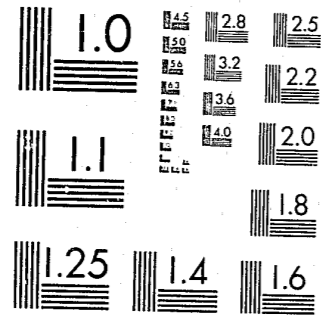


National Criminal Justice Reference Service



This microfiche was produced from documents received for inclusion in the NCJRS data base. Since NCJRS cannot exercise control over the physical condition of the documents submitted, the individual frame quality will vary. The resolution chart on this frame may be used to evaluate the document quality.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

Microfilming procedures used to create this fiche comply with the standards set forth in 41CFR 101-11.504.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author(s) and do not represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

National Institute of Justice  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C. 20531

4/27/84

91592

91592

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  
Public Domain/LEAA/OJJDP  
US Department of Justice

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

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

NCJRS

OCT 15 1983

ACQUISITIONS

FINAL REPORT

of

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

OJJDP Grant #80-JS-AX-0026

September 6, 1983

OVERVIEW

General

It is with pride that we write this final report on our accomplishments under the OJJDP grant that expired on June 30, 1983. We not only carried out the projects we had promised, but the state has benefitted from our work. Termination of the grant marks the end of a three-year amicable and productive association. The association resulted in important system changes beneficial to the children and youth of our State, and we believe, laid a firm foundation for us to continue to work to improve the systems that affect children and youth in Arkansas. Of lasting importance, during the project period we became better recognized as an authority on children's issues by the executive and legislative branches of the State government and by the general public. We developed advocacy strategies that will help our agency fulfill its mission for children and youth in the future.

As an unintended result of our bringing problems to the foreground and of improving the climate for positive change, other groups more concerned with direct services have also initiated or expanded their programs. For example, a foster parent association has been instrumental in getting plans adopted for a therapeutic foster home program.

We were able to successfully complete virtually all of the activities called for in connection with our two major goals: (1) moving juvenile justice from the county court into a higher level trial court, and (2) improving case planning and case review for out-of-home placements. Activities connected with our secondary goal--the education of parents and youth about youth serving agencies--were accomplished primarily in conjunction with our work done under the two primary goals of the project. However, certain activities, such as the Speakers Bureau, were in direct response to this third goal. Because most of the education activities were done in conjunction with other goals, education as a distinct and separate goal was dropped in the latter part of the grant period with some of its activities incorporated into the youth involvement goal.

AACF performed in all the areas of activity called for under the youth involvement goal. We are especially proud of the role youth played in the work of our project. Unfortunately, many of these activities ended, at least temporarily, with the termination of the OJJDP Grant.

Certain types of activities were common to all goals and are described below in order to reduce duplication. (Other activities applicable to more than one goal appear under Goal III, Education.)

During the three year grant period, one or more members of the staff attended every hearing on issues affecting children and youth, both hearings held during regular legislative sessions and those held by interim committees. At times we were asked to prepare testimony for these hearings. Members of the staff, and most

particularly, the Director, serve on boards of various organizations concerned with children and youth. The staff attended workshops to improve their knowledge and skills in areas of their project responsibility. We cooperated with organizations with similar interests. AACF was asked to review draft legislation and regulations, especially on out-of-home placement and juvenile justice. In order to obtain their input and support, we always attempted to involve in our deliberations experts and persons or organizations that might be either favorably or unfavorably affected. We also involved volunteers in our activities whenever possible and attempted to have statewide participation.

The extent to which the activities succeeded in achieving the goals under which they were carried out varied. The out-of-home placement goal was achieved in its entirety. Juvenile courts have not yet been restructured, but the mind-set of the State is much more favorably disposed toward doing so than it was three years ago. AACF played an important role through its Youth Advocacy Grant activities in bringing the State to this point. The goal to involve youth in AACF matters was achieved in a variety of ways. It is difficult to measure education on matters affecting children and youth as a separate goal. Such education overlays all the other goals. We have continuously educated the general public on specific issues involving children and youth. In regard to educating youth and their parents, in particular, the task forces the Community Liaison staff member established throughout the State and the activities of the youth involved in AACF performed this function.

#### Juvenile Justice

Extent goal achieved: The juvenile court has not been restructured as yet. The issue is far from dead, however. The State's effort to reform the juvenile court through the constitutional approach has not succeeded. The failure was not necessarily due to opposition to a better court system for juveniles but rather to the fact that the improvement effort either was part of a referendum for a new constitution which the electorate was unwilling to adopt; was a constitutional amendment that failed to reach the ballot because of a technicality; or the proposed amendment appeared on the ballot but was so broadly worded that the electorate feared it would give the legislature the authority to change the entire judicial system of the state, not merely the juvenile courts.

The work done in connection with these efforts did produce some favorable consequences, however. Not only have some of the key legislators become interested in the issue but they are willing to attempt the legislative route to attain a better juvenile court system. Two comprehensive and thoughtful identical bills were introduced late in the 1983 legislative session. They made the juvenile court a division of the circuit court and addressed three of Arkansas Advocates' major concerns about the State's current system of juvenile justice. They made the juvenile court a court of record, created a uniform system of juvenile justice, and required the juvenile court judge to be a legally trained professional. Because of the confusion and misinformation that attended the last days of a session, supporters of the legislation feared that it might be amended into "ineffectiveness". The bills, therefore, were not voted upon in both Houses but, instead, were referred to the Interim Joint Judiciary Committee. Since the close of the session, members of our staff have attended hearings of this Committee and have been requested to testify in mid-September.

Due to the educational activities of Arkansas Advocates in the area of juvenile justice, a much larger segment of the population understands the nature of the problems involved and, we hope, are much more willing to support raising the juvenile court to a higher level trial court.

Through our work with the Arkansas Bar Foundation's Juvenile Justice Task Force of which our Director was an ex officio member, we played a role in getting the legislature in its 1981 session to pass eight important amendments or additions to the 1975 Juvenile Code. The amendments help to offset the absence of Rules of Procedure for the Code. (Copies of the laws were sent to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, previously.) These laws not only offer new protections to the youth who have contact with the juvenile court, but they ensure greater uniformity among the 75 juvenile courts in the State.

Activities: The Juvenile Court Observation Project occupied us throughout the grant period--starting with developing a questionnaire for use in the courts by volunteer observers, recruiting and training the observers, obtaining permission from the judges to permit the volunteers to observe the courts and ending with the publication of Due Process Rights and Legal Procedures in Arkansas' Juvenile Courts that is based on the survey's findings. (A copy of the publication is enclosed, Exhibit A.)

Because a high percentage of juvenile cases in Arkansas are heard in adult courts, we believe that this situation must also be dealt with in order to achieve a meaningful improvement in the justice system for juveniles. Therefore, we contracted with a private attorney to study the problem. The result is Arrest and Disposition of Juveniles in Arkansas Circuit Courts: Summary. (A copy is enclosed, Exhibit B.)

A third research project under the OJJDP grant was a review of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of court structure. (Copy sent to OJJDP previously.) We hope this will be helpful when Arkansas finally is ready to restructure its juvenile court system.

A graduate student intern conducted a small survey of juveniles in two training schools to determine the impact of the 8 laws that went into effect in July 1981 and served, to some extent, as Rules of Procedure for the 1975 Juvenile Code. (A copy was submitted to OJJDP previously.)

Because of our activities in the area of juvenile justice, the Pulaski County Bar Association awarded us its annual Liberty Award for the year, 1981-1982.

#### Out-of-home placement

Extent goal achieved: Out-of-home placement has been our greatest success in terms of goal attainment. State policy now calls for individual case plans for each child, administrative review, judicial review, and an information system to track children in substitute care.

Implementation, however, is not entirely satisfactory to us as yet, partly due to the newness of the policies and partly due to internal problems of the administrative agency as well as to other factors. Nonetheless, the first step in achieving reform

is to get the needed policy changes adopted. AACF has been very influential in getting these changes and shall continue to work to see that they are properly implemented. We have not abandoned the idea of Citizens Review Boards if we believe they are necessary.

A Child Placement Licensing Act was passed during the 1983 legislative session. Unfortunately, it exempts from licensing an important medium in Arkansas for placing children in adoptive homes, namely lawyers and physicians. It does, however, help children in many ways. Children placed through an agency will now be guaranteed a specified level of protection, as will their natural parents and/or adoptive or foster parents. The law establishes a Child Placement Advisory Committee to review proposed standards and to recommend appropriate services and practices in the child placement process.

Activities: As a joint venture, AACF and Arkansas Social Services conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of foster care. Our Director was the principal author of the recommendations based on the assessment's findings. He met and continues to meet frequently with the officers and staff of the Department of Human Services and Arkansas Social Services on behalf of foster care policies and implementation.

In cooperation with Arkansas Action for Foster Care, AACF surveyed foster parents to determine foster care practices. Two surveys on the juvenile courts' compliance with the 6-month review for foster care were conducted by graduate student interns while with AACF. (A copy of the more recent survey is enclosed, Exhibit C; the first one was submitted to OJJDP.)

Our agency was among those asked for input in the drafting of a Child Placement Licensing Act, and AACF was invited to testify on the subject.

#### Education

Extent goal achieved: The initial goal to educate parents and youth, in large part, evolved into the more comprehensive goal of community education. Most of the educational efforts directed specifically at youth were carried out under Goal IV: Youth Involvement, which was added at a later date. We believe, however, that we achieved our education objectives under both goals, III and IV. Both goals are of a continuing nature, as opposed to those of achieving a new juvenile court system or new policies on out-of-home placements.

Activities: Our quarterly publication, the Incentive, is an important on-going educational medium. It has wide distribution, including distribution to 50 newspapers that are encouraged to use its information. The quarterly featured articles related to our OJJDP goals and activities and served as a primary source for informing parents about services and programs affecting them and their children. (The most recent issue is enclosed, Exhibit D; previous issues were submitted to OJJDP.)

The staff and volunteer speakers delivered speeches to civic, educational, and religious groups on a variety of issues. The Speakers Bureau, although not as successful as we had hoped, did deliver a number of speeches throughout the State and furthered our efforts to get persons outside of Little Rock aware of and involved with AACF and its work for children and youth.

Members of the staff were interviewed by TV channels and the press and appeared on radio talk shows. Juvenile justice, foster care, and adoption were the most common

media subjects. We also presented public service announcements over TV.

Our Community Liaison traveled the state to meet with volunteer groups, officials and providers to discuss local youth issues and services and to inform them of our interest in these issues and services. After compiling and evaluating the data from his site visits, he took appropriate follow-up action to help each area with its local problems. As a result of this effort there is a greater statewide awareness of issues affecting children and youth and more actions taken on their behalf. (See following section on youth task forces established by the Community Liaison.)

During most of the grant period, a Public Forum was sponsored each month by one of the four task forces into which the membership is organized--law, social welfare, education, and health.

One of our first educational efforts was to compile a statistical profile of children and youth for each of the State's 84 representative and 35 senatorial districts and present them to their respective legislators during the January-March, 1981 legislative session. (Copy sent to OJJDP previously.)

#### Youth involvement

Extent goal achieved: After a poor start, we eventually achieved an outstanding degree of success in getting youth involved in AACF matters, both as employees and as volunteers. With the termination of OJJDP funding, we are not able to continue some of the major activities in support of this goal, such as publication of the Defender. (A copy of the last issue is enclosed, Exhibit E; previous issues were submitted to OJJDP.) The paid youth staff had the prime responsibility for recruiting and working with the youth volunteers. We no longer have this staff. However, in the last phase of the grant period the Community Liaison staff member established regional Special Issues Youth Task Forces to get youth input on state and national issues affecting them. These groups, most of which are school affiliated, are still active and their number is expected to increase with the start of the 1983 school year.

Activities: The Defender was written and produced entirely by youth and was a great source of pride to them and to the staff and board of AACF. (Most recent is copy enclosed, Exhibit E; others were previously sent to OJJDP.) Another outstanding activity was the "Kids on Kids" series sponsored by two banks. Speech students from two high schools presented to lunch-time audiences speeches from our Speakers Bureau manual after having extensively revised and improved them.

We held two workshops for youth. One was on how to prepare a newsletter. The other was a two-day video workshop to train youth in building concepts on children's issues, writing scripts, filming, and editing video productions. We also sub-contracted with several groups throughout the state to produce video tapes on specific concerns of ours for use by community groups and organizations. One requirement was to involve youth in all aspects of the production. (Enclosed is a copy of the announcement of the availability of the tapes, Exhibit F.)

We sponsored a youth writing contest -- "Children, Youth, and the Legislature". It was in connection with our participation in a conference, "Kids and the 1983

General Assembly: Who Cares?". Twenty-three organizations participated in this conference which lasted several days.

Our youth employees established several youth task forces but fewer than initially planned because of the departure of the young person primarily responsible for originating the task forces.

#### FINAL REPORT

Goal I: To ensure uniformity and equity in the handling of juvenile cases by placing jurisdiction for juvenile matters in a higher level trial court presided over by a well-qualified judge who follows an approved set of rules of procedures for juvenile cases.

##### 1. Juvenile court reform: constitutional and legislative measures

Between the date our grant proposal was written and the date of our grant award, the Arkansas Bar Foundation established a Juvenile Justice Task Force to examine the juvenile justice system and to make recommendations for legislation to the 1981 General Assembly. The Director of Arkansas Advocates served as an ex officio member of the Task Force. A Board member and three other members of Arkansas Advocates also served on the Task Force. Two Arkansas Advocates' publications, Juvenile Justice Manual and Compilation of Arkansas Laws Relating to Children, were used consistently by committee members in their work.

The majority of the members of the Bar Task Force agreed that removal of juvenile courts from the various county courts of the state and their incorporation into a higher level trial court was the most vital change needed in juvenile justice. This recommendation was shared with the Joint Judiciary Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth of the state legislature. The legislative subcommittee then drafted a proposed amendment to the state constitution which would permit the legislature to make the necessary change. The proposed amendment which stated: "The Arkansas General Assembly may establish jurisdiction and venue of all Arkansas courts of general and limited jurisdiction and divisions thereof," was sponsored by the Joint Judiciary Committee as a committee bill and was approved by the 73rd General Assembly. Members of Arkansas Advocates and the Bar Task Force were invited by several key legislators to meet with them to discuss the importance of the proposed amendment for youth. Additionally, Arkansas Advocates provided through its quarterly newsletter, the Incentive, descriptions of all youth legislation, including the amendment, to more than 800 persons throughout Arkansas.

In April of 1982, we began to plan our strategy in seeking support for public passage of the amendment that was entitled Amendment 61. The year 1982 was a major election year and Amendment 61 shared ballot space with four other amendments, two of which were linked to utility reform and received considerable media attention. A sensitive situation developed that circumvented our plans to launch widespread political canvassing in support of Amendment 61. The amendment was criticized on the grounds that the wording was too vague and broad and gave the legislature additional jurisdiction over all courts, not just juvenile courts. We then met with the legislative members of the Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth who originally had indicated that they would work for passage of Amendment 61 and had agreed to make speeches in their respective communities urging its support. At this meeting the chairman of the subcommittee, himself a member of the Arkansas Bar, advised the members to take a low-keyed approach and to refrain from speechmaking unless specifically requested to do so. Since we had worked closely with the subcommittee and had established strong relationships with many of its members we determined that our approach also would be limited.

Our activities concentrated on promoting public awareness of this ballot issue. We made speeches around the state, a year

among our membership, interested friends and the volunteers from our juvenile court observation project and from the Speakers Bureau. As the election drew near, several newspapers throughout the State editorially opposed Amendment 61; yet, the State's largest newspaper acclaimed Amendment 61 as a positive move to improve Arkansas' system of juvenile justice. Except for our activities and a few "honorable mentions" by the media and limited coverage of the Bar's position, Amendment 61 received little attention. We had little hope for its passage. Out of a vote of 637,681 Amendment 61 failed by 153,727 votes.

In anticipation of the amendment's defeat, we attempted to secure another avenue to change juvenile jurisdiction during the upcoming session of the General Assembly. We met with the chairman of the appropriate committee of the Arkansas Bar Association that agreed to propose a bill for the Bar's legislative package to establish a juvenile court under the jurisdiction of Chancery Court. In addition, this committee would prepare a constitutional amendment that would have very specific language about juvenile court jurisdiction.

At its January 1983 meeting, the Arkansas Bar Association voted both to accept the proposed constitutional amendment and to propose legislation to establish jurisdiction for juvenile court within the Chancery Court. The Bar Association's lobbyist expressed dismay at having to work two pieces of legislation addressing the same issue and indicated that it would be difficult if not impossible to have both pieces pass the legislature.

We informed the Bar lobbyist of our interest in assisting with seeking passage of the Bar's proposed legislation. We also contacted the bill's sponsor who seemed vague as to the intent of the legislation and asked us to brief him on the problem and to be prepared to testify on its behalf. Arkansas Advocates provided the only testimony given to the committee and we fielded questions for the bill's sponsor. Several weeks later, the committee had to select from 12 proposed constitutional amendments, four amendments to be placed on the general election ballot of 1984. The juvenile justice amendment failed to get the support necessary to be placed on the ballot. The other legislation from the Bar was never introduced.

While working with the Arkansas Bar, we also continued to meet with legislative members of the Special Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth. In the last meeting of the interim subcommittee, prior to the convening of the 1983 legislative session, two members--a representative and a senator--decided to draft reform legislation on the question of juvenile court jurisdiction. They decided not to solicit comments nor seek help from other interested factions in drawing up this legislation for they contended that most views concerning juvenile court reform already had been provided in the two years of testimony before the committee. They did not have a finished product to introduce into the 1983 session but toward the end of the session they had prepared a draft bill proposing a juvenile court system under Circuit Court jurisdiction. They had us review the drafts but did not want them released for public comment. Two weeks prior to the end of the session, they introduced the bills in their respective Houses. We found the bills to be the most comprehensive legislation to date and strongly supported passage. The legislation passed quickly from committee but began losing momentum on the Senate and House floor. Probation officers, county judges and a few referees began to express their dissatisfaction with the bill. Some of the opposition related to the issues of local control, expenses, and loss of positions. The primary concern seemed to involve a lack of time

to review and prepare comment on the proposed change. Because several amendments threatened to cripple the intent of the bills, the sponsors decided to refer their legislation to the Interim Judiciary Committee for further review. We supported this plan since we feared the bill either would be defeated or be so amended as not to improve juvenile courts significantly and yet permit the legislators to feel that they had done their duty in the area of juvenile justice. The Senator who sponsored this legislation is chairing a special subcommittee of the Joint Interim Judiciary Committee to review and revise this legislation. Arkansas Advocates has been asked to work with the committee as they pursue this effort.

## 2. Juvenile court reform: research projects

In order to document the need for changes in the juvenile court system, we conducted several major research projects. The juvenile court observation project was the most time consuming and complex of these. As stated in the grant application, we trained volunteers from each county who then observed ten cases in the juvenile court of their own county. This effort was designed (1) to provide data for Arkansas Advocates, interested legislative committees, and public and private youth-serving agencies to use in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current system before designing a new one and (2) to familiarize local citizens with their own juvenile court system in order that they be better equipped to address problems in their own local communities.

As mentioned in the grant application, juvenile courts in Arkansas are "closed" courts, in that the juvenile judge has the power to exclude everyone from the courtroom except the parties involved in a case. For our observation project to succeed it was, therefore, essential that we have the support of each juvenile judge. We began by making personal contact with several judges from selected courts across the state. These judges were selected for us by the Director of the Juvenile Judges Association as persons who were respected by other juvenile judges and who would appreciate the importance of our efforts. All of these judges with whom we met endorsed the project. One of them, the past President of the Juvenile Judges Association, further agreed to send a personal letter to the other 74 Juvenile Judges endorsing the project and encouraging their participation.

After receiving the initial endorsements, we sent a letter to each juvenile judge explaining the project and its purposes and indicating that we would follow up by phone. Our procedure in making follow-up calls and obtaining commitments for their participation was to begin with the juvenile courts with the largest caseload in each of the twenty-two judicial districts of the state. We felt that this would not only give us a picture of how the largest percentage of juvenile cases were currently being handled but that it would also facilitate the start-up activities of the project by allowing us to start recruiting volunteers from more heavily populated areas rather than from the rural, sparsely populated areas. Additionally, this procedure would establish our project in at least one court in every area of the state, thus allowing surrounding areas to become more familiar with it via their own network of communications among adjacent court systems.

During the recruitment process, the research analyst began designing an effective instrument for use by the volunteers. Copies of similar instruments used in other states were reviewed and lengthy conversations were held with attorneys

who practice regularly in juvenile courts regarding the areas they felt should be included in the final instrument. A draft of the instrument was prepared and distributed for review to several attorneys at the University of Arkansas Law School familiar with juvenile court procedures. The final instrument was developed at a meeting of the Arkansas Advocates staff and the UALR Legal Clinic attorneys. At the same meeting, the procedure for training the volunteer observers was discussed and developed. It was decided that a videotape should be used that would depict "proper" and "improper" ways in which the same case might be handled in different juvenile courts across the state. Differences both in terms of the procedures used and the type of hearing being observed (i.e. plea and arraignment, adjudication, or disposition) were incorporated into the videotape.

A sole source contract was awarded to the UALR Legal Clinic staff to develop the videotape based upon: (1) their complete understanding of the purposes of the court observation project, (2) their familiarity with the items covered by the instrument to be used by the volunteers, (3) their personal experience in juvenile courts in various regions of the state, and (4) the fact that they had produced videotapes in the past for instructional use and had access to both the equipment necessary for production and a courtroom equipped with suitable lighting for filming. Three attorneys from the Law School developed a script for approval by Arkansas Advocates' staff. The videotape produced was excellent and provided a means whereby we were able during the training session to have the volunteers actually observe a simulated juvenile court hearing and score the instruments they would later use. In addition, all volunteer observers were trained in the history and theory of juvenile courts, the actual content of Arkansas' Juvenile Code, juvenile court case law which should dictate certain procedures in juvenile court, and their role as an invited "guest" in the juvenile courts.

We received permission to observe in every juvenile court of the state except two. In fact, many of the judges were most enthusiastic about our interest in assessing procedures used in their courts and in our efforts to collect the first statewide data of this type. However, because we felt the data collection phase of the court observation project should be concluded by December 15, 1981 (in order for us to have sufficient time for the analysis and for writing the report), sixteen judges indicated that at most only one or two cases could be observed by the volunteers by that date. We, therefore, asked these judges to sign statements indicating their support of the project and their willingness to participate, but we did not actually observe in their courtroom. This decision proved to be wise. There were an additional eleven counties for which we did recruit and train volunteers but who, because of the extremely small caseload in their counties, were unable to observe any cases or a sufficient number of cases during the observation period. By September 1, 1981 we had recruited and trained more than 100 volunteers from 57 counties of the state to serve as juvenile court observers. We received observations for 499 cases, but several were not useable for various reasons. We feel confident that the data is sufficiently large for our purposes. We were impressed with the conscientious way in which the observers handled their assignments.

Our research analyst, assisted by a student intern from the Graduate School of Social Work in Little Rock, coded the instruments as they were returned for eventual computer analysis. Since we had not designated money in our original grant application for computerizing the data, the Board of Arkansas Advocates approved the use of funds from another source for that purpose. With those funds we contracted with a researcher at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock

to assist us in coding the data and for use of the university computer for the computer analysis of the data. We published the project, entitled Due Process Rights and Legal Procedures in Arkansas' Juvenile Courts, during the last quarter of the grant period and are submitting a copy with this final report. We have distributed the publication to our juvenile court observers, the juvenile judges, the circuit and chancery judges, the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth of our state Legislature, the legislative Judiciary Committee, other interested legislators, the UALR School of Law and other appropriate persons and agencies.

A second major research effort on juvenile justice was conducted by a private attorney contracted by Arkansas Advocates. This research project was designed to gather information about the number of youth in Arkansas who are being tried in the adult court system, the offenses for which they are charged, the procedures used in handling their cases, and the dispositions given them by Circuit Court judges. Since at the present time, the prosecutor in the county has the authority to send children between 15 (14 for class A felonies) and 18 to adult court, a major part of the study involved interviewing prosecuting attorneys as to the criteria they use in making that decision. We feel that the number of Arkansas youth currently tried in adult court is sufficiently large to require this information to be included in the data used in considering moving juvenile courts to a higher level within the court system of the state. A summary of this project, entitled Arrest and Disposition of Juveniles in Arkansas Circuit Courts: Summary, was published during the last months of the grant. Its distribution was essentially the same as that of the other juvenile justice publication except that it also was sent to the prosecutors in the state. These two companion pieces should be helpful to legislators and all other persons and groups sincerely interested in the justice system for juveniles in Arkansas. We are enclosing a copy of this publication with this report.

The third research effort was a thorough review of existing literature on the pros and cons of placing juvenile jurisdiction within various court structures. The report from this research included the major options likely to be considered by the Arkansas legislature in its efforts to restructure the juvenile courts in Arkansas, such as family vs. juvenile courts, juvenile courts with and without exclusive jurisdiction for juvenile matters, elected vs. appointed judges, merits and demerits of having the judge rotate among divisions. The Chairman of the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth asked the Director of Arkansas Advocates to testify before his committee about the research being done and asked that each member be given copies of the final report.

### 3. Juvenile Code: rules of procedure

Through our work with the Arkansas Bar Foundation Task Force on Juvenile Justice we were able to accomplish virtually all of the sub-objective "To ensure that a set of rules of procedure for the handling of juvenile matters are ... incorporated in the Juvenile Code proposals for the 1981 General Assembly." The Task Force agreed with Arkansas Advocates' recommendation that if the needed rules of procedure proposed for incorporation into the Juvenile Code were not approved by the legislature, efforts would be made to have the Supreme Court approve them. The Supreme Court approach was not followed, however, because amendments to provide rules of procedure to the Juvenile Code were drafted by the Bar Task Force, endorsed and supported by the Joint Judiciary Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth, submitted to the

legislature as Judiciary Committee bills, and passed into law in 1981.

In all, there were eight very significant amendments or additions to the 1975 Juvenile Code (copies were sent to you). The new laws incorporated rules of procedure covering:

(1) The maximum time allowed prior to a detention hearing, the rights of the juvenile at the detention hearing, the criteria to be used in making the decision to detain a juvenile, and the various alternatives to detention which the court should consider.

(2) The criteria which warrants the issuance of an emergency order allowing the removal of a child from his or her home, the required procedures to be followed in issuing such an order, and the rights of the parents in such instances.

(3) The procedures for notifying the prosecuting attorney when juveniles are arrested and the maximum time allowed before a hearing.

(4) The assurance that statements made during intake cannot be used nor be admissible against a juvenile.

(5) The guarantee of counsel for juveniles and the criteria and procedures for waiving counsel. Waiver cannot be accepted when the petition against the juvenile was filed by the juvenile's parent, guardian, or custodian, or when at plea and arraignment the judge determines there is a reasonable likelihood that the juvenile may be committed to an institution.

(6) The procedures for deciding the disposition of a case, the procedures for conducting predisposition investigations, limitations on the disposition of various cases, and disposition alternatives to be considered by the court.

(7) The procedures to be followed by Intake Officers and the procedures for developing an informal adjustment-diversion agreement for the juvenile.

(8) The criteria to be considered in transferring juvenile cases between the juvenile and adult courts.

These amendments and additions to the Juvenile Code offer significant new protections for the more than 8,000 children and youth who have contact with our juvenile courts each year. They also provide the necessary framework for ensuring greater uniformity among the 75 juvenile courts in the state. However, because of the present juvenile court structure which lacks any functional mechanism for juvenile court accountability and because so much autonomy is granted each judge (many of whom continue to be non-attorneys) there is great doubt about the extent to which these statutory provisions have been incorporated into practice. The knowledge that many juvenile referees and county judges are untrained and that there are no courts further convinces us that the only way to ensure equity and uniformity is through a restructuring of the juvenile court system.

#### 4. Juvenile justice: other activities

Activities related to the sub-objective "To keep abreast of all measures dealing with juvenile justice to determine if they reinforce the objective or tend to undermine its attainment and purpose," are an on-going but essential process. This sub-objective was most critical and required the greatest amount of effort during the legislative session of 1981 when bills were introduced which were clearly contrary to the best interest of children and youth (e.g. one bill would have allowed 12 year old children to be tried in adult court and sentenced to prison terms; another bill would have exempted many childcaring agencies from any oversight and regulation). However, the need for activity in this area remained important throughout the project period. We, therefore, stayed in regular contact with every major agency, public or private, which works in the area of juvenile justice. Through our efforts in this area, many of the key individuals in these agencies have come to rely on Arkansas Advocates for reliable, well-developed information in juvenile justice issues.

Under the litigation sub-objective, a Litigation Advisory Committee was created and charged with the task of developing criteria for appropriate litigation in the areas of juvenile justice and foster care. The Committee consisting of private attorneys and Arkansas Advocates' Board members met several times and developed some general criteria. Primarily, the committee decided that litigation should be pursued only when it: (1) involved a case which would, if successful, benefit large numbers of children and youth, and (2) represented a needed systems change which could not be brought about cooperatively. Though the Committee has existed throughout our grant period, no case that fully met these criteria was brought to its attention. This was due primarily to the fact that we were able to generate support and cooperation around the major changes needed in the juvenile court system.

Goal II: To ensure that for every child in an out-of-home placement there is a clearly written case plan leading, if possible, to the child's return home, and that there is regular case review both internally by the agency responsible for the placement and by the judge responsible for the disposition of the case.

Every major activity scheduled under this goal was completed. At the time we submitted our original proposal, Arkansas Advocates in cooperation with Arkansas Social Services was working on a total assessment of foster family services in Arkansas under a grant awarded to Arkansas Social Services from the Children's Bureau. The assessment was completed in the fall of 1981. Through a rather lengthy process of debate and compromise among the steering committee of the project (composed of four Social Services representatives and four Arkansas Advocates representatives) a final set of recommendations for improving the foster family services was developed. The Director of Arkansas Advocates was given responsibility for writing the recommendations in the form of a final report, which was approved by the Steering Committee as written. These recommendations addressed a number of significant areas needing improvement. (A copy of the final report from the assessment project was submitted to OJJDP with a quarterly report.)

Since the completion of the report, Arkansas Advocates has continued to work with Arkansas Social Services on the implementation of the recommendations. The Steering Committee for the project met with the Director of the Department of Human Services and the Commissioner of Arkansas Social Services to present the recommendations and to solicit their endorsement. Both persons endorsed the recommendations. The Commissioner requested that the Steering Committee continue to function as the coordinating body to oversee the implementation of the recommended changes.



The final report from the assessment was distributed throughout the state to 200 public officials and individuals who were involved in foster care services. In addition, a smaller brochure was written describing the project, highlighting its major recommendations, and listing ways that citizens can help improve the foster care services in their communities. The brochure was distributed to 5,000 persons statewide. Though the majority of the recommendations required internal changes in the policies and procedures of Social Services, several changes required legislative action. In order to ensure the implementation of those changes, the foster care assessment committee requested and was granted time before the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth to explain the project and the areas requiring legislative attention. Two Arkansas Advocates and two Social Services representatives made the presentation. The Subcommittee of the legislature expressed interest in cooperating with the assessment committee and in supporting the recommendations. The chairman named a panel of members from the Subcommittee to work specifically on one of the recommendations needing legislative action, that of drafting a child placement licensing act. The 1983 legislature did pass a Child Placement Licensing Act. AACF assisted in the drafting of the bill. Although the Act, as passed, unfortunately, exempts lawyers and physicians from licensing, it does provide certain protections to the children. The Act established a Child Placement Advisory Committee to review proposed standards and make recommendations about appropriate services and practices in the child placement process. AACF made recommendations regarding membership on the Advisory Committee and will monitor the development of the licensing standards.

A large number of Social Services' policies have been or are being rewritten to conform with the recommendations of the assessment project. Because of Arkansas Advocates' involvement in the assessment and its continuing involvement with the implementation, we are given the opportunity to review policy changes in draft form and to make recommendations regarding them. We are also able to monitor the progress of the agency in developing policy. We feel that monitoring is essential for securing good case plans and regular review for the children who are placed in substitute care each year.

In conjunction with our work on the recommendations of the assessment project, we have worked with Social Services on how it will more fully meet the requirements of the new Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Law (P.L. 96-272). The Director of Arkansas Advocates was able, through outside funding to attend a meeting of directors of Child Advocacy projects from across the nation. At that meeting the Director of Arkansas Advocates helped develop an instrument to measure a state's compliance with the new law. Because of the excellent working relationship established between Arkansas Advocates and the Administrator of the Foster Care Unit of Social Services, the Director was able through meetings with the Administrator to use the instrument to determine to what extent Arkansas is currently in compliance. The two areas of greatest weakness are insufficient preventive services and inadequate procedures for initiating and conducting the required administrative and judicial reviews for children in placement. The Administrator has hired staff who function solely as administrative reviewers, because it appeared that the judicial reviews are not occurring regularly and do not always involve a hearing.

In addition to collecting information from the Administrator of the Foster Care Unit about the effectiveness and regularity of case reviews, Arkansas Advocates drafted an instrument to survey foster parents. The survey was sent by Arkansas Action for Foster Children (a group composed mostly of foster parents) in conjunction with Arkansas Advocates. The survey was to determine how well case reviews were

occurring from the foster parents' perspective and to what extent foster parents are allowed to participate in case planning for the children living in their homes. We also surveyed the juvenile judges of the state on how they are handling reviews for children in out-of-home placements. Because of the good relationships we built during our juvenile court observation project, we received responses from most of the judges who were very candid with us about their handling of reviews. We are enclosing a copy of the findings of this survey, Judicial Response to Arkansas' Requirement of Foster Care Review.

The information from the judges reflected the degree to which the juvenile court legislation on reviews passed in 1981 has had an impact on the actual procedures of the 75 different juvenile courts of the state. We were able, through the Arkansas Bar Foundation Task Force mentioned under Goal I, to get incorporated into the draft legislation, a provision that the juvenile court review every six months all cases involving children in out-of-home placements. This draft was submitted to the Joint Judiciary Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth, and later enacted into law (Act 395). We have, therefore, as outlined in our original proposal, established three clear mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness for case reviews for children in out-of-home placements: (1) regular review of policy and practice from the perspective of the Administrator of the Foster Care Unit; (2) an assessment from the perspective of the persons most intimately involved with the children, their foster parents, and (3) an assessment of judicial review by the judges responsible. Clearly, our ability to collect such information is the result of having been able to establish ourselves as credible and concerned. Throughout the project we have emphasized that we are committed to improving services to children and not to attacking the agency or court with which we are working.

Since the new Child Welfare Act did not take effect until relatively recently, we will continue to monitor the changes in case reviews in the hope that the existing deficiencies will be corrected during the months ahead. However, as stated in our grant application, we have proceeded to research citizens' review boards as a possible solution to poor case review and case planning. A graduate intern from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Graduate School of Social Work collected data from every state which currently operates a citizen review board system. Based upon this information and data about the children in foster care in Arkansas, the intern was able to design a workable model of a citizen review system for Arkansas. Because of the expected cost of such a system, we are waiting to see if Social Services and courts improve the current review practices before suggesting such a plan to either Social Services or the state legislature. Data from other states, however, clearly indicate that when the state is not doing an effective job of reviewing cases, the cost of the citizen review board system is easily recouped by the reduced length of stay of children in foster care resulting from the citizen review. Thus, rather than being an additional expense to the state, citizen review boards can provide cost effective services and actually save money.

Within each of the sub-objectives directed at improving foster care services there are activities intended to keep the public and other youth-serving agencies informed about our work in this area. We have accomplished these activities through a number of avenues. First, we have featured articles about the foster care assessment project and about the new child welfare law and its provisions in our regular quarterly newsletter, the Incentive. Secondly, we have developed speeches about foster care and adoption for use by the volunteers in our Speaker's Bureau. Thirdly, we have participated in a number of committees concerned with foster care and adoption issues. The Director of Arkansas Advocates currently serves as the Chairperson for a committee to develop Comprehensive Emergency Services for Pulaski County (the most heavily populated county in the state). The intent of the committee is to ensure that there are services available to preven...

and that the services are well coordinated. The Director also helped establish and currently is a member of a newly formed Roundtable for Children and Youth. This group is composed of the Executive Director or Board President of statewide, membership-based agencies that have public education or advocacy for children and youth as part of their stated purpose. It is hoped that this group will be able to ensure better cooperative efforts on behalf of children. In addition, Arkansas Advocates has been instrumental in getting Arkansas to become a part of the Southwest Regional Adoption Exchange. The Exchange was established to permit the five states in Region VI of Health and Human Services to cooperate in the placement of special needs children requiring adoptive homes. An Arkansas Advocates' member has been elected to the original Board of Directors of the Exchange. Since so many children remain unnecessarily long in foster care because an adoptive home cannot be found, Arkansas Advocates has a regular section in its newsletter entitled "Loving Homes for Loving Children" that features two children who need a permanent home.

Again, as with Goal I, we feel that we have been able to accomplish for Goal II all of the activities scheduled. Many of the activities need to be continued to reach fruition. This is particularly true for those activities relating to our evaluation of Social Services' newly begun efforts under the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act and to the appropriate advocacy efforts on our part to improve those areas which fail to place children in permanent homes as quickly as possible. Our work with Arkansas Social Services through the Foster Care Assessment Project implementation and with the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Delivery of Services to Youth should continue to provide us with avenues for ensuring the effective case planning and case review that was sought under this objective.

Goal III: To educate the parents and youth of Arkansas about the proper functioning of selected youth serving agencies and institutions and about their rights within those agencies and institutions.

When asked by OJJDP to prioritize our project objectives, Goal III was listed as a secondary goal. It has not, therefore, received the same amount of attention, time, and resources as the other goals of the project. This decision was made for a number of reasons. First, we felt that the first two goals would have the greatest impact on the largest number of youth. Second, prior to receiving the grant we had already generated a great amount of interest and enthusiasm among the key individuals throughout the state for the changes identified under our first two goals, and it seemed essential that we continue to build upon the momentum already generated in those areas in order to bring them to a successful conclusion. Third, Goal III, while significant, seemed less in line with the stated purposes of the Youth Advocacy grant initiative as stated in the original program guideline than did our other goals.

Even though Goal III was designated as a secondary goal, we have successfully accomplished many of the activities listed under it. Most of the activities were chosen because they are supportive of the other goals. We are confident that much of the cooperation and support we received regarding our efforts to improve both the juvenile justice and the foster care systems have been the result of our on-going community education efforts. By constantly seeking to educate people across the state about Arkansas Advocates, about our concerns regarding juvenile justice and foster care, and about our efforts to improve these two major systems, we have avoided the misunderstandings and suspicions that result from people's learning about our activities only from rumors and misinformation.

Our volunteer Speaker's Bureau was one major mechanism for disseminating information about children and youth programs and about our work. We were able to recruit 65 volunteers from our membership, from Leagues of Women Voters, and from various civic and church groups. These volunteers from 39 counties participated in a full-day training session and received written materials covering fourteen topics concerning children and youth.

Experts in various areas of children and youth services donated their time and energy to help us with this task. They not only wrote the speeches for the Speaker's Bureau Manual, but they also delivered the speeches at each of the three full-day training sessions and answered questions. This procedure gave the volunteers ample opportunity to raise questions and explore the issues with those persons most intimately involved in the programs. Thus, the Administrator of Foster Care spoke on foster care, the Administrator of Adoptions spoke on adoptions, the Director of the Guardian Ad Litem program in Pulaski County spoke on juvenile justice and the Director of the statewide Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Program talked about child abuse. Persons skilled in speech delivery also addressed the session. We were pleased with both the quality of the volunteers chosen for the Speaker's Bureau and with the quality of the training we provided.

Unfortunately, however, the number of speeches given by the Speaker's Bureau has been less than we had expected. No doubt, this is due to a variety of factors. The Local Community Liaison visited personally with the volunteer members of the Speaker's Bureau and gathered information about the problems they encountered. One of the problems was a hesitancy on the part of our volunteers to initiate contact with a prospective group or organization to arrange for a speech. In our effort to assist we obtained mailing lists from such organizations as Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs and sent letters explaining our desire to give a speech, listed the topics and invited them to use us at their convenience. This attempt provoked a limited response. We also discovered that our volunteers were most sensitive about not having all the answers. Many worried that someone would want more detailed information than they could provide. We provided support in this dilemma by proposing alternatives, making suggestions on how to handle "ticky" situations, and offering our availability whenever necessary.

We are disappointed that the Speaker's Bureau did not reach its expected or desired success. Perhaps we would have been more successful if we had initiated more direct contact with each individual volunteer. We did find that correspondence never generated the response that phone correspondence did, and that the personal visits with our Community Liaison generated activity in the initial period after his visit but it waned quickly thereafter. The questions of time and expense involved in pursuing a high level of volunteer commitment often prevented our devoting the extensive staff time we thought necessary to build this program component. We believe that securing invitations to speak before various groups and organizations requires the initiative of a self-starter who is not reluctant to initiate the contacts and to conduct the follow-up.

We still believe that information needs to get to more people addressing the problems that Arkansas children encounter. Although our attempts with a Speaker's Bureau have not achieved the success that we had hoped, we are confident that more people view the organization as an avenue for receiving information. Consistently as various children's issues surface, we are contacted by the media, decision makers

i.e. legislators and public officials, other children's organizations and members of the general public regarding our position and activities. This was illustrated by the recent invitation from the chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Children and Youth who asked that we prepare testimony for the committee's first meeting of the biennium citing the committee's history and activities and projecting what future directions the committee might take.

In addition to the personal presentations by volunteer speakers, we have also used our own newsletter, the Incentive, and the public media to distribute information about children and youth programs. We have, as scheduled in our original proposal, provided information about juvenile justice, foster care (including a detailed description of the new Child Welfare Act), and other youth programs on a quarterly basis through the Incentive. This newsletter is mailed to more than 800 persons statewide each quarter. In order to reach a wider audience, a copy of Incentive also is sent to the editors of 50 weekly and daily newspapers throughout Arkansas. The editors are encouraged to use any of the information in their newspapers. Members of the Board of Directors, the staff, and volunteers of Arkansas Advocates have also appeared on the three major TV stations and on several radio talk shows to discuss children's programs. One such example was when the Director and the Coordinator of Volunteers were the guests on a thirty-minute talk show which was broadcast statewide on the Education Television Network. We also taped TV public service announcements about Arkansas children and the work being done by Arkansas Advocates. One spot focused on a runaway and another focused on child advocacy. Clearly, within the time limits of a public service announcement one cannot discuss issues in detail. However, they do provide a way of briefly highlighting an issue and of encouraging interested citizens to contact us and become more fully involved. A thirty-minute slide show about the needs of children and youth and how we are seeking to address those needs has also been prepared for use by community groups.

One of the difficulties we have encountered in our efforts to collect information about eligibility for various children and youth programs has been the rapid changes that have occurred in those programs during the last year. As federal monies for many of these programs have been reduced and some of the programs have been included in new block grants, the criteria for eligibility have changed, as have the range of services provided and other characteristics of the programs. These changes, in our opinion, make dissemination of accurate information about the programs even more essential. We have, therefore, recently published a plan to collect such information on a regular basis for use in public education efforts.

The final set of activities under Goal III related to educational efforts directed specifically at youth. Because most of our efforts in that area have been done by the youth employees and volunteers, it seems appropriate to address them under the next goal which focuses on youth involvement in our project.

#### Goal IV. Involve youth in OJJDP projects.

Involving young people in our advocacy efforts has been both frustrating and rewarding. Initially, we attempted to recruit a full-time youth employee who had been involved with the juvenile justice system. We alerted juvenile court personnel, area schools, and neighborhood youth centers, but with little success. We ultimately hired a youth who was a school dropout and a former runaway and who indicated she wanted to finish her GED and to work to help others. She did not prove satisfactory and eventually was let go. Not only was the concept of advocacy too intangible for her to grasp, but we overwhelmed her by permitting her to design or implement areas of youth involvement whereas basically she was a follower rather than an initiator.

On the basis of this experience, we determined that part-time employment for youth under 18 was more realistic than full-time work because of school and that we should be more specific with tasks. We brought together a task force of youth and asked what kind of work young people would be interested in doing and offered a list of our own suggestions. They recommended a youth newsletter and youth task forces. They further suggested that we advertise our positions by contacting departments of Journalism and English in area high schools. We followed these suggestions and hired a high school senior who had extensive experience on his school paper and who was a self-starter. He was excellent and we had planned to increase his hours to full-time upon his graduation. Unfortunately, however, family obligations forced him to resign and leave the state.

While with us, he wrote the original third year goals and objectives for youth and initiated the newsletter, the Defender, that received much positive response and elicited letters of commendation from adults. He established a youth task force with the major function of county involvement. The task force cleaned a city park and had made plans to raise funds in order to paint playground equipment. (The youth employee had been intent on creating a network of youth task forces around the state.) After his departure, some of the plans were abandoned. The Defender, was continued by two part-time youth employees and was terminated with the end of the OJJDP grant. The newsletter had been written solely by youth about issues of their choice. It was mailed to more than 2,000 youth agencies and institutions including every junior and senior high school in the state and the two state training schools. The Defender encouraged other youth to submit articles for possible inclusion in future issues. In addition, there was a regular column about some issue relevant to youth, and youths were asked to write their views on the subject. The subjects were various laws pertaining to age of majority for drinking, driving, getting married, or the like. Another regular feature was an article about laws governing youth, e.g. youth employment laws.

The youths also planned to develop one or more audio-visual productions about youth issues for use with youth audiences. In this connection, we held a two-day training session for fifteen youth. The training covered how to operate videotape equipment and how to develop a script and produce a show. The workshop was led by a person from Fayetteville, Arkansas who has trained both youth and adults on how to develop and produce shows for the open channel cable TV station in the Fayetteville area.

Late last summer, ACF awarded contracts to three community-based programs in the state to develop audio-visual productions concerning issues related to youth. The contracts were awarded to Ozark Guidance Center in Springdale to produce a film on school suspension and expulsion; Luqman Seed, Inc., a community action group in Helena for a production on Youth unemployment; and Ozark Legal Services of Fayetteville for productions focusing on emotional problems relating to youth, and on juvenile arrests.

AACF was looking particularly for youth involvement in all phases of production development. Working with adult advisors, the youths did their own video-taping, secured locations, wrote scripts, filled roles, made appointments with professionals in the field to be filmed, and in most cases edited the films. They were given total responsibility in making all the necessary arrangements, research, and contacts.

As the project progressed, those involved became more efficient in their tasks and many became specialized in particular areas relating to the production. Those working on the film took a great deal of pride in the work they were doing, which was eventually reflected in the end product.

One special outcome of the project was that one of the teams donated \$1,000 from their earnings to a local "open channel" to be used for scholarships so that other youths who want to learn about film production might have the opportunity.

During the past year, the films have been utilized by school classes, youth groups, church groups, shown on local cable programming, and the Arkansas Educational Television Network.

Another action centered on youth members that serve on the Arkansas Juvenile Advisory Group. Traditionally, the youths appointed are in their early 20's and attend college or are recent college graduates. We suggested to the Commissioner of the Division of Youth Services that the youth representatives be of high school age for they would more accurately represent the interests of the juvenile population and probably would devote more time and energy to the JAG's activities. As a result, we were asked to recommend young people to serve in this capacity. Three of our recommendations were selected to serve on the JAG.

Another activity was a community lunch-forum series co-sponsored by two area banks and AACF. It featured young people from city high schools delivering speeches on children's issues. Six sack-lunch events were attended by many interested adults including the Arkansas State Treasurer who had seen the media coverage and wanted to hear what young people had to say.

In late winter of this year, AACF initiated Regional Special Issues Youth Task Forces. The objective was to develop a means of gaining immediate response and input from a cross section of youth regarding issues of statewide or national significance which would impact the youth population.

Potential sponsors/coordinators (usually affiliated with the school system) in a number of communities were contacted to discuss the feasibility of developing a task force in their area. The local coordinator in each community scheduled a meeting of potential task force members with AACF staff for an overview of the project and to reach an agreement as to task force members' responsibilities.

Members of the task forces then met during the remainder of the school year at the request of the sponsor to discuss issues presented by AACF, share perceptions and thoughts, and to make recommendations. The local coordinator recorded feedback and recommendations of the meeting and forwarded an inclusive report to the AACF office.

Special Issues Task Forces were established in eight (8) communities with commitments by six (6) others to begin during the 1983-'84 school year.

Issues covered ranged from lowering the minimum wage of teenagers to minimum education standards in public schools. Task force members were very responsive to the process, and stated in follow-up meetings with AACF staff that they certainly were more informed regarding issues impacting their age group and felt a part of the overall decision-making process by having their recommendations solicited and forwarded to the appropriate decision makers.

AACF will continue to expand and support the Special Issues Task Forces so that youth across the state can share thought and opinions on issues directly affecting them.

#### Numbers of Youth Impacted by Changes

The changes brought about as a result of our OJJDP activities have impacted thousands of Arkansas children and youth. The juvenile justice legislation passed in 1981 has a direct, beneficial impact upon the approximately 9,000 children and youth who appear each year in the juvenile courts of the state. In addition, the sections of the legislation covering arrest and waiver will affect approximately another 6,000 youth who are arrested but not sent to juvenile courts.

Similarly, because the changes we have brought about in foster care are directed at statewide services, they have impacted on every one of the more than 3,000 children and youth who are in substitute care sometime each year in Arkansas. Further, because the changes are systems changes, they will benefit those children likely to come in contact with a juvenile court or enter foster care in the years ahead. Since much of our efforts in foster care involve advocating for better preventive services for children at risk of entering the foster care system, it is also fair to say that the children involved in active protective service cases, but not in foster care, have benefitted from the work accomplished through our advocacy project.

More indirectly, approximately 715,000 children and youth of the state have benefitted from the public education efforts conducted during our project. We have sought to inform citizens throughout the state about the needs of children and youth and to encourage more active participation by local citizens in efforts to improve services and to meet those needs.

**END**