local probation departments, stripping them of a prime funding source. In 1978 Proposition 13, the property tax initiative, was adopted by the state's voters. As a result, local probation department budgets shrank, sacrificing youth programs and services that have not since been replaced.

Today California's juvenile justice system emerges from these events with visible scars. California's juvenile justice professionals—at the Youth Authority, in the county police and probation departments, and in the juvenile courts—are doing their best to keep pace with caseloads and with the public demand for protection from juvenile crime. Until 1990, a protracted decline in the state's youth population kept juvenile arrests and referrals to the juvenile courts at steady levels. Now the trend has reversed, and California's youth population is expected to rise by 30 percent over the next ten years. The projected increase in the youth population will place new demands on a juvenile justice system already straining under the load.

As we enter the new decade, the challenge for California's juvenile justice professionals is to find creative and constructive solutions to our problems and to recapture California's former position as a progressive and successful juvenile justice example. Some progress in this direction has already been made. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency has worked with several California

counties to incorporate new juvenile justice models and techniques. Many of the most successful models have been developed outside of California. Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Utah, for example, have pioneered the major experiments in the "deinstitutionalization" of youth corrections, closing large state training schools and referring youthful offenders to small, community-based treatment programs run by private providers. Other states have moved in this direction, but more cautiously, by financing an array of specialized youth programs for serious juvenile offenders and for youth with special treatment needs. While there is no indication that California is prepared to make a major policy shift toward the policies of the reform states, Californians nevertheless have something to learn from effective program models that have evolved in those states.

This booklet is designed to acquaint those interested in California with some of the nation's best juvenile justice programs. The ones described in this booklet are by no means the exclusive examples of success. NCCD's goal is to highlight a few selected programs that are keyed to California problem areas identified in the text. By disseminating this information, we hope to generate interest in the adoption of new juvenile justice approaches where they are most needed in this state.

This publication is made possible by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation. NCCD is grateful to the Foundation for its continuing interest in California's high-risk youth, and for its support of NCCD's efforts to tie exemplary youth programs to the administration of juvenile justice in this state.

Chapter One

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO JUVENILE DETENTION

"Detention" refers to the incarceration of a minor in a juvenile detention facility or "juvenile hall". Unlike adults, minors charged with public offenses may be detained without bail until their cases are tried in the juvenile court.

California has consistently had the nation's highest rate of juvenile, pre-trial detention. The 1987 "Children in Custody" survey by the U.S. Department of Justice showed that California had more youth in detention on a one-day count than any other state; in fact, the survey revealed that 35 percent of all youth detained nationwide were detained in California, which has 10 percent of the national youth population.

NCCD's own surveys of youth detained in three major California counties—Los Angeles, San Francisco and Santa Clara—confirmed the picture of detention provided by the Department of Justice survey. NCCD surveys taken in these counties between 1986 and 1990 found that three-fourths of all minors arrested and referred to probation officers were securely detained for periods in excess of 24 hours, and that the likelihood of being detained was high regardless of the severity of the referral offense.

California's vigorous application of the detention power has contributed to overcrowding in some county juvenile detention facilities. The most serious problem has been in Los Angeles County. In 1989 and 1990, detained youth populations in Los Angeles juvenile halls averaged about 1,800 youth, or 140 percent above rated capacity. Other counties with chronic problems of overcrowding include San Diego, Orange, Fresno and Contra Costa.

The problem of crowding in California's juvenile halls is compounded by the age and deterioration of some of the older facilities. Detention centers in Central Los Angeles and San Francisco, for example, are in extremely poor condition and have been decertified on occasion by the California Youth Authority. State bond funds recently made available will defray some repair costs but will not pay for reconstruction of juvenile facilities that need to be replaced.

One very serious issue is whether adequate levels of care can be provided in overcrowded facilities to prevent self-destructive behavior by depressed or disturbed youth. The worst-case risk is one of suicide—a not uncommon risk among the adolescent offender population. Another issue of some concern is the cost of juvenile, pre-trial confinement. In San Francisco, for example, the Juvenile Probation Department places the cost of occupying one juvenile hall bed for one day at \$ 120, or \$ 43,800 per bed per year. The high cost of such confinement

underscores the need to identify cost-effective alternatives to detention that are consistent with public safety.

The legitimate goals of pre-trial confinement are to ensure public protection and to guarantee the appearance of the minor in court. Minors who are unlikely to re-offend before trial or to skip their court date should be considered low-risk and allowed to return home. By identifying low risk youth and returning them to the custody of their parents before trial, the secure detention option can be reserved for those higher risk youth whose secure detention is necessary as a matter of public protection.

The need to differentiate between low and high risk youth has been recognized by two respected, national juvenile justice standards projects. In 1980, both the National Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice (NAC), and the American Bar Association and Institute of Judicial Administration (AJA/IBA) published Juvenile Justice Standards calling for the adoption of selective, objective detention criteria at the local level. These standards recognized that state laws on detention were often broad grants of power over minors that encouraged subjectivity in detention decision-making. Both projects promulgated model detention criteria and recommended their adoption in the states.

Several California counties have addressed overcrowding in juvenile detention centers by adopting local, objective detention criteria. NCCD designed and helped implement such criteria in three California counties. The San Francisco example is offered as our first model in this section.

Some of the most innovative approaches to juvenile detention have been devised in counties with the most severe problems of juvenile hall overcrowding. The juvenile work service programs in Los Angeles and Orange Counties are examples of such creative alternatives to detention, and they are described as the second model in this section.

Another detention control device included in this discussion of models for California has been a mandated county program for nearly 15 years—the statutory home supervision program.

Finally, for a look outside California, NCCD has selected the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice as a comprehensive and full-service detention model. With a population the same size as Los Angeles County, the New York City juvenile detention system manages to operate with a much lower rate of pre-trial detention and with an enviable multi-service capability.

San Francisco's Point-Scale Criteria for Juvenile Detention

NCCD helped design and implement detention criteria now being used in Los Angeles, Santa Clara and San Francisco counties. Recently San Diego County also adopted detention criteria based on the NCCD model. In each of these counties, the criteria are used to identify low risk youth who can safely be released and high risk youth who need to be detained.

NCCD first studied San Francisco's detained youth population in 1988. In the 1988 study, NCCD found that 78 percent of all youth referred to the Youth Guidance Center were securely confined for periods exceeding 24 hours and that youth with offenses of low severity were often detained. In response to NCCD recommendations, the Juvenile Probation Department adopted an intake screening system to help probation officers make detention decisions.

The central feature of the screening system is a point-scale intake form which rates minors for various risk factors such as severity of offense, prior arrests and probation history. Minors scoring 10 or more points may be securely detained; minors scoring 9 or fewer points are recommended for release to the custody of parents or to an alternative shelter program. The score is advisory, not binding. Probation officers retain the discretion to override the score, detaining minors with scores of less than 10 points or releasing minors with scores over 10.

The new screening system has now been in effect for two years. San Francisco's juvenile hall had a design capacity of 137 beds and an average daily population of 123 minors in 1989. By August of 1990, the population had dropped to 90 youth.

A major concern of probation officers, juvenile court judges and other officials responsible for juvenile justice operations is the public safety impact of selective detention criteria. In San Francisco the changeover to the new intake rating system was accompanied by concern that fewer detentions would result in more pre-trial arrests posing an unacceptable public safety risk. In 1990, NCCD monitored the pre-trial performance of a cohort of minors released after scoring 9 or fewer points on the detention scale. This study found that these released youth had a 94 percent success rate in remaining violation free before trial and a 100 percent success rate in showing up for required court appearances. These results confirmed the safety of the intake screening process.

Point-scale criteria may be difficult to introduce because some probation officers resist the notion of substituting a numerical scale for their personal judgment. The retention of override authority by the intake officer is an important element of reassurance in this respect. Moreover, once the criteria are in place, the personnel using them usually come to appreciate the benefits that the criteria bestow. Among those benefits are uniformity and objectivity in the decision-making process; control over the flow of youth into the detention center; control over the costs of pre-trial, juvenile incarceration; and a system that can accurately measure public safety impact.

San Francisco Juvenile Detention Screening Criteria

(Shown: portion of the screening form applied at intake)

NAME OF MINOR _____ PFN _____ ADMIT DATE _____
ADMIT TIME _____
MOST SERIOUS INSTANT OFFENSE _____ ARREST TIME _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Score minor for each factor below and enter the appropriate score in spaces provided in the right hand column.

FACTOR _____ SCORE _____

1. MOST SERIOUS INSTANT OFFENSE (Score one charge only)

Serious Violent Offenses

WIC 707(b) offenses 10

Other listed violent offenses 7

Narcotics/Weapons Offenses

Possession of firearms 10

Sale of narcotics/drugs 7

Possession of narcotics/drugs for sale 6

Felony possession of narcotics/drugs 5

Misdemeanor possession of narcotics/drugs 3

Property Offenses

Felonies 5

Misdemeanors 3

All Other Crimes or Probation Violations 0

2. NUMBER OF PRIOR ARRESTS, LAST 12 MONTHS

Prior felony arrest within the last 7 days 5

6 or more total arrests, last 12 months 3

4 to 5 total arrests, last 12 months 2

1 to 3 total arrests, last 12 months 1

No arrests within the last 12 months 0

3. PROBATION/PETITION STATUS

Active cases (select only one score)

With petition now pending 6

With last adjudication within 90 days 4

With last adjudication more than 90 days ago 2

Not an active case 0

4. SPECIAL DETENTION CASES (Check whichever applies)

Escapee _____ Failed placement _____ Transfer In _____

Arrest Warr _____ Bench Warr _____ Court Order _____

Other (describe) _____ 10

Not Applicable 0

DETAIN RELEASE DECISION SCALE

Score 0-9 = RELEASE Score 10+ = DETAIN

TOTAL SCORE _____

For additional information on San Francisco's juvenile screening system, please contact:

Fred Jordan, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
Youth Guidance Center
375 Woodside Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94127
(415) 753-7556

California's Home Supervision Program

Home supervision or home detention is a code-authorized alternative to the secure confinement of a minor in the juvenile hall. Though the program has been law in California for 14 years, until recently it has been under-utilized in many counties. The home supervision program is highlighted here, not as a novel option, but as an old and reliable alternative that deserves full attention in counties with problems of juvenile hall overcrowding.

In fact, according to California's Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC), the home supervision program is not an option but a requirement. WIC Section 840 says: "There shall be in each county probation department a program of home supervision to which minors described by Section 628.1 shall be referred. Home supervision is a program in which persons who would otherwise be detained in the juvenile hall are permitted to remain in their homes pending court disposition of their cases, under the supervision of a deputy probation officer, probation aide or probation volunteer."

In 1985, NCCD conducted a one day spot-check of four major California counties to determine levels of use of the home supervision program. At the time we found consistently low rates of utilization in Los Angeles, Santa Clara and San Francisco Counties, with slightly higher use in San Diego County. Five years later in 1990 we repeated the one day spot-check in these four counties, finding higher rates of use except for San Diego. The results of these spot checks are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Minors in secure detention and home supervision in four counties on one day spot-checks in 1985 and 1990

	No. in Secure Detention	No. on Home Supervision	% on Home Supervision *
Los Angeles County			
April, 1985	1,607	140	8.2
Sept., 1990	1,833	189	9.3
San Diego County			
April, 1985	344	90	20.7
Sept., 1990	300	56	15.7
Santa Clara County			
April, 1985	345	32	8.5
Sept., 1990	243	78	24.3
San Francisco County			
April, 1985	169	30	15.1
Sept., 1990	98	22	18.3

* Percent shown is percent of all detention candidates (column 1 + column 2) on home supervision.

Home supervision offers certain benefits over juvenile hall confinement. The first benefit is economic. Keeping a minor at home under supervision costs far less than the \$ 100+ per day required to detain the minor for the 28-30 days usually needed to bring the case to disposition. Another benefit is that probation officers supervising youth on home detention gain insights into the ability of the minor to obey supervision requirements; this knowledge can be of value to the probation investigator preparing the social study for the court. A third benefit is that the minor on home supervision, under the watchful eye of a probation officer, may be a better public safety risk than minors who are simply released without supervision; a follow-up study of more than 1,000 youth on supervised, pre-trial home detention in Broward County, Florida showed excellent public safety results, with only 5 percent of these youth re-admitted to secure detention before trial. Finally, moving the home supervision caseload out of the detention facility provides relief to overcrowding, letting juvenile hall counselors focus their attention fully on the high risk and maximum security youth under their control.

One code requirement is that a probation officer or aide shall have a caseload of not more than 10 minors on home supervision (WIC Section 841). This requirement underwrites the quality of pre-trial supervision, allowing the officer to make personal visits to the youth at home and more than one phone check each day. The 1:10 staffing requirement may seem extraordinary when compared to supervision caseloads in some counties of 100 or more youth, and the staffing requirement has been blamed for low utilization of the home supervision program in some counties. Nevertheless, the cost of detaining 10 minors a year in the juvenile hall is far greater than the cost of maintaining 10 home supervision slots. One can easily justify the deployment of staff to home supervision on financial grounds.

Care needs to be taken in deciding who qualifies for home detention. The Welfare and Institutions Code specifically limits eligibility for the program to "persons who would otherwise be detained". It is important to reserve this option as an alternative to secure detention and not to use it as a more restrictive option for youth who can safely be released without supervision pending. Moreover, the home supervision alternative is not appropriate for minors who come from abusive homes.

Juvenile Alternative Work Service in Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Probation Departments in Los Angeles and Orange Counties operate a work-service alternative to secure confinement. In Los Angeles it is called the "JAWS" program (Juvenile Alternative Work Service) and in Orange County it is known simply as the Juvenile Court Work Program. Other counties, such as San Bernardino and Santa Clara, also have juvenile work service programs. In each case, the option is productive, not only for youth who swap dead time in the juvenile hall for outdoor work, but also for the county which generates income from the work crews.

The crews operate on Saturdays and Sundays, with 10 to 12 youth on each crew. In Los Angeles, about 25 crews go out each weekend; in Orange County, about 12. Groups assemble at an assigned gathering spot in the morning and, under the direct supervision of a probation officer, the youth perform a day's work at city and county sites and school district locations. Most of the work involves cleanup, road maintenance, painting and related tasks.

These work programs are important alternatives to secure confinement. Youth who participate in work service programs are youth who would, for lack of such a program, be ordered to serve time in the juvenile hall (so called "Ricardo M." cases) or who would be committed to the county ranch or camp. Work service is thus an intermediate sanction between home probation and secure commitment. Probation officers are likely to recommend work service, and judges are likely to order it, in cases of medium severity where the minor has already been home on probation but has not committed a new violation serious enough to warrant secure commitment.

The usual work-crew sentence is 15 to 20 days of work. In Los Angeles and Orange Counties, minors on work service are given orders of commitment to the juvenile hall, with credit against this juvenile hall time for each day served on a work crew. The juvenile hall commitment is stayed pending successful participation on the crews. By using a stayed order of commitment, the court authorizes the probation officer to return the minor to secure custody in the juvenile hall if he fails to show up or becomes a disciplinary problem on the job. Among the counties having juvenile work programs, there is some variation in the court procedures used to revoke work program participation. In Los Angeles County, all minors returned to secure custody get full "Section 777(e)" hearings.

The work service programs provide several benefits to the youth and to the probation departments that run them. First, they provide relief to overcrowding of the juvenile hall, an important feature in both Los Angeles and Orange counties. Second, these programs are extraordinarily cost-effective. The work crews operate under contract with cities and school districts. Los Angeles charges \$ 400 per crew per day, and in Orange, the charge is \$ 275 per day. This income generated by the crew offsets the cost of running it, by 65 percent in Los Angeles and by 40 percent

in Orange County. In both cases, the net cost of this alternative disposition is less than the cost of juvenile hall incarceration.

Moreover, these crews offer a more positive experience for the youth than secure confinement, emphasizing a healthy work ethic in an outdoor environment. This positive attitude is reflected by members of the public. According to one of the probation supervisors running the Los Angeles program, the public "likes to see these kids out there working; it reassures them that something is happening after the kids get into trouble".

Juvenile Alternative Work Service Programs in Orange and Los Angeles Counties

Program description

Supervised work crews operate on weekend days with 10 to 12 youth in each crew. Crews perform cleanup, landscape, painting and similar tasks under contracts with cities and school districts. For this work, the crews are paid \$400/day in L.A., \$275/day in Orange; the income offsets cost of the crew. Minors know that failure on the crew will mean return to secure confinement.

Clients served

Juveniles at moderate offense levels and minors with probation violations who participate on outdoor work crews in lieu of juvenile hall time.

Key benefits

- Intermediate sanction between probation and commitment
- Program reduces juvenile hall overcrowding
- Crew income offsets cost of running program
- Programs offer positive work experience for youth and are popular with the public

Contact

Bill Gerth, Director of IDC
L.A. County Probation Dept.
1605 Eastlake Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90033
(213) 226-8501

Sue Cullen, Work Program
Orange Co. Probation Dept.
301 City Drive So., 4th fl.
Orange, CA 92668
(714) 834-6611

New York City's Department of Juvenile Justice

The City of New York's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has challenged tradition by re-defining the concept of detention. In 1979 the Department was established as a separate agency responsible for the custody and care of arrested minors. Under the leadership of Ellen Schall, who became Commissioner in 1983, and Rose Washington, who succeeded Schall in 1990, DJJ restructured its detention program to be more than a holding tank for youth.

The New York City system is a full-service approach to juvenile detention. DJJ operates secure and non-secure detention facilities serving the nation's largest youth population in a single city. While youth are detained they are actively involved in a variety of activities. A network of programs operated by DJJ provides a continuum of services from intake through aftercare. In 1986 the Department received a prestigious Ford Foundation award for innovation in state and local government.

Some of the youth referred to DJJ by the courts are detained in the secure Spofford Juvenile Center (250 beds). Others go to one of seven small, non-secure group homes operated by private providers under contract with the City. A case management plan is designed for every youth under departmental control. The case management system of New York's DJJ is of interest to California because it is a multi-service model that, unlike most California detention experiences, provides a wide range of assessments and programs. Moreover, the case management system is tied to an emphasis on swift movement of youth out of the secure facility, once a destination is assigned. DJJ's case management structure has the following major components:

Needs assessment: Youth at Spofford spend the first ten days in the intake and orientation unit, away from the general population. There, they receive full assessment for medical, mental health, education and family needs. Youth in non-secure detention spend the first 3 days in Intake House where they receive similar evaluation before transfer to a group home.

Service planning: Each youth receives an individualized service plan linked to his or her assessment. At Spofford, each youth gets a case manager; in non-secure detention, case conferences are held to make decisions about the service plan. Families may be encouraged to participate in the planning process.

Service delivery and monitoring: DJJ provides a package of services to detained youth. Full medical, mental health, dental and educational services are available. The medical facility at Spofford is an accredited Correctional Health Care program. The school program provides an individualized curriculum for each youth geared to educational assessment findings and individual educational needs. Services are closely monitored by DJJ staff to ensure that the delivery is consistent with the service plan.

Aftercare and special programs: Another feature of the DJJ system is a voluntary aftercare program which permits youth who leave detention to continue receiving services in the community. Voluntary aftercare workers serve as advocates for youth to enroll them in school and vocational programs. Other special programs available at DJJ are the Youth Advocacy Project, run by the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, which offers intensive supervision for youth as an alternative to long-term confinement; and the Family Ties Program, based on the Seattle Homebuilders program described later in this booklet, which provides intensive, in-home family services as an alternative to out-of-home placement.

New York City's Department of Juvenile Justice

Program description

Secure Detention Center (Spofford) with 250 beds serving New York City; Non secure detention alternatives (7 group homes) and Family Boarding Homes (foster care alternative to secure detention). Full medical, mental health and school services for all youth under DJJ care. Aftercare services and other special programs.

Clients served

Arrested youth processed as juveniles and adults. DJJ has 6,000 annual admissions (5,100 secure, 900 non-secure) with 77% from juvenile court, 23% from adult court. Admissions are males (77%), Blacks (66%), Hispanic (28%), White (4%). Average age is 15.

Average stay: 12 days secure, 23 days non-secure

Special programs

Volunteers for Youth; Voluntary Aftercare; Family Ties (short-term family preservation); Youth Advocacy (NCIA case advocates develop alternatives to incarceration).

Annual budget: \$ 22 million

Key benefits

- Comprehensive assessment and service model of detention
- Model case management system
- Case advocacy component for alternatives to detention
- Low rate of pre-trial detention compared to cities and counties in California

Contact: Rose Washington, Commissioner
Department of Juvenile Justice
365 Broadway, New York, NY 10013
(212) 925-7779

Chapter Two

LOCAL ALTERNATIVES TO COMMITMENT AND PRIVATE PLACEMENT

Once a minor is declared a ward of the juvenile court on the basis of a public offense, the judge must decide on a disposition of the case. The problem for many juvenile court judges is that there are not enough choices. Normally, the disposition recommended by the probation officer to the court will be one of four predictable options: send the minor home on probation; order the minor into an out-of-home private placement; commit the minor to a term in a local juvenile hall, camp or ranch; or send the minor to the California Youth Authority.

Some of the easiest dispositional decisions are those made at the two polar extremes of offense severity—the lightweight cases getting home probation, and the obviously serious cases requiring Youth Authority commitment. But in the middle range of severity, decisions can become quite difficult. The youth with moderate offense profiles include some who may be unsuitable for home probation because they come from abusive home environments. The judge evaluating these cases may find that the minor has a range of needs, from discipline and control to treatment for some specific problem such as substance abuse.

The supply of county-level programs for these moderate juvenile offenders is quite limited. In most counties the need for *secure* commitment is met by juvenile camps and ranches. The camps and ranches, operated by local probation departments, are usually in rural locations and have state-mandated capacities of not more than 125 youth. At the beginning of 1990 there were 52 ranches and camps with a statewide capacity of 3,960 youth. About half of this capacity is in Los Angeles County. Nearly 16,000 youth were admitted to county camps and ranches in 1989. Lengths of stay range from 30 days to 12 months. The program emphasis is on school work, discipline and counseling.

County camps are supported almost entirely by county funds. In Los Angeles County, with its 1,900 camp beds, the *daily* cost of running the camp system exceeds \$ 130,000. Some counties supplement the cost of operating the camps with state funds made available through the County Justice System Subvention Program (AB 90). However, in 1990 the Governor cut this state subsidy program in half. Due to funding problems, two county camps closed in 1990. With the AB 90 cuts, the survival of juvenile camps in some counties is jeopardized and may hinge on a restoration of AB 90 funds in coming budget cycles.

Another possible disposition is an order of private placement in a group home or specialized treatment facility. Minors who are candidates for private placement often have dysfunctional families that make it risky to send the minor home. At the same time, these youth may lack the toughness or criminal sophistication that would

qualify them for a term in the county camp. The judge looks for another choice, and this often means the minor will be placed in a residential facility or group home, possibly far from home. Sometimes these youth remain in placement for two years or more, and they may never return home before reaching the age of adulthood.

A financial advantage for the county in residential placement is that in most cases, 95 percent of the cost of group home care is paid by state and federal AFDC funds. However, this is not always true. In Los Angeles County, as many as 100 of the 1,300 youth on the private placement caseload on any given day are not eligible for AFDC reimbursement; these AFDC-ineligible youth cost Los Angeles County \$3 million in FY 88-89. Moreover, probation placement officers must compete with child welfare agencies, and sometimes with each other, for available private placement slots. Youth who cannot be placed immediately must wait in detention centers until a suitable placement is found. The county bears the cost of this detention.

There is a need in California to explore county placement options which can reduce system operating costs while reinforcing the goal of family preservation. Other states confronting this need have established networks of community-based treatment programs for youth with moderate to serious offense profiles. The best developed systems of community-based care can be found in the states which pioneered the "deinstitutionalization" of youth corrections, such as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Utah. In growing numbers, other states have adopted the elements of the programming developed in the pioneer states. Very little experimentation along these lines has occurred in California.

The models discussed in this chapter are alike in that they are all non-residential alternatives to secure commitment or out-of-home placement. Elements of these models can be found in individual California counties, but they are few and far between. This is perhaps regrettable because these models offer distinct advantages to California juvenile justice professionals and the children and families they serve. All operate at lower costs than secure commitment or private, out-of-home placement. Moreover, they have specific program and treatment capabilities that may not be available from existing county placements. Finally, these models have value in that they provide diversity of choice to judges and probation officers making disposition and placement decisions in difficult juvenile justice cases.

Associated Marine Institutes (AMI) Day Treatment Programs

Associated Marine Institutes, Inc. (AMI) is based in Tampa, Florida and operates a network of innovative treatment programs for delinquent youth in eight states. Originally using marine activity as the core of their program structure, AMI now operates residential and nonresidential programs in a variety of settings, such as a wilderness program in the Everglades and ranch and farming programs elsewhere in Florida. The underlying philosophy of AMI programs is that delinquent youth can become positive members of society as their self esteem and respect for others grows. The focus of AMI programs is on personal achievement and teamwork. The program structure, with its emphasis on individualized education and outdoor activity, provides the opportunity for personal growth to occur.

Youth referred to AMI day treatment programs are experienced juvenile offenders. On average, they have 8 to 12 offenses prior to their enrollment in the program. They are 14 to 18 years old, although their educational level is far below their corresponding grade level. They are youth who are prime candidates for placement in secure treatment facilities. Instead, they are afforded the opportunity to live at home and attend the structured day treatment program that AMI offers.

The two primary components of the day treatment program are the individualized educational plan and the "hands-on" learning experience. The AMI day care program splits time between schooling and outdoor activity in the marine environment. Both sides of the program are viewed as an integrated experience. A youngster who works on a sailboat or takes scuba diving lessons learns responsibility for himself and teamwork with others. The activities are meant to be both instructive and enjoyable. Points are earned each day toward promotion to new levels in the program where greater responsibilities are undertaken and more privileges are allowed.

The size of each program is kept to less than 50 students. The average daily enrollment is between 30 and 40 youth. The average staff to student ratio is 1:7. Although staff members have a set job title, there is considerable flexibility as to the duties each staffperson performs. Teachers participate in sailing activities, and sailing instructors use math problems to teach the concepts of direction and speed.

AMI keeps close track of recidivism at several stages in its day treatment program, and the program claims considerable success in terms of recidivism with youth who successfully complete the program. A new offense while in the program is not a cause for automatic dismissal unless public safety requires it. Only 19 percent of those youths who complete the program commit a new offense.

The cost of the program is one of its most enticing features. At \$ 40 per youth per day, the day care program is very affordable when compared to the cost of institutional or private placement. AMI's day care programs operate under contract with the state of Florida. Each day care program is a separate "institute" with its own board of directors, and each relies on the surrounding community for much of their financial support.

In 1987, California sent a bill to the Governor that would have established an AMI demonstration day care program for delinquent court wards in Monterey County. The Governor signed the bill into law (WIC 727.5) but deleted the funds. As a result the program did not open, derailing a potentially useful demonstration of economy and effectiveness. The AMI day care model remains a promising one, but without funding there is a stronger financial incentive to place youth in 24 hour residential care at much higher daily rates because 95 percent of the cost is reimbursed by state/federal AFDC funds.

Associated Marine Institutes (AMI)

Program description

Community-based day treatment program combines education and experience in a marine or wilderness setting. Youth report to the program each day and go home at night. Emphasis is on personal achievement and teamwork. On-site education facilities and certified instructors for diving and boating activities.

Clients served

Youth committed to state juvenile justice agencies in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts and Delaware. Noncommitted youth on probation are also served in Florida. Youth in day programs are 47% Black, 40% White, 10% Hispanic. They have an average of 8-12 prior offenses.

Length of stay: 150-170 days for program completion

Day treatment cost: \$ 40 per day.

Key benefits

- Day treatment means youth spend days in program, nights at home
- Small staff to student ratio, small program size
- Combined emphasis on learning, teamwork and outdoor activity
- Low cost compared to full-time commitment and placement
- Favorable recidivism and program completion rates

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The Seattle-based Homebuilders Program

Homebuilders helps families in crisis. Most of the youth it serves have been referred by child welfare agencies. But increasingly, the Homebuilders model has been meeting the needs of delinquent court wards with dysfunctional families. New York City's Department of Juvenile Justice has adapted the Homebuilders model in a program called Family Ties. In California, the Homebuilders model has been applied to probation youth in Contra Costa and Monterey Counties.

The Homebuilders strategy is designed to keep families together and to prevent out-of-home placement of children. In California, a substantial number of youth with public offenses are sent each year into group homes and private placements. In July of 1990, there were more than 5,400 delinquent wards in California residential facilities, according to the California Association of Services for Children. Typically, youth who are privately placed by county probation departments have a mixed record of misbehavior falling short of serious and violent criminal conduct. These youth have multiple personal, behavioral and family problems.

Homebuilders treats the whole family. Its specialty is short term (4-6 weeks), intensive, in-home family counseling. The object of the program is to teach family members how to deal with crisis and conflict and how to be their own advocates for help from the community. The goals of the intervention are explicit: to prevent out-of-home placement and to teach families the basic skills necessary to keep the family intact.

There are several standard components of the Homebuilders model. Therapists usually intervene at a time of crisis and go to work swiftly. The caseload is limited to two families per therapist. This allows the caseworker to devote 8 or 10 hours a day to one family in a time of crisis. All caseworkers remain on 24 hour call for their client-families. Therapeutic goals are set for each family according to its needs. The focus may be on poor interpersonal relationships, substance abuse, sexual or physical abuse, lack of money or resources, or other problems.

The Homebuilders program has been highly successful in avoiding placements in out-of-home facilities for their clients. One year follow-up reports on families in the program showed that families stayed together in three-fourths or more of the cases.

The Homebuilders family intervention program is cheap compared to the costs of placement. In 1989, the average cost of serving one youth and his or her family was \$ 2,700. This would barely pay for one month of group home care at today's rates in California. Of course, in California the county's incentive to avoid placement is low because the county pays only 5 percent of the cost of group care. Nevertheless, counties need to consider the additional, human cost of splitting families when measuring the value of the Homebuilders approach. Many placement officers in California probation departments send wards to other counties, far from home, where family visitation is difficult and infrequent. The Homebuilders

approach, with its proven success record, saves dollars relative to the total cost of residential care, and saves families too.

Homebuilders is a division of Behavioral Sciences Institute, a private non-profit family counseling agency. Homebuilders programs operate in 10 Washington counties under contract with the state. Programs based on the Homebuilders model now operate in 30 states.

Homebuilders

Program description

Short term, intensive, in-home family therapy to prevent out-of-home placement of youth. Therapists have a two-family caseload, remain on 24 hour call, and devote 8-10 hours a day to a family in crisis. Homebuilders operates programs in 10 counties in Washington State. Programs based on the Homebuilders model are in 30 states.

Clients served

Youth are referred by juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health and other agencies. To qualify for the program, out-of-home placement must be imminent. In Washington State, Homebuilders served nearly 800 families in 1989. Child neglect and abuse were the most frequent referral reasons; other reasons included alcohol and drug abuse and delinquency.

Length of stay: Four to six weeks of intensive intervention.

Total case cost: \$ 2,700 per case

Key benefits

- Program treats multiple behavior and family problems
- Program works for delinquent youth as alternative to placement
- Program is highly successful in keeping families together
- Low caseload (2 families per worker), 24 hour availability
- Extremely low cost per case relative to residential care

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The KEY Outreach and Tracking Program

The concept which drives the KEY Program in Massachusetts is that most delinquent youth can safely be handled at home under the close supervision of a trained caseworker. Youth in the KEY program are those referred by the Massachusetts juvenile courts to the state Department of Youth Services (DYS). It is important to note that KEY does not just take lightweights; their clients include some very troubled young people with serious offense backgrounds.

KEY Program, Inc. began in 1972 after Massachusetts removed hundreds of juveniles from training schools and transferred them to community-based programs. After the closing of the state training schools, KEY was one of the first private contractors to accept cases from DYS. Massachusetts continues today to refer about 90 percent of its juvenile offender population to non-secure, community-based treatment programs such as KEY. Only about 200 youth remain in locked confinement in Massachusetts, in small residential facilities of from 8 to 20 beds in size.

Once a youth is referred to KEY Outreach and Tracking, caseworkers from KEY and DYS confer about the type of program and level of supervision that will be most appropriate. The youth and the youth's family are also brought into the discussion. A behavior contract is drawn up, setting out expectations and goals for the youth; sanctions and rewards are based on compliance with this contract.

The "tracking" component of the program involves the intense supervision of youth while they live at home or in foster homes. What makes the program work is the extremely small caseload of KEY's trackers—approximately 8 youth per worker. This allows the KEY tracker to be in contact with the youth several times each day, every day the youth is in the program (usually 90 days). Workers serve not only to monitor the youth's movements, but also as broker and advocate for the youth in his or her efforts to resume a productive and law-abiding life.

The "outreach" component incorporates counseling and family services into the caseplan for each youth. If specialized therapies or additional services are necessary, KEY outreach workers will help connect family members with the necessary agencies and providers. KEY also provides an aftercare program for youth coming out of residential care; KEY workers will help the youth find a job or enroll in classes or vocational training, and they will work with the entire family while the youth is in transition.

Tracking Plus combines care in a closed residential facility with the outreach and tracking services described above. Youth in Tracking Plus spend up to 30 days in the residential facility before going home under supervision. If the youth then breaks the contract or backslides in some way, he or she may be re-enrolled in the residential program until he is ready for a greater level of freedom under supervision.

A prime advantage of outreach and tracking is that it supervises moderate and

serious juvenile offenders at a 1990 cost of \$ 23 per day. This, of course, does not include the cost of residential care if used as a backup to outreach and tracking. Nevertheless, KEY's program and proven ability to handle these youth come at a most affordable price.

The KEY Program, Inc.

Program description

Outreach and Tracking provides intensive community-based supervision for youth while at home. Trackers have small caseloads and frequent contacts. KEY staff serve as advocates for youth and family in community. Residential backup is available in the Tracking Plus program. KEY operates in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire.

Clients served

Youth committed to the state Department of Youth Services (DYS); they include moderate to serious juvenile offenders. Ethnic balance is White (61%), Hispanic (21%), Black (13%). Most are males (94%) aged 15-16 years.

Length of stay: 3 months

Special staff requirement

KEY program staff remain in the same job position for no more than 14 months in order to ensure enthusiasm and interest in programs.

Daily cost per client: \$ 23 per day for Outreach and Tracking

Key benefits

- Program handles tough cases successfully in home communities
- Rich staff:client ratio (1:8) allows frequent contact
- Program emphasizes strong ties with family, work, community
- Trackers and outreach workers are advocates for the youth
- Tracking Plus provides residential backup for program failure

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Chapter Three

A **TERNATIVES TO THE CALIFORNIA YOUTH AUTHORITY**

Commitment to the California Youth Authority (CYA) is the most severe sentence a juvenile court ward can receive. Most minors sent to Youth Authority have committed a serious offense or have histories of moderate offenses and prior commitments to county facilities. At CYA, they are housed in one of ten large, locked institutions (average capacity 600) for terms that approach an average of two years each.

California is remarkable among state youth correctional systems for the size of its incarcerated youth population, the length of sentences served by its youth, and the overcrowded conditions of its institutions. In June of 1990, Youth Authority institutions had about 8,300 inmates in institutions with a combined design capacity of 6,181 beds (135% overcrowding). Most of these inmates were committed by juvenile courts, though some were young adults who can be sent to CYA by criminal courts until the age of 21. A new, 600 bed training school is scheduled to open at Stockton in 1991, bringing capacity up to 6,781 beds.

Conditions of confinement at CYA institutions have been the subject of repeated investigation. A series of reports by Steve Lerner and Paul DeMuro for the Commonweal Institute have been highly critical of the Youth Authority's approach to juvenile corrections. These reports document an institutional atmosphere dominated by a gang culture in which youth must fight to establish acceptance and dominance. The institutions are staffed and operated with prison-like rules of conduct. Youth are marched in file from spot to spot with hands behind their backs and may be forbidden to speak. When tensions explode into violence, disturbances may be quelled with tear gas and tie-down restraints. The failure rate is high; within two years of release, nearly 60 percent of CYA wards have their parole revoked and go back into state care.

Some of the causes of overcrowding in Youth Authority institutions are beyond the control of the Youth Authority itself. Youth Authority does not control the juvenile court judge's decision to commit a minor to its care. Counties differ in their commitment practices, some sending more youth with less serious offenses than others. According to the 1988 Commonweal Report, "Reforming the California Youth Authority", nearly half of the wards in CYA could be handled safely and effectively in programs less restrictive than the large institutions of the Youth Authority.

A major cause of overcrowding is the sentencing policy of the Youthful Offender Parole Board. This Board, consisting of seven Governor's appointees, is separate from the Youth Authority. The Board assigns release dates to all wards and

makes all release-to-parole decisions. Over a ten year period from 1977-88, the Board doubled the average length of stay from 11 to 22 months per ward. By 1988, a ward of the California Youth Authority could expect to be incarcerated for a substantially longer period than an adult sentenced to state prison for the same crime. Recently, the Board has come under fire from legislators concerned about the cost of these long sentences. In response, the Board has begun to reduce length of stay, causing a drop of 700 in the CYA population between 1988 and 1990. The recommendation of the 1988 Commonwealth report is that the Youthful Offender Parole Board be abolished, and that control over sentencing be returned to the Youth Authority itself.

The Director of the Youth Authority does have control over the types of facilities in which youth will be placed. But the Youth Authority has continually reaffirmed its preference for handling wards in large institutions. In fact, in 1990, the CYA's handful of smaller facilities were scheduled for elimination as a budget cutting move. CYA's proposal is to close five conservation camps with populations in the 80-100 range, returning 500 wards to the already crowded institutions.

Key policy makers outside the administration have expressed reservations about the California approach to youth corrections— especially in relation to the cost of running the system, the cost of building new institutions, and the ability of the system to prevent the recycling of wards back into institutions after they are released. A legislative proposal in the 1988-89 session, authored by Senator Robert Presley, would have established a short-track in CYA (6 months) for wards with non-violent offense profiles, and would have assigned savings from shorter stays to a fund for local, community-based programs for juvenile offenders. This proposal was endorsed by legislators but failed because the Governor promised a veto. Youthful offender sentencing reform is likely to continue to be on the policy-making agenda in California in the years to come.

In the meantime, Californians must look to other states for model programs for the treatment of serious juvenile offenders. In growing numbers, states have closed or curtailed large youth training schools, referring the juvenile offender populations to a network of community-based treatment programs. These programs offer the benefits of small size and enriched staff-to-youth contact. Another benefit of a community-based system is that the state can sponsor a diverse array of programs, tailored to meet specific offender needs in areas of drug treatment, individual counseling, family reunification, job training, and the like. Massachusetts and Utah are often cited as the states which have developed community-based treatment systems to the greatest degree. Other states have borrowed from this approach, including Maryland, Florida, Missouri, Oregon, Colorado, Texas, Hawaii, Louisiana and Ohio. Where measured, the public safety impact of deinstitutionalized systems has equalled or excelled that of California.

There are many good models of juvenile justice programs serving serious

juvenile offenders in other states. NCCD decided to highlight Pennsylvania's Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC) because it represents an outstanding approach to a continuum of care for juvenile offenders, from arrival at the program to re-entry into home, family, school and job. The ARC approach, with its emphasis on home-like environment and its strong aftercare component, offers a bold contrast to the way these tough, delinquent youth would be handled in California.

Pennsylvania's Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC)

In 1975, a 16 year old boy was raped by inmates of the Camp Hill correctional institution for youth before hanging himself in his cell. The ensuing publicity led to the closure of the Camp Hill facility and to a need to relocate 400 of Pennsylvania's toughest juvenile offenders. The relocation effort involved the development of a network of non-profit, community-based programs for these delinquent youth.

One of the programs that opened to receive these Camp Hill youth was ARC, or Alternative Rehabilitation Communities. From one residential home started in 1975, ARC has grown into a network of small residential and day treatment facilities serving more than 100 youth per year. These youth include serious and violent offenders, as well as chronic property and drug offenders considered too-hard-to-handle by other programs. For some of these youth, ARC is considered a last stop before certification to adult court and state prison.

ARC deals with these difficult and troubled adolescents by combining a highly structured program with intensive personal counseling and a positive environment that is devoid of the prison hardware found in the large institutions of the California Youth Authority. At ARC's Chambersburg facility, a secure residential unit for 14 high-risk youth, there are no lock-up rooms or physical or chemical restraints. The behavior of residents is controlled by peer pressure and by a dedicated staff that operates at the enriched ratio of one staff person for every three youth. The atmosphere is a positive one in which youth themselves feel safe. Dan Elby, the founder of ARC, says "If kids feel safe and secure then treatment will happen; if they don't, then progress can't be made".

Youth entering Chambersburg must earn the trust of residents and staff through an initiation process. New arrivals wear special robes until they earn the right to wear street clothes. They also are assigned a Big Brother or Big Sister who acts as mentor and guide through the initiation phase. Positive peer pressure is used to encourage youth to meet program goals, and privileges are earned for meeting those goals.

The ARC program applies a stepping-stone approach to rehabilitation. Youth who are successful at Chambersburg move to an unlocked residential program after 9 to 12 months. ARC has three, 12 bed, non-secure residential programs for boys and one for girls. These are located in middle-class neighborhoods. The choice of

Pennsylvania's Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC)

Program description

Secure and non-secure residential treatment facilities for serious juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania. Provides a continuum of care from secure to non-secure care to tryouts at home. ARC offers home-like environments and enriched staffing with intensive counseling and close personal supervision. Aftercare services facilitate re-entry into home and community.

Clients served

ARC takes some of Pennsylvania's most serious juvenile offenders, including youth charged with violent crimes. Youth are referred by state agencies and juvenile courts. The program has residential beds for 50 boys and 12 girls in five homes. Most are between the ages of 15 and 18.

Length of stay: 15-24 months in all program phases

Special programs

Day care program serving 25 youth. Foster care placements serving 20 youth.

Annual budget: \$ 2 million

Costs of care

Secure residential, \$ 138/day

Nonsecure residential, \$ 105/day

Day treatment program, \$ 61/day

Specialized foster care, \$ 50/day

Key benefits

- ARC takes the most serious and violent juvenile offenders
- Continuum of service from secure care to return home
- Small residential programs, rich staff to youth ratios (1:3)
- Strong aftercare component
- High success rate (low recidivism) with serious offenders

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middle class neighborhoods is deliberate, to avoid the negative peer influence and street activity that would be expected in low-income areas. Rich staff ratios, a positive reward system, and immediate sanctions for misbehavior keep unauthorized departures from these community facilities to a minimum. Special care is taken to maintain good relations with the neighbors; flowers are planted, lawns are mowed and noise is kept under control.

One month after a youth enters the non-secure residential phase of the ARC program, ARC counselors begin to work directly with the youth's family to prepare for the eventual return to the home community. Preparatory work with the family is followed by supervised home visits. Near the end of the residential term, youth are allowed to spend weekends at home, and the home time increases as time goes on. Near the end, the pattern is reversed so that weekends are spent in the ARC facility and weekdays are at home.

ARC residential facilities provide an individualized education program for each youth. Each resident receives the special tutoring needed to address special educational problems. When the youth leaves the program, ARC counselors facilitate re-entry into the public school system, negotiating with the school about the appropriate grade level for the youth and even accompanying the youth on the first day of class. For those who cannot make it in the public school system, ARC will help the youth prepare for the high school graduate exam (GED); 90 percent of ARC clients taking the test pass.

ARC has a strong aftercare and monitoring component. Outreach workers make home visits to discuss each youth's progress with school, jobs, family and other concerns. After four months at home without any new criminal activity, youth are entitled to take part in a graduation ceremony and to receive a diploma.

ARC youth tracked for two years after graduation recidivated in 32 percent of the cases. This compares favorably with the two-year follow up performance of wards released from the California Youth Authority, who are returned to CYA institutions in approximately 60 percent of cases.

Costs for the enriched programming at ARC are moderate to expensive. Secure care at Chambersburg runs about \$ 140 per day, and the non-secure residential programs cost about \$ 120 per day. Other ARC programs (day treatment, foster care, outreach) are much less costly. The cost benefits lie not in the economy of the residential program, but in the successful outcomes. Youth who stay trouble free after graduation avoid the cost of re-institutionalization. Moreover, the total cost of a case in the ARC program is often less than the cost of a California Youth Authority term at the highest offense levels because the length of stay is shorter. The state of Pennsylvania reimburses community-based care providers for up to 90 percent of their cost.

Chapter Four

CAN WE AFFORD TO INVEST IN NEW JUVENILE JUSTICE MODELS?

Many California counties are struggling to maintain dollars for existing youth facilities and programs. How, then, can they be expected to invest in the juvenile justice models described in this booklet?

The first answer to this question is that these models are, for the most part, more economical to operate than the institutions and placements they would supplement. This is not true for some of the secure, residential programs for serious juvenile offenders. However, for the 90 percent of the juvenile justice referrals that are not cases of felony violence, the models and alternatives described in this booklet offer significant opportunities to reduce system operating costs. Some concrete examples are:

- A minor is released to a home supervision program, instead of securely detained in a juvenile hall for 30 days pending disposition of the case.
- A minor is ordered into an AMI-type day care program in lieu of commitment to the county ranch or camp.
- A youth is enrolled in a Homebuilders' short-term, intensive in-home family preservation program, rather than placed in a group home for two years.
- A ward is committed by the juvenile court judge to a six-month special track in the Youth Authority, and is released to an aftercare program in his home community, instead of being confined in the state institution for 22 months.

In summary, for the models described, the problem is not that they lack the potential to reduce the overall cost of operating the juvenile justice system. Rather, the problem is the inertia or reluctance of state and local juvenile justice administrators to alter dependency on current policies and procedures and to experiment with successful models from other jurisdictions.

Where eagerness for reform exists, it may fail to be linked to fiscal policies that would allow reforms to be implemented. There are key areas in which fiscal policy must change, if innovative, cost-effective and successful juvenile justice models are to be incorporated into the California landscape. These changes must occur at the state and county levels. Some suggestions for progress at both levels are offered below.

State Juvenile Justice Policy Reform

The level of California state funding for local juvenile justice programs is meager when compared to the share of local juvenile justice costs shouldered by state government in the major juvenile justice reform states. California provides only a trickle of support for local, juvenile justice operating costs, or for the support of community-based alternatives to incarceration. Many counties, beset with budget problems, can no longer afford to maintain youth programs which are adjuncts to core justice system functions such as processing cases and operating the juvenile hall.

The support of local juvenile justice systems is a state concern and responsibility for several reasons. First, if the county cannot afford to maintain its own placements for delinquent youth, these youth will wind up as state commitments, incurring a state cost. Second, some county-level programs are often less costly than the cost of institutionalization in the Youth Authority, providing a cost-avoidance opportunity for the state. Third, there is a strong case to be made that some local and community-based treatment programs for delinquent youth are more effective than state training schools; where this can be demonstrated, the state has an interest in supporting programs that may prevent reinstitutionalization at state cost.

Youth corrections policy makers need to restore and maintain a balance of caseload responsibility between the state and the counties. If the balance is not restored, so that counties can maintain viable and effective juvenile justice programs, the state will become the repository for an even larger caseload of moderate and lightweight youth. Combined with a projected increase in the state youth population, this creates the disturbing prospect of having to pay for the construction of new institutions to expand the Youth Authority's already mammoth capacity.

Suggested points of reform related to the funding of the juvenile justice system are:

- **Add new sentencing options** such as a short track at CYA for qualified wards; apply savings from shorter training school stays to local juvenile justice programs that reintegrate wards into home communities. Savings could be substantial, in the range of \$ 20 to \$ 40 million per year, depending on how the short track is defined. Such a proposal has already received strong legislative support (SB 549, Presley, in the 1989-90 session).
- **Change state youth sentencing policy** so that the Youthful Offender Parole Board does not have exclusive control over length of stay of CYA wards. The Board's steady escalation of sentences has increased state youth correctional populations and costs. Many of these youth could be handled with shorter stays or referrals to community-based treatment programs.

- **Encourage county demonstration programs** to test juvenile justice models that offer safe, effective and economical alternatives to present dispositions ordered by the juvenile courts.
- **Restore County Justice System Subvention funds.** These "AB 90" funds support local juvenile camps, ranches and alternative-to-incarceration programs, keeping juvenile offenders in local care and reducing the number of state commitments. The \$ 67 million appropriation for 1990 was cut in half by the Governor. Sacrificing the state's modest contribution to local juvenile justice operations is a counter-productive fiscal policy likely to increase state correctional cost over the long term.
- **Reexamine the cost-reimbursement structure** for out-of-home placements of delinquent youth. Most of these placements are paid by AFDC, a combined federal (50%), state (45%) and local (5%) sandwich. Federal regulations prohibit payment of the federal share for day care. However, the state has flexibility to make its share available for non-federally eligible youth. The total cost-efficiency of state expenditures for out-of-home care should be carefully examined to ensure that the most economical and effective programs are supported.
- **Relax barriers to startup of community-based alternatives** for troubled youth. Strong barriers to program initiation are erected by state zoning and licensing laws for community care facilities. While no one wants to shortcut fire or safety requirements, it is equally important to embrace good-faith efforts to establish responsible juvenile justice alternative programs in communities that need them.

Reform at the County and Local Levels

Counties cannot sit and wait for state policy makers in the executive and legislative branches to devise a new structure for sharing the costs of the juvenile justice system. Policy makers at the local level, including Chief Probation Officers, Juvenile Court Judges, and County Supervisors, need to examine the potential benefits of taking immediate action to experiment with juvenile justice models that can reduce system operating costs and increase the number of juvenile justice options. Some suggested areas of activity are:

- **Review juvenile justice models** and their costs to see if they offer hope for controlling facility populations, streamlining operations or reducing operational expenses. A planning capability needs to be allocated to this task; focusing on reform can be difficult when personnel are consumed with the crisis-management of systems under stress.

- **Support efforts of private providers** to establish supplementary juvenile justice services. This support is sometimes impeded by local probation unions or public employees who fear job loss and "privatization" of services. This fear is generally unfounded because there is plenty of work to go around in a system which balances public institutional care with private-provider care. Moreover, these private providers may bring with them private financial support from foundation and corporate sponsors to ease the local budget crunch.
- **Establish a monitoring capability** in probation departments to evaluate the cost-efficiency and public safety of demonstration programs or models that may be tried. Community-based alternatives need to be tested in both these respects in order to earn credibility for on-going financial support and to reassure citizens that no compromise of public safety is involved.
- **Upgrade information systems** to assure the accessibility and accuracy of local juvenile justice information. NCCD has found that some county juvenile information systems are cumbersome and out-dated. Selective investments in upgrades of information systems are likely to yield dividends by improving case management and by expediting the flow of youth to court-ordered destinations.

In conclusion, the question of whether we can afford to invest in new juvenile justice models should probably be answered with another question—Can we afford not to?

About the authors

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