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Diversion-Year III

FINAL REPORT

EVALUATION OF FLORIDA

PROJECT DIVERSION

September 1, 1980 - January 31, 1981

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Florida Project Diversion began with a grant from OJJDP in January 1977 and ran in several Florida Counties until February 1981. Of the original three components, two (the University Volunteer Component and the HSPC Purchase of Services Component) operated for a full 49 months. The present evaluation is primarily designed to assess the last six months of the University Volunteer Component Program and the HSPC Purchase of Services Program. In addition, the following examination draws, for some of the analyses, on data which cover the full term of the University Component. The sections examining recidivism and net widening in particular, address the full four year project.

Some important changes have occurred over the course of four years in both components evaluated here, but in large part the programs have remained as they began. The most notable change that has implications for evaluation of the last six months is that the University Component did not involve a contract with any Universities or Colleges during the final phase-out of the OJJDP grant. Instead, the DHRS contracted directly with Youth Programs, Inc., an agency that was the primary subcontractor with the University of Florida for the previous 3 1/2 years. The University of Central Florida (another primary subcontractor of the University of Florida) was not under formal contract during the last grant period. Still the basic program of the University Component continued to center on a volunteer role model assigned to each client.

In evaluating both Components we have attended to the major goals of the OJJDP National Initiative and of the program goals of DHRS and each com-

ponent. We have collected and utilized a variety of data on key aspects of both components. Our data include DHRS/YPSO records from eight counties on all referrals to HRS intake during the first three years of Project Diversion; cost comparison data from DHRS/YPSO and from both Project Diversion Components; information on program projections, referrals, volunteer and service contract rates; data on the self concepts of youth as they enter and exit the YPI program; and data from observations and interviews with juvenile justice officials, HRS personnel, project administrators and staff in each county.

The evaluation is divided into several sections, each designed to address one or more important project goals. Unfortunately, it was impossible to analyze all project goals in detail. For example, the analysis of recidivism was originally designed to include both an assessment of in-program and post-program recidivism rates and an examination of clients and program variables which might affect the probability of recidivism. While these analyses could be done for the University Volunteer Component, they were not possible for the HSPC component. The reason is simple: There was no in-program recidivism in HSPC during the last six months. There were recidivists after termination from the program and we present an analysis comparing HSPC client recidivism with a sample of youth from Orange County that received processing through traditional juvenile justice channels.

REFERRAL FLOW - YPI PROJECT DIVERSION

The YPI September 1, 1980 to February 28, 1981 workplan projected 50 referrals per month in a five county area. Budget cuts required the termination of the LEAA funding for Alachua and Marion County at the end of January. Therefore, the total projected referrals for this grant period was 250. A total of 102 clients were matched to volunteers during the five month period of the grant which is 41% of the projected rate (see Table 1).

In most counties, however, the proportion of programmed referrals which were actually matched was below 35%. Orange County came closest to achieving the goal of 10 clients per month with an 84% match rate. Seminole County missed the goal by the greatest amount, matching only 26% of the programmed referrals. Alachua County matched clients during September and October, but made no volunteer assignments in the last three months of the project.

HSPC PROJECT DIVERSION

Referral flow and client assignments are more difficult to assess in the HSPC project than in YPI. HSPC Milestone charts estimate a specific number of referrals for each agency with whom they contract but these figures are extremely tentative since there is no way to know in advance what sorts of referrals will be coming to the project nor what programs the clients will select. Nevertheless, we attempted to plot the referral flow by agency contract for the first five months of the September 1980 - February 1981 grant period. HSPC's best predictions on referrals were with the YMCA and the VSB (Voluntary Service Bureau), where their estimates ranged from 50 to 100 accuracy for the first four months of the program. HSPC took no referrals in January. Predictions for the other agencies and overall were generally off

REFERRAL FLOW

Table 1: YPI Programmed Referrals and Clients Matched to Volunteers*

COUNTY	SEPTEMBER			OCTOBER			NOVEMBER			DECEMBER			JANUARY			TOTAL		
	P	A	%	P	A	%	P	A	%	P	A	%	P	A	%	P	A	%
Alachua	10	1	10	10	14	140	10	0	0	10	10	0	10	0	0	50	15	30
Marion	10	0	0	10	3	30	10	6	60	10	1	10	10	5	50	50	15	30
Seminole	10	4	40	10	4	40	10	4	40	10	1	10	10	0	0	50	13	26
Orange	10	19	190	10	4	40	10	2	20	10	9	90	10	8	80	50	42	84
Volusia	10	3	30	10	8	80	10	4	40	10	2	20	10	0	0	50	17	34
PROJECT	50	27	54	50	25	50	50	16	32	50	13	26	50	13	26	250	102	41

* Figures for the programmed (P) referrals were taken from the YPI September, 1980-February, 1981 Workplan. Figures for the actual (A) matches were taken from the Monthly Management Summaries.

by 60-70%. In January, HSPC accepted 31% of the projected referrals and the rate fell to 13% by December (see Table 2).

BSA and GSA (Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts) were not used after January because HSPC caseworkers found them to be nonsupportive and uncooperative. Referrals to the YPI/University Component fell off from 100% of projections in January to seven percent in the three months following because HSPC staff had difficulty getting feedback on cases and because they were displeased with that agency's services.

REFERRAL FLOW--HSPC PROJECT DIVERSION

Table 2:

SERVICE	SEPTEMBER			OCTOBER			NOVEMBER			DECEMBER			JANUARY		
	P*	A**	%	P	A	%	P	A	%	P	A	%	P	A	%
YMCA	19	21	110	19	10	53	19	11	58	19	9	47	19	0	0
JOB	21	1	5	21	0	0	22	1	4	22	0	0	22	0	0
TGH	9	1	11	9	11	122	10	2	20	10	0	0	10	0	0
CDS	38	2	5	38	8	21	38	6	16	37	0	0	37	0	0
VSB	10	6	60	8	7	88	8	6	75	8	4	50	8	0	0
Family Counseling	28	0	0	28	1	4	28	0	0	28	6	21	28	0	0
University Component	15	15	100	15	1	7	15	1	7	14	1	7	14	0	0
BSA/GSA	9	1	11	9	0	0	9	0	0	9	0	0	9	0	0
Recreation	13	3	23	13	3	23	13	5	38	13	1	8	12	0	0
Totals	162	50	31	160	41	26	162	32	20	160	21	13	159	0	0
Monthly Referrals	63			78			50			86			0		

*Figures for programmed (P) referrals were taken from HSPC September, 1980-February, 1981 Workplan Milestone Chart, Objective IV.

**Actual (A) referrals include only the first referral. Subsequent referrals were not coded by date of entrance and exit.

COST COMPARISON

Total client caseload and hours per service were based on all referrals entering during the grant period and exiting successfully prior to February 28, 1981. Considering only successful cases is consistent with DHRS cost computation standards. Table 1 shows the agencies HSPC contracted with, the average number of hours a client spent in the program, the number of clients served by each agency, and the total number of hours of service during the grant period.

TABLE 1

HSPC Agencies	Hours Per Client	N Cases	Total Hours Service
Boys Club	16	22	352
YMCA	9	109	981
BSA	48	1	48
TGH	5	26	130
VSB	32	40	1,280
JOB	320	16	5,120
Uni. Comp (YPI)	50	62	3,100
The Door	8	17	136
Total w/YPI			11,147
Total w/o YPI			8,047

Table 2 shows the cost per client service hour and total cost per client for HSPC programs during this last grant period. HSPC added 5,064 service hours in second and third placements for clients when YPI services were included and 3,528 hours without the inclusion of YPI hours.

COST COMPARISON

Cost comparisons are always difficult and this instance is no exception. One reason such analyses are difficult is because the comparisons usually are of unlike things. One program may well be reduced to hours or days as basic cost units and time spent with clients while another program may involve little direct client contact time but a great deal of preparatory and administrative time. The use of Citizen Dispute Settlement by HSPC, for example, may involve only one hour of client contact, but many hours are required for preparation and administration to keep the service available. Costs for programs such as this would be very high when measured in terms of client contact hours. By contrast, costs per hour, per day and per client seem reasonable measures of cost effectiveness in Training School Programs, though even there, the quality of time and the preparation time put in by staff cannot be computed with total accuracy.

With the perils of cost comparisons in mind, we offer the analyses which follow. Our data were provided by the YPI Project Diversion and the Orange County Project Diversion budgets and workplans for September 1980 to February 1981 and by the DHRS-PDYS-PDYSS 1980 Youth Services Program Cost Analysis.¹ In the case of YPI and HSPC, costs were based on their revised LEAA budgets effective November 24, 1980. Actual costs will be different if expenditures are different from the budgeted LEAA dollars. HSPC's costs were computed both with YPI referrals included and with them removed. This was done because YPI referrals were accepted at no cost to HSPC since LEAA funding for these referrals went directly to YPI from DHRS.

¹The cost data from DHRS/PDYS was prepared in March 1980 but the figures pertain to FY 78/79. These were the most recent figures available at the time this report was prepared.

TABLE 2

HSPC Cost Per Client Service Hour-First Placement Only		HSPC Cost Per Client Service Hour-All Placements		HSPC Cost Per Client	
w/YPI	w/o YPI	w/YPI	w/o YPI	w/YPI	w/o YPI
\$5.65	\$7.82	\$3.89	\$5.44	\$193.25	\$238.64

YPI figures are based on the total number of clients finishing the program during the first five months of the last grant period and 5/6 of the total LEAA dollars in the November 1980 revised budget (5/6 of 45,936 = 38,264). Some of the 179 cases exiting the program during this period entered prior to September 1, 1980. But, since some youth entering during the grant period had not been terminated at the time of this report, we used all exit cases as an estimate of the total cases served by YPI during the grant period. The actual number served and the average length of program involvement may be determined after the YPI Project Diversion final report is completed.

Table 3 shows the average number of volunteer hours for all clients terminated between September 1, 1980 and January 31, 1981, the number of cases involved and the total number of volunteer hours, plus extra service hours delivered.

TABLE 3

	Hours Per Client \bar{X}	N Cases	Total Hours
Volunteer Hours	48	179	8,592
Extra Service Hours	4	179	716
Total Service Hours	52	179	9,308

Table 4 breaks down the costs per client service hour, first including only the volunteer hours and second, adding extra service hours. It also reports the cost per client and cost per client day in federal dollars.

These computations do not include match dollar costs because these figures were not available at the time of this report. If, of course, match dollars amount exactly to the 10% federal requirement, the figures in Table 4 can be

TABLE 4

Cost Per Client Service Hour-Volunteer Service Only	Cost Per Client Service Hour, W/Extra Services Included	Cost Per Client	Cost Per Client Day (X 159 days)
\$4.45	\$4.11	\$213.77	\$1.34

adjusted upward by 10% to arrive at actual costs.

Costs for official processing were computed from figures provided by DHRS/YSPO. Table 5 represents figures based on FY 78/79.

We adjusted these figures upward by 20% from FY 78/79 actual costs in an attempt to make rough estimates of the cost of comparison programs for FY 80. Table 6 reports the adjusted figures for community control and intensive counseling, the two DHRS treatments which are most comparable to services provided by diversion.

When comparing total cost per client, it is clear that both HSPC and YPI services are provided at lower costs than DHRS community control and intensive counseling. Even when HSPC and YPI costs per client are adjusted upward to include 10% match funds, they are considerably lower than DHRS program costs. Part of the reason for this, however, is found in the number of days youths stay in the programs. DHRS community control clients stay an

TABLE 5
FY 78/79 YOUTH SERVICES (7/1/78-6/30/79)
PROGRAM COST ANALYSIS
YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAM COMPONENTS

PROGRAM COMPONENT	BUDGETED COST/PER CHILD CARE DAY	ACTUAL COST/PER CHILD CARE DAY	ACTUAL AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY (DAYS)	COST PER* CASE
Detention (Secure)	\$39.34	\$37.42	11	\$ 411.62
Detention (Non-Secure)	\$11.57	\$ 6.68	21	\$ 140.28
Community Control	\$ -0-	\$ 1.24	284	\$ 352.16
Intensive Counseling	\$ 5.45	\$ 5.67	141	\$ 799.47
TRY Centers	\$12.19	\$11.41	136	\$1,551.76
Associated Marine Institutes	\$16.43	\$14.25	173	\$2,465.25
Family Group Homes	\$ 7.69	\$10.38	119	\$1,235.22
Project STEP	\$28.27	\$36.05	34	\$1,225.70
STOP Camps (Program opened 7/1/78)	\$23.62	\$42.25**	41	\$1,732.25
San Antonio Boys Village	\$18.00	\$19.02	176	\$3,347.52
Group Treatment Homes	\$23.68	\$24.14	166	\$4,007.24
Halfway Houses	\$22.60	\$22.94	137	\$3,142.78
START Centers	\$22.58	\$31.19	139	\$4,335.41
Pinellas Youth Homes	\$23.08	\$33.36	152	\$5,070.72
Training Schools	\$37.17	\$40.90	158	\$6,462.20
Eckerd Camps	\$24.25	\$39.01	555	\$21,650.55

* Based on Successful Completion of Program; doesn't take into account transfers.
** Includes initial operating expenditures.

Prepared by DHRS-PDYS-PDYSS
March 14, 1980
(November 13, 1980)

TABLE 6

Program Component	Estimated Cost/Per Child Care Day	Length of Stay in Days	Estimated Cost/Per Case
Community Control	\$1.49	284	\$422.59
Intensive Counseling	\$6.80	141	\$959.36

average of 284 days at an estimated FY 80 cost of \$1.49 per day. YPI clients stayed in the program an average of 159 days at an estimated LEAA dollar cost of \$1.34 per day. When 10% is added for estimated match dollar cost, the YPI cost per client day is \$1.47, a difference of only 2¢ per day. However, it could be argued that the YPI volunteer program is more closely compared to Intensive Counseling. The cost differences here are very substantial with the DHRS program costing four times more than YPI's volunteer service.

Computations of cost per client day are not meaningful for HSPC programs since the length of time in the program is not closely correlated with the number of hours of service which is provided. For example, a client may be in the HSPC program for a month and receive only the hour of service through the Citizen Dispute Settlement Program. Or a client may be in HSPC's active case load for a month and receive 32 hours of service from the Volunteer Service Bureau. Computations on these terms would be meaningless.

In overall terms, it is apparent that the cost of services provided by HSPC and YPI are lower than comparable treatments provided through DHRS. The costs per case are lower and the cost per hour of program service is either the same or lower for like services.

SYSTEM IMPACT:
FIELD OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

SYSTEM IMPACT

Field Interviews and Observations

Over the course of the five month grant period we visited the five project counties a number of times. We interviewed representatives of the juvenile courts and the prosecutor's offices, supervisors and counselors in HRS intake, and administrators, coordinators and case workers from the provider agencies. We examined client files and agency records for signed statements by State Attorneys and to determine the level of the system from which referrals were made. In each case, our interviews and observations were aimed at answering the following general questions: (1) Do juvenile justice officials and provider agency staff understand, accept, and instrument the philosophy of diversion as stated in the 1976 LEAA program announcement; and (2) What do juvenile justice officials perceive as the value for the system in participating in the diversion program?

Juvenile justice officials varied greatly from county to county on the extent to which they understood the national and state goals for diversion. Some few persons had clear perceptions of the diversion philosophy. Others, however, not only did not know the basic goals of the diversion program but they did not care to know them. Their only concern with diversion was with the extent to which it could be used to react to some specific situation or case. HRS supervisors were by far the best informed and the most supportive as a category and prosecutors and judges were the least likely to understand the projects. Prosecutors and judges were also more likely to employ diversion for their own purposes when they did use it than were HRS supervisors.

Alachua County

In Alachua County there were two Assistant State Attorneys that worked the Juvenile Division. One was new during this contract period, the other had been in the juvenile division for more than a year. While HRS screened referrals they believed to be appropriate to refer to Project Diversion by a recommendation through the Intake Supervisor, the State Attorney's Office made a separate decision in each case. HRS estimated that one Assistant State Attorney agreed with the Intake recommendation only 30-40% of the time. The other State's Attorney, who was new, accepted HRS's recommendation about 80% of the time.

The referral process did not proceed exactly as it should through HRS because Intake Counselors (most referrals came from two Intake Counselors) recommended some cases for diversion which would not have been recommended for petition to court or for an adjudication of delinquency had it not been for the availability of diversion. When juvenile cases reached the prosecutor's office, speedy trial and 45 days were waived on all cases referred to diversion and a no petition order was held open until a youth completed the requirements of Project Diversion and any other JASP program satisfactorily. One prosecutor said youths referred for felonies were cases that could not be won in trial.

Some small percentage of the referrals came from the court. These were usually cases where HRS had recommended no-petition be filed but where a petition nevertheless was filed by the prosecutor. The judge withheld adjudication and referred the case to diversion.

HRS Intake Counselors and the Supervisor seemed to fully understand the goals and philosophy of Project Diversion. In fact, these officials had a

better general understanding of the program than any other group of officials we talked with. On the other hand, however, neither of the two State Attorneys nor the Juvenile Court Judge in Alachua County knew much about the program. Their position was that it was not important for them to know about the program, since their decision is based on whether the case should proceed further in the system or be diverted out. Once this decision was made, diversion represented one of three or four other possible referral or disposition options. The only real value these officials saw in diversion was that it represented another alternative treatment available to them. They did not see it as a device that could reduce the number of cases processed by the system.

Marion County

The referral process in Marion County deviated from the procedures outlined in the workplan. HRS Intake Counselors recommended no petitions for the cases and a referral to JASP with Project Diversion (one to one program) indicated as a JASP program. If the State's Attorney rejected the no petition recommendation, the case went to court for an adjudicatory hearing. At this point, HRS Intake Counselors frequently requested again that a JASP/Project Diversion referral be made. When the Judge agreed, a Withheld Adjudication Order was entered in the court record and the youth did not have to return to court for a disposition hearing.

One Assistant State's Attorney processed juvenile cases in Marion County. He accepted most of the cases recommended by the Intake Supervisor though he argued his acceptance was only of the no petition recommendation. He did not recognize the existence of a diversion program in the county. Accepting the no petition recommendation meant HRS could do anything it wanted with a case.

HRS and Project officials estimated that most of the referrals to Project Diversion would have been handled judicially had it not been for the availability of the program. One reason for there being some inappropriate diversion referrals may be that HRS Intake Counselors saw Project Diversion as a way to deal with cases that would not have gone to court but for which they had no better alternative. Rather than release a case without any service or treatment, they sometimes made a referral to Project Diversion.

Volusia County

In general, the Intake Counselors in Volusia County believed minor cases were most appropriate for diversion. The Assistant State Attorney liked the option of diversion but he would not accept HRS recommendations of "higher risk" offenders for Project Diversion. According to HRS Intake Counselors' estimates, the State's Attorney accepted their recommendations for diversion from 60 to 70% of the time. One Intake Counselor who estimated the State's Attorney accepted his recommendations in 90% of the cases, indicated at the same time that most of those clients he recommended would have been released without further processing if it had not been for the existence of diversion.

Volusia County officials, like those in other counties, reported that some portion of the diversion referrals did not fit the target population. There was no clear relationship between the number of referrals made by a county and the number or proportion of referrals which fell short of target population requirements. Rather, there seemed to be a sporadic tendency for juvenile justice officials to use Project Diversion to fill gaps in the HRS referral alternatives. That is, inappropriate referrals seemed to be recommended for diversion because there was no better alternative available and

juvenile justice officials preferred diversion to doing nothing at all.

Seminole County and Orange County HSPC

In Seminole County referrals come from two sources: (1) from HRS Intake and the State's Attorney, and (2) from HSPC in Orange County. The cases that come from Seminole County HRS and the State Attorney were basically cases for which no petition was recommended. All Orange County referrals to YPI went through HSPC. HRS recommended Project Diversion and no-petition and, when the prosecutor agreed with the recommendation, the case was referred to HSPC. Most of the referrals to Seminole (YPI) Project Diversion and all of the Orange County referrals followed through this process.

Some difference in opinion exists on what proportion of the referrals in Orange County would have been processed at the Court level if it had not been for HSPC Diversion. HRS and one State's Attorney suggested only a small proportion of the cases would have penetrated further in the system. They indicated something would have been done in most cases but that it usually would have involved a no file and a referral to some other community agency. HSPC and another State's Attorney argued most, if not all, of the diversion referrals would have been handled judicially if it had not been for the availability of the HSPC diversion program. Both State Attorneys suggested that they believed something should be done to defendants in all prosecutable cases. The difference between them was that one suggested many prosecutable cases would not have been petitioned to court even if diversion had not been available. The other State Attorney stated that all cases that were prosecutable would have gone to court had it not been for HSPC diversion. If the first State Attorney was accurate, diversion served only to provide a placement for cases that would not have been processed officially. If the second

State Attorney's view is correct, diversion was used to reduce the number of cases penetrating the system to the court level.

We can assess this difference for the first three years of the project by comparing the mean scores of clients diverted through HSPC to the one to one YPI program with the scores of clients in Orange County that received traditional processing. The comparison data for traditional processed cases were provided by DHRS/YSPO for the period covering the first three years of Florida Project Diversion. A full description of these data and the sampling procedures used is presented in the Target Population and Net Widening section.

In general terms, we can say that youth diverted in Orange County did not differ greatly from those that were not diverted. However, Table 1 shows that at the intake level, diverted youth were different on several dimensions from youth recommended for processing through the system. Diverted youth were significantly different on age, race, sex, referral status (prior record), Title XX eligibility and number of log entries. HSPC referrals assigned to the YPI program were younger, more likely to be black than white, more likely to be female, less likely to have had a prior delinquency record, less likely to be eligible for Title XX benefits and less likely to have had more than one current charge against them in the present referral.

These data suggest some diversion clients in Orange County would not have penetrated the system to the court level. A more thorough analysis for the entire diversion initiative in Florida is presented in the following section on Target Population and Net Widening.

TABLE 1

Orange County - Comparison of Diverted (HSPC to YPI) and Nondiverted youth on several case characteristics at Intake level.

Characteristic	Mean Diverted	Mean Nondiverted	Statistical Significance
Age	13.55	14.71	*
Race	.40	.21	*
Sex	.65	.83	*
HRS Status	.14	.17	
Referral Status	.36	.55	*
Title \bar{X}	1.32	1.61	*
Offense Seriousness	.28	.38	
No. of Log Entries	1.03	1.13	*
N	115	215	

*Indicates statistical significance at the .05 level.

SYSTEM IMPACT:
TARGET POPULATION
AND
NET WIDENING

TARGET POPULATION AND NET WIDENING

A primary goal of Project Diversion was to provide alternative services to delinquent youths who otherwise would be processed through conventional juvenile justice channels. In the last decade, policy makers have become increasingly concerned about whether diversion programs serve this target population. There is some evidence that diversion programs promote "net widening" (Blomberg, 1977; Klein, 1979). Instead of diverting from the system youths bound for court processing, diversion may be used as placements for youths who would have been dismissed outrightly. Such "net widening" increases the total number of juveniles receiving some form of official or quasi-official treatment without easing the pressures on the system diversion was designed to address. Moreover, net widening programs may mean diversion does not help break the cycle of labeling and subsequent recidivism that can result from official processing. Although diverted youth may receive social services rather than more punitive forms of traditional treatment, they still may be identified officially as essentially delinquent and in need of treatment. This sort of labeling can promote many of the negative consequences frequently noted in connection with traditional processing, albeit at a reduced level. Thus, it is important for policy makers and program managers to know whether or not their diversion programs promote net widening.

Social science evaluations have relied on two techniques to identify net widening. The first examines changes in juvenile justice case loads before and after diversion programs have been implemented. Increases in case loads over those experienced prior to diversion and above those normally expected from a consideration of population growth are taken as evidence

of net widening (Blomberg, 1977; Sarri, 1977). The second uses client characteristics to determine profiles of "system insertable" types who would normally be processed through traditional juvenile justice channels (Blomberg, 1980; Klein, 1979). Statistical profiles of diverted and non-diverted youths are then compared in terms of this system insertable type. Analysts assume that when diversion cases resemble system insertable types, normally they would have been processed by the courts and no net widening is indicated. When diversion cases differ from non-diverted cases, analysts claim that diversion programs are serving clients who otherwise would not have been officially identified or treated. In this latter case, net widening is seen to be indicated. While system insertable characteristics vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, clients who are older, male, prior offenders, and who have serious charges against them are generally seen to represent a system insertable profile (Klein, 1979).

DATA AND ANALYSIS

The specified referral process for Project Diversion (University Component Workplan, 1977/1978) is designed to insure referrals of "youth who otherwise would be prosecuted as and perhaps even adjudicated delinquent". If there are other clients in Project Diversion (i.e., those whose cases would have been dismissed if diversion had not been an alternative), the program has promoted net widening. We have used a system insertable methodology to assess whether there is evidence of net widening in the counties served by Project Diversion. Cases referred to Project Diversion accounted for less than 3% of all delinquency referrals in these counties during the study period. We were not able to use system processing rates as a measure of net

widening since yearly fluctuations in county processing rates normally varied by far more than this small potential impact.

Data for statistical profiles were obtained from juvenile intake records collected by the State of Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (YPSO). These records contain information on all delinquency cases referred to intake between July 1, 1977 and September 30, 1979 (total cases = 21,749) in the seven project counties.¹ Diversion project records indicate that 912 clients were served during this period. By using names, birthdates, offense codes, and dates of log entry we were able to identify 621 of the diversion clients in the state intake records.² We then sampled the 21,128 remaining nondiverted cases to obtain equal sized diverted and nondiverted groups.³ Our analyses are based on a total sample that includes all the diversion cases identified in the state HRS data and an equal proportion of randomly selected nondiversion cases (N = 1,240).

¹Intake record formats changed three times between 1976 and 1980. We used data from 1977, 1978, and 1979 because we were able to work out codes for combining two of the data formats. The third format for 1980, however, was substantially different, so analysis of those data are handled separately.

²These cases constitute 68% of the total diversion group and are not a random sample. However, they do seem to be fairly representative of diversion cases as a whole since their mean values on age, sex, race, and offense seriousness are quite similar to those of the cases that could not be identified.

³Since diverted cases are about 3% of the total caseload, this skewed distribution would have limited our analysis. By sampling nondiverted cases we can more effectively compare the groups using analysis of variance techniques.

MEASUREMENT

We have examined diverted and nondiverted profiles at three different stages in juvenile justice processing: intake, non-judicial action, and judicial action. All 1,240 cases are included in the analysis of intake profiles. Most of these are recommended for further processing and receive a disposition at either an intermediate stage of non-judicial action or at a final stage of judicial decision. Nonjudicial action and judicial decision are almost mutually exclusive categories since cases that receive non-judicial action do not appear in court disposition hearings.

Eight variables serve to indicate the sociodemographic and legal profiles of the diverted and nondiverted groups. They are age at time of referral, race, sex, family income, current HRS case status, prior record, offense seriousness, and number of offenses. The coding categories, means, and standard deviations for the total group at intake are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 on next page

FINDINGS

Table 2 presents an analysis of variance that compares the profiles of diverted and nondiverted groups at all stages of processing from which clients could be referred to Project Diversion. The first two columns for each referral stage give the mean value of the diverted and the processed (the nondiverted) groups on the eight profile variables. The third column reports the difference between these group means and notes whether or not the difference is statistically significant.

TABLE 1

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Coding</u>
Age at referral	AGEREF	Continuous (7-18)
Race	RACE	Dummy (0=white, 1=black)
Sex	SEX	Dummy (0=female, 1=male)
Family income	TITLEXX	Categorical (0=ineligible due to income, 1=ambiguous and undetermined, 2=eligible)
Case status	HRSSTAT	Dummy (0=new case, 1=has current case with agency)
Prior record	REFSTAT	Dummy (0=none, 1=one or more)
Offense seriousness	OFF1	Dummy (0=misdemeanor, 1=felony)
Number of offenses in instant case	NLOGE	Continuous (1-5)
Final disposition	DIVPRO	Dummy (0=diverted, 1=processed)

At intake level, clients referred to Project Diversion tend to be younger than those who are sent through traditional processing channels. They are also more likely to be black. Diverted youths are less likely to be a current HRS case, or to have a prior record of delinquency. They also tend to have fewer charges against them and to come from higher income families.

 Table 2 on next page

Those clients referred to Project Diversion at the nonjudicial action stage again tend to be younger than those who are not diverted. They also come from families with somewhat higher incomes. The diverted group is composed of a higher proportion of blacks than is the nondiverted group, and those who were diverted are more likely to have been charged with a felony than those who are not.

Youths who are diverted at the final judicial decision stage in official processing are younger than nondiverted youths. They are also somewhat less likely to have a prior delinquency record or previous contact with youth services in general (current HRS case status). Again the proportion of blacks is higher in the diverted group.

These patterns provide mixed evidence of net widening when they are compared to usual assumptions about the characteristics of system insertable youths (e.g., Klein, 1979). The age differences between diverted and nondiverted groups would usually be taken as an indicator of net widening: Diversion would seem to be serving young clients who are likely to avoid official attention beyond the intake level. The same interpretation would fit for income, prior delinquency record, and current agency status. At initial

TABLE 2: Mean Differences Between Diverted and Nondiverted Youth at Three Stages in the Juvenile Justice Process (all counties combined).

	INTAKE			NON-JUDICIAL ACTION			JUDICIAL ACTION		
	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence
AGEREF	13.7649	14.7889	1.024***	13.5878	14.4985	.9107***	13.9855	15.0000	1.0145***
RACE	.3398	.2080	.1318***	.3351	.1743	.1608***	.3696	.2614	.1082**
SEX	.8019	.7997	.0022	.7660	.7706	.0046	.8297	.8399	.0102
HRSSTAT	.1176	.1680	.0504**	.0904	.1162	.0258	.1703	.2451	.0748*
REFSTAT	.4702	.5501	.0799*	.4229	.3914	.0315	.5543	.7222	.1679**
TITLEXX	1.5942	1.6626	.0684*	1.4947	1.7125	.2178***	1.6630	1.6405	.0225
OFF1	.4106	.3833	.0223	.3750	.2477	.1273***	.4964	.5163	.0199
NLOGE	1.1401	1.2250	.1149*	1.0691	1.1070	.0379	1.2246	1.3497	.1251
N	621	649		376	327		276	306	

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

screening (intake level) youths from more affluent families are more likely to be diverted while others are more likely to be processed. In addition, clients are more likely to be diverted if they have had no prior delinquency record or contact with HRS.

Yet there are some apparent anomalies in these profiles. At intermediate processing stages, youths charged with felonies are somewhat more likely to be diverted than those charged with misdemeanors. This pattern is opposite the pattern of profile differences predicted by most net widening models. The most reasonable interpretation here is that diverted youth are in the target population. The same effects hold true for race differences. Blacks are more likely to be diverted than whites at both intermediate and final referral points. Evaluators have assumed generally that blacks are more "system insertable" than whites (see Klein, 1979), and predict that if net widening occurs, diverted groups will be more likely to be white than nondiverted groups.

This mixed evidence about net widening can be examined in further detail by introducing control variables into the analysis. Controls are important since observable relationships between offense, age, and race could produce these patterns if black youths are more likely to be charged for lawbreaking at younger ages than are whites. To specify the extent to which race, offense, and age operate independently of one another we estimated a regression model for each processing stage. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3 on next page

Under controlled conditions, there are only three significant predictors of who will be diverted at intake: age, race, and agency case status. In

Table 3: Regression Model Predicting Affects of Key Variables on Likelihood of Being Diverted at Three Levels of Juvenile Justice Processing.

	Decision Levels					
	<u>Intake</u>		<u>Non-Judicial</u>		<u>Judicial</u>	
	b	SE(b)	b	SE(b)	b	SE(b)
AGEREF	0.051***	.006	0.036***	.008	0.063	.010***
RACE	-0.116***	.032	-0.174***	.042	-0.047	.047
SEX	0.017	.034	0.016	.043	0.013	.055
HRSSTAT	0.099*	.048	0.149*	.073	0.054	.061
REFSTAT	-0.003	.022	-0.054	.032	0.035	.031
TITLEXX	0.039	.024	0.130***	.032	-0.004	.033
OFF1	-0.049	.029	-0.145***	.039	-0.003	.042
NLOGE	0.033	.021	0.025	.046	0.031	.023
INTERCEPT	-.3118		-.2117		-.4860	
N	1213		682		568	
R ²	0.081***		0.1168***		0.0861***	
Intercepts	-.3811		-.2116		-.4862	

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

other words, youths who are younger, youths who are black, and youths without a current HRS status appear most likely to be diverted at initial screening. Five variables predict diversion at the intermediate stage of nonjudicial action. Again those who are younger, black, or without a current agency file are more likely to be diverted. In addition, those charged with a felony rather than a misdemeanor, and those from relatively more affluent families have a higher probability of being diverted. At the final judicial decision level, age is the only variable that differentiates between those cases sent to Project Diversion and those that were not.

When statistical controls are introduced into the analysis, age, prior record, and family financial status all operate in a direction which indicates net widening. Race and offense seriousness, however, continue to pose an interesting interpretive problem since they work in directions that are usually thought to increase the probability that a case will be system insertable (i.e., not diverted). Two explanations can be offered for these race and offense patterns: 1) county level variation in referral policy or 2) the presence of more than one type of net widening.

If one of the larger counties in Project Diversion's seven county service area followed radically different referral policies from the others, the aggregated data could show apparently contradictory patterns in the overall profiles of diverted and nondiverted clients. Our interviews with key processing individuals suggest that there was inter-county variation in referral policies that reflected the extent to which processors (i.e., state attorneys, HRS intake counselors, judges) endorsed and used Project Diversion. In Tables 4-7 we examine profile data for four counties giving different degrees of support to Project Diversion. These counties were selected because they

represent a range of degrees of support given by key juvenile justice officials to Project Diversion and because they have sufficiently large case loads to make a meaningful county level analysis possible. Other counties had too few cases to ensure interpretable profile differences.

Of the four counties examined here, Alachua County processors had perhaps the most positive orientation to and support for Project Diversion. Marion County processors were also generally favorable to diversion, although somewhat less supportive than those in Alachua. In Seminole County there was general system support for diversion, but some opposition to Project Diversion by key individuals. Three separate assistant State Attorneys opposed diversion referrals despite support from Judges and the State's Attorney. These three Assistant State Attorneys believed that the prosecutor's function was to protect the interests of the State and to insure that the spirit of the law was carried out to the fullest degree. They argued that diversion was a lenient treatment which was inconsistent with the spirit of juvenile law and Chapter 39. Juvenile justice officials in Columbia County were less supportive than any other county of Project Diversion and its goals. Officials there rejected both the general philosophy of diversion and the specific programs offered by Project Diversion. In two and one half years, no youths were referred to Project Diversion from the intake level.

Tables 4-7 on next four pages

Because of the different number of cases in each county, one cannot compare Tables 4-7 on the basis of statistically significant differences. Instead, comparisons must be of actual values of "mean difference" on the variables of interest in each county. In general, there is inter-county variation

TABLE 4: Alachua County: Mean Differences Between Diverted and Nondiverted at Three Stages in the Juvenile Justice Process.

	INTAKE			NONJUDICIAL ACTION			JUDICIAL ACTION		
	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence
AGEREF	13.2542	14.7197	1.4655**	13.4915	14.4286	.9371	13.9438	14.7333	.7895
RACE	.3898	.2500	.1398	.4915	.2857	.2058	.4719	.5333	.0614
SEX	.7288	.7917	.0629	.8983	.9048	.0065	.9101	.8000	.1101
HRSSTAT	.0508	.2083	.1575*	.2542	.1905	.1905	.3034	.2667	.0367
REFSTAT	.4327	.5000	.0673	.5254	.3333	.1921	.7528	.8338	.0810
TITLEXX	1.6780	1.5000	.1780	1.6102	1.8571	.2469	1.6292	1.8000	.1708
OFF1	.2273	.4583	.2310*	.4576	.4286	.0290	.5730	.6000	.0270
NLOGE	1.0389	1.2083	.1694*	1.1017	1.0476	.0541	1.1910	1.0000	.1910
N	59	24		59	21		89	15	

* p .05

** p .01

*** p .001

TABLE 5: Marion County: Mean Differences Between Diverted and Nondiverted Youth at Three Stages in the Juvenile Justice Process.

	INTAKE			NONJUDICIAL ACTION			JUDICIAL ACTION		
	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence
AGEREF	13.7000	14.5556	.8556**	13.7179	14.6471	.9292*	13.8667	14.2000	.3333
RACE	.3000	.1667	.1333	.3333	.1029	.2304**	.2667	.3500	.0833
SEX	.8400	.8889	.0489	.7949	.8676	.0727	.0800	1.0000	.9200*
HRSSTAT	.0200	.0667	.0467	.0256	.0441	.0185	.0000	1.0000	1.0000
REFSTAT	.5600	.4111	.1489	.5641	.3824	.1817	.4667	.5000	.0333
TITLEXX	1.7000	1.8444	.1444*	1.6410	1.8676	.2266**	1.8000	1.9000	.1000
OFF1	.5400	.3333	.2067**	.5385	.2206	.3179	.7333	.6000	.1333
NLOGE	1.2200	1.3222	.1022	1.1282	1.1618	.0336	1.3333	1.8000	.4667
N	50	90		39	68		15	20	

* p .05

** p .01

*** p .001

TABLE 6: Seminole County: Mean Differences Between Diverted and Nondiverted Youth at Three Stages in the Juvenile Justice Process.

	INTAKE			NONJUDICIAL ACTION			JUDICIAL ACTION		
	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence
AGEREF	14.0157	14.6674	.6517*	13.6750	14.4333	.7583	14.4222	14.8065	.3843
RACE	.1417	.1129	.0288	.1750	.0667	.1083	.1333	.1613	.0280
SEX	.7795	.7742	.0053	.7250	.7000	.0250	.8889	.8387	.0502
HRSSTAT	.0157	.2097	.1940***	.0000	.1167	.1167***	.0444	.2581	.2137**
REFSTAT	.3307	.7097	.3790***	.2875	.4667	.1792	1.8222	1.7419	.0803
TITLEXX	1.7323	1.7097	.0226	1.6750	1.6667	.0083	1.8222	1.7419	.0803
OFF1	.4094	.4355	.0261	.4125	.2000	.2125*	.4222	.6774	.2552
NLOGE	1.0551	1.1613	.1062	1.0125	1.1000	.0875	1.0889	1.2581	.1692
N	127	62		80	30		13	9	

* p .05

** p .01

*** p .001

TABLE 7: Columbia County: Mean Differences Between Diverted and Nondiverted Youth at Three Stages in the Juvenile Justice Process.

	INTAKE			NONJUDICIAL DECISION,			JUDICIAL ACTION		
	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence	Divert	Nondiverted (Processed)	Differ- ence
AGEREF		14.8400		13.2381	15.0000	1.7619**	13.2500	14.4444	1.1944
RACE		.2000		.3571	.2000	.1571	.4375	.3333	.1042
SEX		.8200		.7857	.7333	.0524	.0250	.8889	.2639
HRSSTAT		.1600		.0238	.1333	.1095	.1250	.3333	.2083
REFSTAT		.6400		.4524	.3333	.1191	.3750	.7778	.4028
TITLEXX		1.6400		1.6905	1.3333	.3572	1.7500	1.7778	.0278
OFF1		.4000		.2381	.4000	.1619	.2500	.5556	.3056
NLCGE		1.0200		1.0000	1.0557	.0557	1.1250	1.4444	.3194
N	0	50		42	15		16	9	

* p .05

** p .01

*** p .001

in the profile differences of clients who are diverted and those who are not. However there does not seem to be any single county whose race and offense patterns are radically different from the rest. Thus we cannot attribute general race and offense patterns to one drastically atypical county. However, Alachua and Marion County were likely to divert felons as opposed to misdemeanants and Columbia County diverted only misdemeanor offenders.

An alternative interpretation is that our profile method of analysis is picking up more than one type of net widening simultaneously. Most researchers assume that net widening draws only atypical or nontraditional clients into diversion while leaving typical delinquents to be processed through traditional juvenile justice channels. This model of net widening predicts that diverted groups will have characteristics that are different from those of usual delinquency populations. When net widening takes place diverted youths should be more likely to be young, white, female, minor offenders, and without prior records. However, this is not the only type of net widening that may occur in the course of a diversion program. Since juvenile justice resources are always limited, traditional forms of processing cannot identify and take care of every case that might qualify for treatment. Cases that are somewhat marginal may not be identified at all or they may be dismissed after identification simply because of resource constraints. Diversion programs offer processors additional resources, and officials may divert these marginal cases that otherwise would escape any official action and treatment. If so, these diverted cases would have many system insertable characteristics, resembling the typical delinquency case in all but a few ways. Patterns produced by this form of net widening are likely to be complex, and difficult to identify with a profile method of analysis. However,

they could help explain why diverted youths are somewhat more likely to be black and to have committed felonies rather than misdemeanors.

RECIDIVISM

RECIDIVISM

One of Project Diversion's primary goals was to curb recidivism. The program was designed to divert delinquent juveniles from potentially harmful official processing, and to provide them with alternative social services that would help them avoid future trouble. It is important to assess Project Diversion's impact on recidivism, and to identify types of programs and services that may affect a juvenile's probability of rearrest. Our analysis will first examine differences in the recidivism of Project Diversion clients and those of youths who were processed through regular juvenile justice channels. We will then examine different recidivism experiences of Project Diversion clients in depth. The first analysis is designed to assess whether Project Diversion clients show different recidivism patterns from those of regularly processed youths. The second analysis of Project Diversion clients as a group offers some insight about the programs and services that have an impact on client recidivism.

COMPARATIVE RECIDIVISM

Samples and Data

Data for our comparative analyses of recidivism were drawn from Alachua County and Orange County. These counties were chosen because they represent both the University and HSPC components of Project Diversion, and because they have sufficiently large caseloads to make statistical computations meaningful.

Both Project Diversion and processed cases from each county were sampled for this analysis. In Alachua County, all diversion clients who entered the program between January 1977 and January 1981 were tracked through the DHRS

master card file. Any referrals subsequent to the date a client entered Project Diversion were recorded as recidivism. There were a total of 218 cases in Alachua County during the term of the OJJDP grant. We were not able to draw a random sample of nondiverted youth from the HRS records, so we used the master card file and drew every Nth (a random digit) case from the file boxes. If the case drawn had a delinquency charge during 1979 or 1980 and if it was not a Project Diversion referral, we included it in the comparison sample of nondiverted (i.e., traditionally processed) cases. A total of 152 cases were included in this comparison group.

Identical procedures were used in Orange County except that we tracked the recidivism of HSPC clients who entered between September 1, 1980 and January 31, 1981. And for the comparison group our sample took in cases that had a delinquency referral sometime during 1980. The total diverted sample was 275 and the total nondiverted sample was 144.

From these data sets we selected sub-sets of cases in an effort to control for length of time from referral to recidivism, and for the time period during which initial HRS contact occurred. In Alachua County we limited our study to those cases with an initial HRS contact during 1979 or 1980. In Orange County we limited observations to cases with an initial HRS contact during 1980 and those that had at least four months following the contact during which recidivism could have taken place.

Our measure of recidivism is whether or not a case had subsequent contact with HRS intake. In Orange County, we divided the cases into (1) those that had recidivated within four months following initial HRS contact, and (2) those that had not recidivated within four months. In Alachua County we also divided cases into (1) those that had recidivated within four months,

and (2) those that had not recidivated within four months. This provides us with roughly comparable groups for the two counties. Because it was possible to follow Alachua County cases for a longer time period we created a second sub-set of Alachua County cases. It is composed of those cases that (1) recidivated between 5 and 12 months (but did not recidivate the first four months) and (2) those that did not recidivate between 5 and 12 months. It is important to note that the bulk of recidivism cases in both counties is what might be called "in-program" recidivism. This means recidivism that is subsequent to HRS contacts and that took place prior to the termination of a case by Project Diversion. So few youths recidivated after their cases were closed that we could not effectively do separate analyses of in-program and post-program recidivism.

Recidivism in Orange County

Table 1 presents information about cases that were diverted or processed in Orange County. Less than 5% of the diverted cases recidivated within four months of initial HRS contact, while almost 20% of the regularly processed cases show at least one instance of recidivism. Processed cases also show a greater frequency of subsequent HRS contacts, although most have only one subsequent delinquency on their record. Most recidivism is for misdemeanor offenses, although the officially processed group is somewhat more likely to be charged with subsequent felonies.

The differences in recidivism are not surprising given some of the other differences between processed and diverted cases. Processed clients tend to be older than those in Project Diversion and are more likely to have been

 Table 1 on next two pages

TABLE 1: Profile Differences Between Project Diversion Clients and Regularly Processed Cases in Orange County (cases followed four months after initial offense data).

	Project Diversion %	Processed %
<u>AGE IN YEARS</u>		
8	.5	1.8
9	2.1	1.8
10	5.1	.9
11	5.1	.0
12	5.6	3.6
13	9.7	.9
14	15.9	15.3
15	18.5	16.2
16	14.4	20.7
17	22.6	33.3
18	.5	4.5
	100% (195)	100% (111)
<u>SEX</u>		
Female	28.2	27.0
Male	71.8	73.0
	100% (195)	100% (111)
<u>RACE</u>		
White	73.6	67.9
Non-white	26.4	32.1
	100% (193)	100% (109)
<u>CURRENT OFFENSE</u>		
Misdemeanor	76.9	58.0
Felony	23.1	42.0
	100% (199)	100% (112)
<u>TOTAL PRIOR DELINQUENCIES</u>		
0	85.9	81.3
1	12.6	14.3
2	.5	2.7
3	1.0	1.7
	100% (198)	100% (112)

Table 1 - Continued

	Project Diversion %	Processed %
<u>TOTAL PRIOR MISDEMEANORS</u>		
0	86.2	82.7
1	12.2	13.6
2	1.0	3.6
3	.5	.0
	100% (196)	100% (110)
<u>TOTAL PRIOR FELONIES</u>		
0	98.2	94.8
1	1.7	5.2
	100% (172)	100% (96)
<u>TOTAL SUBSEQUENT DELINQUENCIES</u>		
0	95.5	80.4
1	3.5	13.4
2	.5	2.7
3	.5	1.8
4	0.0	1.8
	100% (198)	100% (112)
<u>TOTAL SUBSEQUENT MISDEMEANORS</u>		
0	96.4	85.7
1	2.6	11.4
2	1.0	2.9
	100% (196)	100% (105)
<u>TOTAL SUBSEQUENT FELONIES</u>		
0	98.4	87.4
1	1.6	9.7
2	0.0	2.9
	100% (192)	100% (103)

charged initially with a felony offense. Since older, more serious offenders are more likely to be bad recidivism risks, this suggests that the observed differences in recidivism may be due to the type of clients served by each program rather than the programs themselves. In Table 2 recidivism is crosstabulated by treatment group controlling first for type of offense (misdemeanor versus felony), and then for age. As these figures indicate, the relationship between recidivism and type of treatment cannot be controlled away by either of these two variables that might reflect "high" risks. When one looks only at misdemeanor cases, regularly processed youths still have a higher probability of recidivism than Project Diversion clients; the same is true for felony cases. Project Diversion clients also have lower rates of recidivism than regularly processed cases for all age groups.

 Table 2 on next page

TABLE 2: Orange County: Recidivism of Diverted vs. Processed Clients Controlling for Type of Offense and Clients' Age.

Number of Subsequent Delinquencies	Type of Offense			
	Misdemeanor		Felony	
	Project Diversion	Processed	Project Diversion	Processed
0	97.4%	83.1%	89.1%	76.6%
1	2.0%	12.3%	8.7%	14.9%
2	0.0%	1.5%	2.2%	4.3%
3	0.6%	1.5%	0.0%	2.1%
4	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	2.1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(152)	(65)	(46)	(47)

Number of Subsequent Delinquencies	Client's Age					
	8-14		13-15		16-18	
	PD	Processed	PD	Processed	PD	Processed
0	97.1	88.9	93.0	77.8	93.3	81.5
1	2.9	0.0	4.7	8.3	2.7	16.9
2	0.0	11.1	1.2	5.6	0.0	0.0
3	0.0	0.0	1.2	5.6	0.0	0.0
4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	1.5
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(35)	(9)	(86)	(36)	(73)	(65)

Recidivism in Alachua County

Characteristics of Alachua County cases are summarized in Table 3.

There are no substantively meaningful differences between the recidivism of Project Diversion and regularly processed cases. Approximately 15% of both groups recidivate within four months of their initial offense and virtually none of either group recidivate within the five to twelve month period.

There are some sociodemographic differences between Project Diversion clients and those who are regularly processed: Project Diversion cases are more likely to be younger, male, and non-white. However, the prior offense records of the two groups are similar (the 10 percentage point difference in total prior delinquencies in the 5-12 month group is a function of the exclusion of cases recidivating within the first four months), as are their current offense charges. Thirty-five to forty percent of each group was charged with a felony.

 Table 3 next two pages

TABLE 3: Profile Differences Between Project Diversion Clients and Regularly Processed Clients in Alachua County (cases that recidivated 1-4 months after initial offense vs. all others; cases that recidivated 5-12 months vs. all non-recidivative cases).

	1-4 Months		5-12 Months	
	Project Diversion %	Processed %	Project Diversion %	Processed %
<u>AGE IN YEARS</u>				
8	1.6	0.0	3.6	1.1
9	7.8	4.2	9.1	4.9
10	4.7	2.5	5.5	2.9
11	6.3	2.5	7.3	2.9
12	7.8	3.3	9.1	3.9
13	18.8	5.8	16.4	5.8
14	10.9	10.8	9.1	10.7
15	18.8	25.0	16.4	22.3
16	9.4	25.0	9.1	25.2
17	12.5	20.0	14.6	20.4
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(64)	(120)	(55)	(103)
<u>SEX</u>				
Female	16.4	24.6	15.5	24.8
Male	83.6	75.4	84.5	75.2
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(67)	(122)	(58)	(105)
<u>RACE</u>				
White	46.2	56.2	44.6	58.7
Non-white	53.9	43.8	55.4	41.3
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(65)	(121)	(56)	(104)
<u>CURRENT OFFENSE</u>				
Misdemeanor	61.2	62.6	60.3	65.1
Felony	38.8	37.4	39.7	35.9
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(67)	(123)	(58)	(106)
<u>TOTAL PRIOR DELINQUENCIES</u>				
0	71.2	76.4	71.9	87.1
1	18.2	14.6	28.1	12.9
2	6.1	2.4		
3	4.6	4.1	100%	100%
4	0.0	0.8	(57)	(106)
5	0.0	0.8		
	100%	100%		
	(66)	(123)		

TABLE 3 - Continued

	1-4 Months		5-12 Months	
	Project Diversion %	Processed %	Project Diversion %	Processed %
<u>TOTAL PRIOR MISDEMEANORS</u>				
0	74.2	82.3	75.5	86.7
1	17.7	11.5	17.0	11.2
2	3.2	2.7	1.9	1.0
3	4.8	3.5	5.7	1.0
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(62)	(113)	(53)	(98)
<u>TOTAL PRIOR FELONIES</u>				
0	87.0	86.2	87.2	89.6
1	9.3	11.0	8.5	9.4
2	3.7	2.8	4.3	1.0
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(54)	(109)	(47)	(96)
<u>TOTAL SUBSEQUENT DELINQUENCIES</u>				
0	85.1	86.2	98.3	100%
1	10.5	7.3	1.7	0.0
2	0.0	2.4		
3	3.0	0.0	100%	100%
4	0.0	1.6	(58)	(106)
5	0.0	2.4		
6	1.5	0.0		
	100%	100%		
	(67)	(123)		
<u>TOTAL SUBSEQUENT MISDEMEANORS</u>				
0	89.1	88.3	98.3	100.0
1	7.8	7.5	1.7	0.0
2	3.1	2.5		
3	0.0	1.7	100%	100%
	100%	100%	(58)	(106)
	(64)	(120)		
<u>TOTAL SUBSEQUENT FELONIES</u>				
0	98.3	100.0	98.3	100.0
1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2	1.7	0.0	1.7	0.0
3	0.0	0.0		
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(58)	(106)	(58)	(106)

Summary

It is difficult to make general statements about the recidivism of Project Diversion clients relative to regularly processed cases on the basis of the data presented here. We have examined only two of the counties served by Project Diversion, and there is no guarantee that they are representative of the other counties whose caseloads are somewhat smaller. In Alachua County, there are no meaningful differences in the recidivism of Project Diversion cases and clients processed through usual juvenile justice channels, but in Orange County, Project Diversion clients have lower rates of rearrest than do cases that are regularly processed. These findings should be interpreted cautiously, however, because there are major differences in the types of cases that are routed to Project Diversion in the two counties. The two sets of findings cannot be compared directly. In addition, the recidivism differences noted for Orange County do not necessarily indicate any causal relationship between participation in Project Diversion and subsequent recidivism. There is some evidence from our field interviews that cases referred to diversion would not have been petitioned to court were it not for the availability of diversion. Therefore, diversion cases are likely to be the "best risk" cases while the officially processed cases are likely to be of higher risk. Additional data that would allow us to better control for high and low recidivism risks, as well as information about exactly how cases are allocated to diversion is needed before definitive conclusions can be reached.

The best conclusion to draw with these data is that, at the group level, diversion to services does not yield either better or worse recidivism rates than traditional juvenile justice processing. That information is not insignificant.

nificant, however. From it, planners can better decide the course of future programs. In the next section, we carried our analysis a step further. We asked what impact if any different services and different amounts of services have upon recidivism of clients.

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: RECIDIVISM AMONG PROJECT DIVERSION CLIENTS

Project Diversion offered a number of programs and services and each may have affected recidivism differently. The main service provided by YPI Project Diversion was the assignment of a student or community volunteer who served as an adult friend and role model for each client. Additional services were often provided based on volunteer or staff assessment of client needs. Although most clients received a volunteer match, not everyone received other supplemental services. This makes it important to know (1) what impact these services might have had on recidivism, and (2) which specific services exerted the strongest impact.

Our analysis uses data from all cases handled by the University component of Project Diversion from January 1977 to June 1980¹. The University Component cases were divided into two groups: (1) those who had been in the program four months or fewer, and (2) those who had been in the program five to twelve months. Our measure of recidivism is whether or not the Project

¹Our original plan to analyze the relationship between recidivism and the services provided by HSPC had to be abandoned because there were too few recidivism cases for meaningful statistical analysis. We have tested for a relationship between successful program completion and service provision for the HSPC data and have found none. Overall, there was a 19.6% unsuccessful completions rate for HSPC cases. The breakdown of reasons by percentage is as follows.

<u>Reason for Unsuccessful Termination</u>		
Victim did not approve program	1.8%	(07)
Child or Parent did not approve program	6.5%	(25)
Client moved	5.8%	(22)
Client not locatable by address	1.6%	(06)
30 Day Expiration	.3%	(01)
Nonattendance at program site	2.1%	(08)
Inappropriate referral	1.6%	(06)
Total	100%	382 cases

Diversion client was referred to HRS intake workers while he or she was still enrolled in the YPI program.² This information was collected from Project Diversion exit forms for University Component clients.

Services and Recidivism: University Component

In addition to volunteer assignment, clients of the University Component of Project Diversion could receive services such as tutoring, recreation, transportation, individual counseling, family counseling, employment assistance juvenile justice advocacy, and school intervention. Preliminary analysis indicated that only a few of these service variables differentiated between clients who recidivated and those who did not. Tables 4-6 present data on important program variables (primary volunteer service, and additional services) sociodemographic characteristics, and recidivism for clients who spent from one to four months in Project Diversion and clients who spent from five to twelve months in the program.

 Tables 4-6 on next two pages

As Table 4 indicates, approximately 17 percent of both groups of University Component clients recidivated while enrolled in the program. Among short term clients (those in the program from 1-4 months), the probability of recidivism was higher for those clients who were older, those who were

²While we would have preferred to have been able to divide the sample into early and late recidivists, the project forms do not specify the actual date of recidivism. The forms show only that recidivism did occur sometime prior to termination. Moreover, rearrest and referral to HRS did not automatically result in instant termination from the program or in an unsuccessful termination. Therefore, we have used time in program to provide a rough measure of early and late recidivism. We divide clients into those terminated after 1-4 months and those terminated after 5-12 months.

TABLE 4: University Component of Project Diversion: Proportion of Clients Recidivating Which Enrolled in the Program.

	Clients in PD 4 Months or Less	Clients in PD 5-12 Months
No Recidivism	82.3%	83.1%
Recidivism	17.7%	16.9%
	100% (203)	100% (521)

TABLE 5: University Component of Project Diversion: Zero Order Correlations with Recidivism (Sociodemographic and Volunteer Variables).

	Clients in PD 1-4 Months	Clients in PD 5-12 Months
Age	.13	-.01
Sex	-.05	.06
Race	-.16	-.03
Referral Stat.	.35	.03
Current Offense	.01	.01
Volunteer Hrs.	-.06	.03
# Volunteers	.09	.10

TABLE 6: University Component of Project Diversion: Services Crosstabulated with Recidivism.

	Clients in PD 1-4 Months		Clients in PD 5-12 Months	
<u>Individual Counseling</u>				
	NO	YES	NO	YES
No Recidivism	65.9	86.4	63.9	85.7
Recidivism	34.2	13.6	36.1	14.4
	100% (41)	100% (162)	100% (61)	100% (460)
<u>Family Counseling</u>				
	NO	YES	NO	YES
No Recidivism	85.5	75.4	82.8	83.6
Recidivism	14.5	24.6	17.2	16.4
	100% (138)	100% (65)	100% (296)	100% (225)
<u>Juvenile Justice Advocacy</u>				
	NO	YES	NO	YES
No Recidivism	83.7	72.0	85.1	76.5
Recidivism	16.3	28.0	14.9	23.5
	100% (180)	100% (23)	100% (402)	100% (119)
<u>Employment Assistance</u>				
	NO	YES	NO	YES
No Recidivism	80.7	90.6	83.1	82.9
Recidivism	19.3	9.4	16.8	17.1
	100% (171)	100% (32)	100% (416)	100% (105)
<u>School Intervention</u>				
	NO	YES	NO	YES
No Recidivism	82.2	82.6	85.5	76.3
Recidivism	17.8	17.4	14.5	23.7
	100% (180)	100% (23)	100% (386)	100% (135)

already HRS clients prior to referral to Project Diversion (see zero order correlations in Table 5) and whites were more likely to recidivate than blacks. Among longer term clients, there are no sociodemographic characteristics that differentiate between those who recidivate and those who do not.

Clients who receive more than one volunteer are slightly more likely to recidivate than those who receive just one volunteer match while in the program. Although clients who received individual counseling and employment assistance appear to have somewhat lower recidivism rates, those who received family counseling and school intervention (for the 5-12 month group) show somewhat higher probabilities of recidivism (see Table 6). Juvenile justice advocacy is also associated with higher recidivism rates but that is most probably because project staff generally did not utilize this service unless a client was rearrested.

Obviously, it would be a mistake to conclude that these services cause or prevent recidivism on the basis of the figures in Table 6. The way and the time in which services are provided to clients makes it improper to attach rigid causal interpretations to the data. For example, juvenile justice advocacy and school intervention may appear to cause higher recidivism rates but it is clear, at least in the case of juvenile justice advocacy, that the service is likely to have been provided after the client gets into trouble with authorities rather than before. School intervention does not seem to be applied for the same reasons and may indeed be related as a cause of recidivism. But this service may operate like family counseling and a greater number of volunteers and all may be associated with rearrests because project staff gave these treatments to "high risk" cases whose probability or recidivism is quite high under all conditions. Simi-

larly, there is no assurance that individual counseling or employment assistance are themselves the causes of lower recidivism rates among clients that receive these services. Field staff gave at least three different definitions of what they regarded as and recorded as individual counseling. Without more precise data, our discussion and interpretations must be limited to associations and causal implications must be drawn with much caution.

CLIENT IMPACT: SELF CONCEPT

LEAA's 1976 Program Announcement which introduced the national initiative of diversion explicitly emphasized the potential danger to self concept in official processing of juveniles. The program announcement also emphasized the need for positive experiences in diversion. From the beginning of Project Diversion in Florida, staff coordinators and others who worked closely with clients contended diversion produces a positive impact on clients' self concepts. Until recently, however, there was no standardized way the validity of these claims could be assessed in the project.

In an effort to measure the impact of Diversion on the self concepts of clients, the Ziller Self-Social Symbols Tasks were administered at match (Time 1) and at termination (Time 2) interviews. Clients under 10 years of age were excluded from this process. In all, 76 clients completed the tasks at both match and termination, and data from their responses are used in this analysis.

Ziller's 1975 Self-Social Symbols Tasks (a set of geometric configurations designed to tap non-verbal aspects of the self concept) was administered by county coordinators to clients at entrance (match with a volunteer) and at exit (when the client was terminated from the program). These measures take into account the individual's perceptions of the social environment, an important component which many measures of self concept ignore. In addition, they require no reading by the youth. The tasks are designed to measure changes and stability in the social psychological field from which the self concept emerges. The tasks and the scores of youth participating in diversion are explained below.

CLIENT IMPACT: SELF CONCEPT

Inclusion

The first task the client encountered, with three components overall, was Inclusion. Inclusion has to do with one's feelings of belonging and social trust, dependence versus independence. That is, one's feeling that he/she is integrated into the social world, but also into an individual unit of that world. When a t-test was conducted on the difference between Time 1 and Time 2 scores, it proved to show a significant positive change ($t=4.37$; $p < .01$) across the total sample. This means that, on average, Project Diversion clients increased in their feelings of inclusion while in the program. In fact, 39 clients scored the same on this component at Time 1 and Time 2, 28 showed positive change, and only eight showed negative change. So, while only 47% changed, the majority changed for the better on this dimension of self.

Identification

The second task measured the clients feelings of Identification with significant others. In Ziller's terms, Identification is the acceptance of the other person as a model for the self, involving the perception of similarity between self and the significant other. Slightly more clients ($n=37$) showed positive changes in Identification than negative changes ($n=33$), while few ($n=5$) showed no change. The difference between Time 1 and Time 2 responses was not large and it was not statistically significant ($t=-0.22$; $p > .05$).

Self-Esteem

The third task was designed to measure the client's self-esteem, or feeling of self-worth in relation to significant others in the social en-

vironment. Thirty-seven of the clients showed positive changes in Self-Esteem, compared to 25 who exhibited negative changes, and 11 who experienced no change. Comparison of Time 1 and Time 2 responses, were appreciable but they did not prove to be statistically significant for the overall sample ($t=1.47$; $p > .05$).

Self-Complexity

The fourth task, the only verbally-based item, consisted of a checklist of 55 adjectives designed to measure Self-Complexity. This concept refers to the number of aspects of the self perceived by the individual, and greater complexity is associated theoretically with a better ability to relate to others. Forty five of the clients increased in Complexity while in the program, 27 showed no change, and only three showed decreases. This produced a statistically significant difference between Time 1 and Time 2 measurements ($t=2.50$; $p < .01$).

The majority of the clients showed some change between Time 1 and Time 2 measurements on Identification, Self-Esteem, and Self-Complexity. While most clients showed no change on Inclusion, the number showing positive changes produced statistically significant results. Overall, 43 clients in the sample showed positive changes in global self-concept (the sum of changes across all four measures), 13 showed no change, and 20 showed a negative change in global self concept. It appears, then, that involvement in the program was associated with positive change in the overall self concept of the majority of the Project Diversion clients studied here.

Producing positive changes in self concept was not only an implicit goal of the OJJDP diversion initiative, it has been seen by social theorists and practitioners alike as a way to reduce delinquent behavior. We cannot assess

the extent to which this belief is correct but we were able to carry the analysis one step further by examining the extent to which clients who changed for the positive came from those having low or high self concepts. If the program produces positive change in those who already have favorable self concepts; that is good but it is not as compelling as if it produced changes in those who begin the program with relatively negative self concepts.

As can be seen from Table 1, the clients who changed for the positive were closer as a group to the optimum scores on two of the four measures of self concept, while those who changed for the worse were closer to the optimum on the other two measures. Therefore, there seems to be no relationship between the direction of change in self concept and the strength of self concept at entrance into Project Diversion.

The analysis remains important, however, because there is some evidence that project involvement is associated with raising low client identification and self-esteem. It also shows that clients who change in their sense of inclusion usually start close to optimum and improve or worsen only slightly.

Table 1: Change in Self Concept: Optimum and Mean (\bar{X}) Scores at Entrance.

Variable	Optimum Score Column	Negative Change in Global Self Concept	Positive Change in Global Self Concept
		\bar{X}	\bar{X}
Inclusion	3	2.385	2.357
Identification	1	3.323	1.764
Self-Esteem	6	4.608	4.436
Complexity	55	22.385	24.571

Positive changes are more likely (for inclusion and identification) when scores at entrance are close(er) to the optimum.

SUMMARY
AND
CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The hardest part of any evaluation is arriving at firm conclusions. In the previous pages we have presented analyses of several central aspects of the University Volunteer Component and the HSPC Purchase of Service Component of Florida Project Diversion. When the evidence was clear and unambiguous we indicated definitive conclusions in our discussion. Projected numbers of clients served by both components were obviously not achieved. YPI and HSPC fell far short of meeting their projected referral flow. There are a number of exigencies of which we are aware that can help account for these shortfalls. Among them are (1) a cut in project budgets in November, and (2) knowledge among officials in each county that the program was phasing out. But such factors can only partially explain the distance between projections and delivered services.

The picture for cost comparisons seems clear. Diversion is less expensive than is processing youth through ordinary juvenile justice channels. However, this is where easy conclusions stop. The picture is less clear for issues centering on target population, net widening, recidivism, system impact and client impact.

Target population and net widening considerations have always been problematic in these projects. The official policy on appropriate referrals was necessarily vague, specifying only that appropriate diversion referrals were those youth who otherwise would be petitioned to court. Local interpretations varied on that, and to further complicate matters, HRS intake supervisors and counselors, and State Attorneys seemed uniquely capable of arguing that any case, no matter how minor it might have

appeared to an outsider, would have gone to court had it not been for the availability of diversion. In our analyses, we attempted to deal with these ambiguities with three different procedures. First, we asked HRS officials, project staff and State Attorneys in each county to make retrospective estimates of the proportion of referrals they made to diversion that would have gone to court without the diversion alternative. Next we examined the files in each county and related them to the referral process. Finally, we constructed a statistical analysis comparing sociodemographic and legal characteristics of diverted and non-diverted youth. The evidence shakes down unevenly but, we think the most reasonable interpretation is that a very substantial proportion of youth in the diversion programs would have been dismissed without official court action had the diversion programs not been available. Prosecutors, HRS staff and project staff in every county estimated some of the diversion referrals were clearly inappropriate when compared to the target population standard. Moreover, the records and observations of referral processes in most counties indicate that juvenile justice officials divert a youth only after they decide that court action is not warranted. Most cases referred to diversion were recommended for no-petition to court and the evidence suggests that most of these cases would have gotten a no petition recommendation or action even if diversion had not been available.

The statistical comparison also provides mixed evidence. But, when taken in combination with our other data, the conclusion is the same: A very substantial proportion of the youth referred to the diversion programs are inappropriate by target population standards. The major implication of this finding, of course, is that diversion fails to achieve one of its major goals

(that of reducing the number of youth coming under state control) to the same extent that it accepts and processes inappropriate referrals.

The Reduction of Recidivism has been a major goal in all programs designed and implemented for juvenile law violators and it was an important goal for Florida Project Diversion. Our analyses took into account every available variable on the client entrance and exit forms in an effort to assess both (1) the comparative recidivism rates of diverted and non-diverted youth (under in-program and post-program conditions) and (2) the client and legal characteristics of diversion cases that are related to different probabilities of recidivism. Our best data came from Alachua County. Diverted and nondiverted clients there were more alike in terms of sociodemographic and legal characteristics. The data show that diversion does not produce either lower or higher recidivism rates than traditional processing. The rates are very similar for both groups. This is true for both in-program and post-program recidivism analyses.

The Orange County HSPC data show appreciable differences in the probability of post-program recidivism but the two groups (diverted and non-diverted) are different on important variables associated with higher risks of recidivism. In general, youth in the non diverted group that experienced traditional processing and higher recidivism rates were more likely to be higher risk cases than the HSPC diverted group. Therefore, our general conclusion is that recidivism rates are not significantly different for youth referred to either of the two diversion programs and when compared to youth processed through traditional juvenile justice channels in the same counties.

The projects appear to do better with clients with certain characteristics than with others. They also do better with some client types than

HRS. For example, in Alachua County, females, whites and misdemeanants are less likely to recidivate when they are diverted than when they are processed through traditional juvenile justice channels¹. It is reasonable to believe that different treatments work on different client types. This sort of analysis helps point to the kinds of clients with which diversion is most effective. For more serious cases, diversion and HRS produce very similar recidivism rates.

Whether Florida Project Diversion had an impact on the system is an issue that has many facets. We have already indicated that the project has failed to have an impact on the system in at least one important way. That is, to the extent diversion clients were outside the criterion implied by target population standards, the project failed to reduce the number of youth coming under some form of state control. System impact, of course, means more than this. Our interviews and observations around the project counties revealed clear and strong evidence that the project was successful in diffusing the idea and ideal of diversion in project counties. The extent to which juvenile justice officials, altered their views and became more receptive to utilizing diversion in lieu of official processing of juveniles varied considerably from one place to another. However, in each county there were clear indications that the projects had made substantial differences. A move toward closer ties between and integration of community agencies, juvenile justice agencies, and academic and other local institutions was apparent in every county. Florida Project Diversion can certainly take some credit for this development. And, finally, there was in each county evidence that juvenile justice officials were interested in better programs for juveniles charged with law violations and that diversion had rekindled their hope that such solutions might be found.

¹See Table 3, page 51.

Assessing client impact was done in part with an analysis of recidivism patterns. We developed an additional instrument for this evaluation. A self-concept scale was administered to University Component clients at entrance and at termination. Our interest was in examining the extent to which clients improved their self concepts during their involvement in the project. Our data show that most clients changed in global self concept from the time of entrance to termination and most of those who changed showed a change for the better. Staff for the University Component have maintained for some time that they believed the volunteer program produced positive changes in clients and that one of the obvious indications of this was that clients seem to "feel better about themselves". We took this as a reason to examine the question more carefully. While we cannot isolate the source of improvements in self concept, we can say that data from the Ziller scale confirm the staff impressions.

While we have some data which cover a period from the beginning of the University Component to the end, most of our analyses interpretations, and conclusions applied to a shorted period of time. This report then is primarily an evaluation of Florida Project Diversion from September 1, 1980 to January 31, 1981. Our other analyses are intended to supplement this evaluation and to provide an overall evaluation of the University Component on relevant dimensions.

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