

COST ANALYSIS OF CORRECTIONAL STANDARDS: COMMUNITY SUPERVISION, PROBATION, RESTITUTION, COMMUNITY SERVICE

VOLUME I

By

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PREFACE

The cost analyses which have been undertaken by the Standards and Goals Project have had two purposes:

- To analyze and estimate the costs of implementing Standards of the Corrections Report,¹ issued in 1973 by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (policy-oriented purpose);
- To provide cost guidelines and cost estimation techniques for use by jurisdictions in assessing costs of their own ongoing or contemplated activities (technical purpose).

To achieve both purposes, the Project is presenting the results of its cost analysis of community-based supervision in two volumes, of which this is the first. In focusing on the Project's policy-oriented purpose, this first volume:

- Provides a brief background on the Corrections Standards relating to community-based supervision.
- Focuses on findings of the cost analysis and briefly explains the methodology used so that these findings can be interpreted accurately;
- Highlights the policy implications of the analysis.

It is intended for use as a separate document by justice system administrators, legislators and others in need of a reference to the policy issues surrounding community-based supervision, particularly those related to cost. In addition, Volume I is designed as a companion reference to Volume II, which is intended for use by planners and analysts. Volume II both provides detailed, technical description of estimation techniques applicable to estimating the costs of operating probation, community service and restitution programs in a particular jurisdiction and presents detailed findings of the cost analysis.

¹National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Corrections (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973); hereafter referred to as Corrections.

INTRODUCTION

The most widely used of all sentencing dispositions (excluding fines and suspended sentences) and hence the most widely utilized corrections alternative is supervision in the community. Three types of community-based supervision are employed: probation is by far the most widely utilized of the three; community service and restitution are two relatively recent additions to the corrections field.¹ Community-based supervision, fines and suspended sentences, represent the least severe punishments in the range of sentencing alternatives delineated by the National Advisory Commission in the Corrections Report:

The court should be authorized to utilize a variety of sentencing alternatives including:

- a. Unconditional release.
- b. Conditional release.
- c. A fine payable in installments with a civil remedy for nonpayment.
- d. Release under supervision in the community.
- e. Sentence to a halfway house or other residential facility located in the community.
- f. Sentence to partial confinement with liberty to work or participate in training or education during all but leisure time.
- g. Imposition of a maximum sentence of total confinement less than that established by the legislature for the offense.²

Excluding outright release, fines, and suspended sentences, the range of sentencing, and hence correctional alternatives, can be compressed into three categories:

- (1) Community-based supervision;
- (2) Community-based residential programs;
- (3) Institutionalization.

¹Parole is not included among the community-based supervision alternatives because it is not a sentencing disposition. The cost and resource implications of Corrections Standards relating to parole are analyzed in Cost Analysis of Correctional Standards: Institutional-Based Programs and Parole, by Neil M. Singer and Virginia B. Wright (Washington, D.C.: American Bar Association, Correctional Economics Center, 1976).

²Corrections, p. 569.

Of the three, community-based supervision, in economic terminology, is the least costly to the offender in terms of income and leisure opportunities foregone. For the same reason, community-based supervision is also the alternative which poses the greatest risk of opportunity cost to society in terms of probability and severity of additional crimes committed by offenders during the course of a sentence. In terms of average annual criminal justice system expenditures per convicted offender, community-based supervision is the least costly of the three.

The analysis of these three and other types of costs comprises the major portion of this report. All costs associated with community-based supervision have been analyzed, including:

- Criminal justice system costs;
- External costs;
- Opportunity costs to probationers;
- Opportunity costs to society.

The focus of this analysis has been on those costs about which substantial information is available -- on criminal justice system expenditures and external costs.

As probation is by far the most widely utilized of the three, as well as the most developed, the costs of probation are the subject of greatest emphasis.

Organization of Probation Resources

Corrections Standards relating to probation propose several major changes in the organization of probation resources. These changes include:

- (1) That resources providing services to the courts be separate and distinct from resources providing services to probationers;
- (2) That presentence reports be prepared in all felony cases, in all cases where the offender is a minor, and as a prerequisite to a sentence of confinement in any case, and that the reports be short form in all cases except where incarceration for more than five years is a possible disposition;
- (3) That the primary function of the supervising officer become that of a community resource manager rather than one-to-one counselor;
- (4) That services be provided to misdemeanants as well as felons; and

- (5) That probation resources be organized on the basis of workloads or task groups rather than caseloads.

The complete organization of probation resources and the alignment of functions within the organization is described in Figure I on page 6.

Criminal Justice System Costs of Probation

Total and average operating costs in the form of sample and model budgets¹ have been derived and analyzed for:

- (1) a "typical" existing probation department in a large urban county (population 750,000, including a metropolitan area of 500,000);²
- (2) a probation department for the same size county operating in compliance with the Corrections Standards;
- (3) a probation department for the same size county, operating in compliance with the Corrections Standards, and utilizing paraprofessionals and volunteers; and
- (4) a smaller, primarily rural county (population 300,000, including a metropolitan area of 100,000) probation department, operating in compliance with the Corrections Standards.

Personnel costs for the probation departments were estimated by first determining the staffing requirements for each division utilizing a workload approach, then applying average salaries and a fringe benefit rate of 15 percent. Non-personnel costs were determined primarily on staff size and average non-personnel costs for a representative sample of fourteen probation departments. The following workload estimates were utilized in determining staffing requirements and hence operating costs:

¹A sample budget is a set of cost estimates by budget line item for a particular activity (probation department) based primarily on the costs of similar existing activities. A model budget contains cost estimates by budget line item for a particular activity for which no existing similar activities exist.

²The existing probation departments which were studied as part of this research effort, the costs of which primarily determined the cost estimates for the "typical" urban county probation department, are listed in Appendix A. Certain statistical data are also presented.

Activity	Workload
Short form investigations	4.5 hours
Long form investigations	7.5 hours
Processing function:	
regular completion	.25 hours
early termination	.40 hours
revocation	6.50 hours
Needs assessment	1.5 hours/team member (3)/ probationer (total of 4.5 hours)
Supervision/service delivery (including community resource management):	
minimum	.75 hours/month
low (service needs)	1.50 hours/month
medium	
high (service needs)	2.00 hours/month
maximum	3.00 hours/month

Average costs for each of these functions for a typical existing department in a primarily urban county, and both large urban and small rural departments operating in compliance with the Corrections Standards are presented in Figure 2 on page 7.

Average cost for the first probation year is calculated by adding the cost of the needs assessment service to the cost figure for whichever supervision/service need classification a probationer is in. For example, the average cost for the first year of a probationer in the maximum supervision/service need classification amounts to \$546.75 for the primarily urban county and \$589.68 for the smaller, primarily rural county. These cost estimates compare to the average annual cost of a non-residential pretrial diversion program of \$3,900, a halfway house cost of \$6,649, or a state institution of \$9,215, each operating in compliance with the Corrections Standards.¹

¹The pretrial diversion program cost estimate is derived from Ann M. Watkins, Cost Analysis of Correctional Standards: Pretrial Diversion (Washington, D.C.: American Bar Association, Correctional Economics Center, 1975). The halfway house cost estimate is derived from Donald J. Thalheimer, Cost Analysis of Correctional Standards: Halfway Houses (Washington, D.C.: American Bar Association, Correctional Economics Center, 1975), and the state institution cost estimate is derived from Neil M. Singer and Virginia B. Wright, Cost Analysis of Correctional Standards: Institutional-Based Programs and Parole (Washington, D.C.: American Bar Association, Correctional Economics Center, 1976).

Figure 1

Service Structure of a County Probation System

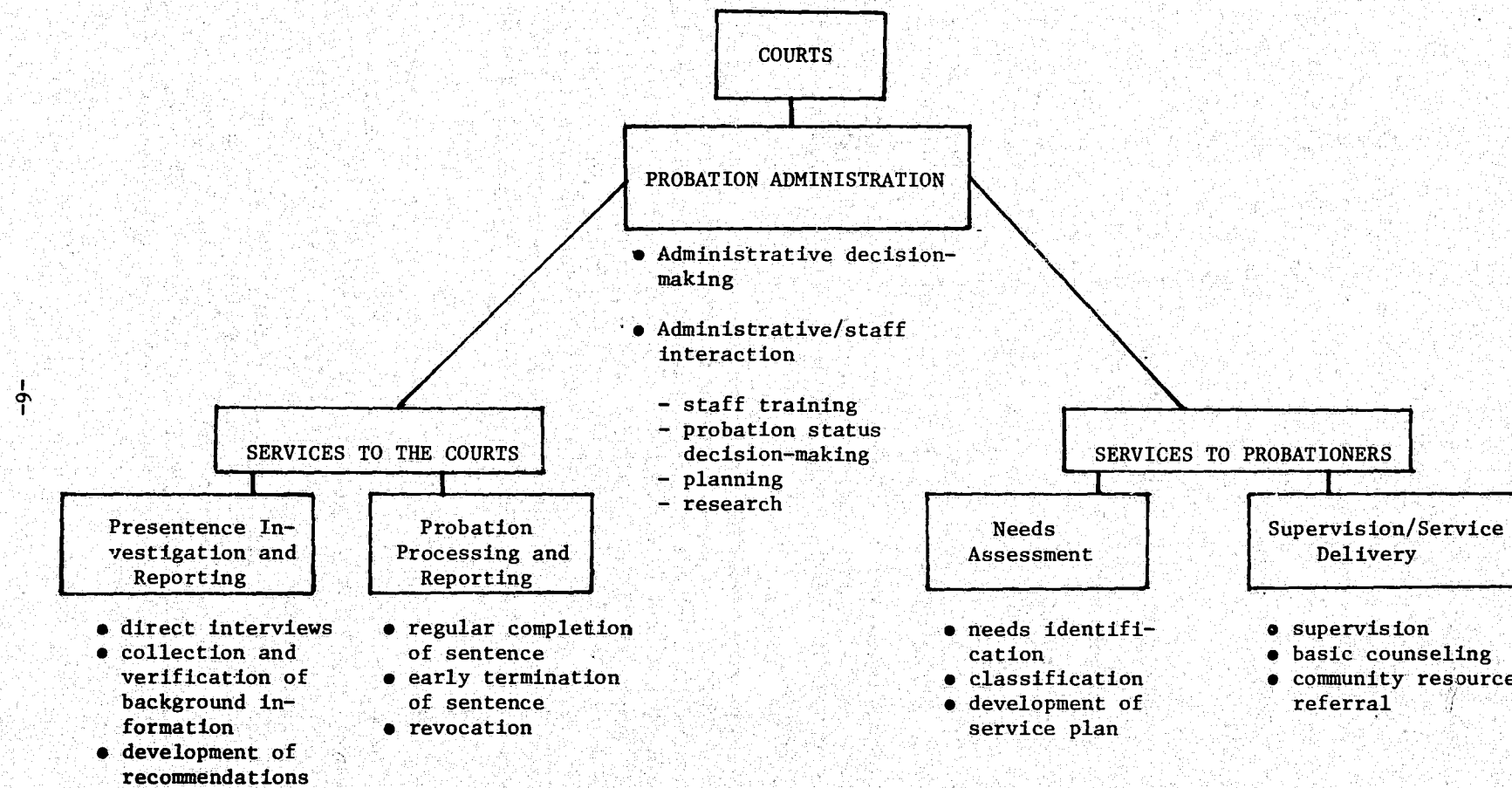


FIGURE 2

Average Criminal Justice System Costs for a "Typical" Probation Department and Three Model Probation Departments Operating in Compliance with the Corrections Standards, Serving a Primarily Urban County with Regular Staffing, a Primarily Urban County Utilizing Paraprofessionals and Volunteers, and a Smaller, Primarily Rural County

Type of Average Cost	"Typical" Urban County	Models		
		Urban County	Rural County	
		Regular Staffing	Paraprofessionals and Volunteers	
<u>Services to the Courts</u>				
● Presentence Investigation per report	\$ 89.47	-----	-----	-----
● Presentence Investigation Long Form, in Compliance	-----	\$ 108.15	\$ 101.97	\$ 122.48
● Presentence Investigation Short Form, in Compliance	-----	\$ 64.89	\$ 61.42	\$ 73.49
Revocation Processing	-----	\$ 93.73	-----	\$ 106.15
<u>Services to Probationers</u>				
● Needs Assessment (One-Time Service)	-----	\$ 60.25	\$ 57.86	\$ 65.52
● Supervision/Service Delivery (Per Client Year)	\$ 218.09	-----	-----	-----
Minimum Supervision/Needs	-----	\$ 121.56	\$ 63.54	\$ 131.04
Medium Supervision/Low Needs	-----	\$ 243.00	-----	\$ 262.08
Medium Supervision/High Needs	-----	\$ 324.00	-----	\$ 349.44
Maximum Supervision/Needs	-----	\$ 486.00	-----	\$ 524.16
<u>Total Budgets</u>				
High Average	\$1,443,081	\$1,967,221	\$1,859,775	\$825,317
Low Average	\$1,121,116	\$1,529,571	\$1,447,674	\$642,770

There are four other types of criminal justice system costs:

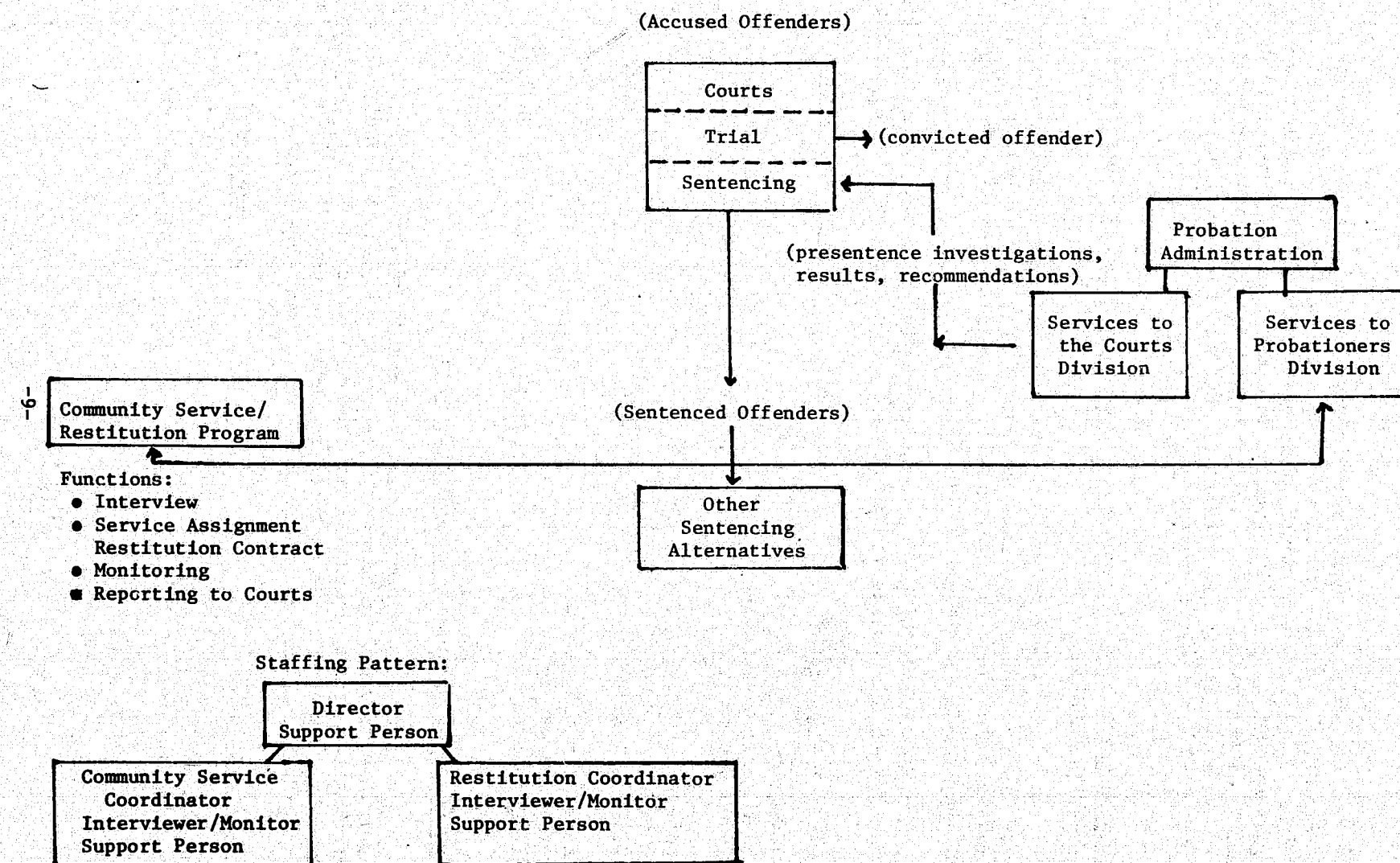
- (1) Police costs of surveilling and apprehending probationers who commit additional crimes while on probation. Average costs of police time involved in surveillance and apprehension, including departmental indirect costs, were estimated to be \$9.44 per hour. A lower bound on these annual surveillance and apprehension costs for a large urban county was estimated at \$165,200.
- (2) Court costs of prosecuting probationers who commit additional crimes while on probation. Unit prosecution costs were estimated to be \$21.58 for a public magistrate, \$16.38 for a prosecutor, and \$19.32 for a public defender. A lower bound (based on the assumption that only 15 percent of probationers come to trial for additional crimes) on the annual costs of prosecuting probationers who commit additional crimes while on probation amounts to \$34,368.
- (3) Costs of revocation hearings. Average costs per revocation hearings conducted in compliance with the Corrections Standards (including court appointed counsel) is estimated to be \$700. With an average of 16 revocation hearings per month, the rate of hearings associated with a large urban probation department, annual costs of revocation hearings amount to \$134,000.
- (4) Costs of other criminal justice activities providing services to probationers. The average cost per client year of one such program, TASC, was estimated to be \$1,331 (\$3.65 per client day) for low budget activities and \$1,643 (\$4.50 per client day) for higher budgeted activities.

Organization of Resources for a Combined Non-Residential Community Service/Restitution Program

Two other types of community-based supervision have been included in the analysis: community service and restitution. As staff functions performed within community service and restitution programs are basically identical, a combined non-residential community service/restitution program model operating in compliance with the Corrections Standards and designed to serve a large urban county has been developed as part of this research effort. The position of such programs within the criminal justice system, the staffing pattern, and the functions performed within the agency are described in Figure 3, page 9.

FIGURE 3

COMMUNITY SERVICE/RESTITUTION AS A LINK IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



The model community service/restitution program is designed to serve a primarily urban county the same size as that in which the "typical" and model probation departments analyzed in Chapter III are located: population 750,000 with 500,000 located in a metropolitan area. The design capacity of the model program is 250 referrals per month or a total of 3,000 referrals annually, of which half are referred for community service and the other half for restitution.

Operating Costs of a Combined Non-Residential Community Service/Restitution Program

The staffing pattern for the program was determined on a workload basis: both personnel and non-personnel cost estimates were based in part on average operating costs for existing community service and diversion programs performing similar functions.

The following are the average operating costs for the combined community service/restitution program at different levels of capacity:

<u>Average Costs</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Mean</u>
At Design Capacity of 250 referrals per month (3,000 per year)	\$46.89	\$34.42	\$40.65
At referral rate of 200 referrals per month (2,400 per year)	\$58.61	\$43.02	\$50.82
At referral rate of 150 referrals per month (1,800 per year)	\$78.14	\$57.36	\$67.75

Other Costs of Community-Based Supervision

As the Corrections Report recommends greater referral of offenders to services provided by community resources, much of the added cost of implementing the Standards can be expected to be external. External costs for the major services to which offenders under community-based supervision may be referred have been estimated as shown in the table below:

<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Average Cost</u>
Education (four year public college)	\$541/client year

Type of Service

Average Cost

Vocational training (trade/technical school)	\$900/client year
Drug Treatment	\$1,728/client year - \$6,254/client year
Detoxification	\$15.84/client day - \$171.55/client day
Mental Health	\$30.86/client day - \$72.80/client day

Two other types of costs, important but largely unquantifiable, which were discussed but of which no estimates were derived, are opportunity costs to offenders under supervision and opportunity costs to society.

Offenders under community-based supervision do incur opportunity costs, but in comparison to offenders in halfway houses, or, in particular, institutions, are better off.

Just the opposite relationship exists in terms of societal opportunity costs associated with additional crimes committed by offenders under community-based supervision. Probation imposes greater opportunity costs associated with crimes committed by offenders under sentence on society than does residential (halfway houses and institutions) corrections.

Directions for Additional Research

This report has capsulized the findings of a comprehensive analysis of the costs of operating community-based supervision activities in compliance with the Corrections Standards. This analysis has not, however, been able to analyze in depth all cost-affecting or cost-related variables. Areas in which additional research is needed include:

- What is the most effective means of linking up probation resources to probationers? Community service/restitution program resources to offenders referred?
- What is the most efficient means of training different types of staff?
- What is the most efficient means of transporting resources between offices?
- What is the impact of turnover of personnel on costs?
- What are acceptable levels of non-personnel costs (for either specified output levels or staff sizes)?

- Are there economies of scale? What is the most efficient scale of operation?
- What are the most efficient methods of distributing resources provided by resources external to the criminal justice system?
- What are the trade-offs between opportunity costs to offenders under community-based supervision and criminal justice system costs?
- What are the trade-offs between costs to society and other costs?
- How can these costs be minimized?

The other side of analysis, the analysis of benefit or effectiveness of different activities, has been touched upon only marginally during the course of this cost analysis. Benefit/effectiveness analysis, or performance measurement as it is often labeled, is an equally important field of analysis, which has not yet been applied on a comprehensive and thorough basis to community-based supervision. Questions which might be addressed by such an analysis are:

- What constitutes a success?
- What is the optimal method for assessing offenders needs?
- What is the optimal means for classifying offenders? Are predictive models effective?
- How much surveillance of offenders under community-based supervision is necessary, and where should resources performing the surveillance function be located?
- What is the effectiveness of different types and levels of training?

For decision-making purposes, the most useful analyses are those which combine cost analysis and output/benefit analysis to determine exactly how they relate to one another. There are two such types of analysis: cost/benefit analysis and cost/effectiveness analysis. Both attempt to relate costs of programs to performance. Cost/benefit and cost/effectiveness analysis are most valuable because, rather than determining which are the least costly alternatives of which alternatives yield the most societal benefits, they determine which alternatives produce the highest net benefits (relative or absolute) or which alternatives are most cost/effective. Because non-monetary criteria are employed in measuring output/benefits, cost/effectiveness in particular lends itself to an interdisciplinary effort, including other social scientists in addition to economists.

Cost/effectiveness analysis would be applicable to most of the research questions previously identified. Such analysis would be particularly valuable in answering the following questions:

- How cost/effective are flexible working hours and decentralized location?
- How cost/effective is specialization on a unit level (for example, separate investigation, court reporting, and supervision units)?
- What level of utilization of paraprofessionals and volunteers is most cost/effective?

APPENDIX A

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAMPLE OF PROBATION DEPARTMENTS STUDIED

Location	Type	Population (1974)	Active Supervision Cases (1974)	Presentence Investigations	Unit Workload Values	
					Presentence Investigations ^d (hrs./invest.)	Supervision Case ^d (hrs./month)
Contra Cost County, California	County	583,600	5,048	5,592	6.8	.7
Santa Clara County, California	County	1,181,600	7,193	8,105	4.7regular (10.3intensive)	1.2-1.6
Alameda County, California	County	1,088,600	13,185	11,458	N.A.	N.A.
San Mateo County, California	County	572,600	3,795	3,619	9	I-1.2 II-1.6 III-2.6 (34%) (49%) (17%)
Multnomah County, Oregon	County	538,500	1,758	1,603	N.A.	.5
Multnomah County, Oregon	State	538,500	2,350 ^b	4,200 ^b	2.8regular (20-40 Impact)	.6regular (2-8 Impact)
King County, Washington	State	1,134,500	3,697 ^b	15,481 ^b	6.2-7	I-.3 II-.5 III 2.3 IV 3.3 (38%) (35%) (19%) (8%)
Seattle, Washington	Municipal	503,073 ^a	435 ^c	1,155 ^c	3.3 - 5	.8 - 2
El Paso County, Texas	County	410,000	1,473	112	6 - 7	1.5
Hennepin County, Minnesota	County	924,800	1,913 ^b	1,293 ^a	6	1.5
Dade and Monroe Counties, Florida	State	1,468,700	6,791	4,187	4.5 - 6	.5 - 2.5
Jefferson County, New York	State	90,800	179	279	N.A.	N.A.
Lewis County, New York	State	25,100	70	76	N.A.	N.A.
District of Columbia		733,801 ^a	3,523	4,008	5	1. - 2.5

^aPopulation estimates for cities are for 1973; 1974 estimates had not been completed.

^bSuperior courts only.

^cMunicipal courts only.

^dMultiple estimates refer to different classifications. IMPACT is the High Impact Anti-Crime Program.

END