

INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

*In Response to a Request for Technical Assistance*

*By the*

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission  
Amarillo, Texas

April 11, 1973

*Prepared by:*

Public Administration Service  
1313 East 60th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637

(Per Contract J-LEAA-015-72)

37622

I. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

A. **Consultant Assigned:**

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Birmingham, Alabama

B. **Date Assignment Received:**

February 16, 1973

C. **Date of Contact with LEAA Regional Coordinator:**

February 20, 1973

D. **Dates of On-Site Consultation:**

(Study conducted in two phases)  
Phase I—February 22—26, 1973  
Phase II—March 14—17, 1973

E. **Individuals Contacted:**

Phase I

Judge C. L. Abernathy  
Panhandle Regional Criminal Justice Coordinator

Chief Paul Hulse  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Col. James Keith, Assistant Chief  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Col. Charles Hollis, Assistant Chief  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Mr. Darwin Avant  
Texas Council on Criminal Justice

Chief Arthur Waite  
Borger, Texas, Police Department

Chief A. L. Stewart  
Canyon, Texas, Police Department

Mr. James Blagg, City Program Director  
Grants Management  
Amarillo, Texas

Sheriff Longest  
Randall County, Texas, Sheriff's Department

Deputy J. Hooks  
Randall County, Texas, Sheriff's Department

Mr. Hammonds, Dispatcher  
Randall County, Texas, Sheriff's Department

Sheriff T. L. Barker  
Potter County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Deputy Sergeant Michael Neal  
Criminal Investigation and Records  
Potter County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief Deputy Robert McCarty  
Potter County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Deputy Sergeant Harold Jones  
Jail Division  
Potter County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Mr. Jerry Terry, Business Manager  
Identification and Records Service Division

Sergeant Gary Smith  
Criminal Investigation  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Captain Paul Nicholson, Chief  
Service Division  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Officer Sandra Baker  
Juvenile Division  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Mrs. Neta Ward, Statistician  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Phase II

Judge C. L. Abernathy  
Panhandle Regional Criminal Justice Coordinator

Chief William Denney  
Frona, Texas, Police Department

Sheriff Charles Lovelace  
Parmer County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief Deputy Tom Atkins  
Parmer County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Jack Cartwright  
Castro County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Deputy F. Reed (Mrs.)  
Castro County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Mr. R. Noble, City Manager  
Dimmitt, Texas

Chief W. W. Jones  
Dimmitt, Texas, Police Department

Sheriff Travis McPherson  
Deaf Smith County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief Don Brush  
Hereford, Texas, Police Department

Miss Mary Johnson  
Hereford, Texas, Police Department

Chief Henry Sikes  
Fritch, Texas, Police Department

Sheriff R. A. Reed  
Moore County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief Frank Hudson  
Dumas, Texas, Police Department

Assistant Chief Gene Davis  
Dumas, Texas, Police Department

Mrs. Nancy Harvey  
Dumas, Texas, Police Department

Chief Calvin Costly  
Stinnitt, Texas, Police Department

Deputy Sheriff Everette McCormick  
Hutchinson County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief Deputy Sheriff C. A. Haren  
Hutchinson County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief Arthur Waite  
Borger, Texas, Police Department

Mrs. Georgia Pool  
Borger, Texas, Police Department

Sheriff R. H. Jordan  
Gray County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief James Conner  
Pampa, Texas, Police Department

Chief Welton Smith  
Tulia, Texas, Police Department

Chief Deputy Floyd Hatcher  
Swisher County, Texas, Sheriff's Office

Chief Allen Smith  
Canyon, Texas, Police Department

Mr. Jerry Terry  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Sergeant Gary Smith  
Amarillo, Texas, Police Department

Mr. Charles Hale  
Oklahoma University

Mr. Sam Chapman  
Oklahoma University

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

### A. Problem as per Technical Assistance:

#### Phase I

Determination of the capability of present police records systems to make readily available data required for planning within the criminal justice system of the Amarillo SMSA, including the City of Amarillo Police Department and the Potter County and Randall County Sheriff's Departments.

#### Phase II

A general review of the records and reporting systems of the remaining police agencies in the largely rural area constituting the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission.

### B. Problem Actually Observed:

As stated.

PHASE I

### III. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

An efficient records system is absolutely essential to virtually all phases of police work. Records help a department to meet its overall needs for a management information system. In this same general context, the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission is in need of much of the same statistical data to enable it to plan for the implementation of Texas Criminal Justice Council (TCJC) programs.

In the field of crime and delinquency, the TCJC has mandated that each plan submitted to it contain a statistical presentation of the region's crime problem. The regional criminal justice council must provide statistical data for the region as a whole and each SMSA in it and for the central county and city in each SMSA. If there is no SMSA in the region, a statistical presentation of the region and its largest county and city is required. The metropolitan planning unit must provide statistical data for the major governments which its area comprises. Sources of data must be identified. The data is required to be presented as follows for each region, SMSA, county, and city:

Murder	Number/Rate
Rape	Number/Rate
Assault	Number/Rate
Burglary	Number/Rate
Auto Theft	Number/Rate
Robbery	Number/Rate
Theft over \$50	Number/Rate

In addition, each regional office must provide an analysis of the charts it submits which shall include:

1. Explanation of unusual rates.
2. Factors that may qualify conclusions drawn from the data.
3. A preliminary identification of crime problems.

The Regional Criminal Justice Council (RCJC) is responsible for discussing the characteristics of crime and delinquency for each of the areas, region, SMSA, county, and city. In order to provide the discussion input, the RCJC must of necessity rely on the data contained in the law enforcement agencies in the four

areas noted immediately above. The TCJC has mandated that the discussion include: (1) possible causes for the incidence of specific crimes, (2) characteristics of the crime, (3) who commits it, (4) crime location, and (5) social and economic impact of the crime.

The RCJC must also furnish information regarding community opinions about the crime problem, extent of narcotic offenses, crime trends over the past several years, and a profile of the region and various subdivisions. Special crime problems must also be identified and supported by reliable statistics.

The survey by the assigned consultant was primarily centered within the Amarillo Police Department, Potter County Sheriff's Office, and Randall County Sheriff's Department.

The records system in each agency will be discussed briefly. Primary emphasis will be on the Amarillo Police Department because of its greater size, complexity, and the relative sophistication of its records system. The Potter County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) is the second largest agency in the SMSA. Its records system is the second most complex. The Randall County line runs through the City of Amarillo. The Amarillo Police Department provides all police services within the city limits even though the City is physically located in Randall County. The records of criminal activity for this part of Randall County are therefore maintained in the Amarillo Police Department. The Randall County Sheriff's Office (RCSO) polices the remainder of Randall County with the exception of incorporated areas. The two primary police agencies outside of the Randall County Sheriff's Office are the Canyon Police Department (10 personnel) and the West Texas State University Security Office (9 personnel). The records in the RCSO are few in number although well maintained.

#### **Amarillo Police Department**

Amarillo's Criminal Investigation and Records Division houses all of the police records within the Department except juvenile records, which are kept in the Juvenile Section, and vice records which are located in a specially funded Metro Detail made up of officers from the Amarillo Police Department, RCSO, and Potter County Sheriff's Office. In effect any request from narcotics, juvenile, or vice for information must be made to these offices.

Amarillo's Records Division is organized in the general pattern of most medium-sized police departments. There is a modified central records system in use

which revolves about a master index card file. Cross-indexing is used as a means of insuring rapid location of records and reports. Card index information is taken from incident reports on a daily basis.

The Amarillo records system includes the following:

1. Master Name Index File — 970,000 cards
2. Incident Records
3. Complaint Records
4. Arrest Records
5. Juvenile Records\*
6. Traffic Records
  - a. Accident Reports
  - b. Citation Records
7. Daily Police Log
8. Criminal History File, which should include:
  - a. Photographs
  - b. Fingerprint cards (FBI local Texas Department of Public Safety)
  - c. Rap sheet
  - d. Local police records (incident reports, citations)
  - e. Arrest report
  - f. Investigative reports
  - g. Personal history sheet
9. Fingerprint File
10. Personnel Records
11. Training Records
12. Property and Evidence Records
13. Vice Records\*
14. Stolen Auto Records\*
15. Stolen Property Records\*
16. Active Warrant File

\* An asterisk indicates that the records or files are maintained in some location other than the central records room. Juvenile records are maintained in the juvenile unit (most are located in the Probation Office for Potter County). Vice records are located in the Metro Detail. No records are located in the dispatcher's office with the exception of the active warrant file.

Traffic summaries are prepared monthly to enable comparisons on a month-to-month basis. The summaries are not used, however, to prepare an accident location file which would present one means to locating accident-prone areas. An accident location file was not maintained. Cross-indexing of accident reports would assist in providing this information. Also, a pin map of accident locations would dramatically depict traffic accident locations. A monthly computer printout contains a monthly summary of driving-while-intoxicated arrests. The same printout contains a yearly summary to the date of the offense.

Arrest records should be available to the field and investigative units. These records should be close to the dispatching desk. At present the dispatcher must have a clerk search files in another room to check names and then locate the file in still another room. The dispatcher does have immediate access to the active warrant file.

All records are currently filed in conventional stand-up file cabinets. In terms of preparing for an increasing number of police contracts due to stepped-up police/crime prevention programs and considering the possibility of later converting totally to a computerized records system, consideration should be given to putting the Master Name Index on a computer. A push button retrieval system would simply involve punching indexed cards for computer programming. The City of Amarillo currently provides computer services for the Police Department. Perhaps additional computer services could be purchased.

The current system, while adequate albeit slow in some cases, is not part of a regional or SMSA-wide police records system. Since Amarillo is the hub of the SMSA and the Panhandle Region, it behooves the Police Department to exert leadership to provide for the rapid retrieval of crime-related information in its files and also perhaps to act as the central records office for the major entities in the SMSA:

Randall County Sheriff's Department  
Canyon Police Department  
Potter County Sheriff's Office

A detailed statistical printout of Part I and Part II offenses is prepared each month. It shows what has happened in enforcement activities for the preceding month and compiles the same type of information for the year through the reporting month. For example, a somewhat detailed analysis of burglary is provided. However, in order to plan, based on these statistics, the burglary problem might be more closely looked at from a view other than that the burglary took place at a residence, between x and y hours on a certain day, entry gained through a window, and property from a very broad category taken.

For a regional planner to have adequate data for future planning, he should know whether x percent of the windows used to gain entry were wooden or steel casement, whether the area was lighted, whether some kind of protective device was in use to prevent burglaries, or whether there was a method of entry other than merely "force or no force." Currently such information is not available except by hand search and tabulation of existing records. To prepare trend analyses, a departmental records system should be geared to preparing any statistical study of police problems that may be requested by any division within a department or by outside city, county, regional, state, and federal planning agencies.

The Amarillo Police Department does maintain broadly based trend charts depicting the history of Part I offenses. The material is based on the FBI crime statistics model. As a planning aid, however, information received by the consultant indicated that more and more burglaries are being perpetrated in specified areas of the City (shopping centers and residences surrounding them). A simple tabulation of burglary—residence or commercial, hour, day, etc.—does not provide adequate management information to allocate resources on a short-term basis or plan for long-term solutions.

In short, the Amarillo Police Department does have a fairly sophisticated records system for its day-to-day needs; but for medium and long-term planning of that kind required for an SMSA or region, there is a need for much more detailed information which can be retrieved easily. The kind of trend development information which is necessary is not that more murders or burglaries will be committed next year or the year after but rather the kind of detailed information which shows the circumstances, whys, wheres, and hows.

#### **Potter County Sheriff's Office (PCSO)**

The Potter County Sheriff's Office is the second largest law enforcement agency in the Amarillo SMSA. It has 47 deputies and performs all of the normal duties of a sheriff's office with the exception of traffic enforcement. The records are at best adequate, and the system comprises the following:

1. Master Name Index. Contains about 55,000 name cards. It is located in the Criminal Identification and Records (CI&R) Office, which is approximately 90 feet and one locked door from the dispatcher.

2. Offense Reports. A file of all offense reports is maintained in CI&R. The OR are numbered from "1" each year. The OR file includes supplemental and continuation sheets. The original copy is maintained in the Criminal History File.
3. Criminal History File. Filed by case number in CI&R. Each file contains:
  - a. Photographs of incident.
  - b. Mug shots.
  - c. Fingerprint cards (FBI, DPS, local).
  - d. Rap sheet.
  - e. Personal history sheets.
  - f. Investigative reports.
  - g. Supplementary local reports.
4. Traffic Records. None maintained. On occasion a traffic citation is written but only as a matter of absolute necessity. The Amarillo Police Department and the Texas Department of Public Safety primarily perform the traffic function.
5. Juvenile Records. None kept by the PCSO. If a juvenile is booked into the jail, his name appears on the booking register. The PCSO does not handle juvenile matters. It was determined, however, that the PCSO does conduct many juvenile investigations and turns them over to the county probation office. A significant amount of time is spent in this activity.
6. Daily Police Log. Maintained at the dispatcher's desk. Filed in the CI&R.
7. Arrest Reports. Original is maintained in the CI&R. Filed by case number.
8. Fingerprint Card File. None maintained, but individual cards are kept in the Criminal History File.

9. Property and Evidence Files. Maintained in the CI&R.
10. Personnel Files. Maintained in Civil Service Commission although there are individual files found in the training office. These files include training, background information, service date, efficiency reports, etc.
11. Booking Log. Contains persons booked into the Potter County Jail. Originally maintained in CI&R.

The above are the primary police records found in the PCSO. In order to provide the data needed by the Panhandle Regional Criminal Justice Director at any time, hand tabulation of offenses and an individual records search are required. The consultant was advised that there is no statistical tabulation system in existence. Trends in Part I and II offenses are computed for the Criminal Report of the PCSO, but the trends are not used for projecting or planning future operations. It is completely realistic to note that the Panhandle Regional Criminal Justice Director does not and will not have adequate statistical data from the PCSO to enable him to prepare a sound regional plan.

#### **Randall County Sheriff's Department (RCSD)**

The Randall County Sheriff's Department is the third governmental unit constituting the Amarillo SMAS. The RCSD has a total of 13 personnel who operate out of two offices:

1. Canyon—Randall County seat.
2. Amarillo—one substation for providing services to the residents surrounding the City of Amarillo which is partly physically located in Randall County.

The Amarillo Police Department provides police services to those in the City of Amarillo. However, for political reasons Randall County wanted to emphasize that part of Amarillo is in Randall County and therefore established the substation.

The records maintained by the RCSD are meager, which is only a reflection of the small size of the County, 18,000+. The files and records maintained in a small records section are as follows:

1. Master Name Index. Original file is in the records section, but a duplicate is maintained in the dispatcher's office for immediate access, something not found in Amarillo Police Department nor Potter County Sheriff's Office.
2. Arrest Report. Original is kept in file and second copy is given to the jailer.
3. Offense Report File. Separate file started in 1965, starting from No. 1 up to the present.
4. Records Division Identification Roster. A departmental form which serves as the jail booking form. It contains data on the charge made, court assignment, and disposition. The files are by month and indicate the arresting agency within the County.
5. Criminal History File. Complete from 1965. Filed by case number, and one is made for all persons who are processed through the jail only. File includes:
  - a. Mug shots.
  - b. Other photographs.
  - c. Arrest report.
  - d. Investigative reports.
  - e. Offense reports.
  - f. Fingerprint cards (FBI, DPS, local).
  - g. Bond release forms.
  - h. Rap sheet.
6. Inactive Arrest Warrant File. Contains several hundred inactive arrest warrants which have been dismissed when a person pays a bill or makes good on a check for which a warrant was issued.
7. Jail Inspection Log. The RCSD has no separate juvenile unit, detective, or vice unit. All records involving these activities are filed on offense reports and filed with regular offense reports.

Personnel records are maintained by the Sheriff. Each deputy also has a file listing property assigned to him.

No training records are kept except by the Sheriff in the personnel jacket.

No traffic records are maintained. If traffic information is needed, the investigation roster is perused to compile kinds of offenses. Then the appropriate offense report is read to ascertain location, facts, injuries, etc.

In order to develop statistics and look at trends in any area of police work, individual hand search and tabulation are required. Requests for information to plan on a regional or SMSA basis are difficult to process at best without a laborious handmade search. Personnel availability in RCSD is critical, and the chances of securing timely responses to outside requests are slim.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

The major problem from the standpoint of the Criminal Justice Regional Coordinator is to be able to present detailed statistical data to the Texas Criminal Justice Council regarding the crime problem in the SMSA and Panhandle Region. Planning information regarding trends and actual crime incidence are now mandatory from his office. He is primarily concerned with the following seven crimes:

- Murder
- Rape
- Assault
- Burglary
- Auto theft
- Robbery
- Theft over \$50

While the Amarillo Police Department, Randall County Sheriff's Department, and Potter County Sheriff's Office are able to furnish the overall data, only Amarillo is capable of furnishing any kind of analysis for each offense on a timely and accurate basis. Amarillo's Police Department has a statistician to compile all data and has access to the city computer. In the other departments, to provide such basic data is time consuming and if accomplished, inaccuracies are likely to be present merely from utilizing hand tabulation.

In Amarillo, trends in the seven offenses are computed. However, the printouts do not contain the detailed information to isolate the specific causes of crimes and their commission. Breaking crimes down into major types, i.e., burglaries, residence, nonresidence, store, etc., does not really furnish the detailed statistical data needed although the Amarillo Police Department does have a very sophisticated records system. Providing the more detailed data should not be a large undertaking for the Police Department.

However, the same cannot be said for the two sheriffs' offices. Their records systems as they now stand will be unresponsive to requests for detailed information without additional people to compile them. Even if this were so, several individuals in the sheriffs' offices and the Amarillo Police Department questioned the completeness of the sheriffs' departments records.

Because the population of the SMSA is overwhelmingly in the City of Amarillo, it is logical to assume that a high percentage of the records maintained in the Potter County Sheriff's Office is duplicated in the Amarillo Police Department. This is also the likely situation in the Randall County Sheriff's Department. An SMSA or even Regional Records System would correct this undesirable situation.

## V. RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

An efficient records system is essential to all phases of police operations. Records help a department to meet its overall needs for a management information system. The needs can be summarized in the following groups:

*Inquiry information* which includes facts needed "on line" and in "real time" about wanted persons and property.

*Personnel information* including fingerprints, prior arrests, criminal history, *modus operandi*, and court histories of persons with whom the Department deals.

*Management information* to improve administration of the Department's personnel and equipment.

*Statistical information* on crime, traffic, and general police activities which advance the Department's planning efforts.

Records administration has now taken an additional turn in that other law enforcement planning offices need highly sophisticated statistical data to prepare region and statewide plans. This is the case in the Panhandle Criminal Justice Regional Planning Agency. In addressing the problem of providing the detailed statistical data to this office, the following are recommended.

1. Preparation of an LEAA grant to develop a regionwide central records system. There are at present 8 to 10 counties in the region with a population of over 10,000 people. As a minimum these 10 counties may be included in the regional system. Presently, because of the difficulty in obtaining information, the Regional Criminal Justice Agency is unable to plan adequately for the region as a whole.
2. The SMSA should immediately implement plans to consolidate the records of the major law enforcement agencies. There is at present some discussion taking place between the Amarillo Police Department and the PCSO regarding consolidation of the records of both agencies. The total picture within the SMSA can then be viewed with emphasis toward projecting crime trends in certain areas, planning to combat the trends, and projecting the total SMSA response to crime. Such an effort would not only assist the law enforcement aspect of the criminal justice system but also the courts, corrections, and prosecution.

In a total records system, the following characteristics are mandatory:

- a. Adequate reporting system.
  - b. Written forms control procedures.
  - c. Use of multipurpose forms.
  - d. Use of specialized forms only when absolutely necessary.
  - e. Training in proper report preparation.
  - f. Training in report writing.
  - g. Operational and administrative records.
  - h. Centralized records.
  - i. Control of records.
  - j. Sound records retention policies.
  - k. Available operational files.
  - l. A single control index file.
  - m. Access to computer-assisted records keeping and retrieval of a broad spectrum of statistical data.
3. In the SMSA is located West Texas State University which has a law enforcement program. Students from this program may profitably be utilized by the Regional Criminal Justice Director to secure the information he needs now in order to prepare the 1974 regional plan. The coordinator has indicated that the difficulty in securing adequate data, from the some 25 counties which make up the region, is staggering. Student interns may very well temporarily serve as a stopgap measure until something positive is accomplished regarding an SMSA-wide records system.
4. Attached is a schematic diagram of the Amarillo Police Department reports system. It is merely a guide for the remainder of the SMSA and region.

PHASE II

### III. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

As noted in the introductory remarks to Phase I, the nature of data needed for planning is determined by the purpose of the plan. The all-inclusive planning responsibility of the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) in the area of law enforcement (police) necessitates a broad-based plan developed from highly sophisticated data collected from all police agencies found within the 25 county region. Phase I dealt with the two major police agencies which make up the Amarillo SMSA, Amarillo Police Department and Randall County Sheriff's Department.

To be effective in its planning, the PRPC needs a maximum amount of information pertaining to the seven major categories of crimes as defined by the Texas state criminal justice plan. Judge C. L. Abernathy, the regional criminal justice coordinator, requested technical assistance to determine the availability of detailed crime statistics in the PRPC police agencies. Phase I was concerned with the Amarillo SMSA. Phase II is concerned with the data available in the selected police agencies in the Texas Panhandle.

In cooperation with Judge Abernathy, it was decided that it would be most fruitful for the consultant to visit the police and sheriffs' departments in those counties within the PRPC having a population of over 10,000. During Phase II, 18 different law enforcement agencies (including Amarillo Police Department) were visited. Approximately 750 miles were involved.

The consultant reviewed all of the records maintained in each agency not for total content but for availability of some kind of records-keeping system. In general the records were skimpy and completely inadequate for the kinds of details which Judge Abernathy and the Texas Criminal Justice Council deem necessary.

The Texas Panhandle is composed of 25 counties, 9 of which have 10,000 or more residents. The Amarillo complex (Potter and Randall Counties) is the hub for the region. Outside of the Amarillo SMSA the region is largely agricultural. Two large tourist attractions are located near Amarillo: (1) Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and (2) Palo Duro Canyon State Park. The law enforcement agencies in the nine counties are small with the exception of the Amarillo Police Department and the Potter County Sheriff's Office.

Table 1

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Sworn</i>	<i>Civilian</i>	<i>County</i>
Amarillo Police Department			Potter
Potter County Sheriff's Office			
Friona Police Department	5	4	Parmer
Parmer County Sheriff's Office	5	0	
Dimmitt Police Department	3	½	Castro
Castro County Sheriff's Office	5	0	
Hereford Police Department	16	4	Deaf Smith
Deaf Smith County Sheriff's Office	8	7	
Dumas Police Department	11	5	Moore
Moore County Sheriff's Office	7	0	
Stinnitt Police Department	1	½	Hutchinson
Fritch	1	0	Hutchinson
Borger Police Department	14	7	Hutchinson
Hutchinson County Sheriff's Office	9	1	
Pampa Police Department	20	0	Gray
Gray County Sheriff's Office	8	1	
Canyon Police Department	10	4	Randall
Randall County Sheriff's Department			
Tulia Police Department	7	3	Swisher
Swisher County Sheriff's Office	8	0	

A review of the records in agencies outside the Amarillo SMSA revealed some similarity with all of the agencies maintaining a criminal history or case file. All of them, however, varied as to content, i.e., some had rap sheets, others did not, although there was a rap sheet in other departmental files; several agencies kept fingerprint cards in the criminal history file, others maintained separate files.

Not all departments maintained a master name index file. In at least three agencies there was none. The only file was the criminal history file. In several agencies an arrest record file was maintained, but it was not cross-indexed to the criminal history file.

A traffic citation file was kept in several of the larger departments. These files were also cross-indexed to the local municipal court dockets to determine disposition. Also, two agencies kept files in a cardboard box. There was no filing system. The citations were thrown randomly in the box.

Each agency was asked if it could furnish detailed information regarding any of the seven FBI Part I offenses. All answered in the negative without hand searching their records or asking the victims or offenders for the necessary information. Only a very few of the agencies indicated that they could (three said would) furnish requests from the PRPC criminal justice coordinator. The major reason cited was the lack of manpower (which is probably valid). However, the very small number of Part I offenses mitigates against this argument even assuming a lack of personnel.

One of the seven rural counties (outside of Randall and Potter Counties) indicated that it has stopped submitting the monthly Department of Public Safety and quarterly FBI reports.

In answer to a question regarding the most important crime problem in each department, the overwhelming response was drunkenness and DWI offenses. Burglary was also cited by three agencies. The consultant is perplexed with this answer, however. For example, in one police department and one sheriff's office, the respondents indicated that there had been no burglaries for four and two years, respectively. When asked whether there were any "breaking and entering" offenses, both agencies said they had them fairly frequently. The implication is that there is perhaps no understanding of the definition of offenses in some of the agencies. The consultant also found a disagreement between the police chief and city manager in one city over what was the most serious crime problem in the city, DWI or burglary. Both, however, were firm in their evaluations.

All agencies had offense reports on file. However, some destroyed them after two years, and some had them as far back as 1953! All stated that there are many incidents and offenses which are not contained on offense or incident reports. The reason stated was that the officers "handled the matter informally." Once again the deduction may be made that there are many criminal offenses that go unreported.

The above findings are only a sampling of the problems that the PRPC criminal justice coordinator will face when requesting crime statistics from throughout the Texas Panhandle Region.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

There is no appreciation in most of the agencies outside of the Amarillo SMSA of the value and necessity of accurate, timely criminal statistics. The records the agencies have "satisfy any needs I have in this town" was a frequent response given to the consultant.

Because of the multiple methods of keeping criminal files, it is currently impossible to secure an accurate profile of the crime situation in the Panhandle. The Amarillo Police Department and Potter County Sheriff's Office are the largest, but only the Amarillo Police Department has a sophisticated computerized records system. It is conceivable that because the Part I offenses do not appear to be large throughout the region (although the consultant cannot make this statement without some trepidation), a common offense data sheet could be developed to be used regionwide. With only a few additions to the data already being collected by the Amarillo Police Department, the Police Department's monthly printouts could include the status of criminal activity in the region.

There is at present no capability to establish crime trends or predict future action for the Texas Panhandle Region. Only one agency the consultant visited thought it necessary to publish an annual report, Amarillo Police Department. Because it is absolutely essential for the PRPC criminal justice coordinator to have detailed statistical data in order to develop a regionwide plan, the data generated should enable him to predict criminal activity with a reasonable degree of accuracy. The lack of interest in even the rudiments of records keeping an information retrieval in the majority of the agencies contacted prohibits any meaningful planning under current conditions.

Also, the time is ripe for consolidation of records in many of the smaller agencies. Several chiefs and sheriffs mentioned the desirability of combining the records of law enforcement agencies within their county. This idea needs to be encouraged throughout the region. Political considerations will have to be considered before much is accomplished in this area, however.

V. RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

- A. The course of action contained in the Phase I report is applicable to this report.
- B. The PRPC criminal justice coordinator should develop a comprehensive, detailed form listing the kinds of information he needs for *each* of the seven major (Part I) offenses with which he is concerned at present. This form would be used regionwide and submitted to him monthly. Persuasion would be the most desirable method of securing compliance, but since all (at least the major law enforcement agencies) receive state criminal justice funds in some form, completion of the form could be made a condition precedent to receipt of financial assistance.

With only a few modifications, the data on the seven crimes could be integrated into the existing computerized reporting system in the Amarillo Police Department. The costs for the additional computer time and key-punching effort may be considered as an expense which could be borne by the PRPC criminal justice coordinator.

In addition to the information contained on each of the seven major offenses in the FBI report, the regionwide crime reporting form should include as a minimum:

1. Types of windows entered—steel casement, wood, others.
2. Age of the building.
3. Kinds of locks forced.
4. Was the area lighted near the point of entry?
5. Probable tool used to force entry.
6. Was there a burglar alarm on the premises?
7. If so, what make?
8. Was it in operation?

9. Was the structure previously burglarized?
10. Were corrective steps taken?
11. Was the loss covered by insurance? Amount?
12. If entry was gained other than through a window or door, what was it?
13. Were there any preventive devices in existence? What kind?

These general questions lead to ancillary inquiries which can also be of use to the criminal justice coordinator.

At present much of the above information is probably contained in the individual agency offense and incident report files (where they are maintained). The recommendation in Phase I, to use university students to compile the statistical data in each of the separate crime categories beyond the DPS and FBI materials, would be a feasible approach. Both Judge Abernathy and the consultant agree on this point. However, this expedient does not alleviate the absolute necessity to develop a viable crime reporting system to furnish the statistical data that will be needed in the future.

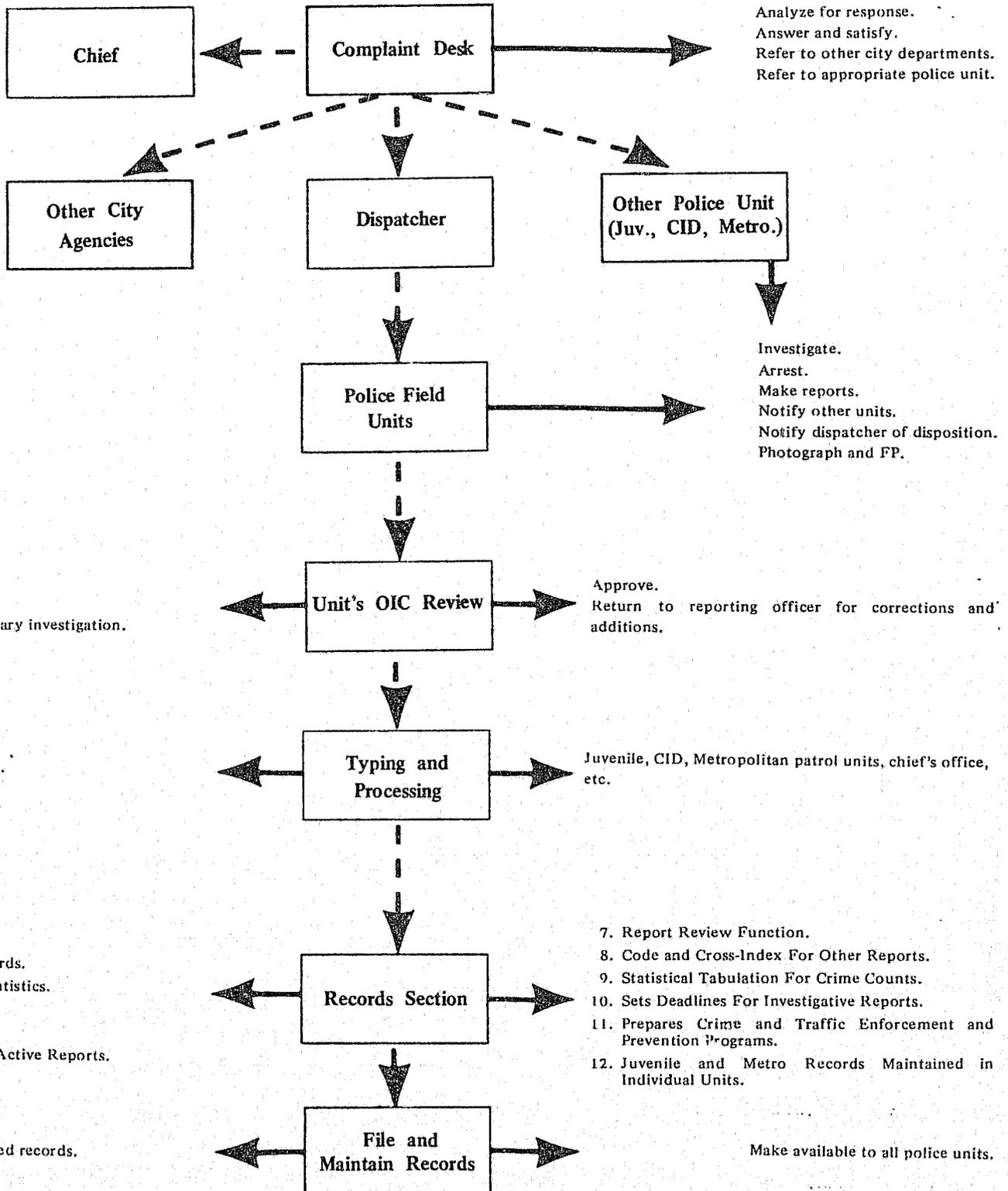
- C. It is also recommended that a detailed study be commenced toward determining the feasibility of having a regionwide or at least an Amarillo SMSA centralized records-keeping and crime statistics office. At present there is the beginnings of a movement to consolidate Amarillo, Potter County, and Randall County into one governmental unit. However, the political problems in such a move are great and really have little bearing on the need for SMSA and regional crime statistics. The law enforcement leadership in the Amarillo SMSA is enlightened. Based upon conversations with these people, there appears to be some agreement on the necessity for records consolidation. As the situation now stands, it was estimated that the records maintained by the Potter County Sheriff's Office are about 80-90 percent duplicates of those maintained in the Amarillo Police Department. The same may be said of the Randall County Sheriff's Department.

Throughout the entire region there appeared to be a positive attitude to records consolidation in all of the individual counties which also have city police departments. It would not be a large step in light of the rudimentary records systems in the rural counties to provide a regionwide records system which would be made workable by a good communications network.

In any event the current situation does not provide the kinds of data that Judge Abernathy needs. The above recommendations would ease his task and make the Panhandle Region one of the pioneers in records consolidation in Texas.

A T T A C H M E N T

ATTACHMENT A



Check for completeness.  
Check for accuracy.  
Check for proper preliminary investigation.

Records Section (original).

1. Master Index Card.
2. FBI, DPS, Local FP Cards.
3. FBI and DPS Crime Statistics.
4. Traffic Statistics.
5. Criminal History Files.
6. Control Follow-Up of Active Reports.

Retire and destroy outdated records.

**END**

7 10/25/1911