



EVALUATION OF DIVERSION PROJECTS
IN SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY

Carol Webster, Ph.D.

April 1982

Juvenile Justice Unit

Office of Research and Data Analysis
Department of Social and Health Services
Olympia, Washington 98504

88245

EVALUATION OF DIVERSION PROJECTS
IN SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY

Carol Webster, Ph.D.

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by
Washington State Dept. of Social
& Health Services Department

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

April 1982

Juvenile Justice Unit
Office of Research and Data Analysis
Department of Social and Health Services
Olympia, Washington 98504

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation was funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant, 81-JS-AX-0017, administered by the Juvenile Justice Unit, originally at the Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Financial Management, and later in the Department of Social and Health Services.

The evaluation was completed with the assistance of staff at the King County Department of Youth Services (Juvenile Court). I wish to thank Dick Carlson and Marge Dollermore of the records division, and Toni Hood and Peggy Hanson of the King County Group Projects for Youth.

Dawn Blanch and Rossi Norris, Directors of the two City of Seattle Youth Service Bureaus, gave freely of their time and provided many helpful suggestions.

Russ Chadwick, of O.F.M., set up the data files and Pat Timmons, of Service Center #1, provided programming. Tedious coding of census tract information was done by Peter Gallitello and Jack Ickes. Pat Habersetzer provided clerical support.

Jack Ickes, Tom Sykes, John Steiger, Judy Chapman and Darryl Fallis reviewed this paper and made useful comments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
I. INTRODUCTION	4
II. THE DIVERSION PROCESS	7
III. THEORETICAL PREMISES OF DIVERSION	8
IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE DIVERSION PROGRAMS	10
V. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	11
VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS	15
A. Description of Modal Client	15
B. Sex	15
C. Race	15
D. Socio-Economic Status	16
E. Prior Referrals	17
F. Seriousness of Offense	18
G. Disposition of Diversion Clients	19
H. Uniformity of Dispositions	22
I. Length of Diversion Process	24
J. Recidivism	24
VII. OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED	28
VIII. COST ANALYSIS	30
IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	32
X. APPENDIX	36

NCJRS

MAR 8 1983

ACQUISITIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diversion, as mandated in the state's Juvenile Justice Act, was an attempt to remove the minor offender from the formal juvenile court adjudication process while still holding the juvenile accountable. This paper examines the recidivism of clients in two diversion programs, administered by King County and the City of Seattle, which were funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) during 1979 to 1981.

Four aspects of diversion were considered: 1) the theoretical premises of diversion, 2) the uniformity of dispositions, 3) the effect of diversion assignments upon recidivism, and 4) the effect of demographic variables upon recidivism. The records of 729 sample youth admitted to diversion during a twelve-month study period were used. Prior offense referrals, during-program offense referrals, and post-program offense referrals were compared. The cost of diversion was calculated, and a cost-per-client figure was determined.

The findings were:

1. The typical client was white, male, 15 years old, and referred for a type D offense. This offense was usually a Theft 3rd degree.
2. Approximately two-thirds of the sample was male and one-third was female. The sex of a client was the most important demographic variable in predicting recidivism. Males had a higher rate of recidivism than females.
3. Approximately 76 percent of the sample was white, 17 percent was black, and 7 percent was other minorities. Race and socio-economic status did not have a statistically significant effect upon recidivism.
4. Approximately 39 percent of the sample had a prior offense referral.

5. The type and length of diversion assignments were not uniform for the typical (type D referral offense and no prior record) clients.
6. No one specific diversion assignment, such as community service, counseling, or restitution, appears to be any more beneficial for reducing recidivism than any other assignment.
7. There was no significant difference between the recidivism of clients who were assigned more community service and higher restitution and those clients who were assigned less community service and less restitution.
8. The diversion process from arrest/citation to completion of a diversion assignment takes an average of 3.5 months. The average assignment is 23 hours of community service. Counsel and release and restitution were used very infrequently.
9. The length of time spent in diversion does not appear to improve the client's chance of completing diversion successfully.
10. Project sites which had caseloads with a large percentage of prior referrals were sites which showed higher recidivism.
11. Certain project sites, such as Highline and Southwest Seattle, appear to be the most successful in terms of reducing recidivism. These two sites, however, did not have a high percentage of clients with prior offense referrals.
12. The average cost-per-client in Seattle, which provided in-house support services, was \$628. King County, which did not have support services in house, had an average cost per client of \$213. There was no significant difference between the recidivism rates of the King County and the Seattle programs.

The paper concludes that diversion, per se, does not necessarily reduce recidivism. It may be the style of the interaction of project staff with clients and/or certain project components that lead to a successful project site, although these factors were not investigated in this study.

The paper recommends:

1. The Department of Youth Services determine a policy for accepting repeat offenders into diversion.
2. Successful project sites should be used as models for the less successful sites and,
3. Sites which are less successful and more expensive should be restructured.

In the future, the King County Department of Youth Services (juvenile court) needs to take an active role in establishing uniform diversion assignments and in establishing better communication among actors in the diversion system.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the recidivism rates of youths who participated in two pilot diversion programs. One was administered by the City of Seattle and the other was administered by King County. The City of Seattle program operated two project sites. The King County program operated six project sites. The two programs had slightly different styles, or philosophies. Both were funded by an Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) grant. The Juvenile Justice Unit, originally in the Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Financial Management administered the OJJDP grant. The Juvenile Justice Unit was later transferred to the Department of Social and Health Services. The grant began in October 1979 and ended in October 1981.

Diversion is mandated by the state's Juvenile Justice Act for minor offenses. Almost all counties in the state now receive diversion funds from the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation, Department of Social and Health Services.

The underlying hypothesis of the City of Seattle and the King County diversion programs was that diversion, rather than a formal adjudication in court, would reduce the number and the severity of repeat offenses. Also, it was believed that diversion would be less expensive than adjudication and that diversion assignments would be more uniform than informal adjustments.

This evaluation describes the demographic characteristics of 729 sample youth, their prior offense history, the number and type of offense referrals while in diversion, and the number and type of offense referrals during a post-program period. Descriptive statistics are used to compare the clients in the eight project sites. Diversion assignments are compared to determine if community service and/or restitution was assigned uniformly. A cost analysis was done to compare the cost and the benefit of the two programs.

The two projects administered by the City of Seattle were:

1. Central Seattle Youth Service Bureau
2. South West Seattle Youth Service Bureau

These sites accepted juveniles who signed Diversion Agreements with the Central Seattle, Leschi, Capitol Hill, and the West Seattle Juvenile Court Conference Committees. The two sites provided placement for community service. Some of the types of community service performed were: custodial work at the Y.M.C.A., typing at a youth service bureau, working at day care centers, and working in nursing homes.

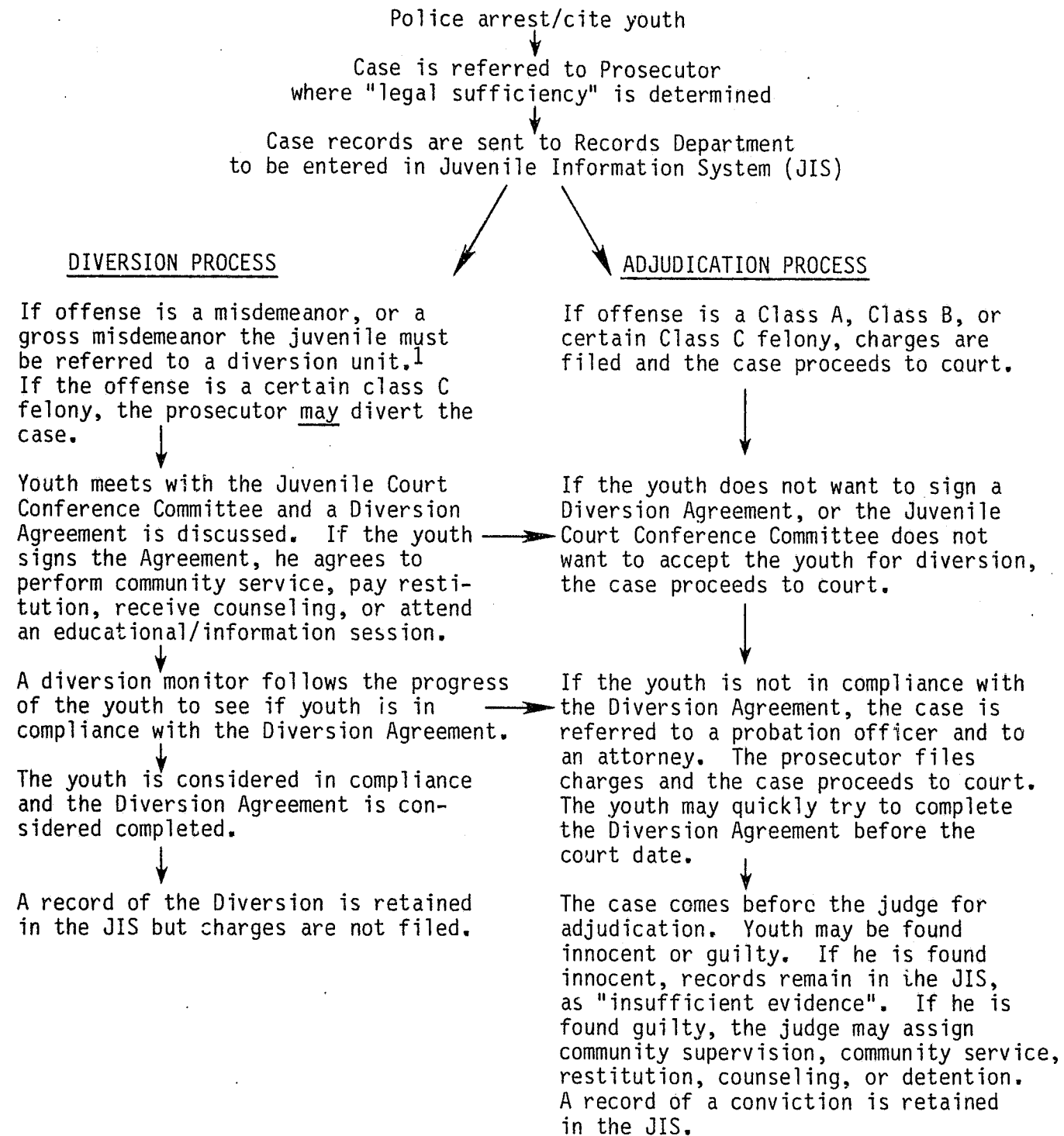
King County administered six project sites, known collectively as the "Group Projects for Youth," at six youth service bureaus:

1. "Operation Pinocchio" in Auburn
2. "Project Choice" at 5 sites on the eastside of Lake Washington¹
3. "Project Recycle" in Bothell
4. "Community Information Center" at Highline Youth Service Bureau
5. "Community Services Project" on Mercer Island
6. "Special Projects for Youth" at Renton

These six youth service bureaus accepted juveniles who signed Diversion Agreements with any of 24 Juvenile Court Conference Committees in the city or county, although they primarily received clients from 12 Juvenile Court Conference Committees. These sites provided community service jobs. Some of the types of community service provided were: repairing toys, recycling, printing community newsletters, working in nursing homes, and repairing small appliances for the elderly or poor.

¹In the tables, this project is referred to as the Bellevue site.

FLOW CHART



¹ For this study, the diversion unit was a Juvenile Court Conference Committee.

II. THE DIVERSION PROCESS

Juveniles arrested for minor crimes by law enforcement agencies in the county have their cases referred to the Prosecutor located in the King County Department of Youth Services (juvenile court). If the case merits "legal sufficiency", that is, enough evidence exists for probable cause to believe the suspect committed the offense, the juvenile may be referred for diversion instead of having the case adjudicated in court.

If the offense is a misdemeanor or a gross misdemeanor, the juvenile must be referred to a Juvenile Court Conference Committee.¹ If the offense is a certain Class C offense the case may be referred. The Conference Committees are volunteer boards of community members.

The youth meets with the local Juvenile Court Conference Committee and is offered a Diversion Agreement. The youth may choose to sign the Diversion Agreement, which in effect is an admission of guilt, or the juvenile may choose to proceed in court. In turn, the Conference Committee may accept or reject the youth for diversion. Most youth, however, accept a Diversion Agreement, and most Conference Committees accept the youth. If the youth accepts the Diversion Agreement and the Conference Committee accepts the juvenile, there are several possible actions taken. The youth may:

1. Perform community service,
2. Pay monetary restitution,
3. Be counseled and released; or
4. Receive a combination of community service, restitution and counseling.

Once the youth is accepted into the diversion program, the youth's progress in completing the diversion agreement is monitored. If the youth completes the agreement, the Records Department is notified, charges are not filed against the youth, and the case is officially closed. If the youth does not complete the agreement, the case is sent back to the prosecutor's office. At this point a court date is set and a probation officer and an attorney are assigned. Several other actions can be taken: The youth may be encouraged to go back to the diversion project and complete his/her hours before the court date. The case could go to court and the judge may assign additional hours of community service as part of the disposition.

¹ Other diversion units are the Community Accountability Boards and the DYS diversion unit.

III. THEORETICAL PREMISES OF DIVERSION

Both the King County and the City of Seattle programs were based upon the mandate of diversion for minor offenses in the state's Juvenile Justice Act. The Act assumes that juveniles who go through the diversion, rather than the adjudication process, will be held accountable for their offense, yet won't be labelled as offenders. The Act also was an attempt to standardize dispositions.

This assumption, in turn, is based upon two sociological theories: Labelling Theory and Deterrence Theory. Guthman and Steiger in their evaluation of diversion programs in DSHS Region III discussed labelling and deterrence theory.¹ Labelling theory holds that the youth will be more likely to internalize the label of "juvenile delinquent" the more formally the case is processed. The youth will then become more likely to commit future delinquent actions to conform to this label. Deterrence theory, on the other hand, holds that juveniles will be less likely to recidivate if there are immediate negative consequences to delinquent acts. Hence, punishment which is swift and sure will make the youth aware of community sanctions, and make the juvenile accountable for his/her actions.

Diversion programs have tried to combine both of these theoretical assumptions. In diversion the youth is held accountable by paying restitution or by performing community service. However, by coming in front of a Juvenile Court Conference Committee composed of community members, a youth may be just as likely to adopt the delinquent label as if he/she came before a judge.

Another theory, Bonding Theory, holds that a person is less likely to commit a criminal offense if he/she is involved with conventional activities.² The diversion assignment of community service appears to be based on this theory. By working on tasks that are beneficial to the community, it is assumed the youth will be bonded to conventional, community mores.

Indirectly, what is being considered in this paper is if labelling, deterrence or bonding theory can best explain the effectiveness of diversion for reducing recidivism. Labelling and deterrence theories appear to be in direct conflict. Bonding to a conventional norm may not take place in the course of an average assignment to community service.

The City of Seattle's grant proposal described diversion as beneficial for two reasons evolving from the deterrence premise: First a youth is brought before a neighborhood Court Conference Committee more quickly than he/she would have had his/her case adjudicated in court, and the committee is composed of neighborhood citizens rather than a judge. Second, by requiring restitution or community service, a juvenile will be deterred from further criminal actions.

¹David R. Guthman and John C. Steiger, Ph.D. An Evaluation of Juvenile Diversion Washington State, DSHS Region 3. Olympia, Washington: Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation, December, 1980.

²For a discussion of bonding theory see Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies published by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, April 1979 pp. 89-92.

The King County grant proposal explained that the purpose of diversion was to make the youth accountable for his/her actions. This purpose is also based upon deterrence theory. The county proposed to provide a successful work experience, to increase the youth's employment-related skills, to provide services to the community, and to reduce recidivism.

The style or philosophy of the programs differed on the question of how much support service would be offered to youth at the diversion project site. The City of Seattle's grant proposal explained that the service available at the Central and West Seattle Youth Service Bureaus were necessary because youths in these areas came from poverty or near poverty-level families. These youth were described as more in need of services than youth in other areas of the city.

King county's style of administering diversion was to provide a community service worksite only. Any other auxillary service was to be contracted for independently, by the client.

The underlying assumption of the Seattle style of administering diversion is that by having counseling available at the site, diversion would be more effective. The underlying assumption of the King County style of administering diversion is that only a community service worksite is necessary, and that it is more cost effective to have the clients arrange for their own counseling.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE DIVERSION PROGRAMS

Both the City of Seattle and King County diversion programs listed several objectives they hoped to meet during the first year funding period. King County listed 5 objectives, Seattle listed 10 objectives. Some of these objectives will not be measured in this evaluation because they deal with auxillary services which were not directly a part of diversion, or because the objectives were not measurable.

The three King County objectives that will be examined in this evaluation are:

1. To provide community service work sites to 1000 youths annually. (An average of 83 youths per month).
2. To reduce the rate of recidivism of juvenile offenders who are referred to the projects.
3. To achieve successful completion of community service by 90 percent of the youths.

The five City of Seattle objectives that will be examined are:

1. To reduce the student suspension rates from school by 20 percent.
2. To increase by 10 percent the percentage of victims who are compensated for damage and losses.
3. To reduce recidivism in areas of the city covered by these two projects.
4. To reduce the number of Part II crimes and total juvenile contacts compared with pre-project juvenile offenses.
5. To reduce the growth of reported simple assaults and larcenies in those areas of the city impacted by diversion projects.

It should be noted that the study period, May 1, 1980 to April 30, 1981, actually straddled the first and second year funding periods.

V. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

It is always desirable to adhere to a true experimental research design, because randomizing assignments to the experimental group and the control group allow the researcher to draw conclusions from the analysis with a measure of certainty. A true experimental design, of course, was not appropriate for this evaluation. It is not possible, under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, to assign juveniles randomly to court or to diversion programs. Under this act, juveniles who committed certain types of offenses must be diverted.

A quasi-experimental design, which would have compared the diverted juveniles with a control group of juveniles who had declined diversion and were adjudicated in the Juvenile Court, had to be abandoned. There was no practical way to select this control group from the Juvenile Information System, and relatively few youths fell into this category.¹

Finally, a quasi-experimental design was chosen which relied upon a single-subject, before and after evaluation model. In essence, each subject serves as his own control. If recidivism rates fell during and after "treatment", that is diversion, then diversion would be seen as effective.² This design allows a comparison of recidivism for the eight project sites. It should be noted, however, that the client's own maturation may affect (lower) his recidivism rate.

The Study Period

Cases were selected from those juvenile offenders who entered a diversion program on May 1, 1980 through April 30, 1981. This provided a complete year of data during the middle to the late stage of the grant period. At this time the projects were well underway. Also, by May 1980, the many start up problems with the Juvenile Information System (JIS) were resolved.

¹Those youths who fell into this category were apparently widely divergent. Those who declined diversion may have been those who were able to hire private attorneys to fight the charge in court, or may have been youths who had gone through diversion programs in the past and did not wish to perform restitution or community service again.

²For a discussion of classic experimental design and designs used more recently in the evaluation of delinquency prevention programs, see, Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Experiments: A review of Analysis, prepared by William C. Berleman, October, 1980, for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, pp. 6-13.

Data Collection

Data collection began in March 1981, and continued through July, 1981. Diversion cases were sampled from program files, and demographic and program data were recorded on coding sheets. Prior offenses and during-program offenses were coded from the Juvenile Information System and double checked in the manual files. In July 1981 the post-program offenses were retrieved from the system. This allowed for a minimum 3 months post-program at risk period, and in some cases provided a 12 month post-program at risk period. Cases which had a six month or longer post-program at risk period were used for looking at recidivism.

Accuracy of Juvenile Court Records

There was some concern over the accuracy of court records, due to the comments made by researchers who have worked with the manual files in the past. The study period was begun May 1, 1980 to eliminate some of the initial problems with the new Juvenile Information System instituted in January 1980. Many D.Y.S. personnel recognized that problems with the system did exist for the first few months of operation.

The referrals for each case were accessed by using the client's name. From the name, a Juvenile Court Number (JCN) was found. Each offense referral is listed with the offense date. By comparing each offense date to the diversion project entry date and the exit date, it could be determined if an offense occurred prior to, during, or after the client was in a diversion project. "Referrals" are arrests or citations presented to the Prosecutor. They are not necessarily formal charges or convictions, because in the case of diversion, charges are never formally filed.

The during-project and post-project referral data were assumed to be current because referrals have been entered daily since January 1980, and there is no backlog. The prior offenses, however, presented a slight problem.

Complete prior offense records for a particular case could be found by checking three places: (1) the Juvenile Information System, (2) manual diversion files, (3) manual social files.

The manual diversion files contain the records of previous diversion in King County. These files contain cases which are recent and generally contain only one or two divertible offenses. A social file contains data on clients who have had referrals prior to July 1978, who might have dependency referrals, or who have had more serious offenses which could not be diverted.

In order to double check the priors listed in the Juvenile Information System, 45 manual diversion files were selected at random and checked. All priors listed in the files were also listed in the system. The diversion files were no longer double checked; it was assumed that the system entries for prior diverted referrals were complete and accurate.

Of the 45 Social Files selected at random and checked, 3 contained prior referrals that were not entered in the system. All 3 referrals had occurred before the new Juvenile Justice Code went into effect. Also, 3 of the social files were not on the shelves and had been checked out to probation workers or other court personnel. After discussing this with the records staff it was decided that any social file number issued before 1980 should be checked in the manual files. It was assumed, however, that data listed in social files from 1980 on were completely reported in the Juvenile Information System.

Sampling

The total client population of the two City of Seattle diversion projects was used. The two Seattle projects handled fewer cases than the King County projects, and a total population gave a more accurate picture of their clients. The total population of the two Seattle projects was 296 cases.

A 50 percent random sample of the 6 King County diversion projects was used. This resulted in a sample of 433 cases, or approximately a total population of 866 cases in King County.¹

Together, the Seattle and King County diversion projects funded by this grant handled approximately 1,162 clients during the 12 month period. The total sample size was 729 clients.

The King County projects processed approximately 75 percent of the total clients and the City of Seattle projects processed approximately 25 percent of the total clients.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to draw a profile of the youths in the eight projects. Similarity between the groups was tested statistically using such variables as age, sex, race, number of prior offenses, and the type of referral offense. Thus, significant differences between project clients that might affect the analysis was determined.

Correlation was used to test the relationship between referral offense and the number of community service hours and/or the amount of restitution assigned by the court conference committees.

¹Every odd-numbered client was chosen from monthly reports. Because sampling began with the first client on each of 12 reports, the total population figure is approximate.

Cost Analysis

The average cost per client was determined for the two diversion programs. The total staffing costs, the capital outlay, and the supplies were calculated for each program. The cost of outside referrals was not calculated.

Benefits accruing from the program, such as goods and services produced, were estimated and calculated at the minimum wage. This figure was subtracted from the total cost per program.

VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Description of Modal Client

The modal diversion client was male, white, 15 years old, referred for a third degree theft, and had no prior court referrals.

B. Sex

A large majority, 64 percent of the total sample, was male while 36 percent was female. This was a statistically significant difference. Two project sites had male to female ratios that were quite different from the norm. The table below shows the ratio of male to female clients. Note the large percentage of males in the Auburn site and the relatively large percentage of females in the Mercer Island site.

SEX OF CLIENTS BY PROJECT SITE

	Central Seattle	Southwest Seattle	Auburn	Bellevue	Bothell	Highline	Mercer Island	Renton	Totals
Male	93 64%	100 66%	61 78%	59 58%	39 61%	30 68%	11 44%	75 64%	468 64%
Female	52 36%	51 34%	17 22%	42 42%	25 39%	14 2%	14 56%	43 36%	258 36%
Totals	145	151	78	101	64	44	25	118	726

Chi Square 13.478 7 Degrees of Freedom
Significant at .01

Note: Central Seattle and Southwest Seattle are total populations. A 50% sample was used for the six King County projects.

C. Race

A large majority, 76 percent, of the sample was white, 17 percent was black and 7 percent was other minorities. The racial distribution of clients was not uniform at all project sites. The difference was statistically significant. The minority clients were found in the two Seattle sites. The Central Seattle Youth Service Bureau site had 67 percent black and 7 percent other minorities. The Southwest Youth Service Bureau had 10 percent black and 20 percent other minorities.

RACE OF CLIENTS BY PROJECT SITE

	Central Seattle	Southwest Seattle	Auburn	Bellevue	Bothell	Highline	Mercer Island	Renton	Totals
White	38 20%	103 70%	75 95%	100 98%	65 100%	41 93%	23 92%	106 92%	551 76%
Black	97 67%	15 10%	0	1 1%	0	0	1 4%	6 5%	120 17%
Other Minor	10 7%	30 20%	4 5%	1 1%	0	3 7%	1 4%	3 3%	52 7%
TOTALS	145	148	79	102	65	44	25	115	723

Chi Square 401.474 14 Degrees of Freedom
Significant at .01

Note: Central Seattle and Southwest Seattle projects are total populations. A 50% sample was used for the six King County projects.

D. Socio-Economic Status

The socio-economic status of clients was considered as a variable because the City of Seattle proposal described their clients as needing more support and services due to their low socio-economic status.

The status of clients was measured very indirectly. Clients were not asked their family income or parents' occupation routinely at intake; even if the clients were asked, the information given might not be accurate. What was used to determine status was the address of each client. The address was located within the appropriate census tract using census maps. Then, the socio-economic status of the tract was assigned to the client. Because the mean family income was not yet available from 1980 census, the mean sale price of homes within the tract was used. Admittedly, this was a very crude measure.

The Seattle-King County Real Estate Research Committee calculates the average sale price of homes within each census tract every six months. For this paper, the six month period of June 1980 through December 1980 was used.¹

The average sale price of homes in Seattle and King County during this period was \$77,781. Five values were assigned to this variable. A high socio-economic status was assigned to those tracts where homes sold for more than \$111,000. A medium/high status was assigned to those tracts where homes sold for \$91,000 to \$110,999. Medium was \$71,000 to \$90,999. Medium/low was \$51,000 to \$70,999 and low was assigned to those tracts where the price of a home was below \$50,999. Tracts that were non-single family residential were coded as missing data and excluded from consideration. This will under represent lower socio-economic status areas.

¹Seattle Everett Real Estate Research Report, Vol. 31, No. 2, Fall 1980.

The mean socio-economic status for clients at each project site are listed below. Each status was given a numerical score. High = 5, medium-high = 4, medium = 3, low-medium = 2 and low = 1.

MEAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF CLIENTS BY PROJECT SITES

Central Seattle	2.46
Southwest Seattle	1.98
Auburn	2.05
Bellevue	3.54
Bothell	3.12
Highline	2.18
Mercer Island	4.70
Renton	2.25

The table above shows that the mean socio-economic status of the City of Seattle project sites were indeed lower than the average mean of the King County project sites. However, the Auburn, Highline and Renton means were close to the mean for Central Seattle. If socio-economic status is an important variable for the successful completion of diversion and for recidivism, then the site with the lowest socio-economic status would be expected to have the poorest record. Conversely, the site with the highest socio-economic status would be expected to have the best record.

E. Prior Referrals

Most clients, approximately 61 percent of the sample, did not have a prior referral.¹ However, almost 40 percent of the clients did have a record of a prior referral. Prior referral was considered as a variable because it was believed that project sites which contained many clients with prior referrals would be sites with higher recidivism rates. These sites were believed to contain the "tougher" or "more serious offenders." Two project sites, Auburn and Renton, did have a higher percentage of prior referrals than the norm. The differences between project sites were statistically significant.

PRIOR OFFENSES BY PROJECT SITE

	Central Seattle	Southwest Seattle	Auburn	Bellevue	Bothell	Highline	Mercer Island	Renton	Total
No Prior Offense	92 63%	103 69%	33 42%	73 72%	41 64%	32 75%	15 64%	54 46%	443 61%
Prior Offense	53 37%	46 31%	46 58%	29 28%	23 36%	12 27%	10 40%	63 54%	282 39%
Total	145	149	79	102	64	44	25	117	725

Chi Square 35.245 7 Degrees of Freedom
Significant at .0001

NOTE: Central Seattle and Southwest Seattle projects are total populations. A 50% sample was used for the six King County projects.

¹Referrals are those in the King County juvenile information system. A youth may have had a referral in another court, but it would not be counted. All prior referrals of a client were counted; there was no uniform at risk period because the clients' ages were different.

F. Seriousness of Offense

Most of the diversion clients were referred for minor offenses. More than 77 percent of the sample were referred for a class D offense and 17 percent were referred for a class E offense. Thus, approximately 95 percent of the sample were referred for minor offenses such as shoplifting, malicious mischief, possession of alcohol, etc. Only 4 percent were referred for a class C felony offense. However, some project sites handled more serious offenders than other sites. By assigning numerical scores for prior, referral, during-program, and post-program offenses, the difference between project caseloads can be seen.¹ This is a crude method, because not all offenses are of equal magnitude within a class; however, it does show the relative differences between project caseloads. It would be expected that the projects with more serious offenders would have a higher rate of recidivism.

Offense seriousness scores were determined for each project site. The higher the score, the more numerous and the more serious were the offenses committed by the project's clients. The lower the score, the fewer and less serious were the offenses committed. Each client, of course, will have committed a referral offense in order to be in this sample. Not all clients will have a prior, during-program or post-program offense. We can expect that there will be less difference among referral seriousness scores than among prior, during-program and post-program seriousness scores. Ideally, seriousness scores should decrease from referral offenses to post-program offenses.

MEAN SERIOUSNESS SCORE OF OFFENSES

Project Site	Number of Clients	Priors	Referral	During	Post
Central Seattle	145	.80	1.97	.17	.51
Southwest Seattle	151	.56	1.81	.12	.31
Auburn	79	1.27	1.78	.28	.48
Bellevue	102	.59	1.94	.24	.25
Bothell	65	.72	1.77	.05	.32
Highline	44	.48	1.84	.07	.30
Mercer Island	35	.76	1.84	.08	.24
Renton	118	1.02	1.67	.06	.32
TOTAL/MEAN	729	.78	1.83	.14	.36

Note: Prior during and post-program periods are not strictly comparable due to different times the youths were at risk.

¹Class A+/A = 5, Class B+/B = 4, Class C+/C = 3, Class D+/D = 2, Class E+/E = 1, No Offenses = 0. Other offenses, such as game or traffic violations, were not counted. See complete offense listing in the Appendix.

The table above shows that certain project sites received clients with more serious prior offenses and with more serious referral offenses. The Auburn site had the highest mean seriousness score for prior offenses. Renton also had a relatively high prior offense seriousness score. The Central Seattle site had the highest seriousness score for referral offenses. Bellevue also had a relatively high referral offense seriousness score.

Central Seattle had the highest post-program seriousness score. Bellevue, however, which also had a high referral seriousness score, showed a low post-program seriousness score. The seriousness of priors does not appear to be directly related to the post-program seriousness score.

G. Disposition of Diversion Clients

One way to measure how "successful" diversion is as a disposition is to see if the client commits future offenses. It is believed by some that the more formal court proceeding "labels" a youth as a juvenile delinquent and that the youth then lives up to this label by committing more offenses. The recidivism of the diversion projects will be discussed later.

Another way to measure how "successful" diversion is as a disposition is to see if the client is held accountable for his offense by fully completing his Diversion Agreement.

Most clients in this sample, a full 85 percent, did successfully complete their Diversion Agreement.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS COMPLETING DIVERSION AGREEMENT

	Frequency	Percent
Successfully Completed Terms of Diversion Agreement	620	85%
Returned to Court, did not Successfully Complete	73	10%
Moved Out of Jurisdiction	13	1.8%
Case Still Active	19	2.6%
Missing/Unknown	4	.5%
Total	729	100%

Approximately 10 percent of the clients who were assigned diversion did not fulfill their Diversion Agreements and were returned to court. The percentage of clients who did not finish diversion differs from site to site.

The table below shows the percentage of clients returned to court for failure to complete their Diversion Agreements.

PERCENTAGE OF CLIENTS RETURNED TO COURT

	Central Seattle	Southwest Seattle	Auburn	Bellevue	Bothell	Highline	Mercer Island	Renton
Number	10	17	8	16	5	3	0	14
Percentage	6.897%	11.258%	10.127%	15.686%	7.692%	6.818%	0	11.864%
Total Clients	145	151	79	102	65	44	25	118

Two issues must be considered in looking at the figures on failing to complete diversion: First, was the amount of community service hours or the monetary restitution unusually high at a particular site? If the hours or restitution assigned to clients is higher than the norm at a particular site, we might expect that fewer clients will complete the assignment. Second, is the number of months allowed to complete the assignment at a site unusually long or short? If clients are given a long amount of time to complete their assignment, we might expect that more clients will be able to complete.

First we will look at the types of diversion agreements assigned to clients and then the mean amount of time clients spent at each project site.

1. Counsel and Release

Very few of the clients, a total of 34 out of 729, were counseled and released. This is less than 5 percent of the sample. The clients who were counseled and released were assigned to only 3 of the project sites: Central Seattle had 11, West Seattle had 21 and Renton has 2.¹

2. Restitution

Few clients were assigned monetary restitution. Less than 5 percent, or 35 clients on the sample were assigned restitution. Approximately 80 percent of the amount assigned was actually repaid. Restitution was not an appropriate disposition for most of the clients because most were referred for third degree theft in which the stolen merchandise was recovered.

3. Community Service

The great majority of the clients, 94 percent, were assigned some form of community service.

The number of community service hours are assigned by the Court Conference Committees. The Court Conference Committees send youths to youth service bureaus to complete the hours assigned. The chart below shows the mean hours of community service assigned clients by project site.

MEAN COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS ASSIGNED BY PROJECT SITE

Central Seattle	Southwest Seattle	Auburn	Bellevue	Bothell	Highline	Mercer Island	Renton
24.78	25.18	20.34	25.75	21.94	21.84	20.20	20.11

Mean: 23.08

4. Time in Diversion

Time in diversion was calculated by subtracting the date out of diversion from the date entered diversion.² The answer is in months.

MEAN TIME IN DIVERSION BY PROJECT SITE

	Months in Diversion
Central Seattle	1.46
West Seattle	1.60
Auburn	1.04
Bellevue	2.20
Bothell	.84
Highline	3.99
Mercer Island	.78
Renton	.97
MEAN	1.57

¹The two clients in Renton might be a coding error. Renton clients are generally assigned community service.

²The date entered diversion was the date when the Diversion Agreement was signed. The date out of diversion was the date the Diversion Agreement was considered completed or the date the client was considered to be not in compliance.

The table above shows that certain sites have clients, referred from the local Juvenile Court Conference Committee, an average of less than one month, while other sites have clients an average of more than two months. All Mercer Island clients completed diversion despite an average diversion time of less than one month. Over 15 percent of Bellevue clients were returned to court despite an average diversion time of more than two months. The length of time needed to finish a Diversion Agreement may differ according to the youth's school and work schedule; however, we would expect the time in diversion to be relatively similar for the eight project sites.

H. Uniformity of Dispositions

One purpose of enacting the Juvenile Justice Act was to standardize the range of dispositions. One way to compare dispositions is to control for priors and referral offense. The typical (modal) client of diversion during the study period was a youth who had committed a third degree theft and did not have any prior offense referrals. Forty-four percent of the sample (320 out of 729) fit this description. Thus, it is easy to compare dispositions for these clients. One would assume these clients would have been assigned about the same amount of community service hours and the same amount of restitution.

The table below shows some interesting differences in dispositions.¹

DIFFERENCES IN DISPOSITIONS FOR THE TYPICAL (MODAL) DIVERSION CLIENTS

Project Site	Frequency	Mean Hours Community Services Assigned	Mean Dollars Restitution Assigned
Central Seattle	73	21.49	0
West Seattle	71	19.67	.84
Auburn	26	16.80	1.06
Bellevue	46	22.06	2.86
Bothell	27	19.85	0
Highline	21	19.19	0
Mercer Island	13	20.00	.07
Renton	43	16.46	0

Ninety-seven percent of these modal clients were assigned community service, 69 percent were assigned some form of counseling, and only 2 percent were assigned restitution. The range of mean community service hours assigned at a site for these modal clients was 16.46 to 22.06 hours. The range of mean restitution assigned at a site was zero to \$2.86. The Bellevue project had both the highest mean number of hours and the highest mean dollars of restitution assigned. Renton, on the other hand, had the lowest mean hours and the lowest mean dollars assigned.

It should be remembered that Diversion Agreements are assigned by the Juvenile Court Conference Committees, not by the project site. The Diversion Planning Committee did attempt to establish uniform diversion assignments and better communication during this period. Another way of looking at the difference in dispositions is by comparing dispositions assigned by the individual Juvenile Court Conference Committees.

¹Note that this table does not control for age or sex. All first-time offenders with a Class D referral offense were counted.

DIVERSION ASSIGNMENTS OF TYPICAL (MODAL) CLIENTS
BY COURT CONFERENCE COMMITTEES
TO THE 8 PROJECT SITES

COURT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE	ASSIGNMENTS ¹			TOTAL CLIENTS
	Community Service	Restitution	Counseling	
Auburn	19 (100%)	1 (5%)	7 (37%)	19
Bellevue	23 (100%)	1 (4%)	2 (9%)	23
Capitol Hill	17 (100%)	0 (0%)	4 (24%)	17
Central Seattle	30 (91%)	0 (0%)	6 (18%)	33
Des Moines	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	3
Federal Way	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5
Highline	19 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	19
Issaquah	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4
Kent	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	9
Lake Washington	36 (100%)	1 (3%)	12 (33%)	36
Leschi	13 (93%)	0 (0%)	3 (21%)	14
Northshore	14 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	14
Renton	24 (100%)	0 (0%)	5 (21%)	24
Vashon-Maury	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	5
DYS Diversion Unit	4 (100%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	4
West Seattle	62 (89%)	2 (3%)	20 (29%)	70
Mercer Island	11 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (9%)	11
Unknown - missing data	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	10
	311 (97%)	6 (2%)	69 (22%)	320

¹A client may have one or more assignments, hence the percentages in parenthesis may total more than 100.

I. Length of Diversion Process

Another factor to be considered in the success of diversion is the length of time it takes a client from arrest or citation, to the police, to the Prosecutor, to meeting with a Conference Committee, to entering a diversion project, to completing a diversion agreement. If the average length of time in this process were shortened, then lower recidivism rates might be expected.

The average length of time between arrest/citation and entering diversion agreement was approximately two months. It can be argued that the lesson to be learned from a "swift but sure" punishment may have been lost in this delay. The average length of time spent in diversion was one and one-half months.

Hence, the complete diversion process takes an average of 3 1/2 months.

J. Recidivism

The other way of looking at how successful diversion is as a sentencing disposition is if the client is deterred from committing future offenses.

First of all, "recidivism" here is defined as another court referral. This may under represent the actual number of offenses committed. Some offenses may not be within the jurisdiction of the King County Department of Youth Services (juvenile court) and would not appear in the Juvenile Information System. Some offenders are never apprehended by the police and thus would not appear in the system. Finally, some Class D and E offenses may be handled informally by a "field adjustment."

There are two points in time that recidivism can be measured:

First, a referral could occur during the Diversion Agreement, and second it could occur after diversion has been completed.

1. During Program Offenses

Relatively few clients committed an offense during the course of their Diversion Agreement. Only 51 clients, or approximately 7 percent were referred to the Juvenile Information System for a during-program offense. There was no significant difference between project sites in the percentage of clients who had a during-program offense.

2. Post-Program Recidivism

Diversion may have a beneficial effect on recidivism if the at risk period is short and if the clients have successfully completed their diversion agreement. Nine percent of clients who completed diversion and the at risk time was less than six months, recidivated. However, when the at risk time is lengthened, the percentage of clients with post-program referrals increases.

When the at risk time is six months or more, 20 percent of the clients who successfully completed diversion were referred for a post-program offense. Too few clients had a 12 month or more post-program at risk period to be considered independently. The prior, during and post-program at-risk periods are not equal and cannot be compared statistically. One can hypothesize that recidivism increases as the post-program period is lengthened.

Diversion may reduce the occurrence of referrals for the period of time the youth is in the diversion program and for the period of time immediately following diversion, but as the period of risk is lengthened, the number of post-program offenses is increased. This post-program recidivism calls into question the lasting effect of diversion.

3. The Effect of Diversion Assignment Upon Recidivism

a. Community Service

The great majority of clients were assigned community service. In fact, all of the King County clients were assigned community service.

A few of the Seattle clients, however, were not assigned community service. It is possible to compare the post-program records of those who were assigned community service and completed diversion to the record of those clients who were not assigned community service and yet successfully completed diversion. Using a six month or more at risk period, 460 client records could be compared. Of these, 424 were assigned community service and 35 were not assigned community service. Twenty-one percent of those who performed community service had a post-program offense and 9 percent of those who were not assigned community service had a post program offense. Although these comparisons appear to be interesting, there is no significant difference between groups. Thus, we cannot claim or disclaim that community service, or the bonding effect of community service, is a strong factor for recidivism.

b. Counseling

It is possible to compare the percentage of clients who complete diversion, with some form of counseling assigned, to the percentage of clients who completed diversion, without counseling assigned. For those who successfully completed diversion approximately 26 percent had counseling assigned and 74 percent had no counseling assigned.

For those clients who did not successfully complete their diversion agreements, 38 percent had counseling assigned and 62 percent had no counseling assigned.

It is difficult to say that counseling per se leads to failure to complete diversion. It could mean that the few clients who are assigned counseling are different than the majority of clients. It could mean that only those youths who appear most troubled and least likely to finish diversion are assigned counseling by Juvenile Court Conference Committees. It does, however, raise questions about the effectiveness of counseling for diversion.

For clients who successfully completed diversion and had a six month or more at risk period, some interesting differences appear. Those clients who did not have any counseling were least likely to recidivate. For those clients who had one counseling session, the recidivism rate increases, and for those few clients who had more than one counseling session, the recivism rate is higher still. These differences, although interesting, are not statistically significant.

What might be concluded from the data on counseling is that it does not have either a beneficial or a detrimental effect on the clients' ability to complete their diversion agreements and to remain offense free after diversion.

c. Restitution

Very few clients were ordered restitution in this sample. The records of clients who successfully completed diversion and were or were not assigned restitution, and had a six month or more at risk period, were compared. Approximately 20 percent of those who were not assigned restitution and approximately 15 percent of those assigned restitution had a post-program offense. These differences are not statistically significant.

d. Conclusion

Community service, counseling, or restitution do not appear to make a significant impact on recidivism. Dennis Romig, in Justice for Our Children, reviewed 107 community diversion projects and concluded, "Diversion projects will fail if they rely on counseling, casework, referral, or work experience to rehabilitate youth."¹

¹ Dennis A. Romig Justice for Our Children: An examination of Juvenile Delinquent Rehabilitation Programs (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1978), page 121.

4. The Effect of Demographic Variables Upon Recidivism

a. Sex

More males than females are referred for diversion, so it is not surprising to see more males than females recidivating. What we find, however, is a statistically significant difference in the rate of recidivism, after six months at-risk, between boys and girls who have successfully completed diversion. The table below shows that approximately 14 percent of the girls and over 23 percent of the boys recidivated after a 6 month period.

POST PROGRAM OFFENSES BY SEX

	Males	Females	Totals
No Post Program Offense	226	141	367
Post-Program Offense	77%	86%	80%
	68	23	91
	23%	14%	20%
Totals	294	164	458

Chi Square = 4.925 3 degrees of freedom
Significant at .05

b. Socio-Economic Status

The socio-economic status of the clients did not appear to make a significant difference in the rate of post-program recidivism for those clients who successfully completed diversion. In fact, the clients who were in the lowest status and those in the highest status had almost identical rates of recidivism.

c. Race

The race of clients did not make a significant difference in the rate of post-program referrals. There is some evidence that native Americans and Spanish surname clients recidivated at a greater rate, but the number of clients is too small to provide conclusive evidence. Project personnel may wish to examine their project procedures to see if there is some way to improve the diversion experience for these minorities.

VII. OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED

A. King County

1. To provide community service work sites to 1000 youths annually (an average of 83 youths per month).

During the 12 month study period the King County projects provided community service work sites to 866 youths, or an average of 72 per month. The program fell slightly short of achieving this objective.

2. To reduce the rate of recidivism of juvenile offenders who are referred to the project.

If recidivism is measured in repeat referrals to the juvenile court, approximately 20 percent of King County clients were referred for a repeat offense after six months at risk. Approximately 40 percent of King County clients had a prior referral when they entered Diversion. However, the at risk time was different for each client. All prior offenses, rather than only those for a 6 month period, were recorded. It is, therefore, difficult to say with certainty that the rate of recidivism was reduced.

PERCENTAGE OF CLIENTS WHO RECIDIVATED BY PROJECT SITES

Auburn	31%
Bellevue	19%
Bothell	21%
Highline	13%
Mercer Island	20%
Renton	15%

3. To achieve successful completion of community service by 90 percent of the youth.

Over 90 percent of the King County clients successfully completed their community service. The percentage of clients returned to court for not completing their community service is listed below:

PERCENTAGE OF CLIENTS RETURNED TO COURT BY PROJECT SITE

Auburn	10.12%
Bellevue	15.686%
Bothell	7.692%
Highline	6.818%
Mercer Island	0
Renton	11.864%

As a whole, the King County program met this objective; however, some individual project sites did not.

B. City of Seattle

1. To reduce the student suspension rates from school by 20 percent.

The City of Seattle projects did not collect school data uniformly on each client; it was not possible to determine if diversion clients were in school, suspended, or expelled from school. It was not possible to determine from client records if a suspended client had been directly helped by diversion staff to return to school.

Suspension rates provided by the Seattle School District could not be attributed to the direct effect of the diversion program. It is not possible to say this objective was achieved.

2. To increase by 10 percent the percentage of victims who are compensated for damage and losses.

The City of Seattle did not collect baseline data on restitution with which to compare diversion clients. Because the modal client in a diversion program committed Class D offense, generally the client was not assigned financial restitution. At Southwest Seattle YSB only 11 out of 151 clients, or 7 percent, were assigned restitution. At the Central Seattle YSB only 3 of the 145 clients, or 2 percent, were assigned restitution.

In general, very few victims were compensated for damage and losses. However, given the type of offenses committed, restitution may not be an appropriate assignment.

3. To reduce recidivism in areas of the city covered by these two programs.

Because baseline data on recidivism were not readily available for clients in these areas, a comparison could not be done.

Juvenile court referrals for diversion in 1980 and 1981 are higher than the 1978 and the 1979 periods. It is possible the increase in diversion, can be attributed to police or prosecution policies, and may not be attributed directly to the effects of the program. It is not possible to say this objective was achieved.

4. To reduce the number of Part II crimes and total juvenile contacts compared with pre-project juvenile offenses.

No baseline data were collected to compare against the post-program period. Even if crimes had decreased, the decline could not be attributed to the directly effect of the program.

5. To reduce the growth of reported simple assaults and larcenies in those areas of the city impacted by diversion programs.

No baseline data were collected. The differences cannot be attributed to the effect of the program.

VIII. COST ANALYSIS

A comparison of the cost of diversion with the cost of adjudication could not be done easily. According to the state's juvenile code, a client who is referred for a divertable offense does not go through the formal court process, he must be diverted. It is possible, however, to display the amount of funds that were actually expended by the City of Seattle and King County, during the two grant periods. From the total amount spent, a per-month cost can be calculated. By multiplying this per-month cost by 12, an average annual cost can be determined.

	CITY OF SEATTLE		KING COUNTY	
	City of Seattle		King County	
	1st Period	2nd Period	1st Period	2nd Period ¹
Personnel	\$112,798	\$188,995	\$ -0-	\$ -0-
Contractual	-0-	-0-	278,744	228,997
Travel	2,449	-0-	1,315	479
Equipment	5,421	651	2,675	204
Supplies	23,986	1,872	1,154	1,502
Other Services & Charges	-0-	32,838	-0-	-0-
Indirect	7,113	11,177	-0-	8,286
TOTAL	\$151,767	\$235,533	\$283,888	\$239,468
TOTAL FOR PROGRAM	\$387,300 (25 months)		\$523,356 (34 months)	
COST PER MONTH	\$15,492		\$15,393	
AVERAGE ANNUAL COST	\$185,904 (12 months)		\$184,716 (12 months)	
TOTAL CLIENTS FOR 12-MONTH STUDY PERIOD	296		866 ²	
AVERAGE COST PER CLIENT ³	\$628		\$213	

¹The first period refers to the first grant period. The City of Seattle started September 25, 1979 and ended September 30, 1980 (12 months). King County's first grant period started January 1, 1979 and ended September 30, 1980 (21 months). The second grant period was the same for both programs, October 1, 1980 to October 31, 1981 (13 months).

²There were 433 clients in the 50 percent sample for the 12-month study period; therefore, approximately 866 clients were handled by the 6 King County sites.

³The average cost per client of state funded diversion units in DSHS Region 3 in 1979 was \$99.54. The cost per client for the Snohomish County Juvenile Court in 1979 was \$67.35.

Most of the clients in the sample were assigned community service. If the value of the community service actually completed was computed at \$3.25 per hour, for the total number of community service hours provided, a "benefit" to the community can be calculated. The table below shows the hours assigned and actually completed.

HOURS ASSIGNED AND COMPLETED BY DIVERSION PROJECT SITE

	Total Hours Assigned	Total Hours Completed
Central Seattle	3271	2830
West Seattle	3097	2646
Auburn	1607	1364
Bellevue	2627	2040
Bothell	1426	1268
Highline	961	885
Mercer Island	505	505
Renton	2313	1993

The total number of hours completed by the Seattle programs was 5476. At \$3.25 per hour, the worth of community service to Seattle was \$17,797.

The total number of hours completed by King County projects was approximately 16,110. At \$3.25 per hour the value of this community service was approximately \$52,358.

It can be argued that the community service provided is similar to volunteer work, needed by the community, but not considered important enough to be paid for by the city or the county. If the clients at the diversion projects had not provided this service, it is not certain that the city or the county would have paid staff members to perform the work.¹ If the services were indeed needed, the cost of the program, after the benefits were subtracted, would be:

COST AND BENEFITS OF DIVERSION

	City of Seattle	King County
Average Cost Per Year	\$185,904	\$184,716
Benefits of Community Service	-\$ 17,979	-\$ 52,358
Average Adjusted Cost Per Year	\$167,925	\$132,358
Adjusted Cost Per Client	\$567	\$153

¹It should be noted that Community Service cannot supplant the work of paid staff.

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper was to examine the recidivism of clients in two diversion programs funded by an OJJDP grant. Four aspects of diversion were considered: 1) the theoretical premises of diversion, 2) the uniformity of dispositions, 3) the effect of diversion assignments upon recidivism, and 4) the effect of demographic variables upon recidivism.

I. THEORETICAL PREMISES

Diversion, as mandated in the state's Juvenile Justice Act, was an attempt to remove the minor offender from the formal juvenile court adjudication process. Instead of going through the court process, the youth now meets with community volunteers and may work on a diversion assignment at a community site. In effect, by going through a diversion assignment, more people in the youth's community are likely to know of the youth's offenses than if the youth had an informal adjustment or had gone to court. Thus, it appears that the youth is no less labelled by diversion than by adjudication and may be more labelled.

Diversion was supposed to deter recidivism because the result of committing an offense was an immediate negative consequence. Almost 40 percent of the sample had a prior minor offense, and it can be assumed that most of these clients had been through diversion previously. For over one-third of the sample, then, referral to the diversion program during the study period was a measure of their recidivism. For these clients, a previous diversion did not deter recidivism. The consequence may not have been perceived by the clients as either immediate or negative.

These two theoretical premises, deterrence and labelling, are in direct conflict with each other. By holding a youth accountable, one must label the youth as an offender.

Most of the sample was assigned community service. This assumed that the youth would be bonded to conventional pursuits as he/she worked, under supervision, to benefit the community. However, there was no significant difference in recidivism between those youth who were assigned community service and those who were not. Community service, then, did not "bond" the youth to community mores.

2. UNIFORMITY OF DISPOSITIONS

One hope in adopting the Juvenile Justice Act was to make dispositions uniform. Diversion assignments for the typical diversion clients in this sample were not necessarily uniform.

Some clients were given longer community service work assignments and some clients were given more restitution to pay. The research, however, showed no significant difference in recidivism accrued from a longer assignment or more restitution. Therefore, it is probably more cost effective to shorten the assignments. In the future, the King County Department of Youth Services (Juvenile Court) should offer more specific guidelines to the Juvenile Court Conference Committees when records for youths are sent to the Committees. Committee volunteers should understand there is no relationship between length of assignment and the chance of a youth recidivating. Committees should strive for uniformity of diversion assignments.

3. DIVERSION ASSIGNMENTS

The diversion process takes an average of three-and-a-half months. The average assignment is twenty-three hours of community service. It would appear that this average community service assignment could be completed in approximately one month. The length of time spent in completing the diversion assignment does not appear to improve the client's chance of completing diversion successfully. In fact, if the client is given a second or third chance to complete his assignment, the youth may be learning he/she can manipulate the system. Lengthening the diversion assignment, to have a

longer "hold" on the client, also does not appear to be successful. The period from arrest/citation to entry and exit from a diversion project site should be shorter. The police, the prosecutor's office, the records division, the Juvenile Court Conference Committees, and the project sites' staff members should work together to see that this period is shorter.

No one specific diversion assignment, such as community service, counseling, or restitution, appears to be any more beneficial than any other assignment. It cannot be assumed, then, that any one of these assignments can reduce recidivism.

Completing diversion, in and of itself, should not be taken as an outcome measure of success. It is a measure of accountability only. Some of the project sites that had the highest rates of completion, also had the highest rates of recidivism.¹

Diversion, itself, does not reduce recidivism. Certain aspects of diversion that were not directly tested in this paper, such as the individual components of a particular diversion project site, or the interaction of staff with clients, may have an effect upon recidivism.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

The sex of the client is the most important demographic variable in predicting recidivism. There is a statistically significant difference between the rates of recidivism for boys and for girls. Boys are more likely to recidivate. Certain project sites which contain a high ratio of boys to girls had a high rate of recidivism. However, project sites which had the lowest rates of recidivism were not those with a high ratio of girls, but those which approached the norm, approximately two-thirds male and one-third female.

¹It should be noted that there were no controls for demographic variables or offenses for post-program offenses by project sites. This merely shows that, in general, completion cannot be equated with a lack of recidivism.

The race and the socio-economic status of the client did not have a statistically significant effect on recidivism.

The seriousness of the prior offense and the seriousness of the referral offense does not appear to affect the success of completing diversion or of recidivating. Some project sites that had a high referral offense seriousness score had low recidivism, although sites with high prior seriousness scores tended to have high recidivism. This again points out the effect that personnel and project components may have.

In conclusion, the objectives for diversion were unrealistically high. Realizing that the objectives may not be met, the county and the city should consider restructuring their less successful sites or combining them with the more successful sites. The King County model appears to be more cost effective than the City of Seattle model. The Highline and Southwest Seattle sites appear to be the most successful in terms of reducing recidivism. Other project sites should consider these as models for providing diversion services. The cost per client, however, must be considered. In comparison to DSHS Region 3, the costs are quite high.

In the future the King County Department of Youth Services (juvenile court) should play an active role in improving diversion by improving communication among all actors in the system: the police, the Prosecutor the records division, the Juvenile Court Conference Committee Director, the Juvenile Court Conference Committees and the project sites.

X. APPENDIX

<u>Offense</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Class</u>
Abandonment	Y	Defraud an Innkeeper	E
Alcohol Offense	E	Disorderly Conduct	E
Alt Res Placement	Y	Dist Court Sentence	Y
Arson 1	A	Diversion Returnee	X
Arson 2	B	DWI	D
Arson 2 Attempt	C	Elude Purs Police Veh	C
Assault 1 Intent Kill	A+	Equitable Relief	Y
Assault 2 Bodily Harm	B+	Escape 1	B
Assault 3 Resist Process	C+	Escape 1 Attempt	C
Assault 2 Attempt	C+	Escape 2	C
AWOL DI	99	Escape 3	D
Bank Check under 250	D	Extortion 1	B+
Bank Checks over 250	C	Extortion 1 Attempt	C+
Boating	V	Extortion 2	C+
Burg Tools Poss	D	Fail to Comply (DIV)	X
Burg 1 Attempt	C+	Federal Hold	X
Burg 2	B	Fireworks	E
Burg 2 Attempt	C	Fish and Game	V
Burg 1	B+	Forgery	C
Change of Venue	X	Guardianship	Y
Child in Conflict	Y	Hit & Run (Occupied)	D
Coercion	D	Hit & Run (Unoccupied)	E
Crim Impersonation	D	Illegal Alien	99
Criminal Trespass 1	D	Indecent Lib Attempt	C+
Criminal Trespass 2	E	Indecent Liberties	B+
Decline: Await trial	Y	Institution	Y
Decline: Sentenced	Y	Interstate Compact	Y

<u>Offense</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Class</u>
Intim. Witness Attempt	C+	Possession Marij Gr 40	C
Intim. Witness	B+	Possession Marij Less 40	E
Involuntary Commit	Y	Poss Stolen Prop 1	B
Kidnap 1	A	Poss Stolen Prop 2	C
Kidnap 2	B+	Poss Stolen Prop 3	D
Kidnap 2 Attempt	C+	Promote Pros. Attempt	C+
Lewd Conduct	E	Promote Prostitution	B+
Mail Theft	X	Prostitution Loiter	E
Mal Mischief 1	B	Pub Indec (Over 14)	E
Mal Misch 1 Attempt	C	Pub Indec (Under 14)	D
Mal Misch 2	C	Rape 1	A
Mal Misch 3	D	Rape 1 Attempt	B+
Mal Misch 3 (Also Vandal.)	E	Rape 2	B+
Manslaughter 1 Attempt	C+	Rape 2 Attempt	C+
Maslaughter 1 Reckless	B+	Rape 3	C+
Maslaughter 2 Negligent	C+	Reckless Burning 1	C
Menacing	D	Reckless Burning 2	D
Minor Freq Tavern	E	Reckless Driving	E
Muni Court Sentence	Y	Reckless Endangerment	D+
Murder 1	A+	Render Crim Assist	D
Murder 2	A	Render Crim Assist	E
Narcotic Possession	B	Resist Off Arrest	E
Negligent Homicide	B+	Robbery 1	A
Neglect or Abuse	Y	Robbery 1 Attempt	B+
No Parent or Guardian	Y	Robbery 2	B+
Obstruct Pub Servant	E	Robbery 2 Attempt	C+
Offer and Agree	E	Scalping	E
Other Off. not in Table	X	Simple Assault	D+
Parole Hold	X	Stat Rape 1	B+
Parole Modified	X	Stat Rape 2	C+
Parole Suspended	X	Taking Motor Vehicle	C
Parolee	99	Taking Vehicle Attempt	D
Pedestrian Offenses	V	Telephone Harassment	E
Police Hold	X	Term Parent Right	Y

<u>Offense</u>	<u>Class</u>
Theft 1	B
Theft 1 Attempt	C
Theft 2	C
Theft 2 Attempt	D
Theft 3	D
Theft 3 Attempt	E
Threats	E
Traffic Violations	V
Vehicle Prowling	D
Violate Court Order	X
Vol Place (Mental)	Y
Vucsa-Delivery Narc	B
Vusca-Delivery Non-Narc	C
Vusca-Poss Non-Narc	C
Warrant	X
Warrant (MD Court)	X
Warrant (OJ)	X
Warrant-District Court	X
Warrant - Muni Court	X
Weapons Offenses	D

END