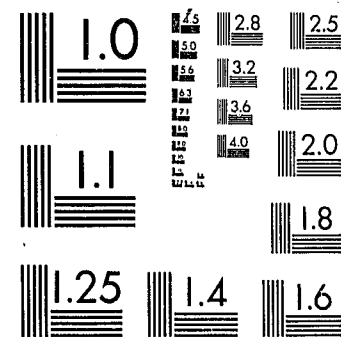


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THE FINAL EVALUATION OF THE JUVENILE INTAKE,
SCREENING AND DIVERSION GRANT PROJECT OPERATED
BY THE SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION

April, 1979

Project Report #3

Suffolk County Department of Probation

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1977, the Suffolk County Department of Probation received a federal grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to implement the "Juvenile Intake, Screening and Diversion Project". This program was developed after collaboration and close cooperation between the Suffolk County Departments of Police and Probation. This document presents the final results of Suffolk Probation's efforts in evaluating the total duration of grant operation which extended through February, 1979. The reader is directed to two other major research efforts conducted by Suffolk Probation that are related to this project: 1) "An Analysis of the First Eighteen Months of the Probation Juvenile Intake, Screening and Diversion Grant Project of Suffolk County", November, 1978; and 2) "An Analysis of the Multiple Recidivist Juvenile Delinquent Population in Suffolk County", January, 1979. These reports reflect an attempt to conduct ongoing research during the project's operation that could help in improving the effectiveness of program implementation.

The research and evaluation effort has been primarily directed towards determining the impact that this program has on the total juvenile justice system in Suffolk County. Subsequent program redesign when necessary has been based at least in part on these results. In addition, this Department has attempted to develop a more effective screening, referral, diversion and petition procedure based on objective criteria. This report presents our progress at this stage of our research. Recommendations for procedural changes are included in this final report.

In order to present the results in the most meaningful context, this report has been organized into the following thirteen major areas: Introduction; Highlights of Project Performance; Program Objectives; Project Performance Measurement; Outcome of Cases Processed; Elapsed Time Between Arrest and Referral; Time Required to Petition a Case; Identification of Sources of Delay; Disposition of Project Cases; Descriptive Profile of 803 Cases; Comparison of Project, NIC, Multiple Recidivist Populations; and Programmatic and Systemic Implications.

Although this report is the final analysis of the L.E.A.A. action grant, the results have generated a research and planning process that is continuing. Specifically, Suffolk Probation wants to further refine the diversion and screening factors for juveniles so that the most appropriate screening criteria can be utilized on an ongoing basis. This entails continuous evaluation with possible redesign based on periodic results. The planning and evaluation mechanism has been established in the form of an Intake Planning Committee which analyzes Intake operations on a monthly basis.

Essentially, the results of the project evaluation indicate that almost all of the stated objectives have been achieved. (Refer to Sections II, III, IV, V, VI, VII.) This project must be evaluated positively both in measurable results and intangible factors such

as increased cooperation and communication between the Police and Probation Departments of Suffolk County.

However, as indicated in Sections VII and VIII, there is still a delay in the amount of time required to petition juvenile cases directly to Family Court. The implications of our results and possible solutions are included in Section XII.

Further analysis of all 88 cases petitioned directly to court in January to determine the source of the delay showed an average of

24.8 days between date of arrest and the date the case material was given to the Police Department for preparation of the petition; and

66.7 days for the Police Department to prepare the petition and return it to the Diversion Unit.

3. Diversion of Cases from Family Court

A.) Immediate Diversion - In 1978, the JSU/Diversion Unit either closed as adjusted or referred to Intake for further adjustment services 62.8% of the cases upon initial screening. 37.2% of the 3,262 cases processed in 1978 were petitioned directly to court.

Over the total grant period of May, 1977 through January, 1979, 65.8% of the cases processed were diverted from court action, either by immediate adjustment at JSU or by referral to the decentralized Intake offices.

B.) Total Successful Diversion - In order to arrive at the total successful diversion rate, the cases petitioned to court following unsuccessful attempts at adjustment at Intake must be considered.

In 1978, 305 cases were petitioned to court following unsuccessful attempts at adjustment or 21.1% of the 1,445 of the cases referred to Intake. When these cases are added to those petitioned directly to court from JSU, the resulting total successful diversion is 53.5% for 1978.

Over the entire grant period of May, 1977 through January, 1979, 534 cases were petitioned from Intake or 19.1% of the 2,791 cases referred to Intake for adjustment. When these cases are taken into consideration, the total successful diversion rate is 56.8%.

This compares with a 44.3% successful diversion rate in 1976, prior to the implementation of the grant.

(It should be noted that the low number of cases petitioned to court in November and December, 1978 does not represent a greater success in diverting cases from court action. It is caused primarily by a backlog of from 200 to 250 cases awaiting the preparation of the petition by the Police Department. A similar backlog existing prior to October, 1977 contributed to the extremely high diversion rates in the first months of grant operations. The development of these backlogs is related to the availability of clerical staff to the Juvenile Services Unit of the Police Department for the preparation of petitions.)

4. Disposition of Cases Referred to Intake for Adjustment

A study of 451 cases referred to Intake for adjustment during September, October and November, 1978 showed that 71.4% had been

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE FROM MAY, 1977 THROUGH JANUARY, 1979

1. Cases Immediately Adjusted at the JSU/Diversion Unit Level

In 1978, 18.5% of the cases processed were adjusted upon initial screening of the JSU/Probation Diversion Unit. Over the total grant period of May, 1977 through January, 1979, 18.7% or 1,107 cases were immediately adjusted requiring no further processing of the cases by the juvenile justice system. The expanded objective of the refunding period of the grant of a 16% immediate adjustment rate was met and exceeded.

2. Timeliness of Intervention

A.) Referral of Cases to Intake for Adjustment Services - The average elapsed time between the date of arrest and the date of referral to Intake has been reduced as follows:

106 days in 1976, to

34 days in November and December, 1977, to

35.5 days for cases with arrest dates in June, July and August, 1978, to

32.6 days for cases with arrest dates in October, November and December, 1978.

In addition, the percentage of cases referred to Intake in less than 30 days increased from 35.1% for the June - August, 1978 cases to 54.5% for the October - December, 1978 cases.

B.) Cases Petitioned Directly to Court from the JSU/Diversion Unit Level - From the initiation of the grant project to the 18-month evaluation of the grant, substantial improvements had been made in the average elapsed time from the date of arrest to the date the case was petitioned to court as follows:

4 - 6 months in 1976, to

70 days for cases petitioned to court in November and December, 1977, to

47.8 days for cases with arrest dates in June, July and August, 1978.

HOWEVER, since the time of the 18-month evaluation, there has been a serious deterioration in the processing of petitions to court. A study of 72 cases petitioned to court in January, 1979 showed an average of 93.4 days between arrest and petition to court.

successfully adjusted, 26.6% were petitioned to court and 2.0% were pending. Further analysis of those cases petitioned to court showed that the most frequent reason for sending the case to court was that the respondent denied the charges, making informal adjustment of the case impossible. 27.2% of the cases petitioned to court fell into this category. Possible factors involved in the increased number of juveniles deciding to deny the charges and to go to court include the increased use of attorneys in juvenile cases, possible awareness on the part of juveniles of the frequency of ACOD dispositions and dismissals, and the long delays now occurring in the petitioning of a case to court.

5. Paperwork Reduction

For those cases which are immediately adjusted by the JSU Diversion Unit and those cases which are referred to Intake for adjustment services, the necessity for complete investigations and the preparation of petitions is eliminated. There were 605 cases immediately adjusted at the JSU level and 1,445 cases referred to Intake in 1978. This translates to a 62.8% paperwork reduction on the initial processing of the case for 1978. Over the total grant period, the number of cases immediately adjusted and referred to Intake has resulted in a 65.8% reduction of paperwork on initial processing. However, those cases which are unsuccessfully adjusted at Intake and are petitioned to court require that a petition be prepared and any information not obtained at the time of arrest be collected by the Police Department when the case is returned from Intake. The 305 cases petitioned to court from Intake in 1978 and the 578 cases petitioned to court from Intake over the total period of grant operations must be considered in estimating the total reduction in paperwork. Including the processing required on unsuccessfully adjusted cases reduces the paperwork savings to 53.5% in 1978 and 56.8% over the full grant period. This reduced figure exceeds both the initial goal of 20% paperwork savings and the expanded goal of 40% savings for the refunding period.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Project Goals and Objectives of Original Grant

- A.) To provide the fastest and most appropriate intervention for juveniles who are apprehended by the Police. A mechanism will be established to provide for immediate telephone screening of cases by a Probation Officer to determine whether informal adjustment or petition to Family Court is required.
- B.) To refine and develop the most effective screening criteria to facilitate correct decisions with regard to juvenile diversion through research and evaluation.
- C.) To divert from the formal court system those youngsters who may be currently petitioned because of the lack of timely intervention or inadequate screening criteria. To continue to divert those youngsters for whom the current system is reasonably effective but at an earlier point in time.
- D.) To provide expanded Intake screening and evaluation on evenings and weekends through the assignment of three Probation Officers to work centrally in the western end of the County. To provide crisis intervention for PINS runaways and juvenile delinquents located by the Police Department.
- E.) To study and evaluate existing methods and procedures in the Police Youth Section and Probation Department in an effort to streamline and improve the effectiveness of the initial system processing. To develop intra-departmental forms to facilitate tracking, research and evaluation.
- F.) To work with available community agencies suitable for use as referral resources for youngsters diverted by Probation.

2. Expanded Objectives as Submitted in the Refunding Application

- A.) By providing immediate intervention instead of long delays between arrest and services, we believe that we can immediately adjust or mediate at least 16% of the cases over a full year's duration.
- B.) By providing differential screening and additional service, we believe that over 65% of the juvenile delinquent population will be successfully diverted from Family Court as opposed to 44.3% in 1976. This would represent a 20.7% improvement in the successful adjustment rate over 1976.
- C.) One of our major objectives is to totally reduce the backlog of petitions to Family Court and, thereby, reduce the average time elapsed from arrest to petition. The current time is 70.1 days which is an improvement over the 1976 average of 4 - 6 months. We wish to reduce this time by the end of this grant to 40 days or less.

D.) To continue reducing the amount of required paperwork by continued implementation of the immediate screening mechanism. Our original objective was a 20% reduction. We now project a 40% reduction over the 1976 base year.

E.) To reduce the number of Shelter remands by providing weekend, evening and holiday intervention services. In 1975, there were 101 cases requiring only one day of Shelter detention. Many of these cases could have avoided secure detention with additional resources available on weekends, evenings and holidays. With the additional Probation Officer, we would provide additional crisis intervention services for runaway juveniles.

F.) To refine and develop the most effective screening criteria to facilitate correct decisions with regard to juvenile diversion.

G.) To study and evaluate existing methods and procedures in the Police Youth Section and Probation Department in an effort to streamline and improve the effectiveness of the initial system processing.

H.) To work with available community agencies suitable for use as referral resources for youngsters diverted by Probation.

I.) A major objective of this refunding grant is to comprehensively evaluate the success of these juvenile screening, adjustment and diversion procedures with the juvenile delinquent population.

J.) Another goal is to prepare a final research report that would present the results of our analysis. The juveniles will be tracked and the screening criteria evaluated and redesigned if necessary.

K.) To continue to increase the amount of cooperation, communication and coordination between the Suffolk County Departments of Police and Probation.

IV. PROJECT PERFORMANCE AS MEASURED AGAINST EXPANDED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The grant project operations have shown the following success and difficulties in meeting the expanded goals and objectives of the refunding period:

1. Immediate Adjustment of Cases at the JSU/Diversion Level

18.5% of the cases processed in 1978 were immediately adjusted by the JSU Diversion Unit in 1978. Over the total period covered from May, 1977 through January, 1979, 18.7% of the cases were immediately adjusted. For the year of 1978, as well as the total period of grant operations, the goal of a 16% immediate adjustment rate has been met.

2. Total Successful of Diversion of Cases From Family Court

In 1978, a total of 53.5% of the 3,262 cases processed were successfully diverted from Family Court. This includes those cases immediately adjusted at the JSU level and those cases successfully

adjusted at Intake. For the total period of grant operations covered, 56.8% of the cases were successfully diverted. This compares with a 44.3% diversion rate in 1976, prior to the implementation of the grant.

These figures represent partial success in increasing the diversion rate to the goal of 65% stated in the refunding application. The 65% goal was based on data obtained for the first six months of grant operations, from May through October, 1977. The number of petitions sent to court during the first five months of the grant was very low, resulting in a high diversion rate. In October, 1977, two additional clerical workers were assigned to the Juvenile Services Unit of the Police Department to process a backlog of cases awaiting petition preparation. The number of petitions processed jumped for the months of October, 1977 through March, 1978, representing a clearing up of the backlog of cases to be sent to court. Therefore, the 65% goal was based on an artificially low number of cases being sent to court during the early months of the project and consequently was unrealistic.

3. Timeliness in Processing of Cases Petitioned to Court

The 18-month evaluation report showed that through the months of June, July and August, 1978, substantial progress had been made in reducing the average length of time between arrest and petition to court to the goal of 40 days stated in the refunding application. The average time between arrest and petition had been reduced from 4 - 6 months in 1976 to 70 days in November and December, 1977. This time lapse was further reduced to 47.8 days for cases with arrest dates in June, July and August, 1978.

Since that time, however, there has been an increase in time required for the processing of cases directly petitioned to court. For 72 cases for which petitions were received in Hauppauge for transmittal to court in January, 1978, the average elapsed time between arrest and petition was 93.4 days. Further study showed that the reduction in time for petition to Court from an average of 150 days (pre-grant) to 93.4 days (end of grant) was the best reduction that could be realized with current clerical staff level utilizing a manual information processing system for an annual new case rate of approximately 3,250 cases.

The earlier grant case processing reductions were attributable to sizeable increases in clerical resources for the sole purpose of reducing the backlog of cases. Once the additional staff returned to their regular duties, the improved procedures with normal staff levels reduced the average time for petition to Court by 57.4 days or 38%.

4. Paperwork Reductions

The necessity of preparing petitions to Court and performing complete police investigations has been eliminated in those cases immediately adjusted by the JSU/Diversion Unit and those cases referred to Intake which were successfully diverted. The 1,745 cases successfully diverted from Family Court action in 1978 and 3,364 cases diverted

over the total period covered by this report have resulted in a 53.5% and 56.8% reduction, respectively, in paperwork. These figures exceed the goal of 40% paperwork savings stated in the refunding application.

The total reduction in paperwork would actually be higher when considering the fact that cases now immediately adjusted at JSU would, prior to the initiation of the grant, have been sent to Intake for adjustment services. A case folder would have been opened, a contact record by the Probation Officer would have been maintained and clerical records of the disposition of the case would have been required. Therefore, the 1,107 cases immediately adjusted at JSU represent an additional paperwork savings to the decentralized Intake offices. The 56.8% paperwork reduction stated above is, therefore, a somewhat conservative estimate.

5. Reduction of Shelter Remands

There was no exact way to compare pre-project and project remands because of the closing of the Suffolk County Children's Shelter. Field Observation and comments by line staff indicate some reduction in this area. The availability of additional staff at critical times seemed beneficial especially for those cases that would have been overnight remands.

6. Development of Effective Screening Criteria

As part of the eighteen-month evaluation report, a study was done of 50 cases closed as adjusted at JSU, 50 cases referred to Intake and 50 cases petitioned directly to court. The purpose of the study was to define the characteristics of each group and to determine the recidivism rates for each group. This information would be used to evaluate what criteria was presently being used in the decision-making at the JSU level and the success of those criteria in selecting cases for the most appropriate action. The results of the analysis were outlined in the 18-month evaluation report and were communicated to the Intake unit supervisors for further improvement to the Intake unit supervisors for further improvement to the decision-making process.

Only 2 cases or 4.0% of the 50 cases studied which were closed as adjusted at JSU had subsequent arrests over a 9-month follow-up period. This demonstrated the success of the criteria being used to select cases for immediate adjustment. The reasons for petitioning cases to court following unsuccessful adjustment have been examined in both the 18-month evaluation and in this report. These results have been and will continue to be reviewed in periodic meetings with the Intake unit supervisors to examine the appropriateness of the decision to refer certain kinds of cases to Intake and whether procedural improvements or alternatives may be available which would allow diversion of additional cases from court action.

Policy determinations by the Family Court which limit the decision-making alternatives at the JSU and Intake levels have been examined in the meetings with Intake supervisors. Of particular concern is the policy that all co-respondents must be treated similarly at the

JSU Diversion level, regardless of the circumstances or prior record of the individual juveniles. The results of this policy is that a juvenile with no prior record can be petitioned to court because a co-respondent has a prior record or behavioral problems requiring court action. Conversely, a juvenile with a serious prior record may be referred to Intake for the benefit of co-respondents for whom court action would be inappropriate. A further review on an inter-departmental basis of this and other policies affecting the decision-making process is essential.

7. Study and Evaluate Existing Procedures in Police Department to Streamline Process

Highlights included in current report.

8. Comprehensive Evaluation of the Success of Juvenile Screening Adjustment and Diversion Procedures

The various interim reports, the 18-month evaluation report, the related studies of the Multiple Recidivist population, the cases receiving A.C.O.D. treatment, and this report collectively represent a comprehensive evaluation of the screening, adjustment and diversion process.

9. Final Research Report

Current document completed.

10. Increase Cooperation Between Police and Probation

One of the most beneficial aspects of this project has been the continuous, open dialogue between the police and probation departments. The positive aspects of this component seemingly will continue long after the grant termination.

V. OUTCOME OF CASES PROCESSED FROM MAY, 1977 - JANUARY, 1979

As indicated in Table I, there were 5,922 juvenile cases processed during the duration of this grant project. Out of this total 1,107 cases or 18.7% were immediately closed by adjustment by the project staff. 2,024 cases or 34.2% were immediately petitioned to court. The remaining 2,791 cases or 47.1% were referred for adjustment to decentralized probation offices.

As indicated in Table II, the overall adjustment rate during the project's operation was 3,364 cases or 56.8%. (Refer to Research Report #1, "An Analysis of the First 18 Months of the Probation Juvenile Intake, Screening and Diversion Grant Project of Suffolk County", for an analysis of the recidivism rates of each group.) The petition rate either at immediate screening or after adjustment attempts was 43.2% representing 2,558 cases.

In 1977, a total of 185 cases were petitioned to court following unsuccessful attempts at adjustment at Intake. This represented 15.3% of the cases referred to Intake that year. The 185 cases petitioned to court from Intake are added to those petitioned directly from JSU to arrive at the total petition rate for the year.

In 1978, 305 cases were petitioned to court from Intake following attempts at adjustment. This represents 21.1% of those cases referred to Intake. The remainder (78.9%) were successfully adjusted and closed at Intake.

In January, 1979, 44 cases were petitioned to court from Intake following unsuccessful attempts at adjustment. These cases were added to the 88 cases petitioned directly to court from JSU in January to arrive at the total number of petitions for the month.

TABLE I : TOTAL NUMBER OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASES PROCESSED BETWEEN MAY, 1977 AND JANUARY, 1979 AND OUTCOME BY MONTH

	Total Cases Received at JSS	Referred for Adjustment to Decentralized Offices		Closed by Adjustment at JSS		Petitioned Directly to Court	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%
May	32	16	50.0	16	50.0	0	0
June	296	218	73.6	57	19.3	21	7.1
July	192	85	44.3	27	14.1	80	41.6
August	307	185	60.3	68	22.1	54	17.6
September	302	220	72.8	1	0.3	81	26.8
October	471	165	35.0	156	33.1	150	31.9
November	318	127	39.9	0	0.0	191	60.1
December	444	197	44.4	100	22.5	147	33.1
Sub-Total	2,362	1,213	51.35%	425	18.0%	724	30.65%
<u>1978</u>							
January	311	96	30.9	60	19.3	155	49.8
February	234	77	32.9	74	31.6	83	35.5
March	302	152	50.3	0	0.0	150	49.7
April	243	93	38.3	59	24.3	91	37.4
May	293	129	44.0	57	19.5	107	36.5
June	252	144	57.1	26	10.3	82	32.5
July	195	51	26.2	62	31.8	82	42.1
August	321	162	50.5	45	14.0	114	35.5
September	390	212	54.4	46	11.8	132	33.8
October	317	121	38.2	86	27.1	110	34.7
November	250	148	59.2	61	24.4	41	16.4
December	154	60	39.0	29	18.8	65	42.2
Sub-Total	3,262	1,445	44.3%	605	18.5%	1,212	37.2%
<u>1979</u>							
January	298	133	44.6	77	25.8	88	29.5
TOTAL	5,922	2,791	47.1%	1,107	18.7%	2,024	34.2%

TABLE II : SUMMARY TABLE OF PROBATION/JSU INTAKE
GRANT TOTALS FOR MAY, 1977 THROUGH JANUARY, 1979

	ADJUSTED*		PETITIONED**		GRAND TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1977	1,453	61.5	909	38.5	2,362	100.0
1978	1,745	53.5	1,517	46.5	3,262	100.0
January, 1979	166	55.7	132	44.3	298	100.0
TOTAL	3,364	56.8%	2,558	43.2%	5,922	100.0%

*The "Adjusted" cases include those closed as adjusted at JSS and those success-fully adjusted at Intake.

**The "Petitioned" cases include those petitioned directly to court from JSU and those petitioned to court following unsuccessful attempts at adjusted at Intake.

VI. ELAPSED TIME BETWEEN ARREST AND REFERRAL

As indicated in Table III, the average number of days elapsed between arrest and referral for adjustment services for the 402 cases analyzed was 32.6 days. This compares with the following figures found during earlier periods of the grant project operations:

a.) An average of 106 days in 1976 prior to the implementation of the grant;

b.) an average of 34 days for a sample of 79 cases analyzed in November and December, 1977; and

c.) an average of 35.5 days for 211 cases with arrest dates in June, July and August, 1978. (See report entitled, "An Analysis of the First Eighteen Months of the Probation Juvenile Intake, Screening and Diversion Grant Project of Suffolk County".)

The average number of days elapsed between arrest and referral has been reduced by approximately 3 days since the June - August, 1978 period. More significant, however, is the fact that over half of the 402 cases analyzed above or 54.5% were referred in less than 30 days from the date of arrest. In the June - August sample, 35.1% were referred in less than 30 days. 94.6% of the cases with arrest dates from October through December, 1978 were referred in less than 60 days, as compared with 95.7% in the June - August sample. No cases in the June - August sample required 80 days or more to process, whereas 9 cases or 2.2% of the above cases required 80 days or more to process from arrest to referral. The two cases which were referred 110 days following the date of arrest were actually received by the Diversion Unit from the Police Department 92 days following the arrest for processing. They were referred to the Decentralized Office 18 days following receipt from the Police Department.

In summary, the above statistics show a slight reduction in the average elapsed time from arrest to referral in the most recent period of grant operations studied. Also indicated is a significant improvement in the proportion of cases processed in less than 30 days. These improvements are due primarily to a streamlined procedure for handling cases referred for adjustment, which was implemented by the diversion unit staff on September 1, 1978. The figures show that for a small number of cases, problems remain which result in usually long delays in processing.

TABLE III: ELAPSED TIME BETWEEN DATE OF JUVENILE
ARREST AND DATE OF REFERRAL TO
DECENTRALIZED OFFICES FOR ADJUSTMENT SERVICES

Number of Days	Number of Cases*	%	Cum. %
0 - 9	33	8.2	8.2
10 - 19	96	23.9	32.1
20 - 29	90	22.4	54.5
30 - 39	41	10.2	64.7
40 - 49	57	14.2	78.9
50 - 59	37	9.2	88.1
60 - 69	26	6.5	94.6
70 - 79	13	3.2	97.8
80 - 89	7	1.7	99.5
90 - 99	0	0.0	99.5
100 - 109	0	0.0	99.5
110 - 119	2	0.5	100.0
TOTAL	402	100.0	100.0

Average elapsed time = 32.6 days.

*The 402 cases used in this analysis were all cases Referred to Intake for Adjustment with arrest dates in October, November and December, 1978.

VII: TIME REQUIRED TO PETITION A CASE TO COURT
DIRECTLY FROM THE JSU DIVERSION UNIT

The following table shows the number of days elapsed between the date of apprehension and the date of receipt of the petition in Hauppauge for 72 cases petitioned directly to Family Court from the JSU Diversion Unit, received in January, 1979.

The average number of days elapsed, 93.4, represents a serious deterioration since the 18-month evaluation of the grant project. A study of 138 cases petitioned directly to court with arrest dates in June, July and August of 1978 required an average of 47.8 days. This is an increase of 95.4% in the length of time required to petition a case to court. The 18-month evaluation used the date the petition was sent to court from JSU, rather than the date the case was received in Hauppauge. However, this difference would only account for an increase of 2 - 3 days at most. An analysis of cases processed November and December, 1977, showed an average elapsed time between arrest and receipt of the petition to court of 70 days. The current elapsed time represents an increase of 33.4% above that figure.

The table shows only 1 case of the 72 received in January, 1979 or 1.4% petitioned in less than 60 days. In the 18-month evaluation, 73.9% of the cases were petitioned to court in less than 60 days. At that time, only 8.8% of the cases were pending over 90 days. Of the January, 1979 cases, 47.2% required over 90 days to be petitioned to court and 15.3% required over 120 days.

The delay in the petitioning of cases to court is even more critical when the number of prior arrests of the juveniles involved is considered. Of the 72 juveniles petitioned to court in January, 1979, 38 or 52.8% had two or more prior JD arrests. The 18-month evaluation report showed that 69.2% of those juveniles petitioned to court in January, 1978, were arrested again during a nine-month follow-up period. Therefore, if effective court intervention is not achieved on a timely basis with these 38 cases, over two-thirds of them can be expected to be rearrested. In addition, 14 of the 72 cases or 19.4% have 5 or more prior arrests and thus meet the definition of a "Multiple Recidivist" as used in a recent study.¹ That study documents the impact of the Multiple Recidivist on the community and the court system and the severity of offenses committed by this group. The Multiple Recidivist sample had an average of 3.2 subsequent arrests over an 8-month follow-up period, pointing out the crucial need for effective court action in such cases.

1 An Analysis of the Multiple Recidivist Juvenile Delinquent Population in Suffolk County, January, 1979

TABLE IV: NUMBER OF DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN
DATE OF ARREST AND DATE OF
RECEIPT OF PETITION TO COURT

72 cases petitioned directly to court from the JSU Diversion Unit, for which petitions were received in January, 1979 (January 11th, 12th, 17th, 22nd, 24th, 25th and 31st)

NUMBER OF DAYS	PETITIONED CASES		
	#	%	Cum. %
0 - 59	1	1.4%	1.4%
60 - 69	9	12.5%	13.9%
70 - 79	13	18.1%	32.0%
80 - 89	15	20.8%	52.8%
90 - 99	8	11.1%	63.9%
100 - 109	8	11.1%	75.0%
110 - 119	7	9.7%	84.7%
120 - 129	7	9.7%	94.4%
Over 129	4	5.6%	100.0%
TOTAL	72	100.0%	

Average No. of Days Elapsed = 93.38

IDENTIFICATION OF THE SOURCE OF DELAYS IN THE
PROCESSING OF CASES TO COURT FROM THE JSU DIVERSION UNIT

The previous section noted the substantial increase in the length of time required to petition a juvenile delinquency case to court from the JSU Diversion Unit. Because of the serious implications of the delays in this process on the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system, it was determined that a more detailed analysis was necessary to identify when the delays were occurring and the source of the backlog.

The records of the JSU Diversion Unit contain for each case petitioned to court, the date of arrest, the date the case was given to the Police Department to prepare the petition and the date the completed petition was received back from the Police Department. The dates that the cases were sent from the Diversion Unit to Hauppauge for transmittal to Court are available on the lists which are typed of the cases transmitted. The records of all 88 cases petitioned directly to court from JSU in January, 1979 were reviewed to establish these dates. The average number of days elapsed between arrest and transmittal of the case to Hauppauge was 91.5, which is consistent with the information on the 72 cases analyzed in the previous section.

The following two tables show; 1) the elapsed time between the date of arrest and the date the case material was given to the Police Department to prepare the petitions; and 2) the elapsed time between the date the case was given to the Police Department and the date the completed petition was received by the Diversion Unit. In all 88 cases, the petitions were sent to Hauppauge on the same day they were received back from the Police Department.

As noted on the first table, the average number of days between arrest and receipt of the case material by the Police Department from the Diversion Unit was 24.8. This time period represents time required by the Police Department to process the arrest; time required by the Probation Officers to contact the respondent, parents and complainants in the case to make a determination as to the appropriate decision; and time for clerical processing of the case by the Diversion Unit. As is evident from the figures in the table, the average is somewhat skewed by a small number of cases which required over 90 days to process. 63 or 71.6% of the 88 cases required less than 20 days between arrest and receipt of the case material by the Police Department for preparation of the petition. The records on the 8 cases which took over 90 days to process do not indicate either the date when the cases were received by the Diversion Unit from the Police or the reason for the usual delay.

The second table shows that an average of 66.7 days elapsed from the date the case material was given to the Police Department for petition preparation and the date the completed petition was returned. In most cases, this time period represents primarily time required for clerical preparation and typing of the petition. However, in some cases, further investigation by the Juvenile Officers is necessary to obtain signed statements from witnesses and complainants who were not available at the time of the

original processing of the arrest. Delays are also caused in a small number of cases by the need for technical evidence, such as lab analyses in drug cases or by new developments in the case, such as apprehension of additional co-respondents.

The table shows that 69.3% of the cases required 60 days or more for the preparation of the petition. In order to provide some perspective from which to consider this figure, reference is made to the 18-month evaluation of the grant project in which 138 cases petitioned directly to court were reviewed. 73.9% of those cases required less than 60 days for the entire process from date of arrest to the date the petition was sent to court.

As noted in the previous section, the implications of delays in petitioning a case to court are particularly serious when a repeat offender is involved. In 55 or 62.5% of the 88 cases petitioned to court in January, the juvenile had a recorded prior arrest. In the 18-month evaluation report, an analysis of 50 cases petitioned to court in January, 1978 showed that 66.7% of those juveniles petitioned to court who had 1 or more prior arrest were re-arrested during a 9-month follow-up period. This emphasizes the importance of timely court intervention in the cases of repeat offenders.

TABLE V: NUMBER OF DAYS ELAPSED FROM ARREST TO DATE
CASE MATERIAL WAS GIVEN TO THE POLICE
DEPARTMENT TO PREPARE THE PETITION TO COURT

Number of Days	Number of Cases	%	Cum. %
0 - 9	12	13.6	13.6
10 - 19	51	58.0	71.6
20 - 29	6	6.8	78.4
30 - 39	4	4.5	82.9
40 - 49	5	5.7	88.6
50 - 59	1	1.1	89.7
60 - 69	1	1.1	90.8
70 - 79	0	0.0	90.8
80 - 89	0	0.0	90.8
90 - 99	5	5.7	96.5
100 +	<u>3</u>	<u>3.4</u>	<u>99.9</u>
TOTAL	88	99.9	99.9

Average elapsed time = 24.8 days

The 88 cases represent all cases petitioned directly to court from JSU in January, 1979.

TABLE VI: NUMBER OF DAYS ELAPSED FROM DATE CASE MATERIAL
WAS GIVEN TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE
DATE COMPLETED PETITION WAS RETURNED TO THE DIVERSION UNIT

Number of Days	Number of Cases	%	Cum. %
0 - 9	2	2.3	2.3
10 - 19	0	0.0	2.3
20 - 29	8	9.1	11.4
30 - 39	0	0.0	11.4
40 - 49	4	4.5	15.9
50 - 59	13	14.8	30.7
60 - 69	15	17.0	47.7
70 - 79	25	28.4	76.1
80 - 89	9	10.2	86.3
90 - 99	7	8.0	94.3
100 - 109	<u>5</u>	<u>5.7</u>	<u>100.0</u>
TOTAL	88	100.0	100.0

Average elapsed time = 66.7 days

In all 88 cases, the petition was sent to Hauppauge for transmittal to court on the same day it was received from the Police Department by the JSU unit.

IX. DISPOSITION OF CASES REFERRED FOR INTAKE ADJUSTMENT

In the eighteen-month evaluation report of grant operations, an analysis was performed of 544 cases referred for adjustment to determine the reasons for the increase in the proportion of cases petitioned to court following unsuccessful attempts at adjustment. Of the 544 cases referred to the decentralized Intake offices for adjustment services in the months of March through June, 1978, 160 or 29.4% were subsequently petitioned to court. The rate of unsuccessful adjustments ranged from a low of 23.2% in May to a high of 48.9% in June. The percentage of cases petitioned to court also varied among the decentralized offices, from a low of 11.8% of cases referred to a high of 43.4%.

Following that analysis, periodic meetings were held with the supervisors of the Family Court Intake units. The factors involved in the decision to petition a case to court were discussed. A significant percentage of cases (47.1%) at that time were being petitioned to court because of problems involved in restitution and failure of the respondent to appear for interviews. Procedural changes were suggested and implemented to attempt to reduce the number of unsuccessful adjustments in these cases.

The following tables contain figures on the disposition of cases referred to Intake during the months of September, October and November, 1978. This information has been collected to establish whether the trends noted in the previous analysis have continued and whether the review of adjustment procedures and criteria conducted at the meetings of the Intake unit supervisors has had an impact on the rate of successful adjustments.

The ledgers maintained at the JSU Diversion Unit show 451 cases referred to Intake for adjustment during September, October and November, 1978. Table VII indicates that 120 or 26.6% of those cases were petitioned to court following unsuccessful attempts at adjustment. This represents a slight reduction from the 29.4% petition rate in the earlier study. Table VIII shows the disposition for the same months of 369 cases, for which the Juvenile Adjustment Record forms have been received from the decentralized offices. What is significant in these figures is that the unsuccessful adjustment rate, which varied widely in the previous analysis (from 23.2% to 48.9%), appears to have stabilized at an average level of about 25%.

Of the 369 cases referred to Intake from September through November, 1978 for which Juvenile Adjustment Record forms were received, 92 were petitioned to court. The Adjustment Record forms on each of these cases were reviewed to determine the reasons for the decision to petition the case to court. Table IX shows the reasons for the petition broken down by month and Table X gives the breakdown by decentralized office.

A comparison of this data with the figures on unsuccessfully adjusted cases in the eighteen-month evaluation shows some important changes. First, the most frequent reason for petitioning the case to court in the September - November period is that the respondent denied the charges at Intake, making an informal adjustment of the charges impossible. This occurred in 27.2% of the 92 cases petitioned to court. In the previous

analysis, 5.9% of the cases were petitioned to court because the respondent preferred to have the charges settled in court, for a variety of reasons including a denial of guilt. In a small number of cases in the current study - 4 of the 25 cases in which the respondent denied the charges - the denial of guilt was made on the advice of an attorney. The increased use of private attorneys in juvenile cases may be one factor contributing to the increased number of cases falling into this category. There may also be an increasing awareness among the juvenile population of the frequency of ACOD (Adjournment-In-Contemplation-of-Dismissal) dispositions and dismissals of charges in cases which reach Family Court. If this awareness is present, the advantages of avoiding court action and cooperating in the adjustment process are diminished from the perspective of the juvenile. The long delays now occurring between arrest and the time the case is petitioned to court, analyzed in previous sections, may also be a factor in the respondent's decision to go to court. There may be a belief that the longer the case is delayed, the greater the possibility that the charges will be dismissed either by a decision by the Judge due to the age of the case or discouragement on the part of the complainant.

In the previous study, 34.5% of the cases were petitioned to court due to the "Difficult Nature of the Case". This category, which was the most frequent reason for petitioning the case, included those instances where there were serious behavioral or attitudinal problems on the part of the juvenile, severe family problems affecting the juvenile, subsequent offenses during the adjustment period or a particularly serious charge which warranted court action. In the September - November sample, serious behavioral or family problems again represented an important factor in sending the case to court. 18.5% of the cases were petitioned for this reason. An additional 5.4% were petitioned due to other pending charges or prior record, which would have been included in "Difficult Nature of the Case" in the first study.

Restitution remains a problem in adjusting juvenile delinquency cases. 15.2% of the cases could not be adjusted due to inability on the part of the complainant and respondent to agree on a fair amount of restitution. In the previous study, 22.7% of the cases were sent to court because of problems with restitution.

In the March - June cases, the second most frequent reasons for petitioning cases to court was a failure to appear for adjustment interviews. For the September - November sample, this category was broken down into two groups: those in which the respondent simply failed to appear and did not answer the appointment letters and those cases in which there was a definite lack of cooperation in the adjustment process. Together, these two groups accounted for 11.9% of the cases sent to court, as opposed to 24.4% of the cases in the prior sample.

As can be seen from this data, there appear to be shifts over time in the nature of cases being petitioned to court from Intake. It would require tracking of adjustment cases over a longer period to determine whether these shifts are due to changes or improvements in departmental

procedures, additional emphasis in training or supervision of Intake workers on the handling of certain kinds of cases, changes in the nature of cases being referred to Intake, or external factors, such as court policies or delays in court action, over which the Probation Department has no control.

TABLE VII: DISPOSITIONS OF CASES REFERRED TO INTAKE
OFFICES FOR ADJUSTMENT
(September, October and November, 1978)

Office	Closed as Adjusted		Petitioned to Court		Pending		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Babylon	45	73.8	11	18.0	5	8.2	61
Hauppauge	111	67.3	50	30.3	4	2.4	165
Islip	95	81.2	22	18.8	0	0.0	117
Riverhead	14	53.8	12	46.2	0	0.0	26
Yaphank	<u>57</u>	<u>69.5</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>30.5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>82</u>
TOTAL	322	71.4	120	26.6	9	2.0	451

These figures are derived from the ledgers maintained at the JSU Diversion Unit of all cases Closed as Adjusted at JSU, Referred to Intake for Adjustment and Petitioned Directly to Court. For those cases Referred to Intake, the ledgers show the date of the referral, the date the case is returned from the Intake Offices and the disposition of the case at Intake.

**TABLE VIII: DISPOSITION OF CASES REFERRED TO INTAKE
BASED ON THE JUVENILE ADJUSTMENT RECORD
FORMS RECEIVED FROM THE INTAKE OFFICES
(September, October and November, 1978)**

Month	Closed as Adjusted		Petitioned to Court		Other*		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
September	101	73.2	34	24.6	3	2.2	138
October	92	76.0	28	23.1	1	0.8	121
November	76	69.1	30	27.3	4	3.6	110
TOTAL	269	72.9	92	24.9	8	2.2	369

*This category includes those cases in which the respondent has moved out of the County or an extension has been granted and the case is not yet closed.

The difference in the total number of cases recorded on this table and the one based on the ledger maintained by the JSU Diversion Unit is due to the fact that Juvenile Adjustment Record forms have not yet been received on all cases processed by the Intake Offices.

**TABLE IX: CASES UNSUCCESSFULLY ADJUSTED AT INTAKE AND
PETITIONED TO COURT BY REASON FOR PETITION
AND BY MONTH
(September, October, November, 1978)**

Reason	September		October		November		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Respondent denies charges	9	26.5	10	35.7	6	20.0	25	27.2
Serious behavioral psychological or family problems involved in case	4	11.8	5	17.9	8	26.7	17	18.5
Restitution cannot be resolved	7	20.6	2	7.1	5	16.7	14	15.2
Complainant insists on court action	4	11.8	1	3.6	6	20.0	11	12.0
Multiple factors	1	2.9	5	17.9	2	6.7	8	8.7
Failure to appear for interviews	4	11.8	2	7.1	1	3.3	7	7.6
Other pending charges or prior record	3	8.8	1	3.6	1	3.3	5	5.4
Poor attitude or lack of cooperation in adjustment process	2	5.9	2	7.1	0	0	4	4.3
Miscellaneous	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.3	1	1.1
TOTAL	34	100.1	28	100.0	30	100.0	92	100.0

1. Source: Juvenile Adjustment Record forms returned from Decentralized Offices with referral dates in September, October and November, 1978.
2. The "Multiple Factors" category includes those cases in which there were more than one significant reason given for petitioning the case to court, such as prior record and serious behavioral problems or restitution problems and lack of cooperation in the adjustment process.
3. Those cases in which the respondent refused to appear for adjustment interviews were listed under "Lack of Cooperation" rather than "Failure to Appear" to distinguish between deliberate non-appearance and failure to appear which may have been due to lack of understanding, failure to receive appointment letters, etc.
4. In 4 of the 25 cases in which the denial of the charges by the respondent was the reason for petitioning the case to court, it was explicitly stated that denials were made on the advice of an attorney.

**TABLE X : CASES UNSUCCESSFULLY ADJUSTED AT INTAKE AND
PETITIONED TO COURT BY REASON FOR
PETITION AND BY DECENTRALIZED OFFICE
(September, October, November, 1978)**

	Babylon		Hauppauge		Islip		Riverhead		Yaphank		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Respondent denies charges	1	25.0	22	46.8	2	15.4					25	27.2
Serious behavioral, psycho- logical or family problems	1	25.0	9	19.1	1	7.7			6	35.2	17	18.5
Restitution cannot be resolved			2	4.3	7	53.8			5	29.4	14	15.2
Complainant insists on court action			1	2.1			7	63.6	3	17.6	11	12.0
Multiple Factors	1	25.0	4	8.5	2	15.4			1	5.9	8	8.7
Failure to appear for interviews			4	8.5	1	7.7	1	9.1	1	5.9	7	7.6
Other pending charges or prior record	1	25.0	1	2.1			2	18.2	1	5.9	5	5.4
Poor attitude or lack of cooperation in adjustment process			3	6.4			1	9.1			4	4.3
Miscellaneous			1	2.1							1	1.1
TOTAL	4	100.0	47	99.9	13	100.0	11	100.0	17	99.9	92	100.0

X. DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE OF 803 CASES
PROCESSED BY THE JSU DIVERSION UNIT
BETWEEN MAY AND DECEMBER, 1977

From the initiation of the JSU/Probation Diversion Grant project in May, 1977 through December, 1977, 2,362 cases were processed by the Diversion Unit. In the spring of 1978, a study was undertaken of the characteristics of the juveniles involved in those cases and of the processing of the cases.

Data on the cases was obtained from the card records maintained by the Diversion Unit, the Youth Activity Reports prepared by the Police Department on each arrest and the adjustment records maintained on those cases sent to Intake. The Diversion Unit cards contain information on each charge, the disposition of the charge at the Diversion Unit level and certain basic information on the juvenile such as date of birth and address. The Police Department Youth Activity Reports contain considerable information concerning the juvenile including prior record, any indication of drug or alcohol use, apparent physical disability, race, religion, school grade, with whom the youth resides and family structure. The report also contains data on the offense, such as date, time of day, day of the week, a description of the nature of the offense and the criminal charge. The records at the Decentralized Intake Offices describe the adjustment process and the disposition of the case at Intake.

Approximately 1,000 cases were originally selected for the study. Relatively complete data was collected and coded for 803 of those cases. Using the SPSS program package (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), the data was analyzed on the basis of 33 variables. The significant results of that analysis are summarized in the following descriptive profile.

In the course of reviewing the computer analysis of the data, it appeared that the number of cases closed as adjusted at JSU were over-represented, and the number of cases petitioned to court were under-represented in the sample. The sample contained the following:

434 (54.0%) cases with dates of referral to
Intake Offices

90 (11.2%) cases with dates showing petitions
sent to court

279 (34.7%) cases closed as adjusted at JSU

During the period of May through December, 1977, of the total 2,362 cases processed

1,213 or 51.4% were Referred to Intake

724 or 30.7% were Petitioned to Court

425 or 18.0% were Closed as Adjusted at JSU.

This discrepancy can be due to a variety of factors. First, complete information may have been less accessible on cases petitioned to court. The sample may more heavily represent the earlier months of grant project operations during which a greater proportion of cases were diverted from court action. Finally, the sample represents individuals rather than cases processed. The number of cases petitioned to court includes multiple offenses by individual juveniles. An individual juvenile can be involved in several cases petitioned to court in a single year.

Whatever the reason for the under-representation of cases petitioned to court during this period, the data is valuable in that it is highly descriptive of those juveniles whose cases are adjusted either immediately or after more intensive services and counseling by the Probation Department. Previous research has focused on the adjudicated juvenile population on probation or in placement and on the multiple offender. The profile of cases processed by JSU appears to show a sample much more representative of the general population. A comparison of some of the key characteristics of the sample with the adjudicated population follows the profile. The differences between the data on this sample of 803 cases and the analysis of all juvenile delinquency arrests in 1977 performed by the Suffolk County Youth Bureau entitled, "Juvenile Delinquency in Suffolk County During 1977", are also noted.

TABLE XI: PROFILE OF 803 CASES PROCESSED
THROUGH J.S.U. DIVERSION UNIT

1. Age at Time of Offense

Below 12	-	11.8%
12	-	10.3%
13	-	18.9%
14	-	24.0%
15	-	33.6%
16 or Over	-	1.1%
Unknown	-	0.2%

2. Sex

Male	-	74.1%
Female	-	25.8%
Unknown	-	0.1%

3. Race

White	-	83.1%
Black	-	12.6%
Hispanic	-	3.1%
Other	-	0.1%
Unknown	-	1.1%

4. Grade in School

6th or Below	-	11.8%
7th	-	14.7%
8th	-	19.9%
9th	-	25.7%
10th	-	20.5%
11th	-	3.1%
Not Attending	-	0.6%
BOCES	-	0.4%
Unknown	-	3.4%

5. Family Structure

Stable	-	60.9%
Divorced or Separated	-	32.4%
Death of Parent	-	3.4%
Out-of-Wedlock	-	0.1%
Other	-	2.5%
Unknown	-	0.7%

6. Lives With

Both Parents	-	60.5%
Mother	-	30.0%
Father	-	3.1%
Grandparent	-	1.2%
Other Relative	-	0.5%
Mother-Stepfather	-	3.0%
Foster Home or Residential Placement	-	1.0%
Unknown	-	0.6%

7. Religion

Roman Catholic	-	63.0%
Protestant	-	23.5%
Jewish	-	3.4%
Jehovah's Witness	-	0.1%
Other	-	3.2%
None	-	6.5%
Unknown	-	0.2%

8. Drug or Alcohol Use

Uses Drugs	-	4.7%
Uses Alcohol	-	6.0%
Uses Both	-	4.4%
Uses Neither	-	84.7%
Unknown	-	0.2%

15.1%

9. Family Members Known to Court or J.S.U.

Brother	-	11.2%
Sister	-	3.1%
Multiple Siblings	- 15.7%	0.6%
Mother	-	0.1%
Father	-	0.7%
None	-	83.3%
Unknown	-	0.9%

10. Day of Week Offense Committed

Monday	-	15.1%
Tuesday	-	15.2%
Wednesday	-	13.3%
Thursday	-	9.7%
Friday	-	15.2%
Saturday	-	16.3%
Sunday	-	11.5%
Unknown	-	3.7%

11. Time of Day of Offense

Midnight - 6 a.m.	-	3.8%
6:01 a.m. - 12 Noon	-	14.6%
12:01 - 6 p.m.	-	53.3%
6 p.m. - Midnight	-	28.4%

% of cases in which
time was specified

(In 405 cases out of 803, the time of the offense was unknown.)

12. Criminal Charge

Burglary	-	27.9%
Petit Larceny	-	27.8%
Criminal Trespass	-	8.7%
Criminal Mischief	-	7.1%
Possession of Controlled Substance	-	4.2%
U.U.M.V.	-	3.6%
Grand Larceny	-	3.5%

12. Criminal Charge (Cont'd)

Assault	-	3.5%
Possession of Stolen Property	-	2.2%
All Other Charges	-	11.5%

13. Category of Current Criminal Offense

Felony	-	37.2%
Misdemeanor	-	62.3%
Violation	-	0.4%
Unknown	-	0.1%

14. Number of Co-defendants

		% with unknown cases removed
No Co-defendants	-	16.4%
One	-	18.7%
Two	-	11.2%
Three	-	5.1%
Four or More	-	6.6%
One Youthful Offender	-	3.2%
Two or More Youthful Offenders	-	4.9%
Adult co-defendants	-	0.6%
Unknown	-	33.3%

15. Hamlet

14 hamlets were listed as the place of residence of over 2.0% of the juveniles in the study:

Bellport	-	4.9%
Brentwood	-	3.7%
Centereach	-	3.5%
Central Islip	-	2.5%
Commack	-	3.1%
Copague	-	2.1%
Deer Park	-	2.0%
Holtsville	-	2.5%
Medford	-	3.0%
Patchogue	-	5.4%
Port Jefferson Sta.	-	2.5%
Selden	-	3.6%
Shirley	-	2.6%
Wyandanch	-	2.1%
		43.5%

Another 45.5% of the juveniles were divided among 80 other hamlets, each of which had less than 2.0% of the juveniles as recorded residents. In 11.0% of the cases, the hamlet of residence was unknown.

XI: COMPARISON OF THE 803 CASES PROCESSED BY THE JSU DIVERSION UNIT WITH THE ADJUDICATED POPULATION AND THE MULTIPLE RECIDIVIST POPULATION ON SIGNIFICANT VARIABLES

The statistics on the Adjudicated Population are based on a study financed by the National Institute of Corrections of 157 juveniles adjudicated as Juvenile Delinquents or Persons-In-Need-of-Supervision and placed either on probation or in residential placement. The Multiple Recidivist population consists of 52 juveniles petitioned to court from January through April, 1978 for juvenile delinquency offenses who have 6 or more recorded J.D. arrests.

1. Age - The sample of juveniles processed by the Diversion Unit appears significantly younger than the adjudicated population or the multiple recidivist population. 41.0% were 13 years old or younger at the time of offense. 20.3% of the adjudicated population were 13 or under at the time of investigation and 11.5% of the multiple recidivist sample were 13 or under at the time of petition.

The Suffolk County Youth Bureau statistics show 32.6% of all juveniles arrested in 1977 were 13 or under at the time of offense. This is an indication that the 803 cases in the sample is not exactly representative of all cases processed by JSU and reflects cases closed as adjusted or referred to Intake more heavily.

2. Sex - A significantly higher percentage of females are contained in the sample as compared with the adjudicated and multiple recidivist populations. 25.8% of the juveniles in the sample were female as contrasted with 8.3% of the adjudicated sample and none of the multiple recidivists.

The Suffolk County Youth Bureau statistics show that 17.5% of all juveniles arrested in 1977 were female, which again indicates a skewing of the sample.

3. Race - 83.1% of the 803 juveniles in the sample were white and 15.7% from minority groups. Of the adjudicated population, 71.3% were white and 42.3% of the multiple recidivist sample were white.

4. Religion - 63.0% of the juveniles in the sample indicated their religion as Roman Catholic, 23.5% as Protestant and 13.2% other or none. Of the sample of adjudicated youths, 45.2% were recorded as being Roman Catholic and 24.2% as Protestant. However, the high percentage of unknown cases in both the adjudicated and multiple recidivist populations makes comparisons difficult.

5. Family Structure - The differences between this sample and the adjudicated and multiple recidivist populations on this variable are dramatic. 60.5% of the 803 juveniles in the sample come from family environments in which both natural parents are in the home. This contrasts with 35.7% of the adjudicated population and 32.7% of the multiple recidivist populations coming from similarly "stable families".

The Suffolk County Youth Bureau figures are similar to those for the sample under study. 57.6% of all juveniles arrested in 1977 were reported as residing with both parents.

6. Family Members Known to Court - This variable also distinguishes the sample of cases processed through JSU sharply from the adjudicated and multiple recidivist populations. 15.7% of the 803 juveniles in the sample had other family members known to court. The figures for the adjudicated and multiple recidivist populations are considerably higher, at 44.6% and 65.4% respectively.

7. Criminal Charge - The sample under study shows a lower percentage for Burglary and a higher percentage for Petit Larceny for the current criminal charge. 27.9% of the current charges against the 803 juveniles were for Burglary, as opposed to 43.3% in the cases of the adjudicated juveniles and 71.2% in the cases of the multiple recidivists.

27.8% of the charges against the 803 juveniles studied were for Petit Larceny. Petit Larceny constituted 10.8% of the current charges in the adjudicated sample and 3.8% in the multiple recidivist sample.

8. Grade in School - The 803 juveniles in the sample have a much lower percentage attending BOCES special education curricula. 0.4% were reported as being in BOCES special education programs as compared with 10.8% of the adjudicated sample and 21.2% of the multiple recidivist sample.

XII. PROGRAMMATIC AND SYSTEMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE JSU SCREENING, ADJUSTMENT AND DIVERSION PROCESS

I. Immediate Adjustment of Cases at the JSU/Diversion Unit Level

The ability of the JSU Diversion Unit to adjust cases immediately at the JSU level with no further processing by the juvenile justice system has considerable benefits both procedurally and programmatically.

The fact that 18% of the cases are immediately diverted from further processing by the Police and Probation Departments enables those agencies to concentrate their efforts on the more serious cases. The Probation Intake units can make more effective use of their personnel on cases requiring counseling and intensive adjustment services. The Police Department can give greater emphasis to the preparation of cases requiring immediate court action. Elimination of these cases on initial screening also contributes significantly to the reduction of paperwork for both departments.

Programmatically, the ability to perform immediate adjustment also minimizes the amount of contact the juvenile has with the juvenile justice system in the least serious cases. At the same time, immediate intervention and counseling with the juvenile is provided. The fact that a very low percentage (4% of 50 cases studied) of those cases immediately adjusted are involved in subsequent arrests shows that the criteria being used to select cases for immediate adjustment has been successful. It also shows that these juveniles do not require further interaction with the system in order to prevent or deter future delinquent behavior. The impact of the arrest process by the Police Department and immediate intervention by the Probation Department has been sufficient.

II. Multiple Recidivist Population

The 18-month evaluation report included an analysis of 50 cases petitioned directly to court from the JSU Diversion Unit. This analysis revealed that a small number of juveniles were responsible for a disproportionately high number of subsequent arrests and petitions to court. An intensive analysis of the Multiple Recidivist population was conducted. This analysis showed that the Multiple Recidivist population consisted of three major sub-groups: a multiple burglar group; a seriously disturbed group of juveniles which was not involved in repeated burglary offenses and had strong tendencies toward violent, assaultive behavior; and all others. Because each group had different and distinguishing characteristics, different program strategies for the treatment of the appropriate sub-groups were recommended.

In addition, the Multiple Recidivist analysis pointed out the crucial need for timely court intervention in these cases. Each juvenile in the study had been petitioned to court between January and April, 1978. An average of 3.2 subsequent offenses per juvenile were committed following the offense which led to the petition. 51.2% of the subsequent offenses committed were felonies. The impact of these subsequent

offenses on the juvenile justice system and most importantly on the community is self-evident.

An inter-departmental case processing system to handle the Multiple Recidivist case on a high priority basis should be developed immediately. A Juvenile Major Offense Bureau in the Office of the County Attorney analogous to the Major Offense Bureau in the District Attorney's Office would ensure that these cases are handled on a priority basis and that the severity of the cases is given appropriate emphasis. (Grant funding for the establishment of such a bureau may be available as it was in the case of the District Attorney's Major Offense Bureau.)

III. Restitution

The 18-month evaluation report and this report show that a significant percentage of cases cannot be successfully adjusted and must be petitioned to court because of the inability of the complainant and respondent to agree on restitution. A number of cases in which the complainant insists on court action or the juvenile denies the charges may also be able to be adjusted if the factor of restitution were resolved.

This data points out the need for the development of a restitution program which could be utilized at the Intake level. Juveniles could be referred to jobs through local Youth Bureaus or other community agencies. Even short-term jobs may enable the juvenile to earn a sufficient amount to satisfy the legitimate claims of the complainant in most cases. The complainant would receive more timely compensation than available through the court. The juvenile would benefit from the work experience and the process of paying from earnings he has received for damage inflicted.

IV. Adequate Clerical Support for Processing of Juvenile Cases

The dramatic deterioration in the amount of time required to petition cases to Family Court points out the necessity for adequate clerical support in the Juvenile Services Unit of the Police Department to process cases for petition. The failure to achieve timely court action due to a weakness in the clerical component of the juvenile justice system can have serious consequences in terms of the number of subsequent offenses committed, the impact of subsequent offenses on the community and the perception by the public and delinquent population of the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system.

V. Continuing Involvement of Line Supervisors in Planning and Evaluation

The communication which has been established among the Diversion and Intake unit supervisors and between the line supervisors and the research and evaluation staff should be continued on a formalized basis. The combination of providing feedback of information from project evaluation to the supervisors and the involvement of the supervisors in interpreting the data has been extremely valuable in identifying weaknesses in procedures, decision-making criteria, policy communication, and staff training in the screening and adjustment process. The on-line experience is also essential in the development of realistic and usable screening criteria and the formulation of procedural changes in the case processing system.

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APPENDIX A - Status of Cases During 18-Month Evaluation Study

TABLE III: NUMBER OF DAYS FROM DATE OF ARREST TO
DATE THE J.D. PETITION WAS SENT TO
FAMILY COURT AND THE NUMBER OF DAYS
J.D. PETITIONS HAVE BEEN PENDING

Number of Days	Petitioned Cases			Petition Pending		
	Cases	%	Cum. %	Cases	%	Cum. %
0 - 9	3	2.2	2.2	0	0.0	0.0
10 - 19	6	4.3	6.5	6	6.6	6.6
20 - 29	12	8.7	15.2	15	16.5	23.1
30 - 39	25	18.1	33.3	26	28.6	50.7
40 - 49	21	15.2	48.5	15	16.5	68.2
50 - 59	35	25.4	73.9	5	5.5	73.7
60 - 69	20	14.5	88.4	7	7.7	81.4
70 - 79	6	4.3	92.7	5	5.5	86.9
80 - 89	10	7.2	99.9	4	4.4	91.3
90 - 99				5	5.5	96.8
100 - 109				3	3.3	100.1
TOTAL	138	99.9	99.9	91	100.1	100

The 229 cases used for this analysis were those with arrest dates in June, July and August. The cases with petitions pending are those which will be sent directly to Family Court, for which petitions have not been prepared as of September 15, 1978.

The average number of days between date of apprehension and the date the petition was sent to Family Court was 47.8. This is a significant reduction from the average of 70 days between arrest and petition for cases processed in November and December, 1977. For those cases for which petitions had been prepared, all had been processed in 90 days or less, 73.9% required two months or less to send the petition to court. For the cases studied in November and December, 50.1% of the petitions were received in less than 60 days and 24.4% of the cases required 90 days or more to process.

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