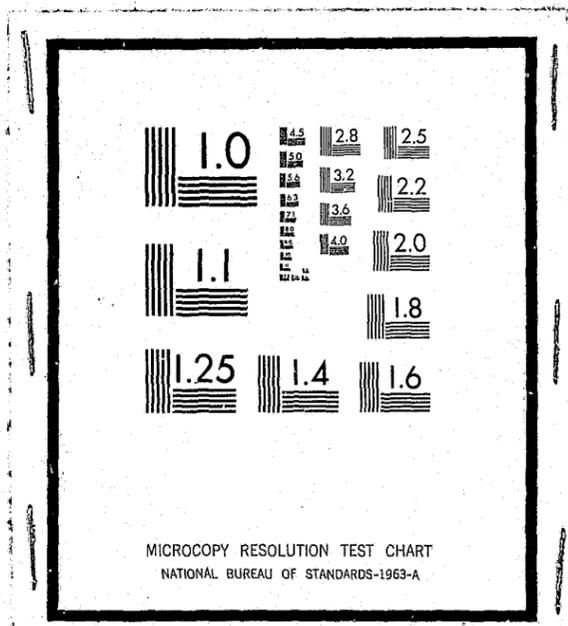


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GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION  
ON CRIME PREVENTION  
AND CONTROL



25069  
Evaluation

AN EVALUATION REPORT

SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

From 1969 through 1974, the Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control has awarded over six million dollars to the Department of Corrections and to local units of government to establish and operate forty residential community corrections projects throughout the State of Minnesota. Although the efforts of the Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control are only part of a larger effort throughout the state, the Commission has been in the forefront of the community corrections movement.

The Commission's role in community corrections is in keeping with a Commission purpose -- that of testing new approaches to the resolution of criminal justice problems. This purpose requires an objective evaluation of new programs to determine if Commission funds are achieving their hoped for results. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide information to the Commission and others in corrections on the effectiveness of residential community corrections programs and on the problems which impede their effectiveness.

This report is a preliminary evaluation and as such may raise more questions than it answers. But the report should be seen, not as a single product which will produce all answers, but as a beginning of a continuous process which will provide information needed by decision-makers and managers to set policy and to effectively manage and improve programs.

*Minnesota:*  
RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS —

A Preliminary Evaluation — *mm*

SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS

prepared by

Evaluation Unit

Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control

April, 1975

*institutional  
offenders  
rehabilitation  
and  
treatment*

This report is limited to a single aspect of community corrections -- residential community corrections. Many community corrections programs do not provide residences for their clients. For example, pre-trial diversion projects, employment and drug treatment programs, and the traditional approaches to probation and parole may be viewed as community corrections programs. Nonetheless, residential programs are more often seen as direct alternatives to institutionalization and probation or as supplements to parole. In this context, residential programs assume great importance within the community corrections approach.

Most residential community corrections projects funded through the Governor's Crime Commission have not been designed to test specific theories of rehabilitation but, instead, represent a variety of treatment approaches, often with overlapping elements. For this reason, no attempt is made in this report to test particular hypotheses about community corrections or specific program components of projects. Instead, the report is concerned with the broader issues of problems encountered and results produced by projects. Thus, this report is an assessment of some of the Commission-funded residential community corrections programs as they have operated to date.

This report provides an overview of residential community corrections and as such does not focus on individual projects. Projects have been categorized into three project types: (1) HALFWAY HOUSES, which were designed as re-entry facilities for adult offenders being released from correctional institutions. The projects included in this study are Alpha House, Anishinabe Longhouse, Anishinabe Waki-igan, Pi House, Retreat House,

and 180 Degrees. (2) P.O.R.T. PROJECTS, which were designed as alternatives to incarceration for adults (and in some cases, also juveniles). These projects include P.O.R.T. Alpha, Portland House, Bremer House and P.O.R.T. of Crow Wing. (3) JUVENILE RESIDENCES, which were designed to serve juveniles at all stages of involvement with the criminal justice system. Included in this study are Zion Northside, Turnabout, the Mansion, Northwest Regional Juvenile Training Center, Project MORAD, Winona County Group Home, Freeport West and Renville-Redwood Counties Group Home.

FINDINGS

A. REASONS FOR TERMINATION FROM PROJECTS

1. Residents of residential corrections projects were classified according to whether they successfully or unsuccessfully completed their programs. A client was successful if he completed his contract or the phase progression program for the residential period. Unsuccessful clients terminated residence without completing their contracts or programs. By project type, only 28.3% of the halfway house clients, 38.5% of the P.O.R.T. clients and 44.1% of the juvenile residence clients successfully completed their programs.
2. In each project type, approximately 50% of the residents fail to complete the programs because they abscond, fail to cooperate with the program or engage in criminal activity. Primary reasons for failure to complete the programs are absconding and lack of cooperation. Relatively few are terminated from the projects because of criminal behavior.
3. The fact that so few clients successfully complete the programs suggests that residential community corrections programs, for a variety of reasons, are an inappropriate form of rehabilitation for a large percentage of persons for whom these programs are now being used. This suggests that either the programs should change to better accommodate the needs of clients or that more selective criteria are needed to limit the programs to persons amenable to this treatment approach.

## B. RECIDIVISM

Indicators of recidivism used in this study include arrests, felony and misdemeanor convictions, and revocation of parole/probation. After-the-fact comparison groups were drawn for P.O.R.T. and halfway house clients. These two comparison groups were selected from adult parolees released from Stillwater, St. Cloud and Shakopee during 1972-1973. The selection criteria for these comparison groups were the formal, objective criteria for entrance into halfway and P.O.R.T. projects. Because there are differences in the characteristics of these groups, differences in the rate of recidivism may be attributed to factors other than participation in the program. Because juvenile residences had few consistent and formal entrance criteria, the selection of a comparison group was made impossible. Consequently, recidivism information for juveniles focuses only on project clientele.

### 1. Halfway Houses:

- a. Only 8.9% of the halfway house clients were convicted of new offenses while residing in the projects.
- b. From the date of intake to the project through twelve months after termination from the project, 42% of the halfway house residents had been arrested, one-fourth convicted and 13% had dispositions pending for new offenses.
- c. There were only slight differences in the recidivism rates of clients who successfully or unsuccessfully complete halfway house programs. These data suggest that whether a client successfully or unsuccessfully completes a halfway house program has little impact on recidivism after termination from the project.
- d. There were no significant differences between the recidivism rates of halfway house clients and the comparison group in terms of arrest, felony convictions or total convictions and revocation of parole. These results suggest that whether parolees participate in a halfway house program has no relationship to recidivism after termination from the projects.

### 2. P.O.R.T. Projects:

- a. Only 4% of the P.O.R.T. clients were convicted of new offenses while residing in the projects.
- b. From date of intake to the project through six months after termination from the project, one-third of the P.O.R.T. residents had been arrested and one-fourth convicted of new offenses.
- c. There were no significant differences in the recidivism rates of P.O.R.T. clients and the comparison group in terms of arrests, felony convictions or total convictions and revocation of parole. These results suggest that whether an individual participates in a P.O.R.T. project is not relevant to recidivism.

### 3. Juvenile Residences:

- a. Only 7.3% of the clients of juvenile residences were convicted of new offenses while residing in the projects.
- b. From the date of intake to the project through twelve months after termination from the project, over one-half of the residents of juvenile projects had been arrested and one-third had their petitions sustained in court.
- c. Juvenile residents who fail to successfully complete juvenile programs were more likely to be arrested after terminating from the program than were successful clients. However, there were only slight differences in the rate at which petitions of successful and unsuccessful clients were sustained in the first six-month follow-up period. These data suggest that successful completion of these programs has little impact on recidivism after termination from the project.

## C. OCCUPANCY RATES

1. Residential community corrections facilities are underutilized by the criminal justice system. Despite the recent emphasis on community corrections, a number of projects were underutilized during the period of study. P.O.R.T. projects had higher occupancy rates than either halfway houses or juvenile residences. After an initial start-up period, P.O.R.T. projects' occupancy rates varied from 71.7% to 86.4%, with an average of 77.4%. The average post start-up rate for juvenile residences was 69.5%, with a range from 56.7% to 97.5%. Halfway houses had the lowest post start-up occupancy rates with a range from 37.9% to 58.6% and an average rate of 48.3%.

The low occupancy rates can be attributed to three major factors. First, by their very nature, community corrections projects are not closely affiliated with the criminal justice system and must independently recruit clientele. Second, some projects do not serve a large enough population to keep the project filled. Third, the occupancy rate of halfway houses is dependent, almost entirely, upon the policies of the Minnesota Corrections Authority.

#### D. CLIENT COSTS

1. All halfway houses and P.O.R.T. projects operated at a cost greater than the Prison at Stillwater. One halfway house and all four P.O.R.T. projects operated at costs less than the Reformatory at St. Cloud. The costs of halfway houses varied from \$24.61 to \$59.81/client/day. For P.O.R.T. projects, the cost varied from \$20.76 to \$25.10/client/day. As a comparison, the costs/inmate/day were \$19.11 at the Prison, \$26.10 at the Reformatory and \$37.47 at Shakopee. Institutional costs are based on figures from November, 1973 -- October, 1974.
2. Most juvenile residences studied had operating costs less than the costs of care in a state juvenile institution. Costs of juvenile residences varied from \$17.69 to \$51.62/client/day. The costs of juvenile institutions varied from \$45.25 at Lino Lakes to \$33.02 at Red Wing. With two exceptions, the costs/client/day of juvenile residences were less than the cost/inmate/day of all three state juvenile correctional institutions. Of the two exceptions, Turnabout has closed and Zion Northside Group Home operated at a cost less than that of Lino Lakes, the juvenile institution most likely to accept Zion Northside clients.
3. Increased occupancy rates would decrease costs. If halfway houses and P.O.R.T. projects were to operate at 90% capacity, two halfway houses and two P.O.R.T. projects would cost less than the Prison; all would cost less than the Reformatory; and the women's halfway house would cost less than Shakopee. Although juvenile projects currently operate at a cost less than the state institutions, increased occupancy rates would also reduce their costs.
4. There are indications that the cost/inmate/day at state correctional institutions is increasing. However, these costs, like those of residential projects, fluctuate a good deal. Thus, cost comparisons must be based, not on monetary fluctuations, but on long-term patterns.

## E. PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. One of the goals of residential projects is to increase education, employment or vocational training of clients. Progress toward this goal was measured by comparing clients' activities in these areas at intake and at termination. In all project types there was, between intake and termination, some increase in clients' activities in these areas. However, the increases in halfway houses and juvenile residences were minimal -- less than 10% -- whereas the increase in P.O.R.T. projects was over 40%.
2. Most of the increase in activity status in each project type was due to an increase in employment. The data show an increase in employment in all project types whereas attendance in academic and vocational programs was unchanged or decreased, with the exception of P.O.R.T. projects, which had a slight increase in attendance in academic programs. The data suggest that most clients are more concerned with the immediate economic benefits of employment than with the future benefits of increased education and training.
3. The increase in employment of successful clients was more than twice the increase of unsuccessful clients for all project types. Differences between successful and unsuccessful clients in the other two activities were slight with one exception -- successful P.O.R.T. clients had a greater increase in academic school attendance than unsuccessful P.O.R.T. clients.
4. Among all project types, there were only small decreases in the proportion of clients relying on governmental assistance and only a slight increase in the proportion of self-supporting clients. Decreases in reliance on governmental assistance and increases in self-support were greater for successful clients than for unsuccessful clients in each project type.

The fact that persons successful in the program show greater improvement in various program outcomes should not be misinterpreted. Persons who succeed in the program should be expected to improve their employment as such improvement may be part of their contract for completing the program. However, so few people successfully complete the programs that the overall impact of these projects, with the exception of employment, is slight.

5. Most of the clients placed in halfway houses on work release were successful in the projects and were granted parole at termination from residence. These data suggest that halfway houses can serve as placements for work release clients if the work release program of Re-Entry Center in Minneapolis is not appropriate.
6. P.O.R.T. projects are intended to serve as an alternative to incarceration, and successful completion of the program is theoretically required to avoid incarceration. Thus, one would expect that sentences would be executed for unsuccessful clients. However, less than one-quarter of the unsuccessful P.O.R.T. clients are incarcerated. It would appear that some clients who are placed in P.O.R.T. projects might otherwise have been placed on probation, not incarcerated. Thus, in addition to serving as an alternative to incarceration, P.O.R.T. projects may have been used as an alternative to probation.

#### F. PROJECT EFFORTS

1. Staff:Client Ratio: The staff:client ratios of project types through August, 1974, were as follows: 1:1.3 for halfway houses, 1:2.3 for P.O.R.T. projects, and 1:1.2 for juvenile residences. The higher occupancy rates of P.O.R.T. projects are reflected in these ratios. Because a major portion of operating budgets is staff salaries, improved staff:client ratios may be reflected in lower costs. In terms of program outcomes, it is, however, too early to determine what constitutes an adequate staff:client ratio.
2. Needs and Services: The data indicate that services provided by staffs and agencies are directed toward the needs of clients and are assisting clients in meeting these needs.

However, a number of problems are also indicated:

- a. In some service areas, particularly employment counseling and placement, projects rely too heavily on staff counselors and, thereby, duplicate services already available in the community. Greater use of community agencies in these areas would free staff time for other services, and possibly, reduce project costs.

Project directors have often complained of the inadequacy of services and lack of cooperation they have received from existing employment programs. Thus, the failure to use community employment agencies is, in part, a response to the inadequacy of these services.

- b. Failure to rely on community agencies may result in discontinuity of treatment after residence. Greater use of community agencies would improve continuity of treatment for problems, such as drug dependency and alcoholism, which cannot be resolved during relatively short residential stays. Again, in some instances, projects place greater reliance on staff counseling because of the lack of adequate community programs.
- c. Many clients receive services for needs which were not identified at intake. Needs identified at intake are more likely to be reduced than needs identified after intake.
- d. Data indirectly suggest an overreliance on group counseling. Projects using group counseling require residents to attend group sessions even though group counseling may not be perceived by staff as one of the client's most important needs. Furthermore, the data indirectly indicate the failure of group counseling to have any substantial impact on clients, as measured by outcomes discussed in this report.

3. Staff Training: Staff training appears to be conducted in a haphazard manner and, in some cases, is little more than orientation to the project.
  - a. Two aspects of residential programs give rise to a need for staff training. First, these projects employ a large number of para-professionals who lack the training and experience most of the professionals have. Second, staff turnover, including administrators, has been a problem with many halfway houses and juvenile residences and, to a lesser extent, with P.O.R.T. projects. The use of para-professionals requires staff training as the projects become operational. Staff turnover requires training of new members during operational stages. However, projects often do not have money budgeted to replace staff in training.
  - b. Staff turnover is often due to staff members accepting economically better positions. Corrections in Minnesota is losing a number of experienced para-professionals because there is little room for their promotion within corrections.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control should establish a moratorium on the funding of new residential community corrections programs. The sole exception to this moratorium should be those projects which test, under strict experimental controls, specific programmatic models. The Commission should determine if this moratorium is to take place with the awarding of 1975 funds or if it is to be placed in effect after the 1975 funding period.

Evidence from existing projects does not present a glowing picture of the impact and operation of residential community corrections programs. The dedication of project staff, the intensity of counseling, and the location of the programs in the community do not guarantee the success of these programs. Present data indicate that the majority of persons sent to these programs are not amenable to the rehabilitation programs offered by the projects. Further, evidence suggests that success in the program is not related to lower rates of recidivism. Finally, the data indicate that in terms of recidivism, the programs do no better, but no worse, than the traditional methods of incarceration and parole.

Most projects are underutilized by the criminal justice system. And while some projects operate at a cost less than the cost of traditional incarceration, others do not. It remains to be seen if projects can reduce their cost to a level comparable to that of the institutions. The data also suggest that the projects have only limited impact on several measures of programmatic outcome. Although persons who succeed in the program demonstrate somewhat more positive improvement than those who do not successfully complete the program, so few successfully complete the program that overall impact is limited. Finally, the projects face several operational problems which must be resolved.

The evidence presented here does not mean that residential community corrections cannot be a viable concept. It is simply too early to tell. But the data do raise disturbing questions which must be answered before continuing unabated funding of these programs. The Governor's Crime Commission should proceed with caution, funding continuation grants and working toward improvements in the operation of existing programs before funding a large number of new projects. To do otherwise runs the risk of developing a series of residential programs before there are assurances that initial program problems can be overcome and before there are assurances that the concept itself is viable. The result could be a set of residential programs whose limitations are as debilitating as those of parts of the existing correctional system.

Information from existing facilities will provide data which indicate if present trends will continue and if operational problems can be rectified. Additional analysis can assist projects in determining which type of residents, if any, are amenable to these treatment programs and the program components related to post-residence success. This information will allow projects to be more selective in the entrance criteria and to alter their programs to better fit clients' needs. This additional information will permit the Governor's Crime Commission to make a responsible and deliberate decision with regard to the resumption of funding. If the data justify a resumption of funding, the Commission can do so with the knowledge that problems have been overcome and that residential community corrections is a viable concept.

Recommendations specifically related to resolving operational problems of existing residential projects are listed below. During the moratorium, Commission staff and sponsoring units of government should work with projects to implement the recommendations.

2. The Department of Corrections and the Minnesota Corrections Authority in conjunction with halfway houses should develop a more systematic referral mechanism for placement of parolees in halfway houses.
3. In order to increase occupancy rates and reduce costs, halfway houses should actively seek referrals of felons from district courts.
4. Projects should re-examine the role of group counseling. This re-examination should include consideration of more effective uses of staff resources to meet client needs.
5. Projects should make greater use of existing community services. To facilitate this use, projects, their sponsoring units of government and community agencies should develop service agreements in order that project clients receive services already available in the community. This cooperation will decrease unnecessary duplication and provide clients with continuity of service after termination from the project.
6. Projects should improve diagnostic procedures in order to gain more accurate pictures of clients' problems.
7. Projects, their sponsoring units of government and educational resources should explore and develop ways of improving the delivery of training programs to project staffs. Training programs for new staff members should be made available on a regular basis. New project administrators should receive training in administrative functions and responsibilities. College level courses with credit should be available to staff members.
8. Projects and their sponsoring units of government should include allowances in project budgets for replacing staff members who are attending training programs.

9. The Department of Corrections and sponsoring units of government should develop a "career ladder" for para-professionals so experienced project staff members may remain in corrections.

**END**

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