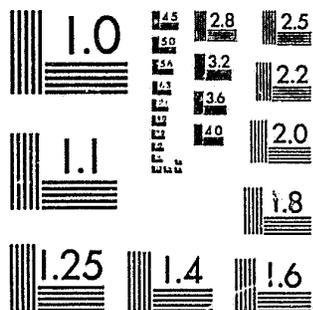


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EVALUATION OF THE WASHINGTON STATE
JUVENILE RESTITUTION PROJECT

Final Report

PREPARED FOR:

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PERFORMANCE RESOURCES, INC.

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U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

PERFORMANCE RESOURCES, INC.

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Extensive evaluation and research of juvenile restitution and community service has been conducted in Washington State for the past three and one-half years. Program data, youth data and follow-up data has been collected regarding almost 1,500 youths. Six projects received state and federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funding. These projects were located in Benton-Franklin Counties, Clark County, Grays Harbor County King County, Mason County, and the City of Seattle.

The following major conclusions and recommendations have been developed based upon the evaluation and research findings:

1. Restitution and community service can serve one or all of three major purposes. These purposes are accountability, treatment to prevent recidivism, and an alternative to incarceration.
 - a. The project youths as a whole were successful in accountability with community service but not with restitution.
 - b. Project youths participating in restitution and community service experienced reduced recidivism compared to control group youths.

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c. Restitution and community service were successful program alternatives to incarceration.

2. There is nothing inherent in a juvenile restitution program that will rehabilitate youths. The quality of the internal program components is the key to the rehabilitative effect the project will have on juvenile offenders.
3. Community service/restitution projects were more successful than control groups (where minimal formal help was given youths), for many of the national initiative goals. The specially funded projects did especially well in terms of lowering the use of detention, lowering the level of institutionalization, lowering six-month program reoffense rates and having greater percentages of completion rates for community service.
4. The restitution component of the projects was generally less effective than the community service component. Restitution completion percentages and amounts paid back were lower than community service completion percentages at nearly every project site.
5. A maximum ceiling rate of restitution and com-

munity service ordered youths should be considered. The ceiling for restitution dollars should be from \$230 to \$345 and the ceiling for community service hours should be from 70-75 hours. Amounts of restitution/community service which are higher than the ceiling result in lower rates of completion and higher project failure rates.

6. Using a statistical comparison, a profile of the type of youth likely to perform well in a community service/restitution program is as follows: a young (age 11-15) white male that is attending school and has had few adjudicated offenses prior to program referral. In addition, the youth would have a low level of restitution and/or community service ordered that he must complete through the project.
7. Certain delinquent youths were not successful in completing restitution or community service. The characteristics of these youths were:
 - a. youths with numerous prior adjudicated offenses
 - b. minority race youths

c. female youths

d. youths not attending school

Youths with two or more prior adjudicated offenses should be considered for alternate programs other than restitution or community service. In Washington State, the youths probably participated in a restitution/community service project for one of their prior offenses. Participation again in a restitution/community service program is probably redundant and would be difficult for the juvenile court staff to monitor. Special program components are needed for minority race youths and female youths.

8. The link-up between a youth's date of offense and referral to a community service/restitution program should be as rapid and efficient as possible. The least amount of court processing time between the youth's offense and restitution or community service program referral is related to greater program success.
9. Youths that are attending school are more likely to succeed in restitution and community service programs compared to youths not in school. In terms of recidivism pre-

vention, a youth's participation in school or in daily structured activities appears to be critical.

10. Quality community service/restitution program services can be provided juvenile offenders at the cost of approximately \$550 per youth for their entire project involvement. Although this amount may seem high, it is much lower than the alternative incarceration costs which range from \$700 to \$3,000 per youth each month. Many youths require more than one month of incarceration when this alternative is used. Therefore, for first- or second-time adjudicated offenders, restitution/community service is a cost-effective alternative.
11. For the third year of the project operation, each of the six projects performed successfully on at least one of the critical goals of the national restitution initiative. The goals for the projects were: high restitution and/or community service completion rates, low offense recidivism rates, low incarceration rates, and cost-efficiency.

12. There appears to be considerable citizen support for restitution and community service programs. While many citizens are not familiar with how the program works, they are supportive of the idea of juvenile offenders repaying either the victim or the community.
13. Restitution programs will show improved outcomes and higher internal program quality after receiving frequent evaluation, training and technical assistance. This finding has positive implications when new programs are being implemented. It is important to provide systematic training evaluation and technical assistance when new programs are being developed.

END