

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
Fiscal Year 1997 Annual Report

Moving Forward

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1997

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission

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TJPC Mission Statement

TJPC has a mission to work in partnership with local juvenile boards and their local juvenile probation departments to provide a comprehensive range of community based probation services. These locally controlled programs will ensure public safety, offender accountability, and assistance to offenders in becoming productive, responsible, law-abiding citizens.

This mission is accomplished through a continuum of services and programs that:

- ◆ *include prevention, early intervention, and rehabilitative programs;*
- ◆ *maximize family participation and accountability*
- ◆ *are community based, family oriented and as least restrictive as possible;*
- ◆ *include a mix of residential and non-residential services which reduce commitments to the Texas Youth Commission;*
and,
- ◆ *are a balance of public and private services and resources.*

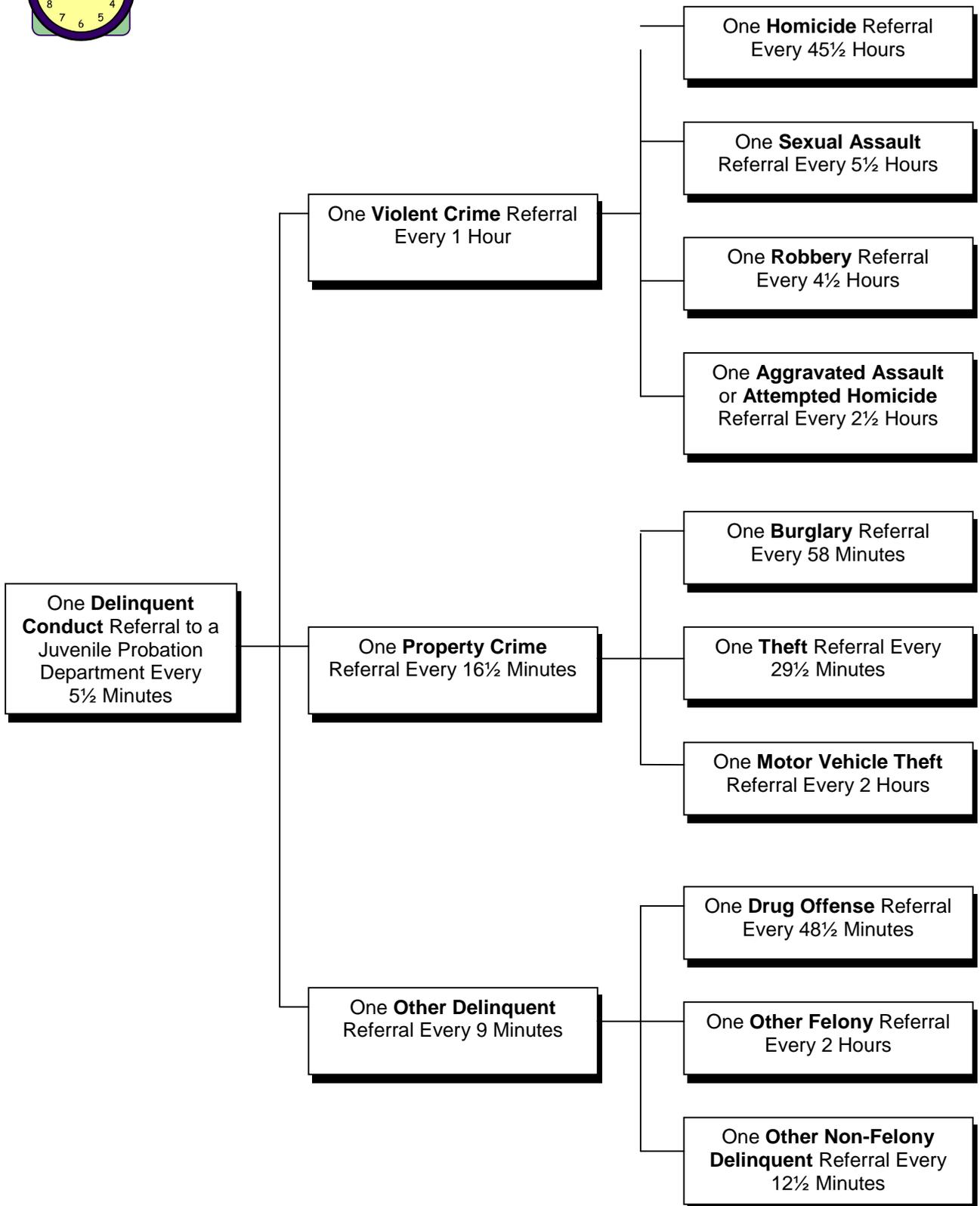
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Texas Juvenile Justice Crime Clock



Delinquent Juvenile Crime in Texas, 1996



A Message from the Executive Director

The saying goes, “Children are the message that we send forward to a future that we might never see.” Our Legislature grappled with this issue during the 74th Legislative Session by questioning how to respond effectively to juvenile crime in Texas. After much discussion and critical examination of the *get tough* approach to juvenile crime occurring on the national level, legislators *got smart* on juvenile crime and passed a series of laws designed to respond to juvenile crime and improve the juvenile justice system. Many of these laws have since become a model for the rest of the nation.

Much of the juvenile justice reform addressed juvenile accountability by increasing the consequences for serious, violent and habitual offenders. This was accomplished by creating the Progressive Sanctions Guidelines, lowering the age of certification, expanding and enhancing determinate sentencing, and allocating funds to build long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities. The primary vehicle for most of this reform occurred through bipartisan efforts on House Bill 327.

Another part of the *get smart* approach to juvenile crime taken by the 74th Legislature targeted prevention programming for Texas’ juveniles. Funds were allocated to create the Community Youth Development programs and enhance the STARS (Services to Truants and Runaways) programs. Both programs are operated by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, but can potentially reduce the number of juveniles referred to the juvenile probation system. In addition, after noting the overrepresentation of minorities referred to the system, the 74th Legislature authorized the creation of the Buffalo Soldiers At-Risk Program, which targets African American males at risk of referral to juvenile probation.

The 74th Legislature responded to public concern on juvenile substance abuse by providing a means for the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse to transfer funds targeted for juvenile substance abuse prevention and treatment. How these funds are used is described in this report.

This massive reform of the system, including the heretofore unmentioned creation of the juvenile justice alternative education programs was the first step in what all knew was a process that will be revisited in future sessions in order to determine what is working and what needs revision. After all...

Children are the message that we send forward to a future that we might never see and we all want to make sure we are creating opportunities for the best message possible.

Director

Vicki Spriggs, Executive

Moving Ahead in New Directions

Fiscal year 1997 was the first year the juvenile justice system in Texas fully implemented the vast number of changes enacted by the 74th Texas Legislative Session. The 74th Legislature was committed to improving the juvenile justice system in our state. Legislators produced an incredible amount of juvenile justice legislation spurred by public outcry to increase the penalties and accountability of juvenile offenders.

Much of the juvenile justice reform did just that by greatly increasing the consequences for the serious, violent and habitual offenders by lowering the age of certification, expanding and enhancing determinate sentencing, allocating funds to build long-term, secure juvenile facilities (both state-operated and locally operated), and much more. The primary vehicle for this reform was one bill -- House Bill 327.

Progressive Sanctions

Perhaps the most significant component of House Bill 327 was the implementation of the Progressive Sanctions Guidelines. These guidelines are viewed as a realistic sanctions model based on what juvenile justice practitioners believe are appropriate consequences and outcomes for juvenile offenders. From prevention and early intervention programs to secure incarceration, the services are designed to assist youth at each sanction level. The optional guidelines provide a continuum of seven progressive steps designed to balance public protection, offender accountability and rehabilitation.

Levels one through five relate to the community based probation end of the system, while levels six and seven relate to juveniles in the Texas Youth Commission and those certified to the adult courts. Decision makers are given the flexibility and are encouraged to determine a sanction level based not solely on the seriousness of the offense, but on the child's prior delinquent history, special needs and circumstances, and the effectiveness of prior intervention efforts. Deviations from the suggested level are readily allowed in order to address the needs of the individual child and family.

Data related to Progressive Sanctions is compiled by TJPC and sent to the Criminal Justice Policy Council for analysis. Their findings and recommendations are presented to the governor, Senate and House of Representatives at least annually showing the primary reasons for any deviation and the effect of the implementation of the sanctions guidelines on recidivism rates.

Progressive Sanctions became effective January 1, 1996. Therefore, fiscal year 1997 was the first full fiscal year of implementation. There were 408 new probation officers and 40 new intensive supervision officers hired with funding from the 74th Legislature to assist with fulfilling Progressive Sanctions mandates.

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs

The 74th Legislature made pivotal changes not only to the juvenile justice system, but also to the public education system. Keeping the balance of safe schools and local control and the recognition for the need for all children to be educated, the legislature required the two systems to work together in a partnership. The most significant impact was the mandate to the juvenile boards in counties with a population above 125,000 (22 counties) to operate juvenile justice alternative education programs, or *JJAEPs*, for certain expelled youth.

Juvenile boards were given one year to plan, develop local memoranda of understanding with local school districts and implement the programs. The legislature gave the juvenile boards tremendous flexibility in the development of these programs requiring only that students be taught the core curriculum and self-discipline and that the program be operated seven hours a day, 180 days per year.

In addition to the 22 mandated counties, the revisions to the Education Code allowed for counties below populations of 125,000 to optionally operate education programs. During the 1996-1997 school year, approximately 20 non-mandated JJAEPs were in operation.

Effective September 1, 1996, all JJAEPs were required to be operational. Eight of the 22 mandated counties chose to contract with a private vendor to operate the program. The other 14 counties developed cooperative programs between local school districts and juvenile boards, each contributing services or funding. After their first month of operation, the JJAEPs had 290 students enrolled; after the first 180 days

of operation, there were more than 1,800 students enrolled. By the end of the first school year, more than 2,408 juveniles were served by these programs.

Program Evaluation

A great emphasis in the juvenile justice system is placed on the need for quality prevention and early intervention programs. Time and time again money and time are spent on programs that make adults feel good about services being provided. Yet, upon evaluation of the juveniles graduating from these programs, results indicated that minimal changes have occurred in their thought or behavioral patterns. Beginning in fiscal year 1997, TJPC was required to develop procedures for collecting information regarding program effectiveness.

Through the development of performance based outcome measures, local departments will now be able to report on actual outcomes associated with each youth services program they provide. Initial outcome based reporting and evaluation will be accompanied in fiscal year 1998.

Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Programs

In January 1996, the Texas Network of Youth Services was awarded \$500,000 from a TJPC grant to develop five Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Program sites and the program curriculum. The program was established during the 74th Legislature as a pilot project to operate through fiscal year 1997. Bexar, Dallas, Tarrant, Tom Green, and Washington Counties were the locations of the five pilot projects during fiscal year 1997.

The Buffalo Soldiers Program is named after the African-American soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments and the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments who fought to settle the Western Plains after the Civil War. Serving predominantly minority male youths, the program curriculum is based on eight core elements: empowerment, identification of self and culture, decision making, team building, community awareness, socialization, values clarification, and expectations for the future. Statistical analysis from the program suggested that youth involved in the program increased their involvement in school and avoided or reduced involvement with the juvenile justice system; avoided

or decreased their involvement with drugs and other risky behaviors; and increased their involvement in positive and pro-social behaviors.

Due to program success during fiscal year 1997, the TJPC recommended to fund the program again through the next biennium.

Substance Abuse Projects

As a result of the 74th Legislative Session, the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and TJPC established an interagency agreement providing approximately \$2.1 million per year of the biennium for TJPC to fund substance abuse prevention and treatment services. With these funds, ten prevention and intervention pilot programs were created. Programs were administered through Angelina, Comal, Dallam, El Paso, Frio, Lamb, Randall, San Patricio, and Tom Green Counties, but prevention and intervention services were received in a total of 38 counties across the state through these sites. Approximately 20,000 juveniles received substance abuse services during fiscal year 1997. In that same period, 56 counties placed 128 juveniles in substance abuse treatment facilities.

The projects use a variety of approaches based on the needs of youth and families in their area. In addition to uniform substance abuse screening and assessment of juvenile offenders, most projects use non-traditional, innovative methods to engage youth and families in services and to prevent negative behavioral trends.

Each of the involved juvenile probation departments set up alliances with schools and other local agencies to increase the stake of their communities in the projects. They are working together to create and redevelop programs to meet the needs of the youths and promote their development as productive members of the community.

Construction Bond Projects

The 74th Legislature authorized \$37.5 million in general revenue bonds to TJPC to assist counties in the construction of 1,000 beds in secure post-adjudication correctional facilities. Prior to fiscal year 1997, eighteen sites were selected upon meeting the funding requirements set for the bonds as required by the Texas Public Finance Authority and other conditions as required by the TJPC.

During fiscal year 1997, progress varied between the facility locations. Progress ranged from breaking ground to completion of the construction, as in Bexar County. Once complete, the facilities will add 1,066 new secure beds to the juvenile justice system in Texas.

Metropolitan Counties Approved for Construction Funding			
Bexar County	108 beds	Harris County	144 beds
Dallas County	96 beds	Hidalgo County	40 beds
El Paso County	54 beds	Travis County	107 beds
Regional Project Sites Approved for Construction Funding			
Cameron County	32 beds	Lubbock County	40 beds
Colorado County	100 beds	Nueces County	85 beds
Denton County	48 beds	Randall County	16 beds
Grayson County	40 beds	Taylor County	36 beds
Gregg County	40 beds	Tom Green County	48 beds
Harrison County	24 beds	Van Zandt County	8 beds

Texas Juvenile Probation Commissioners

Michael L. Williams, Chair
Arlington

Robert P. Brotherton, Vice-Chair
Wichita Falls

Eric Andell
Houston

Victoria H. Baldwin
Austin

Raul Garcia
Austin

Keith H. Kuttler
Bryan

Betsy Lake
Houston

Theresa B. Lyons
Fort Worth

Robert Tejeda
San Antonio

Texas Advisory Council on Juvenile Services

Gary Gaston, Chair
Andrews

Jason Dorsey, Vice-Chair
Austin

Sandy Burnam
Austin

Joe Castillo
Hondo

Carey Cockerell
Fort Worth

Joel B. Johnson
Beeville

Jane Anderson King
Amarillo

Christi Martin
Austin

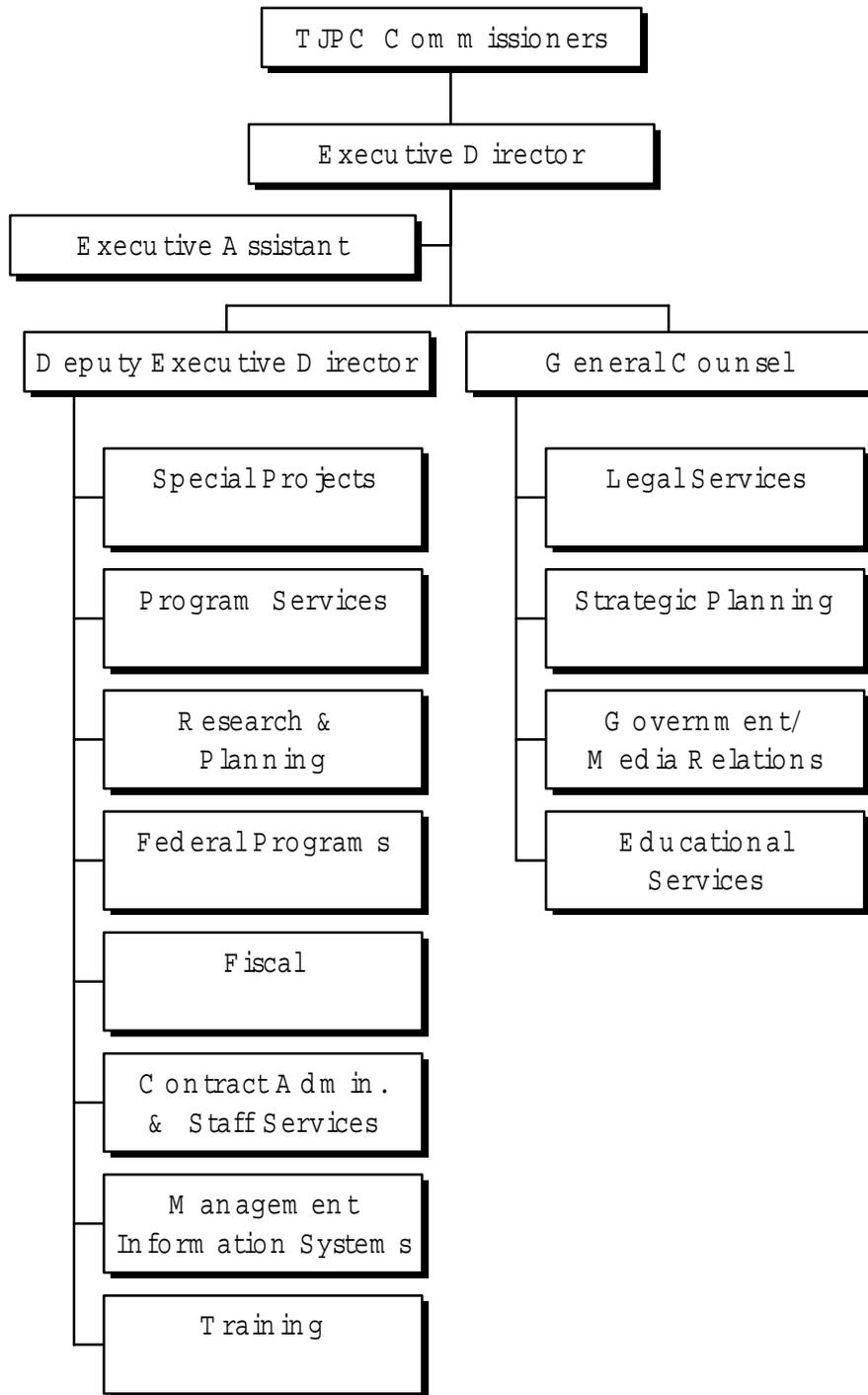
Estela Medina
Austin

Joe Papick
Austin

Jesus Soto
Del Rio

Melissa Weiss
Bellville

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission Organization Chart



Financial Information

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, FY 1997

Source of Funds:

General Revenue	\$ 60,402,249
Construction Bond Proceeds	37,500,000
Interagency Contracts	4,693,176
	<hr/>
	\$102,595,42
Total	5

Appropriations:

State Aid	\$ 26,323,536
Community Corrections	33,992,977
Probation Assistance	4,410,688
Construction of Local Facilities	37,500,000
Direct and Indirect Administrative	368,224
	<hr/>
	\$102,595,42
Total	5

Of \$102,595,425 in total revenues, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission allocated nearly 98 percent to local communities. By retaining just over two percent of its revenues for staff salaries and operating costs, TJPC is proud to be one of Texas state government's most cost-efficient agencies.

Texas Juvenile Probation System Funding, FY 1997

Community Corrections	\$ 30,044,792
Progressive Sanctions	9,848,889
State Aid	16,729,394
Facilities Construction	26,160,289
Border Projects	157,300
Challenge Grants	1,352,828
Title IV-E Contracts	4,715,801
Substance Abuse	2,915,753
Buffalo Soldier Heritage Projects	303,681
Local Funds	142,894,934
	<hr/>

Total

\$235,123,66

1

Programs and Services

Allocation of State Funds to Local Communities

TJPC works closely with its partners in local communities to help them achieve the highest standards. To do this, TJPC allocates funds to juvenile boards for the operation of their probation department's programs and services for troubled youths and their families. The Commission is the primary agency through which state funding for juvenile justice is channeled to the counties.

In fiscal year 1997, TJPC sent more than one hundred million dollars to county juvenile boards for their local probation departments. Total revenues appropriated to TJPC have increased 325 percent in only five years, from \$24,026,880 in fiscal year 1992 to \$102,595,425 in fiscal year 1997.

However, state funding accounts for approximately 30 percent of total funding for juvenile probation. Nearly 70 percent of the total is provided by local Commissioners' Courts from county revenues. Juvenile boards work closely with the Commissioners' Courts to set budgets for the operation of the local juvenile probation departments using both local and state funds.

Setting Standards and Strategic Direction

Just over a decade ago in Texas, the scope and quality of juvenile probation services were spotty at best. In some rural communities they were virtually non-existent.

To meet its primary mandate to improve and standardize Texas juvenile probation services, the TJPC, with assistance from local representatives, established juvenile probation standards, juvenile pre-adjudication secure detention facilities standards, and juvenile post-adjudication secure correctional facilities standards. In addition to the standards, there are twenty financial and accountability assurances which apply to every local juvenile probation agency in the state.

These standards and assurances serve to guarantee uniform, quality probation services across Texas and to further the pursuit of excellence in juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. They are updated and revised as needed. During fiscal year 1997, the TJPC staff, along with field input from various probation departments, drafted numerous amendments to the standards for pre- and post-adjudication facilities. Issues such as overcrowding and mixing of pre- and post-adjudication populations were addressed.

The Juvenile Probation Commission works in partnership with local juvenile boards and judges to set strategic direction. Juvenile court judges and juvenile board members participated in the development of TJPC's strategic plans. They, with additional input from chief juvenile probation officers, assisted TJPC in focusing our agency direction consistent with local needs and issues.

Monitoring

To insure and facilitate local compliance with its standards, eight TJPC staff members conducted on-site monitoring visits and acted as liaisons between the Commission and each of the 163 local juvenile probation departments and their juvenile boards and juvenile judges. They reviewed fiscal and program operations and provided technical assistance and consultation in areas such as case record management, personnel development, budget preparation, fiscal planning, community education and project development.

Caseload Management and Data Collection

In 1985, TJPC initiated the Juvenile Tracking and Caseload Management System, or *CASEWORKER*, to facilitate and standardize the collecting, storing and retrieving of caseload information. By the end of fiscal year 1997, the system had been installed in 151 Texas juvenile probation departments.

CASEWORKER is an excellent tool for local departments to manage and track caseloads. It also is building a valuable database on

juvenile crime and juvenile justice operations in Texas. During fiscal year 1997, the newest version of the system, CASEWORKER 4, was released. This revised version includes data fields to accommodate the changes made by the 74th Legislature, including Progressive Sanctions and JJAEPs. Much of the CASEWORKER data is available in the annual TJPC Statistical Report.

Education, Training and Certification

The Commission plays a vital role in the professional development of Texas juvenile justice practitioners by requiring continuing education for all probation and detention officers and providing training for juvenile judges and all levels of juvenile probation personnel. TJPC requires that all Texas juvenile probation officers be certified as having earned necessary academic degrees and having completed 40 hours annually of approved continuing education. Detention and institutional childcare personnel are also TJPC certified. Training provided by TJPC is offered at little or no cost to probation staff and judges.

Through the agency's certification and training program during fiscal year 1997, 2,880 Texas probation personnel received 33,545 hours of training. During this time, TJPC's training curriculum was offered in 78 statewide, regional and local workshops. During the fiscal year, TJPC certified 353 juvenile probation officers and 351 detention officers and recertified 737 juvenile probation officers and 127 detention officers.

Assistance and Information

The Commission is Texas' central clearinghouse for juvenile justice information. It offers legal and technical assistance, information, consultation to lawmakers, probation departments, judges, prosecutors, reporters, students, researchers, or to anyone with a legitimate request for assistance. TJPC staff includes professionals widely experienced in juvenile law, program development and application, research and data management, personnel development and fiscal planning.

In addition to its law library, TJPC maintains a resource library including textbooks, reports, research papers, news clippings and videotapes.

Community Corrections, Alternative Placements, and Diversion from the Texas Youth Commission

A philosophical cornerstone of the Commission is that the best opportunities for successful delinquency prevention and rehabilitation are to be found in local communities. Removing youths from their homes, schools and neighborhoods should be a last resort.

To this end, and to reduce commitments to the crowded institutions and caseloads of the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), TJPC has developed community-based programs as alternatives for juvenile offenders.

Texas Youth Commission Diversion Project

Beginning in 1992, TJPC worked with local juvenile boards, judges and probation administrators to reach a statewide consensus on a rationale for commitment to the TYC, laying the groundwork for a major statewide project to divert delinquent youths from the TYC. In accordance with the rationale, the primary commitment decision must be based on protecting the public safety as well as the court's ability to impose an appropriate sanction for the offense.

Only the most serious and persistent juvenile offenders are defined as appropriate for TYC commitment. When possible, other youths will be diverted from the state's custody into alternative placements and programs, preferably in their own communities. Of the 129,062 total referrals in 1996, there were only 2,659 juveniles committed to TYC.

Community Corrections Assistance Funding

TJPC dispersed \$33,992,977 of Community Corrections Assistance Funding to juvenile probation departments in fiscal year 1997. The purpose of the program is to enhance the quality of services available to youth at risk of commitment to the Texas Youth Commission, with a goal of reducing commitments, and to

meet mandated performance targets concerning successful completions of probation, intensive supervision programs, and residential diversionary placements.

Completion of a Community Corrections Plan is required in order to be eligible for TJPC Community Corrections Assistance Funding. The plan requires brief, but specific, information concerning the programs and services to be developed or enhanced.

Intensive Supervision Programs

In 1988, the Commission funded twelve pilot projects for intensive supervision programs (ISPs) to expand local disposition and supervision options in juvenile probation departments across the state. Based on the success of the initial twelve pilot projects, the programs have expanded. By the end of 1997, there were 117 juvenile probation departments operating ISPs, and the program was incorporated into the Progressive Sanctions Guidelines.

The programs demonstrate significant economic savings. The state average cost per day in fiscal year 1996 (estimates for 1997 are not yet available) for housing a youth in an institution was \$113.44, as compared to \$12.48 per day for intensive supervision.

Small County Diversionary Placement Assistance

This fund, initiated in 1989, serves juvenile probation departments with juvenile age populations of less than 3,000. The Juvenile Probation Commission reimburses departments for up to six months' placement for a youth when the placement is an alternative to TYC commitment. Smaller probation departments typically do not have as many resources available as larger counties to make alternative placements to places such as private treatment centers, group facilities or foster homes. During fiscal year 1997, TJPC reimbursed small counties for 81 diversionary placements.

Federal Programs Initiatives

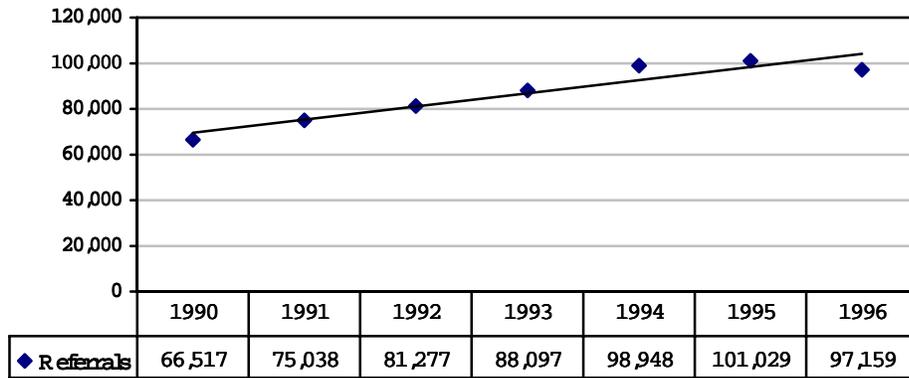
In late 1992, TJPC contracted with the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services making federal funds from the Title IV-E Federal Foster Care Program available to juvenile probation departments across the state. Participating departments receive approximately 64.4 percent of the daily rate for the care of each child placed in a IV-E approved facility. Administrative costs are reimbursed at 50 percent. In fiscal year 1997, there were 393 children placed from 47 counties who were reimbursed over \$5.2 million.

A pilot project to obtain Medicaid benefits for eligible children under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court was initiated by TJPC in March 1997. The Texas Medicaid State Plan was amended to include this population of children. A major goal of the project, in addition to ensuring eligible children receive benefits, is to reduce medical costs to counties and the State.

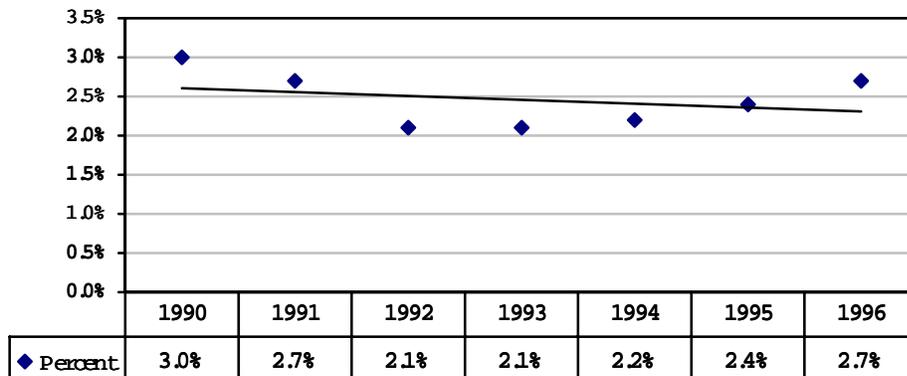
During fiscal year 1997, there were 27 active juvenile probation departments participating in the program. In the first six months of the program, these departments served 265 children and saved over \$56,000 in medical service costs.

While more youths are referred into the juvenile justice system, locally administered diversion programs are supervising more troubled youths in their own communities, reducing the state's burden of custody and cost.

Delinquent Referrals



TYC Commitments as a Percentage of Delinquent Referrals



Border Children Justice Projects

Border Children Justice Projects were implemented in 1985 to address crime problems unique to the Texas/Mexico border and to provide a more humane response to Mexican children who violate U.S. laws. The programs also serve children from the U.S. who violate Mexican laws.

TJPC provides discretionary funds to these programs to improve the rehabilitative efforts of Texas and Mexican authorities. A substantial economic savings is achieved by combining resources in Texas and Mexico.

Border Children Justice Projects operated in five Texas counties, but received referrals from counties across the state. During fiscal year 1997, Cameron, El Paso, Val Verde, Webb and, new this year, Starr Counties provided services, institutional placement and social work services to approximately 300 juveniles and their families.

In 1987, the Ford Foundation recognized this as one of the nation's most innovative programs for children, and it has since become a model for other border states.

Challenge Grants

In 1987, the Texas Legislature created the Challenge Grant Program to provide services to multi-problem juveniles who were under the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts and who were also identified as being abused, neglected, mentally ill or retarded. Previously, these types of multi-problem children often were committed to the Texas Youth Commission because the lack of funding and local resources left no locally based alternatives. In fiscal year 1997, the Challenge Grant Program provided residential and community-based services for over 70 children.

Juvenile Justice Statistical Information

The collection of statistical data regarding the referral and disposition of juveniles to each of the 163 juvenile probation departments would not be possible without the cooperation of the many probation officers, support staff, data research staff, program administrators, and chief juvenile probation officers in the Texas juvenile probation system. TJPC is grateful for their continued efforts. Statistical reports containing statewide data are available upon request. The statistics in this section, unless otherwise noted, are for calendar year 1996.

Arrests and Referrals of Juveniles in Texas

Nine out of ten youths entering the juvenile justice system do so via law enforcement referrals. In 1996, police agencies in Texas arrested 184,284 juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17. Of this number, 70,216 were warned and released, handled in magistrate courts or otherwise diverted from the juvenile justice system. The remaining 114,068 were referred to local juvenile probation agencies.

An additional 14,994 juveniles were referred by social agencies, schools, parents and the Texas Youth Commission, bringing the statewide total of juvenile referrals in 1996 to 129,062.

Particularly worth noting, for the first time since 1987, total referrals were *down* 3.6%. Likewise, most categories of offense referrals also decreased, including violent felonies (down 11.1%), total felonies (down 12.1%), and misdemeanor classes A and B (down 4.3%).

Supervision, Detention and Court Activity

There are 163 juvenile probation departments in Texas. They employed 2,111 juvenile probation officers in 1997 to cover all 254 counties in the state. Another 367 residential placement officers and 752 certified detention center personnel, plus 758 part-time or on-call detention workers, provide supervision for juveniles in the state's 61 secure juvenile detention facilities. There were 407 juvenile judges responsible for detention, adjudication, and disposition hearings.

During 1996, 78,076 youths brought to juvenile probation agencies were immediately released to their parents or other responsible adults. The other 50,986 youths were detained prior to adjudication hearings in court. Ninety-six percent of these were held in secure custody detention centers while the others were in non-secure alternative placements such as foster homes and emergency shelters.

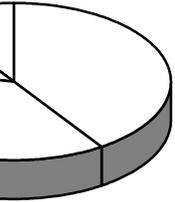
Through a variety of services and procedures, juvenile probation agencies disposed of 59,405 cases, diverting them from already burdened juvenile court dockets. Such cases are often closed at intake after counseling with the youth and family. Others may be referred to more appropriate social agencies for guidance or services. Another 16,859 youths agreed to voluntary supervision programs under guidelines set by local juvenile boards.

Of the 60,973 youths accused of delinquency and handled by juvenile prosecutors or juvenile courts during 1996, 21,420 were adjudicated to probation. This brought the total number of Texas youths under some form of probation supervision during the year to 77,783, including deferred prosecution, court-ordered supervision, conditional release from detention and parolees supervised by probation under TYC contract.

In 1996, juvenile courts committed 2,659 juveniles to the Texas Youth Commission, certified 589 to stand trial as

Justice

3,230 Professional
Juvenile Probation &
Detention Officers



Deferred
Prosecution
19.6%

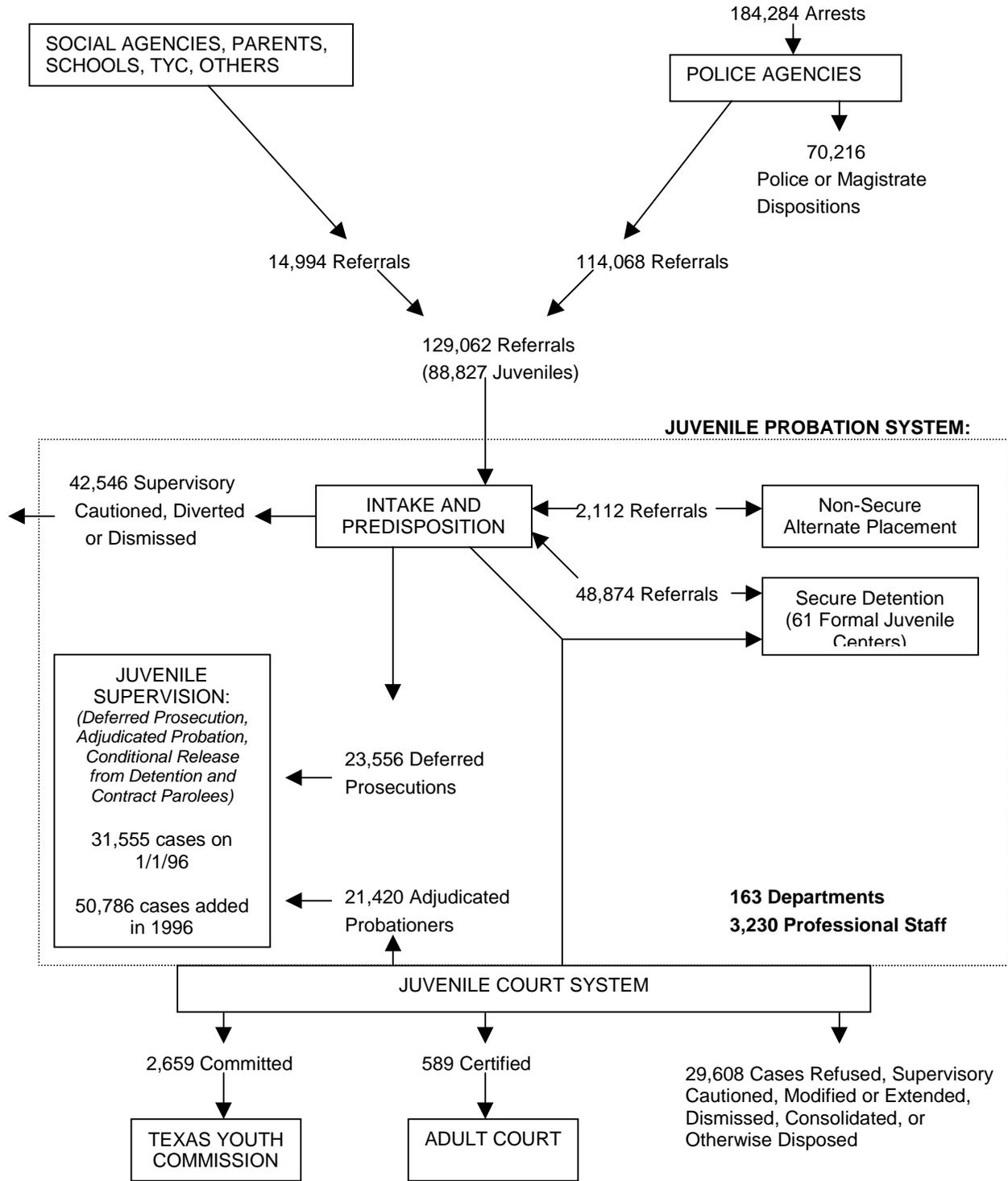


Adjudicated
Probation (New &
Modified)

adults in the criminal justice system, and disposed of another 29,608 cases through refusal to prosecute, dismissal or consolidation of referrals.

Movement of Juveniles

1996



Drugs and Gangs

Certainly no two phenomena have impacted youth crime and our juvenile justice system as have illicit drugs and gang activity. Even rural communities in Texas feel the impact.

In 1996, 62 percent of the juvenile probation departments officially identified 2,237 juvenile gangs in Texas. Gang activity represents 19 percent of all referrals and 21 percent of all probationers; however, it represents 41 percent of all commitments to the Texas Youth Commission.

At the same time, while local probation departments handled fewer referrals, there were more juveniles involved in substance abuse than last year. In 1996, it was determined that 19,665 referrals (nearly one in six) were youths whose involvement in substance abuse was directly responsible for their criminal behavior.

Of the 4,200 placements in substance abuse programs, 1,112 youths were placed in 88 different residential substance abuse facilities, and 3,088 were placed in 96 different non-residential programs.

Even with the continued increases in juvenile felony crime and substance abuse, it should be noted that Texas' juvenile probation departments continue to report average probation success rates above 82 percent while continuing to divert increasing numbers of youths from the burden of the state's custody.

While delinquent referrals rose by 46 percent from 1990 to 1996, local probation departments began implementing diversion programs that reduced the rate of commitments to the Texas Youth Commission from 3.0% in 1990 to 2.7% in 1996.

Profile of Juvenile Offenders

Perhaps no question is more often asked, nor more relevant than “who are these kids who commit crimes and end up in our juvenile justice system?”

Statistically, they are between the ages of 10 and 17, with the majority being over fourteen. About three-fourths are males; about one-fourth are black, with the remaining 75 percent divided almost equally between Hispanic and white youths.

But these numbers fail to capture the most important features of this population.

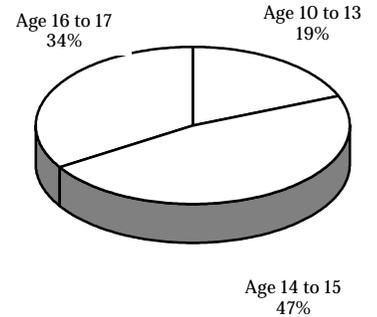
Although many youths in the juvenile justice system do not match the typical profile, as a population, delinquent youths tend to come from categories that we define as “at risk.” The term “child at risk” has become a national buzzword for the growing number of our children whose life conditions place them at high risk for educational, economic and social failure.

They are more likely to come from homes where poverty and despair are ingrained. In their neighborhoods, drugs, crime and violence are part of the everyday landscape.

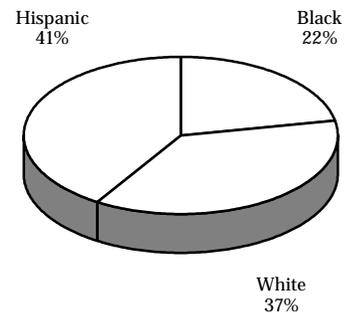
As a population, delinquent youths tend to have long histories of behavioral and academic failure in school. They lack self-esteem and self-discipline. They often live in homes plagued by family violence and substance abuse.

The good news is that because we can identify these and other risk factors that predispose many children to futures of crime and violence, we have the opportunity to intervene in the downward spiral of trouble and despair which leads to a life of crime.

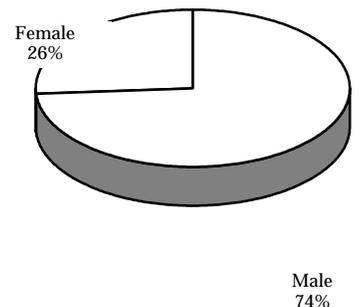
Referral



Referral



Referral



*The following documents are available on request from the
Texas Juvenile Probation Commission.*

*P.O. Box 13547
Austin, Texas 78711-3546
(512) 424-6700*

Annual Reports

Some back issues available, please specify calendar year

InfoNet

Periodic newsletter relating to prevention issues (no longer in print)

Juvenile Gangs: It's Not the Sharks and Jets Anymore

1994

Juvenile Delinquency Prevention in Texas

A compendium of programs and services provided by juvenile probation departments, updated in 1997

Juvenile Probation Directory

1997

Progressive Sanctions Handbook

Guide to the statutory requirements of the Progressive Sanctions Model

Texas Juvenile Detention Standards

Revised 1997

Texas Juvenile Probation Standards

Revised 1996

Texas Juvenile Probation Statistical Report

Some back issues available, please specify calendar year

**Texas Juvenile Probation Commission/Texas Youth Commission Coordinated
Strategic Plan**

For the 1999-2003 Period

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission Strategic Plan

For the 1999-2003 Period

Texas Juvenile Law, Fourth Edition (and Supplement)

An analysis of juvenile statutory and case law for Texas juvenile justice officials
(\$15)

TJPC News

Quarterly newsletter relating to agency activities, some back issues available

Thanks

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Reba Graham, photographer
Corpus Christi Caller Times, cover photo

Michael A. Martinez, Deputy Chief - Institutions
Bexar County Juvenile Probation, photo on page 6

Liz McAllan, Juvenile Probation Officer
Tarrant County Juvenile Probation, photo on page 14

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