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# VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND PLANNING

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ACQUISITIONS

## WOMEN IN THE VERMONT CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

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WOMEN IN THE VERMONT  
CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

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## Abstract:

The early 1970's saw a tremendous increase in the public awareness of women as a special interest, special needs group. The Department of Corrections found that it had little specific information about its female clients. This project was undertaken to provide that specific knowledge about Vermont's female offenders. It was designed to look at the demographic and economic characteristics, criminal justice characteristics, and problems and service needs of female clients with the intent of using the information to assess their needs and plan programs specifically to meet these needs. Two questionnaires were used to gather the data. One went to Department of Corrections staff members to gather information about their individual clients who were in the system on March 31, 1974. The second questionnaire, a modification of the first, was sent to these clients themselves during the winter of 1976. The results show that Vermont's female correctional clients differ significantly from the overall female population of Vermont and also from Vermont's male correctional clients. The results also point to specific need areas and, to a certain extent, show how well these needs were being addressed.

- When compared to the general female population in Vermont, female correctional clients are more likely to reside in the Northwest Corner of the state, with over 30% in Chittenden County.
- Over one-third of the women placed under Department supervision were convicted in Chittenden County courts.
- Female offenders are more apt to be living at or below Vermont's welfare standard for Aid to Needy Families with Children than the female population as a whole, and are more likely to be heads of their own households or living alone than Vermont women as a whole.
- Whereas 72% of Vermont's female correctional clients are under 35 years old, only 44% of the total female population is under 35.
- Vermont's female correctional clients are less likely to have finished high school or the equivalent than the overall female population.
- Female correctional clients are less likely to be employed regularly and those who work are more likely to have low-pay, low status jobs than the female population as a whole.
- The types of crimes committed by women are significantly different than those committed by men. Women are more likely to commit forgery or fraud and men are more likely to be convicted of burglary and auto theft.

- A significantly greater proportion of males than females had prior convictions when entering the corrections system. There is also a greater probability that the women will not reenter the system during follow-up.
- Department personnel indicated that 63.0% of the women needed special treatment, 58.7% needed help with economic problems, and 35.0% had needs relating to social problems.
- For those persons exhibiting a need for special treatment, 71% of the treatment needs were addressed when recognized according to department personnel. Also, 55% of the economic needs and 46% of the social needs were addressed.
- For more than 60% of those women seen to have inadequate income as a prime presenting problem, this one factor was considered causal of many of the other problems faced by that client.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This study of women in the Vermont correctional system was initiated in the fall of 1973 in response to public recognition of women as a group with special interests and needs.\* In trying to answer questions about female offenders, the Department of Corrections discovered much of its data collection was not differentiated by sex and very little solid information was available with which to reply to these concerns or to plan for services for women.

In December, 1973, the Department's Research and Planning Division met with all the female Probation/Parole Officers, institutional staff for women at the Woodstock Correctional Center, and the superintendent of the Weeks School for juveniles. The purpose of the meetings was to hear and to document ideas about the Department's programs for female offenders. Upon reviewing the comments and recommendations made, the Commissioner called for a background study on the characteristics and service needs of women in the system to supply supporting data before developing suggested programs.

A study was designed and carried out by members of the Research and Planning Division which first involved sending questionnaires to each staff member dealing with female clients. These questionnaires were to be filled out on each female client who was in the system on March 31, 1974. (See Appendices A and B.) Secondly, a modified version of the original questionnaire was designed and mailed directly to the clients. (See the Methodology section and Appendix D for further discussion.)

The study of women in the correctional system had not been a priority item to the Department during earlier evaluations of adult institutions and the institutional maximum security arrangements. However, now that supporting data for the development and management of programs for women offenders is available, it is hoped that it will serve as both a catalyst and a tool for increased planning of programs for women in corrections.

We would like to express our appreciation to all those people who helped us to complete this project. Special thanks to Barbara Chase, Superintendent, and her staff at Woodstock Community Correctional Center, and all the women officers in the Probation and Parole Division and Weeks School staff who gave us their ideas and support from the beginning and all through the research and took the time to fill out the questionnaires, to Robert Voorhees, Director of Volunteer Services, who often gave advice and aid, to Thomas Perras, Director of Probation and Parole, who was always available for questions and suggestions, to all the secretaries in the Probation and Parole offices who got the addresses of our clients and made it possible to send out the second questionnaires, and to everyone who gave their suggestions, criticisms, and especially their support throughout the project. An added thank you to Robert Squires of the Research Division for help with technical advice and with the final editing.

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## II. METHODOLOGY

A detailed questionnaire was devised for the field staff to answer about each of their female clients. (See Appendix A.) This method of data collection was aimed at gathering information most efficiently from the individuals best trained in observing offender problems and needs.

The Research and Planning Division took steps to facilitate among the field staff an appreciation for the goals of the study and motivation for doing as thorough a record search as possible. The Division also pre-tested the questionnaire and sent to each staff member an instruction package for coding the questionnaires. (See Appendix B.)

Later feedback from the field indicated that the questionnaire was found to be generally relevant and complete. (See Appendix C for Feedback Questionnaire.) The staff did have a few specific problems in answering it, however. Information about co-defendants and some details of financial status were often not available. Some data items such as service needs of the older cases were difficult to locate or recall. Also, several of the staff found it difficult to "categorize" the personal problems and service needs of their clients. They felt that one need or problem blended into others and that a multiple-choice questionnaire was not adequate for defining personalities. Also, they sometimes had difficulty deciding whether personal problems were symptomatic or causal or both.

Some Officers said that their answers about meeting the needs of the older cases or recommendations for court action might be different if the cases were new because more community resources are available now than years ago.

However, as stated above, the general consensus was that the survey instrument was adequate for its purpose and, as will be shown below, the staff was able to provide complete and valid data in almost all content areas.

The questionnaires were sent out in late spring and were to be completed on every woman who was in the Vermont correctional system (except at Weeks School) as of March 31, 1974.\* The questionnaires were to be answered "as if" the Officer were doing a Pre-sentence or Pre-Disposition Report for the Court, i.e., with information expressed as it was at the time of the criminal conviction rather than as of 3/31/74. The exception to this was "services addressed." Thus all of the demographic data is as of the same date as the offense data, e.g., age or residence would be the age or residence at the time of conviction.

The method of sampling used, that is surveying all women in the correctional system on a randomly selected day, inherently weights the results toward the characteristics of women who remain in the system the longest, i.e. those given the longest maximum sentences (either to be served on probation or incarcerated). This point is illustrated on Table 1 which shows that women with long maximum sentences are more likely to be in the system when the sample is taken on a randomly chosen day (3/31/74) than when we look at all women who were placed on probation in a given year (FY 1973)

\*Data was also collected on a sample of the girls sentenced to Weeks School. Results from this latter study are not included in this report but will be utilized in the Juvenile Planning Project now being conducted by the Division of Research and Planning .

TABLE 1

Comparison of Length of Maximum Sentences  
of Women in the Study with Women Placed on Probation in FY 1973

Length of Maximum Sentence	Women in the Vt. Correctional System On 3/31/74*		Women Placed on Probation in FY 1973	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
1-60 days	53.4	109	67.5	131
61 days - 6 mos.	17.6	36	16.5	32
6 mos.	28.9	59	16.0	31
Total	99.9	204	100.0	194

$\chi^2=27.55$ , d.f.=2,  $p<.001$

This study was designed to be a descriptive planning tool rather than a basic research vehicle; hence few theoretical hypotheses about women in the corrections system have been tested.

It is possible that staff attitudes about their female clients have biased the results described here. There is also the inevitable element of error in records. It is assumed that these biases and errors are distributed randomly throughout the sample but several cross-checks are possible and have been made.

As one check, from the original sample of 264 cases, questionnaires were mailed directly to 219 clients. It was not possible to send questionnaires to all of the clients in the original sample because either some of the cases had been expunged, the clients were deceased, or no current address could be obtained. We received completed questionnaires from 84 of the women. (See Appendix D.)

We then ran statistical tests to determine whether the 84 women who responded to the mail survey were representative of the original sample. The tests showed no significant differences between the two samples in the following areas: age distribution, county of residence at the time of the offense, and offense.

In the area of education, it was found that a significantly greater proportion of the clients who responded to the questionnaire had more than twelve grades of

\* Juveniles and those given deferred sentences are not included as they are not given specific sentences.

education or the equivalent than those in the original sample. Out of the 10 clients in the original study who had greater than 12 grades of education, 9 responded to the questionnaire. In total, 16 of the 84 clients responding to the questionnaire report that they now have more than 12 years of education. However, when we compare the two samples by examining those completing 12 or more grades and those completing less than 12 grades, no significant difference was found between the groups.

From these tests we concluded that the sample of clients responding to the questionnaire was reasonably representative of the total female correctional client population and conclusions about the overall population can also be drawn from the data obtained from this sub-sample (with the exceptions noted).

The next step in analyzing the data gathered from the client questionnaires was to determine if the responses originally gathered from Department of Corrections personnel were valid. Answers from the 84 clients were compared to the answers given by the Department employee who filled out the original questionnaire for those clients to determine whether the responses were the same, were compatible taking into account the two-year time lag between the surveys, or were different. The results, summarized in Table 3, were generally satisfactory. In 11 of the 15 response areas there was at least 60% agreement between the responses of the client and the staff member. The two response areas in which the answers matched less than half the time were employment termination, and approximate monthly income. In the first instance the staff did not feel confident because of the very subjective nature of the question. In the area of income level (71.1%), staff themselves did not feel completely confident about their answers, as noted previously. The two areas of prime presenting problems and service needs were not actually considered a validity question due to the extremely subjective nature of the questions. In 8 out of 13 specific types of service needs, the staff and client did not agree even half of the time. Most of these areas deal with the client's own concept of herself and therefore could be the reason that there is such a low matching rate for service needs in general. These needs are discussed further in Section V.

### III. DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS:

We all commonly describe people in terms of their sex, residence, age, marital status, and number of dependents. These are generally referred to as demographic variables. This section of the report describes the findings with respect to economic variables such as income as well as the basic demographic data as reported by the department staff.

The demographic information collected about the women in the Vermont correctional system was recorded as it was at the time the women were convicted of the crimes that caused them to be under correctional supervision on March 31, 1974. Hence, residence information tells where the women lived at the time of their current convictions; age information tells the distribution of the women's ages at the time of their current convictions; etc.

In order to better understand the scope of the data presented below you may want to refer to Appendix A to see the actual "Background Information" part of the questionnaire and Appendix B for the explanation of the coding of the questionnaire.

TABLE 2

Education Completed by Women 18 years or older:  
Study Sample vs. Sample Responding to Client Questionnaire

Education Completed (by clients aged 18 or older)	Original		Follow-up	
	%	#	%	#
Grades Completed				
Less than 12	55.9	124	52.4	43
12 or more	44.1	98	47.6	39
Total	100.0	222	100.0	82

$\chi^2=0.161$ , d.f.=1,  $.25 < p < .50$

TABLE 3

Validity Comparison  
of Staff and Client Responses

Area	Match	No Match	Percentage Match	One or Both Did Not Answer
	#	#	%	#
Marital Status	58	26	69.0	0
Residence type*	55	28	66.3	1
Dependents*	83	1	98.9	0
Conviction offense*	78	4	95.1	3
Town of residence	66	18	78.6	0
Approximate monthly income**	27	11	71.1	46
Source of most of income	56	18	75.7	10
Employment status	59	21	73.8	4
Employment history	52	17	75.4	15
Employment termination	34	14	70.8	36
Career skills	60	20	75.0	4
Highest grade completed*	75	6	92.6	3
Other schooling*	84	0	100.0	NA
Prime presenting problems	150	357	29.6	NA
Service needs	42	222	15.9	NA

\*In these categories, the two year time difference has been taken into account and possible matches have been counted as matches.

\*\*Within \$150.00 per month.

The background data was compared with similar data from the U.S. Census Bureau about the entire female population in Vermont in 1970.<sup>1</sup> As will be seen, this comparison revealed that the population of women in the Vermont Correctional System is significantly different from the total female population in Vermont. Age was also examined using data from another Research and Planning Division study. That study data allows a comparison between women on probation and men on probation. Unfortunately, no similar comparative data exists for incarcerated men and women.

Unfortunately, income data was thought by field staff to be the most important but also the least reliable of the items. The data presented here uses the one question of the four in the income section of the original questionnaire that seemed to have the most reliable coding. Although exact income data for all the women was not available, we were able to compare income level for 219 of the women to the Vermont Welfare Standards which were in effect. We therefore used this criterion in analyzing the income variable. See Appendix A for the "Aid to Needy Families with Children" Standards which were in effect on 3/31/74. For these results see Tables 8a, b, and c.

Compared to the entire female population in Vermont, women in the correctional system resided disproportionately in the Northwest corner of the state; 30% reside in Chittenden County alone. Women from the Southern half of Vermont are proportionately under-represented in the correctional system, this is in spite of the fact that at the time of this survey the only correctional institution for women was in Woodstock.

TABLE 4a

Residences by Region:  
Study Sample vs. Census

Region of Vermont	Women in the Vt. Correctional System On 3/31/74		Women in the Vermont 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Northwest	52.9%	127	38.3%	86,959
Northeast & Central	27.5	66	25.4	57,702
Southwest & Southeast	19.6	47	36.3	82,502
Total	100.0%	240*	100.0%	227,163

$\chi^2=32.28$ , d.f. = 2,  $p < .001$

\*Where numbers add to less than 264, unknown and out-of-state cases have not been included

<sup>1</sup>Robert Squires and William R. Steinhurst, FY 1973 Adult Probation Follow-up Study. (Vermont Department of Corrections, Research Report II-12, November, 1975.)

<sup>2</sup>1970 Census of Population - General Social and Economic Characteristics of Vermont (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971)

TABLE 4b  
Residence by County (Study Sample)

County	Women in Study		Women in 1970 Census	
	%	#	%	#
Addison	7.9	19	5.3	12,130
Bennington	5.0	12	6.8	15,334
Caledonia	9.2	22	5.1	11,660
Chittenden	32.5	78	22.2	50,445
Essex	.4	1	1.2	2,658
Franklin	7.5	18	7.0	15,865
Grand Isle	0	0	0.8	1,819
Lamoille	5.0	12	2.9	6,700
Orange	1.3	3	3.8	8,693
Orleans	2.5	6	4.5	10,253
Rutland	4.6	11	12.3	27,900
Washington	14.2	34	10.8	24,438
Windham	5.8	14	7.5	16,936
Windsor	4.2	10	9.8	22,332

$\chi^2=52.536$ , d.f.=11,  $p<.001$  (Based on Franklin and Grand Isle Counties counted as 1 unit and Caledonia and Essex counties counted as 1 unit.)

Compared to the entire female population in Vermont, women in the correctional system are disproportionately young adults; 82% are younger than 35. (See Table 5a. & 5b.)

From Table 5c, it will be seen that for probation, the admission rates for males is over ten times that for women. This discrepancy is greater for the young adults than for those over 35. In the 16-34 age range the probation admission rate for men was over 11 times that for women in this age range. However, the rate drops more sharply with age for the men, dipping 80% for men and only 74% for women. The highest probation rate for the women (2.3 per 1,000) is still less than half the lowest for men (5.6 per 1,000). Similar results have been found for incarcerated women.

Women make up only an average of 3.0% of the total average daily incarcerated population in Vermont's adult correctional facilities. The ratio of men to women who are incarcerated is approximately 37:1, even higher than the ratio for placement on probation. (An age breakdown was not available.)

Sixty-eight percent of the women in the Vermont correctional system are either married or have been married (including common-law marriages). Compared to the entire female population of Vermont, though, significantly fewer of them live with a marital partner (Table 6).

TABLE 5a  
Ages: Study Sample vs. Census

Age	Women in the Vt. Correctional System		Women in the Vermont 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
13-17	12.9	34	12.3	21,102
18-34	68.9	182	31.8	54,774
35+	18.2	48	55.9	96,170
Total	100.0	264	100.0	172,046

$\chi^2=181.8$ , d.f.=2,  $p<.001$

TABLE 5b  
Ages (Study Sample)

Age	Percent	Number
13-15	6.1	16
16-17	6.8	18
18-24	40.2	106
25-34	28.8	76
35-44	13.6	36
45-54	3.0	8
55+	1.5	4
Total	100.0	264

TABLE 5c  
FY 1973 Probation Admission Rates  
per 1,000 (1970 Census)

Sex	Age		
	16-34	35+	Total
M	27.2	5.6	14.7
F	2.3	0.6	1.3
Total	14.5	3.0	7.7

TABLE 5d  
Comparison by Age Groups of Males to Females  
Placed on Probation in 1973

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
16-34	77.8	1657	71.0	147	77.2	1804
35+	22.2	474	29.0	60	22.8	534
Total	100.0	2131	100.0	207	100.0	2338

$\chi^2=4.492$ , d.f.=1,  $.02 < p < .05$



TABLE 6a  
Marital Status  
(Study Sample)

Marital Status	Percent	Number
Living with Marital Partner	26.9	71
Living with Non-Marital Partner	14.0	37
Single	32.2	85
Separated from Marital Partner	9.1	24
Separated from Non-Marital Partner	1.9	5
Divorced	12.5	33
Widowed	2.3	6
Unknown	1.1	3
Total	100.0	264

TABLE 6b  
Presence of Marital Partner in the Home  
for Women Aged 14 and Over:  
Study Sample vs. Census

Presence of Marital Partner	Women in the Vt. Correctional System		Women in the Vt. 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Living with Partner	41.4	108	58.0	97,818
Living without Partner	58.6	153	42.0	70,456
Total	100.0	261	100.0	167,774

$\chi^2=29.60$ , d.f.=1,  $p<.001$

As seen in Table 7, women under correctional supervision are more likely than women in Vermont as a whole to be heads of their own households, sometimes as single individuals, but more often as heads of one-parent families. This finding is especially interesting in light of the observation by the staff that 48% of the sample had problems with their parental family and 44% with their husband or children.

TABLE 7

Position in Household:  
Study Sample vs. Census

Position	Women in the Vt. Correctional System		Women in the Vt. 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Head of Household	33.3	83	12.2	26,559
Head of Family	24.5	61	4.6	9,920
Primary Individual	8.8	22	7.7	16,639
Other Family Member	63.1	157	85.7	186,100
Wife of Head	39.4	98	43.1	93,614
Child of Head	20.1	50	38.1	82,596
Other Relative	3.6	9	4.6	9,890
Non-Family Member	3.6	9	2.0	4,378
Total	100%	249	100.1%	217,037

$\chi^2=241.0$ , d.f.=5,  $p<.001$

More frequently than in the entire female population in Vermont, women in the correctional system are heads of, or members of families whose total income is less than or equal to the Vermont Welfare Standards. Thus, except for the few women who do not live with their families, female probationers, parolees, and inmates are significantly poorer than other women in Vermont. Those few women who were living independently also had slightly lower incomes than the average, but the difference was not statistically significant.

In 18 cases where the Department personnel reported income as unknown, we were able to obtain this information from the client questionnaires. This information was used to supplement the original data and recomputed results are reported in Tables 8a, 8b, and 8c.

TABLE 8a

Family Income for Women Living with  
Their Families: Study Sample vs. Census

Relationship to Vt. Welfare Standards	Women in the Vt. Corr. Sys. 3/31/74		Women in Vt. 1970 Census	
	#	%	#	%
Less than or Equal to	140	72.1	15,157	14.1
Greater Than	54	27.8	92,254	85.9
Total	194	99.9	107,411	100.0

$\chi^2=540.4$ , d.f.=1,  $p<.001$

TABLE 8b

Individual Income for Women Not Living with  
Their Families: Study Sample vs. Census

Relationship to Vt. Welfare Standards	Women in the Vt. Corr. Sys. 3/31/74		Women in Vt. 1970 Census	
	#	%	#	%
Less than or equal to	16	64.0	12,117	54.1
Greater than	9	36.0	10,270	45.9
Total	25	100.0	22,387	100.0

$\chi^2 = .987$ , d.f.=1,  $.25 < p < .50$

TABLE 8c

Family Income:  
Study Sample vs. Census

Relationship to Vt. Welfare Standards	Women in the Vt. Corr. Sys. 3/31/74		Women in Vt. 1970 Census	
	#	%	#	%
Less than or equal to	156	71.2	27274	21.0
Greater than	63	28.8	102524	79.0
Total	219	100.0	129798	100.0

$\chi^2 = 333.1$ , d.f.=1,  $p < .001$

Compared to the female population in Vermont aged 18 or over, adult women in the study were less likely to have completed high school. Of all the female correctional clients, only 38% completed 12 grades of education or more; 62% neither finished high school nor obtained a G.E.D., at the time they were convicted.

TABLE 9a

Education Completed by Women 18 Years or Older:  
Study Sample vs. Census

Grades Completed	Women in the Vt. Correctional System		Women in the Vermont 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Less than 12	55.9	124	36.0	54,232
12 or more	44.1	98	64.0	96,565
Total	100.0	222	100.0	150,797

$\chi^2 = 37.99$ , d.f.=1,  $p < .001$

TABLE 9b  
Education Completed  
(Study Sample)

Grades	Percent	Number
0-5	.4	1
6-8	20.1	53
9-11	38.6	102
12	33.7	89
13-15	3.8	10
16+	.8	2
Unknown	2.7	7
Total	100.0	264

A somewhat smaller percentage of the women in the Vermont correctional system participated in the labor force than for the entire female population in Vermont, but the difference was marginally significant. (See Table 10a.)

Although 36% of the women in the correctional system were considered to be active participants in the labor force, only 30% were actually employed. In addition to that 6% who were usually employed another 46% who were not considered active participants in the labor market were also unemployed at the time of their conviction. (See Table 10b.)

While the pattern of employment was unknown for 25% of the women in the Vermont correctional system, at least 18% were always or usually employed. Another 35% were seldom or never employed, and 23% work only intermittently. (See Table 10c.)

As for terminating employment, at least 15% had a pattern of impulsively leaving their jobs. Only 7% are known to have been fired, laid off or requested to leave by their employers, and 20% quit to follow their own alternate plans. Unfortunately, since the pattern of employment termination is not known for the majority of the sample, these results are not conclusive, they do suggest a pattern of instability in employment when joined with the observation that 43% of the sample worked at best seasonally, intermittently, or seldom. (See Table 10d.)

Compared to all the women in Vermont who are employed or usually employed, women in the correctional system who are employed or usually employed were more likely to be in low-paying, low-status occupations and have low-paying, low-status skills. Almost half of the women in the sample had only low-paying skills while

less than a fifth of all women employed in Vermont had low-pay, low-status jobs according to the 1970 Census. Low-pay, low-status jobs are defined as non-farm laborers, farm laborers, foremen, cleaning and food service workers, and private household workers. As shown in Tables 10e and 10f, the data for the study sample and for the Vermont Census are not precisely comparable on this question, the questionnaire discussed career skills--item #13b-- rather than actual employment as in the Census.)

Table 10g shows the actual career skills reported in the survey. The most frequently reported skill of child care (25%), and cleaning (24%). Also, 34 (13%) were reported to have no employable skills at all.

TABLE 10a

Labor Force Participation by Women 16 Years of Older:  
Sample vs. Census

Labor Force Status	Women in the Vt. Correctional System		Women in the Vermont 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
In Labor Force	36.3	86	41.7	66,269
Not in Labor Force	63.7	151	58.3	92,821
Total	100.0	237	100.0	159,090

$\chi^2=2.76$ , d.f.=1, .05<p<.10

TABLE 10b  
Employment Status (Study Sample)

Employment Status	Percent	Number
Not Working	51.9	139
Working Part-time	10.4	28
Working Full-time	17.5	47
Self-Employed	1.9	5
Student	12.3	33
Other	1.1	3
Unknown	4.9	13
Total	100.0	268*

\*Unless otherwise indicated when the number of cases is greater than 264, dual statuses are possible for one case.

TABLE 10c  
Pattern of Employment  
(Study Sample)

Pattern of Employment	Percent	Number
Always Works	17.8	47
Seasonally Works	1.5	4
Works Intermittently	21.2	56
Seldom Works	20.1	53
Never Works	14.8	39
Unknown	24.6	65
Total	100.0	264

TABLE 10d  
Pattern of Employment Termination  
(Study Sample)

Pattern of Employment Termination	Percent	Number
Planned Leave	20.5	54
Impulsive Leave	14.8	39
Requested to Leave	3.0	8
Laid-Off	3.0	8
Fired	1.1	3
Unknown or not applicable	57.6	152
Total	100.0	264

TABLE 10e  
Type of Employment of Women Employed  
or Usually Employed: Sample vs. Census

Type of Employment	Skills Women in the Vt. Correctional System		Occupation of Women in the Vt. 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Low-Pay, Low-Status	49.4	39	17.5	11,055
Not Low-Pay, Low-Status	50.6	40	82.5	52,119
Total	100.0	79	100.0	63,174

$\chi^2 = 55.567$ , d.f.=1,  $p < .001$



TABLE 10f

Skills of Women in Study and Occupations  
of Women in the Vt. 1970 Census by Class

Occupation or Skills Level	Skills of Women in the Vt. Correctional System		Occupations of Women in the Vt. 1970 Census	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Professional	11.4	9	18.1	11,454
Managerial	1.3	1	4.6	2,901
Sales	8.9	7	5.6	3,544
Clerical	24.1	19	30.8	19,447
Crafts	0	0	2.1	1,299
Manufacturing	43.0	34	12.6	7,951
Laborer (non-farm)	1.3	1	1.0	608
Service Worker	65.8	52	24.1	15,246
Farm Worker	0	0	1.1	724
Total	*	79	100.0	63,174

\*One person may have more than one skill, therefore, percent will not add to 100.0.

TABLE 10g  
Employment Skills (Study Sample)

Employment Skills	Percent	Number
None	12.9%	34
Secretarial	12.9	34
Book-keeping	3.8	10
R.N.	1.5	4
L.P.N.	2.3	6
Medical Aid	7.2	19
Teacher	1.1	3
Sales	6.8	18
Factory	28.0	74
Working with Children	25.0	66
Waitressing	18.9	50
Cleaning	24.2	64
Sewing	4.5	12
Cooking	12.9	34
Criminal	1.9	5
Other	7.2	19

#### IV. CRIMINAL JUSTICE CHARACTERISTICS:

Formally, the criminal justice system is concerned with those specific aspects of a person's life relating to the offense in question or previous offense. It describes people in terms of the type and number of their crimes and the type and length of court sentences they have received.

Criminal justice information was collected on the women in the sample to reflect the crime for which each was most recently convicted and sentenced on or before 3/31/74. If a woman had received more than one sentence simultaneously, the crime for which the longest maximum sentence was imposed was the one reported, and in cases of when the maximum sentences were the same, the crime given the longest minimum sentence was reported. Other factors considered were the court and court type, sentence, disposition, as well as the number and nature of crimes the women had been convicted of before their current convictions. The survey also sought information about accomplices the women had in committing the crimes for which they were most recently convicted; however, accomplice/co-defendant data was too often unavailable and is not reported here.

Most of these criminal justice variables were also studied in the FY 1973 Adult Probation Follow-up Study, cited above. In those instances, additional comparisons between male and female probationers are made to further elucidate the special characteristics of female offenders.

Details of the specific data items and definitions are included in Appendices A and B, especially the sections on "Current Conviction" and "Criminal History" (items 4 to 7 and 16).

TABLE 11a  
Types of Offenses Committed  
(Study Sample)

Offense Type	Percent	Number
Crimes Against Persons	4.2	11
Crimes Against Property	59.8	158
Public Order Crimes	13.6	36
Drugs	4.5	12
Traffic Offenses	12.1	32
Other (Mostly Delinquency)	5.7	15
Total	100.0	264

TABLE 11b  
Specific Offenses Committed  
(Study Sample)

Offenses	Percent	Number
Homicide (including negligent manslaughter)	1.1	3
Assault	3.0	8
Burglary	3.8	10
Larceny	22.0	58
Vehicle Theft	1.1	3
Forgery/Fraud	33.0	87
Drugs	4.5	12
Obstruct Justice	3.0	8
Disorderly Conduct/Breach of Peace	10.6	28
Driving Under Influence Liquor	6.4	17
Moving Traffic Offense	5.7	15
Other (mostly delinquency)	5.7	15
Total	100.0	264

TABLE 11c  
Comparison of Type of Crime Committed  
with Income of Women Responding to Client Questionnaire\*

Type of Crime Committed	Women with Inadequate Income		Women with Adequate Income	
	#	%	#	%
Property	35	67.3	15	46.9
Non-Property	15	28.8	16	50.0
Non-determinable	2	3.8	1	3.1
Total	52	99.9	32	100.0

$\chi^2 = 3.84$ , d.f.=1,  $p=.05$  (Non-determinable category not included.)

\*Using information based on monthly income as supplied by client. If client did not report monthly income, information is based on problem area of income if client indicated low income as biggest problem at the time of her offense.

About 60% of the women in the study were sentenced for property crimes. These crimes included forgery, fraud, embezzlement, larceny, receiving or concealing stolen property, vehicle theft, and breaking and entering. A third of the women were convicted of forgery, fraud or embezzlement. Violent crimes accounted for only 4% of the convictions. Many offenses usually associated with men, such as assault, burglary, and auto theft did occur but in relatively small numbers. (However, see Table 11e, below for comparison figures.)

Over 11% of the women's crimes were alcohol or drug violations including DWI. As noted below, up to 23% of the women in the Vermont correctional system were seen as having either alcohol or drug-treatment needs or both. Up to 45% of the women were seen to have alcohol or drug abuse problems.

It is interesting to note that for the 60% of the women who were convicted of property offenses, economics may well have been a contributing factor. The number of women with inadequate incomes who committed property crimes is significantly higher than the number of women with adequate incomes who commit property crimes. This lends support to the frequently-heard contention that economics plays a major role in crimes committed by women. (See Table 11c.)

Tables 11d and 11e, based on the probation study cited above, indicate that the offenses committed by the women placed on probation in Vermont in FY 1973 were significantly different from the offenses committed by the men. The men were more often convicted of burglary, vehicle theft, DWI, or other traffic offenses; the women were more often convicted of forgery or fraud. Notice that although homicide and assault are crimes commonly ascribed to men, for those placed on probation there was not a large difference between the proportion of males and females sentenced for homicide or assault.

Seventy-two percent of the women in the Vermont correctional system had no convictions prior to the current offense. Of the 70 who did have prior adult convictions, 49 (70%) had only 1 or 2. The adult probation study previously cited showed a significantly greater proportion of prior adult convictions among the men placed on probation than among the women. (See Tables 12a, b, and c.)

Of the 264 women (excluding Weeks School girls) who were under Department of Corrections supervision on March 31, 1974, 3% (9) were incarcerated (with 2 on furlough), the other 97% (256) were on probation or parole. (See Table 13) This compares to 11% (302) incarcerated and 89% (2,418) on probation or parole for the men in the correctional system at that date.

Table 14 shows that during the 2 years after being placed on probation, women are more likely than men to successfully avoid further contact with the Vermont correctional system. (For more detailed recidivism information, refer to the adult probation study cited above.)

It can be seen from Tables 15a and 15b that 92% of the women in the Vermont correctional system had "0" minimum sentences, and 60% had been given maximum sentences of 3 months or less. However, there was a sizeable number who had been given maximum sentences of more than one year. There were no statistically significant difference in the length of the suspended sentence (either minimum or maximum) given to men and women who were placed on probation. (See Tables 15c and 15d.)

TABLE 11d

Comparison of Types of Offenses Committed by Men and Women  
(FY 1973 Probation Cases Only)

Types of Offenses	Men		Women		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Crimes Against Persons	7.1	150	6.9	14	7.1	164
Crimes Against Property	24.9	526	40.6	82	6.3	608
Public Order Crimes	18.8	398	19.3	39	18.9	437
Drug Offenses	4.7	99	3.5	7	4.6	106
Traffic Offenses	44.5	939	29.7	60	43.2	999
Total	100.0	2,112	100.0	202	100.0	2,314

$\chi^2=27.20$ , d.f.=4,  $p<.001$

TABLE 11e

Comparison of Specific Offenses Committed by Men and Women  
Placed on Probation in FY 1973

Offenses	Men		Women		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Homicide	0.4	8	0.5	1	0.4	9
Robbery	0.2	4	0.5	1	0.2	5
Assault	6.5	138	5.9	12	6.5	150
Burglary	6.0	127	2.5	5	5.7	132
Larceny	10.6	224	5.9	24	10.7	248
Vehicle Theft	2.3	48	0.0	0	2.1	48
Forgery/Fraud	6.0	127	26.2	53	7.8	180
Drugs	4.7	99	3.5	7	4.6	106
Obstruct Justice	0.6	13	1.5	3	0.7	16
Disorderly Conduct & Morals/Decency Crimes	17.2	364	17.3	35	17.2	399
DWI	27.8	589	23.8	48	27.5	637
Traffic Offenses	16.6	350	5.9	12	15.6	362
Other	0.9	21	0.5	1	1.0	22
Total	100%	2,112	100%	202	100%	2,314

$\chi^2=124.38$ , d.f.=12,  $p < .001$

TABLE 12a  
Number of Prior Convictions  
(Study Sample)

Number of Prior Convictions	Percent	Number
0	71.6	189
At least 1 Juvenile	2.7	7
At least 1 Adult	26.5	70
Unknown	0.8	2

TABLE 12b  
Number of Prior Convictions for those Women with  
at least 1 Prior Adult Conviction (Study Sample)

Number of Convictions	Percent	Number
1-2	70.0	49
3-4	18.6	13
5-9	5.7	4
10 or greater	5.7	4
Total	100.0	70

TABLE 12c  
Comparison of Prior Convictions of Males to Females  
(Probation Follow-up Study)

Type of Prior Convictions	Males		Females		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
None	23.4	474	66.3	134	27.3	608
Only Juvenile Convictions	1.3	26	0.5	1	1.2	27
At most Adult Misdemeanors	63.2	1,282	27.2	55	59.9	1,337
Adult Felonies	12.2	247	5.9	12	11.6	259
Total	100.0%	2,029	99.9%	202	100.0%	2,231

$\chi^2=171.22$ , d.f.=3,  $p < .001$

TABLE 13  
Type of Corrections Supervision Received  
(Study Sample)

Type of Correctional Supervision	Percent	Number
Street Probation	85.6	226
Residential Probation	2.7	7
Split Sentence or Parole Supervision	8.3	22
Incarceration	3.4	9
Total	100.0	264

TABLE 14  
Success Rates for Males as Compared  
to Females on Probation in 1973  
(2 Year Follow-up)

Recidivism	Males		Females		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Success	74.0	757	88.2	82	75.2	839
Failure	26.0	266	11.8	11	24.8	277
Total	100.0	1,023	100.0	93	100.0	1,116

$\chi^2=8.439$ , d.f.=1,  $p < .01$



TABLE 15a  
Presence of Minimum Sentences  
(Study Sample)

	Percent	Number
No minimum	92.2	188
Minimum imposed	7.8	16
Total	100.8	204*

TABLE 15b  
Length of Maximum Sentences  
(Study Sample)

Length of Maximum Sentences	Percent	Number
1 - 2 mo.	53.4	109
2 - 3 mo.	6.4	13
3 - 6 mo.	11.3	23
6 mo. - 1 yr.	11.3	23
1 yr. - 2 yr.	5.4	11
2 yr. - 5 yr.	10.8	22
5 yrs.	1.5	3
Total	100.1	204*

\*Juveniles and those women given deferred sentences cannot be included.

TABLE 15c

Comparison of Length of Suspended Minimum Sentences  
Given to Males and Females (FY 1973 Probation Cases Only)

Minimums	Males		Females		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
0 days	95.0	1939	96.4	187	95.2	2126
1-60 days	0.7	14	0.0	0	0.6	14
61-90 days	0.6	12	0.0	0	0.5	12
91 days - 6 mos.	1.3	27	0.5	1	1.3	28
>6 mo. - 1 yr.	1.6	32	1.5	3	1.6	35
>1 yr. - 2 yrs.	0.6	12	0.5	1	0.6	13
>2 yrs.	0.2	4	1.0	2	0.3	6
Total	100.0	2040	99.9	194	99.6	2234

Komolgoroff-Smirnoff=.013428 p>.1

TABLE 15d

Comparison of Length of Suspended Maximum Sentences  
Given to Males and Females (FY 1973 Probation Cases Only)

Maximums	Males		Females		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
1-60 days	59.0	1204	67.5	131	59.8	1335
61-90 days	7.7	157	7.2	14	7.7	171
91 days - 6 mo.	11.7	238	9.3	18	11.5	256
>6 mo. - 1 yr.	10.1	206	8.2	16	9.8	220
>1 yr. - 2 yr.	6.6	135	5.2	10	6.5	145
>2 yr. - 5 yr.	4.7	96	2.1	4	4.5	100
>5 yrs.	0.2	4	0.5	1	0.2	5
Total	100.0	2040	100.0	194	100.0	2234

Komolgoroff-Smirnoff=.85062 p>.1

Of the women in this study, 88% (231) were convicted in Vermont District Courts. Almost all of the balance had been adjudicated in Vermont Juvenile Courts.

TABLE 16a  
Convicting Court Type  
(Study Sample)

Type of Convicting Court	Percent	Number
District	87.5	231
County	0.4	1
Juvenile	10.6	28
Federal	0.8	2
Unknown (put-of-state)	0.8	2
Total	100.1	264

TABLE 16b  
Distribution of Cases by District Court  
(Study Sample)

District Court	Percent	Number
Addison	4.8	11
Bennington	5.6	13
Caledonia	7.8	18
Chittenden	39.4	91
Essex	0.4	1
Franklin	5.6	13
Grand Isle	0.0	0
Lamoille	5.2	12
Orange	0.0	0
Orleans	2.6	6
Rutland	5.2	12
Washington	11.3	26
Windham	6.5	15
Windsor	5.6	13
Total	100.0	231

In comparing the proportion of men and women placed on probation from the Circuit Courts we find that there are significant differences between those district courts in the proportion of the probation caseload which are women. The overall proportion of men to women in the Vermont correctional system was about 10 men to each woman. Table 16c shows that for courts in Caledonia, Essex, Orleans and Chittenden Counties the number of women placed on probation was greater than 1 in 11 and for Addison, Orange and Windham counties the proportion was less than 1 in 11. There is, overall, a significant difference in the conviction pattern between men and women in the various circuit courts. Of course, these differences may also be a function of other aspects of the local criminal justice system such as law enforcement and prosecution by the States Attorneys or local social and geographic conditions or a combination of all these causes.

TABLE 16c

Comparison of Convicting District Court for  
Males and Females (all FY 1973 Probation Admissions)

District Court	Males		Females		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Addison	3.9	82	1.0	2	3.6	84
Bennington	6.6	139	6.4	13	6.6	152
Caledonia	5.3	111	9.9	20	5.7	131
Chittenden	31.0	656	34.2	69	31.3	725
Essex	1.1	24	1.0	2	1.1	26
Franklin	9.9	209	7.9	16	9.7	225
Grand Isle	0.7	14	0.5	1	0.6	15
Lamoille	5.5	117	7.4	15	5.7	132
Orange	2.7	58	0.0	0	2.5	58
Orleans	4.5	95	3.5	7	4.4	102
Rutland	4.4	94	5.9	12	4.6	106
Washington	9.0	191	9.4	19	9.1	210
Windham	8.5	180	6.9	14	8.4	194
Windsor	6.8	144	5.9	12	6.7	156
Total	99.9	2114	99.9	202	100.0	2316

$$\chi^2=21.55, \text{ d.f.}=13, .05 < p < .10$$

## V. SERVICE NEEDS AND PERSONAL PROBLEMS

The Corrections Department management and the Research and Planning Division anticipated that the most important variables for a study of this type to analyze would be the prime presenting problems and service needs of the female offenders. Such data should provide the key for assessment and development of correctional programs for women.

Prime presenting problems were defined as those personal problems that are perceived as prompting women to behave criminally. The field staff was instructed to determine which problems each client exhibited, then to make a judgement about which of those or other problems were causal and which were symptomatic problems. Naturally, because of their subjective nature these data must be interpreted cautiously.

Service needs were defined as those services each woman should receive in order to alleviate her prime presenting problems and, hence, her tendency toward criminal behavior. The field staff were also asked to record which of the recommended services the women had received or been offered since being committed or placed on probation or parole. Results from the Feedback Questionnaire indicate that the Probation/Parole and Correctional Officers recognized the importance of studying their clients' prime presenting problems and service needs.

Though the officers answered the questions thoughtfully and thoroughly, there is some ambiguity in the interpretation of the answers to the "Service Needs Met" section. Most of the officers coded this section to reflect whether the services were offered regardless of whether the women accepted or rejected the services. The answers to this section, then, do not necessarily indicate whether the women accepted the services offered or benefited from them. For a more complete background to the results discussed below, refer to Appendix A, Page 4, for the actual questions and Appendix B for the appropriate coding instructions.

### Service Needs

The most frequently observed service needs of the women were for formal counseling or psycho-therapy (50%), job placement (36%), and vocational training (31%). For those women who needed formal counseling, 68% were offered the opportunity for counseling while they were Department of Corrections clients. Forty-four percent of the women who needed job placement were offered job placement assistance and 56% of the women who needed vocational training were given vocational training opportunities while correctional clients. (See Table 17a)

In order to allow clearer analysis of all the recognized service needs of the women in the Vermont correctional system they have been grouped into three broad need categories: treatment, economic and social. (See Table 17b)

TABLE 17a  
Specific Service Needs of Women  
(Study Sample)

Specific Need (in order of frequency)	% of Sample	Number	% of Women Who had the Need Addressed
Formal Counseling or Psycho-therapy	50.0	127	68%
Job Placement	35.8	91	44
Vocational Training	31.1	79	56
Alcohol Treatment	16.5	42	76
Exposure to Social/Recreational Experiences	13.4	34	32
Help with Home/Family Care	12.5	32	72
Medical Care/Supervision	12.5	32	84
Residential Placement	12.2	31	55
Training in Home/Family Care	11.4	29	66
Personal Hygiene/Health/Beauty Education	10.2	26	35
Help with Transportation	10.2	25	44
Drug Treatment	7.1	18	83
Further Evaluation	7.1	18	50
Consumer Education	7.1	18	11
Structured Environment	2.0	5	60

Sixty-three percent of the women in the study were seen to have service needs for specific types of treatment: for alcohol, drug, medical or behavioral problems or for formal counseling. Fifty-nine percent of the women had service needs directly related to their economic survival. These included living quarters, transportations, job placement, or vocational or academic training to qualify for work. Thirty-five percent were seen to have service needs related to their social skills: consumer education, education in personal health, appearance, and home maintenance, help with home maintenance, or simply exposure to social and recreational experiences.

TABLE 17b  
General Classes of Service Needs (Study Sample)

Type of Need	% of Total Women	Number
Treatment Needs	63.0	160
Economic Needs	58.7	149
Social Needs	35.0	89

Corrections Department personnel reported that 71% of the special treatment needs were addressed while the women were clients of the Department. Further, 55% of the economic needs were addressed, and 46% of the social needs were addressed. The social needs were least frequently reported as having been addressed, e.g. 13.4% of the women were seen to need social and recreational experiences but only 32% of these women had this need addressed. Of the 7.1% needing consumer education only 11% of these had the need addressed. (A need is considered addressed if an opportunity was provided for the client to avail herself of the services even though the woman may not have taken advantage of the opportunity.)

From the followup survey of clients, it was determined that 264 separate service needs were seen by the Department personnel, the client, or both. A need was recognized by only the client 35.5% of the time (91 needs seen). Department employees observed needs not recognized by the client 49.6% of the time (131 needs seen). A service need was recognized by both parties 15.9% of the time (42 needs seen), a pattern similar to that for the problems reported by each.

Out of 91 needs seen by the clients only, those services were delivered or offered 25.3% of the time (23 services offered) according to either the client, staff, or both. In 69.2% of the cases (63 times) the client needed a service, but it was not offered according to both the client and staff.

Out of 131 needs cited by the Department personnel, the need was addressed 65.7% of the time (86 times), according to the client, her P.O. or both. It was not addressed 28.2% of the time (37 instances).

Out of 42 needs seen by both the client and staff, the service was offered 72.7% of the time, while 27.3% of the time (9 cases) it was not offered. Thus for needs recognized by both client and staff Department personnel are meeting these needs almost 3 out of 4 times. These results are summarized in Table 17c.

TABLE 17c

Service Needs Recognized  
and Addressed (Client Survey)

Needs Recognized By	Number of Service Needs Recognized	Service Needs Addressed (According to either Staff or Client)
Client Only	91	23 (25.3%)
Staff Only	131	86 (65.7%)
Both	42	33 (72.7%)

TABLE 17d  
Problems Associated with Frequent  
Problem Service Needs

Service Need	Associated Problems	Per Cent of all Problems Reported with this Need
Formal Counselling	Relationship with Parents	32%
	Mental or Emotional problems	27
	Relationship with spouse or children	24
Job Placement	Inadequate Income	35
	Relationship with spouse or children	26
	Relationship with parents	25
Vocational Training	Inadequate Income	33
	Relationship with Parents	29
	Low Self-confidence	24



In the case of a need for a particular service which was listed by neither the client nor staff, the need was addressed 41 times according to either the client, staff, or both of them.

Out of the 45 cases where the client reported a service need:

64.4% (29) of the clients reported that none of the services they needed were offered to them,

6.7% (3) of the clients reported that less than half of the services they needed were offered to them,

13.3% (6) of the clients reported that half or more of the services they needed were offered to them, and

15.6% (7) of the clients reported that all of the services they needed were offered to them.

In 39 cases, the client reported that she didn't need any services.

Out of the 56 cases in which the staff reported a service need:

23.2% (13) reported that none of the services needed were offered.

8.9% (5) reported that less than half of the services needed were offered.

26.8% (15) reported that half or more of the services needed were offered.

41.1% (23) reported that all of the services needed were offered.

In 28 cases, the PO reported that the client didn't need any services.

#### Service Needs as Related to Prime Presenting Problems:

Inadequate incomes and relationships with the parental family stand out as the most frequent symptoms and/or causes of the personal problems of women in the Vermont Correctional System. Other frequent problems included being easily manipulated by others and alcohol abuse. Vocational and sexual difficulties were frequently seen as symptomatic problems but were not as frequently seen as causal. (See Table 18a)

Some personal problems of the women in the correctional system were more frequently seen as causal than the others. For example, for over 60% of the women who were recorded as having inadequate income, that one problem was considered to be the cause of the women's other problems. The same is true of problems with women's marital families, being mentally or emotionally ill, or being retarded (only 4 cases).

TABLE 18a

## Prime Presenting Problems of the Women in the Study

Problems Observed	Either Causal or Symptomatic, or Both	Causal only	Symptomatic only	Both Causal & Symptomatic	No. of Persons Reported to Show the Problem	% of Persons Showing the Problem as Causal
Inadequate Income	53%	13%	19%	20%	134	63%
Problems w/Parental Family	48	9	26	13	123	46
Low Self-Confidence	46	6	32	8	118	31
Problems w/Marital Family	44	17	17	10	111	61
Easily Manipulated by Others	33	3	21	9	85	35
Alcohol Abuse	30	2	17	10	75	41
Vocational Difficulties	28	4	20	4	70	27
Mentally/Emotionally Ill	25	3	9	12	63	62
Sexual Difficulties	23	3	17	4	59	29
Drug Abuse	15	1	11	3	39	26
Counter-Culture Value	15	3	9	2	37	48
Ignorant of Social Expectation/Obligations	11	2	8	1	28	29
Academic Difficulties	11	1	10	0	28	11
Lack of Transportation	10	1	9	0	26	15
Physically Ill/Disabled	9	1	5	3	22	45
Criminal Culture Values	8	1	4	3	21	48
Assaultive	7	0	5	2	17	24
Object of Community Prejudice	6	1	4	1	16	31
Retarded	4	3	0	1	11	91
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	50

Over 40% of the women who experience personal problems with their parental families, abuse alcohol, are physically ill/disabled, or have criminal culture values; these problems are thought by Department personnel to cause the women's other problems. The problems least often judged to be causal are lack of transportation and vocation difficulties.

The personal problems which are most frequently seen as causal are: inadequate income, mental or emotional problems, relationships with the marital family, relationships with the parents, and alcohol abuse. These personal problems logically accord with the most frequent service needs of counseling, job placement, vocational training and alcohol treatment, as well as those needs frequently addressed. It seems, then, that Department personnel seek services for their female clients that are appropriate to the deepest personal problems the women are perceived to have.

The personal problems most frequently associated with the three most prevalent service needs are presented below. Also shown is the proportion of the recognized prime presenting problems falling into that category. As mentioned in the introduction, the officers had some difficulty in determining whether a problem was causal or symptomatic. Therefore, this distinction was not used for this table. Only the three most frequent problems associated with each service need group are shown.

From the followup survey of clients, we were able to determine that in the area of prime presenting problems, a problem was cited by the client but not staff 154 times, or 30.4% of the time. A problem was recognized by staff but not the client 203 times, or 40.0% of the time. A client and her staff member agreed on a problem 150 times, or 29.6% of the time. The problem which the client said was the most pressing at the time of her offense was not recognized by the Department employee in only 15.5% of the cases reporting.

Table 18b shows the number of women from the client survey who indicated problems in the areas shown and the percent of those 84 women who indicated problems in these areas.

Table 18c shows similar results for service needs which the 84 women indicated they felt they needs.

For those problem areas which had comparable questions we looked at the number of women from the client survey who saw themselves as having a problem in a particular area which the staff did not recognize, the number of those 84 clients for whom only the staff saw this problem area but the client did not, and the number of those for whom both client and staff agreed a problem existed. We then looked at the percent of those from whom both client and staff agreed as compared to all those perceived to have a problem either by the client, the staff or both. These results are summarized in Table 18d.

Similar data for Service Needs is given in table 18e.

## VI. CLIENT OBSERVATIONS

As mentioned above, the Division of Research and Planning also conducted a mail survey study of 219 of the women who were included in this study.\* Approximately 38% of these women answered the questionnaire and returned it. (Another 30% of the letters were returned as "undeliverable" by the Post Office). The mail questionnaire was a shortened and modified version of the original questionnaire which was used to obtain the data in this study. This survey served both as a reliability check on the data obtained for this report (see Section II above) and

\*Those women whose cases have been expunged or dismissed, known to be deceased, or for whom no address was available were not included.

TABLE 18b  
Problem Areas (Client Survey)

	# of Persons	% of Persons
Alcohol	16	19.0
Drugs	11	13.1
Income too low/ Having a Place to Live	51	60.7
Transportation for Job, etc.	22	26.2
Problems in School/ difficulties with Reading	9	10.7
Getting Along With Parents	20	23.8
Marital Problems/Disciplining Children	37	44.0
People Don't Like Me	7	8.3
Easily Influenced by Others	17	20.2
Emotional Upsets	40	47.6
Fights	14	16.7
Health	18	21.4
Don't Understand What People Expect of Me	13	15.5
Job Skills or Employment	17	20.2
Other	1	1.2

TABLE 18c  
Service Needs (Client Survey)

	# of Persons	% of Persons
Alcohol Program	3	3.6
Drug Program	5	6.0
Job Training	31	36.9
Further Education	24	28.6
A Place to Live/ A Live In Program	9	10.7
Such as a Group Home, etc.		
Training in Home or Family Care	1	1.2
Transportation for Job, etc.	15	17.9
Personal Health and/or Beauty Education	7	8.3
Consumer Education	2	2.4
Opportunity for Social or Recreational Experiences	6	7.1
Mental Health Counselling/ Marriage and/or Family Counselling	20	23.8
Other	1	1.2

TABLE 18d

Selected Problem Areas Recognized by  
Clients, Staff, or Both (Client Survey)

	Recognized By Client only	Recognized by Staff only	Recognized By Both	% of Cases Where Client and Staff Agree
Alcohol Abuse	6	10	15	48.8
Drug Abuse	2	3	9	64.3
Inadequate Income (and related areas)	23	15	32	45.7
Lack of Transportation	16	4	6	23.1
Academic Difficulties	7	8	2	11.8
Difficulties with Parental Family	5	21	15	36.6
Difficulties with Marital Family	9	23	29	48.3
Easily Influenced by others	11	22	6	15.4
Physically Ill or Disabled	0	1	7	87.5
Ignorant of Social Obligations	10	11	3	12.5

TABLE 18e

Selected Service Needs Recognized by  
Clients, Staff, or Both (Client Survey)

	Recognized By Client only	Recognized by Staff only	Recognized By Both	% of Cases Where Client and Staff Agree
Alcohol Treatment	3	10	0	0.0
Drug Treatment	2	4	3	33.3
Vocational or Job Training	16	20	15	29.4
Academic Training or Further Education	21	8	3	9.4
Residential Placement	9	4	0	0.0
Training or Help in Home or Family Care	0	20	1	4.8
Help with Transportation for Job, etc.	14	2	1	5.9
Personal Health and/or Beauty Education	3	7	2	16.7
Social or Recreational Experiences	5	8	1	7.1
Formal Counselling or Psychotherapy	13	23	7	16.3

also shed further light on the problems and needs of female offenders as stated by the clients themselves. The data have been utilized in the various places noted in the body of the analysis.

A total of 29 women of the 84 who responded to the direct mail survey made additional narrative remarks of varying extent. These comments and suggestions are summarized in this section for whatever insight they may add to the "facts and figures" on which this type of report tends to dwell.

Among the 11 clients who commented on their probation or parole officers, 7 were negative comments and 4 were positive comments. The negative comments stated mostly that their probation or parole officers did not care enough, did not take the time to really listen to them, or were generally unhelpful at all. The positive comments included specific names of probation or parole officers and drug rehabilitation counsellors who helped those clients.

Four women commented on their jobs. Two couldn't work because of bad health and complained of extremely strained working conditions. One girl listed several crafts she would like to learn.

Four women had comments to make about their families. One woman typed a full page on the back of her questionnaire. She was very proud of her family and was upset because she could not get a job after her conviction and could not maintain the house she was living in. She asked to meet with the research staff member who sent her the questionnaire. Correspondence ensued and although a meeting was not arranged, a telephone conversation took place and subsequently she was referred to the Department of Corrections volunteer program, since she expressed an interest to help other women who had been convicted. Another woman gave credit to her daughters and sisters for helping her to overcome initial difficulties faced when she was first placed on probation. Two comments were pleas for help. One woman who moved out of state after her conviction asked for help in moving back to Vermont and finding a job. She received a response from this department and her problem was referred to the Probation Office where she had been a client. Another woman lost her son to her mother when convicted and still hasn't gotten him back. She was very bitter towards "the establishment" and was very frustrated from her dealings with the court. She seemed desperate to get her son back.

Two women took the time to comment at length on general topics. One described the night she was arrested and gave reasons for her attempted suicide. Another described her experience at Woodstock Community Correctional Center and the little things that were the worst part of being there, such as "only being able to get sick on Monday nights when the doctor came," and watching the men "get preferred treatment." She emphasized that if the Department of Corrections wanted to help anyone in prison, we have to get "people who really care about helping others."

There were three short comments on several topics. One woman mentioned that at the time of her offense she was living under extremely strained conditions. Looking back on the situation, it seems as though it was a different person who had been convicted. Another suggested that the courts should take the time to ask why someone commits a crime, not just deal with them after an offense occurs. One client credited her religion for helping her to get rid of a drug problem and for helping her deal with her problems.

A few women had comments in the area of programs. Two complained of funding for specific programs running out. Another complaint was that there is a lack of programs designed to meet women's needs near their homes. She noted that the nearest educational facility was 12 miles away, and many programs are located even further away than that. One girl who went to an out of state residential drug rehabilitation program stressed the need for a similar program in Vermont. She was under the impression that Vermonters don't feel the need for residential drug rehabilitation houses which she believes are badly needed. A woman remarked that the drug rehabilitation program she was in didn't work because of the way it was conducted. She alleged that most of the time she left the counselling session stoned and no one even noticed. She noted that without people who really care, programs are worthless to clients who really want to be helped. One woman expressed the need for a money management course. Another said that when a probation or parole officer saw a need for a program, he or she should make sure that the needs are addressed because if it is left up to the client, he or she will never get around to it. A wish for good luck to new programs for women was offered by one client, "because they're needed." A suggestion for co-educational programs was made by one formerly incarcerated woman who said, "Who wants to hang around chicks all the time?"

## VII. DISCUSSION

Although the Vermont Department of Corrections does not make any policy distinctions in services offered to male and female clients, this study shows that in fact our female clients are significantly different from our male clients and may well need other opportunities made available which would meet their specific needs.

We also see that Vermont's female offenders are significantly different from the general female population of Vermont. Therefore, their needs may also be significantly different from those of the general population and may require special programs and opportunities beyond those provided in their communities or by other state agencies.

Since at the present time the Department can only support institutional facilities for females at one location, it would seem that locating these facilities at the Chittenden Community Correctional Center is appropriate due to the geographic distribution of the female clients. Half of the women in the Vermont Correctional System are thought by Corrections Department personnel to be able to relate equally well with either male or female Probation/Parole Officers. 40% are thought to relate better with female P.O.'s, and 6% were thought to relate better with male P.O.'s. Thus, the new policy of encouraging mixed caseloads is justified but prior consideration of the individual's fears and sexual concepts might make the probation/parole relationship easier and more helpful for many women.

Many facts must be considered in assessing the service need and personal problem results of this study of women in the correctional system. The Department of Corrections seems justified in focusing its efforts on meeting the special treatment needs of its female clients. A larger proportion of the women are seen to have special treatment needs rather than economic or social needs. Also, the treatment needs for counseling, alcohol treatment, and medical care/supervision, are closely related to those personal problems which are most frequently causal of other personal problems.

Department personnel addressed special treatment needs when they were seen better than 7 times out of 10. There is, however, one notable weakness. Of the 18 women who were thought to need "Further Evaluation" only 9 received it. This lends credence to the feelings of the staff that there is a need for psychiatric diagnosis and evaluation of female clients that was not being met at the time of this study. It was noted above that about one-third of the service needs and problems reported were not known to the officer and that only 25% of those service needs not reported by the officer were met. It would appear, then, that better evaluation would be worthwhile and that efforts to improve communication about problems and needs between staff and clients should be encouraged.

Then there are the economic needs: a place to live, transportation, job placement, vocational and academic training. Economic needs were present in about 60% of the female correctional population; the needs were addressed over half the time.

The Department seemed to have less success in providing its female clients with transportation and placing them in jobs, but given the rural nature of Vermont and the economy, Corrections will need to be especially resourceful to improve on the current percentage of these needs addressed (44%).

The Department was able over 90% of the time to make academic training available to its female clients when needed. Opportunities for residential placement and vocational training were both provided about 50% of the time. The female Probation/Parole Officers felt that additional resources are not necessary for meeting these needs. The Corrections Department has taken the stand that group homes and vocational courses should not be run by the Department. Instead, they should be run by either the private sector or other public agencies in the community. However, it is possible that if the Department actively advertised a need for residential placements for its female clients more resources would appear.

Although one of the Department's current policy objectives is to introduce more socialization programs it would still appear that in the area of "social" needs we have not been able to address a large proportion of them for its female clients. Social needs were seen less frequently in the population than special treatment or economic needs. The social needs may also reflect back on some personal problems (low self-confidence, sexual difficulties, being ignorant of social expectations or obligations) and may be more symptomatic than causal of clients' other problems. While needs for training or help with home and family care were addressed by the Department close to 70% of the time, the needs for consumer education, for personal hygiene or beauty education, and for exposure to social or recreational experiences were not often addressed by the Department.

Department staff reviews have recognized the importance of addressing these social needs. In such discussions, much of the emphasis in presenting recommendations to the Department about services for female offenders centered around the women's social needs, including recommendations that purchase-of-service money be spent more freely (perhaps through small discretionary funds for the officers) on the personal and recreational needs of women clients, and that more Department programs be made coeducational so women clients can learn to relate acceptably with men and vice versa. It appears that such staff recommendations about services to women were based on some genuine weaknesses in the Department's delivery of services. Now the Department should decide whether strengthening those areas is feasible.



Appendix A  
Staff Survey Instrument

## WOMEN IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
2. PAS I.D. # \_\_\_\_\_  
3. Case # \_\_\_\_\_

## CURRENT CONVICTION

4. Date \_\_\_\_\_
5. a) Offense \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Length of sentence: Minimum \_\_\_\_\_ Maximum \_\_\_\_\_  
check one c) Placed: on probation ( ) in correctional institution ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_
- check one 6. a) Court: district ( ) county ( ) juvenile ( )  
County: \_\_\_\_\_
- check all that apply 7. a) Number of co-defendants \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Relationship of subject to co-defendants:  
partner ( ) other relative ( ) unknown ( )  
parent ( ) other friend ( )  
child ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_  
c) Sentence and placement which co-defendants received:  
Note: If more than two co-defendants, continue this section on  
back of page.
- check one 1) minimum \_\_\_\_\_ maximum \_\_\_\_\_  
On probation ( ) in correctional institution ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_  
2) minimum \_\_\_\_\_ maximum \_\_\_\_\_  
On probation ( ) in correctional institution ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_
- check one 9. a) Residence: Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ (if not Vermont)  
b) type: own or partner's residence ( )  
parent's residence ( ) unknown ( )  
other relative's ( )  
other friend's ( )  
foster home ( )  
adoptive home ( )  
institution \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Length of time in current residence \_\_\_\_\_ unknown ( )  
d) Number of moves in last 2 years \_\_\_\_\_ unknown ( )

## WOMEN IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. PAS I.D. # \_\_\_\_\_

3. Type commitment: DC ( ) SRS ( )

## CURRENT CONVICTION

4. Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. a) Offense \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Length of sentence: Minimum \_\_\_\_\_ Maximum \_\_\_\_\_  
c) Placed: on probation ( ) in correctional institution ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_

check one

check one

6. a) Court: district ( ) county ( ) juvenile ( )  
County: \_\_\_\_\_check all  
that apply7. a) Number of co-defendants \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Relationship of subject to co-defendants:  
partner ( ) other relative ( ) unknown ( )  
parent ( ) other friend ( )  
child ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_  
c) Sentence and placement which co-defendants received:  
Note: If more than two co-defendants, continue this section on  
back of page.

check one

1) minimum \_\_\_\_\_ maximum \_\_\_\_\_  
On probation ( ) in correctional institution ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_  
2) minimum \_\_\_\_\_ maximum \_\_\_\_\_  
On probation ( ) in correctional institution ( ) other \_\_\_\_\_

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

9. a) Residence: Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ (if not Vermont)

check one

b) type: own or partner's residence ( ) unknown ( )  
parent's residence ( )  
other relative's ( )  
other friend's ( )  
foster home ( )  
adoptive home ( )  
institution \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_c) Length of time in current residence \_\_\_\_\_ unknown ( )  
d) Number of moves in last 2 years \_\_\_\_\_ unknown ( )  
e) Number of moves in last 10 years \_\_\_\_\_ unknown ( )

10.

Marital Status:

a)

Living with marital partner ( )

Living with nonmarital partner ( )

Living without partner:

single ( )

separated from marital partner ( )

separated from nonmarital partner ( )

divorced ( )

widowed ( )

check one

unknown ( )

11.

a)

Number of Dependents:

children

elderly

disabled

unknown ( )

b)

Residence of Dependents:

Prior to Current Conviction

Supposing that Subject Committed on Conviction

check all that apply

With subject and/or partner ( )

With estranged partner ( )

With subject's parents ( )

With other relatives ( )

With other friends ( )

In foster home ( )

In adoptive home ( )

In institution ( )

Other

unknown ( )

no dependents ( )

12.

a)

Economic status of subject and dependents and partner (if not estranged):

Income = \$ per month

unknown ( )

b)

If subject is a dependent within her parental family, what is the parental family's income per month? \$

unknown ( )

c)

Total income is:

equal to ( )

greater than ( )

less than ( )

unknown ( )

the Welfare Department's Basic Needs Standard for Aid to Needy Families with Children. (See table page 5.)

d)

Source of Income

unknown ( )

check all that apply

Amount

of

Income

Provided

some

most

all

self	partner	parents	other relatives	other friends	public	other=

13.

a)

Career Status:

at home ( )

part-time job ( )

full-time job ( )

self-employed ( )

student ( )

other

unknown ( )

check all that apply

45

check all  
that apply,  
then circle  
skill used in  
last known job

- b) Career skills:
- |              |     |             |       |
|--------------|-----|-------------|-------|
| secretarial  | ( ) | child-care  | ( )   |
| bookkeeping  | ( ) | waitressing | ( )   |
| RN           | ( ) | cleaning    | ( )   |
| LPN          | ( ) | sewing      | ( )   |
| medical aide | ( ) | cooking     | ( )   |
| teaching     | ( ) | none        | ( )   |
| retail       | ( ) | criminal    | _____ |
| factory      | ( ) |             |       |
| other _____  |     | unknown     | ( )   |

14. Work History:

check one

- a) Length of time in current job \_\_\_\_\_ unknown ( )
- b) Number of jobs held in last 2 years \_\_\_\_\_ unknown ( )
- c) Pattern of employment:
- |                            |     |             |
|----------------------------|-----|-------------|
| always or usually employed | ( ) | unknown ( ) |
| seasonally employed        | ( ) |             |
| intermittently employed    | ( ) |             |
| seldom employed            | ( ) |             |
| never worked outside home  | ( ) |             |
- d) Pattern of terminating employment:
- |  |     |             |
|--|-----|-------------|
| quitting according to subject's own plan | ( ) | unknown ( ) |
| quitting impulsively, without plan       | ( ) |             |
| quitting at employer's request           | ( ) |             |
| being laid off                           | ( ) |             |
| being fired                              | ( ) |             |
| other _____                              |     |             |

15. Educational History:

- a) Highest grade or equivalent completed \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Other vocational/academic training \_\_\_\_\_

16. Criminal History:

- a) Age at first conviction \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Number of previous convictions: juvenile \_\_\_\_\_ adult \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Number of previous placements:
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| on probation _____  |  |
| in correctional institutions: for less than 60 days _____ |  |
| for 60 days to 1 year _____                               |  |
| for more than 1 year _____                                |  |
- d) Any history of violating probation or parole? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

check all  
that apply

- e) Subject has history of:
- |                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| violent crime  | _____ |
| property crime | _____ |
| other          | _____ |
- f) Remarks (Indicate where pertinent any co-defendants in past criminal activity and subject's relationship to co-defendants) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Age first found to be unmanageable or in need of care or supervision  
by juvenile court \_\_\_\_\_

22. SRS History:

- a) Age first committed by juvenile court to the custody of the  
Commissioner of SRS (or DSW) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Number of commitments to the custody of the Commissioner of  
SRS (or DSW) previous to the current commitment \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Number of previous placements by SRS (or DSW) to Weeks School:  
for less than 60 days \_\_\_\_\_  
for 60 days to 1 year \_\_\_\_\_  
for more than 1 year \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Any history of violating SRS (or DSW) aftercare? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Subject has history of:  
acting out against people \_\_\_\_\_  
acting out against property \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Remarks \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 17. PRIME PRESENTING PROBLEMS

unknown ( )

check all  
that apply

	<u>Symptom of Subject's Personal Problems</u>	<u>Cause of Subject's Personal Problems</u>
a) none	( )	( )
b) alcohol abuse	( )	( )
c) drug abuse	( )	( )
d) inadequate income	( )	( )
e) vocational difficulties	( )	( )
f) lack of transportation	( )	( )
g) academic difficulties	( )	( )
h) problems with parental family	( )	( )
i) problems with marital family	( )	( )
j) sexual difficulties	( )	( )
k) low self-confidence	( )	( )
l) easily manipulated by others	( )	( )
m) counter-culture values	( )	( )
n) criminal-culture values	( )	( )
o) mentally/emotionally ill	( )	( )
p) assaultive	( )	( )
q) physically ill/disabled	( )	( )
r) ignorant of social expectations/ obligations	( )	( )
s) object of community prejudice	( )	( )
t) other _____	( )	( )
v) Retarded	( )	( )
u) Remarks _____		

## 18. SERVICE NEEDS

unknown ( )

check all  
that apply

	<u>Needs You See</u>	<u>Needs That Have Been Addressed</u>
a) none	( )	( )
b) alcohol treatment	( )	( )
c) drug treatment	( )	( )
d) vocational training	( )	( )
e) academic training	( )	( )
f) job placement	( )	( )
g) residential placement	( )	( )
h) training in home/family care	( )	( )
i) help with home/family care	( )	( )
j) help with transportation	( )	( )
k) personal hygiene/health/beauty education	( )	( )
l) consumer education	( )	( )
m) exposure to social/recreational experiences	( )	( )
n) formal counseling or psycho- therapy	( )	( )
o) medical care/supervision	( )	( )
p) further evaluation	( )	( )
q) other _____	( )	( )
s) structured environment	( )	( )

## 19. COURT ACTION

Action  
That Was  
Taken

a)	dismiss charges	( )	
b)	diversion program	( )	
c)	fine	( )	( )
d)	restitution	( )	( )
e)	further evaluation	( )	( )
f)	probation:		
	with street supervision	( )	( )
	with residential placement	( )	( )
g)	commitment to correctional institution		( )
	with minimum security	( )	
	with medium security	( )	
	with maximum security	( )	
h)	other _____		
i)	Remarks _____		

a) PRIMARY PROBLEMS # \_\_\_\_\_  
b) SERVICE NEEDS # \_\_\_\_\_  
c) If you're not sure, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

21. If you recommended probation, do you think the officer for this woman should be  
a male figure ( ) unknown ( )  
a female figure ( )  
either; it doesn't matter ( )

TABLE OF TAKE-HOME INCOME  
WELFARE BASIC NEEDS  
STANDARD

Number of People Including  
Subject and/or Partner and Dependents

49



Appendix B  
Staff Survey Instruction

## WOMEN IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

This questionnaire on women in the correctional system is the next step in the Department's project to develop the services female offenders need. The questionnaire will be completed for all the women currently on probation or parole and for a sample of the women who were incarcerated in recent years. The completed questionnaire will then be used as the raw data which a committee will review to determine the need for various new programs. The committee will agree on the program most beneficial for each woman based on the needs identified on the survey form and the recommendation made. The number and types of recommended programs will be tabulated, and an analysis of the data will provide the Department with a relatively objective measure of the variety of services needed by women in the correctional system and of how many women need each service. Also, the completed questionnaire will provide a demographic picture of women offenders in Vermont.

A similar Mock Classification Committee approach was used in the spring of 1973 to document the service needs for male inmates. Results from that study produced several surprises for the institutional staff and administrators and led to changes in the types of services and in priorities; this study may suggest similar changes in program emphasis.

All Probation/Parole officers are being asked to complete a questionnaire for each woman<sup>1/</sup> they had on probation or parole as of March 31, 1974. The deadline for completing and returning the questionnaires to the Research Division is June 30, 1974.

The information necessary to complete this questionnaire may be difficult to obtain, but you, the Probation/Parole officer, have the best chance of anyone in the Department to gather information directly from the offender, and you have the most complete knowledge and notes. Because many people were consulted before this questionnaire was drafted and more were involved in the actual drafting, we

<sup>1/</sup> either adult or juvenile

feel that the questionnaire items scan the parameters of women offenders' lives adequately for this purpose. We ask that you spend the extra effort to fill in the gaps in your knowledge of each woman so you can complete her questionnaire. You may need to consult with other Probation/Parole or Correctional Officers if a woman was transferred to your caseload just prior to March 31, 1974 or if she has been in the Correctional System before. You may even have to negotiate with other officers to answer the questionnaires on woman with whom they are more familiar than you.

The first part of the questionnaire is simply identification. Then there are sections on Current Conviction, Background Information, Prime Presenting Problems, Service Needs and Court Action.

Current Conviction: the conviction for which the woman was most recently placed on probation or committed. If there was more than one commitment or more than one sentence suspended at that time, report the conviction which resulted in the longest maximum sentence or in case of ties, the longest minimum sentence. For fine only cases, please record the amount. The questionnaire asks for information on the current conviction and sentence, the type of offense, the convicting court, and accomplices if she was not by herself.

Background Information: the woman's demographics. The questionnaire asks about her residence, the residence of her dependents if she has any, her marital status, her income and who supports her, her job potential and history, her education, her criminal background.

Prime Presenting Problems: this section of the questionnaire requires that you assess the reasons for the woman's involvement in crime. An assumption here is that she has some personal problem(s) which causes her to behave criminally. First check off under "Symptoms" the problems she exhibits, then decide which of those or other problems are the underlying cause(s) of her personal problems. Check off these deeper problems under "Cause".

Service Needs: Based on the woman's Prime Presenting Problem(s), as described in question number 17, what are the services you think she must receive in order to be "rehabilitated"? How do the services you desire for her compare with the services she has actually received since being committed or placed on probation or parole?

Court Action: Based on the woman's identified Service Needs, what recommendation would you make to a court for her disposition if you were doing a pre-sentence investigation on her current conviction? What kind of sentence did the court actually give this woman for her current conviction? If you think she should have been committed to a correctional institution, what are your specific reasons for thinking so? If you think she should have been placed on probation, do you think her officer should have been female or male, or is it irrelevant for her?

Each questionnaire is to be answered as though you were doing it at the time of the woman's "current conviction." Imagine that the judge, after convicting this woman, ordered you to do a Pre-Sentence Investigation. The "Background Information" in the questionnaire is to be the same as in that imaginary Pre-Sentence, i.e., accurate as of the date of such a pre-sentence investigation. The "Prime Presenting Problems" and "Service Needs" section of the questionnaire should also be answered as if for a PSI at the time of conviction. You should report on the personal problems and needs the woman had at the time of her current conviction but base your answers on the more thorough knowledge you now possess. That is, if she had a problem you now recognize as sexual but originally diagnosed as alcohol abuse when she was first placed on probation, check under "Cause of Personal Problems" sexual difficulties. The woman may no longer have sexual difficulties if she has changed since her current conviction, but the questionnaire is still to be answered in a past time-frame. There are only two exceptions to this time-frame; they are "Service Needs That Have Been Addressed" (No. 18) and "Court Action That Was Taken" (No. 19). You should answer both columns accurate to 3/31/74.

Below is a list of definitions which may help you if the questionnaire seems unclear.

Question numbers #2

PAS I. D. # = The woman's Population Accounting System Identifying Number. The secretary in each office can supply this number.

5c. Anytime you must use "other" as your choice of answer, please specify what "other" means.

9b. "Partner" means husband, common-law husband, long-time boyfriend, etc.

11a. If the woman was pregnant at the time of her current conviction, please note that fact.

11b. "Residence of Dependents": You are first asked to check where the woman's dependents were residing just prior to her current conviction, then you are asked to guess where her dependents would have been placed (or were placed) if the judge had decided to commit her. This information might have bearing on the "Court Action You Would Have Recommended" in No. 19.

12d. "Source of Income" should be answered as follows: Example: For a woman who receives  $\frac{1}{4}$  of her income from a part-time job,  $\frac{1}{4}$  from her parents, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  from welfare:

d)	Source of Income						unknown ( )
	self	partner	parents	other relatives	other friends	public	other=
	✓		✓				
						✓	

check all that apply Amount of Income Provided

some most all

13b. "Criminal" listed as a career skill covers such fields as prostitution, forgery, etc. Please specify further if you check criminal as a woman's skill.

14b&c. "Pattern of Employment": The questionnaire asks you to review the woman's entire work history and make a judgement about it. Is this woman usually employed? Does she usually quit impulsively? Rather than asking for an exhaustive description of past work performance, the questionnaire asks you to assess that performance.

16e.

Type of Offense: You are asked to classify the past convictions of the woman as stemming from violent crimes, property crimes, or other. Committing a violent crime entails physical harm or threat of harm to a person such as by murder, rape, assault, robbery, or kidnap. The victim is unwilling. A property crime implies illegal acquisition of money, goods, or services. An escape, drug offenses, and contempt are examples of "other" types of offenses.

17r.

"Ignorant of social obligations/expectations": as a Prime Presenting Problem this is meant to cover the woman who may have grown up almost isolated from other people, who didn't learn to socialize or what constitutes acceptable behavior. It is basically to convey a lack of exposure or experience.

17s.

"Object of community prejudice": as a Prime Presenting Problem this is meant to cover the woman who may have committed a crime so heinous to the community or whose standard of living is so disgusting to the community that no rational reasons for her performance are accepted by the community. Hence the community's reaction may be a real personal problem for her.

The Welfare Basic Needs Standard table at the end of the questionnaire is the Vermont Department of Welfare's estimate of the monthly net income required to support people in unfurnished apartments or mortgaged homes (but not in furnished apartments). The Welfare Department currently supplies its "Needy Families with Children" with only 90% of the income listed in the table. The monthly figures are roughly equivalent to 1/12 of a yearly salary or 4.3 x a weekly salary.

Please answer all the questions in the questionnaire unless they are clearly inapplicable. If you don't have the information necessary to answer a particular question, check "unknown" rather than skip the question. That way when the Mock Classification Committee reviews your questionnaire it can be sure that the question was not skipped by mistake.

If you have any doubts or inquires about how to proceed, call:

Brenda Patterson

*Brenda Patterson*

Research Assistant - Central Office

828-2464

Appendix C  
Feedback on Staff Survey Instrument



Information from the "feedback questionnaire" was tallied and the results are summarized here.

All staff felt that the questions asked were relevant to what we need to know about our female clients in order to help them.

Five of the six felt that all questions were relevant although there was some difficulty in getting some of the information, especially regarding co-defendants and financial status.

There was only one person who felt that there were not enough options specified for given questions but this only involved the question regarding residence and it was felt that there should have been an option to cover the transient living pattern of many of the Department's clients.

Two felt that particular questions had unnecessary answer choices provided.

All six felt they had answered the questions correctly. Although two of them felt that the questionnaire was difficult to answer.

FEEDBACK ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE  
ABOUT  
"WOMEN IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM"

- 1) Did the questionnaire ask for all the facts about your clients that you feel are generally relevant to helping them?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If "No", what questions were left out?

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- 2) Did the questionnaire ask for facts about your clients that you feel are generally irrelevant to helping them?

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_

If "Yes", what questions were irrelevant?

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- 3) On the questionnaire please put a "X" beside the questions you think are the most important.

- 4) Did the questionnaire give you all the options necessary for choosing relevant answers to the multiple choice questions?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If "No", for what questions did you want more options and what options did you want?

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- 5) Did the questionnaire give you options that were unnecessary for choosing relevant answers to the multiple choice questions?

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_

If "Yes", for what questions were there unnecessary options and what were they?

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- 6) I found the questionnaire: (please check one)

\_\_\_ a) difficult to answer and I'm not sure I answered it properly.

\_\_\_ b) difficult to answer but I think I answered it properly.

\_\_\_ c) not too difficult to answer; I think I answered it properly.

\_\_\_ d) easy to answer; I'm sure I answered it properly.

- 7) On the questionnaire please put a "✓" beside the questions you think have the least reliable answers.
- 8) About how long did it take you to answer each questionnaire? \_\_\_\_ hours \_\_\_\_ minutes.
- 9) Please write below any other comments about the strengths or weakness of the questionnaire. Your comments will be helpful in analysis of the questionnaire results.

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- 10) Please write below any new thoughts or suggestions you have about programs for women.

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Appendix D  
Client Survey Instrument

Questionnaires were sent to 219 clients with the original letter (A) on December 29, 1975. On March 3, 1976, a second questionnaire and accompanying letter (B) was sent to the clients from whom we had not yet received completed questionnaires returned envelopes from the Post Office.\* Approximately half of the total questionnaires returned came back after the first mailing, and the other half were returned after the second mailing.

\*In all, 63 were returned by the Post Office as undeliverable.



**STATE OF VERMONT  
AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**79 RIVER STREET  
MONTPELIER 05602**

March 3, 1976

Ms. Jane Doe  
79 River Street  
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Dear Ms. Doe:

A few weeks ago, I sent you a questionnaire which the Research Division of the Corrections Department will use in helping plan programs for women.

I have not received your completed questionnaire. I am, therefore, enclosing another blank form, number coded as before, so that your responses will be kept confidential from all other Department employees, except me.

Please fill out the questionnaire and mail it to me in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope during the next few days.

I am genuinely interested in making sure that our women clients are getting the programs they need and every response is important in helping us to evaluate these needs and provide the necessary services.

Thank you for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Ruth B. Samuels  
Research Assistant

RBS/cbl  
Enclosure



**STATE OF VERMONT  
AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**79 RIVER STREET  
MONTPELIER 05602**

December 29, 1975

Jane Doe  
79 River Street  
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Dear Ms. Doe:

The Department of Corrections, Research Division is gathering information to help the Department plan programs for women. We would like your help in determining which programs are most needed.

As a person who has been a probationer you probably have ideas which would be very helpful in the planning of future programs.

The enclosed questionnaire is identified only by a code number to insure that your responses will be kept confidential from all other Department employees except me.

Please take a minute, fill out the questionnaire, and mail it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope sometime this week.

Thank you for your time and help.

Sincerely,

Ruth B. Samuels  
Research Assistant

RBS:cb1

What is your marital status? Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐ Widowed ☐ Never Married ☐

With whom do you live? Husband or boyfriend ☐ Parents ☐  
Other relatives or friends ☐ Foster or adoptive home ☐  
Institution ☐ Other ☐

How many dependants do you have? Children ☐ Elderly ☐ Disabled ☐

What offense(s) were you convicted for? \_\_\_\_\_

Where was your home at the time of the offense(s)? Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

What was the approximate monthly income for yourself (or your family if you lived in a family)? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

What was the source of most of this income? Self ☐ Other relatives or friends ☐  
Parents ☐ Public Assistance ☐ Husband or boyfriend ☐  
Other ☐

Were you: Employed full-time ☐ Self-employed ☐ Student ☐  
Employed part-time ☐ Unemployed ☐ Other ☐

Were you: Always or usually employed ☐ Employed off and on ☐ Never employed  
Seasonally employed ☐ Seldom employed ☐ outside the home ☐

What types of jobs have you held? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you usually leave a job: On your own, for a reason ☐ Because you were asked to  
On your own, with no plan ☐ by your employer or were  
Due to lay-off ☐ fired ☐  
Other ☐

What was the highest grade in school, or equivalent, you have completed? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had any other schooling or job training? \_\_\_\_\_

What career skills do you have? (For example, nursing, cooking, carpentry.) \_\_\_\_\_

What career skills would you like to have, or what types of work would you like to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you experienced any difficulties in the problem areas listed below?

Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional upsets <input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs <input type="checkbox"/>	for job, etc. <input type="checkbox"/>	Fights <input type="checkbox"/>
Income too low <input type="checkbox"/>	Problems in school <input type="checkbox"/>	Health <input type="checkbox"/>
Job skills or <input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty with reading <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't understand what
employment <input type="checkbox"/>	Marital Problems <input type="checkbox"/>	people expect of me <input type="checkbox"/>
People don't like me <input type="checkbox"/>	Getting along with parents <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Easily influenced by <input type="checkbox"/>	Disciplining children <input type="checkbox"/>	
others <input type="checkbox"/>	Having a place to live <input type="checkbox"/>	

Which of the following services do you feel you needed and which of these were offered to you?

	A Service I Needed	A Service I Was Offered		A Service I Needed	A Service I Was Offered
Alcohol program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal health and/or		
Drug program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	beauty education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consumer education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunity for social or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A place to live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recreational experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training in home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
or family care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and/or family		
Help with transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
for job, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A live-in program such				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
as a group home, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you receiving any special services now? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel was the biggest problem you had at the time of your offense? Has it improved? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel is your biggest problem now? \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the back of this sheet if you do not have enough room to answer any questions or to add suggestions or comments that you have which will help us plan programs for women.





**END**