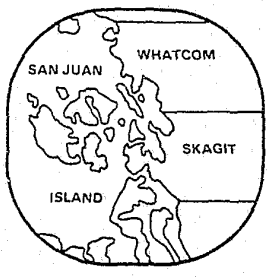

Northwest Regional Council
Whatcom County Courthouse Annex • 1000 Forest Street • Bellingham, WA 98225 • (206) 676-6749

The Program Evaluation Of Skagit County Recidivism Reduction Project LJPO Grant No. 75-C-0228

The preparation of this document was aided in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, and the Washington State Law and Justice Planning Office Pursuant to Title I of Public Law 90-351.

Stuart Readio, Evaluation Coordinator
Northwest Regional Council
Law and Justice Planning Office
February 1, 1977

Law and Justice Program
LARRY FEHR
PLANNER
STUART READIO
EVALUATION COORDINATOR

An Association of Local Governments serving the North Puget Sound Region
DEWEY G. DESLER
DIRECTOR

493e2

Introduction

The Recidivism Reduction Project implemented by Skagit Group Ranch Homes of Burlington has been in existence for approximately twelve months. This paper briefly examines the project in light of its stated goals and objectives with particular emphasis placed upon, as its title suggests, the program's ability to reduce recidivism amongst its population.

The project came into existence as the correlation between school status and delinquency proneness became evident. It appears that rather substantial numbers of delinquents were not attending school immediately preceeding the time of their juvenile court referral. Though, in a society as diverse and complex as ours, we should not expect the traditional school system to effectively serve all people, the availability of viable options to non-attendance were not available. Earlier, Skagit Group Ranch Homes had instituted an experimental project through and with Group Home residents to facilitate school re-entry or in-school maintenance. What would appear to be positive results prompted the staff to seek application from Law and Justice to expand the program to clients not necessarily residing within the group homes. The result of that pursuit was this project, Recidivism Reduction.

The Research

This research is founded upon some excellent program record keeping by Jim Shoop, the project's coordinator/counselor; all follow-up data was made possible by the Skagit County Juvenile Court and facilitated by Pam Hudson of the Juvenile Probation Department.

Few clients had turned 18 thereby minimizing the need to conduct a follow up in the Skagit County Sheriff's Office. As the population was from most parts of Skagit County, assessing the contextual impact of the project was almost precluded. Indeed it is quite difficult to determine whether burglary and grand larceny went down in number in Skagit County during the project year. 1976 data from the Sheriff's Office does suggest that the proportion of juveniles arrested for Part I offenses had, for the first time since 1970, accounted for less than one-half of all arrests. This is a promising note, however, the widely dispersed census of program participants, coupled with a rather low number of program clients may preclude empirically assessing overall impact. With more time, more clients and subsequently more data such an assessment can and will be made.

The piecemeal nature of school records precluded prior academic investigations. This problem is explored later in this document.

All of the data collected were coded and computerized. The tables produced are not included in this document, but were analyzed by means of the statistical package available on the computer terminals at Western Washington State College.

Administration, Staffing and Our Population

Wisely, the quite practically, a program advisory board was developed comprising members of the advisory board of Skagit Group Ranch Homes (one of which is the Director of Probation Services in Skagit County) and participating local school superintendents. The cooperation of these officials is critical to the efficient implementation of the project. This advisory board has meet consistently and was actively involved in developing policy and overseeing the early implementation of the project. This administrative structure assures the cooperation of each of the participating school districts and certainly facilitates school re-entry and credit radification for program participants. This is of particular importance to this project as strict adherence to the grant guidelines as regard referral procedures will necessarily restrict individual school's ability to refer disruptive juveniles into the project. In this case referrals from probation, who also meet the criteria of excessive truancy, expulsion or dropping out are re-instated, at least on a part-time basis, into the traditional school setting. Obviously the project in meeting this task efficiently is quite dependent upon the cooperation of the individual school districts. This entrance restriction has been flexible. Referrals from local school districts and other agencies have been accepted when space is available and the placement seems appropriate both in terms of the program's needs and the client's needs. During the past project year four such non-target individuals were served.

The staff consists of a coordinator/counselor, and an aide, both supported by the centralized services available through the Group Ranch Home administration. These ancillary services include secretarial and fiscal support. The Director of Skagit Group Ranch Homes, Sue Minton, is responsible for the project's administration. The counselor/coordinator, Jim Shoop, has a host of responsibilities. His background as a juvenile probation officer in Skagit County facilities his ability to deal with the population as well as deal effectively with referral sources and treatment modalities. His efforts in propelling clients along towards academic or vocational success are supplemented by an aide, Bob Baloga, whose responsibilties are largely tied to tutoring clients and supervising their progress academically in the study/learning center. Mr. Baloga is a state certified teacher.

Utilization of this aide position has released the coordinator/counselor to devote his full energies to client intake and needs assessment as well as community resource development.

The study/learning center, where the majority of clients spend time involved in tutorial pursuits is located in the rear of the administrative offices of Skagit Group Ranch Homes in Burlington. A large room in this store front has been converted to house these thusly engaged students. The setting is relaxed and comfortable, small enough not to be too imposing though presently large enough for the part-time use students require of it. The proximity of project staff to a very competent administrative staff must facilitate project implementation. Finally, it's location in Burlington is central to a geographically large Skagit County.

The population served is consistent with the goals and objectives established within grant parameters. Some 84.6% of the 39 clients are or were male, while 89.7% were caucasian. Less than 11 percent of the entire population were of a minority ethnicity while only some 15.4% were female. Serious delinquents are typically male while the ethnographic characteristics of Skagit County point toward homogeneity. This target population may be categorized as rural disadvantaged, a social classification that includes parental occupations of a seasonal nature, an emphasis upon vocational life orientation and goals, an inability to attend highly centralized study programs and school systems which do not generally offer independent study programs.

The majority of clients 34 of 39 or 87% were referred to the project by the Skagit County Juvenile Probation Department. Prior to project implementation the criteria and procedures for referral were worked out with probation staff. The procedure works thusly; as each potential participant is contacted by a probation officer, The probation officer makes a determination whether a revised educational program would be appropriate. If the decision is to refer the child to the program, a decision recommended by probation and authorized by the juvenile court, then the child, parents, the involved probation officer and the program coordinator meet to establish the terms and conditions of program involvement. Generally this participation is either court ordered, specified in an informal behavior contact or worked out in an informal and voluntary agreement where probation does not have legal authority. The program coordinator then reviews the client's school records, discusses the most appropriate situation with school personnel, and develops what is perceived to be a most fitting course of study or training.

In 32 of the 39 cases to date (82.1%), clients were wards of the juvenile court and under legal obligation to participate in the project. Further, two clients had been wards of the court while the remaining 7.7% were informal probationers.

The schools which clients last attended are well distributed throughout Skagit County, with the noticeable absence of Anacortes. The middle schools of Skagit County contributed 9 or 23.1% of all referrals, while Burlington-Edison and Mt. Vernon had 8 referrals, 20.5%, each. Students entered at the 9th grade level (30.8%) and the 10th grade level (33.3%) most often; the range of grade levels was from seventh to eleventh.

The most recent reasons for which this population were referred to the juvenile court were also well distributed throughout the offense spectrum. Burglary and grand larceny referrals accounted for 25.6% of the total, though many clients, whose most recent reason for referral was less serious, had such referrals in their court histories. Running away accounted for 17.9% of the total and incorrigibility 12.8%. It is interesting and important to note that these were not isolated status offenders being placed in a program for repetitively delinquent not-in-school youth. The most recent reason for referral does not actually reflect the offense homogeneity of the population. Prior felony delinquencies were part of each child's court history and if the most serious offense in each client's history was examined rather than the most recent, then few, if any, clients would be categorized in a less serious manner than Class C Felony. In ethnically homogenous populations criminality of a violent nature is not often evidenced. The fact that 8 or 21% of this group had most recent referrals of such a nature (assault, arson) speaks to a program addressing a difficult and unusual rural delinquent population.

This population averaged 13.54 years of age at the time of their first referral to the juvenile court. The modal age was 14. Both are quite young relative to the age at first referral of our usual juvenile probation referral population. Further, these 39 individuals averaged some 4.43 prior referrals. This too is an inordinarely high number. On top of this they committed a new offense once every 6.11 months. Indeed, they have been quite prolific in terms of their court referrals, hence the obvious high proportion as wards of court placed on special supervision at the time of their entrance into the project. Further, it should come as no surprise that what might be considered not extremely serious referral reasons, incorrigibility, etc., precipitated court ordered or contract placement with the project. Indeed, the earlier evaluation of the juvenile prosecution project in Skagit County, revealed that several formally adjudicated delinquents were ordered in their case dispositions into this project.

Finally, this population averaged 15.3 years of age at the time of entrance into the project. Therefore, beginning at the age of thirteen and one-half, and committing an offense every six months, this population, by the time they reached the age of fifteen, were out of school and formally adjudicated wards of the court. At this stage in their careers they entered the Recidivism Reduction project, as part of a probation arranged, and court ordered treatment plan.

Participant socialization as evidenced by county history shows a very disruptive (in school) and disrupted (by family breakdown) population. The constant entanglement with law enforcement, indeed the very amounts of time involved in committing delinquent acts, must necessarily successfully preclude academic achievement. In certain cases academic failure preceeded delinquent activity; in the majority of cases the opposite was true.

Academically these children, really just beginning their higher educational careers, may be categorized by their;

- o inability to read at grade level with well established patterns of failure;
- o withdrawal from extracurricular activities;
- o disruptiveness in the classroom;
- o frequent absenteeism (if not outright expulsion);
- o having weak peer relationships in school; or, where peer relationships are strong, they are with other juveniles whose behaviors and attitudes tend to be anti-social;
- o emotional disturbances related to the home environment.

Academia

By way of academic diagnosis at the time of program entrance and as a means of assessing the project's academic impact, the guidance coordinator tested each participant with the Wide Range Achievement Test. Each of the thirty-nine clients were given a pre-test, while seventeen have yet to be tested immediately prior to program departure.

It is assumed that students would show a significant increase in their individual academic process as their study efforts were supplemented by the tutorial efforts on-going within the project's study learning center.

Shortly after entering the project baseline, academic levels in reading, spelling, and math were established for this population through the above mentioned WRAT testing. The guidance coordinator should be complimented for his efforts to ensure that this testing was done. These tests established base reading levels for this

population at 7.39; for spelling, 5.67; and for math, 5.69. The second round of testing produced average scores for the tested population of 8.25 for reading, 5.86 for spelling and 6.06 for mathematics. The change in the reading scores yielded a t value of -5.14 with a probability of chance occurrence equaling .00024. For spelling the difference revealed a t value of -1.68 and a probabiity of chance occurrence of .1047. The math scores, pre and post, produced a t value of -1.65 with á probability of .1115.

In essence, all scores showed definite improvement, though only the reading scores show a significant change to the better, $\alpha = .05$.

To better reveal who was showing improvement in these scores, both pre and post WRAT scores were arranged into low, medium and high scores. These categories were then subject to the test of gamma which revealed scores of .826 for reading, .968 for spelling, and .797 for mathematics. These high, positive gamma scores show that there is a strong relationship between these variables. Further, we may say with some surety that those individuals who scored highest on their pre-tests scored highest on the post-tests. There was not a large amount of cross over in this sense even though scores after the post-testing were generally higher. Finally, any differences in the pre and post WRAT scores did not seem to be influenced by the grade level at which clients entered the program (gamma= .137). This entire group of gamma scores may be indicative of a very positive program impact and at least influenced by factors within the scope of the project.

This project was not on the business of granting either credits nor the external diploma. Again, it should be emphasized that the project sought primarily to supplement the regular school by means of tutorial and remedial instruction in Burlington, as well as curb delinquencies by the program population through constructive use of leisure time.

The courses of action for all program clients were quite diverse though they generally fell into three broad areas; return or remain in school via the study learning center, preparation for and passing of the GED test and vocational or job development. On top of this, students were encouraged to seek or were funneled into work situations during the summer months.

Many of the specific, individual client program packages overlapped these three broad areas and certain clients changed study goals midway through their stint in the project. However, at the time of the writing of this document the majority of students, 25.6% in both instances, were working at the remedial learning center in an attempt to return to school or, while still attending a Skagit County school, were being tutored at the study learning center. 12.8% were receiving vocational training through on-going job development. 10.3% were to remain in school, though this project offered them either pre-vocational training or work experience, while the remaining 7.7% were receiving exclusively, remedial tutoring at the facility in Burlington.

The project has been striving to utilize existing services within the community to further supplement the program. Obviously, one of the most often used services has been the schools themselves. It is fortunate and indeed important that such a symbiotic relationship exists. The SPEDY Program, Summer Employment for Disadvantaged Youth, has been used extensively. Outside employment opportunities of a temporary nature have also been developed for the less academically ambitious clients. Clients seem to have a difficult time maintaining employment, often unable to keep jobs when the interest or motivation declines. Project staff report that there has been a shortage of work experience opportunities. Oddly, employers have been somewhat hesitant to hire clients even though these juveniles are not, in many instances, being paid. Vocational training has been made available through Skagit Valley College though its use has not, to date, been extensive.

As the majority of clients are referrals from the juvenile court and under contractual obligation to participate in the program, upon the termination of the probation agreement the students are free to terminate their involvement. Few students have chosen this means of terminating. Sixteen clients (41.0%) are still in the project. Eleven clients terminated (28.2%) when they left Skagit County. Five students returned (12.8%) to their regular schools. The remaining clients exited the project in a variety of ways ranging from having prepared their GED's on through to one child who was institutionalized for subsequent offenses.

Crime Reduction Efficiency

This section examines the interim project effects on the target population. In each case, where appropriate, statistical tests of relationship were first conducted and followed by tests of significance, largely the generation of correlation

coefficients. The tests of association were either gamma or Yule's Q. The variable, number of in-project referrals was correlated in this manner with eleven different independent variables. These variables were:

1) Seriousness of instant offense (offense immediately prior to program project,
2) The amount of time spent by client in the project;
3) Clients age at the time of instant offense (which coincided quite well with age at program entrance),
4) Age of client at time of first known offense,
5) Number of prior referrals,
6) The frequency of all prior referrals in months,
7) Grade level upon program entrance,
8) Juvenile justice status at time of program entrance,
9) The amount of time from program entrance to new project offenses;
10) The type (seriousness) of in-project offenses, and,
11) The reason for which the client terminated (if he or she did) from the project.

It was anticipated that this exmaination of certain variables that may or may not influence or at least be characteristic of recidivists, could aid the program in individualized treatment development, as well as allow us to discover exactly with whom the project is most effective. Unfortunately, the short amount of time the project has been in existence has somewhat precluded such a correlation follow-up on terminated clients.

To begin with, of the thirty-nine clients comprising the population to date, nineteen (48.7%) committed news offenses while in the project. This is a rather startling statistic at first glance. Indeed, it reveals a recidivism rate quite similar to normal probation recidivism rates (38.6%) in Whatcom County, 1975; 43% in Island County in 1975; 44.3% in Skagit County). It should be remembered that these are in-project referrals and not new offenses after termination from the project. Further, it may be assumed, not erroneously, that if sufficient amounts of time had not passed for the juvenile to feel the effects of treatment, then a high in-project recidivism rate may have been expected. Of course, it is not the mere passage of time that is important, but rather the experiences gained by clients and offered by the project that is assumed to promote behavioral change. It should be noted that the majority of new offenses were status offenders with most of the probation violations actually generated as a consequence of strict time structuring by the program staff. It would not be erroneous to say that programs with less well supervised clients would have lower new offense rates and that this program staff is quite similar to probation staff in their interpretations of what is and what isn't acceptable behavior.

The relationship between time spent by the juvenile in the project and the number of new in-project referrals though not very strong, gamma equalling -.138 and r= .270, did show that as the time spent in the project increased the proportion of clients reoffending decreased. The average amount of time spent in the project, has been to date some 4.76 months. Perhaps, the project is unable to quickly modify abberrant behavior, though there is a modifing effect, and it becomes more evident as time progresses. (See Table I)

Table I. Time spent by clients in the project as a correlate of new offenses.

Time Spent In Project (in months)	Number of Offenses While In Project						
	None	1	2	3	8	Total	Percent
Less Than One Month	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.6
01-03	8	4	5	0	0	17	43.6
04-06	6	2	5	0	0	13	33.3
09-11	5	0	1	1	1	8	20.5
Total	20	6	11	1	1	39	
Percent	51.3	15.4	28.2	2.6	2.6		100.

The seriousness of the offense immediately prior to entrance into the project did not seem to greatly influence the number of in-project offenses this population committed. The gamma of .165 did reveal that the clients with the most serious instant offenses did commit more new offenses, but not to any outstanding degree. This was to be expected as clients generally had quite checkered prior referral histories, that is, they did not commit but one type of offense consistently but rather many different offenses consistently.

With a Q score of .432 the relationship between the number of priors and the number of in-project offenses was somewhat stronger. The r of +.298 reveals that as the number of prior offfenses each client had committed increased thus did (in essence) the likelihood of their committing new offenses. This finding should not come as a surprise, as these clients are not delinquent enough to bring into effect the statistical regression upon their subsequent referral histories. In other words clients were not so bad that they could only get better nor so good that they could only get worse.

The age of this population at the time of their referral immediately prior to entering the project, did not seem to be related to their likelihood of committing in-project offenses. A Q of -.364 and an r of -.077 reveal somewhat low associations and generally showed that as the age of client at the time he or she entered the project increased, the number of in-project referrals decreased. Proportionately, thirteen, fifteen and seventeen year olds recidivated most often, 69%, 67% and 80% respectively.

The frequency with which this population committed their priors was significantly related to their likelihood of committing in project offenses. In fact, as the elapsed time between prior referrals increased the proportions of each frequency cell's population who committed new offenes (while in the project) decreased. In this case the Q was equal to -.371, hardly powerful; though the r, with fourteen degrees of freedom was significant at the .05 level with a score of -.559. Obviously, as the data reveals, those juveniles who had established themselves as frequent referrals to the juvenile court continued to be referred even after program entrance. This concept needs to be explored further. (Please see Table II)

Table II. Frequency of prior offenses by problem client as a correlate of new offenses.

Frequency of Priors (in months)	None	1	2	3	8	Total	Percent
01-03	10	4	4	1	0	19	51.4
04-06	1	1	3	0	1	6	16.2
07-09	2	1	2	0	0	5	13.5
10-12	2	0	1	0	0	3	8.1
14-26	3	0	1	0	0	4	10.8
Total	18	6	11	1	1	37	100.
Percent	48.6	16.2	29.7	2.7	2.7		

The amount of time that elapsed subsequent to program entrance until the new, in project offense averaged 1.58 months per recidivist. In other words, one and one-half months into the project, frequently offending participants, reoffended. Again, this emphasizes the idea that perhaps enough time had not passed after program entrance to have an effect upon clients. The range of elapsed times from program entrance to an in-project offense was one to four months. Indeed, only five of nineteen offenders committed offenses later than one month after entrance. Further, a gamma of -.926 shows that the majority of offenders, significantly so, fell into reoffending quite early on in the project period. (Please see Table III)

Table III. Time from program entrance until new offense.

Time in Months

	None	1	2	3	8	Total	Percent
No New Offenses	20	0	0	0	0	20	51.3
01	0	4	8	1	1	14	35.9
02	0	1	0	0	0	1	2.6
03	0	0	2	0	0	2	5.2
04	0	1	1	0	0	2	5.2
Total	20	6	11	1	1	39	100.
Percent	51.3	15.4	28.2	2.6	2.6		

The age at the time of each client's first known offense did not seem to significally influence the manner in which clients committed new offenses. The Q of .110 shows low strength in the relationship, while the non-critical r of -.569, reveals that as the age of these clients at the time of their first known offense increased the number of them who committed in project offenses decreased. It appears that 13 and 14 year olds reoffended proportionately most often, 56% and 58% respectively. As mentioned earlier the average age of our population at the time of their first known offense was 13.3 years.

Most interestingly it appears that the juvenile justice status of the population at the time of program entrance forms a perfect association with in-project referrals. By this I mean that those clients known in the most strict legal sense, wards of the court, were exclusively responsible for all new referrals. The gamma score of +1.00 exhibits this quite well. Again, we should not be too surprised by this

at this early date in project history. Quite simply the most frequently and seriously delinquent clients are reoffending most often, at least during the earlier stages of the project. (Please see Table IV)

Table IV. Juvenile Justice Status at Time of Program Entrance as a Correlate of New Offenses

Legal Status	None	1	2	3	8	Total	Percent
Delinquent/Incorr. Ward of Court	13	6	11	1	1	32	82.1
Dismissed Ward	2	0	0	0	0	2	5.2
Informal/Probationer	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.6
Information Only	2	0	0	0	0	2	5.2
Other	2	0	0	0	0	2	5.2
Total	20	6	11	1	1	39	100.
Percent	51.3	15.4	28.2	2.6	2.6		

The grade level at which each client entered the project did not seem to appreciably effect in-project offenses (gamma= .047). It seems that as the grade level of clients increased the likelihood of new, in-project offenses did also (r= .439), though not significantly so. In other words, clients with a higher grade level at the time of program entrance committed proportionately more offenses.

A gamma score of +.945 indicates that the type of new, in-project offense is very much related to the number of offenses. This is because twenty clients had no new offenses and obviously these twenty all had the same type of new offense, none. The most frequently appearing type of in-project offense was running away, followed by probation violations.

Finally, the present status of clients in relation to the project seemed to be influenced (gamma of -.737) by the number of in-project offenses. Though new offenses while enrolled in the project did not lead immediately to termination, it did appear that as the number of in-project offenses increased the degree of success as exhibited by the clients project status decreased. Utilizing the seriousness of offense scale developed for the Social Agency Referral Program in Seattle, it was possible to conduct a t-test for the difference between the seriousness of all prior offenses and those that were committed by clients during

the project. It appears that in-program offenses were significantly less serious than those the same population committed prior to entrance, t= 4.87 with a probability of .0007. Further, the seriousness of delinquencies only, in a pre and post basis were examined for clients whowent on to commit new offenses. In this case the t value equalled 1.92 with a probability of .1159; short of significance at the .05 level, however, very close to the .10 level of significance. (Please see Table V)

Table V

Client Status	Number of Offenses While in Project						
	None	1	2	3	8	Total	Percent
Dropped Program	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.6
Institutionalized	0	1	0	0	0	1	2.6
Still in Program	8	2	4	1	1	16	41.0
Left Area	2	2	7	0	0	11	28.2
Returned to School	4	1	0	0	0	5	12.8
Passed GED	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.6
Prepared for GED	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.6
Found Employment	2	0	0	0	0	2	5.2
Joined Military	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.6
Total	20	6	11	1	1	39	100
Percent	51.3	15.4	28.2	2.6	2.6		

In conclusion, it appears that clients are adjudicated delinquent wards of the court upon entrance into the project. Generally, participation in the project is part of a probation supervision contract signed between client and the juvenile court. This most serious probation status was significantly related to the likelihood of new offenses.

To date the in-project recidivism rate has been quite high, seemingly a continuation of the clients previously very delinquent behavior. New offenses are generally committed quite early on upon program entrance and this propensity for new delinquent acts seems to deteriorate as the time spent by these clients in the project increases. This is an important finding and to a very great degree heralds a success of sorts.

The significance of the correlation coefficient between the frequency of prior offenses and the number of clients committing new offenses lends credibility to the above mentioned finding.

Generally these findings speak to a positive crime reduction efficacy exerted by the project upon its population, one that should improve.

Crime Reduction Amongst Terminated Clients

So few clients have terminated and so little time has elapsed since they terminated that the results that follow are quite tentative. The end of the second program year should present quite a different situation and the use of a control or at least a comparison population will indeed be a reality.

In this section, which deals exclusively with clients who have left the project, I wished to again seek correlates of recidivsm utilizing the eleven variables used in the preceeding section. Instead, I will use these variables descriptively in determining what is characteristic of these clients who have terminated and subsequently reoffended.

To begin with three of the twenty-three clients who had terminated have recidivated (13.0%). One redivist had left the project to return to school, one had prepared and passed his GED, the final student had left the program and the area. Collectively, these clients accounted for five new offenses. The most serious new referral encounted in this group were auto theft, running away and probation violations. Our recidivists had been referred into the project earlier for assault, incorribility and running away. Further, they had accounted for one, four and six priors respectively, quite representative of this project's population as a whole in these terms. Two of the three recidivists averaged one month or less between prior referrals while the third had averaged fourteen months previously. Two of the three were fourteen at the time of their first known offense, while the third was at the time of their first known offense, while the third was seventeen. Not surprisingly, two recidivists were fifteen at the time of entrance into the project while the third was seventeen. All three clients were wards of the court at the time of program entrance while two entered at the ninth grade level and third at the eleventh grade.

All three clients who recidivated committed these new offenses one month or less after terminating from the project. Finally, those who recidivated averaged some 5.33 months in the project.

Project Financial Affairs

The Recidivism Reduction Project for its first year of implementation has a total working budget of $27,500. $24,750 were granted from L.E.A.A. for this operation.

Personnel costs accounted for, after the revision of January 1977, $20,031.05 or $72.8% of the total project costs. Less money than expected was used for the aide, he was hired midway through the project's year, and for personnel benefits (by some $668.92). Only one position, the coordinator/counselor, was full time. The remaining staff positions, supportive and administrative in nature, were already in existence positions who donated certain amounts of their time to project operation.

Travel and transportation costs were allocated $2,000. As of October of 1976, only 23% of these funds had been spent, though no budget revision was requested in the January 1977 revision memorandum. It may be in order to suggest that monies in this category be used to facilitate expanding the coverage of the program to, as yet, untouched school districts such as Anacortes. There appears to be a rather low number of referrals from Anacortes meeting target requirements. Two clients from this school district were offered services and the project, despite obvious transportation problems is ready and willing to extend their services.

Office and study equipment were allocated $1,055.24 (revised budget). Certain items were indeed necessary once the Burlington study/learning center opened up.

Some $4,300 dollars were allocated for supplies and operating expenses. The most substantial amounts went towards facility rental, $1800 total or $150 per month. Office supplies were under budgeted by some $100 at first, as was telephone and utilities. By October of 1976, some 71% of the monies in this category had been expended.

As some 39 clients to date have made use of the project, per capita costs, from this budget alone, were $705.13. Monthly operating costs were $2,291.67 which means that the project must have averaged just over three clients per month.

Per capita personnel costs were $487.98; per capita transportation costs were $51.28 or at 13 cents a mile, some 394.46 miles per child, which in a geographically large jurisdiction like Skagit County, is not exorbitant.

By combining certain budget elements it is possible to come up with an administrative cost per client. Such calculations are crude but valuable. Such administrative costs maybe:

Project Administrator	$1,500.00
Secretary/Accountant	2,400.00
Benefits	780.00
Office Supplies	350.49
Indirect Administration Costs to the Northwest Regional Council	700.00

These total costs of $5,730.49 come out to a per capita expenditure of $146.94, compared to $558.19 per client for actual service costs. Indeed there is overlap in both directions on these break downs, however, service costs predominate as they should.

Discussion

Recidivism Reduction is a unique program. Rather than replacing the many school systems in Skagit County it seeks to supplement them by offering individualized learning packages for students unadaptable to their structure. Interestingly, the project does not grant either course credit nor the external diploma though credit can be gained from Skagit Valley College for vocationally oriented class work. Indeed, the emphasis is upon a wide range of skills, remedial and vocational. Further, the important aspect of job development is quite thoroughly implemented by project staff.

The Advisory board of this project needs to keep meeting at least bi-monthly and should indeed be aware of the potential of this project. The maintenance of in-school clients by this project is of the utmost importance and must be continued, if not expanded. With proper scheduling the number of clients served may be increased, a cost-effective benefit for the schools, the juvenile justice system and the project. Further, the schools should regularly forward copies of each clients school histories to the project coordinator/counselor that he might make the best decisions possible in arranging individual client courses of study. To date such information has not been part of program entrance procedures.

The staff of this project is adequate in number and very competent. The coordinator/counselor has done a most remarkable job in maintaining program records and fulfilling contractural arrangements. The centralization of administrative services in Burlington is quite helpful for the project. The budget, which is generally adequate, should be expanded or revised to help supplement getting students to and from the Burlington facility. Perhaps this is the single greatest reason for the non-attendance of students in Anacortes.

The population being served is very delinquent, rural, and culturally disadvantaged. They indeed need these services. It is recommended that clients be funneled into the project as soon after court disposition as possible. If time and treatment can affect change upon this population (as it seems to) the longer amounts of time in the project, perhaps the length of time on special supervision, could affect quite dramatic changes in the population. The juvenile court should be apprised of the crime reduction potential of this project and make more frequent (where space allows) use of the services offered. Though court ordering of attendance in the project is coercive in nature, one must not underestimate the worth of filling leisure time with constructive purposes aimed in definite directions. The treatment offered is far from restrictive in nature and far less expensive (in the long run) than doing nothing or institutionalizing this population.

Academically, some achievement is being made. How well these new skills manifest themselves after a return to school is debatable. Curiously, the children who do worse in terms of continuing their delinquent careers return to the schools. Again, perhaps more time in the project, more time for the project staff to reduce the influence of a decade or more of negative self-concept, will be able to affect change in individual client's academic futures.

The in-project offense rate for this population is quite high, though it deteriorates with time. No simple recommendations here, except that discretion must be used in determining whether new offenses warrant program termination. It is the philosophy of the program staff that so long as new offenses are dealt with as they occur by the appropriate agency, in most instances the juvenile court, and the child continues to live in the community, services should not be terminated. A lack of cooperation or involvement by the child seems to be the major impetus for service termination.

Recidivism amongst terminees, hindered in its assessment at this early date, is not intolerably high. 13% is far below what we might expect. The next twelve months will tell whether this is an accurate figure.

Few clients have returned to school, 12.8%; few clients have found employment for more than temporary periods of time. Again, and most importantly we are dealing with a project really in its formative stages. Twelve months, in an attempt to "people-change" is rather a short time. For these reasons it is recommended that this project continue receiving support from the Law and Justice Planning Office for at least another program year.

END