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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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THE COST OF CRIMINALS

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

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FOR INFORMATION: THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS has received a grant from the National Institute of Corrections for the purpose of conducting a study of the cost of criminals. The study is being conducted by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Technical Director, Frank A. Gandy, and Research Aide, Barbara J. Gandy. The study is being conducted in the District of Columbia and the results will be reported to the Department of Corrections.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS	1
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND OF STUDY	3
STUDY PROCEDURE	3
Career Data Collection	6
OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS AND CAREERS	7
Typical Offense History	8
COST TABLE	9
Costs in Other Jurisdictions	10
PATTERNS OF INDIVIDUAL AND CATEGORY COSTS	11
Individual Costs	11
Costs by Action or Service Category	12
APPENDIX A	15
APPENDIX B	19

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Costs of Correctional Actions and Services	10
Table 2. Correctional Costs by Individual	11
Table 3. Correctional Costs by Category of Action or Service	13
Table 4. Costs by Category of Action or Service: Los Angeles	19

HIGHLIGHTS

This study provides basic information on the correctional costs generated by the offense careers of 25 young men recently paroled from the D. C. Youth Center. These men were random selections from the parolee group and hence may be regarded as representative of the Youth Center population.

The median age of the subjects on July 1, 1968, was nearly 26 years; their "criminal" records extended nine years, on the average.

The subjects had spent an average of 32 months in the Youth Center, 8.5 months in Federal reformatories, 4.5 months in the D. C. Jail, 23 months on parole, 2 months on adult probation, 16 months in Welfare institutions, 22 months in foster homes, and 6 months on juvenile probation. They had also experienced an average of 6 adult arrests, 5 adult court hearings, 4 juvenile arrests, and 2 juvenile court hearings.

Over the nine-year period that the average subject spent accumulating his "prior record," he experienced about 25 correctional actions and services ranging from a juvenile arrest to a term in a reformatory or prison.

When the current costs of these actions and services are totaled for each offender, the individual costs range

from \$13,889.87 to \$68,327.52. The median cost is about \$31,000; the total cost for the 25 offenders is \$842,426.40.

If the median cost of \$31,000 is applied to each of the 325 youthful offenders now at the Youth Center, a projected cost of about \$10,000,000 can be estimated as the amount the public will have invested in the rehabilitation of the group by the time it is released to the community.

This is an investment of major proportions. It is clearly evident that full attention should be given to possible means of reducing this expenditure by more effective early management of delinquents and young offenders.

Two possibilities come to mind. One is the introduction of community treatment programs such as those operated by the California Youth Authority; the other is the use of detached worker programs such as those developed in Los Angeles County. Both these programs have shown a high level of cost effectiveness, and their ultimate result will be the saving of many millions of dollars in new correctional costs. With adequate planning and implementation, similar results should be possible in the District of Columbia.

THE COST OF CORRECTING YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS

Introduction

Costs and expenditures, both private and public, are matters of increasing concern to the average person. This concern is perhaps nowhere more pronounced at the present time than in the field of "law, order and justice."

The present study is a preliminary exploration of one facet of the economics of justice and order -- the correctional costs that have been incurred by one small group of Youth Act offenders. The cases are 25 in number. They are roughly representative of all the cases that were released to parole from the Youth Center of the Department of Corrections during the period August 1965 through June 1967.

The purpose of the study is primarily descriptive. It seeks to ascertain the total cost to the community of the correctional acts and services directed at the 25 youthful offenders as they began and continued in their careers of law violation.

The study is utilitarian as well as descriptive. Correctional administrators are turning increasingly to cost-effectiveness studies, systems analysis, and planning-programming-budgeting as they seek to improve the functioning of their agencies. Their new management techniques

depend increasingly on knowledge of the costs of the various alternatives in the correctional process. Studies such as the present one are essential steps in the development of an optimally effective correctional or criminal justice system.

The most readily visible economic costs in corrections are those associated with arrest, detention, court action, institutionalization, and supervision during probation and parole. These obviously are not the only costs that criminal activity imposes on the community. There are additional costs relating to property loss, welfare payments, job inefficiency, and irresponsibility in meeting social obligations.

However, law enforcement and correctional costs are readily known or easily determined from commonly available information. Furthermore, they probably constitute the larger portion of the total costs that delinquency and crime impose on the community. It seems appropriate, therefore, to start an investigation of the costs of criminality in terms of expenditures on law enforcement and corrections. Estimates derived in this manner will be biased, if at all, in a conservative direction.

Background of Study

This study is modeled after correctional-cost studies previously carried out in a California metropolitan area. It follows rather closely the format and procedure of an analysis of the cost of a juvenile gang in Los Angeles.¹ The gang cost studies were instrumental in the planning and carrying out of other studies, particularly in the area of cost-benefit analysis. The present study may reasonably be expected to be followed by other studies in the District of Columbia that focus on costs, cost benefits, and cost effectiveness in the correction of offenders.

Study Procedure

The present study has focused on 25 cases of young offenders who were released directly from the D. C. Youth Center. The study was limited to 25 cases because it involved a detailed record search, and in the absence of an automatic data processing system, such searches can be time consuming and costly if large numbers of cases are involved.

¹Borden Olive, Roger E. Rice, and Stuart Adams, The Cost of a Juvenile Gang: A Nine-Year Follow-up of Law Enforcement, Court and Correctional Expenditures, Los Angeles County Probation Department, Research Report No. 16, 22 pp. October 1964.

Youth Center cases were preferred for the study because the Youth Center is a relatively costly operation, per capita, and because its releasees are relatively young and presumably more amenable to rehabilitation than Reformatory or Penitentiary releasees. Findings from Youth Center cases would thus have more significance for both cost reduction and crime prevention.

One additional reason for focusing on Youth Center cases was that some information on such cases was already available from a comparative study of Youth Center and Community Treatment Center releasee performance now in progress. The 135 YC cases in the comparative study provided a convenient base from which to draw a study sample for the correctional cost study.

The group chosen for this analysis was originally selected by drawing an interval sample from the 135 cases that were released directly from the Youth Center during August 1965 through June 1967. The sampling interval was every third case, which yielded a total of 45 cases. Some attrition of cases was anticipated because of nonavailability of records. However, it was assumed that the sample of 45 cases would yield at least 25 offenders on whom a relatively complete record of correctional actions and services could be obtained.

This study procedure called for a detailed documentation of the law enforcement, court, community supervision, and institutional placement histories of each of the 25 study cases. The information was obtained primarily from records at the D. C. Jail, the Youth Center, the D. C. Parole Office and the Child Welfare Division of the Public Welfare Department.

The police, court, and correctional data were ordered systematically by use of cross-section paper which was divided by months along the horizontal axis and by years on the vertical axis. Dates and events were charted from the time of the offender's first contact with the police until the follow-up date of July 1, 1968.

In addition to the offense and correctional histories, the study required the development of a schedule of costs of the correctional actions and services experienced by the offenders. The schedule was developed by going to police, court, probation, welfare, parole and correctional agencies for the necessary information. Some agencies were able to supply immediately available data on the costs of specific actions and services. Others were able to provide only budgetary data and caseload information from which average costs of particular kinds of actions and services could be estimated.

Career Data Collection: To secure relevant data on the 25 sample cases, all logical sources were explored. At one likely source, the Juvenile Court, the records were found to be unavailable. This focused attention on the Public Welfare Department records, and here it was discovered that records on 15 of the 25 cases could not be located. The most dependable source proved to be the files at the D. C. Jail, where 15 of the original 25 were found to have relatively complete reports on both adult and juvenile law violation histories. Ten substitutions were made from the larger sample of 45 to replace the cases on which no records or incomplete records were found.

Two kinds of checks were made to evaluate the data obtained from the records. The 15 original cases and the 10 substitutions were compared on historical content and on costs to ascertain whether the substitution process had introduced a bias into the sample. The histories appeared generally similar, but the median correctional costs for the substitute cases were about 10 percent lower than those for the 15 original cases. This meant that the substitution process had moved the overall median in a conservative direction.

The 10 cases whose complete records were obtained by combining Welfare and D. C. Jail files were compared with

the 15 cases whose total histories were obtained from the Jail records. In this instance, the 15 cases from the D. C. Jail records showed the lower correctional costs, with a median about 7 percent below that of the cases with the combined records.

It would appear from the two checks that the final data in this study are somewhat more conservative (that is, lower in average correctional cost) than would have been the case had there been no substitutions in the original sample of 25 and had there been complete records of all juvenile case histories available at the Welfare Department.

Offender Characteristics and Careers

The typical member of the 25-offender group was a youth with a history of numerous contacts with police, courts, welfare and correctional agencies. At the time of the follow-up, the median age of the group was 25 years and 8 months. The group members were predominantly Negro.

The age range at follow-up was 22 years 6 months to 29 years 11 months. Eighty percent of the members had been arrested prior to 1959, when the median age of the group was slightly under 17 years. Only 3 of the boys had no juvenile record.

First arrests of the boys ranged over the period 1952 through 1961. The time span covered by the study includes

This case, in 9 years and 2 months, shows 4 juvenile court appearances, 13 months under probation supervision, 7 juvenile arrests, 29 days in the Receiving Home, 10 months at Cedar Knolls, 3 adult arrests, 3 adult court appearances, 8 parole hearings, 7 months of parole supervision, 5.5 months in jail, and 47.5 months in reformatories or youth centers. The total cost of these actions and services amounted to \$30,094.43, which is the median for the group of 25 subjects. A correctional center staff evaluation of this case is presented in Appendix A.

Cost Table

To make possible a costing-out of the correctional actions and services in the twenty-five offender careers, it was necessary to derive a table of average costs. The derivation of this table presented a number of difficulties. One problem was whether to use costs for the present year or for earlier years. Since it was difficult to secure reliable estimates for earlier years, the decision was made to use the most recent estimates available. In the case of facilities that had closed in recent years, the last available data were used.

Some of the figures for action and service costs are approximations or best judgments. The final estimates are shown in Table 1.

are the lower court and arrest costs and the higher institutional costs in the District.

Patterns of Individual and Category Costs

When correctional costs have been applied to offender careers, the results may be usefully viewed in two ways; as individual totals and as category totals. Tables 2 and 3 present these data.

Table 2. Listing of Individual Correctional Costs

1)	\$13,889.87	14)	30,792.62
2)	18,999.17	15)	31,636.60 s
3)	19,761.75		
4)	20,125.12 s	16)	38,858.68
5)	20,664.09 s	17)	40,077.84
		18)	40,477.93
6)	21,719.19 s	19)	40,778.54
7)	22,560.70	20)	41,554.23 s
8)	22,935.06		
9)	26,044.08	21)	46,049.52
10)	26,980.61 s	22)	47,113.48
		23)	55,821.76 s
11)	27,415.18 s	24)	61,746.03 s
12)	28,002.40	25)	68,327.52
13)	30,094.43 (median case) ^s		<u>842,426.40 Total</u>

(s) denotes cases that entered the sample by substitution

The noteworthy features of the data in Table 2 are (1) the wide range of costs incurred by the offenders in the group, and (2) the high totals generated by the more costly cases.

In general, the costs reflect primarily the amount of time spent in either welfare institutions or correctional institutions, particularly the latter. Institutions

make up the greater part of the total costs, and stays in correctional institutions tend to be much longer than those in welfare institutions.

The case that generated the highest cost, \$68,327.52, spent the first nine years of his recorded career in a foster home, followed by several years in welfare institutions, then a number of years in the D. C. Jail and the Youth Center, D. C. During 1955-65 this youth spent only about 18 months outside an institution.

Costs by Action or Service Category: There are several ways of breaking down the total costs of \$842,426.40 into categories of actions and services. One of the fairly gross methods the amount into adult services and juvenile services, which come to \$597,034.38 (71%) and \$245,393.02 (29%), respectively.

Another approach divides costs into institutional and community costs, which amount to \$764,447.05 (90%) and \$77,979.35 (10%), respectively.

A more detailed approach may be taken by listing practically all the categories of actions and services experienced by the offenders over the courses of their careers. These are shown in Table 3, including numbers of actions and lengths of services experienced as well as the costs by category.

Table 3

Costs of Correctional Actions and Services by Category
of Action or Service

Action or Service	No. of Units	Category Cost
Juvenile Court Hearing	51	\$ 4,508.91
Juvenile Probation	140 mo.	1,645.00
Juvenile Arrest	91	1,607.97
Foster Home Care	45 yrs. 8 mo.	35,860.00
Welfare Institutions	39 yrs. 10 da.	201,770.14
Adult Court Hearing	126	5,121.90
Adult Probation	56 mo.	1,106.56
Adult Arrest	148	2,366.52
Adult Parole	563 mo.	15,876.60
Shaw Residence	1 mo. 3 da.	516.90
Community Treatment Cntr.	1 mo.	263.10
Parole Hearing	139	9,105.89
Work Release Center	5 mo.	1,560.00
D. C. Jail	112 mo. 9 da.	31,803.36
Youth Center	804 mo. 15 day.	466,046.85
Federal Rfy. & Other	217 mo.	<u>64,826.70</u>
Total		\$842,426.40

In conclusion, it is evident that the 25 youthful offenders who have been studied here generated a high volume of correctional costs as they grew up in the community. These costs were incurred primarily in connection with institutional treatments. At this point, it is difficult to state whether the investment was a good one or a poor one. Not enough is known about the outcomes of the correctional process to permit this kind of judgment at the present time. Given the opportunity to carry on more

research, particularly studies with a cost-effectiveness orientation, corrections may resolve this question in a satisfactory manner.

The report on these 25 offenders has been primarily statistical or quantitative to this point. It will now be useful to introduce materials that approach the problem from another perspective -- qualitative information about the offender, his family situation, and his career in the community as a child in the home, a sibling, and as a student in the public schools. The following section presents summary materials on the youth whose offender career was outlined on pages 8 and 9 above. The materials are taken from the case folder prepared by Ashland Reformatory staff when the subject was 16 years of age.

when reprimanded about his chronic pattern of keeping late hours. Doe was expelled from school for severely disturbing behavior, and even though expelled, he continued to loiter in the school building, created disturbances, and bullied students.

At the age of 14, Doe was committed to the Department of Public Welfare, and was placed at the Cedar Knolls School, where he remained for almost 11 months. He initially made a poor adjustment at the school, and was reported to be aggressive, hostile, and belligerent. After about six months, he began to relate more favorably with other individuals, and on March 20, 1959, he was placed with his father. At first the relationship with the father was apparently satisfactory. He enrolled in junior high school as a ninth grade student and continued until he was graduated in June 1959. During this school period his attendance was regular, his classroom achievement average and his deportment was good.

During the latter part of 1959 Doe entered high school, but proved unable to conform to the rules, and failed all his subject. In November 1959 Doe withdrew at the suggestion of his father.

Employment History

Doe has had little significant employment experience. He claims to have been employed as a print setter in a printing concern in Washington before and after his commitment to the training school, but his father indicates that he was only irregularly employed at this concern doing odd jobs. After he withdrew from school in November 1959, Doe obtained work at the bakery firm, which employed his father. However, after having worked there for only a few months, he lost his job after he had created various disturbances ...

After he left high school, Doe kept late hours, and led a highly irresponsible existence. He claims that he was hired as "chaperon" at a dance hall in Washington, D. C. In November 1959, he states that a girl asked him to attend a party in order to keep order. Certain individuals at the party attempted to steal his coat, and so he forced them to leave. On the following day one of the persons, whom he had thrown out of the party, met him in a record shop. He states that this man swung on him, and he retaliated, pushing him through a plate glass window. As a result he was

charged with assault and destroying private property. Juvenile papers were filed, and the charges were dismissed.

Present Situation

Doe gives the appearance of being older than his sixteen years. He is a strongly built youth of medium height.

He is the product of a highly unstable family situation. The father, with whom Doe was living prior to his having been committed for the present offense, was openly relieved that his son had been removed from the home situation. He claimed that if his son were not "taken off the streets, he would kill somebody." In February 1960, the father claims that this youth "went crazy," and blackened his eye. On the other hand, Doe claims that at this time his father attacked him with a broken chair, and with a rolling pin ...

Doe appears to be a highly aggressive youth, lacking in a sense of responsibility and in an adequate moral code. He has led a highly unstable, pleasure-seeking existence, and has been prone to aggressively take what he wanted without regard for social control ...

Both during his stay at the Federal Detention Headquarters in Washington, D. C., and at the admissions center, Doe was reported for fighting. It is apparent that he will need close control, at least during the initial part of his commitment.

He appears to be without future goals, and expressed no preference for any job assignment here. At this stage it appears that Doe will be a long-term case.

APPENDIX B

Table 4. Costs of Correctional Actions and Services:
Los Angeles County, California*

Action or Service	Cost per Action or per Month of Day of Service
Juvenile arrest	\$ 22.00
Juvenile Hall detention	20.50 per day
Juvenile Court hearing	326.00
Juvenile probation supervision	20.00 per month
County probation camp	300.00 per month
California Youth Authority institution	309.00 " "
Youth Authority parole	33.00 " "
Municipal Court hearing	100.00
* Superior Court hearing	200.00
County jail	6.85 per day
Adult probation	6.25 per month
California prison, young adult	200.00 " "

*Estimates are primarily for 1963. Adapted from Research Report No. 12, Evaluation of the Intensive Supervision Caseload Project, Los Angeles County Probation Department, May 1964, Stuart Adams and Calvin C. Hopkins.