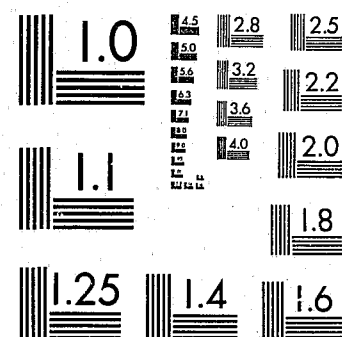


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INFORMATION NEEDS
IN JUVENILE JUSTICE

Report on a Survey of State Juvenile Advisory Groups

Prepared under the Assessment Centers Program of the
National Institute of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention by the Assessment
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I. Introduction: Statement of Purpose

The Assessment Centers Program is mandated to collect and synthesize information about juvenile justice and delinquency prevention and to disseminate it to juvenile justice decision makers, planners, and practitioners. The Advisory Board of the program suggested that the Coordinating Assessment Center¹ survey a group of juvenile justice/delinquency specialists in order to determine their information needs.

To this end, a questionnaire was sent to members of State Juvenile Advisory Groups and related staff or members of analogous ad hoc state groups in the Fall of 1978 asking their opinions about the importance of obtaining more information on various aspects of the following fifteen major topics: juvenile status offenders; serious juvenile offenders; violent crimes; prevention; diversion; law enforcement; courts; probation; corrections; administration and funding; evaluation and research; youthful offenders; juvenile vandalism; confidentiality; juvenile statutes and codes. It is important to stress that respondents were asked to rate these topics according to their need for information about them -- they were not asked to rank their perceptions about the importance of these topics as problems within the field.

¹After the survey was conducted, but before this report was prepared, the Coordinating Assessment Center changed some of its functions and was re-named as the Assessment Center for Integrated Data Analysis.

II. Survey Methods

A. Instrument

The questionnaire was designed to elicit the respondent's desire for information on major topics in juvenile justice and delinquency and various aspects of those topics. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) comprises four sections: (1) a section which requests background information about the respondent, i.e., occupation, sex, age, and community size/type; (2) a section which asks the respondent to rate 99 subtopics on a five-point Likert scale (from little importance to great importance) according to his/her need for information; (3) a section which asks the respondent to rank, by means of a Q-sort, 15 major topics according to his/her desire for more information; (4) a section which provides the respondent with an opportunity to comment upon other kinds of information that he/she feels are needed.

In designing the questionnaire, special emphasis was placed upon including items that reflected the Juvenile Justice Act of 1974 and the 1977 Amendments. The final survey questionnaire is a result of the combined efforts of the Assessment Centers' Advisory Board and the Operations Committee, the Coordinating Assessment Center and the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

B. Sample Selection

The questionnaire was sent to all states (including District of Columbia, Alaska, and Hawaii); however, no responses

were received from Virginia, Wisconsin, or South Dakota. In most states, the questionnaire recipients were members of the State Juvenile Advisory Groups and related professional staff. Nevada, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska were nonparticipating states in the Act and did not have formal State Juvenile Advisory Groups; in these four states, the questionnaire was sent to ad hoc state groups which serve the same function as the formal State Juvenile Advisory Groups. A total of 1,342 questionnaires were sent; 893 questionnaires were returned, representing 66.5 percent.

C. Procedure

Because of the relatively small number of potential respondents, it was important to develop a contacting procedure that would ensure a high response rate. For this reason, before the questionnaire was distributed nationwide, the technical assistance division of OJJDP recommended that it be sent to West Virginia and Massachusetts to test the response rate.

The contacting procedure was as follows: In each state, the person responsible for liaison between the advisory group and other government agencies (the "contact person") was phoned. The purpose of the questionnaire was explained, and then the contact person was asked whether he/she approved advisory group participation in the survey. Next (if applicable) it was asked whether it was also necessary to obtain the approval of the chairperson of the State Juvenile Advisory Group. If chairperson approval was necessary, it subsequently

was obtained by phone. After participation had been approved, arrangements were made to administer the questionnaire.

Two options were offered: (1) the contact person could distribute the survey at a meeting where all advisory group members were present and distribute additional copies to related staff or (2) the contact person could provide the Coordinating Assessment Center (CAC) with the names and addresses of advisory group members and related staff so that the questionnaire could be sent directly to them. CAC expressed its preference for the first option because it seemed that the response rate would be higher if the advisory group's members received the survey questionnaire directly from the contact person. Nevertheless, CAC proceeded with the option that the contact person selected.

Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire. Each questionnaire recipient was assigned an identification number which enabled CAC to determine those who did not return their questionnaires within three weeks. These persons then were sent another, identical questionnaire with a somewhat different cover letter pointing out the importance of their participation. The second mailing of the questionnaire did improve the rate of response.

Seventy-seven percent of the Massachusetts respondents and 62 percent of the West Virginia respondents returned completed questionnaires.

After the response rate was tested in Massachusetts and West Virginia, some changes were made in the initial phone conversation with the contact person and minor changes were made in the letter which accompanied the questionnaire.

The same procedure was then used to send the questionnaire nationwide to the members of each state's State Juvenile Advisory Group and related professional staff or ad hoc group. About 60 percent of the questionnaire recipients received the questionnaire directly from the contact person, and about 40 percent received it directly from the CAC. The type of contact did not appear to affect the response rate.

Whenever possible, accurate records were kept of respondents and their corresponding identification numbers. When CAC contacted the respondents directly, records could be kept conveniently. When the contact person distributed the questionnaire, this proved more difficult. Although every effort was made to contact each person who did not respond to the initial questionnaire, this was not always possible. As noted above, the response rate was 66.5 percent.

D. Respondent Profile

Each respondent was asked to provide the following background information about him/herself: role in delinquency planning and action, occupation or affiliation, age, sex, and place of residence.

1. Role in Delinquency Planning and Action

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following applied to them: member of state/territory juvenile justice advisory board or planning agency, member of county/local juvenile justice advisory board or planning agency, juvenile justice/delinquency program administrator or staff,

criminal justice agency administrator/staff, other role, or no major role.

Thirty-three percent ($n=293$) of the respondents were members of state/territory juvenile justice advisory boards. Forty-four percent ($n=388$) indicated that they had more than one role in delinquency planning and action, and 23 percent ($n=201$) indicated that they had one of the other nine roles. A small number of respondents ($n=11$) did not respond to this question.

2. Occupation or Affiliation

Each respondent was asked to select one occupation or affiliation which best described his/her position. Choices included: planner, law enforcement, courts, probation, parole, corrections, education, evaluation/research, youth service bureau, other community-based agency, legislature, general public administrator, student, other, or no occupation. Of the respondents, 17 percent ($n=150$) were planners; 17 percent ($n=149$) were "other"; and 11 percent ($n=100$) were affiliated with other community-based agencies. The remaining choices were relatively equally distributed among 490 respondents. Four respondents did not reply to this question.

3. Age, Sex, and Place of Residence

Table 1 shows the respondents' age, sex, and place of residence. The majority of respondents (55 percent) were between the ages of 25 and 39. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (65 percent) were male, and about one-third

TABLE 1

Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Percent ^a	N ^b
<u>Age</u>		
Less than 20	2	21
20 - 24	8	67
25 - 29	21	183
30 - 34	18	160
35 - 39	16	137
40 - 44	11	95
45 - 49	7	65
50 - 54	7	66
55 - 59	5	43
60 or older	6	49
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	65	565
Female	35	310
<u>Place of Residence</u>		
Major metropolitan area, central city	27	236
Major metropolitan area, suburbs	24	212
Small city	34	300
Small town/village	10	88
Rural	5	46

^aPercentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

^bRespondents who did not answer the relevant question are excluded from the table. There were 7 missing cases for age, 18 for sex, and 11 for place of residence.

(35 percent) were female. About half the respondents (49 percent) lived outside major metropolitan areas. Among respondents who lived in major metropolitan areas, there was an almost equal division between those who lived in central cities and those who lived in the suburbs (27 percent and 24 percent of all respondents, respectively).

III. ResultsA. Overview

The following sections will report the aggregate data, with each respondent's answers weighted equally. Since the total number of respondents in most of the individual states is relatively low, results obtained from analyzing the data from the individual states would be inconclusive; consequently, they are not included in this report.

Section III. B. reports results of the main body of the questionnaire. In that portion of the questionnaire, respondents rated their information needs on a five-point Likert scale for each of 99 subtopics, which were organized into 11 major topic areas. Each of the 11 major topics included 5 to 16 subtopics.

Section III. C. reports results of the Q-sort portion of the questionnaire. For the Q-sort, respondents were supplied with 4 major topics in addition to the 11 covered in the body of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to "sort" the 15 major topics in terms of the priorities of their own information needs.

Conclusions and implications of the results and the limitations of the research will be discussed in Section IV.

B. Major Topic Areas

1. Definitions

In the main body of the questionnaire, respondents were asked about their needs for information on 11 major topic areas. The technique used in the survey was to ask respondents to rate their information needs on a five-point Likert scale for each of 5 to 16 subtopics within each major topic area. The subtopics do not provide exhaustive coverage of the content of the major topics, nor are they random samples of the possible subtopics within the major topic. The subtopics were selected on the basis of timeliness and of pertinence to issues involved in implementing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. (For example, in the major topic area of Juvenile Status Offenders, one subtopic asks respondents to rate the importance of having information about developing community foster care and group homes for juvenile status offenders.)

Below is a listing of the 11 major topics, their definitions, and the number of subtopic items rated under each one.

1. Juvenile Status Offenders are defined as "Juveniles who have committed an act or engaged in an activity which is illegal only for minors (e.g., truancy, running away, incorrigibility)." 10 items.
2. Serious Juvenile Offenders are defined as "Repeat juvenile offenders and juvenile offenders who commit violent crimes." 7 items.

3. Violent Crimes are defined as "Crimes which involve the threat or use of force and which result in the death or injury of a person, destruction of property, or stealing of property." 8 items.
4. Prevention is defined as "Measures which tend to make it less likely that juveniles will engage in delinquent activity, usually by remedying situations or conditions believed to lead to delinquency." 8 items.
5. Diversion is defined as "The end or suspension of justice-system processing of an alleged offender and his/her referral to a non-justice-system agency or program, decreed by an appropriate authority at any point prior to adjudication." 7 items.
6. Law Enforcement is defined as "The department of government responsible for preventing and detecting crime and arresting offenders." 7 items.
7. Courts is defined as "Judicial agencies, consisting of one or more judicial officers, established and convened for the administration of justice. Juvenile courts have original jurisdiction over juveniles who are classified as delinquent, status offenders, or dependents." 16 items.
8. Probation is defined as "Formal or informal supervision of an alleged or convicted/adjudicated offender by a probation officer; OR The department of the court which provides such supervision, supplies presentence/predisposition case investigations to the court, and performs juvenile intake for the juvenile court." 9 items.
9. Corrections is defined as "The system responsible for custody and/or treatment of persons who have been convicted in a criminal court or adjudicated as delinquent in a juvenile court." 15 items.
10. Administration and Funding is defined as "All aspects of operating agencies and programs concerned with juvenile justice/delinquency, including administration, management, training, recruitment, funding, planning, interagency coordination, etc." 5 items.
11. Evaluation and Research is defined as "EVALUATION: Measurement or investigation of the outcomes and/or procedures of strategies and programs (e.g., prevention, diversion, treatment) and analysis of their impact, efficiency, and value. RESEARCH: Collection and analysis of information about juvenile justice, juvenile delinquency, and delinquency-related programs and assessment of program needs." 7 items.

2. Mean Subtopic Scores

As described earlier, information needs in 11 major topic areas were measured by having respondents rate their needs for information on 5 to 16 subtopics within each major topic area. In this section, mean scores on the subtopics are examined; in the next section, means scores on the major topics -- produced by averaging subtopic scores -- will be examined.

Appendix B displays the mean score for each of the 99 subtopics used in the questionnaire; higher mean scores reflect a greater expressed need for information. Within some of the major topic areas there is a relatively wide range in the subtopic scores. For example, under the major topic of Prevention, mean subtopic scores range from 4.48 (for information about "developing community-based programs and services to work with parents to maintain and strengthen the family unit") down to 3.88 (for information about "the role of the community in providing recreational opportunities").

Examination of the mean subtopic scores in Appendix B reveals some concerns that cut across major topic areas. For example, under the major topic of Juvenile Status Offenders, the subtopic with the highest mean score (4.45) reflects the importance for having information about "the type of placements available for juvenile status offenders." Similarly, the highest score (4.32) under Serious Juvenile Offenders relates to information about "developing services specifically designed for serious juvenile offenders," and under Violent Crimes, the

highest score (4.18) is for information about "developing programs and services specifically for individual juveniles who commit violent crimes." These subtopic scores indicate that the respondents want direct information about how to deal with specific forms of juvenile misbehavior. In contrast, the respondents showed little desire for more information about "legislation in other states," "procedures which guard against stigmatization" (subtopics under Juvenile Status Offenders), "access to prior arrest and conviction records" (under Serious Juvenile Offenders), and "the existence of violence-prone street gangs" (under Violent Crimes) -- none of which would provide guidance about how to deal with the behaviors in question.

Another common concern that emerges from an examination of subtopic mean scores can be described as a desire for accountability in the juvenile justice system. Subtopics that referred to the need for information about evaluation or accountability received relatively high scores within the major topic areas of Diversion (subtopic 2), Law Enforcement (subtopic 4), Courts (subtopic 4), Probation (subtopic 5), and Corrections (subtopics 6 and 7).

Further insights can be gained by looking at the subtopic mean scores regardless of the major topic areas under which they fall. Table 2 shows the 11 subtopics with the highest mean scores (note that two topics were tied on the tenth highest ranking). Examination of Table 2 reveals a strong perceived need for information about community-based alternatives to the

TABLE 2

Highest-Ranked Subtopics

Subtopic	Topic Area	Mean Score	N ^a
Information on...			
1 ...developing community-based programs and services to work with parents to maintain and strengthen the family unit.	Prevention	4.485	887
2 ...the type of placements available for juvenile status offenders.	Juvenile Status Offenders	4.451	885
3 ...using alternatives to traditional sentencing, such as: community service assignments.	Courts	4.349	883
4 ...using community-based facilities or programs instead of institutionalization for all but the most serious, habitual juvenile offenders.	Corrections	4.339	885
5 ...simplifying the process by which federal funds are made available to support juvenile justice/delinquency programs.	Administration & Funding	4.336	883
6 ...developing services specifically designed for serious juvenile offenders.	Serious Juvenile Offenders	4.325	886
7 ...using alternatives to traditional sentencing, such as: restitution.	Courts	4.309	879
8 ...improving coordination among the agencies of the juvenile justice system.	Administration & Funding	4.308	885
9 ...locating adequate and dependable sources of funds to implement the changes mandated by the JJDP Act.	Administration & Funding	4.299	884

TABLE 2 cont.

Subtopic	Topic Area	Mean Score	N ^a
10 ...developing community foster-care and group homes for juvenile status offenders.	Juvenile Status Offenders	4.293	882
11 ...the role of the community in providing employment opportunities for youth.	Prevention	4.293	885

^aThe total number of respondents is 893. Respondents who did not answer a subtopic question are excluded from calculation of the mean score for that subtopic.

juvenile justice system. Six of the eleven highest-ranked subtopics deal directly with this issue (rankings 1, 3, 4, 7, and both items tied on the rank of 10). Another subtopic (ranking 2) addresses the same issue indirectly, in terms of information about placements available for status offenders. Of the four remaining highest-ranked subtopics, two concern information about funding (rankings 5 and 9), one pertains to information about coordinating juvenile justice system components (ranking 8), and one focuses on information about services for serious juvenile offenders (ranking 6).

The range of mean scores for the 99 items was 4.6 to 3.1. This range indicates that respondents tended to feel they had at least a moderate need for information about most of the subtopics. Remember that in this portion of the questionnaire, the need for information on each item was rated separately; respondents did not have to set priorities on their information needs among the major topic areas or subtopics. Without a structure requiring priorities to be set, it is possible that many respondents developed a response "set" of consistently using the moderate-to-great-importance end of the scale for every item. It is also possible, of course, that respondents' high ratings of so many items reflect a real need for information about those items -- if so, that would indicate some serious gap in the information available on juvenile justice and delinquency prevention.²

²It also should be noted, however, that there was a certain amount of overlap in the content of many items, and the small range is in part an artifact of this problem.

3. Mean Major Topic Scores

Table 3 shows the mean scores for the 11 major topic areas ranked from highest to lowest. Not surprisingly, the range of mean scores for the 11 major topics (4.2 to 3.6) is smaller than the one for the subtopics and the pattern is similar: Respondents view the need for additional information as at least moderately important in all 11 major areas.

The need for information about Administration and Funding was rated as most important. Since two of the highly rated Administration and Funding subtopics concerned obtaining federal funds (see Table 2), the high perceived importance of Administration and Funding information may represent, at least in part, respondents' need for the organizational and fiscal information necessary to implement the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act's provisions in their states.

It is interesting to note that the need for information about the traditional juvenile justice system components (Law Enforcement, Probation, Courts, and Corrections) was rated as less important than the need for information about Prevention and Diversion. Perhaps this reflects the respondents' belief that a great deal of information about the system components has already been accumulated. However, another interpretation is that advisory groups members perceive the traditional system modes of response to delinquency as ineffective and feel a need for information about more innovative responses.

Relatively low ratings were given to the need for information about Serious Juvenile Offenders and Violent Crimes --

TABLE 3

Ranking of Major Topic Areas

Topic Area	Mean Score ^a	N ^b
1 Administration & Funding	4.225	885
2 Prevention	4.127	889
3 Diversion	4.085	877
4 Evaluation & Research	4.079	885
5 Corrections	4.050	890
6 Juvenile Status Offenders	4.030	889
7 Courts	3.942	885
8 Serious Juvenile Offenders	3.909	888
9 Probation	3.752	884
10 Law Enforcement	3.723	880
11 Violent Crimes	3.649	889

^aThese values were calculated by averaging the mean topic-area scores of the individual respondents. Each respondent's mean topic-area scores were calculated in the following manner for each major topic: Respondents who did not answer any of the subtopic questions were treated as missing cases for that topic; for respondents who answered at least one subtopic question, the ratings on the answered questions were summed and the sum divided by the number of questions answered.

^bThe total number of respondents is 893. Respondents who did not answer any of the subtopic questions within a major topic area were excluded from calculation of the mean score for that topic.

yet these topics have engendered a great deal of discussion in the press and in state legislatures. This may reflect a disparity between the concerns of the professionals on state advisory groups and other segments of the public. On the other hand, the questionnaire asks about information needs, not issues' inherent importance, and it is possible that advisory groups do share the concern about serious juvenile offenders and violent crimes but they do not feel a pressing need for more information about them.

4. Relationships Among Mean Scores for Topical Areas

The relationship of the topical area scores to one another were examined by computing the Pearson correlations coefficient for each pair; this measure reflects the strength and direction of the linear relationships between each pair of scores. The matrix of correlation coefficients is shown in Table 4.

Each topic shows a positive correlation with all the others. The strength of the relationships ranges from a high of .62 for the pair Courts and Probation to a low of .25 for the pair Serious Juvenile Offenders and Administration and Funding. However, of the 55 correlation coefficients, 16 (29 percent) were greater than .50 and 41 (75 percent) were .36 or greater. The uniformly positive correlations indicate respondents to be consistent in rating their information needs on most items as high, moderate, or low. However, as noted previously, one of the limitations of this portion of the questionnaire is that

TABLE 4

Pearson Correlation Coefficients
for Mean Scores of Major Topics^a

	Juvenile Status Offenders	Serious Juvenile Offenders	Violent Crimes	Prevention	Diversion	Law Enforcement	Courts	Probation	Corrections	Administration & Funding	Evaluation & Research
Juvenile Status Offenders	1.000	.303	.287	.490	.590	.422	.475	.484	.590	.370	.392
Serious Juvenile Offenders		1.000	.598	.256	.280	.351	.444	.343	.318	.251	.328
Violent Crimes			1.000	.316	.295	.418	.416	.380	.317	.286	.414
Prevention				1.000	.565	.420	.420	.527	.529	.367	.373
Diversion					1.000	.518	.536	.514	.565	.455	.459
Law Enforcement						1.000	.538	.496	.451	.344	.420
Courts							1.000	.624	.617	.414	.522
Probation								1.000	.576	.424	.455
Corrections									1.000	.478	.494
Administration & Funding										1.000	.561
Evaluation & Research											1.000

^aOnly respondents who did not answer any subtopic questions within a topic area are excluded from calculation of the mean score for that topic.

respondents were not asked to rate items in terms of their relative importance; provision is made for prioritization only in the final section of the questionnaire.

5. Effects of Respondent's Age, Sex, and Place of Residence

The effects of respondents' age, sex, and place of residence on major topic scores were examined. Table 5 shows mean score differences greater than .20 between males and females, between members of five different age groups (under 25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55 and older), and between respondents living inside major metropolitan areas and those living outside major metropolitan areas for each topic.

Table 6 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between each mean topic score and each respondent variable. The mean topic scores of males, females, each age group, metropolitan dwellers, and nonmetropolitan dwellers are shown in Appendix C.

None of the respondent variables appears to have a strong effect on the rating of any major topic, although there are minute differences among the various groups' mean topic scores; the largest difference is less than four tenths of a point. And, of the 33 correlations coefficients, only 5 are greater than $\pm .10$; the greatest of these is $-.156$.

a. Respondent's Age. Table C-1 (in Appendix C) shows mean topic scores for the five age groups. The greatest differences in these scores were about four-tenths of a point (for Violent Crimes and Law Enforcement). Both the oldest and youngest respondents rated information about Violent Crimes

TABLE 5

Differences Greater Than .20 in Mean Topic Ratings
by Respondent Profile Variables^a

Topic	<u>Respondent Profile Variables^a</u>		
	Age ^b	Sex	Place of Residence
Juvenile Status Offenders	.24	.23	---
Serious Juvenile Offenders	.26	---	---
Violent Crimes	.37	---	.26
Prevention	---	---	---
Diversion	.22	.22	---
Law Enforcement	.36	---	---
Courts	---	---	---
Probation	.24	---	---
Corrections	.21	---	---
Administration & Funding	---	---	---
Evaluation & Research	---	---	---

^a In each cell, respondents who did not answer either the profile question or any of the subtopic questions within the major topic area are excluded from this table. The number of missing cases ranges from 33 (Sex and Diversion) to 8 (Age and Corrections).

^b Age would be expected to show more mean differences greater than .20 simply because it has five categories whereas sex and place of residence are dichotomous variables.

TABLE 6

Pearson Correlation Coefficients
Between Mean Topic Scores and
Respondent Profile Variables

Topics	Respondent Profile Variables		
	Age	Sex ^a	Place of Residence ^b
Juvenile Status Offenders	.037	-.156	-.028
Serious Juvenile Offenders	.090	.001	-.074
Violent Crimes	.082	.031	-.136
Prevention	-.007	-.079	.059
Diversion	.040	-.136	-.011
Law Enforcement	-.016	-.089	-.035
Courts	-.007	-.114	.007
Probation	.018	-.111	.018
Corrections	-.012	-.084	.003
Administration & Funding	-.000	-.005	.020
Evaluation & Research	-.005	-.019	-.033

^aA negative coefficient indicates that females rated information needs as more important than did males.

^bA negative coefficient indicates that residents of more urbanized areas rated information needs as more important than did residents of less urbanized areas.

as slightly more important than did the three middle age groups. There was a slightly stronger need for information about Law Enforcement expressed by the youngest respondents than by the four older age groups. The correlation coefficients (see Table 6) show no relationship between age and any of the 11 major topics. This is because the coefficient used is a measure of linear correlation, and the relationships among age and ratings for 10 of the 11 major topics are curvilinear.

b. Respondent's Sex. Female respondents rated the need for information higher than did male respondents in 8 of the 11 topic areas (see Table C-2 in Appendix C). Males' information-need scores were higher for Violent Crimes and Administration and Funding and about the same as females' for Serious Juvenile Offenders. However, the mean differences in all cases are small; the greatest differences being only about two-tenths of a point (for Juvenile Status Offenders and Diversion). The correlation coefficients were greater than $\pm .10$ for four of the topics: Juvenile Status Offenders, Diversion, Courts, and Probation (see Table 6).

c. Respondent's Place of Residence. Respondents living inside major metropolitan areas tend to view the need for information about Violent Crimes as slightly more important than do respondents living outside such areas (see Table C-3). This was the largest difference (about four-tenths of a point) between these two groups and yielded the only correlation coefficient greater than $\pm .10$ (see Table 6).

C. Q-Sort Ratings of Major Topic Areas

1. The Q-Sort Method

As was discussed, the main portion of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate their information needs by reacting to each of 99 subtopic questions separately, without regard to the other subtopics. For example, a respondent could give every subtopic the maximum rating ("great importance") if he or she chose; there was no necessity to prioritize the items in terms of information needs. In the Q-sort portion, respondents were required to rank fifteen major topics vis-a-vis each other.

The technique used to obtain the relative rankings is called a Q-sort. The Q-sort involves a forced-choice procedure; respondents are given a set of items and are asked to sort them into a limited number of ordered categories.

As a prelude to the Q-sort, the respondents were given definitions of 4 major topics in addition to the 11 that had been presented earlier in the questionnaire. These four additional topics and their definitions are:

1. Youthful Offenders is defined as "Offenders adjudicated in criminal court who have been designated "youthful offenders," usually by a criminal court judge, in order to provide special treatment in court processing, choice of institution, and/or parole processing. The age range for youthful offenders varies with each state. It begins where the juvenile age leaves off; the upper limit usually ranges from 21 to 25."
2. Juvenile Vandalism is defined as "Willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property by juveniles."

3. Confidentiality is defined as "The question of whether juvenile records (those belonging to the police, courts, probation departments, institutions, or parole authorities) should be made available to other justice-system and/or non-justice agencies and programs."
4. Juvenile Statutes and Codes is defined as "STATUTES: State laws defining juvenile delinquency and status offenses and juvenile-court jurisdiction, procedures, and dispositions. CODES: Organized collections of such laws and the rules and regulations for applying them."

The 15 major topics were then listed, and respondents were asked to assign each topic to one of five categories according to how important they thought it was to have more information about that topic. The five categories were Least Importance, Little Importance, Moderate Importance, Great Importance, and Most Importance. A further constraint was that the number of topics which could be assigned to each category was specified in the questionnaire (see page 18 of the questionnaire in Appendix A) -- one topic could be assigned to the category labeled Least Importance, four to Little Importance, five to Moderate Importance, four to Great Importance, and one to Most Importance.

2. Q-Sort Mean Scores

For each respondent, the 15 major topics were assigned scores, from one to five, according to where the respondent placed them on the sort. The distribution of respondent ratings for each major topic is shown in Appendix D. Mean scores for each major topic were also computed. Table 7 shows the 15 major topics and their mean Q-sort scores, arranged from highest to lowest.

TABLE 7.

Ranking of Major Topic Areas According
to Q-Sort Mean Scores

	Topic	Mean Score	N ^a
1	Prevention	3.936	825
2	Diversion	3.495	812
3	Juvenile Status Offenders	3.439	808
4	Serious Juvenile Offenders	3.434	802
5	Evaluation & Research	3.176	805
6	Courts	3.147	805
7	Administration & Funding	3.011	801
8	Violent Crimes	2.945	801
9	Corrections	2.908	797
10	Probation	2.842	799
11	Juvenile Statutes & Codes	2.826	782
12	Law Enforcement	2.757	805
13	Youthful Offenders	2.658	780
14	Confidentiality	2.380	779
15	Juvenile Vandalism	2.353	784

^aExcludes respondents with missing information.

First, the four major topics that were added for the Q-sort (Youthful Offenders, Juvenile Vandalism, Confidentiality, and Juvenile Statutes and Codes) are all among the five lowest-ranked topics. It is unclear, however, whether respondents simply did not perceive much need for information about these four topics or whether the low rankings are a methodological artifact. Perhaps the four new topics -- "tacked on" near the end of the questionnaire -- did not seem very salient to respondents who had been dealing in depth with the other 11 major topics throughout the body of the questionnaire. Because of this ambiguity, the remaining analysis in this section will deal only with the original 11 major topics.

Second, when the mean Q-sort scores of the 11 original topics (see Table 7) are compared to the mean topic scores that were computed from the 99 subtopic ratings (see Table 3), the Q-sort scores are found to be generally lower but to have greater variability. The mean scores computed from the 99 subtopics range from 3.649 to 4.225, a difference of only .576; the mean Q-sort scores, however, range from 2.757 to 3.936, a difference of 1.179. These differences are produced, at least in part, by the difference between the question formats used in the main body and in the Q-sort portion of the questionnaire. When respondents rated information needs on each item separately, there was a tendency to rate most of the items on the "most important" side of the rating scale; in the Q-sort section, respondents were forced to distribute items symmetrically

across the rating scale, producing mean scores with generally lower values and a wider range.

Finally, the ordering of mean scores produced by the Q-sort (Table 7) can be compared with the ordering produced from the ratings of the 99 subtopics (Table 3). Visual inspection reveals several similarities. For example, in both sets of 11, Prevention and Diversion fall into the top three ranks, while Probation, Law Enforcement, and Violent Crimes fall into the bottom four. There are some discrepancies, however. Most notably, Administration and Funding ranked first among the mean scores derived from the 99 subtopics ratings, but it ranked seventh among the mean scores derived from the Q-sort. Corrections and Serious Juvenile Offenders also showed substantial changes in their ranking (the former falling from the fifth to the ninth of eleven ranks and the latter rising from eighth place to third). As a summary measure of the correspondence between the two sets of rankings of the 11 major topics, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ) was computed. Although the resulting value -- .58 -- appears high, it indicates only a moderate degree of correspondence because of the small number of rankings (11) involved.

Overall, it appears that the two methods used to assess information needs produced somewhat different results. As noted, the fact that respondents were forced to prioritize their information needs in the Q-sort portion but not in the main body of the questionnaire led to differences in the magnitudes

and ranges of the two sets of mean scores for the 11 major topic areas. But there is another factor to be considered.

We must reemphasize that, in the main body of the questionnaire, respondents were not expressing their need for information about the 11 major topics directly; they were responding to a set of subtopic questions within each major topic area. As noted, there is no reason to believe that any of the subtopic sets used in the questionnaire tapped the full set of issues underlying any of the major topic areas. Selection of a different set of subtopics items -- even if the items fit logically within the major topic areas -- might have greatly changed the resulting mean score for that topic. In contrast, the Q-sort portion simply presented respondents with the names and global definitions of the major topic areas; it did not direct them to consider a specific set of narrower issues within each topic. Thus, it is not surprising that the two techniques produced somewhat different ranking of respondents' information needs. In fact, given the problems of comparability, one must be impressed by the consistency with which information needs in Prevention and Diversion were rated.

3. Effects of Respondent's Age, Sex, and Place of Residence

The Q-sort results were examined for associations with several respondent characteristics. Because each respondent's "score" on each major topic area in the Q-sort was a whole number,³ the Q-sort results were cross-tabulated with age,

³This was not the case in the main body of the questionnaire where each respondent's "score" on a major topic was derived by averaging the ratings given to a set of subtopic items.

sex, and place of residence in a contingency table format.

Serious Juvenile Offenders is the only major topic for which ratings of information needs show substantial variation across age groups. Table 8 shows that, among young respondents (under 25 years old), 38 percent rated the need for more information about Serious Juvenile Offenders as of Great Importance or Most Importance. Among the middle age groups (from 25 to 54), the corresponding figure ranged from 49 to 56 percent. Among the oldest respondents (55 or older), 62 percent assigned a rating of Great Importance or Most Importance to this topic.

There were two substantial differences between male and female respondents. Table 9 shows that almost two-thirds (65 percent) of the women but only about one-half (48 percent) of the men rated the need for more information about Juvenile Status Offenders as of either Great Importance or Most Importance. On the other hand, Table 10 shows that more than one-third (36 percent) of the men and less than one-quarter (23 percent) of the women thought that it was of Great or Most Importance to obtain more information about Violent Crimes.

Smaller but still noteworthy differences are found between some of the expressed information needs of respondents who live in major metropolitan areas and those of respondents who live elsewhere. For the major topic Violent Crimes, 36 percent of metropolitan residents, as compared to 27 percent of nonmetropolitan residents rated their need for information as being of Great or Most Importance. For Juvenile Statutes and Codes,

TABLE 8

Q-sort Rating of Information Needs About
Serious Juvenile Offenders by Age of Respondent

Age of Respondent	Information about Serious Juvenile Offenders			Number of Respondents ^b
	Least or Little Importance ^a	Moderate Importance	Great or Most Importance ^a	
Less than 25	20%	42%	38%	80
25 - 34	18%	32%	50%	316
35 - 44	13%	38%	49%	206
45 - 54	14%	30%	56%	116
55 or older	10%	28%	62%	79

^aResponse categories combined because of the small numbers of cases in the extreme category.

^bNumbers on which row percentages are based. Excludes 96 respondents with missing information.

TABLE 9

Q-sort Rating of Information Needs About
Juvenile Status Offenders by Sex of Respondent

Sex of Respondent	Information about Juvenile Status Offenders			Number of Respondents ^b
	Least or Little Importance ^a	Moderate Importance	Great or Most Importance ^a	
Male	20%	32%	48%	510
Female	12%	23%	65%	284

^aResponse categories combined because of the small numbers of cases in the extreme category.

^bNumbers on which row percentages are based. Excludes 99 respondents with missing information.

TABLE 10

Q-Sort Rating of Information Needs About
Violent Crimes by Sex of Respondent

Sex of Respondent	Information about Violent Crimes			Number of Respondents ^b
	Least or Little Importance ^a	Moderate Importance	Great or Most Importance ^a	
Male	32%	32%	36%	505
Female	43%	34%	23%	280

^aResponse categories combined because of small numbers of cases in the extreme category.

^bNumbers on which row percentages are based. Excludes 108 respondents with missing information.

the corresponding figures were 25 percent for metropolitan residents and 34 percent for nonmetropolitan residents.

IV. Discussion and Conclusions

(1) Of 11 major topics, some 893 respondents expressed at least a moderately important need for information about all of them. Each topic consisted of a number of subtopics, and the use of different subtopics in the questionnaire might have yielded somewhat different results. However, one can tentatively conclude that the perceived need for juvenile justice information is high and across-the-board -- and infer a corresponding dearth in either the existence or the availability of such information.

(2) When respondents were forced to sort the topics' importance relative to one another, Prevention and Diversion emerged as the two topics about which most information was needed, followed by Juvenile Status Offenders and Serious Juvenile Offenders. However, the reader should note that rating of the other topics as less important does not imply that they are seen as unimportant; on the contrary, the absolute ratings indicate otherwise.

(3) It is possible to speculate that the high perceived need for information about Prevention and Diversion may indicate that respondents view traditional, system handling of delinquents as inadequate and want information about other, innovative responses.

(4) The mean ranking of the four topics Youthful Offenders, Juvenile Vandalism, Confidentiality, and Juvenile Statutes and Codes that were added near the end of the questionnaire may have been an artifact of their position and degree of explication, and no findings on these topics can be considered to have been yielded.

(5) Also notable is the discrepancy between the relatively low rankings these specialists gave Violent Crimes and the large portion of media and legislative attention devoted to this issue. Remember, however, that respondents were rating importance of obtaining information, not importance of the issue.

(6) Mean scores on subtopics tapping the need for information about implementing the provisions of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act were generally high, as were scores on subtopics referring to ways of dealing with specific forms of youthful misbehavior and to accountability within the juvenile justice system.

(7) Respondents' age, sex, and place of residence did not strongly affect their absolute ratings. However, in the Q-sort, the relative importance attached to information about Serious Juvenile Offenders increased with respondent age; women perceived information about Juvenile Status Offenders as more important than men did; and men perceived information about Violent Crimes as more important than women did.

Also in the Q-sort, metropolitan residents perceived Violent Crimes as slightly more important than nonmetropolitan

residents did, and nonmetropolitan residents perceived information about Juvenile Statutes and Codes as slightly more important than metropolitan residents did. Although the differences are small, they do suggest that degree of urbanization has some effect on the nature of information needs.

(8) Methodological limitations of this study are the following:

(a) The composition of state juvenile advisory groups does not necessarily mirror the totality of people who deal with delinquency. In particular, it tends to exclude national legislators, educators, and practitioners affiliated with small or unconventional organizations -- not to mention youths themselves.

(b) The instruction to rate importance of information need, not the importance of the subject, probably was not followed consistently -- and there is no way to assess how much the latter perception affected the former.

(c) As noted earlier, in the main body of the questionnaire each topic was defined by the researchers' choice of subtopics -- in each case, a somewhat different set of subtopics or a more exhaustive one might have elicited a quite different mean score for the topic. This difficulty also contaminates the Q-sort scores, although perhaps to a lesser degree, since respondent's perceptions of each topic may have been shaped by the subtopics they had had to concentrate on in the previous section of the questionnaire.

(d) Finally, comparisons between the absolute and forced-sort rankings are shaky; each set of results should be considered alone.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

APPENDIX B

Mean Subtopic Scores Within

Major Topic Areas

TABLE B
Mean Subtopic Scores Within
Major Topic Areas

Major Topic/Subtopics	Mean	N
<u>JUVENILE STATUS OFFENDERS</u>		
How important is it for you to have information on...		
(1) removing the category of juvenile status offenders from the juvenile justice system?	4.03	883
(2) the type of placements available for juvenile status offenders?	4.45	885
(3) institutionalization of juvenile status offenders who are awaiting other forms of placement?	3.98	884
(4) how to separate juvenile status offenders from the more serious juvenile offenders or from adult offenders during a period of detention?	3.91	881
(5) developing community foster-care and group homes for juvenile status offenders?	4.29	882
(6) program procedures which guard against the stigmatization of juvenile status offenders?	3.79	882
(7) ensuring due process for juvenile status offenders?	4.09	887
(8) legislation in other states concerning juvenile status offenders?	3.56	883
(9) developing different alternatives for different types of status offenders?	4.20	884
(10) involvement of community members in determining service needs of juvenile status offenders?	3.97	884

Major Topic/Subtopics	Mean	N
<u>SERIOUS JUVENILE OFFENDERS</u>		
How important is it for you to have information on...		
(1) the characteristics of serious juvenile offenders?	4.07	885
(2) classification systems for serious juvenile offenders?	3.66	884
(3) access to prior arrest and conviction records of juveniles identified as serious offenders?	3.65	885
(4) developing services specifically designed for serious juvenile offenders?	4.32	886
(5) treating serious juvenile offenders like adult offenders?	3.65	885
(6) placing serious juvenile offenders in community-based programs and services, as opposed to secure-detention facilities?	3.94	886
(7) community concerns with the serious juvenile offender?	4.07	887

VIOLENT CRIMES

How important is it for you to have information on...		
(1) the rate of violent juvenile offenses?	3.94	885
(2) the rate of gun-related juvenile crimes?	3.63	885
(3) developing programs and services specifically for individual juveniles who commit violent crimes?	4.18	882
(4) the existence of violence-prone street gangs?	3.09	884
(5) the fear of violence or threatened violence as perceived by:		
(a) the elderly in urban areas?	3.57	886
(b) small children robbed by older youths?	3.57	879
(c) the general public?	3.75	880
(6) developing community intervention techniques for dealing with violent youth gangs?	3.46	888

Major Topics/Subtopics	Mean	N
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PREVENTION

How important is it for you
to have information on...

(1) developing community-based programs and services to work with parents to maintain and strengthen the family unit?	4.48	887
(2) identifying learning disabilities and/or emotional problems within the schools?	4.20	888
(3) providing remedial and other special services which increase access to education?	4.16	886
(4) the role of the community in:		
(a) providing educational services beyond normal school activities?	4.12	888
(b) providing recreational opportunities?	3.88	886
(c) providing employment opportunities for youth?	4.29	885
(5) providing opportunities for youth to participate in delinquency prevention planning?	3.94	886
(6) comprehensive drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention programs?	3.96	887

DIVERSION

How important is it for you
to have information on...

(1) developing criteria for referring juveniles to diversion programs according to individual needs?	4.16	875
(2) increasing accountability for what happens to juveniles who are diverted from formal justice-system processing?	4.24	876
(3) ensuring due process whenever diversion takes place?	3.99	872
(4) avoiding the stigmatization of diverted juveniles?	3.70	872

Major Topic/Subtopics	Mean	N
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DIVERSION (cont.)

(5) providing community-based programs to divert youth from the juvenile court?	4.28	874
(6) increasing coordination among diversion programs in a community?	4.15	875
(7) avoiding drawing more juveniles into the system through diversion programs?	4.06	871

LAW ENFORCEMENT

How important is it for you
to have information on...

(1) establishing juvenile units in local law enforcement agencies?	3.74	874
(2) counseling programs attached to the police department?	3.64	878
(3) police discretion in:		
(a) informal diversion, i.e., warn and release?	3.70	873
(b) minority arrest rates?	3.44	872
(c) differential treatment in formal processing?	3.65	872
(4) evaluation of juvenile police officers and units?	3.85	875
(5) ensuring due process for juveniles during formal police processing at the station house?	4.04	876

COURTS

How important is it for you
to have information on...

(1) a family court system, rather than a juvenile court system?	3.82	880
(2) increasing uniformity of judicial decisions concerning juveniles?	3.95	882

Major Topics/Subtopics	Mean	N
<u>COURTS</u> (cont.)		
(3) judicial discretion regarding:		
(a) choice of institution?	3.79	877
(b) length of sentence?	3.82	879
(c) use of diversion alternatives?	4.05	879
(4) evaluation of juvenile courts and juvenile court judges?	4.16	880
(5) the time lapse between charge and disposition in juvenile courts?	3.99	882
(6) provision of alternatives to pre-trial secure detention?	4.06	880
(7) waiving of juveniles to adult court?	3.86	882
(8) releasing juvenile records when a juvenile has been waived to adult court?	3.62	879
(9) establishing or prohibiting mandatory, fixed sentences for juvenile felony offenses?	3.82	880
(10) using alternatives to traditional sentencing, such as:		
(a) restitution?	4.31	879
(b) community service assignments?	4.35	883
(c) fines?	3.73	881
(11) ensuring due process at all stages of juvenile court proceedings?	4.12	876
(12) adopting criminal court proceedings instead of the <i>parens patriae</i> concept?	3.60	871
<u>PROBATION</u>		
How important is it for you to have information on...		
(1) greater use of juvenile probation as a sentencing alternative?	3.49	878
(2) probation departments providing services to families of juvenile status offenders?	3.86	881

Major Topics/Subtopics	Mean	N
<u>PROBATION</u> (cont.)		
(3) establishing a standardized intake process for juveniles?	3.73	878
(4) 24-hour intake for juveniles?	3.82	878
(5) evaluation of juvenile probation outcomes?	4.23	880
(6) defining the role of the probation officer regarding:		
(a) judicial duties?	3.61	882
(b) social service responsibilities?	3.76	879
(7) recruitment and training of juvenile probation officers?	3.71	881
(8) increased use of volunteers in probation?	3.56	882
<u>CORRECTIONS</u>		
How important is it for you to have information on...		
(1) separating juvenile offenders from adult offenders in correctional facilities?	3.93	884
(2) using community-based facilities or programs instead of institutionalization for all but the most serious, habitual juvenile offenders?	4.34	885
(3) providing additional group homes?	4.02	884
(4) closing large juvenile institutions in favor of small, community-based treatment centers?	4.09	885
(5) developing viable alternatives to institutionalization in rural areas?	4.15	885
(6) accountability of institutional personnel for care of institutionalized juveniles (for example, protection from sexual or other physical abuse by other juveniles or adults)?	4.20	884
(7) providing educational, vocational, and counseling services for juveniles in correctional programs?	4.22	885

Major Topics/Subtopics	Mean	N
<u>CORRECTIONS (cont.)</u>		
(8) improving the quality of services for committed juveniles?	4.20	885
(9) evaluation of correctional facilities and programs?	4.26	884
(10) training of people who work in correctional facilities and programs?	4.08	885
(11) the juvenile offender's right to treatment regarding:		
(a) the state's responsibility to provide treatment?	3.99	883
(b) the individual's right to refuse treatment?	3.78	879
(12) the use of citizen advocacy groups to monitor correctional facilities which house juveniles to ensure compliance with the law?	3.70	879
(13) the use of citizen advocacy groups to assist with the removal of juvenile status offenders and the less serious juvenile offenders from secure correctional facilities?	3.71	883
(14) using community-based nonsecure correctional alternatives?	4.06	879
<u>ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING</u>		
How important is it for you to have information on...		
(1) availability of technical assistance to administrators of juvenile-justice-system and delinquency prevention programs?	4.01	882
(2) improving coordination among the agencies of the juvenile justice system?	4.31	885
(3) locating adequate and dependable sources of funds to implement the changes mandated by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act?	4.30	884

Major Topics/Subtopics	Mean	N
<u>ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING (cont.)</u>		
(4) simplifying the process by which federal funds are made available to support juvenile justice/delinquency programs?	4.34	883
(5) improving the fiscal and management practices of juvenile-justice-system and delinquency prevention programs?	4.17	882
<u>EVALUATION AND RESEARCH</u>		
How important is it for you to have information on...		
(1) establishing information systems to assess:		
(a) the amount of delinquency?	3.91	881
(b) how youths are processed by the juvenile justice system?	4.02	882
(2) the development of effective reporting systems to ensure accountability of juvenile-justice-system and delinquency prevention programs?	4.22	883
(3) utilization of information resulting from evaluation research by program staff, criminal justice planners, and legislators?	4.12	880
(4) identifying juveniles areas for which programs and/or information are needed?	4.16	880
(5) identifying model programs and developing ways to utilize those models in other jurisdictions?	4.22	881
(6) evaluation of programs funded by grants or contracts by independent evaluators?	3.92	878

APPENDIX C

Mean Topic Ratings By Profile Variables

TABLE C-1

Mean Topic Ratings by Age

Topic	Age of Respondent					N
	under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 & older	
Juvenile Status Offenders	4.11	4.01	3.97	4.02	4.20	884
Serious Juvenile Offenders	3.91	3.85	3.90	3.94	4.11	883
Violent Crimes	3.82	3.54	3.58	3.76	3.92	884
Prevention	4.27	4.10	4.08	4.12	4.21	884
Diversion	4.10	4.09	3.98	4.20	4.17	872
Law Enforcement	3.96	3.72	3.60	3.77	3.79	875
Courts	3.99	3.95	3.91	3.94	3.97	880
Probation	3.92	3.72	3.67	3.79	3.87	879
Corrections	4.22	4.02	4.02	4.06	4.08	885
Administration & Funding	4.18	4.25	4.26	4.16	4.24	880
Evaluation & Research	4.06	4.11	4.02	4.12	4.09	880

TABLE C-2

Mean Topic Ratings by Sex

Topic	Sex of Respondent		N
	Females	Males	
Juvenile Status Offenders	4.17	3.95	871
Serious Juvenile Offenders	3.90	3.90	870
Violent Crimes	3.61	3.67	871
Prevention	4.21	4.08	871
Diversion	4.22	4.01	860
Law Enforcement	3.82	3.67	862
Courts	4.04	3.88	867
Probation	3.87	3.68	866
Corrections	4.13	4.00	872
Administration & Funding	4.22	4.23	868
Evaluation & Research	4.10	4.07	868

TABLE C-3

Mean Topic Ratings by Place of Residence

Topic	Respondent's Place of Residence		N
	Inside Major Metropolitan Area	Outside Major Metropolitan Area	
Juvenile Status Offenders	4.06	4.00	878
Serious Juvenile Offenders	3.97	3.86	877
Violent Crimes	3.78	3.52	878
Prevention	4.09	4.17	878
Diversion	4.11	4.06	866
Law Enforcement	3.76	3.69	869
Courts	3.94	3.94	874
Probation	3.74	3.77	873
Corrections	4.06	4.04	879
Administration & Funding	4.22	4.24	874
Evaluation & Research	4.12	4.04	874

APPENDIX D

Distribution of Q-Sort Ratings For 15 Major Topics

TABLE D
Distribution of Q-Sort Ratings
For 15 Major Topics

Major Topic	Rating ^a (percent)					N ^b
	1	2	3	4	5	
Juvenile Status Offenders	4	13	29	43	11	808
Serious Juvenile Offenders	1	14	34	43	8	802
Violent Crimes	7	28	33	26	6	801
Prevention	1	7	19	43	30	825
Diversion	3	12	26	52	7	812
Law Enforcement	6	32	44	16	2	805
Courts	1	21	44	31	3	805
Probation	3	30	48	18	1	799
Corrections	4	32	37	24	3	797
Administration and Funding	9	25	32	25	9	801
Evaluation and Research	5	24	30	30	11	805
Youthful Offenders	10	36	35	17	2	780
Juvenile Vandalism	15	45	30	10	0	784
Confidentiality	18	39	30	12	1	779
Juvenile Statutes and Codes	11	29	31	24	5	782

^aA rating of 1 = "Least Importance,"
2 = "Little Importance,"
3 = "Moderate Importance,"
4 = "Great Importance," and
5 = "Most Importance."

^bTotal number of respondents is 893. Respondents who did not rate the topic are excluded from the calculation of percentages.

SURVEY OF **STATE JUVENILE** **ADVISORY GROUPS**

Prepared by

The Coordinating Assessment Center
The National Council on Crime and Delinquency
411 Hackensack Avenue
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

For

Assessment Centers Program
Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

The Assessment Centers Program (est. 1976 by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) is assembling available knowledge on key issues in juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. We want to know what topics decision makers think are most important. Your response to this survey will be taken into consideration when we choose the topics for our published reports. If we receive an adequate number of responses from your state, we will supply your state profile on request.

The structured portion on this questionnaire can be completed in less than an hour. There is also a set of open-ended questions at the end. The more information you can give us, the better—but if you do not have time to do the open-ended questions, we would still like to get your answers to the structured ones (including the Q-sort).

Before answering the questions about the various subjects, please supply the background information requested on the following page.

Please complete and return to NCCD by _____

PLEASE NOTE: THE NUMBERED BOXES TO THE RIGHT OF THE ANSWER CATEGORIES SHOULD BE IGNORED: THEY ARE INCLUDED ONLY TO ASSIST THE PROCESSING OF YOUR ANSWERS.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

A. Role in Juvenile Delinquency Planning and Action
(Please check all that apply to you.)

☐ 6 ☐ 7

- ☐ Member of a state/territory juvenile justice advisory board
☐ Member of a state/territory juvenile justice planning agency
☐ Member of a county/local juvenile justice advisory board
☐ Member of a county/local juvenile justice planning agency
☐ Juvenile justice/delinquency program administrator
☐ Juvenile justice/delinquency program staff
☐ Criminal justice agency administrator
☐ Criminal justice agency staff
☐ Other role (please specify) _____
☐ No major role

B. Occupation/Affiliation

(Please check one that best describes your position.)

☐ 8 ☐ 9

- ☐ Planner ☐ Youth service bureau/system
☐ Law enforcement ☐ Other community-based agency
☐ Courts (not probation) ☐ Legislature
☐ Probation ☐ General public administrator
☐ Parole ☐ Student
☐ Corrections ☐ Other (please specify) _____
☐ Education ☐ _____
☐ Evaluation research ☐ No occupation/affiliation

C. Age

- ☐ Under 20 ☐ 40-44
☐ 20-24 ☐ 45-49
☐ 25-29 ☐ 50-54
☐ 30-34 ☐ 55-59
☐ 35-39 ☐ 60 or over

☐ 10

D. Sex

- ☐ Female ☐ Male

☐ 11

E. Place of Residence

(1) Name of State or Territory _____

(2) Zip Code _____

(3) Type of Community

(Please check one that best describes the community where you live.)

- ☐ Major metropolitan area, central city
☐ Major metropolitan area, suburbs
☐ Small city
☐ Small town or village
☐ Rural

☐ 12 ☐ 13
☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18
☐ 19

MAJOR TOPICS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The following pages list major topics and related subtopics of juvenile delinquency. For each subtopic, please circle the one number which most clearly corresponds to how important you consider the need for information about the subject (not whether you are in favor of or opposed to the position described). The scale runs from 1 (little importance) to 5 (great importance).

EXAMPLE:

**HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON...**

... (1) the rate of violent juvenile offenses?

Little Importance	1	2	3	4	Great Importance

1

JUVENILE STATUS OFFENDERS

Juveniles who have committed an act or engaged in an activity which is illegal only for minors (e.g., truancy, running away, incorrigibility).

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO HAVE INFORMATION ON . . .

	Little Importance					Great Importance
. . . (1) removing the category of juvenile status offenders from the juvenile justice system?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 20
. . . (2) the type of placements available for juvenile status offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
. . . (3) institutionalization of juvenile status offenders who are awaiting other forms of placement?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 22
. . . (4) how to separate juvenile status offenders from the more serious juvenile offenders or from adult offenders during a period of detention?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 23
. . . (5) developing community foster-care and group homes for juvenile status offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 24
. . . (6) program procedures which guard against the stigmatization of juvenile status offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 25
. . . (7) ensuring due process for juvenile status offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 26
. . . (8) legislation in other states concerning juvenile status offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 27
. . . (9) developing different alternatives for different types of status offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 28
. . . (10) involvement of community members in determining service needs of juvenile status offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 29

2

SERIOUS JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Repeat juvenile offenders and juvenile offenders who commit violent crimes.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO HAVE INFORMATION ON . . .

	Little Importance					Great Importance
. . . (1) the characteristics of serious juvenile offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 30
. . . (2) classification systems for serious juvenile offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 31
. . . (3) access to prior arrest and conviction records of juveniles identified as serious offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 32
. . . (4) developing services specifically designed for serious juvenile offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 33
. . . (5) treating serious juvenile offenders like adult offenders?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 34
. . . (6) placing serious juvenile offenders in community-based programs and services, as opposed to secure-detention facilities?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 35
. . . (7) community concerns with the serious juvenile offender?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 36

3 VIOLENT CRIMES

Crimes which involve the threat or use of force and which result in the death or injury of a person, destruction of property, or stealing of property (adapted from the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1969, p. 3).

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON ...

	Little Importance					Great Importance	
... (1) the rate of violent juvenile offenses?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	37
... (2) the rate of gun-related juvenile crimes?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	38
... (3) developing programs and services specifically for individual juveniles who commit violent crimes?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	39
... (4) the existence of violence-prone street gangs?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	40
... (5) the fear of violence or threatened violence as perceived by:							
(a) the elderly in urban areas?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	41
(b) small children robbed by older youths?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	42
(c) the general public?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	43
... (6) developing community intervention techniques for dealing with violent youth gangs?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	44

4 PREVENTION

Measures which tend to make it less likely that juveniles will engage in delinquent activity, usually by remedying situations or conditions believed to lead to delinquency.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON ...

	Little Importance					Great Importance	
... (1) developing community-based programs and services to work with parents to maintain and strengthen the family unit?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	45
... (2) identifying learning disabilities and/or emotional problems within the schools?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	46
... (3) providing remedial and other special services which increase access to education?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	47
... (4) the role of the community in:							
(a) providing educational services beyond normal school activities?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	48
(b) providing recreational opportunities?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	49
(c) providing employment opportunities for youth?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	50
... (5) providing opportunities for youth to participate in delinquency prevention planning?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	51
... (6) comprehensive drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention programs?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	52

5
DIVERSION

The end or suspension of justice-system processing of an alleged offender and his/her referral to a non-justice-system agency or program, decreed by an appropriate authority at any point prior to adjudication.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON ...

	Little Importance					Great Importance				
... (1) developing criteria for referring juveniles to diversion programs according to individual needs?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 53
... (2) increasing accountability for what happens to juveniles who are diverted from formal justice-system processing?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 54
... (3) ensuring due process whenever diversion takes place?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 55
... (4) avoiding the stigmatization of diverted juveniles?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 56
... (5) providing community-based programs to divert youth from the juvenile court?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 57
... (6) increasing coordination among diversion programs in a community?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 58
... (7) avoiding drawing more juveniles into the system through diversion programs?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 59

6
LAW ENFORCEMENT

The department of government responsible for preventing and detecting crime and arresting offenders.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON ...

	Little Importance					Great Importance				
... (1) establishing juvenile units in local law enforcement agencies?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 60
... (2) counseling programs attached to the police department?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 61
... (3) police discretion in:										
(a) informal diversion, i.e., warn and release?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 62
(b) minority arrest rates?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 63
(c) differential treatment in formal processing?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 64
... (4) evaluation of juvenile police officers and units?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 65
... (5) ensuring due process for juveniles during formal police processing at the station house?	1	2	3	4	5					<input type="checkbox"/> 66

7 COURTS

Judicial agencies, consisting of one or more judicial officers, established and convened for the administration of justice. Juvenile courts have original jurisdiction over juveniles who are classified as delinquent, status offenders, or dependents.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO HAVE INFORMATION ON . . .

	Little Importance					Great Importance
. . . (1) a family court system, rather than a juvenile court system?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 67
. . . (2) increasing uniformity of judicial decisions concerning juveniles?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 68
. . . (3) judicial discretion regarding:						
(a) choice of institution?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 69
(b) length of sentence?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 70
(c) use of diversion alternatives?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 71
. . . (4) evaluation of juvenile courts and juvenile court judges?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 72
. . . (5) the time lapse between charge and disposition in juvenile courts?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
. . . (6) provision of alternatives to pre-trial secure detention?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
. . . (7) waiving of juveniles to adult court?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
. . . (8) releasing juvenile records when a juvenile has been waived to adult court?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
. . . (9) establishing or prohibiting mandatory, fixed sentences for juvenile felony offenses?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 10

	Little Importance					Great Importance
. . . (10) using alternatives to traditional sentencing, such as:						
(a) restitution?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
(b) community service assignments?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
(c) fines?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
. . . (11) ensuring due process at all stages of juvenile court proceedings?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
. . . (12) adopting criminal court proceedings instead of the <i>parens patriae</i> * concept?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 15

*In the United States, "parent of the country": the principle that the state, through the juvenile court, is the guardian of the minor and is legally required to protect and ensure the welfare of its ward.

8
PROBATION

Formal or informal supervision of an alleged or convicted/adjudicated offender by a probation officer; OR The department of the court which provides such supervision, supplies presentence/predisposition case investigations to the court, and performs juvenile intake for the juvenile court.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON ...

	Little Importance					Great Importance
	1	2	3	4	5	
... (1) greater use of juvenile probation as a sentencing alternative?						<input type="checkbox"/> 16
... (2) probation departments providing services to families of juvenile status offenders?						<input type="checkbox"/> 17
... (3) establishing a standardized intake process for juveniles?						<input type="checkbox"/> 18
... (4) 24-hour intake for juveniles?						<input type="checkbox"/> 19
... (5) evaluation of juvenile probation outcomes?						<input type="checkbox"/> 20
... (6) defining the role of the probation officer regarding:						
(a) judicial duties?						<input type="checkbox"/> 21
(b) social service responsibilities?						<input type="checkbox"/> 22
... (7) recruitment and training of juvenile probation officers?						<input type="checkbox"/> 23
... (8) increased use of volunteers in probation?						<input type="checkbox"/> 24

9
CORRECTIONS

The system responsible for custody and/or treatment of persons who have been convicted in a criminal court or adjudicated as delinquent in a juvenile court.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON ...

	Little Importance					Great Importance
	1	2	3	4	5	
... (1) separating juvenile offenders from adult offenders in correctional facilities?						<input type="checkbox"/> 25
... (2) using community-based facilities or programs instead of institutionalization for all but the most serious, habitual juvenile offenders?						<input type="checkbox"/> 26
... (3) providing additional group homes?						<input type="checkbox"/> 27
... (4) closing large juvenile institutions in favor of small, community-based treatment centers?						<input type="checkbox"/> 28
... (5) developing viable alternatives to institutionalization in rural areas?						<input type="checkbox"/> 29
... (6) accountability of institutional personnel for care of institutionalized juveniles (for example, protection from sexual or other physical abuse by other juveniles or adults)?						<input type="checkbox"/> 30
... (7) providing educational, vocational, and counseling services for juveniles in correctional programs?						<input type="checkbox"/> 31
... (8) improving the quality of services for committed juveniles?						<input type="checkbox"/> 32
... (9) evaluation of correctional facilities and programs?						<input type="checkbox"/> 33
... (10) training of people who work in correctional facilities and programs?						<input type="checkbox"/> 34

	Little Importance					Great Importance
... (11) the juvenile offender's right to treatment regarding:						
(a) the state's responsibility to provide treatment?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 35
(b) the individual's right to refuse treatment?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 36
... (12) the use of citizen advocacy groups to monitor correctional facilities which house juveniles to ensure compliance with the law?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 37
... (13) the use of citizen advocacy groups to assist with the removal of juvenile status offenders and the less serious juvenile offenders from secure correctional facilities?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 38
... (14) using community-based nonsecure correctional alternatives?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 39

10 ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

All aspects of operating agencies and programs concerned with juvenile justice/delinquency, including administration, management, training, recruitment, funding, planning, interagency coordination, etc.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO HAVE INFORMATION ON...

	Little Importance					Great Importance
... (1) availability of technical assistance to administrators of juvenile-justice-system and delinquency prevention programs?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 40
... (2) improving coordination among the agencies of the juvenile justice system?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 41
... (3) locating adequate and dependable sources of funds to implement the changes mandated by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 42
... (4) simplifying the process by which federal funds are made available to support juvenile justice/delinquency programs?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 43
... (5) improving the fiscal and management practices of juvenile-justice-system and delinquency prevention programs?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 44

11
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

EVALUATION: Measurement or investigation of the outcomes and/or procedures of strategies and programs (e.g., prevention, diversion, treatment) and analysis of their impact, efficiency, and value. RESEARCH: Collection and analysis of information about juvenile justice, juvenile delinquency, and delinquency-related programs and assessment of program needs.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU
TO HAVE INFORMATION ON ...

	Little Importance					Great Importance
... (1) establishing information systems to assess:						
(a) the amount of delinquency?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 45
(b) how youths are processed by the juvenile justice system?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 46
... (2) the development of effective reporting systems to ensure accountability of juvenile justice system and delinquency prevention programs?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 47
... (3) utilization of information resulting from evaluation research by program staff, criminal justice planners, and legislators?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 48
... (4) identifying juvenile areas for which programs and/or information are needed?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 49
... (5) identifying model programs and developing ways to utilize those models in other jurisdictions?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 50
... (6) evaluation of programs funded by grants or contracts by independent evaluators?	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 51

Four additional major topics are defined here for your use in answering the questions on the following pages.

12
YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS

Offenders adjudicated in criminal court who have been designated "youthful offenders," usually by a criminal court judge, in order to provide special treatment in court processing, choice of institution, and/or parole processing. The age range for youthful offenders varies with each state. It begins where the juvenile age leaves off; the upper limit usually ranges from 21 to 25.

13
JUVENILE VANDALISM

Willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property by juveniles.

14
CONFIDENTIALITY

The question of whether juvenile records (those belonging to the police, courts, probation departments, institutions, or parole authorities) should be made available to other justice system and/or non-justice agencies and programs.

15
JUVENILE STATUTES AND CODES

STATUTES: State laws defining juvenile delinquency and status offenses and juvenile-court jurisdiction, procedures, and dispositions. CODES: Organized collections of such laws and the rules and regulations for applying them.

Q-SORT RATING OF THE FIFTEEN MAJOR TOPICS

Place the number of one major topic in each of the boxes below, choosing the column that corresponds to how important you think it is to obtain more information about the subject. There is no need to rank the topics within the columns, as all the boxes within each column receive equal value. For example, if you consider information about Juvenile Justice Offenders, Violent Crimes, Courts, and Juvenile Vandalism to be very important, the numbers 1, 3, 7, and 13 should be placed (in any order) in the four boxes above "Great Importance."

<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> Least Importance	<div><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> Little Importance	<div><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> Moderate Importance	<div><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> Great Importance	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> Most Importance
1. Juvenile Status Offenders <input type="checkbox"/> 52	6. Law Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> 57	11. Evaluation and Research <input type="checkbox"/> 62		
2. Serious Juvenile Offenders <input type="checkbox"/> 53	7. Courts <input type="checkbox"/> 58	12. Youthful Offenders <input type="checkbox"/> 63		
3. Violent Crimes <input type="checkbox"/> 54	8. Probation <input type="checkbox"/> 59	13. Juvenile Vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> 64		
4. Prevention <input type="checkbox"/> 55	9. Corrections <input type="checkbox"/> 60	14. Confidentiality <input type="checkbox"/> 65		
5. Diversion <input type="checkbox"/> 56	10. Administration and Funding <input type="checkbox"/> 61	15. Juvenile Statutes and Codes <input type="checkbox"/> 66		

COMMENTS

The major topics covered by this questionnaire are listed on the following pages. The space below each topic has been provided to allow you to indicate other kinds of information you feel are needed about each area:

1. Juvenile Status Offenders

☐
67

2. Serious Juvenile Offenders

☐
68

3. Violent Crimes

☐
69

4. Prevention

☐
70

5. Diversion

☐
71

6. Law Enforcement

☐
72

7. Courts

☐
6

8. Probation

☐
7

9. Corrections

☐
8

10. Administration and Funding

☐
9

11. Evaluation and Research

☐
10

12. Youthful Offenders

☐
11

13. Juvenile Vandalism

☐
12

14. Confidentiality

☐
13

15. Juvenile Statutes and Codes

☐
14

END

Use the last page to discuss topics which were not identified in this questionnaire and which you feel are important. Additional pages may be added if needed.