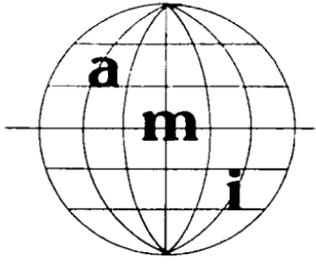


C. P. Sent.
5-17-82



**THE ASSOCIATED MARINE INSTITUTES:
ASSESSMENT OF A SHORT-TERM CONTRACTUAL PROGRAM**



**State of Florida
Bob Graham
Governor**

**Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services
Alvin J. Taylor, Secretary**

**Division of Youth and Families Program Office
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**Research Report No. 681
Prepared by
Division of Youth and Families Program Office
Data Analysis Unit
June, 1981**

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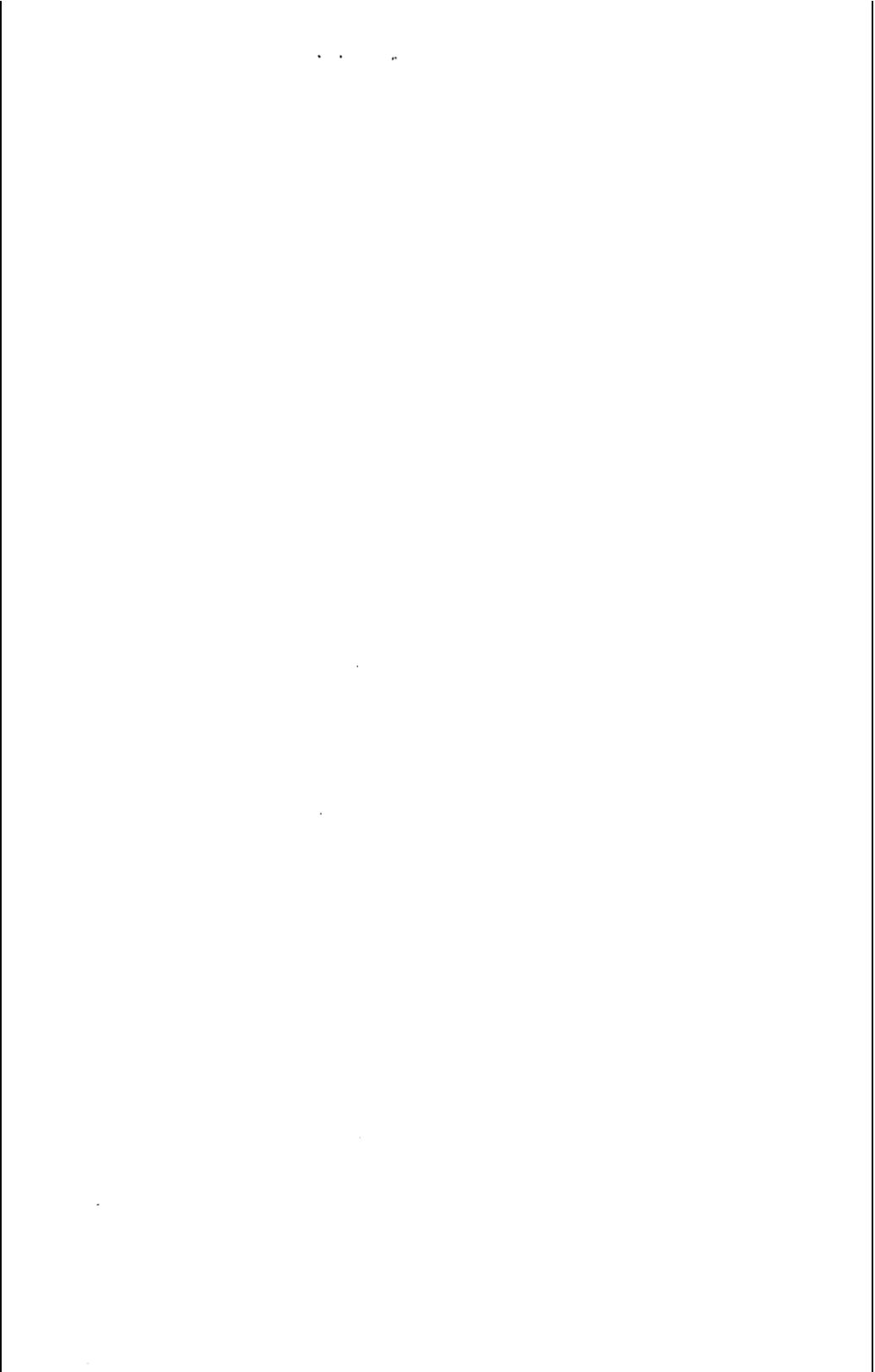
THE ASSOCIATED MARINE INSTITUTES:
ASSESSMENT OF A SHORT-TERM CONTRACTUAL PROGRAM

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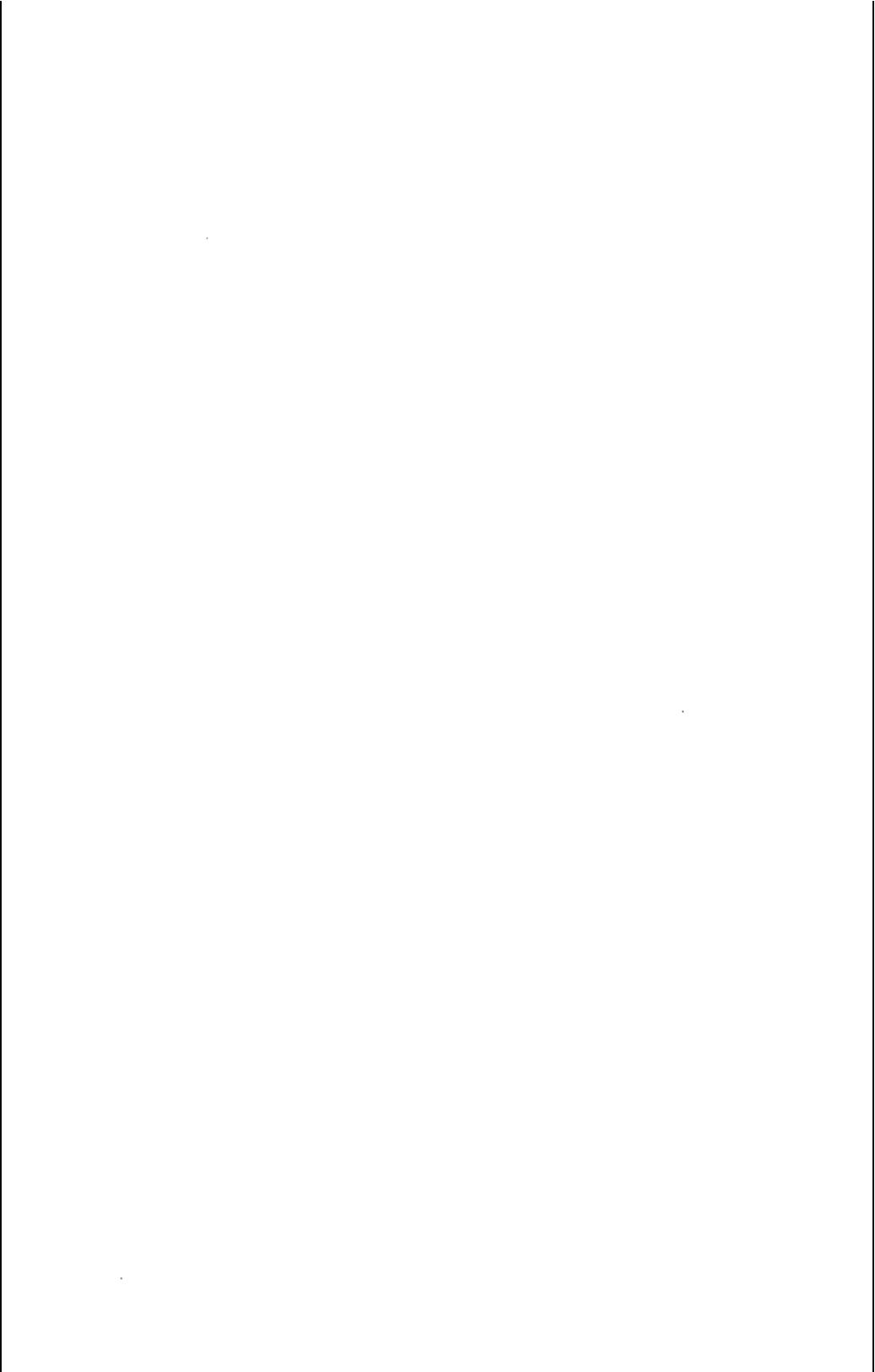


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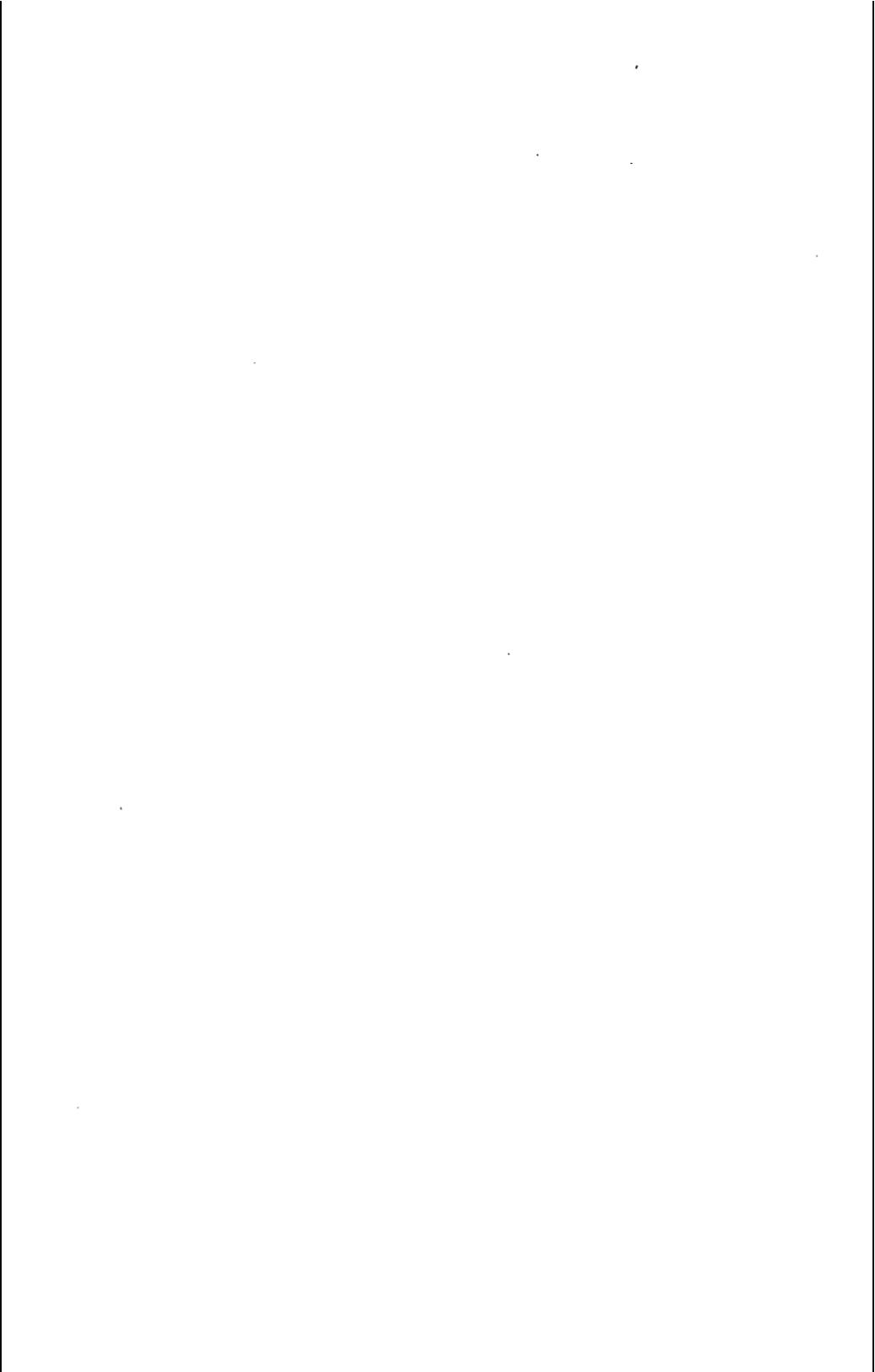
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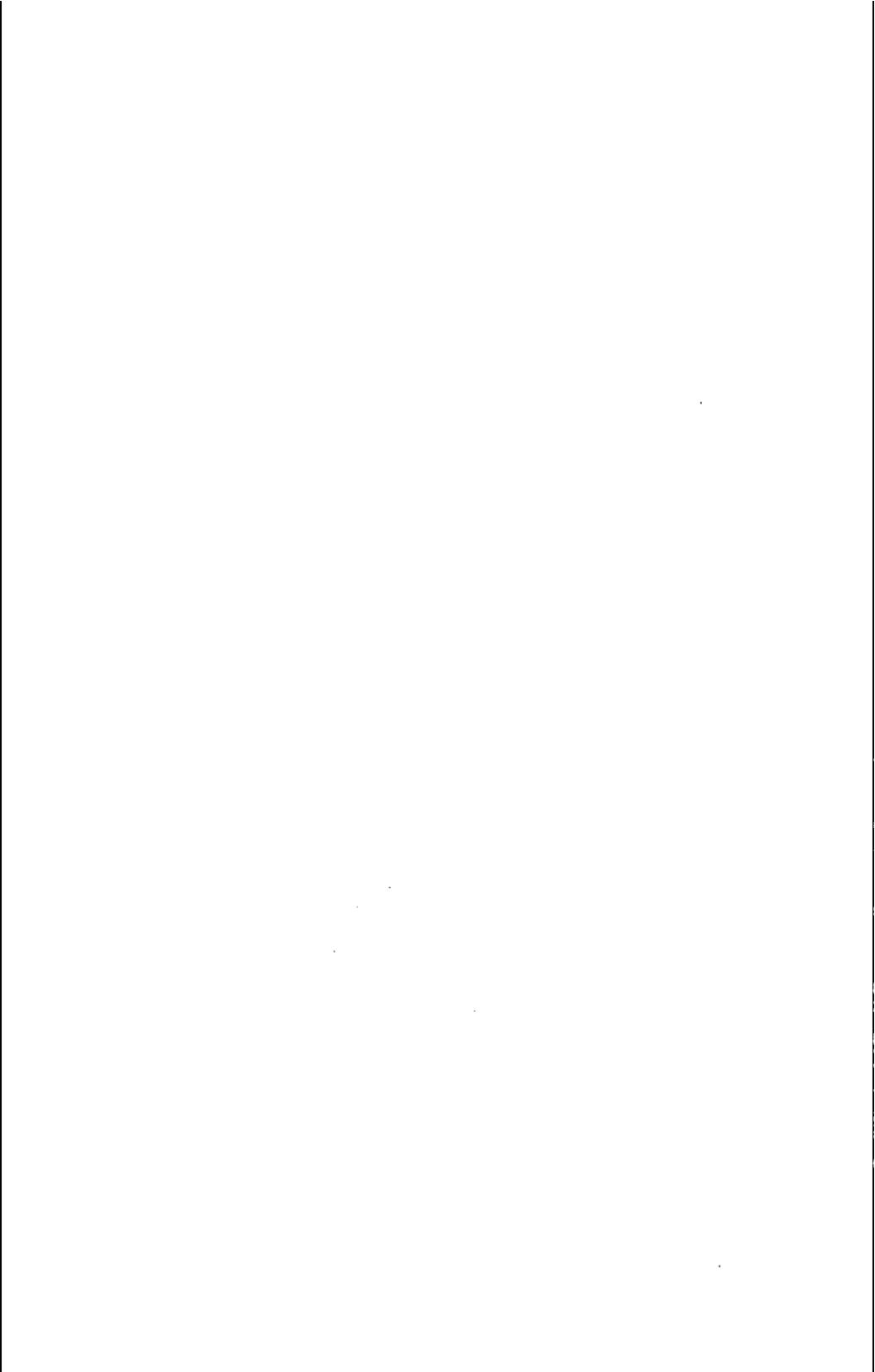
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Associated Marine Institutes, Inc. (AMI) is a public, non-profit education and training organization from whom the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) purchases specialized educational, vocational, and counseling services for delinquent youth who have been placed under supervision of the Department by the juvenile court.

There are seven marine institutes located in Florida; Miami, Pompano Beach, Jacksonville, Panama City, St. Petersburg, Tampa and Key West. Each program, except for the Key West facility, is a non-residential, day care facility that provides services while allowing the child to continue residing with his family.

An evaluation of the AMI program was conducted by the Children, Youth and Families Program Office. Some of the major findings and results are summarized below:

1. During the six month period of July through December 1979, a total of 377 youth were admitted to HRS funded AMI programs. Of these, 49.6 percent were children who had been committed to HRS custody and 50.4 percent were non-committed children, most of whom were under Community Control (probation) supervision by HRS.
2. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the commitment population in AMI programs between July through December 1979, were white and 21% black. Blacks appear to be underrepresented in AMI programs. The number of blacks in AMI programs is a function of the low number of blacks referred to AMI by HRS.
3. Youth admitted to the AMI programs range from 14 to 18 years of age. The majority of youth in AMI programs are 15 or 16 years old.
4. Eight percent of the youth committed to AMI programs from July through December 1979 were females, while 92% were males.
5. The large majority of commitments (73.7%) are for property offenses. Person offenses account for 18.5% of commitments during the July-December 1979 period.
6. The average length of stay for committed youth in AMI programs was 5 months.



7. An analysis of releases from AMI programs indicates that 56.3% of the releases were successful and 43.7% were unsuccessful.

8. AMI programs offer coursework in basic academic skills which is structured to assist students in obtaining their high school equivalency diploma. Of the 75 students who met the age requirement for the G.E.D. test, 72% were successful in obtaining their diploma.

9. Eighty-two percent of the AMI youth discharged from furlough supervision were placed in jobs and/or schools.

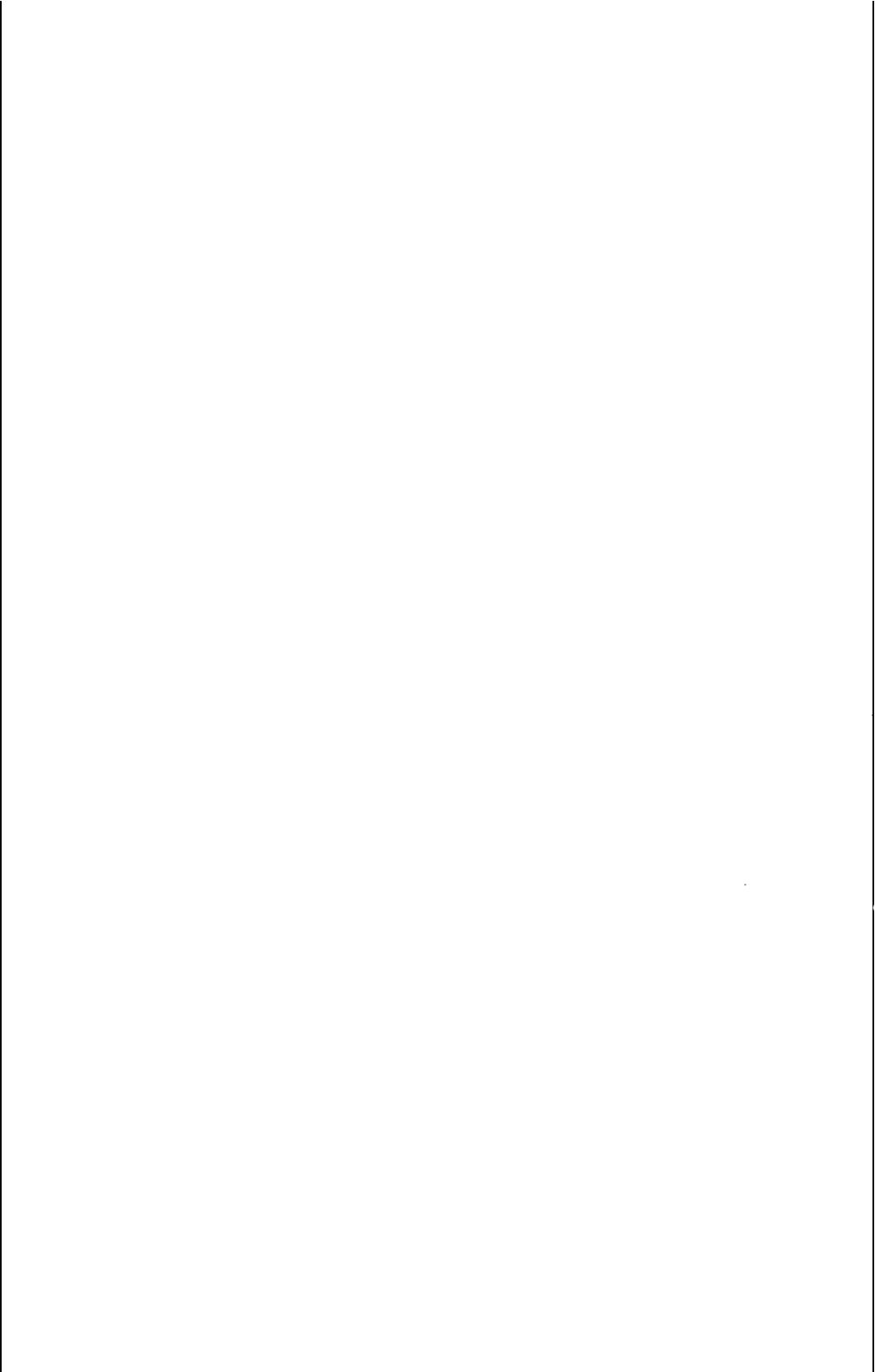
10. The recidivism rate for those youth committed to AMI between January-June 1977 and released from AMI programs was 14% after 12 months and 23% after 18 months. An AMI recidivism study for all HRS clients enrolled between July, 1978 and June 1979 indicates an 18% recidivism rate after 18 months for committed clients and 12% for non-committed clients.

11. COST RELATED FIGURES

	<u>July 1978-June 1979</u>
1) Budgeted Cost/Child Care Day	\$16.43
2) Actual Cost/Child Care Day	\$14.25
3) Average Length of Stay (Days)	173
4) Average Cost Per Case	\$2,465.25

12. Associated Marine Institutes continue to provide quality educational, vocational, and counseling services for delinquent youth. The success attained by program graduates is indicative of the effectiveness of the services delivered. It is recommended that the following actions be initiated in order to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of AMI programs:

- A. Consideration should be given to improving in-program control mechanisms so that fewer clients will require transfer to more restrictive programs.
- B. Youth Services program supervisors in HRS districts 2, 4, 5, 10, and 11 should review referral and screening procedures with the placement coordinator and other appropriate district and AMI staff, to ascertain the reasons for the underrepresentation of blacks in AMI programs. Corrective action plans should then be developed and implemented.



EVALUATION OF ASSOCIATED MARINE INSTITUTES (AMI)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Associated Marine Institutes, Inc. (AMI) is a public, non-profit educational and training organization from whom the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) purchases specialized educational, vocational, and counseling services for delinquent youth who have been placed under supervision of the Department by the juvenile court. Children on Community Control (probation) or Furlough (parole) as well as those in commitment status are referred for placement in the program. There are seven marine institutes located in the following Florida cities: Miami, Pompano Beach, Jacksonville, Panama City, St. Petersburg, Tampa and Key West. Each program, except for the Key West facility, is a non-residential facility that provides services while allowing the child to continue residing with his family. The Florida Keys Marine Institute in Key West began operation July 1, 1979 and is the only residential program. The Pompano Beach facility serves Palm Beach as well as Broward County youth.

The objectives of the AMI program are:

1. To provide a viable commitment alternative to costly residential treatment for at least 50 percent of the youngsters placed into the program.
2. To provide each participant with the opportunity to develop a wide range of pre-vocational and vocational skills which will advance the overall career development of each child and enable him to apply this wide range of knowledge and skills in a variety of occupations.
3. To encourage further training of both an academic and vocational nature. This encouragement should result in each child's increased academic achievement while in the program, and continuing his education in school, employment or other training following his completion of the program.

AMI prefers that program participants be between the ages of fifteen and eighteen.

The vocational program provides each participant with the opportunity to develop a wide variety of occupational skills, including both classroom and on-the-job training. Specific areas of vocational instruction include boat handling, seamanship, scuba diving, practical oceanography, and marine mechanics and maintenance. Remedial classes are also provided to enable trainees to move successfully through the vocational program. Basic academic programs are provided at each institute.

Weather permitting, overnight trips or cruises of from two to four days duration are conducted at regular intervals of from four to six weeks throughout the program for selected youths. These trips enable participants to reinforce skills learned in the shop and classroom by applying them through practical experience.

The program is designed to provide individualized counseling and instruction for each participant. In addition to an overall ratio of about one counselor/instructor per seven trainees, the program director and administrative personnel of the facility have a substantial amount of direct involvement with the trainees.

AMI develops and maintains an active job placement program to assist participants in finding employment, upon completion of the program. AMI works with government and private employment agencies and industry in developing job opportunities for its graduates.

SOURCES OF DATA

Several different sources of data were utilized in this report. Youth Services Population and Movement Reports and Monthly Facility Recapitulation Reports provided data on client flow. A cohort comprised of all AMI placements during the period of July-December 1979 was selected for this study.

Data on age, race, sex, offense and type of commitment came from the Youth Services commitment data base which consists of demographic and case history information on every committed child. There was limited demographic data available on the non-committed clients served by AMI. Data on the race and proportion of non-committed cases in the total population were obtained from the facility recap reports. Length of stay data was not available on the July-December 1979 admission population. The most recent data available is on the April-September 1979 AMI committed admissions.

Another data source utilized is information on Furlough obtained from the Youth Services Case Review Data Base. Case Review forms are completed monthly on all youth who are under field supervision. This was the source of information on the school/job placement of youth furloughed. The population examined comprised all of the committed youth furloughed from AMI from July through December 1979. The cost analysis reported herein was taken from an earlier Youth Services study of program costs for fiscal year 1978-79.

Information on student performance in the area of General Educational Development (GED) testing was provided by AMI institutes for the July-December 1979 period.

The final source of data for the study is the Youth Services central commitment files, which were checked for recidivism information since furlough. For this data base it was necessary to select a sample of youth who had been out of the program long enough to allow for an 18-month follow-up of their record of subsequent law violation. Youth furloughed during January-June 1977 comprised the follow-up population. The program recaps showed only 72 furloughs from the programs* during this period and this total was included in the follow-up.

* The Florida Keys Marine Institute was not in operation during this period.

After compiling the data described, site visits were made by the evaluator to three of the HRS districts (District 2, 5, and 6) housing marine institute programs to gain some first-hand insight into program operations that would aid in the interpretation of the findings and the formulation of conclusions regarding program effectiveness. Informal interviews were held with district and AMI staff involved in screening and working with these clients.

POPULATION PROFILE

During the six months period of July through December 1979 a total of 377 youth were admitted to HRS funded AMI programs. Of these, 49.6 percent were children who had been committed to HRS custody and 50.4 percent were non-committed children, most of whom were under Community Control (probation) supervision by HRS.

An examination of the racial composition of AMI programs indicates that blacks are underrepresented in AMI commitment slots. Table 1 provides a breakdown by race of the percentage entering each program. As a comparison, the table also indicates racial percentages for the total commitment population of the HRS district where each program is located.

Except for the Tampa Marine Institute, the proportion of blacks in each facility is substantially less than the representation of blacks in the district's commitment population. The percentage of blacks entering the Tampa program from July to December 1979 was larger than the percentage in the commitment population for District 6. Overall, blacks comprised 21 percent of the total population committed to AMI, while 40 percent of total commitment population for the seven districts involved were black children.

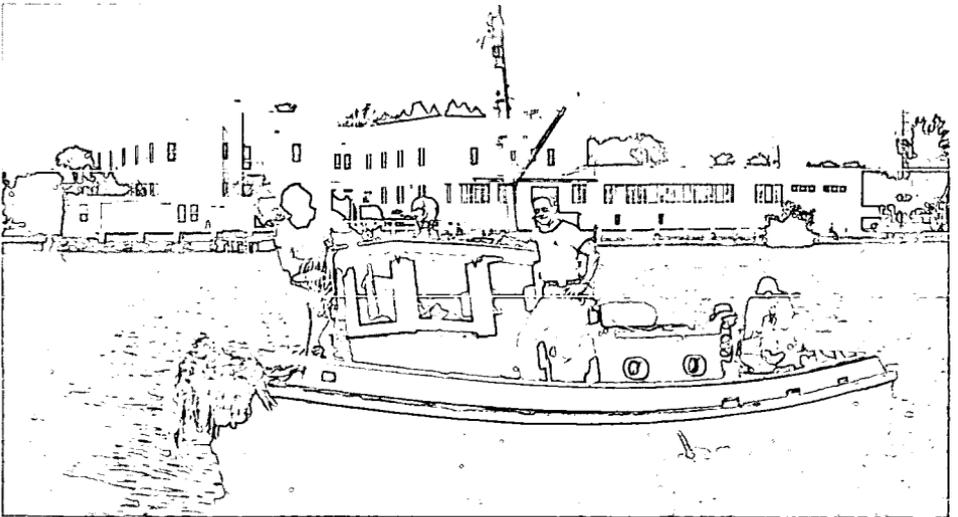
The percentage of blacks among AMI's non-committed population is also small. At the end of the 1979 calendar year only 10 percent of the non-committed youth in AMI programs were black.

The previous AMI evaluation (1978) reported that only 16 percent of the youth entering marine institutes from July-December 1977 were black. Noticeable improvement has occurred since that time, and the percentage of all AMI programs has increased to 21 percent.

Informal interviews with AMI and HRS staff in districts 2, 5, and 6 revealed a number of possible explanations for the level of black participation in these programs. Transportation problems, a lack of interest by blacks, and the availability of other placement alternatives are reasons that were mentioned. In District 5, for example, HRS staff pointed out an abundance of community-based placement alternatives. Because most of these programs are more conveniently located near the inner city area, few blacks are placed at the Pinellas Marine Institute.



Model Environmental Project planting crew.



TMI Students and Staff "shake down" the mini-tug in Tampa Bay.



The Martec sporting her stage name "Henry Morgan"

1980 OLYMPICS- AMI STYLE



Paddling toward the finish line.



Participants preparing for the Buddy Breathing event.

TABLE 1
 RACE COMPARISONS FOR AMI
 COMMITMENT POPULATIONS AND
 DISTRICTS COMMITMENT POPULATIONS
 (July - December 1979)

<u>AMI Programs</u>	<u>AMI Commitment Populations</u>			<u>District Commitment Populations</u>		
	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>N</u>
Broward	75%	25%	12	62%	38%	138
Dade	59%	41%	22	37%	63%	355
Jacksonville	92%	8%	25	63%	37%	454
Palm Beach	80%	20%	10	54%	46%	230
Panama City	100%	0	6	60%	40%	91
Pinellas	92%	8%	13	74%	26%	169
Tampa	60%	40%	15	69%	31%	199
Florida Keys	82%	18%	28	37%	63%	355
Total Population	79%	21%	131	60%	40%	2129

While the reason for the disparity in black participation appears to vary from one district to another, feedback from both HRS and AMI personnel indicates that it is not the result of any selectivity on the part of AMI staff. Potential placements are referred and screened by HRS staff. According to HRS program specialists, placements coordinators, and liaison counselors in the three districts visited, the Marine Institutes are willing to accept all referrals made to the program by HRS. AMI officials point to figures they have which indicate that there is little or no difference in the success achieved by the different races in Marine Institute programs.

The difference between females among the AMI commitment population and the total commitment population does not appear to be substantial. Eleven percent of the youth committed to HRS Youth Services from July to December 1979 were female, while 8 percent of the commitments placed in AMI programs were female.

Data on admissions during the last six months of 1979 show the average age of committed youth entering marine institutes to be 16.2 years old. The percentages for each age are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

AGE OF COMMITTED CHILDREN ADMITTED TO AMI FROM
JULY THROUGH DECEMBER 1979

<u>Age</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>N</u>
14	7%	10
15	48%	65
16	26%	35
17	18%	24
18	1%	1
	<u>100%</u>	<u>135</u>

Offense data are available on 133 committed children admitted to AMI programs during the first six months of 1979. This information, summarized in Table 3, provides a comparison of the type of commitment offense for AMI commitments and all commitments statewide. In both instances, the large majority of commitments are for property offenses.

TABLE 3
OFFENSE CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN COMMITTED
DURING JULY-DECEMBER 1979

<u>Type of Commitment Offense</u>	<u>Commitment Percentages</u>	
	<u>AMI Programs</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
Person	12.8%	17.7%
Property	73.7%	68.5%
Victimless	<u>13.5%</u>	<u>13.8%</u>
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
N = 133	2154	

Children committed for the first time comprise 78.8 percent of the 133 committed persons placed in Marine Institutes during July-December 1979. First-time commitments are more likely to be recommended for a non-residential program such as AMI. The percentage of first-time commitments for the same period statewide was 66.8%. Twenty-eight percent of AMI admissions were recommitments and 5.2 percent were revocations. The percentage of re-committed youth is also substantially less than that found in other Youth Services commitment programs and is in part reflective of the non-residential character of the program.

POPULATION MOVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The Children, Youth and Families Population Movement Report provides a breakdown of the number of admissions and exits that occurred during the July-December study period - committed and non-committed cases included. At the beginning of July, 1979, there were 214 children enrolled in Associated Marine Institutes. During the six months period from July to December, 377 youth were admitted to the eight AMI programs. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the sources of admission to AMI. During the same period, a total of 335 youngsters left the program for a variety of reasons. This information is provided in Table 5. The population at the end of December 1979 was 256. The average daily population maintained during the six months period was 260.5 youth.

The most recent length of stay data available at the time of the study was for those committed youth furloughed from AMI programs during the six months period of April-September 1979. This data was obtained from the Youth Services monitoring data base. The average length of stay for this population was 154 days, or 5.0 months.

About half, 49.6 percent, of the 377 admissions were children who had been committed to HRS Youth Services by the juvenile courts, while the other half, 50.4 percent, were non-committed youngsters. Most of the non-committed youth were under Community Control supervision by Youth Services.

Data reported in the Children, Youth and Families Population Movement Report for July-December 1979 allows for a comparison of the releases from AMI programs and two other non-residential community based programs operated by Children, Youth and Families. Intensive Counseling programs serve only committed children, while TRY Centers handle about half committed and half non-committed, as does AMI. Table 6 presents this data for AMI, Intensive Counseling, and TRY Center programs in a more condensed form to allow for a comparison of successful releases.

Successful releases from Marine Institutes constituted 56.3 percent of all losses for that time period, compared to 61.0 percent for TRY Centers and 66.7 percent for Intensive Counseling. Table 6 shows that 43.7 percent of AMI releases were either transferred to more restrictive programs, recommitted, transferred to the adult system, or terminated for less than honorable reasons. The comparable figure for TRY Centers is 39.0 percent, while only 33.3 percent of Intensive Counseling releases fall into the category of unsuccessful releases. Though the differences between programs appear to be substantial, a chi square statistical test discloses that the difference is not statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 4
AMI ADMISSIONS
(JULY-DECEMBER 1979)

Source of Additions	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
First Commitments	119	31.6
Recommitments	23	6.1
Furlough Revocations	10	2.7
Transfers from:		
Training School	1	.3
More Restrictive Children, Youth and Families Program (excluding Training Schools)	3	.8
Equally Restrictive YS Program	5	1.3
Local Program	6	1.6
Return from Inactive	22	5.8
Intake	14	3.7
Community Control	151	40.1
Furlough (Parole)	15	4.0
Social and Economic Services	4	1.0
Other	<u>4</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Total Additions	377	100.0

TABLE 5
AMI RELEASES
(JULY-DECEMBER 1979)

Losses	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Furlough to Parole	71	21.2
Discharge from Youth Services (committed cases only)	11	3.3
Transfer to:		
Training School	19	5.7
More Restrictive YS Program (excluding Training Schools)	14	4.2
Equally Restrictive YS Program	6	1.8
Local Program	0	0
Recommitment to Youth Services	12	3.6
To the Adult System	7	2.1
Inactive	35	10.4
Honorable Termination (non-committed cases only)	69	20.6
Less Than Honorable Termination	65	19.4
Other	<u>26</u>	<u>7.8</u>
Total Losses	335	100.0

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL RELEASES
FROM NON-RESIDENTIAL
COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS
(JULY-DECEMBER 1979)

		<u>Marine Institutes</u>	<u>TRY Centers</u>	<u>Intensive Counseling</u>
Successful Releases (Furloughes, Discharges & Honorable Terminations)	No. (%)	151 (56.3%)	122 (61.0%)	138 (66.7%)
Unsuccessful Releases (Transfers to more re- strictive programs, re- commitments, less than honorable terminations, to adult system)	No. (%)	117 (43.7%)	78 (39.0%)	69 (33.3%)
		<u>268</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>207</u>
TOTAL		(100.0%)	(100.0%)	(100.0%)

Transfers to programs of greater restrictiveness constitute the largest proportion of unsuccessful AMI releases.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

In addition to training in marine related areas, AMI programs offer coursework in basic academic skills structured toward helping students obtain a high school equivalency diploma. Most institutes have at least one academic teacher provided by the local district school system. Each child entering the program is administered the Test of Adult Basic Education. This instrument is used to assess the educational level at which each child is functioning and whether or not the child is a good candidate to prepare for the General Education Development (G.E.D.) test. Those youth who pass the G.E.D. receive their high school diploma.

Data provided by AMI on the students admitted to Marine Institutes from July to December 1979 indicate that 79 percent of the new admissions met the minimum age (16 years) required by the State to prepare for the G.E.D. test. About one-fourth, 23 percent, of the youth completed the G.E.D. preparation program while in a Marine Institute. Table 7 provides a breakdown of the number of youth completing the preparation program that pass the test and receive their G.E.D. diploma.

TABLE 7

RESULTS OF G.E.D. TESTING

(STUDENTS ADMITTED JULY TO DECEMBER 1979)

<u>Marine Institute</u>	<u>Received</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>Diploma</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Failed Exam</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Brevard	6	86.7	1	13.3
Dade	7	77.8	2	22.2
Jacksonville	14	87.5	2	12.5
Panama City	9	100.0	0	0
Pinellas	7	63.6	4	36.4
Tampa	2	25.0	6	75.0
Florida Keys	9	60.0	6	40.0
All Institutes	54	72.0	21	28.0

The Panama City and Jacksonville Institutes achieved the greatest success with their G.E.D. programs. The Panama City Marine Institute had the largest percentage passing the exam, with no failures. The Jacksonville Marine Institute had 87.5% of the students who completed the G.E.D. preparation program receive their diploma. Overall, 72 percent of all the AMI students who completed the G.E.D. preparation received their high school diploma. Taking into consideration the five months average length of stay in the institutes and the average entry grade level of 7.8 in reading, it appears that AMI programs are having a substantial impact upon the educational achievement of the youth they serve.

EMPLOYMENT

Table 9 provides a breakdown of the employment and school status for the 51 AMI youth discharged from furlough supervision during January-June 1980.

TABLE 9
JOB AND/OR SCHOOL PLACEMENT WHEN DISCHARGED
FROM FURLOUGH SUPERVISION

<u>Placement</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>N</u>
Job Only	68.6	35
Job and School	7.8	4
School Only	5.9	3
Neither	17.6	<u>9</u>
		<u>51</u>

Three-fourths of the committed population studied were working when discharged from supervision (68.6 percent job only, 7.8 percent job and school). No other Youth Services program had as large a percentage of youth employed at the time of discharge. There were more youth attending school while working than there were youth attending school only. Except for one person, everyone in the population was sixteen years of age or older. The lone 15 year old, however, was working rather than attending school.

RECIDIVISM

This section of the evaluation examines information on the subsequent involvement of AMI clients with the juvenile or adult justice systems. The purpose of this follow-up study is to determine recidivism rates twelve and eighteen months following program completion. The definition of recidivism utilized for evaluation purposes is:

Recidivism: Subsequent readjudication of delinquency and/or revocation or recommitment to the juvenile justice system, or admission to the adult criminal justice system by being placed on adult probation, given a suspended sentence or committed to a jail or prison.

This follow-up study was completed on committed youth furloughed from AMI programs during the six months period of January to June 1977. Data were gathered through a review of furlough recap reports and individual case files. There were 72 committed youths furloughed from the Marine Institutes during the period studied. Follow-up information was not available on six cases. As a result, the total population studied numbers 66 clients.

Table 9 presents the recidivism data for the AMI follow-up population. Twelve months after furlough 14 percent had become recidivists, yielding an 86 percent success rate. Eighteen months after furlough the recidivism rate was 23 percent, reciprocally a 77 percent success rate.

Table 9 also gives a breakdown of the types of recidivism and the number of recidivists in each category. One-third of the fifteen youths who became recidivists within eighteen months were handled by the adult court and entered the adult system. Of the ten recidivists handled as juveniles, one was placed on probation and another was given a suspended commitment by the juvenile court. Three juveniles were recommitted by the court and five had their furloughs revoked. Except for one child whose furlough was revoked for a technical violation, all recidivists had committed new law violations.

TABLE 9

RECIDIVISM OF AMI COMMITMENTS
FOR POPULATION COMMITTED BETWEEN JANUARY-JUNE 1977

A. Twelve Months Recidivism

14 percent recidivism rate (9 of 66 cases)

Furlough Revoked	4
Recommitted	2
Placed on Probation	0
Suspended Commitment	<u>1</u>
	7
Adult Probation or Commitment	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	9

B. Eighteen Months Recidivism

23 percent recidivism rate (15 of 66 cases)

Furlough Revoked	5
Recommitted	3
Placed on Probation	1
Suspended Commitment	<u>1</u>
	10
Adult Probation or Commitment	<u>5</u>
TOTAL	15

A comparison of the 18 months recidivism rate for this study population with the rate for the population in an earlier study (August 1975 - April 1976 furlough) shows that AMI has continued to maintain a low rate of recidivism. In fact, the rates for both groups were identical.

<u>August 1975 - April 1976</u>	<u>January - June 1977</u>
85 clients furloughed	66 clients furloughed
18 months follow-up	18 months follow-up
23 percent recidivism	23 percent recidivism

In each study only 23 percent of the population became recidivists. There was some variation between the two groups in the rate of recidivism for the first twelve months following furlough. In the earlier study a twelve months rate of 20 percent was recorded. The rate of those furloughed during the 1977 study was lower at 14 percent.

In addition, AMI was asked to provide more current recidivism information.

Follow-up Data was retrieved on all AMI students enrolled between July 1, 1978 and June 30, 1979. This group of students was chosen to provide a minimum of 18 months recidivism data. The recidivism rate for committed HRS clients was 18% and 12% for non-committed clients.

Total population of the study was 623 students. Table 10 delineates that the success of committed students (measured by percent favorable terminations) is comparable to that of non-committed students.

TABLE 10

AMI FOLLOW-UP RETRIEVAL

POPULATION = All HRS clients enrolled between July 1, 1978 and June 30, 1979

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Committed Students Enrolled	268
Committed Students - Favorable Terminations . .	148
Non-Committed Students Enrolled	355
Non-Committed Students - Favorable Terminations	189
% Committed Students - Favorable Terminations .	55%
% Non-Committed Students - Favorable Terminations	53%
% Recidivism for Committed Students	18%
% Recidivism for Non-Committed Students	12%

PROGRAM COST

The cost-related figures below provide a limited analysis of program costs for Associated Marine Institutes. The cost per case figure is the average cost per client successfully completing the program and is derived by multiplying the actual cost per child day by the average length of stay. The Florida Keys Marine Institute was not in operation during the fiscal year studied.

COST RELATED FIGURES

	<u>July 1978-June 1979</u>
1. Budgeted Cost/Child Care Day	\$16.43
2. Actual Cost/Child Care Day	\$14.25
3. Average Length of Stay (Days)	173
4. Average Cost Per Case	\$2,465.25

The actual cost per child day for AMI clients was less than the budgeted cost for the period studied.

APPENDIX

AMI's Reaction To the Evaluation

The preceding evaluation of AMI conducted by the Children, Youth and Families Program Office is a useful tool providing our organization with constructive feedback and supplementing our annual in-house evaluations. The time and effort contributed by the HRS Staff is appreciated. Present AMI efforts will be increased in the two areas discussed in the Evaluation Recommendations -- demographics and transfer of clients to more restrictive programs.

Considerable improvement has been made in both areas since our last HRS Evaluation. Minority participation has increased five percent and the percent of clients transferring to more restrictive programs has decreased by six percent. The progress in both areas is the result of an increase in emphasis on the part of AMI, including recruitment of minorities and developing techniques for reduction of unfavorable exits. As specified in the preceding evaluation, HRS is responsible for referrals; therefore, AMI's role in client demographics is limited. It should also be noted that only a small percentage of negative terminations are initiated by AMI. Half of the transfers are due to circumstances (run-aways, failure to attend) in which AMI does not get the opportunity to decide the status of the youngsters.

A comparison of successful and unsuccessful releases of AMI and two other non-residential programs, TRY Center and Intensive Counseling, was made in the Evaluation. Release status of participating youngsters is important; however, AMI regards recidivism as the "bottom line" indicator of the total effectiveness of a program. Recidivism rates reflect further legal involvement of all youngsters leaving the program including those participants labeled unsuccessful releases. Recidivism rates of different programs were not compared in the report. Historically AMI maintained the lowest recidivism rates of the HRS programs.

A client can participate in the program for a period of time, improving basic skills and making positive behavior changes. One incident can dictate his/her removal from the program and classify him/her as an unsuccessful release. Recidivism statistics show that most of these AMI youngsters, in this circumstance, have made considerable progress and have not returned to the criminal justice system upon release. We feel that this criteria is more accurate than the status of the release.

