



# **REPORT TO THE CONGRESS**

## **Federal Guidance Needed If Halfway Houses Are To Be A Viable Alternative To Prison**

**Law Enforcement Assistance Administration  
Department of Justice**

**BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**GGD-75-70**

**MAY 28, 1975**

*Handwritten:* 1181



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-171019

To the President of the Senate and the  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report discusses the need for guidance by the Law  
Enforcement Assistance Administration, Department of Justice,  
if halfway houses are to be a viable alternative to prison.

We made our review pursuant to the Budget and Accounting  
Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act  
of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Of-  
fice of Management and Budget; the Attorney General; and the  
Administrator, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

*James A. Atchefs*  
Comptroller General  
of the United States

NCJRS

MAY 18 1978

ACQUISITIONS

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ABBREVIATIONS

GAO	General Accounting Office
LEAA	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
SPA	State planning agency

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S  
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

Between September 1973 and June 1974 GAO reviewed 15 State and locally operated halfway houses in Florida, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Halfway houses are community-based correction activities for adult offenders.

GAO wanted to know

--whether the States had developed coordinated, effective strategies for integrating halfway houses into their overall correction efforts and

--how successful the houses had been in rehabilitating offenders.

GAO also wanted to determine whether the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration had adequately helped these States plan and establish coordinated, effective halfway house programs. The States had awarded about \$1.1 million in fiscal year 1973 Federal funds for these programs.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Halfway houses have increased substantially in numbers and could become a viable alternative for dealing with many criminal offenders, or they could die out for lack of funds and public support.

FEDERAL GUIDANCE NEEDED IF  
HALFWAY HOUSES ARE TO BE  
A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO PRISON  
Law Enforcement Assistance  
Administration  
Department of Justice

If they continue to increase in number and improve their operations, they could reduce the need to place many persons in sometimes outdated and crowded prisons. However, the houses are not a replacement for all prisons since there will always be individuals who are not willing to accept the constraints of halfway house living or who present too great a risk to the public safety if placed in a halfway house.

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration has assisted halfway houses financially but has provided little guidance in planning or operating them.

Two studies have stressed that efforts such as halfway houses should be part of well-planned State correctional systems. But the agency has not required those States that are planning or have already financed halfway houses with the Federal funds to describe in their comprehensive plans how the houses fit into their correctional systems.

This results from the way the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration managed its block grant program. It permitted each State to develop its approach to improve the criminal justice system within the framework of broad Federal guidelines.

Inadequate organization (see ch. 3)

In 1973 the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommended that the Nation place greater emphasis on community-based correction programs and facilities as alternatives to incarceration. The Commission's report has prompted States to study their criminal justice systems.

The States, however, did not have well-organized systems for coordinating State operated and locally operated halfway houses, partly because no one State agency was responsible for establishing and coordinating such a system.

The lack of such coordination meant that no State agencies had information concerning the operations of all halfway houses in their States. Therefore, the States could not plan properly to insure that halfway houses were

- located in areas with sufficient offender populations,
- located where adequate resources and services would be available for rehabilitation, and
- established to serve segments of the offender population different from those already possibly being served by existing houses in the same location.

The States did not have adequate knowledge about the way public and private resources were allocated to operate and develop halfway houses. Such information is desirable to provide public assurance that the States have well-planned and supervised community-based correction systems.

Generally States

- had not developed a system to coordinate halfway houses to operate with other parts of their correction programs (prisons, probation, parole) and
- had not developed adequate plans for determining the extent to which they should use halfway houses.

Missouri and Texas had only locally operated houses that were not part of the States' correction systems. The States gave these houses Federal funds, not according to any plan to coordinate them with statewide correction efforts, but in response to requests for aid from local groups which had proposed the facilities on their own initiative.

Florida and Pennsylvania had a combination of State and locally operated houses but did not effectively coordinate the two operations.

Neither the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration nor the States' criminal justice planning agencies, which are responsible for determining how to spend the agency's block grants, effectively encouraged the States to develop coordinated halfway house systems.

Neither the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration nor the planning agencies adopted operating standards to be used by the houses when no statewide standards exist.

Results achieved (see ch. 4)

The houses were achieving some success in assisting offenders. About 3,000 offenders had participated in

the 15 houses' rehabilitation programs; some 2,600 had left the programs.

- About 65 percent of the participants successfully completed the program. GAO estimated that, as of June 1974, about 25 percent of these persons were returned to prison.
- Of those that failed to complete the programs successfully, about 27 percent absconded from the houses and about 46 percent were returned to prison. The other 27 percent were discharged or their status could not be determined.
- About 2 percent of the participating offenders were arrested and incarcerated for committing crimes, ranging from murder to disorderly conduct, while at the houses.
- Overall, GAO estimated that about half of all offenders treated by the 15 houses had been rehabilitated; that is, they had, according to the houses, successfully completed their programs and had not become recidivists during the period covered by the review.

The States did not have adequate data reflecting the extent to which other correction methods--prisons, probation, or parole--were able to rehabilitate offenders. Thus direct comparisons with the results of the halfway houses were not possible.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons, Department of Justice, however, studied offenders released from Federal prisons in 1970 and determined that their recidivism rate was about 33 percent. This at least provides a general indication that results from halfway houses were not any worse

than for some other forms of rehabilitation.

Differences of operations (see chs. 5 and 6)

Although all houses had the same basic objective--to help offenders become productive and law-abiding citizens--they differed in their methods and physical adequacy. Halfway houses should offer different methods to different types of offenders. But some minimum criteria are desirable to coordinate the houses' operation, to achieve acceptable living and rehabilitative conditions for offenders, and to assure that the public safety is being protected.

RECOMMENDATIONS (see ch. 7)

The Attorney General should direct the Administrator of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to:

- Require the States to describe in their comprehensive plans how they will develop an adequate system for coordinating halfway houses with other correctional efforts or improve existing systems and what standards halfway houses must meet to receive Federal funds.
- Determine the best aspects of the different approaches now used by halfway houses and develop criteria to assess the houses' effectiveness.

AGENCY ACTIONS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

The Department of Justice generally agreed with GAO's conclusions and recommendations. (See app. II.)

The Department:

- Recognized the importance of coordinating statewide correctional

halfway house programs, but pointed out that coordinating halfway houses with a State's correctional system is complex and involved far-reaching issues affecting public and private resource allocation. However, where feasible the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration will consider addressing or setting parameters in terms of guidelines to be followed to develop a coordination policy for statewide correctional halfway house programs.

--Agreed that the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration needs to take an affirmative stand relative to developing and enforcing standards whenever the agency's block grant funds are involved. Accordingly, it will initiate action to require States to incorporate certain information in their comprehensive plans relative to minimum standards which halfway houses must meet to receive Law Enforcement Assistance Administration block grant funds. In carrying out this action, the agency should specify a minimum level of standards which all States must meet for their plans to be approved.

These actions, if effectively implemented, will help halfway houses become a more viable alternative to prison.

The States generally agreed with GAO's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. However, one State pointed out the difficulties of trying to coordinate locally operated halfway houses with other elements of corrections systems.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION  
BY THE CONGRESS

One issue facing the Congress when it reconsiders the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration's authorizing legislation in 1976 will be that of determining the Federal Government's role in helping the States reduce crime and improve their criminal justice systems. Among the questions that will have to be asked is whether the role previously played by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration was adequate.

GAO believes it is significant that the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration has now recognized that it is within its mandate to require States to establish some type of minimum standards for operating projects which might receive block grant funds.

Effective implementation of such actions would help clarify to the Congress how the Federal Government can play a positive role to improve the criminal justice system within the general framework of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration's authorizing legislation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Major studies of the Nation's correction systems have emphasized the need for change. One change advocated by many is a greater use of adult community-based correction activities in lieu of sending offenders to prison or as a transitional step back into the community after being in prison.

One type of community-based correction effort being used more frequently is community-based correction centers--more commonly known as halfway houses. Respected blue ribbon commissions have urged the Nation to expand such efforts. This report discusses their operation in four States and uses the term "halfway houses" for such operations regardless of size or the sponsors of the projects.

We neither advocate nor oppose the use of halfway houses. The basic purpose of our report is to provide information on how such projects are being operated and to make Federal and State governments more aware of some measures that might be undertaken to improve rehabilitation efforts.

WHAT ARE HALFWAY HOUSES?

All halfway houses have the same basic objective--rehabilitating offenders in the community using community resources. But they differ considerably in the types of offenders they serve and in the methods they use.

Most houses have some criteria for admitting offenders; i.e., legal status, age, offense, and number of previous convictions. Most, however, exclude persons with histories of violent behavior, sexual deviation, or serious mental problems.

Participants may include offenders from a variety of backgrounds, including persons

- released from custody before disposition of the case by the courts,
- placed on probation by the courts with the stipulation by the courts that they enter a halfway house,
- released from prison a few months before completing their full sentences,
- to be considered for parole within a few months, and
- paroled to a halfway house as a condition of their parole.

Each house establishes a program to rehabilitate offenders. Although the program techniques differ, employment and counseling are primary rehabilitation programs. The houses also determine whether an offender is a success or a failure in their program.

Each house offers various services to help rehabilitate offenders. These services, which may be provided by the house or by other sources in the community, usually include assistance in finding jobs, group and individual counseling, and medical and dental assistance.

The house itself can be a former residence, a remodeled store, a dormitory, or a building specifically designed and constructed as a halfway house. Space requirements for individuals and such activities as group meetings, recreation, administration and the general condition of the house usually are subject only to city or State regulations for rooming or boarding houses.

Halfway houses have not been universally accepted by correction personnel or the public. Citizen objections have forced some houses to locate in the deteriorating section of a community or near industrial areas. Also some houses receive little support from criminal justice agencies, especially from agencies philosophically opposed to this mode of treatment of offenders.

The 1973 report on corrections by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals<sup>1</sup> acknowledged that, though a clear majority of a community may support the concept of halfway houses, a proposal to establish such a facility will generally draw substantial opposition from the immediate neighborhood where it is to be located.

This condition delayed the opening of some of the houses we reviewed for up to 5 months. Others were forced to abandon their planned locations and settle elsewhere, and one house finally had to locate outside the city in a rural area. The opposition came mainly from persons who lived, or owned businesses in, the immediate vicinity of the proposed house and who were concerned about public safety and the devaluation of property values. This opposition usually declined after the houses began operating.

#### HOW IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVED?

The Federal Government helps States and localities establish and operate halfway houses primarily by providing funds as part of LEAA's program.

LEAA was established by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 3701). The legislation encouraged the funding of projects that used new methods to prevent or reduce crime or that strengthened criminal justice activities at the community level. The Crime Control Act of 1973, which extended the LEAA programs through fiscal year 1976, reemphasized that legislative intent.

The legislation provides for State criminal justice planning agencies (SPAs), responsible to the Governors, to manage the Federal funds provided by LEAA. LEAA establishes

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission was funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), Department of Justice, in 1971. Membership was drawn from the police, courts, and correction branches of State and local governments, from industry, and from citizen groups. Most members had working experience in the criminal justice area.

regulations and guidelines to carry out the purposes of the act. Each SPA must develop a State plan stating how it will try to prevent or reduce crime and improve the criminal justice system. Each SPA must determine what projects will be funded and must seek advice from local or regional planning units in developing its plans. This plan, when approved by the LEAA Regional Administrator, is the basis for Federal grants to the State.

LEAA action funds are awarded as either block or discretionary grants. Block grants are awarded in total to SPAs which in turn determine further distribution to programs and subgrantees. Discretionary grants are made according to criteria, terms, and conditions determined by LEAA. They can be awarded to specific groups on the basis of LEAA-approved applications and are designed to

- advance national priorities,
- draw attention to programs not emphasized in State plans, and
- give special impetus to reform and experimentation.

SPAs carry out their plans primarily by awarding funds to subgrantees, usually other State agencies, local governments, or nonprofit organizations, to implement specific projects. All subgrantees must adhere to LEAA and SPA regulations and guidelines in carrying out their projects.

Through fiscal year 1974, LEAA had been appropriated about \$2.6 billion for action grants. LEAA had data readily available only for fiscal years 1972-74 pertaining to the amount of funds awarded to community-based correction programs, which included halfway houses, probation and parole efforts, etc. The amount awarded for those years as of April 1974 was about \$73 million, including \$43 million in block grants and \$30 million in discretionary funds. The four States reviewed had awarded a total of \$1.1 million of their fiscal year 1973 funds to halfway house projects.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE BASIC ISSUES

Halfway houses are at a crucial stage of development. They have increased substantially in numbers and could become a viable alternative in the correction system for many criminal offenders, or they could die out for the lack of funds and public support.

If they continue to increase in number and improve their operations, they could reduce the need to place many people in outdated and crowded prisons. However, they should not be viewed as a replacement for all prisons since there will always be individuals who are not willing to accept the constraints of halfway house living or would present too great a risk to the public safety if placed in such a facility.

LEAA has assisted halfway houses financially but has provided little guidance in planning or operating them. This stems basically from the way LEAA has administered its block grant program. It permitted each State to choose its own approach for improving criminal justice within broad Federal guidelines.

The States we reviewed, however, did not have well organized, planned, or operated systems that would coordinate both State and locally operated houses. This was partly because no one agency was responsible for coordinating a statewide system. Moreover, LEAA has continued to allow SPAs to fund halfway houses even if the States do not have coordinated correction systems. This has contributed to the fragmented efforts in some States.

The States did not have adequate knowledge about how public and private resources were allocated to operate and develop halfway houses. Such information is desirable because States need to be able to assure the public that they have well planned and supervised community-based correction systems that will safeguard the citizenry while providing rehabilitation.

If local private groups can develop and operate half-way houses without coordinating such efforts with a State correction and rehabilitation strategy, States cannot assure the public that the offenders in their corrections systems are being properly supervised. If the administration of the houses were improved, including increased cooperation and coordination of the jurisdictions involved, the houses most likely could provide more services to the offenders and serve more offenders.

In 1972 a Bureau of Prisons publication dealing with halfway houses stated that the real hope for greater effectiveness lies in system planning. We agree and believe that recent developments indicate that system planning is progressing. For example, the 1973 report by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, which had LEAA support, has caused States to begin analyzing their correction programs.

LEAA could require the SPAs to expand the correction section of their State plans to adequately describe the standards for and coordination of the projects it funds. If neither standards nor coordination exists, the SPA should describe the steps it plans to take to obtain desired action. We recognize that, because the SPAs' influence with the States' criminal justice systems varies among the States, some will be more successful in bringing about the changes than others. But SPAs are the primary State groups that control most Federal funds going to the States to prevent crime and improve the criminal justice system. LEAA must look to the SPAs, which in most cases are directly responsible to the Governors, to foster improvements. The SPAs must do a better job in addressing issues such as the development of statewide coordinated correction systems.

The problem of integrating halfway houses into coordinated statewide correction programs involving both State and locally operated facilities may appear to be basically a State problem. But our review and other national studies have shown that the problems of rehabilitating offenders and protecting the public's safety are national. Therefore, the Federal Government, primarily through LEAA, should be more active in helping the States solve the problems.

The basis for these conclusions is presented in chapters 3 through 6. Chapter 7 contains our recommendations to bring about needed improvements in the operation of halfway houses.

### CHAPTER 3

#### NEED FOR STATEWIDE SYSTEMS TO COORDINATE HOUSES

In its 1973 report the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals stated that community-based correction programs were the most promising means of accomplishing changes in offender behavior that the public expects and recommended greater use of such programs. The Commission, however, stated that such activities were not then part of well organized, planned, or programmed systems. This statement was still accurate in the four States reviewed.

The 1967 Task Force on Corrections also considered community programs and stated:

"It is clear that new community programs must be integrated into the main line of corrections, if they are to succeed and survive \* \* \*."

The State Government determines the organizational relationship between halfway houses and the State's corrections system.

LEAA and SPAs are not authorized to make policy as to the course of action a State should take. Their leverage lies in the conditions they place on the use of Federal grant funds and in their recommendations and encouragement to responsible State and local officials. To date LEAA has not provided effective leadership.

Halfway houses are becoming acceptable as an alternative to incarceration or to the minimum supervision provided on probation or parole.

Thus, it becomes desirable to insure that new houses are (1) locating in the communities with sufficient offender populations, (2) locating in communities that can provide adequate employment and other needed services to offenders, and (3) serving a segment of the offender population different from that already served by an existing house unless it can be shown that the existing house cannot handle the population of such offenders. Also, when two or more houses

are in the same community, consolidated administration may be economical. A consolidation of staff might also provide more potential for staff advancement, use of specialized staff, and more full-time rather than part-time positions.

Community approval of a locally operated halfway house is generally essential if the house is to succeed and receive continued local financing. Community pressure can cause a house to accept only the "cream" of offenders eligible to participate in the house's program. A coordinated approach to planning halfway houses could (1) help insure the continued financing of locally operated halfway houses and (2) help the houses meet the statewide offender population's needs.

#### LEAA GUIDANCE

LEAA's legislation requires that, before funds can be awarded to a State, LEAA must determine that a State's comprehensive plan:

- Discusses, among other things, incorporation of innovations and advanced techniques, including descriptions of general needs and problems; existing systems; available resources; organizational systems and administrative machinery for implementing the plan; and to the extent appropriate, the relationship of the plan to other State or local law enforcement and criminal justice plans and systems.
- Provides for effective use of existing facilities and permits and encourages units of local government to combine or provide cooperative arrangements with respect to services, facilities, and equipment.

LEAA's Office of Regional Operations<sup>1</sup> is responsible for developing guidelines that the SPAs must follow when developing their State plans. This Office also establishes the policies and procedures for LEAA regional offices to use in reviewing and approving State plans.

<sup>1</sup>In November 1973 the Office of Regional Operations was established. It basically assumed the responsibilities previously assigned to the Office of Criminal Justice Assistance which was abolished at that time.

Since most of LEAA's funds are provided to the States as block grants, LEAA has leverage for bringing about positive changes through its approval of the States' plans for spending money. But the Office's planning guidelines have not been specific enough regarding how the State plans must address the completeness of their States' correction system or the extent of the steps that should be taken to make the system more comprehensive. The States have considerable discretion regarding the information that must be included in the plans.

For example, LEAA's December 1973 planning guidelines emphasize the need for an SPA to demonstrate that its efforts to improve all aspects of the criminal justice system are coordinated. In addition, the SPA is to assume a leadership and coordination role in its State's law enforcement and criminal justice system. The guidelines state that one way the SPA can exercise such a role is by developing an overall, long-term plan for criminal justice improvements in the State.

LEAA's guidelines require that, as part of this overall plan, the SPA address such issues as legislative changes needed to develop an overall strategy, the types of research and information systems needed, and the types of noninstitutional rehabilitation efforts that will be undertaken. The guidelines do not, however, require the SPA to specify such things for the various components in a system; i.e., the correction system encompasses institutions, probation, parole, and other community-based activities.

Though LEAA's guidelines provide the broad framework within which the States can develop specific strategies, they do not set down in any detail how specific problems or issues are to be approached.

For example, LEAA's guidelines note that the SPA's plan must discuss such rehabilitative efforts as halfway houses, but do not specifically direct the SPA to discuss the organizational framework within which such houses operate, the type of offenders served, the staffing needed, or the nature of the programs used in the houses. Moreover, the SPA plans reviewed had not developed such information and there was no indication that the information was available anywhere in the State. Without such information it is

difficult for an SPA to assume the type of leadership and coordination role LEAA says it should.

Accordingly we believe it is appropriate for LEAA to tell the SPAs more specifically what kind of information their plans should include.

LEAA has authorized its regional offices to review and approve the comprehensive State plans for the States within their regions. The regional offices responsible for Florida, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Texas were located in Atlanta, Kansas City, Philadelphia, and Dallas, respectively.

We visited those offices and found that they had not supplemented the basic guidelines on comprehensive plans with any additional requirements concerning how the State believed it should coordinate all correction projects activities in its State, be they financed by public or private funds. The regional office staffs interviewed generally were quite vague on how halfway houses were, or should be, coordinated with the correction programs of the State or whether any State agency could assume overall responsibility for operating or administering all such facilities. The regional offices thus could not effectively promote the development of statewide coordinated correction strategies or effectively use the leverage available to them to improve State efforts.

Each regional office had correction specialists to give technical assistance to States, their planning agencies, and grant recipients. Assistance, however, was generally provided only on request. If a technical assistance request required significant research, the regions generally referred the requestor to LEAA headquarters staff who, in turn, generally referred them to expert consultants.

LEAA financed the development of guidelines and standards for halfway houses and community treatment centers through a contract with the International Halfway House Association and published them in May 1973 as a technical assistance publication with the qualification that they did not necessarily represent the official position of the Department of Justice.

Only one regional office visited knew such guidelines existed and stated that it had distributed the publication to the States in its region. Some halfway houses visited had copies of the guidelines; others had never heard of the guidelines or the association.

In addition, LEAA's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice is funding research into various criminal justice matters although the Institute has not begun to evaluate halfway house operations.

We issued a report<sup>1</sup> to the Congress in 1974 that recommended that LEAA designate several projects from each type of LEAA-funded program as demonstration projects and determine information that should be gathered and the type of evaluations that should be done. This would develop for similar projects guidelines relating to similar goals, uniform information, standard reporting systems, the standard range of expected accomplishments, and standardized evaluation methodologies. We pointed out that, until such standards and criteria were established and comparable data was gathered on the operation of similar projects, LEAA could not effectively determine what types of approaches work best and why. When LEAA evaluates halfway houses, the above steps should be included.

#### STATE PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

A similar approach was used by the four SPAs to prepare their comprehensive plans for LEAA approval. Each State was divided into regions to facilitate local planning. In these regions, the county or community officials determined local needs and forwarded their requests for funds for certain projects or project areas to their regional planning unit for review and approval. The approved requests were then incorporated into the regional plans and the regional plans became a source of information for the State plan. Although the SPA had final approval authority on grant applications, the incorporation of a specific request in a regional plan usually was tantamount to approval.

<sup>1</sup>"Difficulties of Assessing Results of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Projects to Reduce Crime" (B-171019, Mar. 19, 1974).

Grant applications from State agencies usually do not go through regional planning units but are forwarded directly to the SPA. Thus the SPAs are in a good position to encourage or require the coordination and cooperation needed between State and local correction activities in planning and operating a statewide halfway house effort.

The SPAs, however, had allowed States, local governments, and private agencies to establish houses that apparently satisfied local needs without considering statewide needs based on probationers and potential parolees needing halfway house supervision or the number of institutionalized inmates from the communities that could be placed on work release if such a facility was available. In addition, State agencies, community officials, and private agencies were allowed to determine the type of offender to be served, the condition of the facility to be used, and the type of program to be offered. As a result there were no well organized or planned statewide correctional or rehabilitation systems to insure that

- the existing houses were not concentrating too heavily on helping one type of offender while ignoring other types,
- the facilities were adequate, and
- the programs met some minimally accepted standards.

The four SPAs had recognized in their State plans that their correction approaches were fragmented. None of them, however, presented detailed proposals to integrate the halfway houses they funded within a coordinated system.

In Florida, for example, State agencies as well as local officials were using LEAA funds to establish halfway houses. The Division of Corrections determined that it needed large, 50- to 100-bed houses to help the transition of State prisoners back to community life.

One of these houses was established in Tampa, which already had a locally operated halfway house that had been established using LEAA funds. Thus, there were two similar programs within the same community, one operated by the

State and the other by the county. Establishing two or more halfway houses in one community may be justified if there are enough potential participants and many types of offenders to be served. However, the work of the houses should be coordinated between local and State agencies to assure that they complement each other and do not end up competing for the same resources. (Utilization is discussed further in ch. 5.)

A similar situation existed in Pennsylvania. State correction officials, in some cases using LEAA funds, established 9- to 18-bed halfway houses to serve State prisoners while local agencies and private organizations were also obtaining LEAA funds to establish houses in the same communities.

In Missouri local officials or organizations established halfway houses based on the needs of offenders returning from prison and those that can be placed in the house while on probation in lieu of incarceration.

In Texas local officials, without coordinating such needs with State agencies, determined needs for halfway houses. One house reviewed was established by a county to serve offenders placed on probation. The house was established by this county rather than the State because Texas has no statewide probation system.

The following sections describe the conditions in the four States reviewed.

#### Florida

Florida has no single agency to administer or coordinate its adult correction activities. Jails hold pretrial detainees and convicted misdemeanants and are the responsibility of cities and counties, while most other correctional activities fall under State control. The State Division of Corrections is responsible for the custody and care of incarcerated felons, including those in a preparole work release status in community-based facilities. The independent Parole and Probation Commission is responsible for supervising and rehabilitating offenders on parole and probation within the community. Although, at the time of our review

in 1974, there were no provisions for joint planning or policymaking for the two State agencies, we were told that such joint efforts are in effect in 1975.

In 1973 Florida had an offender population of about 41,000. About 10,000 were in institutions under the jurisdiction of the Division of Corrections, and the other 31,000 under the supervision of the Parole and Probation Commission.

In 1974 the Division of Corrections operated 10 major institutions. It also operated 25 halfway houses that could accommodate approximately 1,224 offenders. The Division used LEAA grant funds to help construct seven of the houses in operation at the time our review started. The houses were established so sentenced offenders could be placed in the community to work or study during the last 12 months of their sentences and thereby be assisted in their rehabilitation and transition to community living.

In 1973 the Parole and Probation Commission, under its "Multiphasic Diagnostic and Treatment Center Network," had established 2 houses which could accommodate a total of 35 offenders and planned to establish 4 more. These houses were established for probationers and parolees who need more supervision than regular probation and parole practice could provide.

The SPA provided about \$459,000 from fiscal year 1973 LEAA grant funds to seven locally operated halfway houses for adult offenders. The SPA was the only State agency responsible for supervising the operation of these houses. In 1973 the SPA established some standards for the operation of the halfway houses receiving LEAA grant funds. Although brief, the standards did provide requirements on the number of participants, sources from which participants would be accepted, staffing, and programs.

Although there has been no study to determine the number and location of halfway houses needed for a statewide system, Florida has developed a plan that includes using both State and local correction activities and establishes goals that include halfway houses.

The SPA, in commenting on our report, stated:

"Since the State Planning Agency realizes that no one type halfway house or treatment philosophy is best for all client groups, there is a tendency for the SPA to allow localities to define their own needs and propose what they consider to be the most appropriate solutions. Therefore, because of flexible programming which allows for a diversity of halfway house operation and treatment programs, it may appear there is little coordination. However, we would reiterate that the halfway houses which represent viable alternatives to state incarceration are located within two highly structured and coordinated networks operated by the state. Local halfway houses are designed solely to meet local needs which vary throughout the state."

LEAA, Florida, and local government funds were used to construct and operate halfway houses that will help reach these goals. For fiscal year 1974, Florida budgeted about \$3.6 million in State funds for the Division of Corrections' halfway houses.

In November 1973, in response to the report of the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, the State established a Commission on Standards and Goals to develop a comprehensive statewide plan for improving criminal justice.

Some adult correction problems the State Commission had to deal with were identified in the State's 1973 Comprehensive Plan submitted to LEAA. This plan listed the following problems pertaining to community-based correction activities:

- An unmanageable flow of offenders as evidenced by overcrowded prisons and excessive caseloads of offenders under supervision in the community.
- The absence of an evaluation system that reports the results of existing rehabilitation programs.
- Inadequate coordination and communication among the elements that comprise the statewide correction system.

Thus, Florida appears to be recognizing some of the problems caused by the lack of a coordinated statewide strategy.

#### Missouri

The State Department of Corrections and the Board of Probation and Parole are responsible for statewide adult correction efforts. The county sheriffs have the major responsibility for correction at the county level, and cities oversee their individual jurisdictions.

The Department of Corrections operated 8 penal facilities, which had an average monthly population of 3,428 inmates during fiscal year 1973. The Board of Probation and Parole is responsible for (1) paroling and supervising inmates from adult correction facilities, (2) supervising persons placed on probation by the courts, and (3) supervising probationers and parolees transferring to Missouri from other States. The supervision of parolees and probationers is carried out through 25 district offices. As of December 1, 1973, these 25 districts were supervising 1,454 felons on parole and 6,231 felons on probation.

Neither the Department of Corrections nor the Board operates halfway houses. The Department, however, does operate a community release program in which selected inmates, who have 6 months or less of their sentences remaining, are permitted to leave penal facilities and enter community-based programs operated by other organizations.

We identified 7 halfway houses for adult offenders in the State having a total capacity of 174 participants. The SPA provided a total of about \$387,000 to six of these houses--all locally planned and operated--from 1973 LEAA grant funds. The house that did not receive LEAA funds was operated by the Bureau of Prisons. The \$21,500 in State funds that the houses received during 1973 was in the form of per diem payments for inmates released to the houses through the Department of Corrections community release program.

No State agency was responsible for supervising locally operated halfway houses. The houses set their own goals, planned their own approaches to helping the offenders, and

determined what services they would provide. There has been no statewide study to ascertain the number or type of halfway houses needed in the State or where they should be located.

The Missouri plan submitted to LEAA for 1974 stated that there was a need for a unified and coordinated system of providing community-based correction treatment programs to include the full use of existing programs and the development of new ones designed to meet individual needs of the offender.

The SPA has funded a statewide task force to develop a master correction plan for Missouri. Areas to be considered in the study include community-based services, manpower needs and training, and alternatives to incarceration and diversionary programs.

This same task force recommended priorities for the State's correction activities in March 1974. Community-based correction services was ranked as the third highest priority after pretrial release programs and personnel training. The report, noting that at that time community-based corrections were not well organized, planned, or programmed, recommended a network of community-based treatment centers.

#### Pennsylvania

The Bureau of Correction and the Board of Probation and Parole are responsible for the State's adult corrections system. The Bureau of Correction is a part of the Pennsylvania Department of Justice and is essentially responsible for adult offenders sentenced to State correction institutions. The Board of Probation and Parole is an independent agency directly responsible to the Governor. It has responsibility for granting parole and subsequently supervising adult offenders sentenced by the courts for 2 years or more. In addition, county courts can also assign parolees and special probation cases to the Board if their maximum sentences do not exceed 2 years.

The Pennsylvania correction system for adults was described as fragmented and lacking coordination in the State's

1974 plan submitted to LEAA. The plan stated that the lack of a clear definition of functional relationships between county and State agencies, and among the several State agencies involved, seriously hampered adult correction efforts. Each of the 67 counties has its own correction institution and adult probation agency, in addition to the State correction institutions and the State Board of Probation and Parole. State agencies have only limited control over the county institutions and agencies.

In August 1973 the Bureau of Correction operated 7 State penal institutions, 1 regional institution, and 9 halfway houses with a combined population of about 5,750 offenders. By February 1974 the number of halfway houses had increased to 13.

In 1969 the Bureau started a program of community-based services and facilities designed to provide an alternative to confinement and help those incarcerated make the transition from prison to the community. Community treatment facilities took two basic forms--halfway houses and group homes.

Halfway houses are designed for 16 to 20 offenders and provide treatment programs geared to specific needs of the participants. Group homes generally are privately operated facilities which provide specialized treatment and services, such as treatment of drug addicts or alcoholics, which the Bureau-operated houses are not able to provide. The Bureau contracts with group homes to provide specific services for selected inmates released to these facilities. As of February 28, 1974, the Bureau had contracts with 8 group homes for treating 24 inmates.

The Bureau states that it is committed to expanding community-based facilities until they can handle all offenders released from State correction institutions. To achieve this goal, the Bureau plans to open 11 additional halfway houses, bringing the total to 24. The Bureau's community treatment program also plans to expand the contractual group home program and begin regional halfway houses for women.

As of March 1974, the Bureau had received three LEAA grants totaling about \$1,276,000 to establish and expand the halfway house program. Of this amount, about \$953,000 was allocated for operating the houses and about \$323,000 was earmarked for salaries of administrative employees in the Bureau's central and regional offices. In December 1973 the Board of Probation and Parole was supervising about 11,000 offenders. Another 43,000 were under county supervision.

The Board did not use halfway houses to a great extent. During 1973 the Parole Board had contracted with four privately operated houses. These contracts, totaling \$18,000, covered per diem payments for persons paroled to the houses. The Board had no formal standards or guidelines for operating those houses. Although we were told that the Parole Board believes there is a need for more houses, it was not collecting complete and accurate data on what resources were available and the number of parolees actually in these houses on a statewide basis.

The SPA, which is a part of the Pennsylvania Department of Justice, has stated that the State's goal is to expand the use of adult community-based services and facilities until at least 20 percent of all prison commitments would be regularly placed within community treatment programs.

The SPA had helped fund 17 halfway houses for adult offenders. Thirteen were operated by the State Bureau of Correction. The others included a house operated by the Philadelphia County Adult Probation Department and three that were privately operated. The SPA had awarded a total of \$137,000 of fiscal year 1973 grant funds to two houses as of March 1974.

Data available showed that 15 of the 17 houses had a total capacity of 276 participants. The SPA had not established any policies, criteria, procedures, or guidelines for the houses regarding qualifications of employees, facilities, or services. In addition, no one State agency was responsible for supervising the operation of all halfway houses in Pennsylvania.

In 1973 the Pennsylvania Joint Council on the Criminal Justice System began a study of the State's system with the

SPA's concurrence. The study resulted from the report issued by the National Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. Although the Joint Council was not an official unit of State government (it was created by the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges), it was established to recommend ways to eliminate fragmentation, to open communication lines, and to encourage the integration of all State criminal justice agencies as well as private and professional organizations.

The Joint Council stated that Pennsylvania needed commonly accepted goals and a strategy that would reduce the fragmented conditions of its criminal justice system.

#### Texas

The Texas Department of Corrections and the Board of Pardons and Paroles are legally responsible for State correction efforts. There is no statewide probation system. Instead, probation programs are operated on a county-by-county basis. Of the State's 254 counties, 224 have adult probation services. Although no current statewide data was available on the number of persons on probation, an SPA study showed there were about 33,400 felons on probation as of December 31, 1971.

The Department of Corrections operates 14 prison units which had 16,690 inmates on December 31, 1973. The Department does not operate any community-based correction programs or halfway houses. These programs are considered the responsibility of the communities. A Department official said Texas correction programs should use halfway houses more, but State laws do not permit the Department to become directly involved at the community level.

The Board of Pardons and Paroles was supervising 7,232 parolees on December 31, 1973. According to a Board official area parole officers were referring some parolees to various halfway houses in the State. In addition, the Board is considering the development of a statewide halfway house program and has asked other States for information on their programs. The Board plans to include proposals for a halfway house program in its 1975 budget request to the Texas legislature.

We identified 11 halfway houses in Texas for adult criminal offenders. Nine had a total capacity of 234 participants. The SPA provided 1973 LEAA grant funds totaling about \$136,000 to three of them. The State provided about \$4,600 to one house, the total contribution of Texas funds for halfway houses.

Neither the SPA nor any other State agency administers a halfway house program in Texas. Those houses funded by the SPA are the primary responsibility of the SPA's correction office; however, no specific guidelines, policies, or criteria for their operation have been developed. Grantees establish their own operating procedures, including criteria for types of offenders eligible for participation, and set their own goals according to community needs. In addition, neither the SPA nor any other State agency has studied the total need for halfway houses to serve all eligible offenders--probationers, parolees, work releasees, etc.

The Texas plan for 1974 stated that the lack of resources for helping ex-offenders readjust to the community made it more likely they would return to prison. The plan also recognized that the criminal justice system in Texas is actually a conglomeration of disconnected parts, created by constitution and statute, sometimes working together but occasionally operating in opposing directions.

The State, however, is taking steps to improve the situation; i.e., a conference on State criminal justice standards and goals has been planned. This conference should result in the adoption of specific standards and goals which will be used as a guide by the State agencies in their planning. To date, Texas has relied on those standards and goals set forth by the National Advisory Commission and on the regional planning councils and other State agencies, rather than setting its own priorities.

The SPA also plans to begin master planning, which will entail a complete analysis and evaluation of the existing correction system. A model system will be drawn up and restraints preventing achievement of the system will be identified. Next, alternatives to incarceration will be listed and priorities assigned. Master planning for juveniles'

corrections had already begun, and adult master planning was to start after July 1974. SPA officials expect master planning to recognize the need for a greater emphasis on community-based corrections.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS ACHIEVED BY HOUSES

The houses were achieving some success in working with offenders, but success varied significantly from house to house. Overall:

--About 65 percent of the participants successfully completed the program. But we estimated that about 25 percent of these were later returned to prison.

--Of those who failed to complete the program, about 27 percent absconded from the houses, 46 percent were returned to prison, and the other 27 percent either were discharged or their status was undeterminable.

--We estimated that about half the offenders treated by the 15 houses were rehabilitated because they had successfully completed the program and had not subsequently been convicted of offenses or had their probation or parole revoked.

None of the States had any criteria for judging if specific houses were effective enough to warrant continuing their present methods of operation. Moreover, none of the States had adequate data on recidivism rates for the different types of correction efforts, such as probation, parole, or direct release from prison to compare with the recidivism statistics for the halfway houses.

Some data collected for specific studies, however, indicated that the results achieved by the houses were not much better or worse than those achieved by other types of correction efforts.

Halfway house offenders work in the community and contribute to society. But these benefits are achieved with some risk to the public's safety--a major concern of correction authorities. About 2 percent of the offenders who went through the halfway houses were arrested and incarcerated for committing crimes--ranging from murder to disorderly conduct--while at the houses.

### TYPES OF OFFENDERS IN THE PROGRAMS

Most of the locally operated halfway houses served a mixed group of probationers, parolees, and State or Federal prison releasees. One, however, dealt almost exclusively with probationers; three others concentrated on assisting criminals who had several prior convictions; and one worked mainly with offenders still in the custody of the county's penal system.

Each house, including those operated by State correction agencies in Florida and Pennsylvania, decided on its own which offenders to serve rather than following any organized statewide strategy or specific statewide guidelines. Most houses (apparently because of public pressure) automatically excluded sexual deviants, offenders who had demonstrated violent behavior, and those with serious mental problems.

Except for these exclusions, several houses had few restrictions on offenders they would accept. One, for example, required only that the offender be over 18 years of age and express "an honest desire to change his life." Another required only that the offender be between 17 and 25 years of age, be a convicted felon, and be on probation. A third concentrated on offenders having long histories of crime and required only that they not be juveniles or heroin addicts.

The four State-operated houses mainly served offenders still under the jurisdiction of the State's Division of Corrections. Hillsborough was operated as part of the county prison system and mainly served county inmates. Most participants in the other locally operated projects were probationers or parolees. The most varied mixture of participants from different sources was in Missouri houses. The following table shows the offender mix.

Halfway house	Source of participants (note a)				Total
	Parole	Probation	Work or study release	Other (note b)	
Locally operated:					
Florida:					
Cain	10	29	-	25	64
Hillsborough	-	-	827	-	827
Missouri:					
Alpha	9	3	4	-	16
Dismas	26	35	43	-	104
Magdala	47	70	3	4	124
Morman	8	27	2	1	38
Reality	33	40	4	8	85
Pennsylvania:					
Home of Industry	48	6	1	-	55
Lehigh Valley	53	18	-	2	73
Texas:					
New Directions	152	10	-	162	324
Waco	<u>1</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>128</u>
Total	<u>387</u>	<u>365</u>	<u>884</u>	<u>202</u>	<u>1,838</u>
State operated:					
Florida:					
Jacksonville	-	-	644	-	644
Tampa	-	-	253	-	253
Pennsylvania:					
Philadelphia	-	-	122	-	122
Scranton	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>101</u>
Total	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1,111</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1,120</u>

<sup>a</sup>Data was obtained for all houses from the time they began operating (the earliest was Oct. 1969) through April 1974.

<sup>b</sup>The other category included mostly those who had served their full sentences in prison as was the case for 145 of the 162 in the New Directions program. There were also some juveniles, persons on pretrial release, or those who were not offenders.

Background data for those offenders who completed their stays at the houses during a 6-month period is shown in the following table and indicates the characteristics of the offenders served by each house. Five of the locally operated houses concentrated on young offenders with few prior convictions, while four others concentrated on older offenders with multiple offenses. The locally operated houses generally received a wider range of offenders in terms of age and prior convictions.

Halfway houses	Number of offenders (note a)	Age		Number of prior convictions		Grade level achievement	
		Median	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range
Locally operated:							
Florida:							
Cain	8	19	17 to 33	1.3	0 to 3	10	7 to 12
Hillsborough	25	26	17 to 61	4.9	1 to 23	10	3 to 12
Missouri:							
Alpha	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dismas	8	30	23 to 65	5.1	1 to 9	10	7 to 12
Magdala	8	18	18 to 21	1.4	1 to 3	9	6 to 11
Morman	1	30	-	3.0	-	14	-
Reality	10	20	17 to 37	1.8	1 to 3	10	6 to 18
Pennsylvania:							
Home of Industry	18	(b)	(b)	6.4	1 to 15	9	0 to 12
Lehigh Valley	3	19	18 to 29	2.3	1 to 3	10	9 to 10
Texas:							
New Directions	24	37	24 to 53	2.9	0 to 7	10	5 to 16
Waco	20	19	18 to 26	1.1	1 to 2	10	7 to 14
State operated:							
Florida:							
Jacksonville	25	25	19 to 49	3.4	1 to 14	9	5 to 12
Tampa	24	24	20 to 61	1.5	1 to 4	10	5 to 16
Pennsylvania:							
Philadelphia	27	32	18 to 56	3.6	1 to 13	9	3 to 16
Scranton	14	29	22 to 51	3.6	1 to 12	9	5 to 12

<sup>a</sup>Data was obtained for various 6-month periods between October 1972 and October 1973.

<sup>b</sup>Not available.

Although the houses usually concentrated on specific groups, such as young first-time offenders, several had a mixture of residents with wide differences in age and prior criminal offenses. This could have affected the success these houses had in rehabilitating the offenders. It also raises a question on the ability of a house to deal successfully with offenders having different backgrounds, ages, and behavior patterns. For example, several 40- to 50-year-old offenders with many prior convictions may require very different counseling techniques and employment assistance than a group of 17- to 21-year-old first-time offenders. In addition, older hardened offenders could have an adverse psychological effect on young first-time offenders.

THE OFFENDERS: THE EXTENT OF SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

About 3,000 individuals had entered the 15 houses and about 2,600 had left the programs at the time of our review. Nearly all participants had committed criminal acts, some for the first time and some many times before. A few in the locally operated houses had no criminal records and had voluntarily entered because of alcohol or other adjustment problems.

As the table on page 29 shows, 2,570 of the offenders had passed through the 15 houses and 65 percent were considered by the houses' staff to have successfully completed their stays. The other 35 percent either failed to complete their stays successfully, were transferred to another program, died, or were released for some other reason. For example, one asked to be returned to prison and another became too ill to stay at the house.

Results of Houses' Efforts With Participants (note a)

House	Total	Successful completions		Failed to complete		Others	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Locally operated:							
Florida	811	582	71.8	227	28.0	2	0.2
Missouri	308	141	45.8	149	48.4	18	5.8
Pennsylvania	113	81	71.7	28	24.8	4	3.5
Texas	393	258	65.6	126	32.1	9	2.3
Subtotal	1,625	1,062	65.4	530	32.6	33	2.0
State operated:							
Florida	758	515	67.9	243	32.1	-	-
Pennsylvania	187	95	50.8	48	25.7	44	23.5
Subtotal	945	610	64.5	291	30.8	44	4.7
Total	2,570	1,672	65.1	821	31.9	77	3.0

<sup>a</sup>Data was obtained for all houses from the time they began operating (the earliest was Oct. 1969) through April 1974.

The 15 houses had successful completion rates that varied considerably from the categorizations shown in the table, ranging from 9.3 to 100 percent. Four had successful completion rates of less than 50 percent. The house claiming 100-percent-successful completion did so on the grounds that no offender had to be returned to prison while a resident of the house. However, information we obtained showed that several offenders had not lived up to expected behavior patterns while at the house and would have been considered failures under the criteria used at some other houses.

## Failures in the program

As the following table shows, the offenders who failed to successfully complete their stays at the houses either (1) were incarcerated for committing new offenses, for violating the terms of their early release from prison, or for violating the terms of their probation or parole, (2) absconded, or (3) were discharged because they did not adjust or broke rules. The majority of those who were incarcerated had been released early from prison to enter the houses but violated some condition of their release. Those in the third category who were still on probation or parole were returned to the supervision of their probation or parole officers, and those who had served their full sentences and were no longer under jurisdiction of a unit of the correction system were released outright.

Disposition of Offenders Who Failed to Successfully Complete Their Stays (note a)

House	Total	Incarcerated		Absconded		Discharged		Undeterminable (note b)	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Locally operated:									
Florida	227	184	81.1	33	14.5	10	4.4	-	-
Missouri	149	39	26.2	61	40.9	49	32.9	-	-
Pennsylvania	28	2	7.1	8	28.6	18	64.3	-	-
Texas	126	25	19.8	29	23.0	72	57.2	-	-
Subtotal	530	250	47.2	131	24.7	149	28.1	-	-
State operated:									
Florida	243	94	38.7	79	32.5	-	-	70	28.8
Pennsylvania	48	35	72.9	13	27.1	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	291	129	44.3	92	31.6	-	-	70	24.1
Total	821	379	46.2	223	27.2	149	18.1	70	8.5

<sup>a</sup>Data was obtained for all houses from the time they began operating (the earliest was Oct. 1969) through April 1974.

<sup>b</sup>The disposition of these offenders could not be identified from the records kept by the two State-operated centers.

## Threat to the public safety

The public safety should be a major concern of correction programs. Halfway houses are a risk to the citizenry because those offenders who would otherwise be in prison are living in the community where they are not as closely supervised, although offenders who would otherwise be on regular probation or parole are receiving more supervision in a halfway house. None of the States, however, had criteria for judging whether, in terms of crimes committed by participants or absconders, the threat to the public safety was sufficient either to close the house or to require that substantial management improvements be carried out if operation was to be continued.

Since halfway houses deal with offenders who obviously did not abide by society's accepted norms, it is unrealistic to expect the houses to rehabilitate all participants; not all individuals change their behavior patterns, no matter how you reward or punish them. The Executive Director of one house included in our review commented that in his opinion:

"It is a valid function and indeed an obligation for halfway houses to render a well-considered, informed and documentable objective judgement based on a client's behavior as to whether he/she represents a threat to the community. If the client does represent such a threat, the house has an obligation to inform the supervising authorities and, if necessary, make appropriate recommendations."

However, a house's failures can point to problems that could be corrected, such as insufficiently trained or dedicated staff or carelessness in selecting participants. The results could also be a symptom of problems that the house cannot correct, such as the community's attitudes toward participants or job shortages.

The State should monitor the activities of every halfway house in the State to verify that a house is properly handling its participants, because the State is responsible for adequately protecting the public. To do so, it should

establish criteria, monitor the houses' operations, and make decisions based on overall achievements rather than reacting to specific one-time incidents that may not represent the houses' operation. Such criteria are especially important when a house is locally operated under no formal relationship with a corrections agency.

Neither the States nor LEAA had established such criteria. The States' experience with halfway houses might dictate general criteria initially.

Of the 2,570 offenders that passed through the 15 houses, 379 (about 15 percent) were incarcerated for improper behavior while residing at the houses, such as (1) committing new crimes, (2) violating the terms of their early release from prison, or (3) violating conditions of their probation or parole.

Only 56 of the 379, however, were arrested for committing new offenses and were convicted or had their probation or parole revoked. This data pertains to all houses from the time they began operating (the earliest was Oct. 1969) through April 1974.

The 56 represent only 2.2 percent of the 2,570 who had passed through the houses. The other 323 had been returned to the legal jurisdictions of the agencies that placed them in the houses primarily because they had violated rules, such as those forbidding drinking or requiring satisfactory performance on a job.

The 56 offenders arrested for new offenses were incarcerated for the following crimes:

Crimes against people:	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Robbery	5	
Assault	4	
Rape	3	
Murder	1	
Accessory to murder	1	
Kidnaping	<u>1</u>	
	15	26.8
Crimes against property:		
Burglary	9	
Breaking and entering	3	
Auto theft	2	
Larceny	1	
Stealing	<u>1</u>	
	16	28.6
Other:		
Drug charges	7	
Weapons charges	4	
Drunken driving	1	
Disturbing the peace	1	
Disorderly conduct	<u>1</u>	
	14	25.0
Not identified	<u>11</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	<u>56</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The fact that 223 offenders absconded (about 9 percent of the 2,570) indicates that some offenders reject the houses' rehabilitation efforts stressing socially acceptable behavior.

#### RECIDIVISM BY SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPANTS

Not all offenders who successfully completed the half-way houses' programs stayed out of prison. Recidivism is a measure of the failure of correction efforts. Though there is no generally accepted definition of "recidivism," we defined it as a conviction for a new offense or an incident

resulting in revocation of probation or parole for which the offender was incarcerated. This definition excludes those offenders who have committed crimes and, if apprehended, have not been convicted.

To measure recidivism and thereby obtain an indication of impact, we attempted to obtain data on the subsequent criminal activity for 614 of the 1,672 successful participants. (See p. 29.) This included all successes for nine houses, and a sample of successes for six because of the large number of successful participants.

The extent of criminal activity for only 467 of the 614 former participants was identified because the sources from which we sought criminal information had no files at all for 147 of the participants in our sample.<sup>1</sup> The extent of their criminal involvement represents what was reported to the sources we questioned and probably does not include every conviction. For example, a former participant may have been convicted of an illegal act in another State which was not reported to our sources. When we acquired the data, the offenders had been out of the houses for various periods ranging from 2 months to over 4 years.

From the data on the 467 offenders considered to have successfully completed the houses' programs, we estimated that 25.1 percent of the total successful participants in the 15 houses had been returned to prison for new crimes or revocation of probation or parole by the time we completed our fieldwork in June 1974. Also some offenders in our sample (an estimated 7 percent of successful participants) had charges pending, had been arrested but no dispositions were recorded, or had absconded while still on probation or parole. Persons in these situations were not classified as recidivists according to our definition.

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<sup>1</sup>The criminal history records of one or more of the following agencies were reviewed in each State: probation agencies, Departments of Corrections or Public Safety, and the State Police. In addition, some centers had obtained data for some of their former participants which we used in our statistics.

How does the recidivism rate of 25.1 percent compare to results achieved by other correction programs? We cannot accurately say. The few recidivism studies available on the results of other correction methods usually use different definitions of recidivism and different time periods which prevent accurate comparison of results. In addition, the type of offender involved in the program studied would likely affect the recidivism rate.

Nevertheless, some available studies do provide a general indication that the halfway houses' results were not that different from those achieved by other methods. To obtain a definitive assessment of comparable recidivism rates would involve an effort which LEAA might wish to undertake.

The combined rate of all 15 houses in the 4 States reviewed was lower than the 33-percent recidivism rate of offenders released from Federal prisons in 1970.<sup>1</sup> Although direct comparison of results is not valid because different groups and timeframes were involved, the results give some indication of the relative success of halfway houses. The Federal study that presented the above-noted finding was based on a 50-percent sample of releasees during a 6-month period, January to June 1970. The study followed the releasees for a period of 2 years. Disposition data on charges made during this period was obtained through January 1973. "Recidivism" was defined by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in its study as:

"\* \* \* either (1) parole revocation; or (2) any new sentence of 60 days or more, including probation, resulting from an arrest reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Also the recidivism rates for the State and locally operated houses in Pennsylvania (10.5 and 21.0, respectively) are less than the rate for persons released on parole directly from the State institutions. A study released in September 1972 based on Pennsylvania parolees released between 1964 and 1969 stated that about 26 percent of the State's parolees eventually returned to prison because of new convictions or parole violation.

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<sup>1</sup>"Success and Failure of Federal Offenders Released in 1970," U.S. Bureau of Prisons, Department of Justice, April 1974.

We estimate, as the following table shows, that approximately 27.4 percent of the offenders who successfully completed their stays at the 11 locally operated houses and 21.1 percent of those from the 4 State operated houses later committed acts for which they were returned to prison.

Estimated Recidivism Rates for Successful Participants (note a)

Halfway houses	Number of successful participants	Basic categories for estimated recidivism		
		Convicted of new offense	Probation or parole revoked	Both categories
		Percent		
Locally operated:				
Florida	582	37.1	(b)	37.3
Missouri	141	14.1	4.3	18.4
Pennsylvania	81	17.3	3.7	21.0
Texas	258	10.5	1.5	12.0
All locally operated	<u>1,062</u>	26.1	1.3	27.4
State operated:				
Florida	515	16.7	6.4	23.1
Pennsylvania	95	6.3	4.2	10.5
All State operated	<u>610</u>	15.1	6.0	21.1
Combined locally and State operated	<u>1,672</u>	22.1	3.0	25.1

<sup>a</sup>Data obtained between March and June 1974.

<sup>b</sup>Less than one-half of 1 percent.

Note: The estimates assume that those for whom records were available were similar to those for whom records were not available.

### Differing results among the houses

The results differed substantially among the houses. The house showing the highest recidivism rate (40 percent) had been operating only 6 months at the time of our review and had released only six participants. The one with the lowest rate (4.5 percent) was a State-operated house in Pennsylvania.

Four of the 15 halfway houses had recidivism rates of 30 percent or more and were all locally operated. We could not determine with any certainty why the four had higher recidivism rates because of the multitude of variables that affect results, such as the offenders' background, ages, and education; social pressures; treatment approach; and dedication and quality of staff assisting the offenders. However, some probable reasons for the different recidivism rates follow.

Alpha house, the one with the highest rate, was fairly new and had only a few offenders participate in its program. The results achieved by the house in its shakedown period may not be representative of the house's achievements over a longer period.

The Hillsborough house, with the second highest rate, used regular county prison guards to oversee offenders. The guards ran the place like a prison in terms of handing out work details and discipline. In addition, the participants were required to eat their meals at the county prison next door. Although the dining facilities were adequate, we were told that participants felt they were being harassed because the prison guards randomly selected participants and thoroughly searched them to prevent the passing of contraband to prisoners. A program supervisor believed the strict regimentation may have been excessive and may have negatively influenced the house's rehabilitation efforts.

Home of Industry dealt with offenders that, on the average, had more prior convictions than those entering the other houses. Participants, therefore, could be considered as more likely to reject the house's rehabilitative efforts. In addition, the house considered that all its participants successfully completed their stays although five of its

successes probably would have been considered as failures by other houses reviewed. This house's recidivism rate was higher than most because these borderline successes (three of whom later returned to crime) were counted.

Morman house, located in a rural area, served mostly first-time offenders on probation. Only 3 of the 32 who had passed through the house successfully completed their stays, and one of these was later sent to prison. The house had difficulty in finding good jobs for participants and also had problems in obtaining enough qualified employees. These factors appeared to cause an ineffective program. However, the house was attempting to correct these deficiencies.

Other differences may have contributed to different recidivism rates between the other houses. The two State-operated houses in Florida, which basically operated under the same requirements, had recidivism rates of 26.3 percent at the Jacksonville house and 14.5 percent at the Tampa house. The Jacksonville house had the capacity to handle 100 offenders while the Tampa house had a capacity of 56.

One difference appeared to be the qualifications and experience of the staff. The Jacksonville house employed 14 counselors, most of whom had no academic background in counseling-related fields, such as sociology or psychology. Most had several years' experience with the State Division of Corrections and four were military retirees. The Tampa house, on the other hand, had eight counselors, four of whom had academic training in counseling-related fields. One had a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in guidance and counseling. Since Jacksonville participants usually came from a medium security institution while Tampa participants usually came from minimum security facilities, the impact of the staff qualifications may have been significant.

One house having a low recidivism rate (9.1 percent) was the locally operated New Directions house which was directed by a dedicated ex-offender who had spent 30 years in prison. The unique characteristic of this house was that all but 1 of the 14 staff members were ex-offenders and none were academically trained professionals. Apparently, the ability

of ex-offenders to relate to offenders was an important element in the rehabilitation.

Overall, it was very difficult to identify specific factors that directly affected the different houses' abilities to rehabilitate offenders. Much depended on intangibles--two of the most important being the staff's dedication and the offenders' willingness to reform.

#### OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

Our previous discussion of recidivism focused on what happened to successful participants. Another way of measuring the impact the houses are having is to consider their success with all offenders whom they treated, regardless of whether the offenders completed the programs, excluding those who died while at the centers, became too ill to continue; or transferred to another program, such as vocational rehabilitation.

This method accounts for the differences among houses in classifying offenders as failures or successes and the corresponding effect such classifications have on recidivism rates. For example, the locally operated houses in Florida and Pennsylvania classified a smaller percentage of their offenders as failures than did the other State or locally operated houses. They in turn had the highest recidivism rates for the successful participants because borderline failures in the projects were classified as successful and their return to crime after leaving the house was considered in determining the recidivism rate for the house.

The following chart shows the percentage of those persons who failed during the program, the estimated percentage of those who had successfully completed the program and were still considered successful when our review was performed, and the estimated percentage of those who had successfully completed the program but whose reinvolvement with the criminal justice system placed them in the recidivism category.

When the percentage of failures during the programs and the estimated percentage of failures (recidivists) after

ESTIMATED PROJECT RESULTS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS (note A)



A. Data were obtained from the houses from the time they began operating (the earliest was October 1969) through June 1974

successfully completing the programs are combined and subtracted from 100 percent, the remaining percentage represents the houses' effectiveness. Using this method of measurement, the effectiveness of the houses in the four States in terms of their overall ability to rehabilitate the offenders in their programs was as follows:

Locally operated houses:	Houses' effectiveness (percent)
Florida	45
Missouri	40
Pennsylvania	59
Texas	59
State-operated houses:	
Florida	52
Pennsylvania	59

The average for all the houses was about 50 percent.

Many factors could have accounted for the results, some of which are discussed in the following two chapters. We did not attempt to determine whether one factor may have had more impact than others on the houses' rehabilitation efforts. That is the type of research LEAA should undertake.

## CHAPTER 5

### APPROACHES USED BY HOUSES

The 15 houses basically had the same objectives: to help offenders become productive, law-abiding citizens. Each provided a place in the community for the offenders to live and emphasized employment and counseling as the main approaches to changing the offenders' way of life. Other services, such as education, vocational training, and medical services, were provided when necessary.

Although the basic approaches of the houses were similar, they all differed in the types of offenders served, the formality with which they organized their programs, the methods of providing services, and the number of employees used. The States had no criteria or guidelines that all houses had to follow regarding such factors before they could begin receiving offenders into their program.

We do not propose that all halfway houses be designed to serve the same types of offenders or operate their programs in the same manner. A certain amount of flexibility is desirable.

However, if the States are to develop statewide systems to coordinate halfway houses, they must at least know the various types of programs that exist so they can fit them into an overall strategy. No State agencies we contacted had such information for all houses operating within their jurisdictions. A step toward developing a cohesive statewide system would be for the States, with LEAA direction and assistance, to develop standards specifying what is expected from halfway houses awarded LEAA funds.

### STAFFING

Several publications describing an acceptable operation of halfway houses have noted the importance of having the correct number of qualified employees and stated that their temperament is critical in dealing with offenders.

Neither LEAA nor the States had developed staffing guidelines that had to be followed by all houses. The

locally operated houses generally did not have specific requirements for use in hiring, although they attempt to hire the applicants they considered best qualified. State-operated houses, on the other hand, had specific qualification requirements because they were part of the State personnel system. However, we did not evaluate these qualifications.

The staffs generally consisted of a director, several counselors, night attendants to assure 24-hour supervision, and such administrative employees as each house considered necessary. In some cases a program director provided overall supervision if more than one house was operated by the same organization, as was the case in Houston.

The houses used various full-time, part-time, and volunteer workers and varied in the number of staff used and in the types of positions. Six had full-time employment counselors or job placement specialists, 7 had bookkeepers or accountants, 7 had cooks or housekeepers, and 11 had clerk-typists or secretaries.

On the basis of the number of offenders each house stated it could accommodate, the ratio of employees who worked directly with the offenders ranged from an average of 1 for every 2.1 offenders to 1 for every 7.1 offenders. The table on page 44 illustrates the differences in staffing ratios for the 15 houses.

Most house directors and counselors had college degrees in fields related to sociology or psychology and prior related experience. An exception was the New Directions program in Houston, which used ex-offenders having no college degrees. The director, an ex-convict with about 30 years in prison, believed that properly trained ex-offenders who had successfully adjusted to life outside prison could relate to the offenders much better than professionally educated persons.

Only one house director stated he had a problem in attracting qualified staff. His house was in a small town. Four directors, however, also mentioned that salaries were low, a factor that could make it hard to obtain the best qualified individuals.

<u>Halfway house</u>	<u>Number of offenders for each staff member (note a)</u>
Locally operated:	
Florida:	
Cain	4.1
Hillsborough	6.5
Missouri:	
Alpha	3.3
Dismas	2.9
Magdala	2.6
Morman	3.3
Reality	3.0
Pennsylvania:	
Home of Industry	5.0
Lehigh Valley	2.3
Texas:	
New Directions	6.9
Waco	6.0
State operated:	
Florida:	
Jacksonville	7.1
Tampa	7.0
Pennsylvania:	
Philadelphia	3.5
Scranton	2.1

<sup>a</sup>  
As of the time of our review (Sept. 1973 through June 1974).

Four houses had employee problems that adversely affected program operations. Two of these were locally operated and two were State operated. However, we could not discern any pattern in the staffing problems incurred by

the locally operated house that was different from that in the State houses.

Cain house, a locally operated house in Florida which employed six people, had dismissed four employees during about a 1-year period for misconduct and nonperformance of duties, one of whom was the house manager. The employees were dismissed for such infractions as being intoxicated while on duty, having unacceptable attitudes, and not enforcing rules.

The other locally operated house that had a problem related to staff organization was the Hillsborough County program, which had four counselors reporting to the Director of Programs and five security employees reporting to the County's Director of Corrections. The problem occurred when five house security employees were all transferred at one time. The house supervisor stated that the transfer of all security personnel at one time disrupted the continuity of operation and caused resentment by the participants. The supervisor also desired to change the security personnel from county guards to persons having at least a working knowledge of the social science field so they could aid in counseling and treatment.

Since our review, this situation has been changed and the security officers (now called correctional officers) report to the supervisor of the house program. The correctional officers are required to have specific preservice and inservice training. We were told that over 70 percent of the correctional officers are now enrolled in criminal justice professional courses in a local college.

One State-operated house with staffing problems was in Philadelphia. Although this house was only in its second year of operation at the time of our review, none of the original staff were still employed there. During the 12 months before our review, the house had two different directors and five different counselors. The director said the high turnover caused the counseling process to break down. The participants continuously had to reinitiate counseling programs. This in turn, tended to lower the level of achievement of the program's goals. The director said the professionals quit either because they lacked interest in corrections as a profession, because salaries

were too low, or because of the lack of advancement opportunities.

The other State-operated house with staffing problems was in Tampa, where, the chief corrections counselor said, the staff turnover had been high and had adversely affected the house. He attributed the turnover to counselors leaving to accept jobs with higher salaries and better advancement opportunities. Records at the house showed that

--seven counselors had left because they had been promoted or transferred to other positions within the Division of Corrections,

--four had accepted higher paying jobs with private employers, and

--three had been terminated for unsatisfactory conduct.

The counselor also said that the number of staff was inadequate and that more counselors were needed to provide a closer working relationship with offenders.

#### Staff training

Staff training at the houses was very limited and, for the most part, on-the-job training. Training programs for halfway house employees are essential primarily because (1) a unique combination of skills is needed to assist offenders back into society and (2) most house employees have had education or experience in either crime-related fields, such as criminology and corrections or social sciences, but not in both. A combination of training or experience in both would be most desirable.

Only 3 of the 15 houses had what we considered a formal training program. One was the New Directions program, which had no professionally trained employees. Each staff member was required to attend a six-part counseling course offered by a local university.

The other two were the State-operated houses in Pennsylvania, which required all new employees to attend a 3-week orientation course conducted by the State. Although the course concentrated mainly on corrections in an institutional setting rather than in the community, it was supplemented by inservice training in the areas of drug use, counseling, and understanding the offenders' motivations.

Staff members from the houses did try to improve their skills. Some continued to attend college and took courses in counseling-related fields. Others attended seminars, workshops, and conferences that would improve their skills in working with offenders. But generally there was no employee training plan on a statewide level which the houses could follow.

#### PROGRAMS

All houses had developed programs to help offenders become productive, law-abiding citizens. The houses, however, differed in the structure of their programs and in the techniques used. Offenders on probation or parole, and those who entered voluntarily, successfully completed the programs when the staffs decided they were ready to leave. Prison releasees, which made up the majority of those offenders in State-operated houses, usually completed the programs successfully by receiving a parole or serving out their sentences.

Seven of the 11 locally operated houses had structured programs in which the offenders were expected to pass through a series of levels that gave progressively more freedom for more responsive behavior. The most formal of these programs was the one operated by Magdala house. It consisted of five levels and required about 3 to 3-1/2 months to complete.

The first level was devoted to orienting the new participant, obtaining his background data, and giving him vocational and psychological tests. A handbook describing the program was given to him at this time.

In the second level the staff and the offender set mutually agreed upon goals and the way to achieve them. The goals (generally related to employment and education) were

stated in a contract that served as a means of gaging the offender's performance and determining his progress.

In the third and fourth levels, the offender executed his contract; i.e., he found a job, started educational courses, or entered vocational training. He was also expected to change antisocial attitudes and perform certain other things, such as opening a savings account and acquiring an alarm clock so he could get to work on time.

During the first four phases, the offender was subject to a point system used to determine his progress. He earned or lost points for doing or not doing certain things, such as finding a job, going to work each day, attending group meetings, and keeping his room clean. The points were exchanged for such privileges as no household tasks, having visitors, or receiving evening or weekend passes.

The fifth level was called the attitude level; here the offender was expected to continue constructive activity, such as a job or training. He entered this level after accumulating \$60 in his savings account and continuing constructive activity in the fourth level for 4 consecutive weeks. He was permitted to leave the program once he saved \$100 and showed a good attitude for 4 consecutive weeks, with two of those weeks falling in the fifth level.

The Magdala house also had a followup program to maintain regular contact with former participants. Those still on probation or parole were expected to remain in the after-care program for 6 months and could be required to return to the house if they failed to maintain proper behavior. This was the only halfway house reviewed which had a followup program.

The remaining six houses that had structured programs did not use a point system to measure the offender's progress but did have a system of levels. These levels generally provided more freedom as the offenders progressed from one level to the next. For example, a participant would be granted permission to stay out later at night at one level than at the preceding level; on another level he would receive weekend passes, etc.

Eight of the 15 houses (4 locally operated and 4 State operated) did not have formally structured programs involving various levels. Three locally operated houses--Home of Industry, Waco house, and New Directions house--and the two State-operated houses in Pennsylvania could be characterized as operating liberal programs. For example, at one house

--there were times when no employee was present to provide supervision and

--very few rules had been established for the offenders to follow.

The locally operated Hillsborough house and the two State-operated houses in Florida were quite strict in comparison to the other houses reviewed. These houses were run by correction agencies which exercised greater control over the offenders. The Hillsborough house had prison guards stationed in the house and the guards tended to treat the participants as prisoners, which they were. The State-operated facilities in Florida were operated under the philosophy that, while certain rules had to be adhered to, the residents were to be treated as adults in a relaxed atmosphere.

The houses generally had written rules regarding the behavior expected from the residents. These rules ranged from 1 typewritten page at a locally operated house to a 26-page handbook for Florida State-operated houses that went into great detail to explain exactly what was required. The rules generally dealt with visitors; absences from the house; financial matters; and specific prohibitions on using or possessing drugs, alcohol, weapons, and automobiles.

The offenders successfully completing the programs did so within about 2 to 5 months. Some, however, did not wish to leave and remained at the houses for over a year and one stayed for 17 months. The offenders were generally permitted to leave when the house staff decided they were capable of following socially acceptable behavior. One house, however, required that each offender receive unanimous approval from his fellow participants before the staff approved his release.

Those offenders released from prison to participate in a house's program were technically still prisoners of a correction facility and generally had to be granted parole or serve their full sentences before they could be released from a house as successfully completing the program. Others who were on probation or parole when they entered continued under those terms after they left.

#### SERVICES

All 15 houses generally provided or made available to the offenders the following services:

- Temporary financial assistance.
- Group and individual counseling.
- Vocational counseling and training.
- Employment counseling and placement.
- Medical, dental, and psychiatric services.
- Academic upgrading.
- Food and shelter.

The extent of these services and the methods of providing them differed considerably among houses. Our comments on the shelter provided are in chapter 6.

#### Employment services

The 15 houses considered employment as one of the most essential elements for returning offenders to society, and all required their participants either to be employed or to attend a vocational training program or a school. The State-operated houses appeared to be more successful in getting their participants to find employment promptly and stay employed, primarily because they could be easily returned to prison if they did not work.

Some locally operated houses need to increase efforts to obtain employment for participants. For example, the low rate of employment at the Cain house seems to indicate that

the staff was not adequately encouraging and assisting the offenders to obtain jobs. Officials advised us that they recognized the problem and had plans to correct it. Also the Morman house was having difficulty finding jobs for offenders in the rural area where it was located.

A meaningful job is important to an ex-offender. Not only can it assist his reintegration into society, but it may also be the critical difference between an ex-offender successfully adjusting to freedom or committing new crimes. In his search for employment, an ex-offender faces many obstacles; for example he probably has a history of poor work experience or a lack of a specific job skill or training. Accordingly, helping him find meaningful employment within his capabilities and interest is one of the prime requisites of a successful program.

The extent to which the locally operated houses helped their participants secure jobs varied. Some houses had full-time employment specialists; some helped new participants determine their fields of interest; a few gave them tests to ascertain their vocational interests and aptitudes; and a few conducted individual sessions or classes on how to look for jobs, how to fill out applications, and how to work with and impress employers. The Magdala house, for example, required all new participants to attend a 5-day course designed to teach them skills needed in finding and holding a job.

Most of the houses required the offenders to find their own jobs on the theory that they would have to find their own after leaving the houses. These houses, however, would help the offenders find jobs if they encountered difficulty.

Three of the houses usually started the offenders working at temporary or menial jobs to give them experience at working and to teach the importance of showing up for work, being on time, and performing tasks assigned to them by employers. After this initial work experience, they were permitted to take more permanent jobs.

The houses referred offenders to a wide variety of sources to assist them to find jobs. These sources included want ads, lists of employers willing to hire offenders

compiled by the houses, State employment service offices, and local employment programs funded by Federal agencies.

The two State-operated houses in Florida had employment counselors who helped the offenders find jobs if they desired assistance and provided counseling when required. Neither house had any problems in finding jobs for the offenders, and both offered transportation to and from worksites for a charge of \$1 a day.

The two State-operated houses in Pennsylvania stressed employment but generally required offenders to find their own jobs. Both houses referred offenders to the State employment service, and one house had contacted a few employers who were willing to provide jobs.

A 1973 report, "Crime, Recidivism and Employment" by a U.S. Bureau of Prisons task force discussed the effect that employment had on crime and cited the results of related studies. Criminal offenders were said to resemble the disadvantaged group they came from--young, unemployed, under-educated minority group members who had been generally classified as failures. Because many factors were involved, the report said, it was difficult to relate crime to only one variable, such as employment, a complex variable in that it involves economic, social, psychological, and cultural dimensions besides the technical skills.

Although few studies had been made that directly examined the effect of unemployment on crime, there was evidence that suggested a direct correlation.

Evidence cited in the report came from many sources and included:

--A study of a group of prison releasees showed that property crimes vary directly with unemployment.

--46 percent of the offenders in one study had been employed less than 50 percent of the time during the 2 years before incarceration, and 56 percent were unemployed or were employed less than 6 months in the jobs held just before incarceration.

--63 percent of the persons committed to Bureau of Prisons facilities in a 6-month period needed improved vocational skills.

The report stated that evidence was stronger with respect to the effect of employment on recidivism and reported that:

--Unemployed releasees from Federal Community Treatment Centers during a 2-year period failed at a 42-percent rate as compared to a 33-percent rate for those who had jobs.

--Several studies concluded that job stability (holding one job for a significant period) was positively correlated to success.

--One study showed that those employed in administrative, professional, or business occupations before incarceration had high success rates, while only half those working at lower occupations were successful.

--Eighty percent of the offenders who earned over \$600 a month were successful while only 47 percent of those earning less than \$300 a month were successful.

--Another study showed that the more savings available to offenders when they left the houses the greater the probability of their success.

#### Employment experience of participants

We sampled offenders who successfully completed their stays at the 15 houses to determine the extent of their employment while in the houses and after leaving. The sample included 215 offenders who had been out of the houses for an average of about 11 months. However, we were restricted by the absence of complete records.

The houses generally had poor data on the offenders' work histories while in the program and after leaving. We tried to obtain work history data from probation and parole agencies, when applicable, but those agencies also had

incomplete information on periods of employment and salary rates.

Of the 215 offenders, 201 worked at least some of the time while they were at the houses. Three never worked, two were too ill to work, one attended school. There was insufficient data for the remaining eight to ascertain any of their employment histories.

The offenders were generally engaged in unskilled jobs, such as laborers, custodians, and food service workers, or in such jobs as machine operators, carpenters, painters, and repairmen. Data showed that offenders in the houses held each job for an average of 2.8 months while in the houses.

The offenders' earnings while in the houses is a significant monetary benefit not otherwise available to prisoners and their families. Although most of the houses did not keep complete records of earnings by the offenders, several did. The Hillsborough County house in Florida, for example, reported that its participants had earned about \$830,000 over a 4-1/2-year period. The offenders paid about \$208,000 to the house for room and board, about \$227,000 went to the support of their families, and about \$148,000 was placed in savings for the offenders when they left the house. The remaining \$247,000 went for taxes and personal expenses.

Both the locally operated and State-operated houses referred offenders to vocational training programs in the communities when they expressed an interest in a specific program. These community sources included State employment service and vocational rehabilitation programs as well as public and private schools.

Although many houses encouraged offenders to pursue vocational training, the offenders generally did not display interest in such training. One reason was the excessive time required to complete vocational training since many were not in the houses long enough. Another was the long waiting periods for entering training programs. Those that did enter training programs usually did not complete them.

Of our sample of 215 offenders, only 11 entered vocational training programs while at the houses and 6 of the 11 did not complete them. The reasons for not completing included

--the offender's attendance was poor,

--he was tired of it, or

--he did not feel he was learning anything.

#### Counseling

The 15 houses provided group counseling for the offenders and all but 1 required them to attend. The frequency with which group sessions were held varied from one a week to four a week.

The houses offered two basic approaches to group counseling. Some had house meetings in which general subjects were discussed, such as house activities and personal problems. Others, which were all locally operated, used a therapy approach and conducted group counseling aimed at improving the offenders' behavior. One of these locally operated houses used pressure from the offenders' peers to try to convince them to change their behavior.

All 15 houses provided individual counseling for the offenders, usually on a day-to-day basis and when determined necessary by the staff. This counseling, usually based on the individual's needs, covered many different areas, such as family relations and financial and behavior problems.

#### Medical, dental, and psychiatric services

Medical, dental, and psychiatric services were generally provided on a referral basis through existing community services. These included private physicians and dentists, county health services, city hospitals, college health centers, and State or city mental health facilities.

Medical and dental expenses were paid in various ways. Four houses required the offenders to pay for their own expenses, while three were able to acquire the services free from community services. Two others required the offenders to pay for their own expenses or obtain the service free through the State's prison hospital. The remaining six houses each had different methods.

--One arranged for services through private physicians and dentists at reduced fees.

--One paid for small charges but solicited aid from local agencies, such as welfare, for more costly services.

--Another required the offender to pay small charges but, depending on his income, shared part of the cost of expensive services.

--Another required the offender to pay all charges if he were capable; if not, the house paid.

--One required the offender to pay or to apply for welfare.

--Another required offenders to pay for small costs but obtained expensive services free through existing community agencies.

Psychiatric services were generally provided free through local organizations, usually community or college mental health facilities.

#### Educational services

Although the houses did not place a great deal of emphasis on educational services, these services were usually made available and recommended to the offenders. The reasons for the lack of emphasis were that the offenders, as a group (1) were usually deficient in education and (2) were more interested in working than in improving their education.

Seven houses did provide offenders the opportunity to prepare for and take a high school equivalency examination. One, however, had to drop this service because the volunteer teachers withdrew their services. Another required all non-high-school graduates to attend evening classes conducted four times a week by licensed teachers. Several other houses had offenders who had attended adult education or college courses.

#### Food service

As was the case with other services, the houses took many different approaches in providing food to offenders. Only one did not provide some type of food service at the house. Three others did not serve meals at the houses but did provide kitchens for the offenders to use. Otherwise, the offenders at these three houses had to buy their meals at local restaurants.

The two State-operated houses in Florida used offenders as full-time cooks to prepare and serve meals for the other offenders. The Hillsborough County house in Florida, operated by the county correction agency, required participants to eat in an adjacent county prison. The county has recognized this as a poor situation and plans to provide a separate facility for this program.

The other houses used various combinations for serving food that included the offenders preparing their own breakfasts and lunches, offenders and staff members preparing evening meals, and staff cooks preparing all meals.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE HOUSES: THEIR PHYSICAL ADEQUACY, USE, AND SOURCES OF FUNDS

What physical standards should a house meet? What percentage of use of a house's capacity should be considered acceptable? What financial arrangements are available to locally operated houses? There are no standard answers.

The 15 houses reviewed were quite different in physical appearance and cost, some were not being fully used, and most had to acquire operating funds from many sources.

Funding differences were due basically to the different concepts under which the various houses were organized. Eleven were locally operated and 4 were operated by State correction agencies. The 11 locally operated houses included 5 operated by nonprofit organizations under the sponsorship of local governments, such as counties or cities; 3 operated by nonprofit organizations without any local government sponsorships; and 3 operated by local governments.

Neither LEAA nor the four SPAs reviewed had established physical requirements covering all houses. The standards that were imposed usually were city or State requirements established for rooming or boarding houses. These standards do not insure an adequate facility since they do not cover the specialized requirements needed by a rehabilitation center, such as counseling rooms, office space, or recreation facilities.

A certain amount of fluctuation in the use of the capacity of a halfway house must be expected. Failures during the program, such as an offender who absconds, refuses to abide by rules, or is arrested for a new crime, cause unplanned vacancies. The prompt placement of a new participant depends on the house's coordination with placement agencies, such as courts and parole boards. Because of these inherent delays in obtaining participants, the houses must work closely with all sources from which they receive offenders.

An inability to obtain new placements promptly leads to less than 100 percent use, thus increasing the cost for each participant. The occupancy rate that indicates that a project is having managerial problems or is receiving less than acceptable support from criminal justice agencies had not been established by LEAA of the SPAs reviewed.

Another problem inadequately addressed by LEAA and the SPAs was the potential inability of the locally operated houses to obtain adequate financial backing once LEAA funds are no longer available. Generally, LEAA funds are available for about 3 years, and, for locally operated houses, LEAA funds represent a significant percentage of their total budgets.

Locally operated nongovernmental houses usually functioned in an unstable financial environment. Besides LEAA aid, funds were obtained from participants by charging them for room and board, from the sources placing persons in the house if the source had available funds, from charitable groups, and from private contributions. State-operated facilities work in a relatively stable financial environment because they receive State funding.

The following sections describe in detail the differences in physical adequacy, use, and sources of funds for the houses.

#### FACILITIES

The halfway houses occupied several different types of facilities but for the most part were former residences. Other types of facilities used included a former fraternity house, a remodeled 100-year-old convent, a remodeled store, and buildings designed and constructed as halfway houses.

There were no city or State code or zoning requirements that specifically covered these houses. But most of the locally operated ones had to meet city code and zoning requirements for rooming or boarding houses, while State-operated houses had to meet requirements established by State agencies. The facilities were usually inspected by State or city inspectors, but regulations were not always enforced.

We observed the physical condition of 19 facilities operated by the 15 houses and considered that 5 facilities were excellent, 11 were adequate, and 3 were poor. Our evaluation was based on our assessment of the adequacy of the plumbing, visible electrical system, size of rooms, recreational and counseling space, and general appearance. (See app. I for details on the houses.) Generally the house directors agreed with our observations.

Also eight facilities had fire safety deficiencies in that they did not have fire extinguishers readily available or lacked adequate fire escapes. House directors and SPA officials said they would try to correct these deficiencies.

The five facilities in excellent condition included three locally operated and two of the four State-operated houses. The three locally operated houses were a newly constructed house in Hillsborough County, Florida; a newly remodeled store building in Springfield, Missouri; and a very well maintained former residence in Waco, Texas. The two State-operated houses in excellent condition were both in Florida--one was a newly constructed facility in Tampa and the other a remodeled facility in Jacksonville.

Although most facilities were in good condition, many needed some work, such as painting and minor repair. For example, the facility in Columbia, Missouri, appeared structurally sound but generally provided a depressing atmosphere. There were cracks in the ceiling and walls and the interior needed a good cleaning and painting. Most of the furniture was already used when it was acquired by the house and was in poor condition. Several minor repair jobs were also needed, bathroom fixtures were coming loose, and the front door lock did not work. The pilot lights on the gas cooking stove would not stay on causing gas to escape into the room.

When we visited one facility in Houston in April 1974, it was being remodeled because of the poor condition of the interior. This facility was a former residence that was first occupied as a halfway house in December 1972 and had been donated rent free by a local church. The remodeling work was being done by house participants and members of the church that owned the property.

The facility in the worst condition was the Philadelphia house operated by the State Bureau of Correction. The overall appearance was dreary. Both the exterior and interior were in serious disrepair. Plaster was falling from the walls in some of the bedrooms, tile was falling from the walls in the bathrooms, and the fixtures were in poor condition. In addition, the fire alarm did not work; there was no fire escape plan; virtually no space for visitors; and, except for a radio and television in a small crowded reception room that also served as an office, there was no space, equipment, or facilities for recreation. Furthermore, many bedrooms were furnished only with a cot, and the other furniture in the building was in poor condition.

Although the facility was leased by the State Bureau of Correction, the State Department of Labor and Industry was responsible for inspecting its safety and livability before any lease agreement was finalized. However, it had never been inspected by that State agency, apparently because the Bureau never notified the agency that the facility was being leased. Following our discussions of the problems with State officials, the Bureau of Correction notified the owner that, if the poor conditions were not corrected within 90 days, the State would cancel the lease and move the program to another facility.

Living space provided for participants in the facilities was generally adequate, but sleeping areas in several appeared crowded. Gross square footage (including sleeping, dining, indoor recreation, and office space) ranged from 118 square feet to 786 square feet for each participant.

The facilities were acquired in several different ways that could have affected their condition. For example, the owner of a rented facility would be less likely to remodel, especially for a house having an uncertain future. Ten of the facilities were rented; five were purchased by nonprofit organizations that operated the houses; two were designed and constructed specifically as halfway houses; and two were provided free by the owners. The latter two were both in Houston and were being used by the New Directions program. One of these had been donated by a local church and the other by a mental health organization.

The rented facilities were obtained at annual rates ranging from \$3,600 for about 5,700 square feet of floor space in Springfield, Missouri, to \$14,310 for about 5,400 square feet in Philadelphia.

The purchased facilities ranged in price from \$9,000 for about 5,600 square feet of floor space to \$25,000 for about 3,800 square feet. Remodeling costs however, were incurred for each of the five purchased facilities and ranged from \$1,925 to \$38,600.

The two facilities designed and constructed as half-way houses were in Florida. One was built by a county correction agency for \$24.55 a square foot and could accommodate up to 52 participants. The other was built by the State for \$20.90 a square foot and could house up to 56 participants.

#### USE OF FACILITIES

Efficient use of halfway houses requires that they stay as full as possible. Houses operated by a State correction agency, such as those in Florida and Pennsylvania, have less of a problem in obtaining participants than locally operated ones because the State prisons, also operated by the correction agency, have many offenders potentially eligible for placement in halfway houses.

Locally operated houses, however, had to use a different approach because they depended on those agencies with jurisdiction over potential participants, such as probation, to voluntarily send them participants. They therefore must have continued coordination and cooperation with those agencies to obtain participants.

The 15 houses' occupancy rates ranged from 46 percent to 93 percent of capacity. The locally operated houses had occupancy rates ranging from 46 to 90 percent and averaging about 69 percent. Three of the 11 had less than 60-percent occupancy. The State-operated houses, however, had occupancy rates ranging from 68 to 93 percent and averaging about 80 percent.

The following table shows occupancy rates for the 15 houses.

<u>Halfway house</u>	<u>Percent of occupancy (note a)</u>
Locally operated:	
Home of Industry	46
Cain	51
Hillsborough	53
Alpha	68
Morman	69
Reality	70
Waco	71
Dismas	79
Lehigh Valley	79
New Directions	85
Magdala	90
State operated:	
Philadelphia	68
Scranton	72
Jacksonville	86
Tampa	93

<sup>a</sup>Generally for 6-month periods between March and December 1973.

Other sources could be developed to increase use of the houses having low occupancy rates. For example, the Home of Industry in Philadelphia, which had an occupancy rate of only 46 percent, had received 89 percent of its offenders from the State correction agency and only 11 percent from probation sources. The low occupancy, we were told, was due to the lengthy procedures used by the State Board of Probation and Parole to approve the release of offenders to the house.

Another example was Cain house in Florida, which had only 51-percent occupancy. The courts and voluntary admissions accounted for 84 percent of the participants, and the State correction agency furnished 16 percent. The house received no offenders from the Bureau of Prisons or county and local jails. The low occupancy, according to the house directors, stemmed from employee problems which had seriously disrupted the house's ability to work with

offenders. Consequently, the number of referrals by the courts was significantly reduced.

Usually the houses were established to serve certain groups of offenders, such as probationers; repeat offenders; or, in one case, county prisoners, so the county jail population could be reduced. If these usual sources do not provide enough participants, house officials should seek others. For example, probation and parole officials in Missouri helped establish two houses designed to serve young male probationers but the number of probationers being referred was not enough to fill the facilities. To increase their occupancy, the two houses contacted the Missouri Department of Correction and obtained offenders being released under the State's parole and work release programs.

#### SOURCES OF FUNDS

Another requirement for operating a halfway house is an adequate and continuing source of funds. There are many possible sources, including Federal, State, county, and city governments as well as local civic organizations and private citizens. The locally operated houses relied primarily on grants from LEAA but also acquired funds from other sources. These included those sources mentioned above; room and board charges paid by offenders; and payments from Federal, State, and local agencies which placed offenders in the houses.

Nine of the 11 locally operated houses had not developed adequate and continuing sources of funds and, consequently, were in danger of closing or reducing the scope of their programs when LEAA financial support stopped. It is imperative for locally established and operated houses to explore new funding sources early in their development. If they do not seek out new funding sources--the most logical ones are State and local governments--some worthwhile programs could be lost.

The problem of continual funding of worthwhile projects once LEAA funding stops is discussed in detail in a previous GAO report, "Long-Term Impact of Law Enforcement Assistance Grants Can Be Improved," GGD-75-1, December 23, 1974.

The State-operated houses, in contrast, were virtually assured of continued existence as long as the States believed that halfway houses contributed to their correction efforts.

The following table shows the sources of funds for each house as set out in the grant budgets submitted to the SPAs.

<u>Halfway house</u>	<u>Percentage of funds</u>	
	<u>LEAA</u>	<u>Local</u>
Locally operated:		
Cain	72	28
Hillsborough	44	56
Alpha	67	33
Dismas	82	18
Magdala (note a)	55	45
Morman	74	26
Reality	70	30
Home of Industry	70	30
Lehigh Valley	67	33
New Directions (note a)	26	74
Waco	67	33
State operated:		
Jacksonville	60	40
Tampa (note b)	48	52
Philadelphia (note c)	83	17
Scranton (note c)	59	41

<sup>a</sup>These two houses received grants from Federal agencies other than LEAA, which were included in their budgets as local share funds. Total Federal funds received by Magdala house were 94 percent of the budget, and total Federal funds received by New Directions were 44 percent.

<sup>b</sup>The Tampa house received only one grant of LEAA funds for constructing the facility. The State then assumed operating costs.

<sup>c</sup>The two houses each received only one grant of LEAA funds. The State then assumed total operating costs.

The houses secured operating funds from many different sources other than Federal grants, and the locally operated houses generally had more difficulty securing funds than the State-operated houses. Officials at only two of the locally operated houses firmly believed they could continue without Federal financial support, and both of these were sponsored by county governments which could assume financial responsibility. Hillsborough officials told us in February 1975 that the county had assumed complete financing of the program.

All 15 houses charged the offenders for room rent and for food, if provided. The income helped finance the operation but did not begin to cover all costs. In addition, the offenders were generally not required to pay if they were not working. At some houses the room and board rates were graduated based on the offender's income. The maximum weekly rates ranged from \$10 to \$31.50.

The five houses in Missouri received funds from the State Department of Corrections for housing prisoners under the State's prerelease program. Two other locally operated houses in other States also received similar payments--one from a probation and parole agency and one from a mental health program. Eight houses, including five locally operated and three of the four State operated, also received payments from the Bureau of Prisons for housing Federal prisoners under its prerelease program.

Two of the locally operated houses--one each in Pennsylvania and Texas--received State funds--about \$5,000 each--as a part of their grants from SPAs.

County and city governments also contributed to three of the locally operated houses. These included Reality house in Missouri, which received cash from both the county and city government; Cain house in Florida, which received cash from the county; and the Hillsborough house in Florida, a part of a county correction program.

One source of funds unique to locally operated houses was the contributions in the form of cash, goods, and services from civic and religious organizations, businesses, and private citizens. In some cases these contributions

were significant amounts. For example, the New Directions program in Houston received about \$57,000 in cash and about \$27,000 in goods and services over 4 years.

Other examples were the Lehigh Valley house, which received cash of about \$26,000 over about 2 years, and the Dismas house, which received \$15,000 from a private individual when the center began.

Florida and Pennsylvania received LEAA grant funds to help start their State-operated houses. The States then assumed financial support.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS AND AGENCY COMMENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Attorney General direct the LEAA Administrator to:

--Require that each SPA that is funding or intending to fund halfway houses include certain information in its comprehensive plan before LEAA approves it. The information should address (1) whether a system exists in the State for coordinating the efforts of governmental and nongovernmental houses with each other and with other operating or planned rehabilitation efforts or programs and (2) what standards halfway houses must follow to receive LEAA block grant funds from the SPA. Standards should cover such areas as:

--Minimum physical requirements for facilities.

--Minimum size and qualification of staff in relationship to the number and type of offenders at the house.

--Inhouse training for staff.

--The services to be provided the participants during their stays.

If such information is not in the State plan, LEAA's approval of the plan should be conditional and funds not released for halfway house projects until such information is included.

--Require any SPA whose State does not have a system for coordinating such efforts to identify the impediments to establishing such a system, including the legal, organizational, and political constraints. For example, the SPA might cite legislation that precludes establishing one agency with overall

responsibility for coordinating the operations of houses.

--Require such SPAs to specify an action plan that they and other appropriate State agencies may take to eliminate the impediments to establishing a coordinated rehabilitative system.

--Require the SPAs, in those States where a coordinated system exists, to review the systems to determine if their guidelines and procedures are adequate and, if not, to work with appropriate State agencies to improve them.

We further recommend that the Attorney General direct the LEAA Administrator to use resources available to its National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to evaluate the impact of the different approaches of halfway houses and to develop criteria for assessing the houses' effectiveness.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Department of Justice, by letter dated April 11, 1975, generally agreed with our conclusions and recommendations. (See app. II.) The Department:

--Noted that the report raised two basic issues: (1) the need for statewide coordination and (2) standards relative to adult correctional halfway house programs.

--Noted that the premise underlying these two points is that a fragmented development of alternative systems exists throughout the corrections field. The Department is pursuing several policy-level efforts to address the problem that should define more precisely the Federal role in law enforcement and criminal justice activities.

--Recognized the importance of coordinating halfway house programs with other correction efforts, but pointed out the difficulty of such efforts because it involves an effort that transcends the public

and private sector; State and local correctional and human resources; agencies and organizations; and a number of treatment categories. Nevertheless, the Department generally agreed with our recommendations regarding the need for States to incorporate certain information into their comprehensive plans concerning coordination. LEAA will work toward requiring States to do this. LEAA will also consider setting parameters in terms of guidelines to be followed in developing a coordination policy for statewide correctional halfway house programs.

--Said that, regarding our recommendations that minimum standards be established for halfway houses to receive LEAA block grant funds, it shared our concern and that LEAA needs to take an affirmative stand on developing and enforcing standards whenever its block grant funds are involved. LEAA will initiate action to require each State to incorporate certain information in its comprehensive plan relative to minimum standards which halfway houses must meet to receive LEAA block grant funds. We believe that in carrying out this action LEAA should specify a minimum level of standards which all States must meet for their plans to be approved.

--Stated it would be feasible to withhold block grant funds programed to halfway houses if a State's plan did not contain the preceding information. However, the Department considered that such action would be premature until adequate time had lapsed to permit the States to develop and incorporate such information into their comprehensive plans. This observation is valid.

--Stated it would implement our recommendation regarding the need for LEAA to evaluate halfway house approaches by considering incorporation of such approaches in LEAA's National Evaluation Program for looking at certain areas, in this case, community-based alternatives to incarceration.

The Department's indicated actions, if effectively implemented, will help halfway houses become a more viable

alternative to prison. Moreover, effective implementation should help clarify for the Congress how the Federal Government can play a positive role to improve the criminal justice system within the general framework of LEAA's authorizing legislation.

The States generally agreed with our findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Florida, however, pointed out the difficulty of coordinating locally and State operated halfway houses because, in effect, the effort would have to transcend governmental boundaries and public and private efforts. We believe, however, that these problems do not negate the need to try to coordinate such efforts.

Comments from the houses reviewed are recognized, where appropriate, throughout the report.

## CHAPTER 8

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

To obtain the basic information on halfway house operations, we reviewed State and locally operated programs in Florida, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Texas. We inquired into

- the extent to which LEAA has helped and encouraged States to establish community-based correction systems and assess their effectiveness;
- whether States have coordinated, effective strategies for using LEAA funds to develop a system for halfway houses and integrate them into their overall correction efforts; and
- specific problems involved in operating halfway houses and their impact on offenders.

For each State we obtained information on the extent of the SPA's actions in administering community-based activities and the extent of coordination and administration by State operating agencies.

We reviewed 15 halfway houses of the 42 that had received LEAA funds. They were chosen because they appeared to be representative of the efforts in each State and most had existed for at least 2 years. The selected houses were reviewed between September 1973 and June 1974 and included those operated by local organizations and by State agencies. We reviewed five in Missouri; four each in Florida and Pennsylvania; and only two in Texas, where the SPA had funded very few halfway houses.

At each project we inquired into the objectives and rehabilitation program, staffing, services, operating costs, sources of funds, and condition of facilities. We also obtained statistics on participating offenders.

To assess LEAA's role, we reviewed LEAA's headquarters operations and the work of LEAA regional staff in Atlanta; Dallas; Kansas City, Kansas; and Philadelphia.

### PROJECTS REVIEWED

The following projects were reviewed. Most references to these projects in the report used a shortened name to assist readability.

#### CAIN HOUSE

Community Out-Reach Services, Inc.  
(Formerly Cain Offender Halfway House, Inc.)  
Daytona Beach, Florida  
Sponsored by Volusia County

Cain house occupied an old two-story wood frame house. It was formerly a private residence that had been converted into an apartment house with about 3,300 square feet. Both the exterior and interior needed painting and minor repairs. The interior was generally dreary and untidy and needed a good cleaning. However, the facility was considered to be in adequate condition. Cain house was near the city's central business district in a commercially zoned area. Other businesses and apartment houses were in the immediate neighborhood.

#### HILLSBOROUGH HOUSE

Hillsborough County Offender Diagnostic and Treatment Center  
Tampa, Florida  
Sponsored by Hillsborough County

The halfway house occupied a new one-story concrete block building constructed to house inmates. It contained about 6,150 square feet but had no dining facilities. The offenders were required to eat in the dining facilities of the county prison adjacent to the house. The facility was considered to be in excellent condition.

The county prison camp was enclosed by an 8-foot-high fence and had armed guards on duty at all times. It was constructed in 1926 and contained three main buildings on

3-1/2 acres; a two-story concrete cell block for inmates, a dining facility, and a one-story concrete block building. The concrete block building contained about 2,100 square feet and was used to house inmates participating in the county's rehabilitation program. It was considered to be in adequate condition.

The house was about 6 miles from the central Tampa business district adjacent to a county minimum security prison. The immediate area included residences and commercial buildings. The county prison camp was also about 6 miles from the central Tampa business district in a heavily commercialized area.

#### JACKSONVILLE HOUSE

Jacksonville Community Corrections Center  
Jacksonville, Florida  
Sponsored by Florida Division of Corrections

The Jacksonville house was housed in a one-story concrete block building which contained about 17,000 square feet. The building was formerly the administration building of the Florida Air National Guard. It was considered to be in excellent condition. The facility was in an industrial park that was formerly an airport. The site was about 10 miles from the Jacksonville central business district.

#### TAMPA HOUSE

Tampa Community Corrections Center  
Tampa, Florida  
Sponsored by Florida Division of Corrections

The Tampa house occupied a one-story metal building constructed for the State in 1972. The building was constructed to serve as a halfway house and contained about 10,000 square feet. It was considered to be in excellent condition. The house, about 8 miles from the Tampa central business district, was adjacent to a highway near several commercial buildings.

#### ALPHA HOUSE

Alpha House of Springfield  
Springfield, Missouri  
Sponsored by Springfield Area Council of Churches

Alpha house was located in a 50-year-old two-story brick building formerly used as a retail store with apartments on the second floor. The 5,700-square-foot building was an excellent facility but extensive remodeling, costing about \$25,000, was required before it could be used. It was considered to be in excellent condition. Alpha house was near the city's central business district in an area zoned for light manufacturing.

#### DISMAS HOUSE

Dismas House of Kansas City, Inc.  
Kansas City, Missouri  
Sponsored by Jackson County, Missouri

Dismas house was in a 60-year-old three-story stucco frame house. It contained about 5,600 square feet and needed painting and some minor repair. About \$1,900 was spent on remodeling a bathroom. The facility was considered to be in adequate condition. Dismas house was in an old residential section of the city several blocks from a neighborhood business area. The immediate vicinity consisted of old homes similar in size to Dismas house and several larger apartment buildings.

#### MAGDALA HOUSE

Magdala Men's Residence  
St. Louis, Missouri  
Sponsored by Magdala Foundation (a nonprofit organization)

The Magdala Foundation men's program occupied a 100-year-old three-story brick building originally built as a convent. It contained about 4,200 square feet. Although major renovation work started in 1971, floor repairs were still underway in 1974 and the interior needed painting.

Otherwise, the facility was adequate except the bedroom space for some offenders was too cramped.

The men's house is in an old residential section of St. Louis that generally consists of small two- and three-story apartment buildings and shops. The house is adjacent to a church. The rest of the block has been cleared of buildings except for two that house social welfare programs.

#### MORMAN HOUSE

W. Howard Morman House  
Farmington, Missouri  
Sponsored by Southeast Missouri Law Enforcement Assistance Council

Morman house occupied a two-story frame house formerly used as a family dwelling. The house contained about 1,900 square feet. Overall, it was considered to be in adequate condition. Morman house was about 4 blocks from the town's central business district in an area that included both residential and commercial facilities.

#### REALITY HOUSE

Reality House, Inc.  
Columbia, Missouri  
Sponsored by Mid-Missouri Law Enforcement Assistance Council

Reality house occupied a three-story brick and frame building that was formerly a fraternity house. It contained about 11,000 square feet and appeared structurally sound. Its interior, however, was rather dismal. The walls were cracked and soiled, the furnishings were in poor condition, and the plumbing needed repair. The facility was considered to be in poor condition. Reality House was on the edge of the University of Missouri campus near several sorority and fraternity houses and rooming houses for students.

#### HOME OF INDUSTRY HOUSE

Home of Industry for Discharged Prisoners  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Sponsored by Home of Industry for Discharged Prisoners (a nonprofit corporation)

The program was in an old three-story brick and frame house which was formerly a private residence. It was in adequate condition and contained about 3,250 square feet. The bedrooms appeared too small to accommodate the stated maximum capacity of 15 residents. Twelve appeared to be a more reasonable figure.

There were several deficiencies regarding fire safety: no escape plan; no fire extinguishers; and an inadequate wooden fire escape that did not extend to the third floor. In February 1975 we were told that fire extinguishers had been installed and fire drills had been instituted. The house is in an old residential section of the city.

#### LEHIGH VALLEY HOUSE

Lehigh Valley Opportunity Center, Inc.  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Sponsored by City of Bethlehem

The Lehigh Valley program was in a 65-year-old three-story brick and stone house formerly used as a private residence. The house contained about 3,150 square feet, was clean and in adequate condition, and was adequately furnished. The third floor was not occupied because there was no fire escape. The house was in a commercially zoned area surrounded by residential homes and was adjacent to a university campus.

#### PHILADELPHIA HOUSE

Philadelphia Community Treatment Center #2  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Sponsored by Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction

The program occupied two adjoining brick apartment houses. The old three-story buildings contained about 5,400

square feet, and, except for the recently remodeled first floor area, they were in deplorable condition. Plaster had fallen from the walls in some bedrooms and in the hallways. One bedroom had no heat, and spots from water leaks were prominent throughout the upper two floors. Window casings were rotted and the bathrooms had tiles missing and fixtures that were old and in poor condition. There were very few furnishings and some bedrooms had only metal cots. The overall appearance was dreary and depressing. The houses were in an old residential area of small apartment buildings with some small stores nearby.

#### SCRANTON HOUSE

Scranton Community Treatment Center  
Scranton, Pennsylvania  
Sponsored by Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction

The program occupied a two-story brick and frame building formerly used as a funeral home. It contained about 6,600 square feet of floor space, and extensive renovations had made it into a facility considered to be in adequate condition. The house was in a commercial area with many stores nearby. Across the street was a small park.

#### WACO HOUSE

Rehabilitation Center for Young Adult Offenders  
Waco, Texas  
Sponsored by McLennan County Adult Probation Department

The Waco program was located in an old three-story house and adjacent garage apartment. The facility provided about 5,000 square feet, was in excellent condition, and was well furnished. The Waco house is near the central business district in a combination residential and small business area.

#### NEW DIRECTIONS HOUSE

New Directions Club, Inc.  
Four houses in Houston, Texas  
One house in Galveston, Texas  
Sponsored by New Directions Club, Inc.  
(a nonprofit corporation)

House No. 1 is a 35-year-old two-story brick residence with an adjacent garage apartment. House No. 2 is a 59-year-old three-story brick house with an adjacent garage apartment. House No. 3 is a two-story wooden frame house. House No. 4 occupies the second floor of a 35-year-old two-story brick house. House No. 5 is a 10-year-old one-story brick home formerly used by a mental health program. House No. 1 provided about 3,400 square feet, while the others provided about 3,800, 2,600, 1,000, and 1,800, respectively. All but House No. 3 were considered to be in adequate condition. House No. 3 was considered to be in poor condition but needed renovation had been started.

The Houston houses are in integrated, middle income neighborhoods around the perimeter of the central Houston area. The Galveston house is in a rural area because citizen complaints forced center officials to locate outside the city.



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

APR 11 1975

Address Reply to the  
Division Indicated  
and Refer to Initials and Number

Mr. Victor L. Lowe  
Director  
General Government Division  
U.S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Lowe:

This letter is in response to your request for comments on the draft report titled "Guidance Needed for Halfway Houses to be a Viable Alternative to Prison."

We are in general agreement with the findings and recommendations presented in the draft report. State and local governments are utilizing Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funds to support halfway houses as an alternative to continued incarceration of offenders, and there is an obvious accompanying need to assess thoroughly the manner in which this approach is being implemented. The development of a consistent and coordinated planning process by the States is a primary Departmental concern, and the problem areas identified in the GAO report related to this goal are valid.

The draft report points out the need for a more aggressive Federal role in formulating development of (a) systems for statewide coordination of adult correctional halfway house programs and (b) standards for halfway houses to follow. Also, GAO recommends that LEAA's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice evaluate the various operational modes used by halfway houses to determine which approaches work best in order to develop criteria to assess the effectiveness of halfway houses. The premise underlying these two points is that a fragmented development of alternative systems exists throughout the field of corrections. The Department recognizes this problem and is undertaking a number of policy-level efforts to address the basic causes. For example, the Department is

pursuing an in-depth study to explore fundamental policy issues which have significant operational and procedural impact. An attempt is being made to define more precisely the Federal role in law enforcement and criminal justice activities.

Because crime and almost all efforts to reduce it have been consistently and legislatively defined as State and local problems, direct Federal involvement is seriously limited. However, the Department is attempting to more clearly delineate appropriate ways for the Federal Government to become more actively involved. Federal incentives toward improving the planning process, which is a recurring theme throughout the GAO report, is one area being given attention. Appropriate usage of the National Institute's resources, as well as the leverage available to LEAA through its administration of the primary fund-dispensing mechanism--the Block Grant Program--are two matters which relate directly to the appropriate level of Federal involvement in State and local programs.

#### Statewide Coordination

The concept of statewide coordination of halfway houses is currently receiving much attention in criminal justice circles. The need to address this coordination concept is quite understandable when one examines the myriad of agencies and organizations, both State and local, charged with similar authority and responsibility. However, the complexity of the coordination concept and its ability to escape a realistic, operational definition and implementation should not be underestimated.

The ability of State planning agencies (SPA's) and State correctional authorities to coordinate overall operation of the many different types of halfway houses presents a paramount problem because such a coordination effort must transcend public and private sectors, State and local correctional and human resources, numerous agencies and organizations, and several treatment categories, such as drugs and alcohol. While establishment of one agency to have overall responsibility for supervising and approving the operations of all halfway houses represents one approach, other alternative approaches to the problem would also have to be fully tested and their efficiency established. The issues involved here are far reaching and will require further study by LEAA.

In criticizing LEAA's hitherto nondirective stance toward encouraging a coordinated statewide planning system, the GAO report does acknowledge that many States face legislative restrictions in institutionalizing such a structure. This is an impediment which confronts both LEAA and the SPA's in attempting to organize a more effective and coordinated system.

We agree with GAO's recommendation that LEAA require each SPA to incorporate in its comprehensive plan certain information relative to coordinating statewide adult correctional halfway house programs. LEAA intends to move in this direction by requiring each SPA to furnish such information in its future comprehensive plans. We view the development of an LEAA coordination policy regarding statewide correctional halfway house programs as a very essential step and, where feasible, LEAA will evaluate the need for setting parameters in terms of guidelines to be followed.

#### Minimum Standards

Generally, we agree with GAO's conclusion that minimum standards need to be established for halfway houses to follow, and that LEAA block grant funds could be used as leverage to encourage halfway houses to follow the standards. For the most part, SPA's and State and local correctional agencies have not taken the initiative in this area. Although it has been pointed out that the halfway house movement is new in relation to the concept of incarceration, the knowledge needed to develop standards can be drawn from a number of analogous programs, such as group houses for delinquents and children in need of supervision, and residential centers for treatment of mental health problems.

We wish to point out that LEAA has not overlooked the need for standards. For example, LEAA has sent 3,222 copies of the document "Guidelines and Standards for Halfway Houses and Community Treatment Centers" by the International Halfway House Association to interested organizations, including copies to every SPA. Copies of another study funded by LEAA in 1972, entitled "Guidelines and Standards for the Use of Volunteers in Correctional Programs," were sent to each SPA. In addition, 100 copies of the study were sent to each regional office, and 894 copies were sent to correctional institutions. In total, 5,971 copies of the study were disseminated.

LEAA also provided funds to the University of Illinois for development of "Guidelines for the Planning and Design of Regional and Community Correctional Centers for Adults." Twenty-one hundred copies of this guideline have been disseminated. Personnel at the University of Illinois are currently preparing guidelines specifically for halfway houses entitled "Planning for a Community Re-integrative Program: Halfway House." They expect wide dissemination of these guidelines when completed.

We also agree that LEAA needs to take a more positive stand on the development and enforcement of standards whenever LEAA block grant funds are involved. LEAA will initiate action to require each SPA to incorporate in its comprehensive plan certain information relative to minimum standards which halfway houses must meet in order to receive funds from the SPA. The inclusion of such minimum standards in annual plans should prove beneficial in upgrading the program and where feasible, LEAA will consider addressing, or setting parameters, in terms of guidelines to be followed.

#### Need for Evaluation

We agree, in general, with the GAO recommendation regarding the need to evaluate different operational approaches halfway houses may use and to identify the best aspects of each approach in order to develop criteria by which to assess the effectiveness of halfway houses. As we have indicated in previous responses to other GAO reports, it has become increasingly clear to us that there is a definite need to assess the effectiveness of LEAA's programs in achieving their objectives, including the effectiveness of the halfway house programs.

Currently, plans for evaluating programs concerning "Community-Based Alternatives to Incarceration" are being considered under LEAA's National Evaluation Program (NEP). Basically, NEP consists of a series of phased evaluation studies which includes the collecting, developing, and assessing of basic information about programs of interest to LEAA and developing designs for further in-depth study. Where appropriate, these in-depth study designs will be used for carrying out intensive evaluations of the programs.

As one method of measuring the success of halfway houses, the report makes comparisons of halfway house releasees with releasees from Federal institutions, as reported in the 1970

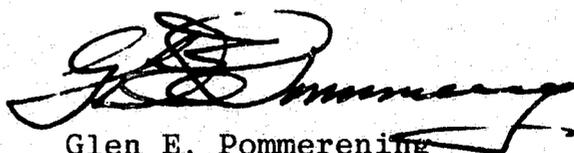
Bureau of Prisons (BOP) study on recidivism. This comparison is misleading. The two groups of releasees are not comparable because the GAO halfway house release group contained probationers, parolees, pre-trial detainees, and possibly other groups not represented in the BOP release population. Moreover, the 1970 BOP recidivism study maintained a follow up on releasees of at least 2 years, whereas the study of halfway house releasees included several who had been discharged for only 4 months.

#### Other Comments

The report suggests that information pertaining to coordination of State rehabilitation efforts and standards which halfway houses must follow should be in the State plan, and if "such information is not in the State plan, LEAA's approval of it should be conditional and funds not released for halfway house projects until such information is included." Although this may be a feasible approach to ensure incorporation of such information in State plans developed 2 or 3 years from now, we do not believe such a rigid policy would be feasible, or in the best interest of all parties involved, for plans developed in the next year or two. The difficulties in operationally defining and delineating the issues of statewide coordination and halfway house standards are such that considerable time may be necessary for the SPA's to adequately develop and incorporate such information into their comprehensive plans. Once these obstacles have been overcome by the SPA's, LEAA intends to consider the feasibility of withholding funds to ensure that each SPA plan includes the necessary information on statewide coordination and halfway house standards.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft report. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Glen E. Pommerening  
Assistant Attorney General  
for Administration

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

	<u>Tenure of office</u>	
	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
<b>ATTORNEY GENERAL:</b>		
Edward H. Levi	Feb. 1975	Present
William B. Saxbe	Jan. 1974	Feb. 1975
Robert H. Bork (acting)	Oct. 1973	Jan. 1974
Elliot L. Richardson	May 1973	Oct. 1973
Richard G. Kleindienst	June 1972	May 1973
Richard G. Kleindienst (acting)	Mar. 1972	June 1972
John N. Mitchell	Jan. 1969	Feb. 1972
<b>ADMINISTRATOR, LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>		
<b>ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION:</b>		
Richard W. Velde	Sept. 1974	Present
Donald E. Santarelli	Apr. 1973	Aug. 1974
Jerris Leonard	May 1971	Mar. 1973
Vacant	June 1970	May 1971
Charles H. Rogovin	Mar. 1969	June 1970

**END**

7. Allen/112-11