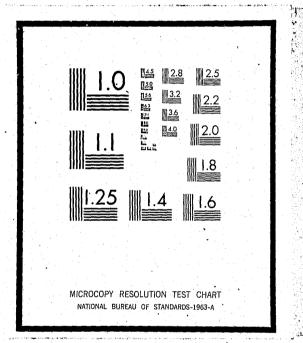
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Delaware -

VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION

(Delaware Council on Crime and Justice, Inc. through the Department of Corrections)

74-069

A Preject Evaluation

Submitted to the Executive Committee

of the

Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime

Evaluation

by

Hareld W. Metz Director of Evaluation

October 1975

2980

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#### ABSTRACT

The approach taken in this investigation can best be characterized as historical research. The aim of the approach was to analyze and evaluate a project designed to secure the services of community representatives to serve as volunteers in working with probationers.

The basic strategy was to construct a story around four components of the project whose interactions formed descriptive events reflecting the total project's outcome. The four components which served as a framework for this investigation were; management, maintenance, production, and participant observations. Each component was identified and described in relation to issues and activities.

In the development of any evaluation, two things are important; empirical data and conceptual elaboration. Therefore, the evaluator; collected and analyzed available evidence associated with the project, along with asking specific subjects who had a personal involvement with the project to volunteer perceptions relating to its efficiency and effectiveness. Some of the findings from those endeavors were as follows:

- 1. Since August 1, 1974, 163 volunteers have been matched with 163 probationers.
- 2. Three individuals (two professional and one clerical) have been hired to implement the project.
- 3. A total of seven (7) judges have been involved with the project since its inception.

- 4. A second application was approved on June 30, 1975 with a 40 percent increase in the budget.
- 5. The project and its director have demonstrated an admirable record in recruiting volunteers.
  - 6. A volunteer and judicial training program was implemented.
- 7. A Volunteers in Probation Policy Advisory Committee was formed, however, it has been relatively ineffectual in resolving project problems and concerns.
- 8. The project has had little impact on the probation officer's job. His professional role has not been altered and caseloads have not been reduced.
- 9. Most of the volunteer's time has been spent on "low risk" cases.
- 10. To use the talents and energies of concerned citizens in only a single way, one-to-one counseling, would appear to be a limited and rigid use of volunteer services.
- 11. Each component involved in the project (Judges, DCCJ, Bureau of Probation and Parole) indicated they needed more complete and unilateral control over its activities.
- 12. Although the project does not meet the needs or problems of the Department of Corrections, they continue to sponsor the grant.
- 13. The project has, from its inception, suffered from a lack of coordination and communication.

Due to the lack of available evidence, it was impossible to determine the project's:

- a. effectiveness in reducing crime or improving the criminal justice system;
- b. adaptability to other jurisdictions;
- c. indications of achievement; and,
- d. ability to demonstrate cost-effectiveness.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Due to the high recidivism rates of incarcerated individuals, many judges are now concluding that incarceration is not warranted or adviseable for all those found guilty of criminal offenses. Therefore, probation is becoming an increasingly common case disposition for many offenders.

In order to deal with this increase, the VIP project proposed to secure the services of community representatives to serve as volunteers in working with the probationer. Its purpose was to provide a one-to-one counseling relationship designed to assist the state probation staff in supervising probationers. In the words of the applicant:

This project is designed to focus on the overcrowded caseloads of the officers in the State Probation Department and the effectiveness of a sentencing judge in placing an individual on probation.

#### II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Title of Project:	Volunteers	in	Probation

Applicant: Department of Corrections

Project Director: Jean Schneider, Executive Director,

Delaware Council on Crime and Justice, Inc.

Project Period: 1 August 1, 1974 to July 31, 1975

Budget Summary:	\$28,463 Federal	\$3,163	State	\$31,626	Tota:
Categories	Allocations		Expen	ditures	
Personnel (Benefits)	\$25,216		\$23	,575	
Consultants	600		• 4	600	
Travel	800			800	
Supplies	1,237		1	,237	
Operating Expenses	\$ <del>28,463</del>		\$ <del>26</del>	610 ,775	
Project Personnel:	Marjorie Reynold October 1974	s, Volu	nteer C	oordinato	or,
	John Quarles, Pa Kent County, S			nator for	<b>:</b>
	Andrea Wolfson,	Clerk-ty	pist,	October 1	L974
	Doris Holmes, Se	cretary	I, Jan	uary 1975	5

#### III. HISTORICAL NOTES

Problems associated with the probation process were illuminated in a summary report written by Dr. Ted Zink<sup>2</sup> in April of 1973. The highlights of that report were as follows.

- 1. The Division of Probation and Parole is not particularly sympathetic toward or desirous of a volunteer probation program. Because of the internal struggles and external bombardments that presently surround the Division, they are in no way equipped to handle additional functions.
- 2. The Municipal Court does not have the resources or personnel to operate a volunteer program on an independent and continual basis.

lon June 30, 1975, the Supervisory Board of DARC approved a second application ending July 31, 1976 in the amount of \$47,700. This represented a 40 percent increase over the first year's budget. The increase involved an additional employee (a total of four) and significant increases in consultants, travel, supplies, operating expenses and equipment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Dr. Zink, a consultant from Glassboro State College, was hired to conduct a study pertaining to the expansion of a Volunteer Probation Counseling Program for the Municipal Court. The DCCJ had previously initiated a pilot program in conjunction with judges Fraczkowski and Goldstein.

- 3. Although, ideally such programs as volunteer probation counseling should clearly rest in the probation jurisdiction, an independent agency such as the Delaware Council on Crime and Justice, Inc., is entirely appropriate as administrator, at least on a temporary basis.
- 4. If this program is to succeed, communications between DCCJ and the Department of Probation and Parole must be improved. Unless the primary problem of coordination of professional staff and volunteer workers is solved, the true potential for projects of this sort cannot be realized.

There was a general feeling by all involved parties that the judges would not have been receptive to a volunteer probation program if such a program were to have been housed and operationalized from the Bureau of Probation and Parole. Therefore, a more neutral third source appeared to be the only workable alternative.

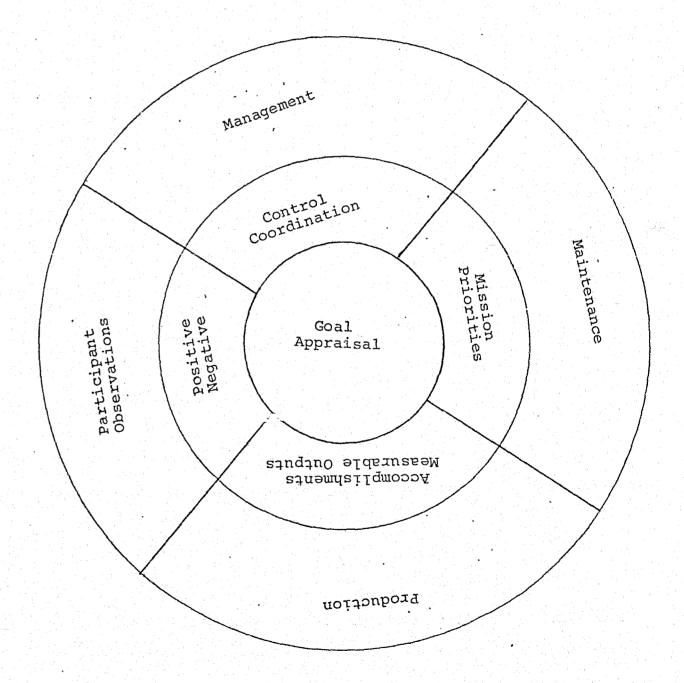
#### IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EVALUATION MODEL

In order to record subjective feelings and empiral data which could be used to provide a basis for analysis and evaluation of this project, the evaluator chose to develop a model, simulating the projects' accomplishments and failures. The model, (see Figure 1), is a descriptive model composed of four parts seeking to order and relate what had been observed as fragments. It is intended to identify those involved in the achievement of goals and objectives, and to describe the process by which the project survived, ensured participation, motivated personnel, and emitted some measurable output, product or service. The model is intended to provide a structure which will support an appraisal of the stated objectives as established by the Delaware Council on Crime and Justice.

Each part is identified and described in relation to issues and activities. Therefore, the evaluator chose the following four

Figure 1

A Descriptive Model Of A Goal Appraisal System



areas as most relevent for analysis.

- 1. Management. This component is concerned primarily with the control, coordination and selection of personnel.
- 2. <u>Maintenance</u>. This component is concerned with mediating between task demands and project needs. It attempts to prevent the project from failure or decline.
- 3. <u>Production</u>. This component is concerned with individual and project accomplishments.
- 4. Participant observation. This component is concerned with uncontrolled observations of individuals who are directly involved in the project.

#### V. MANAGEMENT

- 1. The application called for the hiring of part-time student helpers. However, this concept was later discarded and a part-time coordinator was hired for Kent County.
- 2. A Volunteers in Probation Policy Advisory Committee (for a list of members, see Exhibit A) was organized to allow for collective and cooperative efforts in the establishment of project policies and guidelines. This committee has met on a regular basis and all quidelines emanating from the project have been subsequently approved by its members.
- 3. All volunteers were asked for a one year service commitment, 3 however, the length of a volunteer's service was dependent

upon the disposition of the case by the court or a change in probation status imposed by the probation officer.

- 4. A recruitment program was established involving: (1) public speaking engagements; (2) letters, brochures and published documents; (3) articles in local newspapers; and, (4) public service announcements made via the local radio and television stations. There was, however, no formalized, on-going recruitment program. Recruitment was generally based upon need, and since there are 25 volunteers awaiting assignment there were no apparent problems in obtaining a sufficient number of volunteers for the project.
- 5. The screening of new applicants consisted of: (1) the completion of an application (at which time personal references were checked); and (2) an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator. Although such steps are generally taken in other states, the DCCJ did not find it expedient or necessary to check fingerprints, criminal histories, or previous psychological records.
- 6. A volunteer and judicial training program was offered by DCCJ consisting of the following three components.

#### A. Orientation

- 1. Required of all volunteers
- 2. Five (5) hours in length
- 3. Curriculum:
  - a. VIP Program Philosophy and Design
  - b. Delaware Court Structure and Operation
  - c. Function of the Bureau of Probation and Parole
  - d. Volunteer's Functions and Roles
  - e. Counseling Principles and Techniques

Nationally, it has been determined that the average volunteer drops out of the program before he has completed four or five months of service. According to local probation officers, this same trend appeared to be evident in the local program.

#### B. On-going Group Training

- 1. There have been four sessions of two hours each
- 2. Curriculum:
  - a. Individual Case Situations and Problems
  - b. Available community resources and referral procedures

#### C. Judicial Orientation

- 1. One session for two hours
- 2. Curriculum:
  - a. The Use of Volunteers
  - b. Supplementing Court Services
  - c. The Local VIP Program
- 7. Although it was not part of the original application, therefore, nullifying DCCJ's responsibility or accountability, a major problem of this project was the lack of training for probation officers in the use and function of volunteers. In every case, the probation officer stated that he/she was desirous of such training but that none had been provided or planned. Another problem was that none of the training provided to volunteers utilized the knowledge and skills of on-line probation officers.

8. Early in the project, the referral source was broadened to include not only referrals from the court but also direct requests from the probation officer for a volunteer to be assigned to a specific case for which he was responsible. Several officers indicated that as much as a six month delay from request to assignment of a volunteer was observed. In some cases, the individual was off probation by the time the volunteer was assigned.

#### VI. MAINTENANCE

- 1. The project was designed to focus on the overcrowded caseloads of the officers in the Bureau of Probation and Parole. According to the officers within the Bureau, the project had in fact increased their duties and responsibilities, since they now were required to supervise both probationers and volunteers.
- 2. Most of the volunteer's time was spent on "low risk" cases whose chances for positive adjustment were relatively high to begin with. Therefore, there is some justification in assuming that the volunteer could be more profitably used by assisting the probation officer with his total caseload. This assistance would not only take the form of counseling but might also involve providing transportation, collecting information and visiting prospective employers.
- 3. The sentencing judge was kept informed of the probationer's progress in the form of periodic reports from the probation officer, the volunteer, and the project coordinator. A problem arose in that the volunteer often did not communicate his perceptions or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Nationally, only 30 percent of the probation staffs involved in projects of this type felt they had been adequately trained in working with volunteers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>A training program for probation officers is planned for November 6, 1975.

recommendations to the probation office, therefore, the judge could have received conflicting or a least confusing reports.

4. It was interesting to note that each component involved in the project (Judges, DCCJ, and The Bureau of Probation and Parole) felt they needed more complete and absolute control over its activities. Although the Judges were quite positive in their reactions to the project, they expressed a desire to meet with the volunteers prior to their assignments, and to actually be responsible for the ultimate match.

#### VII. PRODUCTION

1. A stated objective of the project was to coordinate a program of one-to-one counseling. The estimated number of persons to be served during the initial year of the project was 300.7 Figure 2 depicts the total number of cases matched. A total of 163 "service units" (326 individuals) have been formed and operationalized since the project's inception.

Figure 2
Total Number of Cases Matched

County	Municipal Court	Court of Common Pleas	Superior Court	Total
New Castle	18	93	26	137
Kent	_0	<u>20</u>	_6	_26_
Total	. 18	113	32	163

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>A total of seven (7) Judges have been involved in the project since its inception.

2. Other pertinent data as regards the use and status of volunteers is illustrated in Figure 3.

#### Figure 3

#### Present Status of Volunteers

Number	Status
163	 Assigned to date <sup>8</sup>
75	 Currently active
25	 Awaiting assignment
13	 Dropped out
3	 Screened out
25	 Number of untrained applicants awaiting orientation
33	 On deferred status

- 3. Of the 163 volunteers assigned to date, 33 (21.2%) have been recruited from the minority population.
- 4. Figure 4 depicts selected characteristics of the client population.

#### VIII. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

In the development of any evaluation, two things are important; empirical data and conceptual elaboration. The objective of this component was conceptual elaboration. Therefore, the evaluator asked specific subjects to volunteer perceptions relating to the management and effectiveness of the project. Participation by the interviewee was strictly on a voluntary basis

The DARC staff interpreted this number to represent 300 probationers, whereas, the DCCJ staff worked under the assumption that the number 300 represented "service units", i.e., 150 probationers and 150 volunteers. This problem was rectified in the new application.

<sup>8</sup>July 31, 1975

<sup>9</sup> The total number was composed of 15 black males, 17 black females, and one Spanish surname female,

and each subject was urged to express himself fully and truthfully. The results of those interviews can be found in Figure
5. Such perceptions could be the basis for a future evaluation
since their reliability or validity has not undergone empirical
testing.

#### Figure 4

### Client Profile (163 Probationers)

Cat	<u>egory</u>	Number
I.	Age:	
	18 - 25 26 - 35 36 - 46 47 - 57 58 - 68	127 21 11 3 1
II.	Sex:	
	Male	122 41
III.	Race:	
	White	108 55
IV.	Number of Offenses	
	First Two or More Unknown	65 91 7
v.	Sentencing Court:	
	Court of Common Pleas	113 18 32

Observations	Judges <sup>2</sup>	Volunteers <sup>3</sup>	7007 7	Bureau of Probation 5
		VOIGHTGGEIS	DCCJ Personnel4	and Parole Personnel
Positive Observations:	<ol> <li>The project is good, it has a lot of merit.</li> <li>We expect to continue to use the services</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>The type and extent of supervision was good.</li> <li>Monthly discussion sessions were interesting</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>We have been able to obtain a more than adequate number of volunteers.</li> <li>The project has benefited 163</li> </ol>	1. The project has the potential for improving proba- tion services.
	<ul><li>provided by this project.</li><li>3. It has the potential</li></ul>	and valuable	probationers.  - 3. A Policy Advisory Committee was established to allow for	2. We would like to see the volunteer doing additional
	of being extremely val- uable.	4. I enjoyed the experience.	collective and cooperative in tegration of the various components.	functions other than counseling
Negative				
Observations	1. The courts need more control over this project.	n-1. The monthly forms to be completed by the volunteer were confusing and	1. There have been problems in securing complete monthly reports from the volunteers on	l. We have received little or no training in working with
	2. There have been cases of inappropriate matches. The court should have the		time 2. Necessary tracking data from	volunteers. 2: This project has
	opportunity to meet with the volunteer prior to assignment.		the Courts and Department of Corrections is not available. Staff must rely on the pro- bationer for necessary infor-	in no way altered the professional role of the pro- bation officer.
	<ol><li>Some of the written re- ports from the volunteer were insufficient, incor plete and not on time.</li></ol>	the probation officer. We need to work more closely	<ul><li>mation.</li><li>During the early stages of the project, there was a lack of</li></ul>	ication problem
	4. There remains severe con	with him/her.	. court referrals.	between us and the DCCJ.
	munications problems be- tween the DCCJ and the Bureau of Probation and Parole.	- 4. Supervision was fragmentary and limited. The majority of supervision was by telephone	ond-year funding adversely,	4. There appears to be a very high
	Parole.	5. Judges fail to heed volun- teer recommendations.	affected services to the pro- ject's constituents.	drop-out rate among volunteers. They never seem to stay on a case
				to its logical con- clusion.
				5. Often the volunteer simply circumvents the probation Officer and reports directly to the judge.

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personnel who represent the four major components of the VIP Project. No observation was listed unless it was indicated by two or more individuals.

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can never

be realized.

the parties state, the Bureau of

2A total of four judges were interviewed. All had direct contact with the VIP Project.

volunteers. Eleven (34%) responded to the questionnaire and six (19%) were returned by the Post Office indicating that the addressee

were interviewed.

<sup>4</sup>A total of three individuals were interviewed. 5A total of ten probation officers and two administrators

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next thirty Justice, Inc. the this submitted between the applicant and the contractor. As regards the Division DCCJ, project, resolved, Unless the (30) days. of Bureau no written contract was ever negotiated between Such a contract should be submitted within the the problem of coordination between the Judges, Corrections the Of true potential for this particular project Probation and Parole, and the Volunteers and the Delaware Council on Crime and

agency for

this

project,

their part

to involve themselves with its administration or out-

there appeared to be a reluctance on

perspective, the project has not met the De-

problems, yet they were unwilling to take the

nternal problems were resolved and

Agreements were made to continue

From

their

CONCLUSION IS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the Department of Corrections was the applicant

Probation and Parole is to take over the project (with state funds) beginning August 1, 1976, steps need to be taken to begin the transfer of responsibilities and functions. As the project is now constituted, the probation officer and the VIP Coordinator assume dual responsibility for the volunteers supervision and activities. Such a dual role breeds only confusion and conflict. If, however, the Judges are to assume control over the project, the Division of Corrections needs to develop a new relationship with them or terminate their future sponsorship of the grant.

- 5. It would appear that the establishment of a Volunteers in Probation Policy Advisory Committee did not serve as a conduit for project concerns and issues. Many of the problems discussed in this evaluation were not brought before the collective membership and therefore were not debated and resolved by the Committee. The absence of any on-line probation officers on the Committee was a management decision by the Department of Corrections and not that of DCCJ.
- 6. To use the talents and energies of concerned citizens in only a single way, one-to-one counseling, would appear to be a limited and rigid use of volunteer services. If the probation officer or the Judge could use volunteers in a variety of different roles, such as tutoring offenders with remedial education problems, providing transportation and delivery services, performing clerical and public relations work, and planning and coordinating employment interviews and special meetings, the potential of such a program would be significantly increased.

- 7. Nationally, volunteers have not been accepted by professional probation officers. Probation officers have generally believed that volunteers were too soft, and that they get to do all the "good-guy" things with offenders, while the regular probation officer must be an enforcer. As relates to this project, this conclusion did appear to be applicable in the early stages, however, the evaluator detected that such a belief was no longer held by the present probation staff. It should be noted that similar projects involving the volunteer concept have taken from four to six years to become fully operational and effective.
- 8. There was a general feeling by all concerned that the project director had a unique ability to recruit volunteers, especially from the minority communities. It is hopeful that her eventual replacement can cultivate her contacts and maintain her recruitment techniques.
- 9. In order to document activities and achievements, the project needs to develop a more explicit and comprehensive record keeping system. Many of its accomplishments were not recorded or officially noted. For example, if volunteer hours were computed and multiplied by the merit system rate for said services, a demonstrated cost-benefit could be ascertained.
- 10. A future objective of this project should be to collect data which could be used to assess the project's impact. For example, by using 40 probationers who were assigned to a volunteer and 40 probationers who proceeded through regular probation,

one would have been able to compare the recidivism rates, both during and following the probationary year.

- 11. There appeared to be an inordinate number of "low risk" cases assigned to volunteers, see Exhibit B. Since the majority of probationers may have successfully completed probation without a volunteer or close supervision by the probation officer, the project may wish to experiment with a greater percentage of high risk probationers who demonstrate more serious behavioral problems resulting in additional professional services.
- 12. Due to the fact that DARC did not require the project to keep appropriate data, and because the Department of Corrections was reluctant to analyze and assess its subcontract, it was impossible to determine the project's:
  - .a. effectiveness in reducing crime or improving the criminal justice system;
  - b. adaptability to other jurisdictions;
  - c. indications of achievement; and,
  - d. ability to demonstrate cost-effectiveness

#### EXHIBIT A

V.I.P. Policy Advisory Committee

#### DELAWARE COUNCIL ON CRIME AND JUSTICE, INC.

701 SHIPLEY STREET • WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801 • TELEPHONE 658-7174

#### MEMORANDUM

TO:

Dr. Harold Metz, Director

DARC's Evaluation and Research Unit

F'ROM:

Marjorie L. Reynolds, Volunteer Coordinator

DATE:

June 18, 1975

RE:

V.I.P. Policy Advisory Committee Persons

Listing of names, addresses and telephone numbers

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Phone: 571-4530

Judge Merrill C. Trader

Court of Common Pleas

Kent County Court House Dover, Delaware 19901

Phone: 678-4617

Judge Robert O'Hara

Superior Court Public Bldg.

10th and King Streets

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Judge Arthur F. DiSabatino

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#### EXHIBIT B

Offenses of Probationers

Number	Offense
39	Motor vehicle violations
20	Shoplifting
14	Theft under \$100
13	Driving while under the influence
10	Resisting arrest
9	Disorderly conduct
8	Trespassing
8	Possession of drugs
5	Terroistic threatening
<b>5</b>	Menacing
5	Assault
<b>3</b>	Theft over \$100
3	Offensive touching
3	Indecent exposure
2	Burglary
<b>2</b>	Conspiracy
<b>2</b>	Criminal mischief
2	Escape
2	Issuing bad checks
2	Felony
2	Issuing a false statement
	Carrying a concealed weapon
	Receiving stolen property
	Prostitution
	Forgery

# END