



# JUVENILE RESTITUTION PROJECT



*A PRELIMINARY  
EVALUATION*

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JUVENILE RESTITUTION PROJECT

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

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## PRELIMINARY EVALUATION - RESTITUTION

LEAA Grant #78-ED-AX-0119

### Introduction

Over the years, various rehabilitation programs for juvenile offenders have been in existence, such as counseling, probation, group homes, volunteer services, etc. However, little has been done for the victims of juvenile crime.

Jefferson County, Kentucky is one of 41 sites chosen by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) to implement a juvenile restitution program. Youth adjudicated for property offenses are referred to the Restitution Program from the juvenile session of District Court. The project locates work for the youth and monitors his progress on the job. Three-fourths of the youth's wages are sent to the victim weekly while one fourth of the wages are kept by the youth.

Symbolic restitution is also offered by the project. If money or property has been recovered, the judge can order the youth to do a certain amount of volunteer work which the project also locates and monitors.

The overall goal of the Jefferson County Juvenile Restitution Program is to involve 400 youths per year in the project and therefore provide partial redress for victims of juvenile crime. This will enhance the image of the juvenile justice system and reduce the number of youths committed to juvenile institutions.

The LEAA grant for the Restitution Program was awarded in October, 1978. The project director was hired in December and the

line staff was hired in February, 1979. The program began receiving referrals in March, 1979.

As a result of a July, 1979 LEAA review, it was recommended that program goals be modified due to a lower number of referrals than previously estimated. The basic goals remain the same with only the numbers being reduced. For example, the original project goal was to involve 750 youth per year in the program. This was reduced to 400 per year.

The program contracted with Jefferson County Parks and Recreation, County Works Department, and Voluntary Action of United Way for employment and volunteer placement. The Voluntary Action contract was cancelled in September due to the low number of referrals for voluntary service hours. It was decided that a project work supervisor employed by the project could monitor and process voluntary service referrals.

Requirements for youth eligibility have also been modified. Previously, youths between 14-18 years of age and adjudicated for property offense, were eligible only if involved in no other court program. Youth are now allowed to be involved in other court programs. Robbery and assault (non-property offenses) offenders are also now eligible for the program if medical expenses are involved.

These modifications (approved by LEAA in August, 1979) should allow an increase in referrals to the Restitution Program. It is too early at this point to determine the effect of these changes.

### Methodology

The primary methodology of this preliminary evaluation involves an examination of the program's goals and objectives and to what extent they have been met as of September 30, 1979. The population studied includes those youths admitted to the project from March 1, 1979 through September 30, 1979.



## SECTION I.

### The Objectives

The purpose of this section is to determine how closely the objectives stated in the grant application have been met. This study includes the first seven months of youth referrals--March through September, 1979.

I. The first area of objectives deals with "compensation for loss."

- a. One objective is "to provide monetary compensation for 150 victims by enrolling youth in a subsidized work program and requiring restitution."

Thus far, 66 victims have received or are receiving compensation through the subsidized work program. According to the objective, at least 87 victims should have been involved at this point. The present rate of 66 victims projects to a yearly total of 113 or 25 percent short of the objective.

- b. Another objective is "to provide monetary compensation for 200 victims by requiring restitution from youth currently employed or having resources of their own."

The program at this point has provided compensation to 10 victims from youth with their own resources. According to the objective, at least 116 victims should have been involved by now. The present rate

of 10 victims projects to a yearly total of 17 or about 91 percent short of the goal of 200.

- c. The last goal concerning compensation for loss is "to provide symbolic restitution for 50 victims by enrolling the youth in community service programs." In the first seven months of referrals, the program has provided seven victims with symbolic restitution. According to the objective, 29 victims should have been provided symbolic restitution at this point. The present rate of seven victims projects to a yearly total of 12 or 76 percent short of the goal of 50.

II. The second area of objectives deals with the "feasibility of restitution."

- a. The first one is "to demonstrate the feasibility of using restitution as a dispositional alternative for eight percent of all youth handled formally by the Juvenile Court."

Approximately 5,000 youth are handled formally per year. The program's goal is to involve 400 youth per year in Restitution. Thus far, 71 youths have been involved. According to the objective, at least 233 youths should have been involved in the program at this point. The present rate of 71 projects to a yearly total of 120 or 70 percent short of the 400 goal.

- b. The second objective is "to demonstrate that restitution agreements be adhered to by 75 percent of youth involved."

Of 44 closed cases thus far, 40 youths have met with full compliance of the program while four have not. Therefore, the project is currently experiencing an in-program success rate of 91 percent. At the current rate, the program is expected to exceed the 75 percent goal.

III. The third area of objectives deals with an "increased sense of responsibility in youth involved."

- a. The first objective is "to provide pre and post testing for 25 percent of all youth completing the restitution order using the self-reliability, personal worth, and social standards scales of the California Test of Personality."

Of the 71 youth in the program, 16 (23%) have been pre-tested, (2% short of the goal). Nine of these youths have successfully completed the Restitution Program. Six of the nine were post-tested while the other three were unable to be tested due to failure to appear for testing and inappropriateness. (One youth was in the program only a few days).

- b. The second objective is "to demonstrate a one standard deviation change in the three scales for 50 percent of all youth completing the program."

On the Self-Reliance Scale (of those six pre and post tested) 33 percent showed a standard deviation change. Self-Reliance as defined by the authors of the California Test of Personality, Louis Thorpe, Willis Clark and Ernest Tiegs\* is when an individual's "overt actions indicate that he can do things independently of others, depend upon himself in various situations, and direct his own activities. The self-reliant person is also characteristically stable emotionally, and responsible in his behavior."

On the Personal Worth Scale, 83 percent showed a standard deviation change. Personal Worth is defined as when an "individual possesses a sense of being worthy when he feels he is well regarded by others, when he feels that others have faith in his future success, and when he believes that he has average or better than average ability. To feel worthy means to feel capable and reasonably attractive."

On the Social Standards Scale, 50 percent showed a standard deviation change, however, the change was in a negative direction. Social Standards Scale measures the extent to which an individual recognizes desirable

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\*California Test of Personality, Manual, 1953 Revision. Louis Thorpe, Willis Clark, Ernest Tiegs, published by CTB/McGraw-Hill, Del Monte Research Park, Monterey, California.

social standards and has come to understand the rights of others and appreciates the necessity of subordinating certain desires to the needs of the group. Such an individual understands what is regarded as being right or wrong."

Generally, these results would indicate that the youths began to feel more positive about themselves but their understanding of society's norms deteriorated.

This study was based on a limited sample of youths (six). It is also noted that the average length of stay in the program for the youth tested was a significantly limited 2.3 months. These facts should be taken into consideration when determining the validity of the test results.

The Jesness Inventory was also given to the same youth who took the California Test of Personality. Of those six taking pre and post testing, 50 percent did show a standard deviation change. Of the three youths, one showed a positive change while two showed a negative change.

IV. The fourth area of objectives is concerned with the "increased confidence in the Juvenile Justice System."

- a. The first objective is "to develop a baseline confidence level using the instruments selected by the Research Analyst."

A ten question survey was developed to determine the confidence victims involved in the restitution have in the juvenile justice system. Thus far, a one-fourth sample (18) of restitution victims received the survey by mail. Seventy-three percent responded. (See Page 17.)

- b. The second objective is "to demonstrate a significant change (one standard deviation) in the level of confidence by the end of the first project year."

A mailing list of victims not involved in the Restitution Program is currently being compiled. Five of the questions from the restitution victim survey will be used in determining the confidence level of these non-restitution victims. It is too soon to determine the success of this objective.

- c. The third objective is "to conduct an intensive public education effort within 90 days of grant award and a six month follow-up effort."

In February, an intensive public education effort was launched by the program director. The Louisville Times, a major paper, carried two articles explaining the purpose and functions of the program. A smaller local paper also contained an article.

Public service announcements were run on all the local radio and television stations along with one radio interview. Letters explaining the program were sent to 120 community service groups resulting in 20 speaking engagements by the director. At the present time, a follow-up effort is in process. A brochure to be distributed to the public is almost completed. There are more newspaper articles and speaking engagements scheduled. These objectives seem to have been adequately met except for the follow-up being a couple of months late. A modification of program goals during August was the reason for the delay.

V. The fifth area of objectives concerns the "reduction of commitments."

- a. The specific objective is "to demonstrate an overall decrease in the number of commitments by 50 during the first project year as compared to 1977." In 1977, there were 283 youth committed to institutions. It is too early to determine if this objective has been achieved.

VI. The last area of objectives concerns the "reduction of recidivism."

- a. The first objective is "to have the youth remain arrest-free during the restitution order in 75 percent of all cases."

Ninety-eight percent of the youth have remained arrest-free during their involvement in the Restitution Program.

- b. The second objective is "to have the youth remain arrest-free for six months after completion of the restitution order in 50 percent of all cases."

It is premature to determine this since no youth have been out of the program for six months yet.



## SECTION II.

### Population Characteristics

The purpose of this section is to detail the characteristics of the youth involved in the Restitution Project from March, 1979 through September, 1979.

The age and race characteristics are given in Tables 1 and 2. Slightly more whites were in the program than blacks while the average age of the youth was just under 16 years.

Tables 3 and 4 indicate the type of offender and the type of offense. About 80 percent of the youth were first and second offenders and the most common offense was Burglary.

The next three tables (5, 6 and 7) pertain to school status, sex and closures. More than three-fourths of the youth were attending school. All youth in the program have been male and about 91 percent of the 44 youth finishing the program did so with full compliance.

Tables 8 and 9 indicate the location of the youth in Jefferson County and his length of time in the program. Jefferson County and Louisville is divided into 15 planning service communities (PSC). It appears that the youth referred were from all sections of the city and county. However, there was a large number of youths located in the western section of the county (PSC's 2, 6 and 9).

Almost 75 percent of the youth spent no more than three months in the program while about 25 percent spent four to five months in the program. The amount of restitution a youth is to

pay, and whether or not he attends school, affects the length of time he spends in the program.

Table 10 pertains to Family Income. Youth were referred to the program from all types of family incomes. However, the majority (almost 60%) were from families with incomes of under \$10,000.

Tables 11 and 12 indicate the amount of restitution paid and restitution ordered. Approximately 85 percent of the restitution so far was from subsidized funds from the grant. The program limit for a restitution amount is 500 dollars. Almost 15 percent of the youth were ordered the maximum while the majority of the youth, 66 percent, were ordered to pay under 200 dollars.

**TABLE 1.**  
**TOTAL POPULATION BY AGE**

AGE	No.	%
14	14	19.7
15	11	15.5
16	22	31.0
17	19	26.8
18	5	7.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Mean</b>		<b>15.9</b>

**TABLE 2.**  
**RACE**

WHITE		BLACK	
No.	%	No.	%
41	57.7	30	42.3

**TABLE 3.**  
**OFFENDERS**

OFFENDERS	No.	%
First	38	53.5
Second	20	28.2
Third	9	12.7
Fourth	2	2.8
Fifth & Up	2	2.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 4.**  
**TYPE OF OFFENSE**

TYPE OF OFFENSE	No.	%
Burglary	26	36.6
Criminal Trespass	10	14.0
Theft	11	15.6
Receiving Stolen Property	7	9.8
Unauthorized Use of Auto	6	8.4
Criminal Mischief	9	12.7
Forgery	1	1.4
Arson	1	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>99.9</b>

**TABLE 5.**  
**SCHOOL STATUS**

	No.	%
Attending	55	77.5
Withdrawn	16	22.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 6.**  
**SEX**

MALE		FEMALE	
No.	%	No.	%
71	100.0	0	-

**TABLE 7.**  
**CLOSURE**

COMPLIANCE		COURT CONTACT NON- COMPLIANCE	
No.	%	No.	%
40	90.9	4	9.1

TABLE 8.  
LOCATION OF YOUTH

P.S.C.	No.	%
1	6	9.1
2	8	12.1
3	1	1.5
4	6	9.1
5	3	4.5
6	9	13.6
7	0	-
8	1	1.5
9	7	10.6
10	5	7.6
11	5	7.6
12	4	6.1
13	5	7.6
14	1	1.5
15	5	7.6
Unknown	5	*
TOTAL	66	100.0

\*Unknowns are excluded in determining percentages.

TABLE 9.  
LENGTH IN PROGRAM

DAYS	No.	%
10-29	5	11.4
30-39	2	4.5
40-49	5	11.4
50-59	2	4.5
60-69	5	11.4
70-79	3	6.8
80-89	6	13.6
90-99	4	9.1
100-109	2	4.5
110-119	2	4.5
120-129	2	4.5
130-139	1	2.3
140-149	1	2.3
150 & Up	4	9.1
TOTAL	44	99.9

TABLE 10.  
FAMILY INCOME

FAMILY INCOME	No.	%
0-\$ 4,999	18	26.1
\$ 5,000- 9,999	23	33.3
10,000- 14,999	6	8.7
15,000 19,999	12	17.4
20,000- 24,999	3	4.3
25,000 & Up	7	10.1
Unknown	2	*
TOTAL	69	99.9

\*Unknowns are excluded in determining percentages.

TABLE 11.  
RESTITUTION PAID

TYPE OF RESTITUTION	RESTITUTION AMOUNT	%
Subsidized	\$ 5,558.58	84.3
Private	1,036.87	15.7
TOTAL	\$ 6,595.45	100.0
Volunteer Hours	430 Hrs.	

TABLE 12.  
RESTITUTION AMOUNTS ORDERED

AMOUNTS	No.	%
\$500 (Limit)	10	14.9
400-\$499	1	1.5
300- 399	3	4.5
200- 299	9	13.4
100- 199	25	37.3
1- 99	19	28.4
TOTAL (\$13,238)	67	99.9
Mean	\$198	
COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS	No.	%
120	5	71.4
91	1	14.3
30	1	14.3
TOTAL (241)	7*	100.0

\*Three are doing restitution,  
plus volunteer hours.

SEPTEMBER, 1979  
One-Fourth Sample (13 Victims)

VICTIM ATTITUDE SURVEY - RESULTS	TRUE		FALSE		NO RESPONSE	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. I feel the Juvenile Restitution Program is too harsh on the youth.	0	-	13	100.0	0	-
2. I was adequately informed about the progress of my case.	12	92.3	1	7.7	0	-
3. The local court is more fair and just than I previously thought.	8	61.5	3	23.1	2	15.4
4. The youth should have a more harsh punishment than the Restitution Program.	4	30.8	7	53.8	2	15.4
5. When the court ordered the youth to pay, I did not think I would really get compensation for my losses.	8	61.5	4	30.8	1	7.7
6. The Juvenile Restitution Program should continue.	13	100.0	0	-	0	-
7. I feel as though I had some influence in the outcome of my case.	8	61.5	4	30.8	1	7.7
8. I do not feel I got a fair deal in court.	1	7.7	12	92.3	0	-
9. Making offenders pay restitution is probably a better treatment method than other court programs like Probation or Counseling.	12	92.3	1	7.7	0	-
10. The local court is really more concerned with the offender's rights than with the victim's rights.	5	38.5	7	53.8	1	7.7

SEPTEMBER, 1979  
One-Third Sample (18 Youths)

YOUTH ATTITUDE SURVEY - RESULTS	TRUE		FALSE	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. I look forward to going to work each day.	13	72.2	5	27.8
2. I should be allowed to keep more money out of my paycheck.	10	55.6	8	44.4
3. It is only right I pay for the wrong I've done.	17	94.4	1	5.6
4. The Restitution Program is a waste of my time.	1	5.6	17	94.4
5. I've gotten off pretty easily for what I've done.	12	66.7	6	33.3
6. I feel good about having a job.	16	88.9	2	11.1
7. I'll be very happy when the Restitution Program is over.	14	77.8	4	22.2
8. The Restitution Program is a fair punishment for what I did.	18	100.0	0	-
9. I don't like the work site where I've been assigned.	4	22.2	14	77.8
10. I feel I owe my victim for what I did to him/her.	14	77.8	4	22.2

### SECTION III.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

The Juvenile Restitution Program seems to be successful in obtaining positive results with offenders and victims. One of the overall goals was to provide partial redress for the victims and to enhance the image of the juvenile justice system. So far, 91 percent of the youth completing the program paid back all the money they were ordered.

A survey given to victims involved in the program indicated their approval of the program. (See Page 17). One hundred percent of those victims responding felt the program should continue. Sixty-two percent indicated the court was more fair and just than they previously believed. Ninety-two percent felt restitution was probably a better treatment than the more conventional rehabilitation methods.

Of the youth surveyed, 88 percent said they felt good about having a job. One hundred percent felt restitution was a fair punishment for what they did. (See Page 18). These attitudes may account for the high success rate of program completions.

The primary short-coming of the program is in the low number of youths and victims involved. Currently the program is running far behind the projected goals. The program has not been getting the number of referrals expected.

It is too early to check recidivism rates and to determine if a reduction in institutional commitments has resulted. Overall, the quality of the program seems high, yet it has not serviced the



the numbers predicted.

There is a definite need to obtain more referrals. Since the judges, prosecutors and court assessment workers are primarily responsible for a youth's referral to the Restitution Program, these persons should be kept abreast of the program. A continuous and positive relationship should be fostered between the restitution staff and the assessment staff to encourage more use of the program.

A concern is raised as to whether or not the Restitution Program is causing an attitudinal or value change in the offender. The few test results available so far indicate that most youth have increased their sense of personal worth and self-reliance, yet their sense of social standards, or ideas of right and wrong, have decreased.

An average of two and one-half months in a program is not a sufficient length of time for any internal effect to take place. It is reasonable that a youth would feel better about himself and feel more self-reliant when he is employed and earning extra spending money. A possible flaw is that the youth is being forced or ordered by the court to be in the Restitution Program. It is against his will that he participates. In the attitude survey given to the youth (see Page 18.), 88 percent said they felt good about having a job yet 78 percent also said they would be "very happy" when the Restitution Program was over.

It is possible the program doesn't help internalize positive social values. One youth asked the Restitution staff to obtain a job for his friend. The youth was confused as to why this was not

possible.

In the future, it might be helpful to assign Volunteer Probation Officers to each youth admitted to the program. These VPO's can keep close contact with the youth after his termination with the Restitution Program. This personal relationship may help the youth internalize more positive values over a longer period of time.

As more testing occurs, it can be more accurately determined whether or not a VPO Program might be beneficial.

## SUMMARY

In the first seven months of operation, the Juvenile Restitution Program has succeeded in providing partial redress for victims of juvenile crime and has enhanced the image of the juvenile justice system. However, it has fallen short in obtaining the projected number of referrals.

Several points have become salient during the first seven month period of the program.

- ✓ Seventy-six victims have received compensation through the Restitution Program.

- ✓ The program has provided seven victims with symbolic restitution.

- ✓ According to a survey, 100% of the victims responding felt the Restitution Program should continue.

- ✓ Sixty-two percent of victims responding to the survey found the court more fair and just than they had previously thought.

- ✓ Seventy-one youths have been involved in the Restitution Program.

- ✓ Forty youths or 91% of those finishing the program have done so successfully.

- ✓ The average length of stay in the program was two and one-half months.

- ✓ The average age of the youth was 15.9 years.

- ✓ One hundred percent of the youth were male.

- ✓ Most youth were first and second offenders.

- ✓ Sixty percent of the youth were white while 40% were black.

✓ The most common offense was Burglary.

✓ Sixty percent of the youth were from families with an income of under \$10,000/year.

✓ Total restitution paid was \$6,595 and 430 hours of volunteer service.

✓ The average amount of restitution ordered was \$198.

✓ The total amount of restitution ordered was \$13,238.

**END**