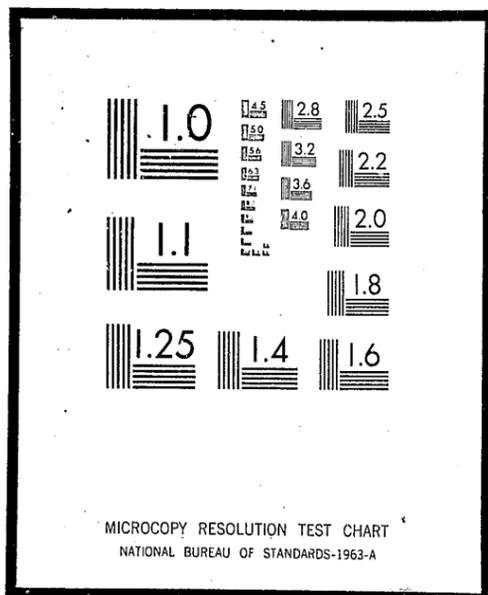


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*Project Jaguar - Final Evaluation Report*

PROJECT JAGUAR

(PH 170-72A)

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

*407 JUL 1, 1974*

Prepared by:

Peter C. Buffum  
Social Research Associates  
February 1, 1974

Project Jaguar  
Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas

Evaluation Report Summary

Background - The JAGUAR project (PH 170-72A) was funded in July, 1973. The grant proposal provided principally for the hiring of a project coordinator and six ex-offenders to be used as probation officer aides within the Philadelphia Probation Department. Two aides were to be deployed to each of three district probation offices. Each aide was to assist in dealing with a small number of high risk clients.

Evaluation - Project evaluation was under the direction of Peter C. Buffum of Social Research Associates, a Philadelphia-based firm. Evaluation methodology was built upon site visits, clinical interviews and ratings, and statistical follow-up of ninety-nine Jaguar clients and 290 control cases.

Implementation - The project was fully operational within seven weeks of funding. Aides were assigned to district offices as prescribed in the proposal although greater autonomy was given them than originally anticipated. Caseload size has ranged from twelve to twenty-five clients per Jaguar aide. Over two-thirds of their clients have been probationers or parolees requiring intensive supervision as measured by objective tests. Jaguar aides have been in contact with their contacts on an average of three times a month throughout the project.

Results - These paraprofessional aides have been moderately well accepted by other probation officers and supervisors. As a result of interviews with each of the aides, prescriptive packages were prepared to assist them in improving counselor effectiveness. Overall, counseling quality was rated high.

For cases of maximum difficulty Jaguar aides had slightly lower rates of client violations than regular (control) officers (17.5% vs. 24% after 3½ months). This difference was due to a significantly lower rate of technical violations and failures to report. It is probable that this finding reflects the results of better rapport and tighter supervision. There were no significant differences between Jaguar and control clients on rearrests for new crimes.

Recommendations - 1. A series of immediate steps were recommended to further integrate the aides into the departmental structure. Most of these dealt with field supervision and aimed at reducing dual lines of authority. Project personnel have agreed to implement these changes.

2. Over the longer run, more attention should be given to developing programs for ex-offenders in general, specifying career ladders for the paraprofessional aides is particularly recommended.

3. Because the project has met or exceeded all original objectives, project continuation is strongly recommended.

PROJECT JAGUAR  
Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas

Final Evaluation Report

PROJECT  
HISTORY

The JAGUAR project (PH 170-72A) was funded in July, 1973. The grant proposal provided principally for the hiring of a project coordinator and six ex-offenders to be used as probation officer aides within the Philadelphia Probation Department. Two aides were to be deployed to each of three district probation offices. Further, each aide was to assist in dealing with a small number of high-risk clients. Finally, the original grant proposal suggested that by the end of the project year there might be a reduction in Jaguar client recidivism. The proposal went on to say that the more likely goal would be simply to establish internal project policies, to hire staff, and to develop working relationships within and beyond the department.

Behind the original grant proposal was the conviction, backed by survey data, that probation officers wanted and needed assistance in dealing with high-risk offenders. The paraprofessional aide, it was reasoned, might help the officer in concrete ways by establishing

better rapport with the offender, and through that rapport, help to develop and implement appropriate treatment plans.

Between the time the proposal was funded and the time the project became operational, there was a major shift in emphasis. Rather than assign the paraprofessional as an aide to a given officer or group of officers, it was decided that the paraprofessional should be allowed to function as a regular officer in all but legal status and title. This decision seems realistic and in keeping with the experience of projects in other cities such as Chicago.

EVALUATION  
ACTIVITIES

The evaluation design outlined by Social Research Associates at the beginning of the project proved to be applicable throughout the project year. This design generated the following activities:

Conducted over twenty site visits in an effort to gauge the response of supervisors, probation officers, and clients to the new aides. Visits were made chiefly by the principal evaluator;

Designed and administered a clinical interview schedule to tap the effectiveness of the aides as counselors;

Monitored daily, weekly and monthly statistics on frequency and kind of client contact and undertook secondary analysis as needed;

Picked the first ninety-nine Jaguar cases for statistical follow-up on subsequent arrests and technical violations;

Selected for control purposes a comparison group of 338 non-Jaguar cases;

Ran recidivism checks on Jaguar and control cases after six weeks and again after three and one-half months on probation

Issued an interim report to project and funding authorities and provided final debriefing sessions for project personnel.

PROJECT  
PERSONNEL

Advanced planning permitted the project to start up quickly without sacrificing rigor in personnel selection practices. Within seven weeks all of the probation officer aides and the project coordinator were hired. Hiring practices were nevertheless more thorough than usual and yielded an above-average group of job candidates. One of the aides was subsequently asked to resign and a replacement was promptly found. A single arrest for petty larceny--which was later dismissed--mars an otherwise clean behavioral record for the aides during the project.

Training was provided by the Department's training unit and supplemented by the project coordinator. The major training vehicle was a two-week orientation session designed for all incoming probation officers. The aides' reactions to training were mixed. One week after training, most felt that the didactic sessions had been somewhat boring and repetitive. There was a sharp split in opinion regarding the usefulness of the field trips. Morale was generally good and the aides were delighted to have finished training.

Eight to ten weeks later each of the aides was again asked to evaluate training in its various aspects (See Appendix B for complete ratings). At this time the training

was rated strongest in its use of group work and comparatively weak in its use of role playing/family dynamics. The use of films and field trips was judged above average. Other audio-visual aides and tapes were rated adequate but not good. Interestingly, didactic sessions employing lecture methods ranked highly. There was a general consensus that the aides could profitably use more initial training and there were doubts expressed that the in-service training program could fill this need. A constructive suggestion voiced by one aide was to include a trip to the Philadelphia State Hospital, either in addition to or in place of the prison field trip.

Following initial training, two aides were assigned to each of three district probation offices. Two of these offices had only recently been established (NE-III, S-III) and were still in the process of becoming fully staffed or finding permanent locations. The third unit was an established office in West Philadelphia (W-III). Socialization of the aides into departmental and unit procedures was somewhat uneven.

There were clearly fewer visible transitional problems in the one established unit where the unit itself did not have to contend with its own growing pains as well. Maximum caseloads were quickly assigned to the two aides in this unit, although as noted below, caseload assignment procedures were somewhat out of keeping with project goals.

In the two newer units there were more problems in implementing the project. Questions immediately arose as to the aide's proper role as well as the role of the project coordinator relative to the unit supervisor. Caseloads were assigned sparingly, although appropriately. For the most part these transitional crises have passed, although some of the underlying structural problems remain.

The majority of the Jaguar unit supervisors are today strongly in favor of the program. Some sample supportive comment includes the following points:

- "The aides work well and establish better rapport than many regular officers."
- "They are able to go into the neighborhoods during off-hours and at night."
- "(W)as pleasantly surprised at the results. They are very conscientious in doing pre-sentence investigations."

Not all the comment was positive. Negative evaluation of the aides was clustered around several themes:

- "(They) lack adequate writing skills for comprehensive reports or good pre-sentence work."
- "He is too casual in meeting appointments and is not always punctual."
- "Both are off in the field without supervision too often."

AIDES' RELATIONSHIPS TO STAFF

Regular probation officers in the Jaguar units were not formally and systematically queried about their relationships with the Jaguar aides. Informal and scattered response, however, tended to back up what the Jaguar aides

INITIAL ASSIGNMENTS

reported to us; there remain pockets of substantial jealousy and resentment concerning the aides among the probation officer staff. It appears that these feelings are based on three aspects of the aide's job vis-a-vis the probation officer's position:

Less educational background is required;

Greater freedom in day to day activities and style is permitted;

Smaller caseloads are assigned.

Several aides have countered that they are performing regular probation officer roles and should rightfully receive equal pay for equal work. Thus the issue is joined. It is not likely that this tension will resolve itself quickly. As long as probation officer aides perform roles closely akin to regular officer roles, there will exist role conflict. Social Research Associates feels that the difference in working conditions between the two jobs is defensible and further, that the pay spread at entry level is equitable. The unit supervisor, however, is the real key to resolving this problem over the long run, for it is the supervisor who must moderate this tension on a day-to-day basis. If the supervisors fail to agree that there is an equitable division of tasks, the project will eventually fail.

A second major issue raised by both probation officers and supervisors was the aide's relationship to the

project coordinator on the one hand and the unit supervisor on the other. From the beginning of the project the aides have reported to both their unit supervisor and to the project coordinator. This dual line of authority was singled out by the evaluating team at the outset as the principal structural defect in the proposed project. This hunch has been borne out and we have included recommendations to reduce this continuing source of strain.

#### CASELOADS

It was originally intended that each aide would be assigned a small caseload of high-risk clients. In one of the units (W-III) there was some departure from this plan and the aides received a caseload containing a far more representative and less risky sample of clients. In the other two units, however, there was strict adherence to the project proposal with the result that the aides' caseloads contained cases of exceptional difficulty and risk of recidivism. As of mid-January, there were slightly over 100 clients assigned to the aides, with more than two-thirds falling into the maximum risk-maximum supervision category. (See Table 1, Appendix B, for a partial breakdown.) Caseload size has ranged from about twelve to twenty-five, with the lower figure usually representing cases assigned to the most recently hired aide.

#### AIDES' ACTIVITY

It was intended that the aides should provide intensive supervision for their high-risk caseloads. In other jurisdictions however, caseload reduction programs have not always entailed greater frequency of supervision.

Consequently, detailed measures of client contact were maintained by the aides. In a limited number of cases efforts were made to test the reliability of such measures. We found some probable instances of both under-reporting and over-reporting of client contacts. The net effect of these biases did not seem to alter the aggregate figures to any large degree. Aggregate figures (detailed in Appendix A, Table 2) showed that the aides maintained over three contacts per month per client and that this figure appears to have been stable from month to month. Two of the contacts are likely to be in person, the remaining contact by phone. Further efforts to examine ratios of office to field contacts, and of personal contacts to telephone contacts were not productive, owing to the influence of external factors (units moving into new locations, delays in obtaining phones, etc.) Overall contact rates were judged to have met the goals set forth in the proposal and to have exceeded the rates at which regular probation officers see even their intensive-supervision clients.

Frequency of contact does not imply quality of intervention. To get at the quality of the aides' activities, a counseling psychologist was retained to conduct clinical interviews. Aides were rated on sixteen dimensions (for the complete list and ratings, see Appendix B, Table I.). Results were summarized both as prescriptive packages

QUALITY OF INTERVENTION

available to the aides on request and also as an overall single grade for each aide, representing a cumulation of the ratings on various aspects of performance. Quality of intervention was deemed to be high. Individual grades ranged from 83% to 95%. In the areas of respect for clients, concreteness and spontaneity, the aides were rated particularly high. The only isolated areas in which further improvement might be called for were in flexibility and feelings of security. We felt that these two areas were probably linked, with occasional insecurity leading to occasional rigidity of response. We surmised that this problem would work itself out as the aides grew in self-confidence.

We did not undertake any content analysis of interaction between Jaguar aides and clients. Nevertheless it was sensed that the aides attended very well to concrete survival needs and that their ultimate effectiveness might well be a function of their ability to secure trust and cooperation in working out some very basic problems in the areas of housing and employment. In general, the aides did not make much use of the Department's own resources in this area and were disappointed in the results when they did use them. Several of the aides turned out to be very good job developers and served as key resources for other aides and probation officers.

EFFECTS ON  
RECIDIVISM

Although quality of intervention may have been rated high, the proof of the pudding lies in behavioral outcomes. At the time of the Interim Report our sample had been on the streets, and therefore exposed to arrest, for an average of six weeks. There was a slight difference at that time in the re-arrest rates for Jaguar (5.1%) and control clients (3.8%). This difference could be attributed entirely to the fact that Jaguar aides had substantially more serious and risky cases. When controls were introduced for differences in caseload difficulty, the difference in re-arrest rates disappeared. There remained no significant differences in the arrest behavior of the two groups.

In mid-January we again examined the re-arrest records of the sample which had by then been on the streets for an average of three and one-half months. This time we also analyzed the extent to which probationers were failing to report to their assigned officers or had already become subject to violation hearings for failure to report. From our original sample we excluded twenty-one cases on which we had insufficient records and an additional twenty-two cases in which sample members had been institutionalized for the duration of the project. Ninety-seven Jaguar cases and 249 non-Jaguar cases remained. Probation Department master files were searched for recent arrest histories in each case. When the master file was unavailable, we

relied on probation officer and supervisor reports. As a check for reliability we also requested and received from the Philadelphia Police Department the "Extract of Criminal Record" for a 10% sub-sample of our cases. The police records revealed no discrepancies in our arrest tally, indicating high reliability in our figures (for a technical note on record availability, see Appendix C). By mid-January, 11% of the entire sample had either been arrested for a new crime, had received a violation hearing for failure to report, or was currently viewed as delinquent (see Appendix A, Tables 3-5). Total violation rates were again somewhat higher for Jaguar caseloads (14.5%) than for control cases (9.6%) due to the difficulty in cases.

When control was introduced for "degree of supervision required," an interesting finding emerged. For cases requiring minimal and moderate supervision there was no significant difference between the Jaguar and control groups. For cases requiring intensive supervision, however, there was a slight but significant difference between the groups as 17.5% of the Jaguar cases were violators versus 24% of the control cases.

This was the first evidence we had that Jaguar aides might actually induce better behavioral results than their control counterparts. From a cost-effectiveness point of view, it may be necessary for the project to demonstrate

this advantage. Jaguar aides carry very small caseloads, and if a regular probation officer with a much larger caseload can do just as well with his or her intensive cases despite this handicap, then the Jaguar program is a highly inefficient way of managing serious probation and parole cases.

In order to analyze the findings further, we broke the total violation rate down into two components:

a) arrests for new crimes, and b) technical violations and delinquencies.

As seen in Table 4 (appended) there were no significant differences between the two groups in the rates of new arrests. Among non-Jaguar cases there was a 5.2% arrest rate compared with an 11.3% arrest rate for Jaguar cases. For cases of equal difficulty, however, all group differences vanished. Jaguar aides were as able, but no more able, than their professional counterparts when it came to reducing recidivism.

The situation was somewhat different for technical violations and failures to report (see Appendix A, Table 5). Here, the Jaguar aides displayed a marked advantage in dealing with intensive supervision cases (3.2% delinquencies versus 12.0%). This finding accounts for the earlier finding of differences in total violations. Whether this present finding is real or spurious cannot be conclusively answered at this time. If the difference is real, it is

likely to be because the Jaguar aide, through greater rapport and frequency of contact, is better able to retain clients than his more professional counterpart. It remains possible, however, that the Jaguar aides are simply under-reporting client delinquencies relative to the regular probation officers. After review of case histories, we concluded that this is unlikely and that the differences are probably real. Further follow-up on this point is recommended.

SUMMARY AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

The project may fairly be viewed as meeting or exceeding all of its original objectives. For this reason project continuation is strongly recommended.

The project is also a success when viewed in the context of other comparable projects nationally. The best known of these is undoubtedly the Probation Officer Case Aide Project (PO-CA) under federal jurisdiction in Chicago. Results from the Jaguar project compare quite favorably with that larger and more heavily financed demonstration program.

Recommendations (For Immediate Implementation)

1. Statistical reports currently filed by the Jaguar aides to the program coordinator should no longer be required.
2. Weekly supervisory conferences between the Jaguar aides and the program coordinator should be gradually phased out.

3. Unit supervisors should hold weekly conferences with Jaguar aides beginning immediately.
4. Jaguar aides should under no circumstances be required to undertake more pre-sentence investigations than other field officers.

Discussion--The involvement of the program coordinator in the initial stages of the project has been of unparalleled importance. His role as a protector, trainer, facilitator, and quasi-supervisor has been appropriate to the integration of paraprofessional aides. At this point, however, a planned re-orientation of his role should take place. Further integration of aides will require the strong support of unit supervisors who must not feel encumbered by dual lines of authority. As the supervisory influence of the coordinator is phased out, unit supervisors will have to pick up the slack and will have the undivided responsibility for supervision. It is our understanding that weekly supervisory conferences are the standard, if not the norm yet, in the units under consideration.

The fourth recommendation speaks to the pervasive pressure to assign pre-sentence investigations to persons with small caseloads. The aides were selected principally for their empathic and other counseling skills. Occasional investigations adds a dimension to their acquired skills, but more frequent work in this area will not facilitate reaching the project's objectives.

Recommendations (Intermediate Implementation)

5. The position of project coordinator should be retained and used increasingly for program and policy development particularly with respect to roles for ex-offenders.
6. Consideration should be given to using experienced Jaguar aides on a voluntary or rotating part-time basis in training capacities with the In-Service Training Unit.
7. Provisions should be made for an adequate paraprofessional career ladder. Over the short-term, opportunities for advanced education for the aides should be explored by the department.

Discussion--As the project coordinator's position is stripped of supervisory significance, the job should be allowed to embrace a broader spectrum of program development activities. In the event that there is personnel turnover among the aides, however, it may again be appropriate for the coordinator to return temporarily to his former role.

The use of aides as trainers was originally suggested by one of the aides. We endorse the idea as adding another dimension to training and another chance for added experience and skill acquisition for the aides. A related point is the necessity to structure appropriate career ladders for paraprofessionals. A model developed in the Federal Probation Service is included here for reference as Appendix D. With minor modifications, it could serve as an appropriate blueprint for the Philadelphia Probation Department.

## Appendix A

Table 1

## Caseloads by Level of Supervision Required

	Intensive	Moderate	Minimum	Non-Reporting	Other*
Jaguar Units N=99	65	24	8	2	--
Control Units N=290	36	119	49	28	58

\* Not ascertainable or incarcerated

Table 2

## Jaguar Contacts by Type and Month

	September	October	November	December
Office	11	49	81	71
Field	19	44	45	110
Telephone	33	97	112	135
Average Monthly Contacts/Client*	2.9	3.4	3.2	3.2

\* Based on an average caseload of 29 in September, 56 in October, 75.5 in November and 100 in December

Table 3

Total Violation Rate  
by Level of Risk and Jaguar Involvement

	Intensive	Moderate	Minimum
Jaguar N=97	17.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Non-Jaguar N=249	24.0%	9.1%	2.8%
Significance of Group Difference	p=.10	N.S.	N.S.

Table 4

Arrest Rates by Level of Risk  
and Jaguar Involvement\*

	Intensive	Moderate	Minimum
Jaguar N=97	14.3%	8.3%	0.0%
Non-Jaguar N=249	12.0%	5.5%	2.8%
Significance of Group Differences	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.

\*Arrest rates calculated as of January 15, 1974, or approximately 3½ months after placement on probation. Non-reporting cases are included in this and subsequent tables with the minimum supervision cases due to small cell size.

Table 5

Delinquent Case Rate by  
Level of Risk and Jaguar Involvement

	Intensive	Moderate	Minimum
Jaguar N=97	3.2%	4.2%	0.0%
Non-Jaguar N=249	12.0%	3.6%	0.0%
Significance of group differences	p .05	N.S.	N.S.

Appendix B

Chart 1

Aides' Ratings of Training Techniques

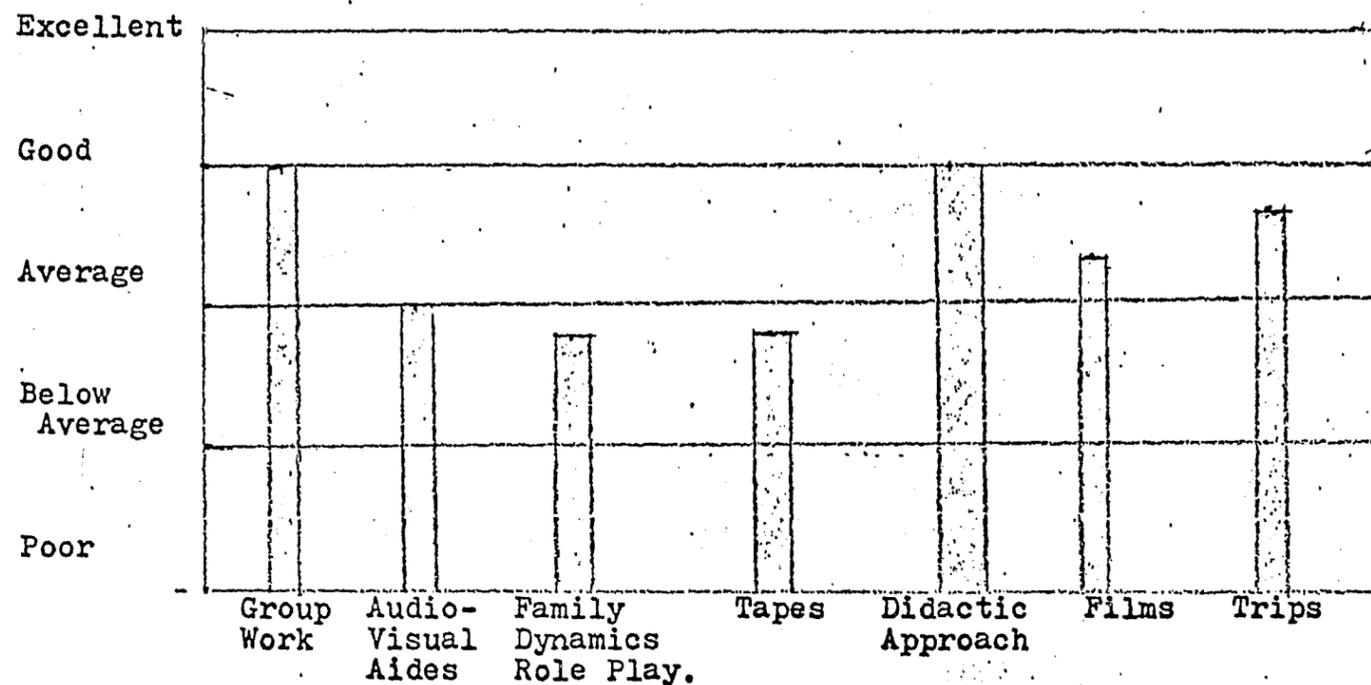


Table 1

Percentage Ratings of Jaguar Aides on Selected Counseling Components

	$\bar{x}$ score
Perceptivity	84%
Security	84%
Ability to Convey Messages	88%
Concreteness	92%
Respect for Clients	100%
Spontaneity	96%
Self-Awareness	92%
Flexibility	80%
Rapport	92%
Informative	84%
Reflection of Content	92%
Reflection of Feeling	88%
Reinforcement	82%
Understanding	96%
Diagnostic ability	92%
Listening	88%

Appendix C

Technical Notes of Record Availability

For future research and evaluation it may be helpful to record data on the availability of master files at the Department's main office on any given day. After two samplings we found anywhere from 46% to 84% of any given field unit's records were available. Median availability of unit records was 81%.

Figure 1  
Percent of Records Available by Unit,  
and by Selected Time Periods

Unit	T <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>2</sub>
NE-3	85%	79%
NW-3	71%	84%
C-2	81%	82%
S-2	66%	81%
S-3	46%	74%
W-3	83%	84%
	$\bar{x}_1=73\%$	$\bar{x}_2=80\%$

We found two cases of records with no arrest recorded when in fact we knew there to have been one. Both cases were unearthed by asking probation officers and supervisors to remember any possible arrests in given cases. The opposite kind of error also occurred. There were two arrests which took place and were recorded in the records but which were not reported to us verbally when we asked for them. The fact that the police check indicated no discrepancies in our tally was reassuring, however, and suggests estimates can be made which will underestimate true incidence by no more than a few percentage points.

It should be pointed out, however, that a sample which uses just those records available at the Main Office is likely to underestimate new arrest and technical violation rates. Our finding was that a record out of the office was nearly twice as likely to contain such a violation as one stored in the main files.

WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

POSITION TITLE AND MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

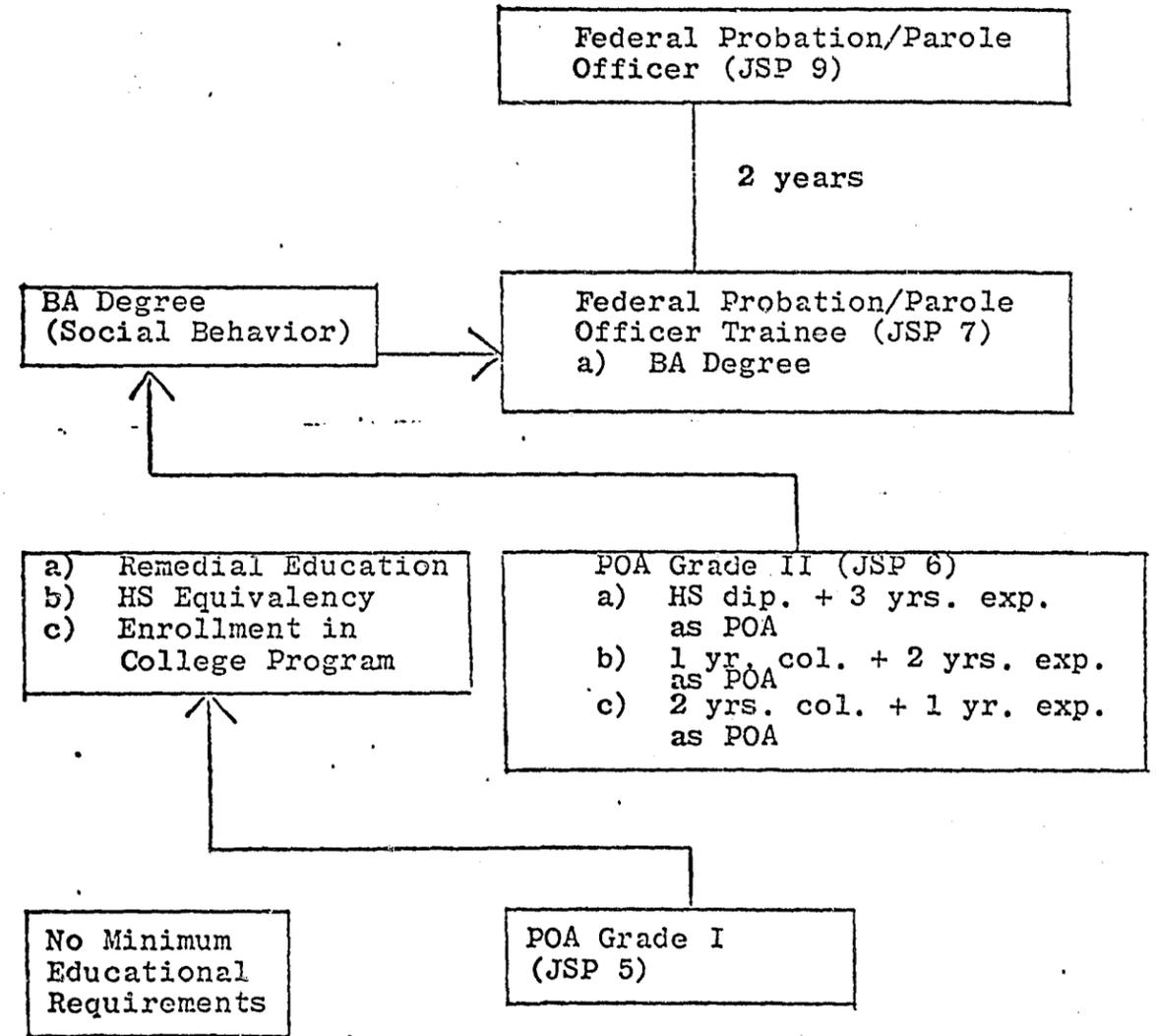


Fig. 1. Proposed Career Ladder for POA's ( Probation officer aides )

Source: Probation Officer Case Aide Project, Final Report, Phase II, p. 6

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PROJECT JAGUAR

(PH 170-72A)

UPDATE

July 31, 1974

Prepared by

Peter C. Buffum  
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July 31, 1974

PROJECT JAGUAR

UPDATE  
July 31, 1974

Six months after the submission of the final evaluation report, Social Research Associates finds the Jaguar Project (PH 170-72A) still operating satisfactorily.

The Final Report was filed on February 1, 1974. Since that time, there have been only a few changes worthy of special attention. Four such developments are noted.

I. Most of the recommendations contained in the Final Report have been carried out or are in the process of being carried out. Exceptions include a relative lack of movement toward developing career ladders for paraprofessionals. A scheduled meeting between the evaluators, the Probation Department, and the Corrections Task Force planning aide to discuss these recommendations was postponed and subsequently never rescheduled.

II. The project is no longer up for refunding by itself; it has been joined with two other pre-existing programs in a combined refunding application. Judging by the evaluation reports filed on these latter projects, it appears that the Jaguar component is the strongest of the three with respect to demonstrated effectiveness.

III. In line with across-the-board cuts in most of its Federal (LEAA) programs, the Probation Department has announced its intention to cut the size of the Jaguar Project by two positions. Since this policy was announced, there has been some premature attrition as two of the aides have left the employ of the project. Thus, the present staff consists of one supervisor and four paraprofessional aides, all of whom are expected to be retained should the project be re-funded.

IV. In the Final Report, it was suggested that there still existed factors which would impede integration of the aides into the mainstream of the Probation Department. It was also hypothesized that unresolved tensions might become more prominent rather than less so over the intermediate term. There has been some corroboration for this view over the last six months, although none of the friction appears to have severely affected project effectiveness.

After consideration of these developments by the evaluation team, it was decided that there should be no change in our previous recommendation in favor of continued funding.

**END**