

DIVERSION PLANNING AND EVALUATION
SYSTEM PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prepared for:

The Los Angeles Regional
Criminal Justice Planning Board

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PREFACE

This Executive Summary provides a basic introduction to the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board's Diversion Planning and Evaluation System Project (DPESP) --and to the technical documentation it produced. It includes a brief discussion of the issues and problems which the Project addressed; a review of the Project's philosophy and methodology; an overview of the Planning Board's diversion strategy and approach; and a discussion of the results achieved. It is directly oriented to those individuals responsible for making decisions related to the direction, scope and operation of the Planning Board's juvenile diversion activities. It should also be of special interest to individuals involved in the delivery of services to children and youth.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. PROJECT ISSUE

Local children and youth services programs today face severe challenges as they seek to contribute to the resolution of the critical juvenile crime and delinquency problems of their community. These challenges are characterized by rapid change, sharply increasing crime rates and demands for services, and inadequate, often diminishing resources. Local programs see these challenges as demanding of them the ability to respond more rapidly to community needs, the enhancement of their skills to deal with management of scarce resources and the management of change, and an ever-increasing capacity to establish, document and evaluate accomplishments. To achieve these objectives, each community must develop a strategy which will allow it to assess its needs, to plan services, to implement these services and to evaluate the results.

It is in this context that the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board (LARCJPB) undertook the Diversion Planning and Evaluation System Project, and it is the context and rationale for the youth program services and products described in this Executive Summary.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As noted in the 1967 report of the President's Crime Commission, youth is responsible for a substantial and disproportionate part of the national crime problem.⁽¹⁾ To quote an example of contact rate between youth and the Juvenile Justice System: "Between a million and a million and a half

⁽¹⁾ President's Commission on Law and Administration of Justice, The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society 55. (1967) at 55.

arrests were made of persons under 18 years of age in 1966 and at that time it was estimated 27 percent of all male youths could expect to have been arrested before they reached age 18."⁽²⁾ Statistics also indicate that, "Nationwide, over half of all those arrested for the seven index crimes⁽³⁾ are under 19 years of age; one fifth are 14 or younger."⁽⁴⁾ The Juvenile Justice System that is responsible for responding to the criminal acts of young people, as well as to a range of other matters (such as truancy, neglect, etc.), has been under attack in recent years for the failure of its traditional correctional programs and institutions to deal with the problems and needs of these youth.

In terms of the Juvenile Justice System, the problem is one of not being equipped to handle the large number, intense, and wide-ranging needs of the juvenile population. There are a number of factors contributing to this situation such as the demands on staff time to meet the so-called "hard crime" problems; the lack of adequate funding and qualified staff personnel; and the lack of criteria to identify those types of juvenile offenders who can appropriately be handled outside the Juvenile Justice System. Further compounding the problem is the fact that few of the referral agencies (e.g., law enforcement, probation, etc.) are familiar with the types of services

(2)

Alfred Blumstein, Systems Analysis and the Criminal Justice System, American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 1967, 374, 92-100.

(3)

Index offenses include murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny \$50 and over, and motor vehicle theft.

(4)

Committee for Economic Development, Reducing Crime and Assuring Justice II (1971).

available in the community for the treatment and rehabilitation of the juvenile offender. However, while much of the criticism leveled at the Juvenile Justice System is deserved; there are numerous other problems associated with the prevention and control of juvenile crime, delinquency, violence, and other forms of juvenile anti-social behavior over which the Juvenile Justice System has little control or responsibility.

As an example, many people argue that juvenile crime and delinquency are not merely the aberrations of individuals, but the result of a host of contributing factors in the larger society. Others have concluded that delinquency is a community problem requiring total community participation in the processes designed for its prevention and control. This particular philosophy revolves around the concepts of self-determination of clients, the importance of community corrections, the coordination of all community resources, and the belief that traditional intervention and treatment agency methods are largely ineffective because their employees are ill-equipped to understand the problems of the juvenile delinquent or offender. And still others have concluded that the ultimate causes of juvenile crime and delinquency lay within the social institutions which oppress poor people.

Add to all of this the fact that the organization, management, and administration of children and youth services, in the Los Angeles region, has been characterized in the past by almost total decentralization of operations and minimal coordination of planning and services among administering agencies. There have been a few attempts at organizational centralization of planning and operational services, but the basic experience with this centralization has been frustrating. Children

and youth services are planned, operated and evaluated by a bewildering number of local and county agencies. The result of all of these efforts has been programmatic "shotgunning", encompassing a great deal of duplication of effort and little capability to provide a balanced spectrum of services based upon a correctly assessed series of needs.

Complicating the services planning and evaluation process is the increased emphasis on individualized services and the subsequent demands that places on information management, security and privacy of data, and standardized policies, procedures, and practices. Even if the community were equipped with sound planning skills, the mechanics of developing a comprehensive, community-wide children and youth services plan are ill defined and difficult to achieve.

The lack, in the area served by the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board, of community level coordinating mechanisms which can identify and redirect appropriate juveniles to youth serving resources outside the Juvenile Justice System has resulted in inadequate treatment, unnecessary stigmatization of juveniles, corresponding high recidivism rates, and less than adequate correction of the more serious offenders.

III. THE LARCJPB DIVERSION SUBSYSTEM

Until 1973, the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board's response to these problems was to establish a series of independent juvenile diversion projects directed to individual considerations within independent geographic areas. Through its 1973/1974 planning efforts, the Board funded four such projects: the Compton Juvenile Diversion Project; the West San Gabriel Valley Diversion Coalition;

the Pomona Valley Juvenile Diversion Project; and the Mid-San Gabriel Valley Delinquency Prevention Project. As indicated in the Board's 1973/1974 plan these projects were to address the problems of fragmentation, gaps in service, and lack of coordination which existed in the County.

In reviewing the progress and results of these projects, the Regional Board realized that it had only partially achieved these objectives and that it would only fully achieve them when a comprehensive, regionalized system of juvenile program coordination, problem identification, referral, case and agency evaluation, and program development had been operationalized. As a result, the LARCJPB's plan, entitled The Diversion Subsystem, was modified. It now involves a multi-year approach to the development of a comprehensive, regionalized "Youth Services Planning and Action Network" built around existing community resources and designed to bridge the prevention and treatment capabilities of social service agencies with the post-apprehension processes of the Juvenile Justice System. Its basic purpose still remains--to establish viable alternatives to Juvenile Justice System processing which will have a significant impact on the region's juvenile crime and delinquency problems.

The major difference is in the fact that it is a County-wide, unified plan that makes maximum utilization of the Regional Board as a catalyst and facilitator in the development of such a network.

The role of the LARCJPB in the Diversion Subsystem Plan is threefold: 1) to obtain regionwide participation and support of all juvenile justice agencies as well as community agencies that have the capacity to work with selected

juvenile offenders; 2) to fund new services when gaps are identified in the existing service delivery system; and 3) to provide the leadership necessary to the successful establishment of a comprehensive, community-wide network of action-oriented activities for assisting troubled youth.

As has been indicated here, the LARCJPB's Diversion Subsystem Plan is largely a developmental effort. It seeks first to devise effective measures for addressing the region's juvenile crime and delinquency problems. Then it proposes testing and validating these measures by implementing trial action projects (the previously mentioned, community-based diversion projects) utilizing federal, state and local funding. Concurrently, it seeks to develop the climate of public awareness and acceptance essential for a successful effort. Finally, through manpower, training and the development of management tools it seeks to insure that skilled personnel will be available in the individual communities to sustain the effort upon discontinuation of LARCJPB assistance.

The topic of this Executive Summary, the "Diversion Planning and Evaluation System Project", is directly related to the manpower training and the development of management tools phase of the Diversion Subsystem Plan.

IV. DIVERSION PLANNING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM PROJECT

The intent of the Diversion Planning and Evaluation System Project (DPESP) was to bring to bear the collective knowledge and experience of state, regional, county and local juvenile justice and social services organizations and agencies; and this consultant, on the significant problem of developing a program structure within which guidelines for children and youth services planning, development,

operation and management could be developed and within which community programs could be reviewed.

Since this statement of intent was clearly much too general to serve as a guide for implementing the DPESP effort, the LARCJPB established a minimum set of specific objectives toward which the Project would aim and against which its performance would be measured. These objectives were:

- To develop a planning methodology and evaluation design that would translate juvenile justice and social problem policy into a meaningful and well-articulated set of guidelines for developing goals and objectives and for implementing diversion project activities.
- To develop a multi-sector, youth services, automated case-tracking system that would provide services monitoring, administrative, and program evaluation information to meet the minimum data requirements of the Diversion Projects.
- To develop a preliminary operational plan for one of the diversion projects (Project HEAVY/Central City) that would effectively express the management, fiscal and administrative, resource development, services, and information and evaluation operational elements of that Project.
- To convey planning, information systems, and evaluation methodological skills to appropriate Project, county and local personnel.
- To assist a selected public sector evaluation team in the development of a request for proposal (RFP) for the selection of an organization/agency to be responsible for on-going evaluation services for Project HEAVY/Central City and for other diversion efforts.

Following the award of a contract to Mott-McDonald Associates, Inc. and the establishment of an Interjurisdictional Steering Committee to direct their activities the Project was initiated. It was immediately recognized that the

DPESP staff, the Interjurisdictional Steering Committee, the individual Project Planner and Manager, and the various constituencies represented in the local community children and youth services program, would require a common frame of reference within which program functions and operations could be discussed and within which roles and responsibilities could be defined. It was further recognized that the more specific this framework could be made--without presuppositions about organizational roles, operational and treatment modalities, or other restrictive assumptions--the more immediately decisions about the Program could be reached.

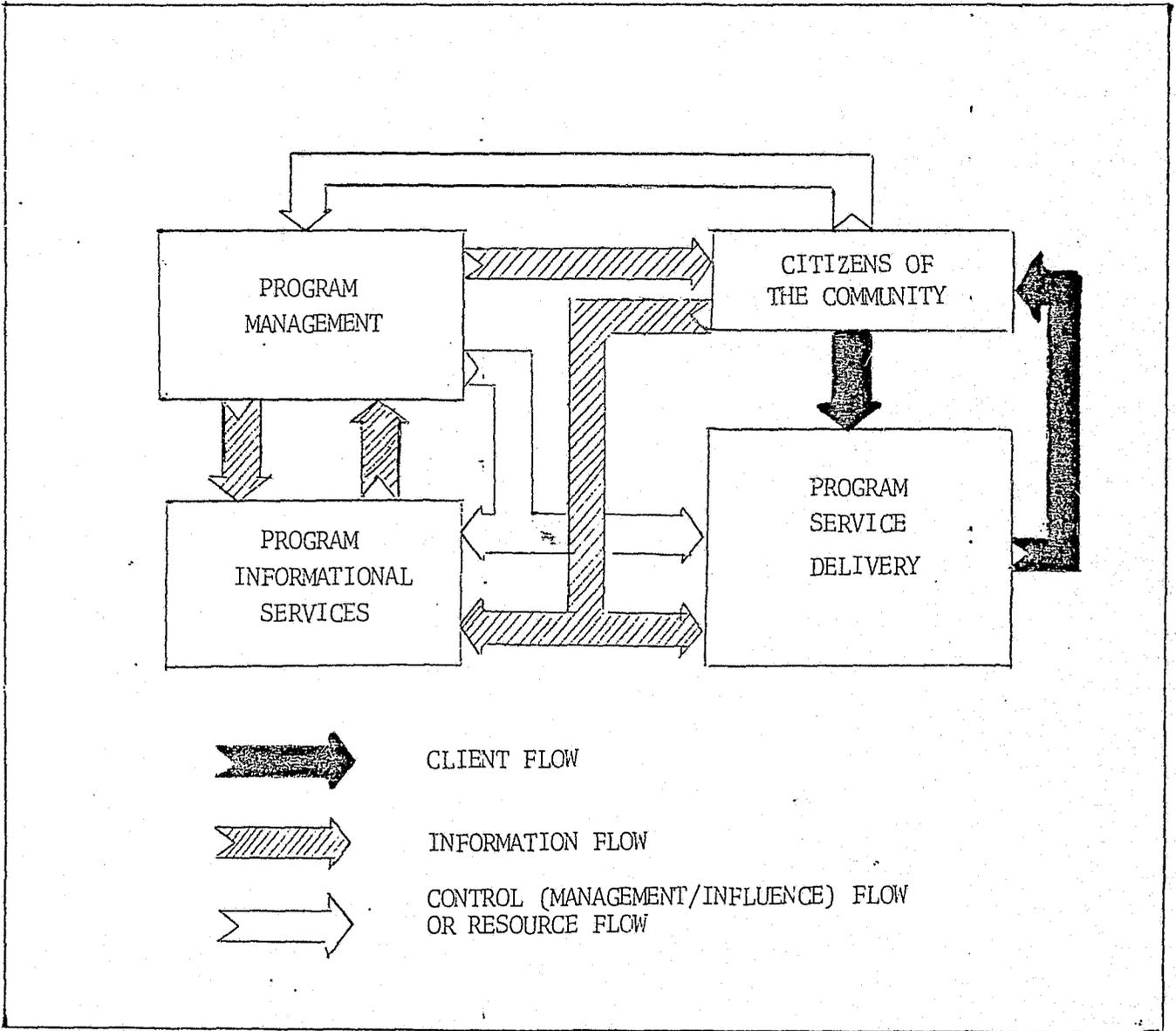
While the virtues of such a common frame of reference were manifold, the key advantages were summarized by the Project Staff as follows:

- All Program/Project participants were offered a vehicle for common understanding of Program/Project objectives, scope, and functions.
- All Program/Project participants were offered a unified picture of interties and interrelationships in the regionwide Program and thus their role in and impact upon the Program/Project as a whole.
- The local community children and youth services Program/Project Planner or Manager could plan and operate within a generally accepted, generally bounded Program/Project area, the extents of which are known.

In a refined form, this common frame of reference was depicted in the form of a "Community-wide Children and Youth Services Conceptual System Model". (Figure I depicts the model developed as the frame of reference for the Diversion Planning and Evaluation System Project). In its most comprehensive form, the model defined the clientele to be served; the Program's service delivery functions; the Program's management and administration functions;

FIGURE I

COMMUNITY-WIDE CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES
CONCEPTUAL MODEL



and the Program's informational and evaluation functions. Also within the framework of this "model" the detailed charters, roles, and responsibilities of the Project participants were defined.

V. THE UTILITY OF THE MODEL

In the broadest definitional sense, the model is nothing more than a representation of reality or a perception of reality. The primary virtue of the model was that it permitted a simulation of the real world's operations and the making of decisions about those operations without disrupting the real world situations being examined. Since elements of the real and perceived world consist of things that are stable (static) and things that are moving (dynamic), so too were the elements of the model static and dynamic. In terms of the "Community-wide System Model" the "static" elements were the Program's "functions" while "dynamic" elements were its "flows".

Its facility of use in respect to the DPESP effort lay in the fact that a large number of "known" diversion program needs and required functional relationships could be included as axioms in the "model", that additional needs and functional relationships could be "negotiated" and included within the "model" framework, and that a somewhat standardized set of management techniques and concepts could be used in conjunction with the "model" and their utility gauged.

Once the "model" framework was developed, it was employed by the Project Staff to accomplish Project activities.

VI. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Using a concise but clear plan for accomplishing Project objectives and a "task team" approach to divide the Project into manageable units, the overall stress

of the DPESP effort was clearly on "capacity-building" (i.e., developing a series of management tools or guiding principles as to what the Diversion Subsystem and its projects should "look like" and how they should function). Descriptions of existing national, state and local diversion programs/projects were obtained and studied to determine critical problem areas and needs. In an all-out search for programs, information systems and ideas; the DPESP Staff employed as its main resources existing literature, interviews, and personal contacts with knowledgeable children and youth services planners and managers. Both to assist in achieving the specific goals of the Project and to increase the acceptability of its eventual results, an Interjurisdictional Steering Committee was established to direct Project activities. It consisted of staff personnel from the agencies directly involved in the Diversion Subsystem. Throughout the Project, every effort was made not only to elicit ideas and suggestions, but also to provide feedback, in order to obtain ongoing reaction and assistance from as widespread a spectrum of sources as possible. Finally, the dangers of breaking the Project into separate task teams was recognized from the start. Therefore, to avoid the pitfall of fragmented Project operations, a separate Project management and administration task team was created with the major responsibility of integrating the entire Project. The key role of this team was to ensure that a continual effort was made by the total staff to share overlapping concerns and issues throughout the Project with the Interjurisdictional Steering Committee.

While DPESP Project activities are described in detail in the Mott-McDonald Proposal, they are summarized, by phase, here:

- PHASE O -- PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Project management and administration included administrative, financial, and technical management efforts designed to keep the DPESP on track. It involved planning, allocating, directing and monitoring staff assignments, financial accounting, management quality control, Project secretarial and clerical support operations, personnel administration, and Project liaison.

- PHASE I -- DESIGN FOR PLANNING AND OPERATIONS

In Phase I, the "Design for Planning and Operations Phase", a "Youth Program Planning" manual for youth services programs was developed for use by all diversion projects.

- PHASE II -- EVALUATION DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES

During Phase II, the "Evaluation Design and Development of Procedures Phase", an evaluation system specification was developed based on City, County, Regional, and State needs and upon capabilities (and constraints) of an externally acquired information system.

- PHASE III -- DATA PROCESSING APPLICATION

In Phase III, the "Data Processing Application Phase", a diversion project "case data and evaluation system" was selected from those currently available nationally, based upon local systems requirements. The Client Action, Characteristics, Tracking, and Record Updating System (CACTUS), originally developed in Kansas City, Missouri, was selected and modified for local use.

- PHASE IV -- RFP FOR SELECTION OF ON-GOING EVALUATOR

During Phase IV, the "RFP for Selection of On-Going Evaluator Phase", the Project Staff supplied necessary technical information and otherwise assisted the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board in the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the selection of an ongoing evaluator of the Diversion Subsystem.

- PHASE V -- TRAINING

During Phase V, the "Training Phase", curriculum and instructional materials were developed and training of public sector personnel involved in the Diversion Subsystem's activities was conducted.

- PHASE VI -- DEVELOPMENT OF PRELIMINARY PROGRAM AND OPERATIONS PLAN FOR PROJECT HEAVY

During Phase VI, the "Development of a Preliminary Program and Operations Plan for Project HEAVY Phase", a "Project HEAVY Operational Plan" was developed for the Central City area using the approach defined in the "Youth Program Planning" manual (See Phase I).

The Project phases and deliverables just described, were related in the following general ways. Phase 0 - Project Management and Administration - specified and controlled work to be accomplished in all other Project phases. Phase I - Design for Planning and Operations - supplied the planning approach which was employed in Phase VI to develop an Operational Plan for Project HEAVY/Central City and which can be utilized in other regional diversion project planning efforts. Phase I activities also specified general guidelines for information and evaluation system design activities which occurred in Phases II and III.

Phase II - Evaluation Design and Development of Procedures - supplied an evaluation methodology for the Project HEAVY/Central City Operational Plan and for other regional diversion projects, as well as selection and design criteria for Phase III. Phase III - Data Processing Application - resulted in the selection of a case data and evaluation information system whose design was incorporated into the Project HEAVY/Central City Operational Plan. Additionally, the system selected during this phase was capable of providing some of the mechanisms for supporting the evaluation design developed in Phase II. Phase IV - RFP for Selection of an On-going Evaluator - drew materials from the first three phases for the preparation of a

Request for Proposal which will result in the selection of an Evaluator to evaluate the Diversion Subsystem and its Projects' impact on juvenile crime and delinquency in the area served by the LARCJPB.

Phase V - Training - employed products and materials developed in all previous phases of the Project for the orientation and training of public sector personnel. Phase VI - Development of a Preliminary Program and Operations Plan for Project HEAVY - used the planning approach developed in Phase I, Design for Planning and Operations, to develop an Operational Master Plan for the Project HEAVY/Central City effort. In addition to discussing service delivery system functions and activities, the Operational Plan addresses informational and evaluation functions based on the results of the data and evaluation system's developmental efforts conducted in Phases II and III.

VII. PROJECT DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

As a result of the Diversion Planning and Evaluation System Project ten products were produced which are designed to assist various regional, county, city and project personnel involved in Diversion Subsystem activities. The content and intended audience of each are briefly described below.

- DPESP PROJECT WORK PLAN

CONTENT: Describes in detail the work content of some forty-five activities involved in the seven phases of the Project. Project organization, roles and responsibilities, manpower allocations, and budgets are also discussed. (This document was the master work scheduling and control device used by the Project.)

AUDIENCE: Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board; DPESP Interjurisdictional Steering Committee; Project HEAVY Interim Management

● YOUTH PROGRAM PLANNING MANUAL

CONTENT: A guide to planning youth services systems including management, operational, informational, and program evaluation considerations. Six planning steps are defined: Program Formulation; Needs Assessment and Analysis; Program Design; Program Development; Program Implementation (Operation); Program Evaluation. A specific planning checklist is presented for juvenile diversion programs.

AUDIENCE: Youth Services Program Planners/Managers

● TRAINING MATERIALS

CONTENT: Viewgraph slides and attendee handouts covering diversion project planning, information systems, program evaluation, and proposed Project HEAVY/Central City operations--in conformance with materials contained in other products described in this Executive Summary.

AUDIENCE: Diversion Projects' Policy Makers; Project Planners/Managers; LARCJPB Program Planners

● COMMUNITY RESOURCE SURVEY

CONTENT: A presentation of the community youth services resources picture in the Project HEAVY/Central City Area. Findings, issues, and recommendations which should be considered in Project HEAVY operational design are also presented.

AUDIENCE: Project HEAVY Management; DPESP Design Staff

● PROGRAM DESIGN ISSUES

CONTENT: Discusses design aspects of client selection, program management, service delivery, and program information and evaluation system components of Project HEAVY/Central City. Recommends major design approaches and/or presents alternatives.

AUDIENCE: Project HEAVY Management; DPESP Development Staff; LARCJPB Program Planners

● PROJECT HEAVY OPERATIONAL PLAN

CONTENT: Describes anticipated client service parameters for Project HEAVY/Central City. Discusses recommended management and service delivery processing. Presents a project implementation schedule and proposed three year Project budget.

AUDIENCE: Project HEAVY Management; Project Technical Staff; LARCJPB Program Planners

● CASE DATA AND EVALUATION SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS SPECIFICATIONS

CONTENT: Discusses the operational characteristics of some ten computer-based client information systems considered for use by LARCJPB sponsored diversion projects. Ranks candidates and recommends optimum system for local use.

AUDIENCE: DPESP Interjurisdictional Steering Committee; Data Processing Advisory Personnel; DPESP Technical Staff

● CLIENT INFORMATION SYSTEM DOCUMENTATION

CONTENT: Three distinct manuals constitute the complete information system documentation:

- Computer Operations Manual -- contains a description of computer run sequences and time cycles.
- Systems Documentation Manuals -- contains general system flows, keypunch instructions and card layouts, file record layouts, output report descriptions, as well as a Code Manual with corresponding procedures.
- System Users' Handbook -- describes both the input (form) preparation procedures and the output (report) content.

AUDIENCE: (In the respective order above)

- Computer Operations Staff
- Client Information Coordinators; System Maintenance Personnel
- Client Information Coordinators and others using CACTUS (Client Action, Characteristics, Tracking, and Record Updating System) forms or reports

● SECURITY AND PRIVACY MANUAL

CONTENT: Proposes principles and procedures which should be required by the LARCJPB to insure the integrity of information recorded in the projects' data systems and to prevent the misuse of diversion project records.

AUDIENCE: DPESP Interjurisdictional Steering Committee; Data Processing Advisory Personnel; Diversion Projects' Planners, Managers and Client Information Coordinators.

● DIVERSION EVALUATION SPECIFICATION

CONTENT: Discusses the process of program evaluation and provides guidance and direction for the evaluation of individual Regional diversion projects. The Specification also provides guidance for the evaluation of the LARCJPB's Diversion Subsystem.

AUDIENCE: LARCJPB Program Planners and Evaluators; Diversion Project Management and Evaluation Personnel; and the On-going Evaluator's Technical and Management Staff.

● REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CONTENT: Provides background data and a statement of work for a project whose functions are to evaluate the impact of the Diversion Subsystem and its projects on juvenile crime and delinquency in the area served by the LARCJPB.

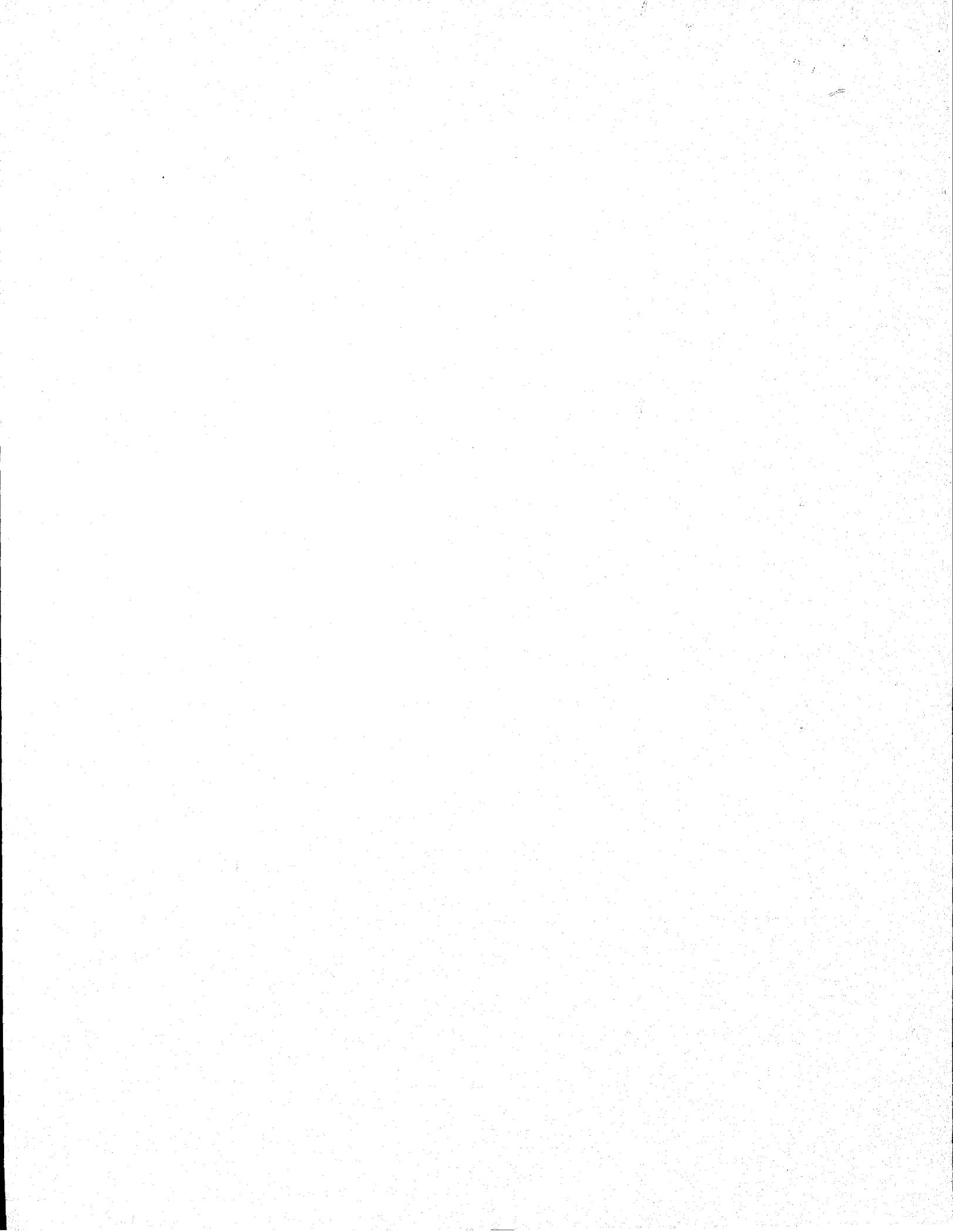
AUDIENCE: Qualified organizations and agencies;
capable of performing the tasks required
by the On-going Evaluator.

VIII. FINAL REMARKS

In this Summary we have attempted briefly, but completely, to describe the background, purpose, activities, and results of the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board's Diversion Planning and Evaluation System Project. While the DPESP products go a long way toward assisting the management, operational and evaluation staffs of the Planning Board's Diversion Projects; they are only a first step in a direction that seeks to find solutions to the juvenile crime and delinquency problems of the Region by: comprehensive planning and evaluation, the development of management tools and techniques, and the involvement and commitment of local agencies and units of government. The next step belongs to those local agencies and units of government and by those individuals involved in planning and managing diversion project activities.

Mott-McDonald Associates, Inc. was pleased to be a part of that first step and wishes the Regional Planning Board and its Projects success in this most important Diversion Subsystem Program.

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