

FAMILY COURT SUBSTANCE ABUSE ASSESSMENT PROJECT  
(Bureau of Substance Abuse)

An Evaluation Report

Submitted  
to the  
Adjudication Committee  
of the  
Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice

NCJRS

MAR 20 1978

ACQUISITIONS

45759

by  
Pat Robinson  
Monitoring/Evaluation Unit  
GCSJ

January 1978

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

General:

Grant Number(s): FA-47-72, FA-31-73, 74-081, 75-052,  
76-008, 76-009, 77-071  
Grant Title: Family Court Substance Abuse  
Assessment Project  
Implementing Agency: Bureau of Substance Abuse  
Project Director: Marcia Ferriera  
Project Period: July 1, 1972 to September 30, 1978\*

Budget:

<u>Category</u>	<u>New Castle County</u>	<u>Kent County</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Personnel	\$64,793	\$21,579	\$86,372	\$73,122
Travel	2,800	0	2,800	2,800
Supplies	1,000	0	1,000	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$68,593</b>	<b>\$21,579</b>	<b>\$90,172</b>	<b>\$76,922</b>
Federal:	\$60,910			
Match:	\$29,262			

The Bureau of Substance Abuse also contributed an additional \$53,295 in salaries for project staff.

Organization:

Non-Grant  
Positions

Bureau of Drug Abuse  
Director

Criminal Justice Coordinator

Drug Counselor Supervisor  
(Project Director)

Grant Funded Positions

Drug Counselor  
(N.C.C.)  
FA-42-72, FA-31-73,  
74-081, 75-052,  
76-008

Drug Counselor  
(N.C.C.)  
FA-42-72, FA-31-73,  
74-081, 75-052

Drug Counselor  
(Kent County)  
76-009

\* The project operated in New Castle County from July 1, 1972 through August 31, 1977. It was funded to operate in Kent County from May 1, 1976 to September 30, 1978.

The following persons were employed in this project:\*

- J. Stanley (2-1-73 to 8-31-77)
- R. Kranz/Hutchings (7-1-72 to 8-10-73 and 12-16-74 to 8-29-75)
- M. Varnadoe (3-1-74 to 10-15-74)
- F. DiDomenicus (3-16-75 to 9-30-76)
- J. Masten (10-1-76 to 9-30-77)
- J. Nutter (6-1-72 to 8-24-73)
- N. Moyer (7-5-72 to 9-29-72)
- M. Ferriera (7-1-72 to 9-30-77)

---

\* As of 8-31-77, GCCJ funds supported only one position, which was in Kent County. That position has been vacant since 9-30-77, and the Bureau of Substance Abuse Control is currently attempting to fill it through a transfer.

## I. Introduction

In June of 1972, the Family Court of the State of Delaware received jurisdiction over all juveniles arrested on drug charges. Prior to that date, all drug cases regardless of age, were under the jurisdiction of the Superior Court. Family Court had no counselors trained to deal with this new population and it was felt by both the court and the Office of Drug Abuse Control (now the Bureau of Substance Abuse) that a unit which could specialize in the assessment, evaluation and treatment of juveniles involved in drug abuse was needed. The Office of Drug Abuse Control applied to the Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice (then the Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime) for funds to support such a unit for the New Castle County Family Court, and in June 1972 the application was approved. Since then, GCCJ has awarded a total of \$68,593 to the New Castle County Family Court Substance Abuse Assessment Project. In April of 1976, the concept was expanded to Kent County Family Court and GCCJ has awarded \$21,579 to enable that project to operate from 5-1-76 to 6-30-78.

The purpose of this report was to evaluate the performance and impact of both the New Castle County and Kent County Family Court Substance Abuse Assessment Project through September 30, 1977.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation was based on a review of archival materials and interviews with persons who had had contact with the project.

---

<sup>1</sup> As previously mentioned, the one position which GCCJ currently funds has been vacant since 9-30-77. Therefore, no activity has occurred in the project since that date.

## II. Project Description

The original project application (FA-47-72) proposed to provide intensive counseling and follow-up services to juveniles involved with drug abuse who would be referred to the unit rather than being sent to an institution. The unit consisted of three drug counselors (two funded through GCCJ), and one drug counselor supervisor and was housed in Family Court. A secondary purpose of the project was to provide evaluations<sup>2</sup> of youth coming into the court in order to determine the nature and extent of their involvement with drugs.

During the second year of operation the project began to shift its emphasis from providing intensive counseling to a limited caseload to becoming a liaison service for coordinating the needs of the court with available drug abuse alternatives and facilities. The project also began to place more emphasis on providing evaluations and consultations for the court. The project continued in this manner through the third year of operation and much of the fourth. In the fourth year, the project introduced the concept of monitoring clients.

In response to the services most requested by the court, the project shifted its emphasis to primarily providing evaluations and consultations during the final year, and active case load counseling was continued only on a limited basis. During 1976, the concept of the substance abuse assessment project was introduced into the Kent County Family Court. The

---

<sup>2</sup> Definitions of evaluation, active case load, consultation and monitoring as used in this report are provided in the Appendix, page 7.

accomplishment of the stated objectives of each application is described in Table I.

As Table I indicates, the project more than met its stated objectives. The subgrantee should be commended for changing the project to meet the actual needs of the court. Further, the project was not content with performing at the same level each year. Rather, proposed levels of performance were increased with each year of funding with no concurrent increase in requested staff.

### III. Project Impact

It was difficult to assess the impact of this project. No follow-up was done on clients who received direct counselling to determine if these clients had any further contact with the juvenile justice system. The other aspects of the project emphasized providing information to decision makers, and it is extremely difficult to objectively determine if such information led to better decisions.

Since objective measures of the project's impact were not available, subjective measures, i.e. opinion of persons who had had contact with the project were examined. Such persons voiced unanimous support for both the concept, i.e. having the unit housed in the court, and for the people who worked in the unit.



TABLE I

Accomplishment of Objectives of  
Family Court Substance Abuse Assessment Project  
7-1-72 to 9-30-77

Objective	FA-47-72		FA-31-73		74-081		75-052		76-008		76-009		Total	
	# Proposed	# Provided												
1. To actively counsel clients referred by Family Court	50	87	80	87	80	84	90	145	0	23	0	0	300	425
2. To monitor clients referred by Family Court	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	75	85	144	10	62	95	302
3. To provide evaluations and/or consultations as requested by Family Court	0	0	100	439	200	830	250	938	85	814	40	134	675	3155
4. To screen referrals from Family Court for substance abuse involvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	85	100	40	66	125	166
5. To provide liaison and referral services between Family Court and substance abuse treatment programs	0	0	20	45	30	42	30	63	25	89	10	61	115	300
Total	50	87	200	571	310	977	370	1221	280	1176	100	323	1310	4349

#### IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

##### A. Conclusions

It was the opinion of the author that this was a well operated project which provided a needed service. As mentioned above, the project changed to reflect actual needs of the court, yet the general concept of the project was not changed substantially.

It was to the project's credit that there was a relatively low turnover of personnel. Despite low salaries (drug counselor I's were a pay grade 13 [salary range \$7,686 to \$11,473] compared to a pay grade 19 [salary range \$9,793 to \$14,941] for counselor trainees in Family Court), the project employed competent, qualified staff. Four of the counselors who left the project returned to graduate school, and one left through transfer and promotion to another department.

The project further demonstrated that different parts of the criminal justice system, in this case Family Court, and the Bureau of Substance Abuse Control, can cooperate to the mutual benefit of both parties. Family Court contributed much support to the project in terms of providing space, supplies and secretarial services when needed. In return, the court got expertise in the area of drug abuse they did not have. This cooperation may in a large part be a result of the staff employed by the project.

Despite the increasing use of the project, it will not be continued in New Castle County due to drastic staff reductions in the Bureau of Substance Abuse Control. The future of the Kent

County project is unknown. GCCJ has funded the project through at least September 30, 1978. Although the project per se has been discontinued in New Castle County, the project director is currently developing a referral procedure for the court to follow so that many of the services will still be provided.<sup>3</sup> However, this procedure will not permit the timeliness nor convenience of having the services within the court facility, which was one of the most important aspects of the project.

#### B. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings in this report:

1. The position of drug counselor has been changed to Human Service Worker. Classifying drug counselors in this position should be reviewed. If it is found that drug counselors perform duties similar to those of other counselors, the position should be reclassified so that qualifications and salaries are comparable to other counselors in the merit system.

2. GCCJ should support either Family Court or the Bureau of Substance Abuse Control in obtaining other funds so that a specialized drug unit within the court facility can be continued.

3. GCCJ should monitor the project closely to assure the vacancy in Kent County is filled.

---

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that although GCCJ funding for the New Castle County project terminated September 30, 1977, a staff member from the Bureau of Substance Abuse Control remained in Family Court through December 30, 1977. However, she was a drug counselor supervisor and there was no staff for her to supervise in the court so she had to be transferred.

## Appendix

### Definition of Terms\*

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Active Caseload	Once the drug counselor is active with a case, he/she handles all aspects of the case. The counselor works with the individual and the family. Intensive individual counseling and/or group counseling is provided, depending on the client's needs.
Monitoring	The counselors may monitor clients who are attending other drug treatment facilities or other counseling services and receiving services from this project as well. Contacts with these clients will vary in quantity and content depending on the needs of the client.
Evaluation/ Consultation	Evaluations or consultations are provided to both the judiciary and counseling staff for those juveniles not referred to the Drug Counseling Project staff. The Drug Counseling Staff is available on an on-call basis as well as a scheduled basis. The difference between an evaluation and a consultation is that in the evaluation the counselor interviews the client while in the consultation, he/she talks only to the counselor or judge. A consultation can also be informational rather than about a specific client.

---

\* These definitions were contained in the quarterly reports submitted by the subgrantee.

FA-47-72  
FA-31-73  
74-081  
75-052  
76-008  
76-009  
77-071

Family Court Substance Abuse Assessment  
Project  
Bureau of Substance Abuse Control  
7-1-72 to 9-30-78

(\$60,910)

January 1978

A. Purposes:

1. To actively counsel 300 clients referred to the project by Family Court.
2. To monitor 95 clients referred by Family Court.
3. To provide 675 evaluations and/or consultations as requested by Family Court.
4. To screen 125 referrals from Family Court for substance abuse involvement.
5. To provide liaison and referral services between Family Court and substance abuse treatment programs for 115 clients.

B. Findings:

1. The project provided active counseling for 425 youth referred by Family Court.
2. The project monitored 302 youth referred by Family Court.
3. The project provided 3155 evaluations and/or consultations as requested by Family Court staff.
4. The project screened 166 referrals from Family Court for substance abuse involvement.
5. The project provided liaison and referral services between Family Court and substance abuse treatment programs for 300 youth.
6. Subjective measures, i.e. opinions of persons who had had contact with the project were examined. Such persons voiced unanimous support for both the concept, i.e. having the unit housed in the court, and for the people who worked in the unit.

7. It was the opinion of the evaluator that this was a well operated project which provided a needed service. The project changed to reflect actual needs of the court, yet the general concept of the project was not changed substantially. Also, the project increased the proposed level of performance each year without requesting additional funding.

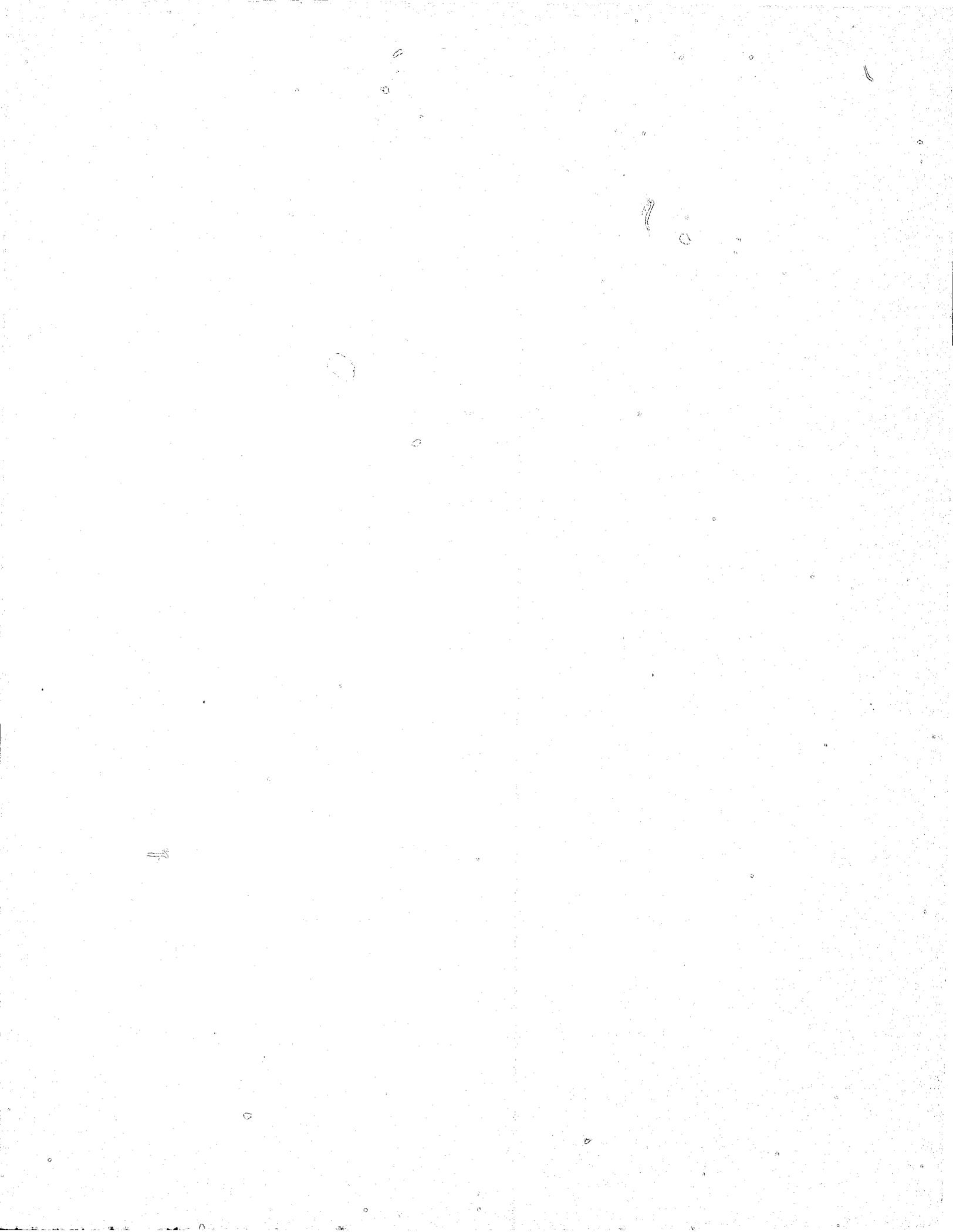
8. The project demonstrated that different parts of the criminal justice system, in this case Family Court and the Bureau of Substance Abuse Control, can cooperate to the mutual benefit of both parties.

C. Recommendations:

1. The position of drug counselor has been changed to Human Service Worker. Classifying drug counselors in this position should be reviewed. If it is found that drug counselors perform duties similar to those of other counselors, the position should be reclassified so that qualifications and salaries are comparable to other counselors in the merit system.

2. GCCJ should support either Family Court or the Bureau of Substance Abuse Control in obtaining other funds so that a specialized drug unit within the court facility can be continued.

3. GCCJ should monitor the project closely to assure the vacancy in Kent County is filled.



**END**