

# DEPARTMENT OF OFFENDER REHABILITATION

67650

THIRD ANNUAL EVALUATION ON  
COMMUNITY DIVERSION CENTERS  
FISCAL YEAR 1977-1978



(5) THIRD ANNUAL EVALUATION -  
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(3) COMMUNITY DIVERSION CENTERS -  
FISCAL YEAR 1977-1978  
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On-site evaluations were conducted during May and June, 1978. Information herein applies only to center operations at the time of the evaluator's visit.

## PROBLEM STATEMENTS

### Problem

To determine whether Georgia's Diversion Centers are useful alternatives to incarceration for non-violent and non-sex-related offenders.

### Introduction

The Community Diversion Centers have the potential to achieve success as a viable alternative to incarceration, easing the overcrowded conditions in prisons. Not unexpectedly, many problems have plagued the diversion centers as they have attempted to successfully divert offenders from prisons. However, the lack of consistent, unified management geared toward the achievement of clear and authoritative goals has most complicated efforts for total program success.

Specific problems addressed by this third annual evaluation are:

- (1) differentiating whether current rehabilitative services maximize the use of existing resources within the Probation/Parole system, other agencies and among private citizens;
- (2) determining whether managers maintain a consistent focus on the diversion center's major emphases of service delivery and continued supervision upon release from the center;
- (3) determining whether Centers are centrally located in areas where client population and adequate services are available;
- (4) determining whether follow-up research is sufficient to conclude that the program is successful in terms of long-term recidivism and employment;
- (5) determining the degree to which operational goals and performance measures are affected by Center administration;
- (6) determining any cost savings of the Centers on both an annual and day-to-day basis;

- (7) determining the success rate of past years' clients with emphasis on rearrest, reconviction, and disposition.

## BACKGROUND ANALYSIS OF FY76-77: DIVERSION CENTERS

### Adjustment Centers

The Adjustment Center Program appeared to be successful in FY76-77, at least in terms of operating a logically sound and potentially effective pilot effort. The initial concept was to effectively use residential diversion centers in a manner which would: (a) prove a low risk to the community and (b) operationally prove cost effective. A resident would, while at the center, be provided: (1) the opportunity to become involved in a number of structural rehabilitative experiences; (2) a period of adjustment; and (3) a reprieve from incarceration as motivation to lead a crime-free life in the future. All centers appear to have been diligent in these efforts. If the low risk and cost effectiveness criteria can be met, DOR and local governments may move to expand this mode of diversion from incarceration.

The second year findings revealed:

1. enrollments exceeded projections for all Centers;
2. graduations exceeded projections for each Center;
3. each Center averaged less than one escape per month;
4. each Center attained 85% employment during FY77;
5. revocations decreased in the second year of operations, probably as a result of more rigid in-house disciplinary procedures.

### Restitution Centers

Restitution Centers must by their very design be located within the community in which victims and compensating action can come together. Restitution Centers' initial development included the same purposes as the

Adjustment Centers. Additionally, they have the purpose of providing monetary and service-oriented restitution to local citizens, businesses and other community agencies. When community involvement is lacking, problems arise and the Centers may cease to be effective as rehabilitative agents.

One important concept with the Restitution Program is offender reparation to the victim for losses and/or damages incurred by the victim. Current judicial practices rarely provide for interaction between the victim and the offender after acts have been committed. Earlier restitution programs in Georgia piloted offender-victim conferences, but no plans exist at present for the victim to be the determining factor in the use of monetary or symbolic restitution.

Operational goals that were adopted for FY76-77 are explained in the following sections:

Goal 1. Open three residential restitution shelters with capacities between 20 and 40 clients each in September, 1974 and one shelter within the same capacity range in April, 1975 (p. 54, budget narrative, grant application).

**Attainment:** Openings of the centers in Albany, Macon, and Rome which were scheduled to begin operations September 1, 1974, were delayed between 30 and 75 days. The Atlanta Center--scheduled to open April 1, 1975--opened April 30, 1975.

Goal 2. Provide an alternative to incarceration for both the Courts and the Board of Pardons and Paroles (p.67, grant application).

**Attainment:** Placements were received from both the Courts and the Board of Pardons and Parole. Of the 400 offender participants, approximately 80% were from the Courts and 20% from the Board. Problems of slow caseload growth, personnel related problems, conceptual problems and operational indifferences minimized any accomplishments in this area.

Goal 3. To divert 275 offenders during the 22 months of program operation (October, 1975 grant amendment).

Attainment: The program was highly successful with its revised goal of 275 offender placements, down from 600 originally, achieving 1½ times the adjusted goal with 400 offender placements.

Goal 4. To save \$592,900 as a result of program diversion (same as Goal 3).

Attainment: This was another downward revision in the goals originally projected savings of \$2,064,000 (grant narrative, p.55). Utilizing the mathematical formula used in the October 1975 grant amendment, no real dollars were saved as average daily program costs far exceeded those same costs for prison. In FY75 and FY76 the program's average daily costs were \$24.68 and \$11.99, respectively, while prison costs were \$8.99 and \$8.77, respectively. However, if a relative cost effectiveness approach is used, cost savings potential totals \$4,108 per diverted offender with comparable sentences per fiscal year.

Goal 5. To successfully graduate 60 percent of all offender participants (performance budgeting material submitted to OPB, October 27, 1975).

Attainment: Sixty-one percent of all offenders released from the program were successfully terminated.

Goal 6. Assure victim reparation through the payment of restitution either actual or partial cash or symbolic restitution (pp. 68-69, grant application).

Attainment: Of the \$207,567 awarded victims, only \$54,828 was repaid. Symbolic restitution was assigned to 157 offenders, most of whom were parolees. Program participants reportedly performed 3,215 hours of compulsory public service as symbolic restitution.

Goal 7. To test the effectiveness of Intensive Probation/Parole supervision and restitution payment on offender success/failure in the program and after release (p.68, grant application). The Intensive Probation/Parole Supervisor was assigned to the center initially to do probation supervision and counseling.

**Attainment:** The framework in which Intensive Probation/Parole Supervisors performed their duties was different from traditional models because little or no on-street supervision of the offender occurred; it had little or no impact on offenders. Pearson correlation revealed no significance related to success or failure based on restitution payment.

**Goal 8.** To measure citizen participation in terms of the use of one-to-one volunteers with each offender, in job placement and in the use of VISTA volunteers (p.68, grant application).

**Attainment:** Only 23 percent of the offenders served were paired with a citizen volunteer at program entry; 22 percent of all offenders were paired at their release from the program. We were unable to identify any job placements developed by volunteers. VISTA volunteers were very active in centers and performed many tasks well. However, the reason most often reported in 69 percent of the cases for lack of job placements was "volunteer not available." The low level usage of community resources was an issue raised in the program's interim evaluation which continued throughout the grant period.

## Administration

The Facility Manager of the diversion center reports directly to his/her District Director, and therefore very little contact or communication is generated directly to the administrators in the Probation Division in Central Office. There were no major problems reported in overall center administration. Both Facility Manager and Senior Counselor believed that the only problems per se in administration centered around staff shortages and spending, and in some cases the physical building. Each of these areas will be addressed in a separate section. Administratively, the Facility Manager felt that the centers were operating both effectively and efficiently, even based on current staff, population, and budget.

### Adequacy of Center Staff

Staff adequacy varied among the diversion centers. In Adjustment Centers, staff allocation seemed adequate with 14 positions. Restitution Centers' staff appeared far less adequate with eight positions, especially with three (3) of those centers having 1 or more vacancies at the time of the evaluator's visit. It should be noted that populations of centers do not vary substantially as might be expected with obvious differences among allotted staff positions.

Adding to the contrast, Adjustment Centers were using either interns, part-time-time (6 month) CETA positions, volunteers, and combinations of the above. Ironically, the centers with more adequate staffing also had these extra "positions" available, while understaffed centers reportedly were unable to find community support.



Adjustment and Restitution Center capacities are 40 and 30 offenders respectively. Major differences are also evident in programs and opportunities available at the Centers, especially in the amount of one-to-one counseling actually performed by the treatment staff. Treatment programs are important but in some of the centers they have been sacrificed for a higher priority, security. Staff members do not appear to be available to conduct the desired and much needed treatment programs.

In addition, the smaller staffs encounter problems in being able to provide treatment programs or 1-1 personal consultations in late evenings. Counselors hours are almost always the 8-5 p.m. or 9-5 p.m. shift, while most residents are working or sleeping during the day if they work at night. These day shifts compel the Correctional Officer on duty at night to be available for personal or social conversation and guidance if the need arises.

#### Staff Orientation Procedures

There are no written guidelines for orientation of new staff. Each center discussed with a new staff member the duties and responsibilities of the position, introduced the new employee to other staff and his/her immediate supervisor, and discussed the work hours/schedule. No mention was made of having a previously developed work outline prepared for the new employee, even though the Facility Managers were aware of a new employee's arrival date. Consequently, it appears evident that a new employee is hired without any concrete direction or guidelines to follow for basic and routine tasks.

The evaluator suggests that written guidelines be developed for treatment staff, for clerical staff and for security staff. This would

provide for the identification of basic questions relating to the job and would provide a framework for becoming acquainted with the new position. It would provide the employee with clear ideas of performance expectations and overall responsibilities. Additionally, this guide would be a reference for stimulating basic questions that have not been initially addressed. Suggestions for guidelines include but should not be limited to the following items:

- A) Merit System Title and Center Title
- B) Duties and Responsibilities with appropriate timetables, dates, contact persons, etc.
- C) Immediate Superior (if other than Superintendent)
- D) Other responsibilities indirectly related to position title
- E) Local resources and contact people with phone numbers, addresses, etc.
- F) Work Schedule (hours, shifts, etc.)
- G) Orientation and In-Service Training Plan
- H) Program of gradual orientation to Rules and Regulations, DOR Procedures, and Divisional Practices

#### Treatment Qualities

Facility Managers varied in regard to personal qualities expected in hiring new staff people. In addition to the academic requirements stipulated by the Merit System, the following is a comprehensive list of qualities desired (not in priority order) when interviewing prospective candidates for diversion centers:

- A) Job dedication
- B) Proper dress
- C) People oriented personality
- D) Personal philosophy on counseling techniques

- E) Patience
- F) Person who can endure pressure
- G) Local resident for stability
- H) Correctional officer or counseling background
- I) Knowledge of testing procedures
- J) Job commitment
- K) Good communication skills
- L) Coordinating skills
- M) Good team worker
- N) Accountability oriented

Finally, special emphasis is currently being given to treatment qualities when hiring new diversion center staff. Although the majority of center directors expressed a number of the qualities listed, concern was evident regarding the high rate of staff turnover in diversion centers. They felt that in addition to Merit System requirements, other personal qualities must be addressed, such as Items A, D, F, G, J, and M especially. Perhaps with a stronger emphasis on securing employees who are both qualified for and personally committed to the job, staff turnover in State Diversion Centers will begin to decrease.

### Clients

Residents (clients) at diversion centers are received in three (3) different ways: (a) by center intervention after the judge has sentenced the offender to prison; (b) by Probation Officers selecting revokees and offenders already probated by the judge to the center, and (c) by center staff making selections from the Arraignment Calendar before court day. Differences exist among centers' directors regarding the best method for

use in a particular center. However, of the 10 diversion centers in operation, the overall "preferred method" by Facility Managers, District Directors, and center staff is method A: center intervention after the offender has been sentenced to prison and is waiting for transportation to a designated prison.

Method A: Center intervention at post sentencing of the offender. Even though this method is most preferred by center directors it is definitely not the most widely used. Method A, as perceived by the majority of staff and District Directors, would have the greatest impact on the resident's success and on potential failures or recidivists. It is felt by staff that since the majority of offenders are first offenders and have not been incarcerated, being sentenced to prison and then "saved" by the center is "a blessing in disguise." Therefore, the offender knowing that he was going to prison creates a severe psychological motivation to strive for success at the center, at least more so than he would have had he been probated directly to the center.

Since the offender is not provided an opportunity to select prison or the diversion center, he cannot attribute his good fortune to either his attorney or himself, nor can he feel that the center is only used as a scare tactic. Method A of receiving clients leaves no doubt in the offender's mind that he was going to prison, it obviously offers him a second chance at a crime free life, and possibly provides a strong incentive to be successful at the diversion center. Method A clearly communicates to the client and to the courts that the center is diverting offenders from prison, thus helping to alleviate the overcrowded prison conditions and possibly salvaging the human potential that is often wasted in prison.

Method B: The Probation Office has principal control over the selection of clients for the Center. Offenders already on regular probation are revoked and recommendations are made for selected individuals to reside at the center. Offenders who were released from the center but are still on probation may also be revoked to the center, thus providing them yet another opportunity to lead a crime free life. Offenders who are in the court for the first time with non-violent and non-sex-related offenses are selected and recommended by the Probation Officer to reside at the center. Recommendations generally are accepted by the judge. In only exceptional cases (such as Rome), are post-sentencing techniques exercised with Method B and this is with the cooperation of one judge--not all judges--in Rome.

Method B includes pre-sentence investigations (PSI) on some offenders but not all. This method does not allow major input in the selection of offenders by center staff and no PSI's are conducted by center staff. There is little opportunity to acquire a better understanding of the offense and personality of the offender before making a recommendation for his acceptance into the center.

Probation is not a diversion from incarceration. Center staff expressed the opinion that the centers are used as a "dumping ground" for as many offenders as the center can accommodate (to keep the center operating at capacity). One can find violent and sex-related offenders in the centers because of the lack of input by center staff into the selection procedures. In Method B offenders are selected by Probation Office staff to reside at the diversion center. It is the selection method most often utilized. It is not truly an alternative to prison because most often the offenders are not sentenced to prison nor did they

have any previous idea they might be sentenced to prison.

It is appropriate to emphasize here that the interviews with residents confined by Method B were unfruitful. Ninety (90) such residents were interviewed throughout the state, and most felt that the center was used as a "scare tactic" and they would never have been sent to prison. No resident who was probated to the center viewed it as an alternative to prison. Residents' comments will be discussed in a later section.

Method C: Center staff select candidates for the center from court calendar before arraignment day. Selections made are discussed with attorney or Public Defender (PD), Prosecuting Attorney (PA), District Attorney (DA), and client in a joint meeting. In some cases, however, the client is omitted from the meeting and after confirmation is given to center staff--either PD, attorney, or staff informs the client of the decision to send him to the Center as opposed to the work farm, prison, or regular probation.

The method of informing the resident varied with each case. Method C is restricted to the Atlanta Restitution/Gateway Adjustment Centers. All clients come directly from the Fulton County Courthouse. The relationship with the Fulton County Probation Office is limited to the discharge of a resident to that office; or when an offender is revoked, the Probation Office contacts the diversion center to pick the offender up from jail. The Facility Manager, Senior Counselor or designee makes all decisions regarding client selections for Atlanta and Gateway Centers with the exception of revocations. Even so, with Method C there are no pre-sentence investigations conducted.

This method cannot be seen as an alternative to incarceration because (a) the offenders are not sentenced to prison before the center accepts

them, (b) offenders are not told they were going to prison, and (c) often these cases are not felony cases and would not have been sent to prison anyway. Residents confirmed this statement and, when interviewed at Gateway and Atlanta Centers, they viewed the centers as "a place to stay until the fines and restitutions are paid" or "a place to cool off and think for a few months." None of the 10 residents interviewed believed they would have gone to prison if it had not been for the centers' existence and input into their cases. When pressed for a comment on the anticipated outcome of their cases, all believed that they would have either been fined and sent home, placed on regular probation or a combination of both.

### Client Intake Procedures

Intake procedures for residents at diversion centers are in three categories as explained in Methods A, B, and C. The most effective method found to date is Method A: Center intervenes in offender's case only after he has been sentenced to prison. While Methods B and C have been effective in operating the other diversion centers at or near capacity, they cannot be called true diversionary mechanisms. Method A further allows time for a thorough investigation to be conducted by the center and a joint decision made by center staff. Time is also allowed for all case materials to be viewed and analyzed unhurriedly. Even with all of this time to make a decision, there is no guarantee that all selections will be successful graduates of the center. However, Method B does decrease the chances of uncontrolled failures and revocations.

### Clients - Orientation

Residents' orientation to the centers was basically the same. Orientation procedures include (a) written guidelines on center rules and regulations; (b) a visual examination and medical questions, both recorded on a medical form; (c) vocational and psychological testing and evaluation reports; (d) room assignment; (e) inventory of personal belongings; (f) an oral explanation regarding work procedures; and (g) procedures on money management. Intake procedures are begun on the first day at the center but can last as long as two weeks or more. These procedures provide ample opportunity for residents to become familiar with their new environment and begin adjustments to the center. Questions are entertained whenever a discrepancy arises on center rules and regulations.

### Clients' Diagnostics

Testing is done at some centers by a staff member while the Vocational Rehabilitation Center (VRC) performs some psychological testing for other centers. The testing is simple enough to do, but obtaining the evaluation reports is time consuming. This is especially the case with the psychological testing.

Some psychological evaluations are written for the center after the client has been tested and interviewed by DOR's Correctional Psychologist. Other psychological and vocational testing and evaluation reports are contracted through the VRC for diversion center clients. Both procedures have proven to be very time consuming. Even though the reports are delayed, the evaluations are in-depth and very impressive.

In summary, although orientation procedures are evident at each center, residents did not verify their existence. Their lack of understanding



that the seven (7) procedures mentioned above are all orientative in nature is probably attributable to the lack of a structured orientation, lack of group orientation, and the fact that the procedures are drawn out with no established completion dates. Some evaluations are so long in being received that the resident's release date is often rapidly approaching. Consequently, little in the way of formalized, structured diagnostic procedures is used. Residents simply do not view any of the intake procedures as orientative in nature except the discussion on center's rules and regulations.

### Rehabilitative Programs

Each diversion center is charged with the responsibility of providing rehabilitative treatment programs to all residents. The purpose of these programs is to provide opportunities for mental and emotional growth, for moral support, to improve existing or develop new skills and interests, to provide consumer and academic education and strengthen and improve their self-concept. Further purposes involve establishing positive work habits, accountability and creating an incentive to engage in full-time employment and a desire to lead a crime free life.

There were no written guidelines for the treatment staff. The number of programs developed was dependent upon the number of treatment positions and the imagination of individuals. In some cases, the treatment staff consisted of three or four team members. Although most centers claimed to have several functional programs, the programs cannot be documented by this evaluator. The kinds of programs available in diversion centers include:

1. Consumer Education
2. Counseling and Reality Therapy
3. Counseling and Life Coping Skills
4. Counseling and Work Ethic
5. Guides for Better Living
6. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED Preparation
7. Individual and Group Counseling
8. Religious Activities
9. Recreational Activities
10. Drug and Alcohol Treatment
11. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
12. Job Specialist and Assistance

The existence of these programs at each diversion center ranges from very few (2-4) to about half of those listed above. Obviously, centers with a staff of eight (8) or less are not expected to have six or more functional programs because the staff of 8 includes a Facility Manager, Accounting Technician, and Secretary, and these people do not supervise treatment programs. The staff would also not provide for effective functioning because the Counselor Aides only perform security duties. Moreover, time and staff are inadequate to provide the programs often considered appropriate to community corrections.

The most common programs in existence at diversion centers are Adult Basic Education and Alcohol/Drug Programs. In some centers, the Alcohol/Drug Program is a referral source and treatment is not available on the premises. The second most common activity is group counseling sessions. Consumer Education and Job Placement Services are rare and there is also a scarcity of recreational activities except for the usual playing cards, checkers, and billiards. The residents of some centers do not have even these minimal games with which to entertain themselves. Center Managers report that boredom often contributes to unacceptable behavior in residents at these centers.

## Treatment Staff Caseload Size

Caseload size is directly related to treatment staff size. At no centers do security staff perform structured counseling activities, but rather provide information to clients on an as-needed basis. Correctional Officers per se are almost always in a center with a staff of 14. In the remaining centers--those with a staff of 8-- the Counselor Aides are required to perform security functions in the absence of allotted Correctional Officer positions.

In several centers, Counselor Aides perform the same responsibilities as Counselor I's. Some of these responsibilities include structured one-to-one counseling and organized group sessions. When Correctional Officers provide necessary counseling, an information record is given to the resident's counselor for proper documentation and recording in the offender's case record.

In centers with at staff of eight, the entire caseload is the responsibility of the Senior Counselor. Where there is a staff of 13+, the caseload is equally divided among the treatment staff. In only one instance did this procedure vary. At this particular center, it was reported that the entire treatment staff reviews all case material during the first week the resident arrives. During orientation each treatment person has the opportunity to get to know the resident. The treatment person who feels he/she has the most to offer the resident volunteers to accept the resident on his or her caseload. This method, of course, is monitored to avoid under-utilization of any one counselor.

### Court Responsibilities

Court duties are primarily the responsibility of one staff member-- usually the Facility Manager or Senior Counselor. At Cobb, where post-sentence intervention is the rule instead of the exception, only one person is responsible for all client selections and investigations. Only in revocation cases is a Correctional Officer or Counselor Aide expected to attend court. The rule appears to be that a revokee's counselor carries out revocation procedures. Few centers reported any negative feedback with the use of several staff members in court. Once the judge is familiar with center staff, procedures run smoothly even with new employees.

### Case Recording System

Generally, case recording is the sole responsibility of the counselor. Even though Correctional Officers do counsel, it is most often unstructured and on an as-needed basis. The primary reason Correctional Officers engage in counseling is that in most instances the (CO) is the only one around when residents need assistance or guidance in late evening or night. Of the 10 Centers, only three centers' treatment staff (Gainesville, Cobb, and Athens) had split or rotating shifts to accommodate this problem. Whether or not this method is continued is contingent upon retaining adequate staff, but it is one representative aspect of a functional program which attempts to provide needed services to the offenders.

At the time of the evaluator's visit, all centers were midstream in either receiving training on the new case recording procedures or initial implementation of the training already received. Consequently, the files were neither complete, up-to-date nor had the new case recording procedures

been fully implemented. All training was scheduled to be completed by June 30. It is anticipated that the files will be complete and the new case recording procedures implemented before the evaluator's next routine visit.

### Counseling More Generally

The counseling phase of center operations is suffering. There are no structured individual counseling sessions. Centers report these sessions difficult to implement because of varied work schedules of residents. Counselors therefore conduct only group treatment sessions at night. There is minimum 1-1 counseling performed. Albany Restitution has the unique procedure whereby the counselor conducts privately scheduled interviews with residents at least four times during his first week at the center. Case recording documented and verified the regularity of these sessions. In this way, the resident is not left to wonder, guess, or be misinformed on Center operations or his accountability to the center.

In conclusion, counseling in diversion centers lacks structure and effectiveness. There appear to be no in-depth personal counseling activities except in crisis situations. Interviews with residents confirmed the lack of personal counseling techniques, and many professed that the only time they (clients) saw their counselors was when they sought them out. Typically, this contact occurred once per week to secure a pass or to get an allowance.

If residents are to be guided, motivated, and supported in dealing with their personal, emotional, and psychological weaknesses, interpersonal communication must be established between the counselor and resident. This bond of trust, faith, and confidentiality is a key to motivating the client to maintain a positive attitude until positive behavior has become habitual.

## Use of Community and Public Resources

Local private and non-profit organizations are supportive in all areas. These resources are in abundance and should be sought for support to the centers. Private organizations such as churches, local Jaycee Chapters and social clubs have donated clothing, tools, books, games, and food in some instances to centers. On holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, one or more of these organizations have been known to cater dinners and provide entertainment for parties. Public relations is important for the success of any program and diversion centers are no exception.

Supportive services, public and private agencies, are available to all diversion centers. In some centers, however, few of either are effective, and there is a lack of support from any resource. Initiative in this case is the responsibility of the center, and several centers have not shown great initiative to date. Resources must be contacted and communications must be established before support for the center can be forthcoming.

## Supportive Services

### State Agencies

Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor, and Mental Health are the agencies within state government that are supportive in treatment and rehabilitative services. Vocational psychological evaluations and reports are often prepared, and other needs such as medical and clothing are obtainable for the diversion center. Vocational Rehabilitation is reported as an excellent resource for almost all needs. Alcohol and Drug

Centers have been established as resources of utmost importance by the Centers. Although alcohol and drug abusers are among the least desired offenders, diversion centers have had limited success with these cases.

Other public agencies are supportive to centers dependent upon the local center's needs and level of effort in building cooperative relationships. DOL was reported as the least supportive. Employment was almost always secured by public relations contact with local businesses. Hiring offenders has become a common practice with some businesses, and their efforts are being utilized by the diversion centers. The diversion center programs must be positively publicized to encourage successful attitudes to develop among staff and positive interest to develop within the community.

#### Physical Facilities

Some of the diversion centers are in deplorable condition. The evaluator feels that the most comfortable and adequate quarters are those centers housed in former motels where each room has only one (not more than two) residents. In some of these cases, office space is very limited but acceptable.

Albany, Augusta, and Gainesville Centers living quarters are the exceptions. They seem to be beyond repair or renovation, and they should be replaced immediately! These centers were assessed and divisional staff determined that renovations were needed. The rooms have no closets, tables, chests, or cabinets for storage of clothing. Therefore, the rooms are cluttered with clothing strewn all over.

In addition to these three centers, Athens also need storage spaces and more adequate showers and commodes. Presently, Athens has only three showers and two face bowls for a population of 40, and most residents

work during the day and will all use these facilities in the early morning and late night.

Further, none of these centers has passed minimum fire inspection to date because of these conditions. At the writing of this report, plans are under way to eliminate deficiencies in these three centers by either renovation of the present facility or relocation to a new house. Monitoring of these situations should be undertaken and reported to top administrative levels to insure that follow-through is not delayed or abandoned.

#### Business Management

Each diversion center has a business manager on the premises, but some business managers have a secretary while others do not. The difference in the number of positions at each center is attributed to specified positions requested in the initial grants for center operations. To date, this difference still exist, but plans have been made to upgrade diversion center staffs to an adequate number to operate the centers at their maximum offender capacity and maximum staff workload.

Business managers are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of center operating budgets and individual residents' salary disbursements. They are further responsible for daily posting of bills, check writing, approving residents' allowance, and disbursing funds for residents' emergency needs as well. Emergency needs for the center are approved in-house if the purchase is \$100.00 or less. Purchases above \$100.00 must be processed through Probation Division budgetary procedures.

Each business manager is usually audited every six months. A letter of the auditor's findings is sent to the center outlining weaknesses or



inappropriate techniques or methods being used and possible recommendations to alleviate the weakness or modify existing procedures. In turn, the Facility Managers or Accounting Technician is advised to respond to the auditor's feedback (using the Clearance Report) and show compliance with recommendations made by the auditor. In most instances, this practice was evident. Most of the negative findings related to inappropriate bookkeeping methods and techniques being used by the Accounting Technician. These methods and techniques could easily be corrected by either center staff or the Accounting Technician, and the Clearance Report stated which procedures had been implemented. General comments by the auditor most often noted discrepancies related to procedural changes rather than fiscal mismanagement.

Accounting Technicians were not experiencing any major deficits toward the latter part of FY77-78. Where deficits were obvious, staff reported the transfer of funds already approved to clear these deficits. These transfers had already been cleared through the District Director and the Probation Division prior to the evaluator's visit.

#### A Summary of Interviews With Diversion Center Residents on Various Areas of Center Operations

Ten residents were interviewed at each center. Questions asked were related to how the residents arrived at the center, center operations, and their overall impressions of the diversion center. (Ninety residents, 10 per center (except Thomasville), were randomly sampled from each of the nine diversion centers) The evaluator used a questionnaire developed by the Probation Division for the interview. Each resident was interviewed in private and individually by the evaluator, Mrs. R. L. Okpara,

Ms. Susan Neugent, Emory University Intern, and on occasion Mr. G. T. Flowers, Senior Operations Analyst. The interview began by explaining the reasons for the questions and by asking for the residents' honest and personal opinions on each question.

### Purpose of the Center

The residents responded to all the questions asked. Everyone had a general idea of the purpose of the diversion center but specific opinions varied: "to make offenders responsible, to help us manage our money, a rehabilitation place, to help straighten me out so I will stay out of trouble, provides me one last chance to help myself, and to provide educational opportunities." As one would expect, very few of the residents except those at the Cobb Center believed that it was used as anything other than a scare tactic to make them pay their fines and restitution. Few believed that they were going to prison in the first place.

### Orientation

At no center except Cobb was there truly an "orientation process." At Cobb, the residents were oriented to the center in a structured process, given maintenance details, and tested before they are allowed to go to work. This process involved two weeks prior to seeking employment. At the other diversion centers, the orientation process was at best skimpy and was not conducted in such a structured fashion. The major goal in all centers is employment, but few appreciated the need for a combination of employment, rehabilitation and treatment, and counseling services integrated into an overall program.

### Profile of Residents

The interviews included white and black residents, first offenders and recidivists, younger (17) and older residents (66). Educational level attained ranged from fourth grade to college; one resident had even obtained a law degree.

Based on interviews, the offense category was varied and included first offense non-child support, theft by taking and theft by conversion, drug sales and possession, burglary, probation revocation, driving under the influence, and forgery. The majority of the cases were reportedly first offenders.

Type of sentence was not so varied as offense category. Of those residents who were actually sentenced to prison before acceptance into the center (15), sentences usually varied from two-to-five years with remaining non-incarceration time to be served on probation. When the center intervened, the offender's sentence was amended to serve approximately three-to-four months at the diversion center and the remainder on regular probation. The residents were consciously aware of the possibilities of revocation and resulting consequences.

Residents who were probated directly to the center had similar offenses. Since the majority of the residents were not sentenced to prison first, no analysis of sentence length could be made with the entire sample. From the total sample (90 residents), only 13 had experienced prison life before. Needless to say, no resident had intentions of repeating that prison experience.

### Residents Knowledge of the Center

Few residents had any prior knowledge about the centers before their initial interview (or intake) with a staff member from the center. The residents who had heard about the center before arrival received their information from county jail inmates who either had been a resident at the center or had friends or relatives at the center previously. These few comments received from cellmates were generally negative, and each resident stated that the center had not turned out to be as negative as they had expected.

### Residents Opinion of Diversion Center Treatment Programs

Programs vary at each center. Only at the Cobb Center was a battery of tests administered to all residents. Other tests were administered by the Vocational Rehabilitation Center. Also, if proof could be provided of a high school diploma or equivalent, no tests were administered to these residents; however most of the residents were not high school graduates.

Because of this effort to identify needs, the majority of residents spoke favorably of the educational programs. The residents expressed optimistic opinions about receiving their GED and the opportunity to obtain more favorable employment. Also, for those who did not have a high school diploma, GED classes were mandatory at most of the centers; at others employment took priority. If a resident's work schedule interfered with his scheduled GED classes, then that resident was exempted from the GED class.

Impressions of other programs such as Personal Development and Work Ethics were mildly favorable. The residents believed that these programs

were beneficial. However, they vehemently opposed such programs being mandatory requirements of each resident. The overall consensus was that those who wanted to attend should, but those that felt no need should not be required to attend these group sessions.

The counseling, both group and individual, left much to be desired according to residents interviewed. Center staff and residents alike agreed that they only saw each other for either an "informal rap session" or when a personal problem arose. Both counselor and resident felt that regularly scheduled appointments would probably be a waste of time and would tie up the staff member's time. Arranging a schedule to accommodate the counselor's work hours and the client's work schedule has often proved unrealistic, especially for residents who work at night. Consequently, the present situation is that the resident contacts the counselor for answers to questions, suggestions on personal matters, and guidance in some situations, but there are not structured schedules for person-to-person counseling.

### Employment

Job placement (initially) did not prove to be a problem at any center. What appeared to be a problem was the lack of jobs with at least minimum wage or above. Most jobs were meager ones which residents had to accept in order to work and maintain their room and board and food fees. Jobs, just to work, were very easy to obtain if one really wanted a job, reported the staff and residents.

About one-third of the residents were employed when they arrived at the center. After orientation (specifically Cobb) the residents were usually reinstated with their former employers. Those residents who were

not employed at the time of arrest were usually in jail waiting for court day. These residents found it mandatory to accept immediate employment, especially the ones who had huge (\$500-2500) fines which supposedly had to be paid before their release from the center.

More than half of the residents had plans to change employment upon release from the diversion center. The reason for changing employment was most often salary and relocation to another county. Those residents who had no intentions of changing jobs were usually a resident of that county.

There is very little job training in the centers. Most of the jobs were secured as a result of the resident's efforts and in other cases from leads from the acting Job Specialist. The "leg work" was totally left up to the resident. In the two centers where there is a counselor or an intern performing duties of the Job Specialist, informal talks are given regarding proper dress, how to conduct an interview, and punctuality; some centers did drive the resident to and from job interviews.

#### Overall Impressions of Diversion Centers

Most of the residents' comments were favorable concerning the centers. The residents at the Cobb Center who were sentenced to prison before center intervention had prior negative impressions about the Center. After a few weeks at the center, however, the negative impression was not sustained.

Offenders at other centers had varying responses. The most common response when asked if he felt he would have gone to prison had the center not accepted him, the answer in the majority of the cases was "No". Some of the residents believed that the center was used as a scare tactic to make them believe they might have been sent to prison. None of the residents were aware of any other offender who had been sentenced to prison

first and then accepted by a diversion center, therefore they had no reason to think otherwise. In these instances the residents were informed of existing practices of past sentence intervention techniques by diversion centers.

Another widely expressed comment concerned inconsistent discipline procedures. The major concern was the inconsistency among disciplinary practices with Correctional Officers when administering punishment for similar crimes. Residents reported this discrepancy, but the evaluator can only recommend that appropriate staff investigate discipline procedures and follow up on any discrepancies concerning favoritism or otherwise biased punishment. It appeared to this evaluator that the circumstance would dictate the type and intensity of punishment. At this writing, new discipline procedures have been established and should alleviate some of these related disciplinary problems.

#### Food Service

Food service is available in all but two diversion centers: Albany and Macon. These two centers have meals available by contracting with local restaurants for food preparation, food delivery or pick-up.

In Rome and Gainesville Centers, the Morton's Frozen Food Plan is used. Frozen meals are purchased from the company and fresh breads and beverages are often prepared to complement the meal. A problem cited with the frozen dinners is lack of variety. Both centers reported that the Master Menu contained too many peas and carrots. At Rome, however, this was corrected by widening the variety of dinners and better planning of meals. Gainesville expressed no particular method of changing the menu.

At the Athens, Atlanta, Cobb, Gateway, and Augusta Centers, food is prepared in-house. Menus are planned and prepared by an assigned Cook. Generally, meals are acceptable. However, complaints ranged from the food being tasteless to poor preparation of foods. The most frequently expressed grievance about food prepared in-house is the inability to purchase from the open market. Institutional purchasing limits meat and vegetable type and variety in preparation.

The Macon and Albany Centers contract for food preparation with local restaurants. In Albany, the food is delivered; in Macon residents dine at the restaurant. In Albany, funds are paid for the food whether a resident eats a meal or not which can become expensive for a night worker who is away for the evening meal and sleeps through breakfast and lunch meals. In an exceptional case such as this, the resident is responsible for obtaining food through personal funds. In Macon, residents are provided meal coupons which are validated at each meal. At the end of the month, all meals are computed for payment. Established amounts prevent over-spending for each resident.



MEASUREMENT OF OBJECTIVES  
FY 77-78 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Introduction

All tables on performance measures are discussed separately for Adjustment and Restitution Centers as previously stated. Differences between budget and staff make this separation imperative for analysis and clarification purposes.

ADJUSTMENT CENTERS

Athens Center  
Augusta Center  
Cobb Center  
Gainesville Center  
Gateway Center

## MEASUREMENT OF OBJECTIVES

### Fiscal Year Accomplishments

#### Introduction

Before reorganization, diversion centers were called Adjustment Centers; their mission was to provide the courts with an alternative to incarceration and to provide the offender with an opportunity to "straighten out" in a place designed for "adjustment" expectations. Later, emphasis was concentrated on fines and the offender's reparation to the victim--money, symbolic restitution, or community restitution--for his crime. The functioning program became more and more like that of a restitution center. So although initially offenders accepted into Adjustment Centers did not pay or perform restitution services to their victims, a different situation awaited those who followed them.

When restitution centers came into being, supportive judges stipulated the amount of fines and restitution to be paid by the offender. Program focus can easily center on the collection of money and the maintenance of employment necessary to make restitution payments. Restitution Shelters in Georgia reflected an emphasis shift when they were implemented in 1972. Small staffs, little programmatic content, and difficulty in clearly demonstrating diversion from incarceration characterized these "alternatives" to adjustment centers.

The staff difference between the Adjustments and Restitution Centers is 14 and 8 respectively. The deficiency lies in providing adequate counseling programs as opposed to providing adequate 24-hour security coverage at the centers. Some of the centers find means to help sustain the pressures and demands of inadequate counseling personnel by recruiting

interns, volunteers, and other professionals. These volunteers are academically and intellectually qualified to provide personal and social counseling and guidance to the offenders.

Each Adjustment and Restitution Center is evaluated on performance measures set forth in earlier grants and grant amendments. These measures are:

- A) Number enrolled during FY77-78
- B) Number successfully graduated during FY77-78
- C) Overall operating capacity
- D) Percent escaped during 77-78
- E) Percent revoked during 77-78
- F) Total amount collected in fines (Restitution)
- G) Total amount collected in restitution
- H) Total hours worked by residents

The following tables reveal levels of attainment in each of the performance areas for all Adjustment Centers.

In summary, Georgia's halfway houses are alternatives to incarceration for offenders. Only male probationers are accepted with special emphasis given to type of crime (i.e., the Centers primarily accept all non-violent and non-sex related offenses). Before reorganization, centers were classified into two categories: Adjustment and Restitution. Since reorganization all ten centers are classified under one category, diversion centers. Centers now show staffing disparities but operate under a common set of performance goals.

### Performance Measures

#### Enrollment

Each center's enrollment and successful terminations were projected in advance by the Community-Based Services Division. These projections were based on previous years' successes and failures in overall center operations. Success in enrollment area is contingent upon the center

experiencing a successful year in its judicial and probation office liaison function. Table 1 shows projected enrollments for each center for FY77-78.

TABLE 1  
Projected Enrollments for Each Center, FY77-78

Athens	114
Augusta	132
Cobb	114
Gainesville	105
Gateway	108
TOTAL PROJECTED ENROLLMENT	573

Table 2 shows the number of offenders enrolled by each center during the fiscal year:

TABLE 2

## ENROLLMENT DATA FOR ADJUSTMENT CENTERS

Number of Residents Enrolled by Center by Month  
Fiscal Year 1977-1978

Month	Athens	Augusta	Cobb	Gainesville	Gateway	Total
July	8	13	8	9	9	47
August	14	5	7	13	11	50
September	13	6	4	10	8	41
October	5	9	8	12	11	45
November	1	14	9	11	15	50
December	3	12	4	8	15	42
January	13	12	14	9	9	57
February	6	4	5	7	5	27
March	10	8	8	6	23	55
April	9	9	3	9	10	40
May	12	5	4	17	13	51
June	9	12	6	7	7	41
TOTALS	103	109	80	118	136	546

Source: Community Counselor Services Monthly Reports, FY77-78  
(Used for all tables).

Table 3 shows enrollment percent for the fiscal year for each center:

TABLE 3

Goal Attainment Adjustment Centers

Center	Projected Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Percent Attained
Athens	114	103	90%
Augusta	132	109	83%
Cobb	114	80	70%
Gainesville	105	118	112%
Gateway	108	136	126%
TOTALS	573	546	95%

Collectively, the Adjustment Centers reached the total projected enrollment (95%) for the fiscal year. As Table 3 indicates, Augusta and Athens fell slightly below enrollment projections while Cobb's enrollment was 30% lower than projected.

Center directors report several reasons for a decline in enrollment figures. The number of court days scheduled per week is a determining factor in addition to the type of cases scheduled for court. Diversion centers are selective in offense types and at times are limited in their selections. The number of court days scheduled per week determines the number of opportunities available for the selection process.

A second reason for low enrollment is the lack of bed space. If the center is operating at capacity with no possible terminations within a few weeks, full capacity eliminates the intake of new residents.

Along these same lines, the length of the offenders' time at the center can affect intake. When an offender's stay at the center is extended by 30 or 60 days, he occupies a bed that otherwise would have been vacant at least one month ago. This reason also contributes to a low figure for successful terminations in one month and several successful terminations in another month.

A third possible reason for not reaching the projected enrollment is operating above capacity. At times when bed space is available, centers received clients almost daily. As this occurs in given month--such as Gateway in November and December--new residents must either be restrained the following months or continue to operate above capacity. The latter is not advisable if the center is to be effectively and efficiently operated.

A final reported reason for low enrollment is staff shortage. Staff shortage contributes to low enrollment in that when several positions are vacant at one time and available staff are utilized in priority areas, court liaison is possibly neglected for weeks at a time. In these instances, especially if the shortage continues for months, low enrollment is inevitable.

The Adjustment Centers, nonetheless, did reach overall enrollment projections (95%). Flexibility is to be expected in diversion centers' enrollment, and often matters relating to deficient areas cannot be rigidly controlled.



### Successful Completions

A successful completion is a resident who resides at the Center for a minimum of 120 days without any major infractions. When he completes the program, he is either transferred to another circuit or released on regular probation to the local Probation Office. As one part of being an alternative to incarceration, diversion centers are evaluated on the number of offenders who successfully complete the center program and are therefore not revoked and sent to prison. Table 4 shows the number of residents projected to successfully complete the diversion center program for the fiscal year.

TABLE 4  
PROJECTED SUCCESSFUL COMPLETIONS  
Former Adjustment Centers

Center	Projections
Athens	58
Augusta	66
Cobb	58
Gainesville	53
Gateway	54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>289</b>

Table 5 shows the number of residents who successfully completed the diversion program by month.

TABLE 5

Number of Residents Who Successfully Completed the Diversion Program

Month	Athens	Augusta	Cobb	Gainesville	Gateway	Total
July	9	4	5	7	9	34
August	9	5	10	9	9	42
September	8	15	4	2	10	39
October	4	7	12	5	6	34
November	1	6	3	7	7	24
December	12	6	5	3	10	36
January	9	0	6	1	4	20
February	4	4	5	7	2	22
March	1	9	9	9	10	38
April	1	6	5	3	6	21
May	7	10	5	6	7	35
June	3	2	10	5	2	22
TOTAL	68	74	79	64	82	367

Table 6 is a comparison between projected completions, actual completions and level of attainment for each center.

TABLE 6  
Percent of Attainment for Successful Completions

Center	Projected Completion	Actual Completion	Percent
Athens	58	68	117%
Augusta	66	74	112%
Cobb	58	79	136%
Gainesville	53	64	121%
Gateway	54	82	152%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>127%</b>

Overall successful completions = 127%

Successful terminations surpassed projections for Adjustment Centers by 26%. Individually, each center overwhelmingly surpassed the 100% projected completions and collectively obtained 95% enrollment also. Though shifts were eminent during some months in both categories, Adjustment Centers completed the fiscal year successfully in both enrollment and successful termination categories.

### Employment

A high priority of diversion centers is to maintain 95% employment of center residents. There will always be a certain number of residents unemployed at any given time. Contributing factors of unemployment are newly assigned residents, residents terminated by temporary jobs, and ill residents. Therefore, employment is computed using (a) total number of residents eligible for employment, and (b) total number of residents who are actually employed. Table 7 shows both categories (eligible for work/actually working) for each center with employment percentages for the fiscal year.

TABLE 7

Total Number of Residents Eligible for Employment/Total Number of Residents  
Actually Employed: Employment Percentages for Fiscal Year, 1977-1978

Month	Athens	Augusta	Cobb	Gainesville	Gateway
July	48/47	40/32	38/36	27/27	39/39
August	52/52	40/38	32/32	23/23	38/38
September	51/51	25/25	32/32	37/35	33/33
October	42/40	26/26	26/26	36/36	28/28
November	35/35	27/26	32/32	40/38	36/33
December	33/30	34/30	31/31	33/32	37/34
January	31/28	43/42	32/31	31/31	32/32
February	26/26	39/37	31/31	30/29	35/35
March	29/28	38/36	30/30	23/23	29/26
April	36/34	34/34	27/27	27/27	37/36
May	41/41	29/29	24/24	34/34	37/36
June	39/36	33/33	19/19	34/34	40/40
TOTALS	463/448 97%	408/388 95%	354/351 99%	375/369 98%	421/410 97%

Total overall employment is 97%.

### Employment Eligibility

A resident has to be "eligible" in order to seek employment. Eligible refers, in some centers, to the resident having completed the orientation and testing process which usually requires two weeks. In other centers eligibility has not been defined since residents are strongly encouraged to seek (and assisted with) employment immediately upon intake. Therefore, eligibility, as understood by the evaluator, refers to the resident's physical capability of performing fulltime employment, and is "eligible" immediately upon intake at the center in most cases.

### Absconders/Escapes

Absconding, by definition, is to be absent from the center without official permission for an indefinite period of time. Escape, on the other hand, refers to leaving security supervision without official approval. Both have been used synonymously in the past; however, for purposes of this report statistics refer primarily to absconders. Only a minimum number of residents actually leave the center without official permission. The majority of residents who abscond sign out on a pass to go to work, to see a doctor, seek employment or a combination of any of the above and then never return to the center. Table 3 provides information on monthly absconders for each center during the fiscal year.

TABLE 8  
Absconders

Month	Athens	Augusta	Cobb	Gainesville	Gateway
July	2	3	2	1	1
August	1	1	0	2	0
September	5	4	1	2	3
October	1	2	0	0	2
November	1	0	0	6	1
December	0	1	0	4	2
January	1	2	4	2	4
February	3	2	1	2	6
March	0	2	0	0	3
April	4	3	0	0	2
May	2	2	2	2	0
June	2	4	0	3	2
TOTALS	22	26	10	24	26

Table 9 shows absconders for each center, annual enrollments, and average number of absconders based on annual enrollments.

TABLE 9  
Abscond Rate Based on Enrollment

Center	Enrollment	Absconders	Percent Absconding
Athens	103	22	21%
Augusta	109	26	23%
Cobb	80	10	12%
Gainesville	118	24	20%
Gateway	136	26	19%
TOTALS	546	108	20%

Total absconding rate, based on enrollments, is 20% overall for these centers for fiscal year 1978. Calculating an absconding rate with enrollments is done because residents who absconded were initially counted as newly assigned. This rate should therefore, represent a true picture of the in-house failure rate of those offenders who were assigned to the diversion center.

#### Revocations

Revocations are also monitored as a performance measure in diversion centers. Residents are revoked as a result of (a) continuously disobeying center rules and regulations; and (b) committing a felony offense. When revocation is inevitable, offenders usually are sentenced to prison.

Revocations can be controlled to a limited degree. For example, a resident is not revoked the first time he disobeys center rules. Other



disciplinary actions are taken such as extending the residents stay at the center, forfeiting a weekend pass, or assigning the resident extra in-house details. Other disciplinary actions are also exercised. Committing a felony offense while at the center (i.e., using or selling dangerous drugs) suggests automatic revocation. Table 10 is a comparison between FY77 and FY78 revocation rate for former Adjustment Centers.

TABLE 10  
Revocations Diversion Centers

Diversion Centers	Avg. I-H* Per Mo.	Annual In-House Revoked	Avg. Mo.** No. Rev.	Rev. Rate %
1976 - 1977				
Athens	29	26	2.16	7.5%
Augusta	38	27	2.25	5.9%
Cobb	31	14	1.16	3.8%
Gainesville	34	19	1.58	4.7%
Gateway	39	24	2.00	5.1%
1977 - 1978				
Athens	29	16	1.33	4.6%
Augusta	37	6	.50	1.3%
Cobb	29	8	.67	2.3%
Gainesville	35	26	2.17	6.2%
Gateway	38	10	.83	2.2%

\*Average In-House Per Month (population)

\*\*Average Number Revoked Each Month

Table 11 shows the FY76-77 and FY77-78 revocation rates.

TABLE 11  
Monthly In-House Revocation Rates In Diversion Centers

Centers	FY1977 Rates	FY1978 Rates
Athens	7.5%	4.6%
Augusta	5.9%	1.3%
Cobb	3.8%	2.3%
Gainesville	4.7%	6.2%
Gateway	5.1%	2.2%
OVERALL	5.4%	3.3%

Revocations decreased considerably, 2.1 points, from fiscal year 1977. This reduction can be attributed to several factors, though no one center provided any major causes for the decline. Revocations, as discussed earlier, result from the offender's lack of adjustment to diversion center rules and regulations and his committing felony offenses while at the center. The latter demands automatic revoking while the former provides some degree of flexibility in disciplinary procedures by center staff. These procedures can be assumed to be contributing factors to the decline in the need to revoke residents. Admission criteria could also be a contributing factor in the decrease in revocations. Alcohol and drug abusers have never been prime candidates for diversion centers, and whenever possible were not accepted. If the number of drug related offenders has been decreased, then it is likely to cause a decrease in

revocations. Centers have reported on several occasions that drug related offenders were most often revoked.

In conclusion, all centers (Adjustment) were successful as reported in their performance areas. Where projections were not met, these categories were not alarmingly low.

MEASUREMENT OF OBJECTIVES  
FY77-78 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RESTITUTION CENTERS

Albany  
Atlanta  
Macon  
Rome  
Thomasville\*

\*The Thomasville Center received its first resident in March, 1978, therefore it will not be addressed in this evaluation.

## Performance Measures

### Enrollment

Each center's enrollment and successful terminations were projected by the Community-Based Services Division. These projections were based on previous years' successes and failures in overall center operations. Success in this area is contingent upon the center experiencing a successful year in its liaison efforts. Table 12 shows projected enrollments for each center for fiscal year 1977-78.

TABLE 12  
Projected Enrollments for Each Center

Center	Projection
Albany	112
Atlanta	112
Macon	112
Rome	112
<b>TOTAL PROJECTED ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>448</b>

Table 13 provides enrollment percent for the fiscal year for each center:

TABLE 13

## Goal Attainment - Restitution Centers

Center	Projected Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Percent Attained
Albany	112	111	99%
Atlanta	112	74	66%
Macon	112	130	116%
Rome	112	79	70%
TOTALS	448	394	88%

## Enrollment Data for Restitution Centers:

TABLE 14

Number of Residents Enrolled by Center by Month  
Fiscal Year 1977-1978

Month	Albany	Atlanta	Macon	Rome	Total
July	7	6	7	5	25
August	14	6	7	5	32
September	9	11	11	5	36
October	14	8	8	3	33
November	6	6	17	7	36
December	7	7	20	8	42
January	12	5	13	9	39
February	5	7	11	7	30
March	9	10	17	8	44
April	11	0	10	5	26
May	12	5	6	4	27
June	5	3	3	13	24
TOTAL	111	74	130	79	394

Restitution Centers collectively did not reach 95% for the fiscal year. Albany and Macon Centers exceeded the 95% enrollment projection while Atlanta and Rome barely exceeded 50% enrollment.

In addition to possible causes of low enrollments already discussed under Adjustment Centers, Atlanta specifically encountered major



influencing difficulties during the latter half of the fiscal year. The Atlanta Center has been seriously understaffed. Five key positions were vacant all at the same time, creating frustrations and extra work for remaining staff. The Senior Counselor, Accounting Technician, and three Counselor Aide positions were vacant. Counselor Aides at the Atlanta Center perform security duties on 24-hour coverage. Understandably, the Facility Manager was also responsible for all treatment and case recording in addition to his usual responsibilities. The remaining two Counselor Aides, in concert with the Facility Manager, had to reorganize duties in order to facilitate 24-hour security coverage. These priorities naturally created difficulty in maintaining court duties and other administrative functions on the part of the Facility Manager. The Manager at the Atlanta Center has total responsibility for client recruitment from the courts, but priorities mandated that client recruitment be suspended during these critical months.

#### Successful Terminations

Enrollment outcome is clearly related to successful terminations. When enrollment is low, then successful terminations will also be low.

A successful completion is a resident who lives at the Center a minimum of 120 days without any major infractions. When he completes the program, he is either transferred to another circuit or released on regular probation to the local Probation Office. As an alternative to incarceration, diversion centers are evaluated on the number of offenders who successfully complete the center program (who are not revoked while at the center). Table 15 shows the number of residents projected to successfully complete the diversion center program during the fiscal year.

TABLE 15

## Projected Successful Completions Former Restitution Centers

Center	Projections
Albany	56
Atlanta	56
Macon	56
Rome	56
TOTAL	224

TABLE 16

Number of Residents Who Successfully Completed  
the Diversion Center Program

Month	Albany	Atlanta	Macon	Rome	Total
July	8	6	7	6	27
August	5	5	5	0	15
September	3	1	10	3	17
October	13	8	5	2	28
November	5	6	4	5	20
December	7	4	6	2	19
January	5	3	4	3	15
February	3	2	5	3	13
March	6	4	5	4	19
April	5	4	6	5	20
May	6	7	6	1	20
June	5	3	7	3	18
TOTAL	71	53	70	37	231

Table 17 is a comparison between projected completions, actual completions, and level of attainment for each center:

TABLE 17  
Percent of Attainment for Successful Completions

Center	Projected Completion	Actual Completion	Percent
Albany	56	71	127%
Atlanta	56	46 53	82% 95%
Macon	56	70	125%
Rome	56	37	66%
TOTAL	224	224 231	100% 103%

Overall, successful terminations exceeded projections. Individually, Atlanta and Rome were lower than expected. Atlanta's shortage is related to low enrollments which is attributed to problems encountered in staff shortage. Rome's low completion rate is reportedly attributed to the Center's use as a diversion center by local judges within the past 12 months. Previously, clients received were primarily candidates for prison and therefore were really "prime" offenders for success. The present offender who is made aware that he is being sentenced to the center instead of prison is a more difficult client. His stay at the center tends to extend beyond the normal four-to-five months. Though eventually successful, these extended residents decrease the number of monthly completions from the usual expected turnover every 120 days. A different

type offender is received whose admission constitutes a condition to probation rather than an alternative to prison. Consequently, center stay has increased from a minimum of 120 days to approximately six to eight months, with huge restitution and fines dictating longer sentences at the center.

### Employment

A high priority of diversion centers is to maintain 95% employment of center residents. Each center will always have some residents unemployed. New residents, residents terminated by temporary jobs, and ill residents comprise the unemployed category. Therefore, employment is computed using (a) total number of residents who are eligible for employment and (b) the number of residents who are actually employed. Table 18 shows both categories eligible for employment/actually employed for each center with employment percentages for the fiscal year.

TABLE 18

Total Number of Residents Eligible for Employment/Total Number of Residents  
Actually Employed; Employment Percentages for Fiscal Year, 1977-1978

Month	Albany	Atlanta	Macon	Rome
July	20/18	29/27	26/19	23/27
August	26/24	26/24	24/24	30/31
September	31/31	31/26	22/17	26/28
October	29/21	36/34	25/17	27/28
November	30/28	32/30	23/22	23/25
December	25/19	30/27	34/32	24/31
January	26/15	24/18	34/27	19/34
February	27/16	31/28	33/28	25/32
March	26/26	39/35	42/37	23/25
April	14/13	31/30	41/35	28/30
May	26/19	22/21	35/32	23/29
June	20/15	15/13	35/32	23/29
TOTAL	300/245 = 81%	346/313 = 90%	374/322 = 86%	344/292 = 84%

Total Overall Employment is 85%.

Several factors contribute to unemployment in diversion centers. Some are uncontrollable--i.e., bad weather, temporary jobs, sick residents, job locations, employment availability, revocations, etc.--while other factors can be controlled by residents, e.g., time devoted seeking employment, employment preference, salary preference, and efforts expended in job seeking. There were no significantly low employment

rates at the centers, and the overall employment rate of 85 percent does not create any alarming problems.

### Absconders/Escapes

Absconding by definition, is to be absent from the center without official permission for an indefinite period of time. Escape, on the other hand, refers to leaving security supervision without official approval. Both have previously been used synonymously; however, for purposes of this report statistics refer primarily to absconders. Only a minimum number of residents actually leave the center without official permission. The majority of residents either sign out for work, the doctor, a pass, to seek employment or a combination of any of the above, and the absconders never return to the center. Table 19 provides information on monthly absconders for each center during the fiscal year.

TABLE 19

### Abscond Rate Based on Enrollment

Center	Enrollment	Absconders	Percent Absconding
Albany	111	27	24%
Atlanta	74	17	22%
Macon	130	43	33%
Rome	79	19	24%
TOTAL	394	106	26%

Total absconding rate, based on enrollments, is 26 percent for the fiscal year for these four diversion centers. Absconding rates are based on enrollment and are computed in this manner because all residents who absconded were initially counted as newly assigned clients and should therefore be accounted for in the total figures.

TABLE 20  
Absconders

Month	Albany	Macon	Rome	Atlanta
July	2	4	1	2
August	3	2	0	1
September	2	3	2	2
October	0	2	0	1
November	1	3	2	2
December	1	8	0	1
January	2	5	1	1
February	1	4	2	0
March	4	2	3	2
April	2	3	3	3
May	6	5	1	2
June	3	2	4	0
TOTAL	27	43	19	17

Table 20 shows the monthly absconders for each center.



## Revocations

Revocations are also monitored as a performance measure in diversion centers. Residents are revoked as a result of (a) continuously disobeying center rules and regulations; and (b) committing a felony offense. When revocations are inevitable, offenders are usually sentenced to prison. Revocations can be controlled to a limited degree. For example, a resident is not revoked the first time he disobeys center rules. Other disciplinary actions are taken such as extending the resident's stay at the center, forfeiting a weekend pass, or assigning the resident extra in-house details. Other disciplinary actions are exercised. Committing a felony offense while at the center (i.e. use or selling of dangerous drugs) suggests automatic revocation. Table 21 is a comparison between FY77 and FY78 revocation rates for the former Restitution Centers:

TABLE 21  
Revocations - Diversion Centers

Diversion Centers	Av. I-H* Per. Mo.	Annual I-H* Revoked	Av. Mo.** No. Rev.	Rev. Rate
1976 - 1977				
Albany	24	11	.92	3.8%
Atlanta	28	11	.92	3.3%
Macon	25	20	1.67	6.7%
Rome	27	15	1.25	4.6%
1977 - 1978				
Albany	28	17	1.42	5.1%
Atlanta	24	11	.92	3.8%
Macon	31	26	2.17	7.0%
Rome	29	18	1.50	4.2%

\*Average In-House Per Month (population)

\*\*Average Monthly Number Revocations

TABLE 22  
Monthly In-House Revocation Rates In Diversion Centers

Center	FY77 Rates	FY78 Rates
Albany	3.8	5.1
Atlanta	3.3	3.8
Macon	6.7	7.0
Rome	4.6	5.2
Overall	4.6	5.3

NOTE: The Revocation Rates were calculated by dividing each diversion center's average monthly number of revocations by the average in-house population for each month.

SOURCE: Data from the Community Facilities Counselor Services Monthly Report, compiled by the Office of Research and Evaluation, July 7, 1978.

Revocations for these four centers increased slightly (0.7 percent) over FY77. While this increase is not alarming, it is evident in each center. No special problems were cited by center personnel as reasons for the increase, and no noticable shifts were found in the selection and disciplinary policies exercised by center staff.

#### Restitution

All diversion center residents were not originally intended to pay reparation to victims. Only former Restitution Centers were designed with this concept in mind. However, former Adjustment Centers at times receive clients with court orders to pay restitution, fines, and court fees.

Emphasis, in the past, has been to evaluate former Restitution Centers on the amount of monies collected contrasted with the amount former Adjustment Centers collected unofficially. Because of the original design, this report will separate the two centers for comparison purposes. Table 23 shows the two categories, Restitution and Court Costs and Fines for former Adjustment Centers. Table 24 shows the same categories for former Restitution Centers. Diversion Centers cannot control court orders for amounts of monetary restitution or offender type designated to pay restitution. Therefore, the following tables are presented only to emphasize another important aspect of the diversion center concept.

TABLE 23  
Distribution of Restitution  
Adjustment Centers

Center	Restitution	Court Cost & Fines
Athens DC	\$ 2,757.70	\$13,180.11
Augusta DC	4,754.02	13,093.40
Cobb DC	8,440.78	6,956.76
Gainesville DC	3,993.20	9,884.09
Gateway DC	1,857.90	1,325.00
TOTAL	\$21,803.60	\$58,219.47

TABLE 24  
Distribution of Restitution  
Restitution Centers

Center	Restitution	Court Cost & Fines
Albany DC	\$21,499.74	\$21,507.13
Atlanta DC	4,788.57	4,080.00
Macon DC	9,804.10	9,399.60
Rome DC	16,344.11	16,906.54
TOTAL	\$52,436.52	\$51,893.27
GRAND TOTAL	\$76,528.67	\$96,332.63

As stated previously, restitution payments were mandated for some diversion centers (Atlanta, Albany, Macon, and Rome).

Some diversion centers were designed for monetary and symbolic restitution (Albany, Atlanta, Macon, and Rome). Other centers (Athens, Augusta, Cobb, Gateway, and Gainesville) accepted the tasks as assigned by the courts for payment of restitution and fines. Payment of fines and restitution is another positive aspect of the diversion center concept, and is another avenue by which to gain community support for the diversion center. Further, these restitution acts are mandated by the courts and do not come as a result of any offender/victim negotiations. Therefore, the restitution concept promotes responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and behaviors.

## SUMMARY

### Performance Measures Diversion Centers

Each performance measure is monitored and evaluated annually in each diversion center. Performance measures are: number of new clients enrolled, number of successful terminations, percent employed, percent of revocations, and percent of absconders. These measures were discussed in two separate categories: former Adjustment Centers and former Restitution Centers, for purposes of analysis and clarification. Adjustment Centers were initially developed as an alternative to prison with emphasis on adjustment to the community and a crime-free life. Restitution Centers served the same purpose but additionally were designed to pay reparations to victims and to perform community services for non-profit organizations and individuals.

Adjustment Centers obtained a 95% enrollment while Restitution Centers obtained 87% for the fiscal year. Overall, enrollment for diversion centers reached 91 percent. Successful terminations for Adjustment and Restitution Centers were 126 percent and 90 percent respectively, for over 100 percent successful terminations overall. Employment reached 95 percent for former Adjustment Centers and 85% for Restitution Centers, for total diversion center employment of 91 percent. Annual percent of absconders was 19 and 17 percent for Adjustment and Restitution Centers with a 23% overall absconder rate for diversion centers. Revocations for diversion centers increased slightly (.7 percent) for former Restitution Centers while they decreased considerably (2.1 percent) for former Adjustment Centers when compared with FY76-77 revocation rates. Overall, performance measures for diversion centers verified success in each category. The rate of failure for diversion centers generally was 23%.

## DISPOSITION TRACKING FOR DIVERSION CENTERS GRADUATES

### Purpose of Tracking

Diversion center programs include treatment programs, referral services, counseling and guidance, and academic and vocational testing. These programs are provided to help the offender strengthen weak behaviors and to modify or change unacceptable behaviors which hamper positive mental and emotional growth. These services and programs, hopefully, will have an impact on the offender's post-release performance and encourage him to lead a crime free life. Therefore, the purpose of tracking diversion center graduates is to determine if the program had a positive impact on an offender's post-release behavior.

### Tracking Criteria

Initial preparation for the diversion centers annual report, FY78, suggested specific criteria to be considered: rearrest, reconviction, and incarceration. Rearrest, in this report, refers to the first arrest after release from the diversion center. Reconviction refers to the offender being convicted of a crime, and incarceration refers to the offender being put in prison as a result of his conviction. To account for all graduates, this report primarily concentrates on probationers who had clear dispositions after rearrest on GCIC data sheets. This information revealed if they have failed in the post-graduation Probation System and have been put in prison or jail.

The criteria used for tracking graduates is an arrest incident. The timeframe for examining the rearrest information is one year following successful completion of the center program. Arrest data are provided by the Georgia Crime Information Center. The tracking period for all graduates is FY76-77 for all centers.

Arrests are used as an initial criterion even though they are difficult to obtain with assurances of accuracy. We are concerned with any illegal acts the offender has committed during a specified period of time since release from the diversion center. Further, when dispositions are available, convictions and imprisonment can also be used to assess the severity of the act which the individual has committed.

#### The Use of Rearrest/Recidivism Data

Recidivism and rearrest information is often controversial. Recidivism as previously reported, referred only to the number of rearrested probationers regardless of the disposition of the cases. Concern over this matter has been expressed on several occasions by the Deputy Commissioner of the Probation Division and several diversion center personnel. These individuals have expressed a preference for information on the disposition of each case, charges dismissed, cases probated, fined, or offenders incarcerated.

One effort to further document recidivism information was an Assessment of Georgia's Diversion Centers Recidivism Rate by Josh S. Lanier dated June, 1978. This report was prepared to independently verify previous recidivism data. Mr. Lanier's findings revealed that seven percent of all program offenders have their probation revoked. In addition to adding this new criteria of outcome, Mr. Lanier reported that other recidivism data contained in the Evaluation Report were not a cause for concern unless single indicators at single points in time are used to make definitive judgments.

Recidivism may also refer to an offender's return to prison. Imprisonment rates suggest that a probationer has committed a serious offense.



Data are not scarce in this area; GCIC data and DOR Inmate Databases provide independent estimates of incarceration percentages. Refer to Table 26 for case dispositions.

## ANALYSIS OF REARREST DATA

### Rearrest Tracking

Successful graduates from diversion centers were tracked for post release performance. Five hundred eighty-seven graduates were tracked for FY77-78; four hundred and twelve were trackable (with GCIC records available). For rearrest purposes, offenders who were at risk for twelve months (384) were considered for this study; 134 (or 34.9%) were rearrested within twelve months. The arrest rate is the proportion of program graduates that were rearrested within the given time interval. Therefore, based on the number of at risk offenders, about 1 out of 3 were rearrested within twelve months. Table 25 provides one year rearrest tracking information on diversion center graduates.

Several variables may contribute to the high rearrest rate. We must state, however, that our interest lies in determining the performance of illegal activity, being aware that some men are falsely accused and that the arrest rate does not reflect all crimes that are committed. The ratio of unreported crimes to reported or actual arrests cannot be determined in this report. Variables contributing to high arrests range from a lack of well-organized and well structured center programs to an individual's innate criminal behavior. Lack of adequate "post graduate" probation supervision may be another factor related to high arrest. Still another factor, police harrassment, cannot be overlooked in the

Table 25. One Year  
Rearrest Tracking

ADJUSTMENT TYPE	<u>Total Number of Graduates</u>	<u>Total Number of Trackable Cases</u>	<u>Total At Risk for 12 Months</u>	<u>Number Rearrested Within 12 Months</u>	<u>One-Year Rearrest Rate (# arrested/# at risk)</u>
Athens	61	43	35	5	14.3%
Augusta	75	27	14	3	21.4%
Cobb	75	66	65	25	36.9%
Gainesville	31	23	22	7	31.8%
Gateway	<u>97</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>23</u>	29.9%
SUB-TOTAL	339	236	213	63	(29.6%)
RESTITUTION TYPE					
Albany	64	46	43	22	51.2%
Atlanta	70	53	51	23	45.1%
Macon	86	62	62	23	37.1%
Rome	<u>28</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>3</u>	20.0%
SUB-TOTAL	248	176	171	71	(41.5%)
GRAND TOTAL	587	412	384	134	34.9%

SOURCE: Office of Research and Evaluation, Georgia Department of Offender Rehabilitation.  
August 15, 1978.

Table 26. Case Disposition for One Year Tracking  
of Diversion Center Graduates Who Were Arrested

	<u>Total At Risk for 12 Months</u>	<u>Number Without Clear Disposition*</u>	<u>Number With Clear Dispositions**</u>	<u>Number Acquitted</u>	<u>Number Fined &amp;/or Probated</u>	<u>Number Jailed/ Imprisoned</u>	<u>Total Convi</u>
<u>ADJUSTMENT TYPE</u>							
Athens	35	2	33	0	0	3	3
Augusta	14	2	12	0	0	1	1
Cobb	65	10	55	7	3	5	8
Gainesville	22	2	20	0	1	4	5
Gateway	<u>77</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>
SUB-TOTAL	213	21	192	12	7	23	30
<u>RESTITUTION TYPE</u>							
Albany	43	8	35	0	5	9	14
Atlanta	51	0	51	3	8	12	20
Macon	62	13	49	0	1	9	10
Rome	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
SUB-TOTAL	171	21	150	3	16	31	47
GRAND TOTAL	384	42	342	15	23	54	77

SOURCE: Office of Research and Evaluation, Georgia Department of Offender Rehabilitation. August 15, 1978.

NOTE(\*): The "number without clear disposition" is the number of cases of arrested graduates for whom the courts have not reported judicial outcomes as of the GCIC report date. The "total convicted" plus the "number acquitted" plus the "number without clear disposition" equals the "number arrested within 12 months" in Table 2.

NOTE(\*\*): The "number with clear dispositions" is the denominator for all recidivism rates because it is the figure which accounts for all trackable and at risk graduates for whom a clearly unambiguous outcome is available. Offenders who have been arrested but the outcome is not reported are, therefore, taken out of the numerator and the denominator of conviction and incarceration rate computations.

arrest process of known offenders. Peer associations, past criminal history, and offense type are other indicators of reasons for possible arrests. No one factor has been discovered as the key to police arrests. More in-depth research and more intensive evaluations must be conducted to determine the key variable to our diversion center graduates' high rearrest rate.

### Convictions

Convictions based on arrests are analyzed for this report. Conviction categories were: acquittals, fines, probations, fine and probation, jail, county camps, and prisons. Eleven percent (42) of the total at risk (384) had no clear dispositions, 77 (22%) were convicted within a year of release. Twenty-three of these cases were probated or fined (7%). Fifty-four others resulted in jail or prison sentences (16%). Only 15 (or 4%) of the arrested cases were dismissed or found not guilty.

A clear indication of these convictions is the crime for which an offender was arrested and convicted. We found that of total arrests (134), one out of three were burglary offenses; about one out of four were larceny crimes, 6% were arrested on fraud or drug charges; robbery, vehicle theft, and DUI's comprised only three percent of the arrests made. The remainder of the convictions were widely distributed among arson, rape, murder, criminal trespassing, simple assault, child neglect, and probation violation. A great proportion of the crimes were non-violent burglary crimes, with larceny being the second highest crime committed and fraud and drug-related or drug possession crimes both held third place on the conviction list. The number of acquitted or dismissed cases is very low. We cannot, without courts information, determine the result of those

arrests without clear dispositions. They can be proven neither innocent or guilty. However, we could determine a one year conviction rate based on available data, of 22.5% for diversion center successful graduates. Table 27 provides information on case dispositions for all convictions.

### Incarceration

Incarceration includes sentencing to county jails, county camps, and county or state prisons. This study revealed a one year reconviction rate of 22.5 percent and a one year incarceration rate of 15.8 percent. This imprisonment rate represents the 54 offenders who were either jailed or imprisoned as a result of their arrest and conviction after release from the community diversion center. Only one out of five incarcerants were sentenced to county jails. The remainder were sentenced to state prisons for a repeated offense such as robbery, vehicle theft, or a drug related crime. It appeared evident that the harshness of the crime (i.e., DUI, theft-by-taking, forgery, or child neglect) somewhat influenced the sentence to county camps as opposed to state prisons. The lesser the crime, the less likely one was sentenced to a state prison.

### General Discussion

Time does not permit an in-depth study of innocence or guilt on all those arrested or the circumstances surrounding the arrests and convictions. Ability to hire private attorneys or post bond often dictates sentencing. Some future study might well attempt to provide this information.

Table 27. Disposition  
Rates from Table 3.

	<u>One-Year Reconviction</u>	<u>One-Year Incarceration</u>	<u>One-Year State Imprisonment*</u>
<u>ADJUSTMENT TYPE</u>			
Athens	9.1%	9.1%	4.5%
Augusta	8.3%	8.3%	2.3%
Cobb	14.5%	9.1%	1.7%
Gainesville	25.0%	20.0%	15.4%
Gateway	18.0%	13.9%	11.0%
SUB-TOTAL	(15.6%)	(12.0%)	( 6.6%)
<u>RESTITUTION TYPE</u>			
Albany	40.0%	25.7%	21.7%
Atlanta	39.2%	23.5%	11.4%
Macon	20.4%	18.4%	20.2%
Rome	20.0%	6.7%	0
SUB-TOTAL	(31.3%)	(20.7%)	(15.9%)
GRAND TOTAL	22.5%	15.8%	(10.8%)

SOURCE: Office of Research and Evaluation, Georgia Department of Offender Rehabilitation. August 15, 1978.

NOTE (\*): The "one-year state imprisonment rate was calculated by matching trackable cases to the DOR inmate database, not by matching the trackable cases to GCIC records. The numerators and denominators are, therefore, different in the two samples. In fact, the last column might be considered the output of a separate study altogether. That is why the two estimates in the case of Macon seem counter-intuitive: the imprisoned in state institutions figure actually exceeds the total jailed and incarcerated figure from the GCIC data. The two samples obviously have slightly different clienteles.

A one year incarceration rate of 15.8% and a one year state imprisonment rate of 10.8% is not alarming. These rates do indicate an 84.2% and an 89.2% success rate for incarceration and imprisonment respectively. Nonetheless, corrections personnel believe that success rate can increase.

Recidivism is a major indicator of personal success of a diversion center graduate. His post-release performance, hopefully, was positively influenced by his program participation. Yet other variables--personal, social, and economic variables--continue to influence his behavior. The offender's criminal reinvolvement as indicated by arrests and convictions suggest that many interventions have not "taken"; the complex set of likely causal factors certainly may overshadow the correctional experience.

There are several reasons for failure after release from the diversion program. Their reasons may be programmatic or environmental in nature. Programmatic reasons will be considered first.

The diversion center program is designed to provide guidance and support to the offender. Treatment programs are available and referral services used to enhance the program's operations. Additionally, personal counseling, family counseling, and therapy groups have been implemented to help the offender in his struggle toward a crime free life. Educational and vocational testing and counseling are also included for his growth. The community center is not a prison but it does have 24-hour supervision, and the offender is held accountable for his behavior within and away from the diversion center. On occasion, positive proof of change in attitude or behavior is exhibited by an offender before he is released from the center. The adjustment/progress changes may take longer to evidence for other offenders. Some changes, we assume, occur as a result of the program's impact on the offender. Center staff feel that

the existence of personal guidance and counseling, personal support, money management, accountability, direction, and positive reinforcement are contributing factors to success at the center. Hopefully, this continuity is part of his post-release supervision plan.

While center staff can see evidence of accountability and progress in a resident while he is in the center, there is no way to guarantee the continuance of these behaviors upon release. Thus, probation supervision enters the rehabilitative process. The probation office assigns supervision levels and maintains supervision for the remainder of the offender's sentence.

Environmental factors evidently contribute to an offender's success or failure after release from the diversion center program. Peer associations often dictate criminal behavior, especially if one's friends are involved in criminal activity. Family support and assistance to an offender's attempt to adjust and lead a crime free life are important. Economic status is very important to success in the free world, and employment or lack of it often dictates success or failure. Often, a person's attitudes influence his failure. For example, an unskilled laborer may have high aspirations for employment which he cannot accomplish. His ideas are related to status positions. When he cannot fulfill his goal for a status job, he becomes frustrated, refuses to accept a less prestigious job, and finally resorts to criminal behavior to secure immediate finance. Other environmental factors related to failure are employee rejection due to criminal record, lack of skills with which to work, lack of transportation for work and dead-end jobs have been cited by center residents.



Diversion center graduates were released between January, 1975, and June, 1977. Total successful terminations were 536. Fifty (or 9.3%) were put in state prisons. The return to prison rate for all inmates release during this same time interval was 9.5%. (16,299 released; 1,550 or 9.5% returned to prison). These statistics indicate that the diversion center program is as effective as the prison system. Consideration must be given to separate clientele; non-violent and non sex-related offenders in the diversion center program and all offenses (violent and sex-related) in the prison system. By analyzing both clientele, the diversion center program, with all its services, would provide the most impact on offenders; while the prison system is only moderately programmatically oriented. The diversion center program would initially surface as a viable alternative to prison.

TABLE 28.  
DIVERSION CENTERS SUCCESSFUL TERMINATIONS  
SUMMARY OF ANNUAL EARNINGS

CENTER	TRACKED	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	\$20-999	\$1,000-3,999	\$5-6,999	\$7-8,999	\$9-10,999	\$11,000-above
Albany	61	35	26	7	18	5	5	none	none
Atlanta	65	45	20	11	18	5	5	2	4
Athens	55	44	11	8	29	2	2	3	none
Augusta	75	58	17	12	23	7	3	2	none
Cobb	69	56	13	15	16	7	4	2	1
Gainesville	26	19	7	10	4	1	3	none	1
Gateway	84	45	39	14	22	5	3	1	none
Macon	86	63	23	22	31	4	3	2	1
Rome	28	19	9	6	9	4	none	none	none
TOTAL	549	384	165	105	170	40	28	12	7
(Percent)		(70%)	(30%)	(27%)	(44%)	(10%)	(.07%)	(.03%)	(.02%)

## EMPLOYMENT TRACKING

For this annual assessment, successful graduates of diversion centers were tracked for employment status. Employment is a requisite to diversion center success for a probationer. It is considered a priority to promote responsibility, to earn a living and be self-supporting, and to pay one's fair share of taxes. Further, employment is required to pay restitution, fines and court costs stipulated by the courts. Successful terminations for fiscal year 1976 and 1977 were tracked to determine their employment status since their release from the diversion centers. Table 28 is a summary of annual earnings. This information is used to help understand employment and its impact on program performance.

Employment, as a priority for diversion center success, was used primarily for reducing the likelihood of returning to crime in order to obtain the money needed to defray financial obligations. While at the center several employment services were available. Among these were acceptable work habits, attitudes and behaviors, physical appearance, job placement services, and other supportive work-related services. These programs were designed to provide long term benefits and positive work attitudes and behaviors to the offender, and if the center was successful, these behaviors would become a part of their natural work style.

In some cases where salaries are extremely low for the year, two factors should be considered: (a) some residents were terminated during the first quarter of the year and failed to maintain employment after release from the center, and (b) others were terminated during the third or fourth quarter and did not work prior to residing at the diversion center. Consequently, these salaries will be included in the very low salary range.

Among the trackable probationers, thirty percent (165) had no employment data. Four assumptions could be made regarding the lack of employment data: (a) the probationer was working in menial labor where wages were not reported; (b) he was working part-time and no wages were reported; (c) he was working below minimum wage level and no wages were reported; or (d) he was not working at all. In either case since no employment data were available, for purposes of this report we are assuming the probationer to have been unemployed January-December, 1977 where employment data were not available.

Seventy percent (384) of successful terminations worked part or full time during the report period. Thirty percent (165) were unemployed during the year since no employment records were available. Considering the percentage employed (70%) and the reported number of offenders who had failed to maintain gainful employment prior to arriving at the center, the 70 percent rate indicates success in the employment category while in the center and in some instances after release from the center. In either case, Table 28 indicates about half of the offenders who were employed received salaries far below the poverty level. This implies that the greater portion of diversion center offenders are unskilled laborers. And this fact, further, could be an indicator of high diversion center rearrest rate.

## SUMMARY

Diversion Centers are alternatives to prison for non-violent offenders. There are ten centers throughout the State of Georgia. This report addresses nine centers. The Thomasville Center received its first clients in April, 1978 and therefore is not addressed in this report.

Initially, half of the centers were designed to provide victim compensation and to perform symbolic community services for private and non-private organizations. The other centers were also designed as alternatives to prison and for a period of readjustment for probationers before they were released back into the community. Diversion centers more generally were designed as a mechanism to reduce overcrowding in Georgia penal institutions through reduced inmate intake. However, the program service population did not increase as rapidly as was projected, and the program analysis has gradually shifted to finding appropriate alternatives to prison based on client needs.

Overall, several operational problems were experienced in the diversion centers in FY78. However, some minor problems experienced by the program were: (1) staff shortages; (2) lack of clearly defined eligibility criteria; (3) low community involvement; and (4) fragmented follow-up services.

Success levels achieved were at or near annual projections. In terms of success the programs functioned efficiently throughout the fiscal year. In addition to evaluating performance measures, successful graduates were tracked for employment and rearrest status. Employment data revealed that 218 (or 58%) were engaged in some type of gainful and legal employment. The average salary was between \$1,000 to \$3,999. Rearrest data revealed a one year rearrest rate of 34.9 percent; a 22.5

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percent reconviction rate; and a one year incarceration rate of 15.8 percent. In the future there will be no separation of diversion centers if staffing patterns become adequate in all centers (14-15 staff per center), but rather all centers will be referred to in common terminology--diversion centers. Further, there will be no analysis made regarding the collection of monetary restitution for former Restitution Centers as previously compared. When the courts stipulate restitution and court fees, the center will monitor and maintain these accounts. Likewise, all centers are involved in community service for non-profit organizations. Originally, these two functions were primarily the responsibility of Restitution Centers.

Georgia is making progress with its diversion programs. However, much of what is left to be done deals with conceptualizing the program in terms of theoretical and practical performance and evaluation. The future of this type of diversion--community restitution centers--is shrouded by an array of unanswered issues which, when answered, should provide conceptual and programmatic guidance for community centers. One of the more important issues to be decided is raised because the program to date has not clearly established what overwhelming successful performance is or should be, and thus cannot be measured by those success criteria. Secondly, the programatics themselves are non-standard and qualitatively uneven. In many areas, the basic community involvement itself suffers from a lack of clear and positive development.

Many issues are common for all community diversion centers. Since the recent reorganization, community facilities are administratively a part of the Community-Based Services Division. These same issues were enumerated in the FY77 Georgia Restitution Shelter Program Report.

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Issues that have remained unresolved are: In a correctional setting, what is the mission for community diversion centers? Who should set goals and objectives and establish evaluative criteria? Who or what determines eligibility? Who is responsible for the offender's transition from courts to diversion center back to the community? Does a Restitution/Adjustment (community) Center have to have a lower cost effective ratio than incarceration to be judged effective? How important is it to reduce recidivism? Is it more appropriate for the program to focus on employment, whereby the offender is able to repay the victim but which may not impact recidivism; or is it best to develop therapy as a behavior modifier which might affect recidivism? Can both approaches work effectively together? Is partial success possible in a diversion program? What is a sufficient staff for a community center? How can in-house technical violations be monitored? How can offenders be led to realize that prison may lie ahead? Answers to these issues could provide impactful information on present diversion center operations and important decisional information for future diversion centers.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Probation Division should establish a more therapeutic oriented supervision program for its centers' clientele. Initiating such a change shifts program orientation from primarily employment and employment-related operation to one which attempts to deal with psycho-social problems of offenders as well. A key factor in the relatively high program rearrest rate apparently has been lack of an emphasis on personal growth and awareness. However, it appears from review of other programs that where psychological treatment is given a high priority, those programs have demonstrated lower rearrest rates in comparison to this program. To accomplish this, the program will need additional counseling staff and considerable program development.
2. New diversion programs should include greater use of community service restitution designed to provide alternatives for program participation by indigent offenders. Community service restitution provided must be meaningful and performed with citizens themselves in public and private settings. Documentation for types of services rendered, number of hours expended, agencies used must be accurately and permanently recorded. Specific restitution, whether cash or service, should be spelled out in the court order and determined on an individual basis according to economic abilities of the offender. New programs should also set specific criteria for eligibility, criteria which can be measured by empirical research methods. Previous research should be incorporated into future research designs.

3. A staff of less than 14 appears inadequate for effective and efficient center operations. Diversion centers, former Restitution Centers, were not initially designed for a staff of more than 10. Previous evaluations revealed the need to emphasize more effective counseling programs and more individual and group counseling sessions. Security is a diversion center priority and often other programs such as individual and group counseling are sacrificed for it. To implement these programs and maintain a variety of effective and therapeutic services, additional staff are needed in these centers with less than 14.
4. Public relations in diversion centers should be the responsibility of all center personnel. The diversion concept should be publicized to generate support and services for the local community. An Advisory Board provides contact persons that generate jobs, volunteers, goods and services for center needs. Use of private citizens and organizations for goods and services by diversion centers should be improved. Effective input from these persons should be a serious policy criterion.
5. Some diversion centers (Gainesville, Augusta, Albany) are in deplorable condition. Residents living quarters are unbearable and unsightly. They do not provide the comfortable and residential atmosphere intended. These centers should either be renovated or relocated. At other centers, Atlanta, Athens, and Gateway, renovations are needed in the kitchens for working, storing and food preparation.

6. Case management should be standardized according to newly developed guidelines. Training has been provided to all center staff. With standardization of the case recording system, all centers will be aware of evaluating procedures and techniques throughout the fiscal year.
7. On-site visits to diversion centers should be made more frequently. Quarterly visits are recommended for the evaluator to discuss quarterly performance measures, problem areas, and make recommendations. Further, feedback should be provided in writing to each center after each visit.
8. There are Counselor Aide positions that are misassigned to function as Correctional Officers in some diversion centers. These positions should be assigned in their category of specialty and should function as counselors. The treatment component is lacking in the centers where these positions are misassigned, thereby debilitating a variety of rehabilitative treatment programs.
9. Follow-up research should be conducted on former clients from all diversion centers for a 12, 18, and 24 month period. Post release performance of former clients would help develop a database on probationer failures and successes, and overall centers' impact on post-release behaviors could be studied. A primary focus of follow-up should be employment and citizen contacts.