

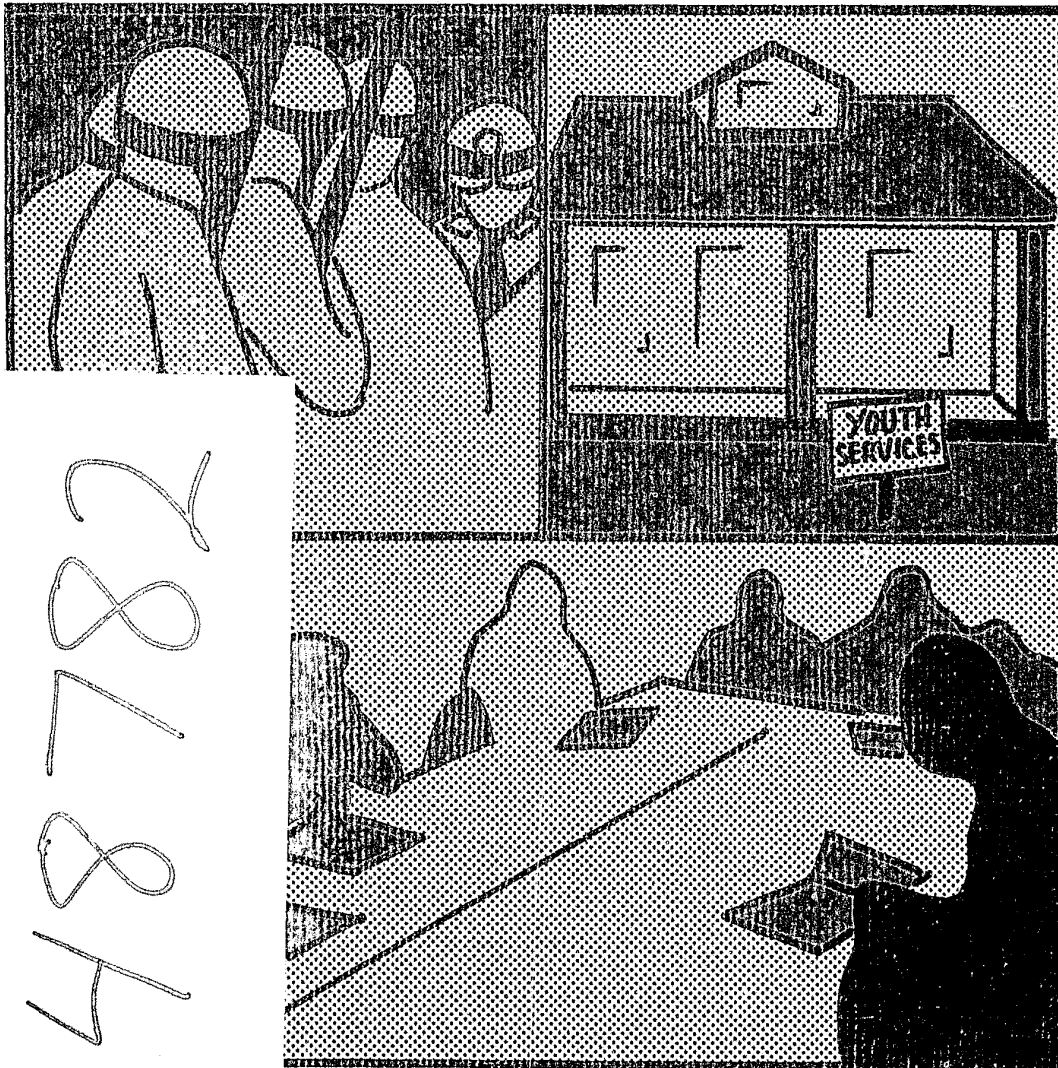
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SUMMARY



AN EVALUATION OF A "COMMUNITY BASED PREVENTION" and "INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO JUVENILE COURT SERVICES PROJECT"

ADMINISTERED BY: OKLAHOMA COUNTY JUVENILE BUREAU
AND YOUTH SERVICES FOR OKLAHOMA COUNTY, INC.,
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA—1975



PROJECT C.R.I.M.E.

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SUMMARY OF AN EVALUATION OF
COMMUNITY BASED PREVENTION PROGRAMS (74-d-2)
AND
INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO JUVENILE
COURT SERVICES (74-i-3) PROJECT

Administered by
Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau
and
Youth Services for Oklahoma County

Prepared by
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January 23, 1975

This report is one of seven evaluation reports
prepared by ACOG through Project C.R.I.M.E.
(Community-based Research to Improve Methods of Evaluation)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name: Community Based Prevention Program and Innovative Approaches to Juvenile Court Services

Name of Grantee: Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau and Youth Services for Oklahoma County, Inc.

Local Government Level: County

Director: Thomas D. Stanfill, Director
Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau
321 Park Avenue, Room 214
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Client Group of Criminal Justice System: Juvenile

Project Amount: \$96,501

Project Description: The project provided for the establishment of two neighborhood offices to more effectively deal with delinquency and pre-delinquency in closer proximity to the community. Each office housed probation counselors from the Juvenile Bureau of the Oklahoma County Court and counselors from Youth Services for Oklahoma County, Inc.

DEFINITIONS

Objective - Something toward which effort is directed; an aim or end of action.

Immediate Objectives - The project objectives which are the preconditions for the accomplishment of the intermediate objectives.

Intermediate Objectives - The project objectives which are the means by which the ultimate objectives are to be achieved.

Ultimate Objectives - The project objectives which are stated as the effect, outcome or impact of a project on its target population.

Pre-delinquent behavior - A pattern of behavior which can be identified and which has proven to be an indicator of a potential for further involvement in, or precipitating acts judged to be delinquent.

Diversion - Preventing a child from penetrating the official juvenile justice system any further than necessary and referring those children to appropriate noncoersive community agencies or services.

Adjudicated - A determination by the court of guilt or innocence and which fixes the category of delinquent or in need of supervision.

In Need of Supervision - A child who is habitually truant from school or is beyond the control of parents or guardian, or who habitually departs himself so as to endanger the health or morals of himself or others.

Delinquent - (1) A child who has violated a federal or state law or municipal ordinance excepting traffic statutes or ordinances, or any lawful order of a court; (2) A child who habitually violates traffic laws or ordinances.

Probation - Court ordered supervision of a youth adjudicated as delinquent or in need of supervision.

SUMMARY REPORT

Findings

This report has attempted to evaluate a juvenile delinquency project funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) through the Oklahoma Crime Commission (OCC). The project was administered by the Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau and Youth Services for Oklahoma County, Inc. and involved the establishment of neighborhood youth services centers in the northwest and northeast quadrants of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. In summary, it can be said that the project has achieved or is making progress toward the majority of the identified objectives.

The immediate objectives dealt with project planning and implementation efforts. The evaluation has established that planning did take place prior to application for LEAA/OCC funds and that the project was implemented as scheduled. In fact, the two quadrant offices were established during the first three months of the project year, so that the project was able to proceed toward obtainment of the intermediate and ultimate objectives at the start of the second quarter.

The intermediate objectives consisted of the staff training and service delivery aspects of the project. It was through the attainment of these objectives that the project

anticipated reducing delinquency among the juveniles receiving services.

Through the evaluation, it was determined that most of the project's intermediate objectives had been achieved. The probation counselors' caseload was reduced in the two northern quadrants, allowing the counselors increased time for supervision of probationers. Additional time was achieved by locating the quadrant offices in areas with the highest concentration of juveniles, thus reducing travel time for the counselors at the quadrant offices. Furthermore, various agencies which provided long-term counseling or treatment of problems were identified for referring juveniles with problems that required extensive counseling. Coordination with such agencies was achieved, and approximately 40 agencies were used on a regular basis.

On-going training of staff and volunteers serving the project was achieved through weekly meetings with professional consultants. The staff perceived these meetings as very beneficial, as they provided the personnel an opportunity to work with the consultants on various problems and increase their own ability to provide services to probationers and pre-delinquents. In all, approximately 150 hours of training were available for the staff and volunteers. The incorporation of volunteers into the project design provided one other source of increasing the time available to counselors for intensive work with probationers and pre-delinquents.

The only intermediate objective that was not fully realized by the project was the planned increased work with the probationers' families. This objective was partially achieved, resulting from a lack of coordination between the two agencies. However, the coordination problems have been reduced; and during the last quarter of the project's first year, increased counseling with the families has been initiated.

The assessment at the intermediate objective level was not able to incorporate some of the indicators planned, since the necessary data was not included in the Juvenile Bureau's record-keeping system. During an exit interview with Tom Stanfill (Project Director) and Mike Harris (Supervisor of Probation Services), the need for increased data was discussed. Both men stated that the evaluation had identified data shortcomings toward which they have initiated efforts to correct. The effort to maintain the necessary data is reflective of the desire of the project's personnel to achieve the most effective means of service delivery.

The final level of assessment were the ultimate objectives, which are the effects on delinquency that the project was designed to achieve. These desired effects were to decrease the rate of future delinquent acts among clientele and to increase diversion of juveniles from the juvenile justice system. The evaluation found that the project had made progress toward obtaining its ultimate objectives.

Support of the project's progress was provided by the following findings:

- (a) reduction in the number of juveniles adjudicated Delinquent and the number adjudicated In Need of Supervision, which is reflective of the court's and Probation Department's effort to divert juveniles from the justice system,
- (b) a very low rate of adjudication among the pre-delinquents receiving services from the Youth Services counselors at the two quadrants,
- (c) a reduction in the percentage of the Probation Department's caseload from the northern half of Oklahoma County, the area which the project was designed to serve,
- (d) a reduction in the number of juveniles from the northern area committed to state institutions.

The recidivism rate for probationers was also derived. Using the frequency of arraignment among the probationers in the northern quadrants, the recidivism rate was found to be 78%. However, this rate included juveniles that were brought before the court for arraignment more than once, and therefore, represented a rough overestimation of the actual rate.

A second calculated rate used adjudication after placement on probation to define recidivism. By this definition, the rate was 25%. Again, this rate was not totally accurate, as some of the probationers were scheduled for adjudication hearings and the outcome of the hearings could not be included in the calculations. The derived rate, then, underestimates the actual rate. As a result of the limitations on the two derived rates, the recidivism percentages reported are considered as reflecting the boundaries within which the actual rate falls.

The final indicator of the project's success in obtaining the ultimate objectives, was a telephone survey to assess the community's awareness of the services offered to pre-delinquents. The survey revealed little awareness, which could reduce the effectiveness of the project delivery. However, in an exit interview with Doug Gibson (Director of Youth Services), it was found that plans were being developed for activities which would increase the community awareness. Two possibilities under examination were television "spots" publicizing the services offered at the quadrant offices and designing a brochure for dissemination within the community.

Conclusions

Overall, the performance during the project's first year had successfully achieved the first two levels of objectives; and the project was found to be progressing toward the ultimate objectives. The problems found by the evaluation are being addressed by the project managers, and plans have been developed to reduce the shortcomings during the project's second year.

Program Overview

The project just discussed was, in actuality, a combination of two programs which were written in the OCC's Comprehensive Law Enforcement Action Plan, 1974 under the program titles "Community Based Prevention Programs" (74-d-2) and "Innovative Approaches to Juvenile Court Services" (74-i-3). At the time of this report, it was being administered by two separate agencies: Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau, under the leadership of Thomas D. Stanfill and Youth Services for Oklahoma County, Inc., headed by Douglas M. Gibson.

The project was conceived by the directors of the two agencies as the result of the identification of, in Mr. Gibson's words, ". . . dual needs---needs identified by the court and needs identified by Youth Services. The court wanted to decentralize their office and get the people out into the field . . . [and] wanted them to get out into the neighborhoods and develop a closer identity with the neighborhoods, schools, police department, etc. We also wanted to do that---be more accessible to the families we are working with." The resultant project involved the establishment of branch or neighborhood offices located in the areas of Oklahoma City experiencing the highest incidence of delinquency.

A survey utilizing 1973 data was conducted, and it was found that 31% of the referrals to the Oklahoma County Juvenile Court came from the northwest quadrant of Oklahoma City and 30% came from the northeast quadrant. Thus, it was decided to locate a neighborhood office in each of these two

quadrants. Attached to each of these offices were probation counselors from the Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau and youth services counselors from Youth Services for Oklahoma County, Inc. This, of course, allowed the two agencies to take their services to the areas identified as having the greatest need.

The probation counselors would be able to provide more intensive supervision over a relatively small caseload and conduct more intensive family counseling with the parents and other siblings in the home. Also, the youth services counselors would be able to work more intensively with pre-delinquent referrals because of their proximity to their clients. It was anticipated that this multi-service (two district agencies offering diversified services from the same facility) approach would result in a decrease of delinquent acts. It was the purpose of this evaluation report to provide an indication of the success achieved in attaining this goal and to provide feedback concerning their program to the project directors.

Program Supportive Literature Review*

In an effort to determine the degree to which the means toward achieving the goals of the project were supported by existing knowledge, a literature review was performed, the results of which indicated the project's activities should enable it to progress. For example, the neighborhood centers concept was recognized in 1967 by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice when it recommended:

"Communities should establish neighborhood youth-serving agencies . . . located if possible in comprehensive neighborhood community centers and receiving juveniles (delinquent or non-delinquent) referred by the police, the juvenile court, parents, school and other sources.

These agencies would act as central coordinators of all community services for young people and would also provide services lacking in the community or neighborhood, especially ones designed for less seriously delinquent juveniles." (p.83)

Malcolm W. Klein (1974: 297) lent support to diverting juveniles from the system when he found that first offenders had a higher rate of recidivism when handled by police departments employing low diversion practices than in the departments having higher diversion policies. (Others supporting the concept of diversion are: Roberts, 1974; Scarpitti and Stephenson, 1968; Lauicht, 1962; Mannering, 1958; Rector, 1958 and Rubin, 1958.) But, Klein (1972: 302) has also warned that " . . . simple recidivism as a criterion measure was inadequate in juvenile delinquency research . . . for measuring the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a program."

The need to work more closely with the family of a juvenile is also well supported in the literature. For instance, Mahoney (1974: 600-601) has said that the degree of parental and family attachment has been considered an important criterion to the probation officer while preparing the intake and predispositional reports.

Evaluation Process

The objectives necessary to evaluate the progress of the project toward its goal were derived by: (1) the evaluation

staff of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) reviewing the grant application and extracting objectives from it, (2) input from the Steering Committee for ACOG's Model Evaluation Project and (3) through discussion with the directors of the two agencies administering the juvenile delinquency project which was the subject of this evaluation.

Through this process the following objectives and their corresponding data needs were identified and classified:

I. Immediate Objectives

- A. To develop grant planning and preparation capacities
- B. To design record-keeping forms for purpose of data collection
- C. To retain personnel specified
- D. To obtain equipment
- E. To retain consultants specified
- F. To arrange training workshops for counselors
- G. To locate and establish two facilities
- H. To recruit volunteers

II. Intermediate Objectives

- A. To provide intensive supervision of juvenile probationers
- B. To provide intensive counseling with the probationers' parents and siblings
- C. To provide counseling services to pre-delinquent referrals
- D. To refer to local resources juveniles in need of long-term counseling or treatment
- E. To provide initial volunteer orientation/training
- F. To provide on-going volunteer training during project involvement
- G. To do complete analysis of first half of project
- H. To hold weekly group meetings with professional consultant present
- I. To identify all local resources for potential referral, and record services available and qualifying criteria
- J. To reduce probationers' and pre-delinquents' transportation problems for obtaining services

III. Ultimate Objectives

- A. To decrease the rate of future delinquent acts
- B. To increase diversion of juveniles out of the juvenile justice system

With the cooperation and assistance of the project's staff, the necessary information was gathered. This involved interviewing the project directors, designing a questionnaire to be completed by the counselors in each of the quadrant offices and extracting information from the various files.

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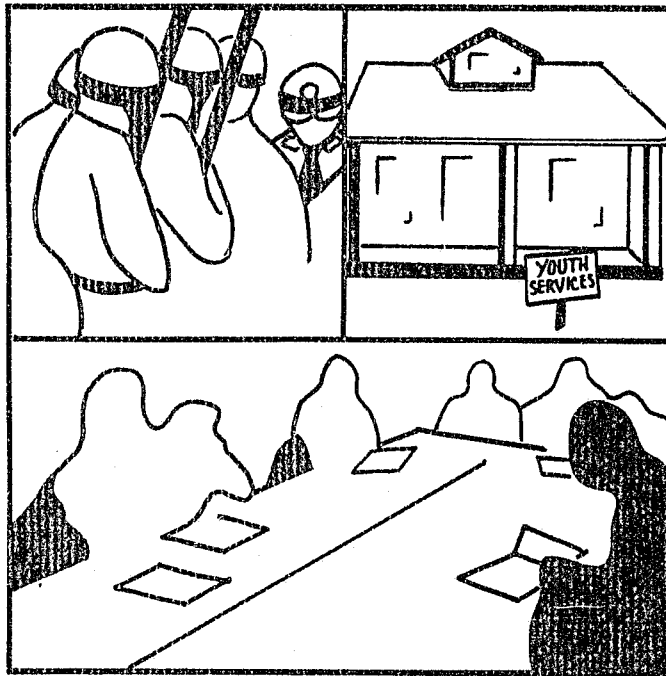
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