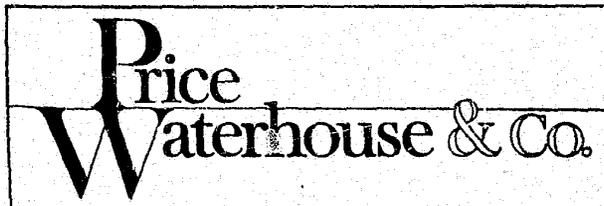


# Evaluation/Policy Research Associates, Ltd.

AN EVALUATION JOINT VENTURE

55524



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINAL REPORT

MILWAUKEE COUNTY PROJECT TURNAROUND

LEAA GRANT #78DF-AX-0014

JANUARY 31, 1979

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ACQUISITIONS

# Evaluation/Policy Research Associates, Ltd.

January 31, 1979

The Honorable Michael T. Sullivan  
Chairman, Project Turnaround Executive Committee  
821 West State Street Room 208  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

RE: Project Turnaround Evaluation Final Report

Dear Judge Sullivan:

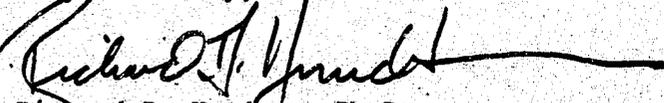
As you know, for the past three years, Price Waterhouse and Co., our joint venture partner, and Evaluation/Policy Research Associates, Ltd., have been engaged in the evaluation of Project Turnaround. We have now reached the conclusion of this effort and are presenting the final report which summarizes the activities of the three-year project. We have both found the project to be of major value to the citizenry of Milwaukee County and are pleased to have had an opportunity to share in its implementation/assessment.

As evaluators, we have been impressed with the cooperation of the staffs of the Unit, as well as all personnel in Milwaukee County with whom we have had to actively deal. We thank you and members of your committee for your diligent examination of the data and the continued questioning which helped clarify concerns and direct decision making as the project changed from dependence on federal funding to support by the County.

Overall, the net effect of Project Turnaround has been positive, both for the citizens who have been served by the Project, as well as the County which has benefited from its efforts. Milwaukee County should be proud of the fact that this effort has been one of the more useful victim/witness projects carried out in the nation and has generated ideas and information which will serve those throughout the country who are interested in victim assistance projects.

We submit this report then with an expression of thanks for your fine cooperation these several years and even though our paths will not cross in an official manner in the immediate days ahead, we look forward to assisting you in any way we can.

Very sincerely,



Richard D. Knudten, Ph.D.  
President

Suite 1010, Continental Bank Building, 7 Continental Plaza, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233  
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# Price Waterhouse & Co.

1500 MARINE PLAZA  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53202  
414-276-9500

January 31, 1979

The Honorable Michael T. Sullivan  
Chairman, Project Turnaround Executive  
Committee  
Milwaukee County Safety Building  
821 West State Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233

Dear Judge Sullivan:

Price Waterhouse & Co., in conjunction with its joint venture partner, E/PRA, Ltd., is pleased to present this final evaluation report on Milwaukee County's Project Turnaround.

The scope of evaluation efforts undertaken by our firm has included on-going analysis of the Project's benefits, definition of the costs required to transfer Turnaround's services to other jurisdictions, assessment of the Project's administrative environment, and general monitoring of the development and implementation of the JUSTIS information system. Our findings, as developed over the respective years of the Project's history, are unified herein.

The findings indicate that Milwaukee County can take great pride in the local and national accomplishments of Project Turnaround. To the Milwaukee community, the Project has contributed annual savings estimated at several hundred thousand dollars from (1) reduced citizen and law officer inconvenience accomplished by Turnaround's action services and from (2) recordkeeping efficiency gains enabled by implementation of the JUSTIS system. To the more efficient administration of justice nationwide, Project Turnaround has contributed valuable learning experiences that are the fundamental intent of demonstration grants as well as a computerized system for the integrated processing of prosecution, court and sheriff's information.

Throughout the conduct of all evaluation activities, our staff was afforded continuing courtesy and exceptional cooperation by Project staff and County officials too numerous to mention. We were also pleased to observe their obvious dedication to the general concept of public service and their genuine concern for the specific and critical needs of that portion of the public victimized by crime or called upon to serve as witnesses.

Yours very truly,

*Price Waterhouse & Co.*

## PREFACE

### Report Organization and Emphasis

This evaluation report represents a joint venture endeavor of Evaluation/Policy Research Associates, Ltd. and Price Waterhouse & Co. The report is divided into five major parts as follows:

Part I addresses impact and value results for each of Turnaround's seven Units (Citizen Contact and Support, Citizen Victim Complaint, Sensitive Crimes, Witness Emergency, Information Systems, Advocacy, and Administration and Planning).

Part II is a presentation of aggregate population benefits. Included within Part II are the results of random surveys of Milwaukee County citizen witnesses, police officers, Assistant District Attorneys, and members of the criminal judiciary.

Part III addresses the Project's community involvement and support efforts. General awareness of Project Turnaround by the community's citizens, a description of the Project's Advisory Council, and discussion of Turnaround as perceived by members of its Citizen's Advisory Council are included. The Project's community outreach efforts through media and organization contacts are also documented.

Parts IV and V summarize the cost of replication and cost benefit findings derived and presented separately in Part I for each Project Turnaround Unit.

The findings and information presented here represent a compilation and summary of evaluation over three funding periods. The original grant to Milwaukee County was made by LEAA on October 25, 1974 and accepted by the County on December 10, 1974. The Director was hired on April 7, 1975 with other staff coming on between June and December, 1975. References to the first funding period found in the text refer to the first period of actual operation of the Units of the Project, approximately June, 1975 through October 7, 1976. The second funding period ran from October 8, 1976 through November 30, 1977 while the third funding period ran from December 1, 1977 through December 31, 1978.

### Authorship Responsibility

The report subsections pertaining to cost of replication and cost benefit analysis within each Unit's narrative (Part I of this report) plus the entire report section on the impact and value of the JUSTIS system (Part IE) and the Administration and Planning Unit (Part IG) have been developed by Price Waterhouse & Co. Price Waterhouse & Co. has also authored Parts IV and V: the Cost of Replication and Cost Benefit Summaries, respectively. All remaining subsections and sections of this report have been developed by Evaluation/Policy Research Associates, Ltd.

This project was supported by Grant Number 78DF-AX-0014 awarded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, United States Department of Justice. The points of view and opinions stated separately by authors of this document are those of the responsible joint venture author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the United States Department of Justice.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PROJECT TURNAROUND

### FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

#### I. UNIT ANALYSES

##### IA. CITIZEN CONTACT AND SUPPORT UNIT

The Contact and Support Unit was created to provide assistance and information to victims and witnesses of crime. Over the period of time of its existence the staff has varied, from a total of ten at the beginning to five (plus three persons funded through CETA) at the time the program ceased to be funded by federal discretionary monies. The staff deal with such citizen concerns as appearance scheduling, transportation problems, child care needs, property return concerns, witness fee acquisition, restitution assistance, and general questions and information needs. These efforts were concentrated on felony case witnesses through the first two years of its existence. During the last year one CETA staff member gave full attention to selective misdemeanor cases.

Detailed descriptions of twelve cases handled by the CCSU staff illustrate the diversity of Unit activities. The case descriptions suggest three main classes of benefits: 1) direct aid to victims, which contributes to their well-being, and which improves their perceptions of the criminal justice system; 2) direct aid to the criminal justice system, which often releases police officers and workers in the District Attorney's Office for other tasks that need to be done; and 3) indirect contributions to the successful prosecution of cases, by locating witnesses, keeping them satisfied and cooperative, and seeing that they come to the necessary court appearances.

Because the Unit operated within the physical confines of the District Attorney's Office the staffs of the Unit and the Office worked cooperatively over time. When Turnaround funding ceased, the Unit became an institutionalized part of the Office with monies to support its activities coming from the Title XX money available to the County Welfare Department for purchase of services for crime victims.

##### Witness Management Activities

To assist citizens' orientation to the court setting, an informational brochure was developed. Although there was little difference between those who received the brochure and those who did not in terms of difficulties in finding the correct location or for knowing what to do,

a sizable portion of citizens who received it indicated it was useful in helping them find the correct location for their case.

Through contacting witnesses prior to the time they were subpoenaed and recalling witnesses whose cases were going to be adjourned or whose testimony was not needed, the Contact and Support Unit had an impact upon the percentage of witnesses who indicate making unnecessary trips (a decrease of 50%) and on the total number of trips that were perceived as unnecessary (a decrease of 28%). An experiment to determine if citizen witnesses who were placed on call (arrangements made that the witness will be at a phone number where they can be reached quickly and within one hour's distance from the court setting), showed that a higher percentage (75% versus 63%) of these witnesses actually appeared when needed as compared to citizens subpoenaed in the regular way. An effort to locate witnesses when subpoenas are returned to the Sheriff's Department Process Service Division as unservable has resulted in the finding of 88% of those witnesses who would actually be needed in court, thus preventing unnecessary trips for other participants in the case. There has also been a 6% decrease in the number of felony cases for which a dismissal was necessary because of witness problems.

#### Benefits to Citizens

Letters notifying witnesses of the disposition of their case were sent to over 3,000 persons each funding year. Impact data revealed that knowing the outcome of the case is associated with higher levels of intended cooperation on the part of witnesses.

As a result of procedures initiated by the Contact and Support Staff, victims of property loss may receive their property before it is used as evidence in a trial, if it is determined that a picture of the evidence will be adequate to ensure prosecution. Initiation of this procedure has resulted in an increase from 20 to 55% of victims receiving some or all of their property before trial. CCSU staff also advised victims regarding the need to keep records of expenses in order to determine restitution needs. CCSU staff assisted 73% of victims where restitution was ordered by the court. Among cases where restitution was ordered, in 46% some or all had been paid, and in the remainder (54%) nothing had been paid. Thus, even when CCSU staff assist victims in determining restitution needs, there may be problems getting restitution included in the court order and in actually collecting the money. A similar situation exists regarding witness fees. Staff attempts to help witnesses get their fees from the Clerk of Courts Office have, for the most part, been unsuccessful. That is, the Unit staff have been unable to bring about a change in procedures so that more witnesses receive the fees to which they are entitled.

The extent to which crime victims and witnesses need services is evident from the fact that 44% indicate having had problems as a result of the crime. While many of these persons do not receive help for their problems, there was an increase during the third grant year in the number of persons who indicate receiving help (9%). The level

of satisfaction with the services was generally quite high with two-thirds of those with problems indicating satisfaction with the services they received.

#### Cost of Replication

In terms of cost, it is estimated that other communities could expect to spend roughly \$50,000 to initiate a Citizen Contact and Support Unit similar to Project Turnaround's and thereafter spend about \$157,000 per year to replicate those services which eventually emerged as the major focus of effort. The ongoing cost estimate of \$157,000 considers the total commitment of resources to the CCSU, which includes grant and local funds plus the equivalent cost of additional personnel paid for by the CETA program.

#### Cost Benefit Analysis

The financial commitment to the CCSU appears to be returning annual savings of about \$175,000, or 113% of the Unit's current ongoing costs. These savings result primarily from decreased unnecessary trips to court by law officers and citizen victims and witnesses. The specific services provided are many and varied. Several involve making certain that victims and witnesses receive accurate and correct information on when and where to appear as well as notification not to appear if adjournments, projected guilty pleas, etc. become known to CCSU staff. Other services present more direct monetary benefits to citizens and to local government, such as assistance in obtaining restitution, witness fees, property release, and mailing of subpoenas versus the more costly alternative of delivery by Sheriff's Deputies.

#### Conclusions

The overall conclusion that the staff have developed innovative and effective means to deal with victim/witness problems is evident from both the impact data and the summary of benefits to citizens. A minimum staffing level is necessary in order to have an impact, however. The volume of cases that Milwaukee County generates necessitates a minimum of three Specialists within this Unit.

#### 1B. CITIZEN VICTIM COMPLAINT UNIT

This Unit provides assistance and information to victims who come to the District Attorney's Office as individuals to initiate complaints. The Unit's staff have joined forces with a Consumer Fraud Division of the District Attorney's Office and work as a single unit.

Operating only in the first two years under discretionary funds available to Turnaround, the number of staff varied slightly from time to time. For most of the time the staff consisted of an Assistant District Attorney, a Caseworker, and two clerical persons. The Unit screened cases to determine those for which a criminal charge was appropriate. Other cases were handled by the Caseworker or by making a referral to a community agency.

The Unit continued following cessation of Turnaround funds under an arrangement of purchase of service by the Welfare Department.

#### Case Handling

Initially, family matters, battery situations, harrassments and threats constituted over half the caseload of the Unit. During its second year of operation the Unit was characterized by a marked decline in the number of family, battery, harrassment-type cases handled (from over 55% to a low of 10%). At the same time, the percentage of consumer fraud cases increased from about 10% at the beginning to almost 50% in 1977.

During a relatively brief period at the end of the second funding year when there was no caseworker working within the Unit, the way cases were handled was changed. Rather than dealing with complainants' situations in the office through giving them advice and consultation, the Assistant District Attorney depended more on order-in letters, mediation or warning letters, and issued criminal charges. There was also an increase in the number of referrals made to outside agencies. Whether this pattern continued after the end of the second funding year when a person with social work background was again available in the office is not clear in that following cessation of connection with Project Turnaround, the office no longer prepared reports indicating types of cases dealt with or actions taken.

#### Impact of Unit Activities

One impact of Unit services is the finding that of persons referred to another agency, 43% went to the agency and in all but one case received services. Referrals made by CVCU staff have also been one component in the general increase in the volume in activity in the small claims court. The Unit was able to maintain, over the period of its operation, an approximately 30-minute waiting time for citizen complainants. This is down from four to five hours prior to initiation of the Unit.

In terms of criminal complaints issued, the Unit was not able to screen cases so that only those which would continue to effective prosecution were charged. However, the Unit itself only prepares the complaint and does not actually try cases in court. The fact that about 53% of the charges are either dismissed or the defendant is found not guilty cannot be considered strictly the Unit's responsibility.

Starting in the summer of 1976 and continuing through September, 1977, there was a decline in citizen assessment of the effectiveness of the CVCU staff. On the other hand, a decline evident in the summer of 1976 in citizen assessment of effort diminished, with assessments during the summer of 1977 being close to those of the earlier baseline period. Assessments of the courteousness of the staff remained high throughout all periods. While there was a decrease in the number of persons who indicated that they were satisfied with the action or advice of the staff at the end of the first grant year (from 71% to 56%), in the second grant period, satisfaction increased to 64%.

Response to phone inquiries made by the staff remained fairly high. Overall over 79% of the citizens considered the courteousness of the response given them on the phone as "excellent" or "good." Slightly over 67% indicated the response was also helpful.

#### Cost of Replication

In terms of start-up costs, other communities could expect to spend roughly \$7,000 to initiate a Citizen Victim Complaint Unit similar to that which existed during the first and second grant years of Project Turnaround. Subsequent to start-up expenses, ongoing operating costs could range from \$126,000 to \$171,000 per year, depending upon the level of staffing and services provided by other communities in respect to the Milwaukee experience.

#### Cost Benefit Analysis

From the above "investment," annual savings ranging from \$166,000 to \$389,000 are possible. The savings are the result of a decreased wait from about 4½ hours, formerly experienced in Milwaukee by citizen complainants, to the 30-minute wait which was achieved by the CVCU. Estimated savings will vary within the indicated range depending upon the number of clients who benefit from the reduced wait. In Milwaukee, the number of beneficiaries and attendant savings decreased substantially during the second and final funding period due to the shifting of several types of complainant matters from the County to the City Attorney's Office.

#### Conclusions

The impact data on this Unit indicate that the nature of the complaint brought by the citizen frequently involves very complicated and difficult to deal with interpersonal relations. The use of social service techniques rather than a legal approach was shown to be most appropriate in the large majority of these cases. While explicit baseline data were not available, it is the overall judgment of the Evaluator that the positive impacts demonstrated would not be evident under the prior situation.

### IC. SENSITIVE CRIMES UNIT

The Sensitive Crimes Unit provided specialized assistance and individualized attention to victims of sensitive crimes. It prosecuted these crimes using a "vertical" model whereby one prosecutor stays with the case from beginning to end.

The Unit received funding through Turnaround sources through the end of February, 1978. At that time the District Attorney's Office picked up support for the Unit. Three Assistant District Attorneys continued to prosecute sensitive crimes cases. Most clients (96%) of the Unit considered Unit personnel either to be "extremely sensitive" or "sensitive" to their particular problem. Ninety-five percent of the clients indicated satisfaction with referrals to other agencies made by the Unit. The information given by Unit staff on court procedures was also regarded as helpful by virtually everyone (99%). Of those testifying in court, 66% reported that the staff of the Unit had a definite impact on their willingness to testify.

That the conjunction of the Sensitive Crimes Unit and the Anti-Rape Unit were helpful was indicated by the fact that almost all sensitive crimes victims were served by both units and that the assessment of anti-rape activities was equally positive.

#### Impact of Unit Activities

As the Unit was in operation for a longer period of time, allowing for more complicated cases to be disposed of, and as defense attorneys used a plea of mental incompetency to a greater extent, the length of time from issuance of charges to trial increased. In the first and second years the average time was 3.0 and 4.9 months respectively. The overall average time to trial for the Sensitive Crimes Unit was 4.1 months versus 5.3 months during the baseline period. Data on other criteria indicate positive achievements. The average number of adjournments per case declined from 3.9 in the baseline period to 2.2 over the life of SCU. The average number of Assistant District Attorneys involved in each case declined from 3.4 in the 2-year baseline period to 1.4 during Unit operation.

The Unit was able to achieve a slightly higher rate of guilty on an original charge verdict than was true in the baseline period (36.1% versus 31.4%). At the same time, fewer charges resulted in a verdict of guilty on a reduced charge when compared with the baseline (27% versus 35.9%). Looking at the same dimensions by case, rather than by charge, the findings are also positive. The SCU was able to achieve a higher rate of verdict of guilty on an original charge (41.9% versus 35.8%) and a slightly lower percentage of guilty on a reduced charge (34.9% versus 36.5%).

### Cost of Replication

In terms of start-up expenses, other communities could anticipate spending about \$21,000 to initiate a sensitive crimes program like Milwaukee's. The indicated start-up amount relates primarily to the cost of establishing necessary local contacts with police and medical professionals plus costs for providing a confidential office setting. Annual operating costs are estimated to range from \$124,000 to \$136,000, which includes an imputed allowance for support services provided to the Sensitive Crimes Unit by the County's Anti-Rape Unit and from other non-grant sources.

### Cost Benefit Analysis

Annual savings, which accrue primarily to local government, result from the reduced number of adjournments achieved. Reduced adjournments averaged 2.44, 2.19, and 1.59 per case for the three respective grant years. These reductions equate to savings which range from \$65,000 to \$101,000 per year. The Sensitive Crimes Unit's benefit cost ratio is .6:1, based upon the indicated cost and saving figures. This ratio is likely conservative since it is not possible to quantify the value of increased willingness by sensitive crimes victims to cooperate in the future nor is it possible to dollarize the potential deterrent to the commission of sensitive crimes provided by existence of the Unit.

### Conclusions

The Sensitive Crimes Unit appears to have made a positive contribution both to victims of sensitive crimes and to the prosecution of sensitive crimes cases within the criminal justice system. Clients were very positive about the support services they received. Impact measures show, in virtually every situation, an improvement over the baseline period.

### ID. WITNESS EMERGENCY UNIT

This Unit, which originally consisted of a Coordinator and six Deputies, later reduced to three Deputies and then to two, provided protection/surveillance; transportation to work, court and other places; 24-hour telephone contact; telephone traces; and relocation of victims and witnesses who were threatened or intimidated.

Following cessation of Turnaround funding, the Unit ceased to operate. Those cases which were regarded as serious, were referred to local police departments. However, no continuing financial or personnel support is available to continue the activities of this Unit.

### Client Satisfaction

Among the clients served over the three years of the Unit's existence, 99% indicated satisfaction with the services offered. Of the clients who were asked to testify in court, over 95% did so. None of the clients who did not testify reported that their lack of testimony had anything to do with fear, threats, or other reasons that might make a person unwilling. Among those who testified, 96% indicated the services of the Unit were either "extremely important" or "important" in influencing their willingness to testify.

### Impact of the Unit Activities

The Unit receives referrals from several sources, the most common being other Turnaround units or the District Attorney's Office (72%). Seventy percent of the cases were handled in a period of three months or less, while over 93% were closed within six months. The Unit was successful in acquiring cooperation of victims and witnesses. Almost 85% of persons it served were cooperative and/or testified. In cases where there was testimony, only 11% resulted in a dismissal or a judgment of not guilty. The percentage of all cases handled by the Unit that resulted in a conviction (65.2%) compares favorably with convictions obtained in all cases prosecuted by the District Attorney's Office. Cases in which witnesses are intimidated or threatened have traditionally been difficult to prosecute successfully.

### Cost of Replication

In terms of start-up expenses, another community could anticipate spending about \$25,000 to initiate witness emergency services like Milwaukee's. Start-up expenses are primarily facility and equipment related given the need to provide transportation and surveillance by totally inconspicuous means. Ongoing operating costs experienced by the Milwaukee project ranged from \$90,000 to \$170,000 per year. The high extreme of the cost range existed in the first grant year when the Unit had seven professional positions. The low end of the cost range existed during the third and final funding period, when three professional positions comprised the Unit.

### Cost Benefit Analysis

Over the three grant years the Unit experienced a relatively consistent finding that about 60% of its cases resulted in testimony where the WEU was also considered an important influence by the clients in their willingness to testify. Because these cases could otherwise have resulted in dismissal, it is possible to calculate a break-even point at which the Unit becomes financially self-sustaining. The Unit's break-even point averaged \$1,057 per case over the three grant years.

Because it costs the County anywhere from \$114 to \$7,800 to process a felony case -- which represents money spent non-productively if the case is dismissed for lack of witness cooperation -- it can be generally inferred that the WEU is financially self-sustaining. This inference seems supportable since the WEU's break-even point falls very favorably toward the lower end of the County's cost range for processing felony matters.

### Conclusions

There can be little doubt that the Witness Emergency Unit addressed a very important problem in the criminal justice system. The absence of baseline data makes it impossible to accurately assess the degree to which the services provided by this Unit were effective in comparison to what had been done previously. However, the impact data suggest that the Unit concentrated on important cases, disposed of them in an expeditious manner, and was successful in a high percentage of cases. The strongest data, however, comes from the enthusiasm and positive evaluation of the services of the Unit provided by former clients and the cost benefit data that point out the important benefits achieved for the criminal justice system itself.

### IE. INFORMATION SYSTEMS UNIT (JUSTIS REVIEW)

A component of Project Turnaround uncommon to most victim witness service programs was funding for the development of a comprehensive computer system (JUSTIS). The system developed by Milwaukee County, having been conceived within the context of victim witness services, presents substantial benefits to citizens and law officers impacted by crime. It is also evident that JUSTIS has enabled significant efficiency improvements in the County's criminal justice recordkeeping process. Further, the JUSTIS system has been transferred from Milwaukee to sixteen other jurisdictions as a testimony to the quality of the product produced by the County in partnership with LEAA.

Among the victim witness support features provided by JUSTIS are the preparation of more accurate and complete subpoenas which can be more selectively issued to minimize unnecessary trips and waiting time. The system also has the capacity to recognize other pending litigation against defendants at the time any new cases are initiated. Thus it is possible to combine cases, build stronger cases, or to otherwise adjudicate cases more expeditiously, thereby relieving congestion in the system and minimizing inconvenience to the victims and witnesses associated with these cases. Finally, the JUSTIS system can provide more accurate information much faster to any citizens who inquire about the status of their case or about when and where they are to appear. In the aggregate, it is estimated that the various victim witness support features of JUSTIS produce annual savings of about \$296,000. These savings result from reduced citizen and law officer waiting time provided through the relief of criminal justice system congestion.

In terms of day-to-day recordkeeping efficiency gains, JUSTIS appears to be saving Milwaukee County about \$225,000 per year due to the replacement of cumbersome manual systems and procedures formerly used in the District Attorney, Clerk of Courts and Sheriff's Offices. Among the most significant savings areas are the automated preparation of about 69,000 subpoenas per year, automated preparation of court calendars (saving from 2,000 to 3,000 clerical hours per year), and elimination of double booking for approximately 8,400 inmates transferred between the Jail and House of Corrections.

As mentioned in introduction, the JUSTIS system has also been transferred to sixteen other jurisdictions as a vote of confidence and measure of value for the quality of Milwaukee County's accomplishment. Had these other jurisdictions developed their own system, it is estimated that they would have collectively spent in excess of \$3 million.

Thus, it is clear that both LEAA and Milwaukee County can take great pride in their accomplishment and should perhaps consider additional areas where information systems might be developed within the context of action services or on a more direct user-attached basis, respectively. Given: 1) the success of the JUSTIS team, 2) the team's accumulated knowledge and experience with the County's criminal justice system, and 3) the key products scheduled for future systems development, it would appear that priority should be given to maintaining the continuity of the Unit subsequent to the expiration of Federal funding.

#### IF. ADVOCACY UNIT

This Unit operated only between June, 1975 and September, 1976. Its purpose was to allow an attorney to focus attention on laws, rules, administrative practices, etc. which impact the processing of cases and impinge upon victim/witness interests. At the end of the first funding period, a decision was made by Milwaukee County to eliminate this Unit.

#### Witness Management Activity

The Advocate assisted in the development of charging conference guidelines which served to eliminate unnecessary citizen and police involvement in the charging conferences held within the District Attorney's Office. Assistance by the Advocate in development of the Witness Subpoena Data Form also contributed to increased ability by the District Attorney's Office and the Contact and Support Unit staff in scheduling witnesses.

The Advocate attempted to initiate a time limited approach to plea negotiation. While the purpose of this procedure was to allow the District Attorney to be aware of cases where witnesses would not be needed, and thus recall them, the procedure was not always successful because of its voluntary nature.

Other attempts to assist in the management of witness testimony included the trial of key cases involving witness intimidation, and the attempt to initiate procedures for allowing hearsay evidence to be heard at preliminary hearings (as opposed to having a witness appear to testify to minor matters).

The Advocate also initiated or assisted in the development of subpoena mailing procedures, teletyping of police witnesses, and the development of the on-call procedure.

#### Benefits to Citizens

The Advocate worked against passage of a bill which would lower penalties for threatening witnesses, was able to make retaliative action against witnesses a condition of bond (so that a defendant could be brought in immediately after threatening a witness), and assisted in the trials of several cases involving threats to witnesses. The problems surrounding collection of witness fees by witnesses, receipt of property soon after it was recovered, and inclusion of restitution as an option in sentencing were the subject of advocate activity as well. Development of a holding area for prisoners separate from the area in which witnesses wait was achieved, although monies were never allocated to support a deputy to staff the facility. Advocate intervention resulted in the District Attorney's Office reappraising its handling of worthless check cases (resulting in elimination of unnecessary trips by citizen witnesses). The Advocate also assisted in the disposition of cases, and in initiating alternate times for witnesses to appear at charging conferences.

#### Cost of Replication

In terms of cost, it is estimated that other communities could expect to spend about \$4,000 to establish an Advocate's position similar to Project Turnaround's and thereafter spend roughly \$34,000 per year to continue advocacy services. Start-up expenses recognize that the nature of an Advocate's involvement requires that he/she be an experienced and well-regarded criminal justice system professional. Given this requirement, a transition period can be expected between the phasing out of former duties and responsibilities and the full time dedication to advocacy.

#### Cost Benefit Analysis

Although the Advocate's position existed only during Turnaround's initial funding period, it is quite clear that substantial benefits accrued from this brief experiment. In particular, savings several times the annual cost of the Unit were estimated from the Advocate's development of guidelines which reduced the number of law officers and citizens appearing at charging conferences.

Although evaluations in the second and third grant years were not directed toward the determination of continuing benefits, it can still be concluded that other communities that implement direct victim witness services may miss a far greater and probably more cost effective benefit opportunity area if they do not include an Advocacy Unit. Specifically, a single advocate person can direct reforms of long-established practices and legislation that adversely affect the entire target group of victims and witnesses.

### Conclusions

It is evident to the Evaluators that the projects and efforts of the Advocacy Unit tended to benefit crime victims and witnesses as well as the criminal justice system. As indicated in the Cost Benefit Analysis, operation of the Unit could be expected to yield a high return.

### IG. ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING UNIT (Administrative Review)

Project Turnaround's Administration and Planning Unit existed during the first and second funding periods. Between these two grant years, a substantial reduction in the Unit's staffing occurred (from nine positions to three). Although assessment of the Unit was conducted only during the first grant year, retrospection provides several summary level conclusions of interest.

The first conclusion is that the Unit played a positive role in the establishment of the Project, particularly in respect to organization and internal coordination. On the other hand, the initial staffing of the Unit proved to be greater than the administrative support requirements of the Project. This probably resulted because Turnaround's action units were located within established County departments, wherefrom administrative support was also available. Another possible reason was some loss of creditability between Unit personnel and administration due to occasional goal conflicts which arose.

The second conclusion is virtually opposite of the first in that some difficulties and inconveniences were encountered in the final grant year when no formally dedicated administrative unit existed. Specifically, several of the remaining units operated without direct clerical support. The necessary delegation of Project financial administration and progress reporting to the remaining Unit Coordinators also took time away from their other responsibilities. It is clear that a more balanced source of administrative support would have been preferable throughout.

Finally, the importance of administrative liaison between projects like Turnaround, the local community, operating department heads, and elected policy makers is underscored. Generally, the Administration and Planning Unit instituted effective communications internally and externally between department heads and the local community. On the other hand, some policy makers evidenced negative perceptions of the Project which could possibly have been diffuse through adherence to established County communications channels, even though several emergency and short notice situations which characterized the establishment of Project Turnaround placed certain constraints on the alternatives open to Project Administration.

## II. POPULATION BENEFITS

Four population groups, citizens who were victims of crime, Milwaukee City and County police officers, Assistant District Attorneys, and the Milwaukee County Judiciary handling criminal cases, were sampled and questioned about the benefits of Project Turnaround.

### I IA. MILWAUKEE COUNTY CITIZENS

From among a sample of person whose cases were scheduled for trial during December, 1976 through September, 1978, 60% had heard of Project Turnaround. About two-fifths of these persons were aware of the Project by having had a contact with a staff member or having heard a speech about Project Turnaround.

Among those who had heard of Turnaround, 27% had used one or more of its services. Eighty-nine percent of these individuals felt that the services were either helpful or very helpful. Others may have received services from Turnaround but not associated them with the Project since staff members do not necessarily mention Project Turnaround as they contact citizens.

### I IB. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Responses were received from 20% of a sample of officers of the Milwaukee Police Department and 25% of a sample of law enforcement officers from suburban police departments and the County Sheriff's Office. Caution should be used in generalizing these results because of this low return rate. Nevertheless, the results form a clear pattern that is highly suggestive of the knowledge and attitudes of Milwaukee County peace officers with respect to Project Turnaround. A minimum of 57% of police officers knew nothing of the Project. Only 12% of city police and 6% of suburban police officers indicated they were well or very well acquainted with Turnaround, as compared with 35% of the deputies. Awareness of the services of the Units within the Project is limited. Suburban police listed an average of 1.0 services, city police an average of 1.4 services, and deputies listed an average of 2.6 services. In actuality, about 34 different services are provided by the Units. In terms of the accuracy of the officers' perceptions of services, the Witness Emergency Unit was the most clearly identified.

About one-third of the officers mentioned at least one benefit resulting from Project Turnaround to them in their work, and less than one-tenth mentioned any hindrances. Specific benefits mentioned included: increasing willingness of witnesses to testify in court, increasing rapport with witnesses, protecting witnesses, and transportation of victims.

In terms of strengths, the primary strength mentioned was the Project's ability to provide general support to witnesses and victims. Witness protection was the second most commonly mentioned strength of the Project. Most of the weaknesses mentioned were compliments in disguise, such as the most commonly mentioned that the Project was not well enough publicized and that it needed more staff members and a higher level of funding.

While the results of the study show that Milwaukee County police officers do not always ask citizen witnesses what they would like to have done in their case, they do recognize the legitimacy of communicating with citizen witnesses about their cases. Furthermore, they believe that the services traditionally offered to citizen witnesses by the police, courts, and District Attorney's staff are not adequate without supplementary services such as those provided by Project Turnaround.

In terms of changes in their own perspective, only one officer reported a negative change, that he now experienced "more confusion with witnesses" than he had before Project Turnaround was initiated. Positive changes were: 1) an increased appreciation of the importance of witnesses, 2) a greater realization of the fears witnesses and victims have, 3) more general concern for victims and witnesses, 4) increased empathy, 5) more encouragement of prosecution in appropriate cases, and 6) a greater tendency to let citizens know what happens in their case than before. Of the total questionnaires returned, 23 officers (10%) indicated their attitudes and actions toward citizen witnesses and victims had become more positive and responsive as a result of their contact with Project Turnaround.

For the most part, officers felt that Project Turnaround should be continued, 82% feeling it should definitely be continued, and 12% being unsure. Only 6% were in favor of discontinuing the Project, primarily because of concern about spending taxpayers' money on services they did not see as essential to the criminal justice process. Positive comments included such items as, "It's one of the best criminal justice/community relations programs I can think of," "Witnesses can use all the help they can get," and "It is good to see the victim receive some consideration instead of the criminal getting all the breaks."

The main problem between Project Turnaround and Milwaukee County law enforcement officers appears to be a weakness in communication. This is more true of city and suburban police officers than deputies from the Sheriff's Department. For those officers who were familiar with the Project, generally positive attitudes resulted and benefits were perceived.

### III. MILWAUKEE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

Fourteen of the fifteen Deputy and Assistant District Attorneys in the sample chosen by the Evaluators responded to the interview schedule. None were currently or previously assigned to any of the Action Units of the Project. All had working knowledge of the Units of Project Turnaround. The benefits of the Citizen Contact and Support Unit were most clearly identified by most of these Assistant District Attorneys. The Evaluators were impressed with the number of respondents who indicated that the Unit saved valuable professional legal time for them as well as time and money for victims and witnesses. Not only did the CCSU locate witnesses who could have previously not been found, but, according to the District Attorneys, they were able to get marginal witnesses to testify. The underlying theme of the responses was that the CCSU allowed the Assistant District Attorneys to be better lawyers and freed them from the task of being an appointment secretary for witnesses. The significance of this comment should be especially noted because it has cost ramifications for Milwaukee County.

The employment of lower cost support staff may save the County money and yet maximize the talents of the legal staff in the District Attorney's Office.

Most of the Assistant District Attorneys viewed the benefits of the Citizen Victim Complaint Unit as indirect. Strong support was given to the operation of the Sensitive Crime Unit and the Witness Emergency Unit by this group. There was some ambivalence among the Assistant District Attorneys concerning the real value of the JUSTIS system, although most believed it was still too early to judge its full potential.

When asked whether the activity of the Action Units presented any hindrances to their work, most Assistant District Attorneys held that there were either none or relatively few limitations. The strengths of Project Turnaround were perceived as being many. The Evaluators were generally struck by the change of attitude evidenced by the Assistant District Attorneys between the time of program initiation and the current contact. Several Assistant District Attorneys went out of their way to point out that they were hostile to Turnaround originally, but now believed that they were wrong. One individual put it succinctly when he indicated: "The Citizen Contact and Support Unit saves me a lot of work, and I now feel that I am really practicing law rather than doing a lot of contact work that has nothing to do with law."

The main strength of the Sensitive Crimes Unit was seen in its vertical prosecution approach. While the central benefits of the Witness Emergency Unit were seen in calming witnesses and giving them a sense of security, there was once again a degree of ambiguity concerning the strength of the JUSTIS system. What is apparent from the comments of the Assistant District Attorneys is that those who use it like it, and those who do not are still somewhat in doubt about its benefits.

Action Unit weaknesses were seen as few, although where they were apparent they tended to center around lack of staff, lack of security or lack of funding. In general, the staff and all the Units were perceived as being dedicated and willing to go beyond the call of minimum duty. While members of the Action Units had proved their value to the Assistant District Attorneys, they were not convinced of the full utility of the newly-inaugurated JUSTIS system.

Only 5 of the 14 respondents indicate that they asked citizen witnesses what they would like to have done in their case 50 or more percent of the time. Six of 14 claimed they tell citizen witnesses how they will handle their case and what is likely to happen in their case 50 or more percent of the time. Thirteen of the 14 respondents claimed that it was very important to provide Project Turnaround-type services to citizen witnesses. Nearly 3/4ths held that it was very important and almost 30% held it to be important to inform citizen witnesses as to "what's happening or what the outcome is in a case." Fifty percent of the respondents felt that the focus on victims and citizen witnesses of Project Turnaround had caused them to change their attitudes toward both groups.

An analysis of the response of the Assistant District Attorneys suggests that the frustration level of several of that group appears to have been lowered by the existence of Project Turnaround. According to them Project Turnaround now allows them to function as lawyers and to provide better services without being under the continuous pressure of barely surviving until the next day. When asked whether Project Turnaround should be continued, all 14 Assistant District Attorneys indicated "yes." Reasons for such support ranged from: the pressure that it takes off the District Attorneys to the fact that they have assumed many of the clerical duties that lawyers previously had to complete, the project has helped to humanize the criminal justice system, more witnesses are now showing up than had previously, make it easier for victims and witnesses to come forward and cooperate, give necessary attention to sensitive crime cases which are difficult to process and prosecute, and make citizens feel more a part of the system.

#### IID. MILWAUKEE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUDICIARY

Seven of ten criminal court judges agreed to be interviewed by members of E/PRA's staff. Although most were aware of the existence and general operations of Project Turnaround, they evidenced little detailed knowledge of its specific responsibilities or activities. Only 1 of the 7 could be actively identified as thoroughly informed. It was evident from many of the comments that the judges depended on their staff for management of daily operations and were somewhat indirectly aware of the full benefits of Project Turnaround. One judge noted that "getting witnesses subpoenaed and in court on time seems to have improved since Project Turnaround began." There was a high degree of uncertainty, however, concerning the actual names of the various Action Units of Project Turnaround. The Unit probably best identified was the Sensitive Crimes Unit which, of course, often came before the presiding judges. The services of most of the other Units were seen as indirect, although one judge indicated a strong usage of the on-call and recall service of the CCSU. Most judges saw few hindrances due to Project Turnaround and expressed a desire to have a greater understanding of the Project's workings. The majority of the judges were unable to define adequately the strength of the various Units. Those who were knowledgeable were aware of the CCSU in terms of its facilitation of witness appearance. The Citizen Victim Complaint Unit was not an item of easy recognition. The highest awareness appeared to be attached to the Sensitive Crimes Unit and, secondly, to the Witness Emergency Unit.

It is evident from the responses of the judiciary that most maintain a discreet distance from the various participants in a criminal case. This is possibly due to the fact that they feel a strong need to remain separate in order to be objective. This, in turn, appears to have had an impact on their lack of definitive understanding of the scope and service of Project Turnaround. Most judges claim that the focus on victims and witnesses of Project Turnaround has not caused them to change their attitudes or actions toward either group in any way. When the seven judges were asked whether Project Turnaround should be continued, six indicated "yes" and one claimed he did not know enough to answer adequately. Reasons for supporting Project Turnaround ranged from the fact that it "saves the time of victims and witnesses and is valuable in coordinating court activities" to the fact that it "should be continued because while the criminal justice system exists for the benefits of lawyers and judges, Project Turnaround helps the victims and witnesses." Overall, the judiciary emphasized that the Court, the District

Attorney's Office, and Defense Attorneys could not possibly provide the services to victims and witnesses that Project Turnaround could and does. However, it does not appear that Project Turnaround has significantly changed the attitude of judges or their work assignments. While they believe that the services of Project Turnaround should be offered somewhere, they were not able to suggest where or by whom.

### II E. GEOGRAPHIC MATCH-UP OF CLIENTS SERVED

Between the beginning of Project Turnaround and June, 1977, its four Action Units served 8,577 persons to at least some extent. The heaviest usage of Project Turnaround's services came from the central city or near central city areas of Milwaukee County. The lowest pattern of usage came from the suburban areas where the lower volume of crime and the tendency of citizens of the more affluent suburbs to find alternative solutions to their victimization problems may be evident.

### III. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT

The examination of the extent and consequences of citizen involvement and support of Project Turnaround is carried out by determining the extent to which citizens in Milwaukee County are aware of the Project, by analyzing the operations and attitudes of the Advisory Council, and by listing media references to the Project.

#### IIIA. CITIZEN SURVEY

A survey of citizens of Milwaukee County carried out using a random-digit-dialing technique shows that 47% of citizens of the county have heard of Project Turnaround. Irregardless of race, sex, residential location, or time at a residence, a similar proportion of citizens are aware of the Project. Having been a victim of or witness to a crime within the past year did not increase knowledge either. It is the Evaluator's judgment that this indicates the program is quite well known.

The largest percentage of citizens heard of Turnaround by seeing the commercials which have appeared on television (one-third), while one-fourth indicated having read about Turnaround in the newspaper, and one-fifth saw news about Turnaround on television.

Although citizens are aware of the Project, they do not know a great deal in terms of specifics about what it does. Forty-four percent of the citizens are simply aware that it exists, and only 13% know that the Project exists to aid victims. The best source of information for correct knowledge is a contact with Project Turnaround itself. Even among citizens who are not sure as to what Turnaround does, it is associated with doing something about crime.

#### IIIB. ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Advisory Council, fundamentally a policy "sounding board," is composed of members covering a broad range of citizen and government perspectives. Actual operations during the first year reflected several

practical difficulties such as orientation to the project and organizational development. Inconsistent attendance or attendance by second and third alternates was also characteristic in the first year. During the second and third funding period the role of the Advisory Council was examined in part by looking at the minutes of each meeting. Between October, 1976 and December, 1978, the Advisory Council of the Project met seven times, holding meetings on November 17, and December 16, 1976, and February 17, March 23, April 21, and November 21, 1977 and on April 20, 1978. During that period the Advisory Council met for slightly over 10 hours. Regular, ex officio, and substitute member participation ranged from a low of 6 out of 17 in March, 1977 to a high of 15 out of 19 eligible in November, 1976.

During July, 1977, members and/or substitute representatives of the Advisory Council were interviewed by members of E/PRA's staff. Nine out of 14 official members and 3 substitute members of the Advisory Council were interviewed during this time concerning their perceptions of the impact and effectiveness of Project Turnaround and the actual and desired role of the Advisory Council. Of the 12, six were members of the Milwaukee County community and 6 represented professionals within the County's criminal justice system. About two-thirds of those queried claimed to be either very well or well acquainted with the units of Project Turnaround. Ten of the 12 held Project Turnaround to be overall very effective or effective. However, when asked about whether the project had reached its full potential, ten indicated that it had not. There was some sentiment on the Advisory Council that Project Turnaround was not given a chance to fully develop due to the early withholding of necessary and added funding.

Members of the Advisory Council tended to rate the administration of Project Turnaround in the good or very good categories. Eleven of the 12 respondents believed staff effort also to be very good or good. However, most members believed the Advisory Council had made a limited contribution to the operation of Project Turnaround. Those who said it made only a little contribution related this deficiency to a failure to define a need for the Council at the time of the original development of the program. It was seen by some as only a funding requirement. There was a degree of ambiguity among Council members concerning the Council's actual as well as proper role. There was some evident frustration expressed by Advisory Council members concerning the limited effectiveness of the body. Some sentiment was expressed for the merger of the Advisory Council with the Executive Committee, or as a minimum, the granting of more decision-making powers to the Advisory Council. The lack of decision-making powers left many members frustrated or with the belief that Council had little importance. One respondent claimed "it must be in the position of giving information to the Executive Board before decisions are made if it (the Council) is to be effective."

The majority believed the relationships between the Advisory Council and Turnaround staff were positive or very positive. The majority of the Council's members knew little about the involvement of citizen volunteers in Turnaround's activities. The Evaluator was struck by the fact of this limited knowledge, especially in view of the fact that the question of liability for injury to volunteers had been a major topic at one of the earlier meetings of the Council during the second grant year. Only one of the twelve respondents was able to identify any instance in which she/he as a member of the Advisory Council to Project Turnaround intervened with the police, a district attorney, a judge, or Project Turnaround personnel on behalf of a victim or witness.

Analysis of the Advisory Council participant responses suggest that there was a certain role frustration among its members. The concerns of the Council were addressed in a letter attached to the final report. The issue of the proper role for the Advisory Council was never resolved to the satisfaction of the membership. Clearly it functioned more as a monitor of Turnaround happenings, rather than a primary initiator of or influence on Turnaround policies and/or activities.

#### IIIC. MEDIA AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH DEFINED

During the three periods of operation, Project Turnaround maintained an outreach into the community through press and publications, television appearances, news reports or editorials, radio interviews, and appearances before civic organizations, professional societies, government groups, symposiums, training programs, schools and the like. Eighty-seven items appeared in the press which were of direct importance to publicizing Turnaround. While 29 television exposures were recorded, several of these involved the continuing run of several public service film features dealing with Project Turnaround. On all channels, those films were shown an estimated 741 times in the three year period. Radio appearances were somewhat fewer and not as extensive in audience numbers.

Members of Project Turnaround staff appeared before many organizations, agencies, or groups during the three periods of its operation. Although the request for speakers from several Units of the Project declined as time went on, interest in the program community-wide remains rather high.

#### IV. COST OF REPLICATION SUMMARY

Other communities interested in adopting a comprehensive victim witness service program like Project Turnaround could expect to spend approximately \$306,000 to initiate such services and thereafter spend from about \$775,000 to \$1,340,000 to continue these services on an annual basis. The indicated expenditure levels should be viewed with the following in mind:

- The identified costs assume that Project Turnaround would be duplicated. Because only selected services might be adopted and because the scale of needs may differ elsewhere, the indicated amounts are, necessarily, only a financial starting point for replication decision making.
- One intent of demonstration grants and pilot programs is to identify learning curve experiences and pitfalls which other communities will hopefully avoid. In particular, thorough advance planning can significantly reduce the indicated start-up cost amounts.
- Project Turnaround has produced deliverable products from the indicated expenditures which will be avoidable costs to other jurisdictions. The most notable of these is the JUSTIS system.

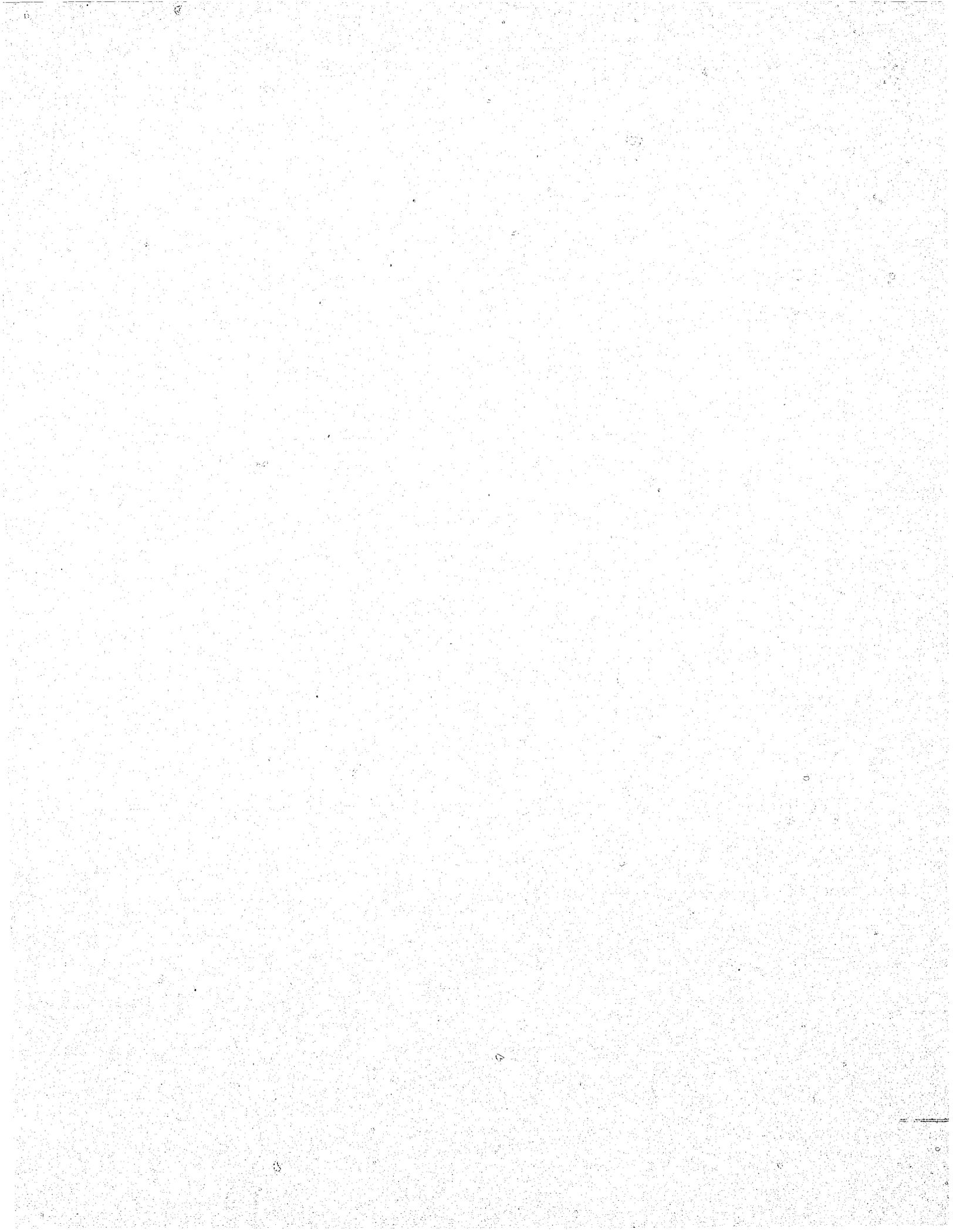
Based upon the above perspective, it is highly desirable for other communities to consider the individual cost of replication analyses and specific experience and environmental factors encountered by the respective Units of Project Turnaround. These factors are summarized in the preceding sections of this Executive Summary and are presented in detail in the final evaluation report.

#### V. COST BENEFIT SUMMARY

Total savings to government, citizens and the business community from individual Unit accomplishments ranged from \$1.5 million to \$761,000 over Project Turnaround's three year funding history. The indicated amounts increased to \$2.7 and \$2.2 million when national savings from transfer of the JUSTIS system are considered. The annual savings range results from several interacting variables including: 1) changes in the number of clients benefitting as selected action units and services were dissolved, 2) improved service effectiveness as the Project matured, 3) application of more refined data gathering and cost benefit techniques, and 4) increases in the number of JUSTIS transferees.

Due to the variability in the estimated savings and complementary fluxuations in Project costs (see Cost of Replication Summary), it is advisable to calculate separate benefit cost ratios for the individual funding periods. Such calculations compensate for variability and also provide a basis for inference about whether or not comprehensive victim witness assistance programs like Turnaround can be financially self-sustaining. These ratios nearly equaled or exceeded 1:1 for both local savings and total local and national savings for all funding periods. Since quantified savings could not be developed for all Project services, there appears to be adequate conservatism to suggest that large scale efforts like Milwaukee's can, indeed, be financially justified.

It might further be implied that the possibility of financial justification increases with the scale of the cost commitment. Specifically, smaller programs which include only limited services or which are staffed disproportionately in respect to the severity of victim witness problems may simply not have enough resources available to reach the "threshold level" necessary for maximum cost effectiveness.



**END**