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REPORT TO THE CONGRESS 095956



Difficulties Of Assessing Results
Of Law Enforcement Assistance
Administration Projects
To Reduce Crime B-171019

Department of Justice

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES

~~701887~~ / 095956

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This is our report on the difficulties of assessing results of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration projects to reduce crime.

We made our review pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

Copies of this report are being sent to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Attorney General; and the Administrator, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

James B. Stacks

Comptroller General
of the United States

C o n t e n t s

		<u>Page</u>
DIGEST		1
CHAPTER		
1	INTRODUCTION	7
	Project funding	8
	Scope of review	8
2	LACK OF STANDARDS: THE BASIC PROBLEM	10
	Recent LEAA and SPA actions to im- prove evaluations	12
3	ALCOHOLIC DETOXIFICATION CENTERS	14
	Need for centers	14
	Projects reviewed	15
	Project evaluation	19
	Project effectiveness	22
4	DRUG-COUNSELING PROJECTS	26
	Why drug-counseling projects are needed	26
	Projects reviewed	27
	Project evaluation	29
	Project effectiveness	30
5	YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS	33
	Need for youth service bureaus	33
	Projects reviewed	34
	Project evaluation	36
	Project effectiveness	40
6	GROUP HOMES FOR JUVENILES	44
	Purpose of group homes	44
	Projects reviewed	45
	Project evaluation	48
	Project effectiveness	51
7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
	Conclusions	54
	Recommendations to the Attorney General	55

CHAPTER		<u>Page</u>
	Agency comments and GAO evaluation	59
	Recommendation to the Congress	62

APPENDIX

I	Letter dated February 8, 1974, from the Acting Assistant Attorney General for Administration, Department of Justice	63
II	Principal officials of the Department of Justice responsible for administering activities discussed in this report	71

ABBREVIATIONS

GAO	General Accounting Office
HEW	Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
LEAA	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
SPAs	State planning agencies

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

Between fiscal years 1969 and 1973 the Federal Government, through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), awarded about \$1.5 billion to finance over 30,000 projects of State and local governments designed to prevent or reduce crime.

LEAA funds for these projects are distributed as block or discretionary grants. State planning agencies generally determine further disbursement of these funds to specific programs in the criminal justice system--police, courts, or corrections.

LEAA was one of the first agencies the Congress established to operate a block grant program.

GAO wanted to know if management had taken appropriate steps to find out, if possible, whether the projects had helped to prevent or reduce crime.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Common difficulties were involved in trying to assess results of the four types of LEAA projects GAO reviewed.

LEAA and the States have established no standards or criteria by which some indication of success or failure of similar projects can be determined.

To develop such criteria, comparable data on the operation and results of similar projects is needed.

Although LEAA encouraged States to evaluate their projects, LEAA did not take steps to make sure comparable data was collected. Thus, information for similar projects was not adequate or comparable.

The following examples from the four types of projects reviewed--alcohol detoxification centers, youth service bureaus, group homes for juveniles, and drug-counseling centers--illustrate the difficulty of trying to assess the effectiveness of LEAA projects.

Alcohol detoxification centers

An expectation of the centers GAO reviewed was that their short-term treatment approach might have some positive impact on the "revolving-door" pattern of the chronic public drunk.

About 70 percent of the patients being treated at the three centers previously had been patients. The readmission rates were about the same despite significant differences in costs and services provided.

However, without criteria as to what acceptable readmission rates might be, neither GAO, the States, nor LEAA can state whether the projects were effective. (See ch. 3.)

Youth service bureaus

These are to provide services to keep youths who have a high potential to commit crimes from doing so. One basic way to find out if the projects are doing this is to gather behavior data on the youths.

Only one of the three LEAA projects reported such data. It showed that only 15 percent of the young people served during a 1-year period who had court records got into trouble after contact with the project. Data developed by GAO for another project, however, showed that 43 percent of the youths who had court records were referred to juvenile court after contact with the project.

The first project appears to have been more successful, but, without standard ranges of expected success rates, neither GAO, the States, nor LEAA can determine the success of the youth service bureaus.

Group homes for juveniles

These homes are to provide a family environment in a residential setting where a youth's problems can be treated and corrected. Data GAO developed showed that 45 percent of youths were released from these homes for poor behavior; 65 percent had problems which resulted in referral to juvenile court once they left the homes; and 36 percent were sent to penal or mental institutions after release.

Are such percentages acceptable? Until LEAA and the States establish criteria there is no adequate basis for determining success or failure. (See ch. 6.)

Drug-counseling centers

These centers sought to rehabilitate youthful drug abusers and prevent youths from taking drugs. One center kept no data on former use of drugs by participants or the extent of their change in drug use after participating in the counseling centers because participants feared this information would be provided to law enforcement officials. Another drug-counseling project developed data on the drug use habits for about 45 percent of its participants but based its conclusions entirely on participants' oral statements and the staff's opinion on their progress. (See ch. 4.)

Evaluation reports inconsistent

Because adequate evaluation criteria did not exist, evaluation reports on the projects were inconsistent and generally did not provide sufficient data to allow management to make objective decisions regarding project success.

Evaluation reports on the three detoxification centers focused on different aspects of the centers' operations and used different techniques.

One report described in detail the operations of the center and tried to compare its operations to the operations of another project even though the two projects' treatment philosophies differed significantly regarding the extent of medical services to be provided.

A report for another project assessed primarily the adequacy of the project's facilities and staff and sought patients' and police

department views of the project's usefulness and success.

The evaluation of the third center developed quarterly statistics concerning patients and what happened to them. But the information in the quarterly reports was inconsistent, which reduced the value of the reports as indicators of the project's results. (See ch. 3.)

Evaluations of the youth service bureaus also varied. Studies of one project developed information primarily concerning the extent of community support for the project. A study of another project consisted primarily of interviews of project staff and certain participants, randomly selected, to determine whether they thought the project influenced them to stay out of trouble. No objective data was reported on the project's effect on participants.

The evaluation report of the third project, however, contained subjective and objective data indicating the project's impact. (See ch. 5.)

Similarly, the evaluation on only one of the juvenile group homes presented data adequate to indicate the project's effect. Evaluation of another project presented data showing where the participants went after leaving the home but did not disclose whether they subsequently got into trouble and were referred to juvenile court. The evaluators of the third project solicited views of participants and staff through questionnaires. (See ch. 6.)

Recent LEAA actions

In the fall of 1973 LEAA began to plan programs to improve its ability to evaluate LEAA-funded projects.

A separate evaluation unit was established in LEAA's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to develop evaluation strategies.

The National Institute also started new projects to provide States with information on how they may want to operate and evaluate certain types of projects. However, LEAA has not mandated any requirements that the States standardize the type of data they collect for similar projects.

One issue involved in LEAA-financed programs is determining the type of leadership the responsible Federal agency should provide to insure program accountability for Federal funds spent by the States. The actions LEAA has taken are not adequate to establish systems necessary to provide the Congress with such accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Attorney General should direct that LEAA, in cooperation with the States, designate several projects from each type of LEAA-funded program as demonstration projects and determine information that should be gathered and the type of evaluations that should be done in order to establish, for similar projects, the following.

- Guidelines relating to general goals, the type of staff that could be employed, the range of services that could be provided, and expected range of costs that might be incurred.
- Uniform information.
- Standard reporting systems.

AGENCY ACTIONS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

--A standard range of expected accomplishments that can be used to determine effectiveness.

--Standardized evaluation methodologies that should be used so comparable results can be developed on the impact.

In developing the standards, LEAA should coordinate its efforts with those of Federal agencies funding similar projects.

On the basis of the standards developed from the demonstration projects, the Attorney General should direct LEAA to:

--Establish an impact information system which LEAA-funded projects must use to report to their States on the effectiveness of their projects.

--Require States, once such a system is established, to develop, as part of their State plans, a system for approving individual project evaluations only when it can be determined that such efforts will not duplicate information already available from the impact information system.

--Publish annually for the major project areas results obtained from the impact information system so the Congress and the public can assess LEAA program effectiveness.

GAO also suggested certain information that could be gathered to indicate the impact of the types of projects it reviewed. (See pp. 56 and 57.)

In developing information on the impact of projects, LEAA must arrange the data so the confidentiality of the individual is protected.

2 The Department of Justice generally agreed with the conclusions and recommendations regarding the need for greater standardization of goals, costs, types of services, and information to be collected on similar projects so better evaluations can be made.

However, the Department did not agree with the recommendations that the way to implement the needed improvements was to have LEAA ultimately establish general criteria regarding each item. (See app. I.)

The Department believes it is inconsistent with the philosophy of the "New Federalism," as defined by the Administration, for LEAA to require the States to adopt such guidelines. LEAA plans to continue to encourage the States to evaluate their programs and to disseminate to them information on projects' operations and results as written up in various LEAA publications.

However, the information in such publications is generally not comprehensive enough to provide an adequate basis for developing comparable data to develop standards and criteria.

GAO does not believe the Department's proposed methods for carrying out the recommendations will insure that the same general guidelines and criteria are applied to similar projects so effective evaluations and adequate national accountability can be achieved.

GAO believes that its recommendations for LEAA to establish general criteria for the grant projects and to require States to adopt such criteria are consistent with the concern of the Congress that LEAA provide

more leadership so information on the program's success would be available. (See pp. 60 to 62.)

The States reviewed agreed with GAO's conclusions and recommendations and noted that they would be helpful in improving their evaluation efforts.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION
BY THE CONGRESS

Although the Crime Control Act of

1973 requires the Administration to provide more leadership and report to the Congress on LEAA activities, the Department of Justice's responses to GAO's recommendations indicate that LEAA's action will not be consistent with the intent of the Congress.

Therefore, GAO recommends that the cognizant legislative committees further discuss this matter with officials of the Department.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Between fiscal years 1969 and 1973 the Federal Government, through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), awarded about \$1.5 billion to help State and local governments fund over 30,000 projects to prevent or reduce crime. Have the projects been effective? In many cases it is too early to know because they have been operating for only a few years. However, to answer the question, certain steps, such as defining project goals, have to be taken.

To determine whether the steps have been taken to make such assessments, we reviewed 11 projects--alcohol detoxification centers, youth service bureaus, group homes for juveniles, and drug-counseling centers--in Kansas, Missouri, Oregon, and Washington. We asked:

- Whether standards and goals had been established to determine if the projects were successful.
- Whether evaluations of the projects were useful.
- What LEAA has done to help State and local governments determine project impact.

We also determined, to a certain extent, whether the projects had helped the participants.

Establishing a sound basis for assessing the effectiveness of social programs is necessary but frequently difficult. The problem is compounded in LEAA's program because of the number of projects funded. Yet, most of the projects (1) have the same goal--to prevent or reduce crime, (2) involve one or more elements of the criminal justice system--police, courts, or corrections, and (3) deal with participants who either have been involved with the criminal justice system or are likely to become involved with it if they are not helped. Accordingly, certain criteria could be applied to most LEAA-funded projects to assess their impact. By examining closely a few projects, we (1) identified specific difficulties in trying to assess impact which we believe are inherent in most LEAA-funded projects and (2) developed a basis for recommending ways to improve program operations.

PROJECT FUNDING

The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3701), LEAA's authorizing legislation, encouraged the funding of projects that involved new methods to prevent or reduce crime or that strengthened law enforcement activities at the community level. The Crime Control Act of 1973, which amended the 1968 act, extended LEAA's existence until 1976 and reemphasized that legislative intent.

The legislation provides for State planning agencies (SPAs), established by the Governors, to manage the Federal funds provided by LEAA. SPAs must develop State plans to indicate how they will try to prevent or reduce crime. This plan, when approved by the LEAA Regional Administrator, is the basis for Federal grants to the State. LEAA therefore must establish regulations and guidelines necessary to carry out the purposes of the act; SPAs must determine what projects will be funded and are to seek advice from local or regional planning units in developing their plans.

LEAA project funds are awarded as either block or discretionary grants. Block grants are awarded in total to SPAs who determine the further distribution of the funds to programs and subgrantees. Discretionary grants are made according to criteria, terms, and conditions determined by LEAA; can be awarded to specific groups on the basis of LEAA-approved applications; and are to

- advance national priorities,
- draw attention to programs not emphasized in State plans, and
- afford special impetus for reform and experimentation.

SPAs carry out their plans primarily by awarding funds to subgrantees, usually other State agencies, local governments, or nonprofit organizations, to implement specific projects. All subgrantees must adhere to LEAA and SPA regulations and guidelines in carrying out their projects.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The projects reviewed were selected because they had been operating for several years and appeared similar in

operations and funding levels to other projects in the selected States.

To assess the projects' operation and determine the problems of determining their effectiveness, we (1) used statistical data on the impact to the project if it had been gathered in evaluation studies of the projects, (2) used data recorded by project operating staff if it was relevant to assessing impact, and (3) gathered additional data, primarily from court records.

We also determined the extent to which goals were uniform and quantified for similar projects and, to the extent possible, compared the results of similar projects, to determine impact. To assess LEAA's role, we reviewed LEAA's headquarters operations and the work of LEAA regional staff in Kansas City, Kansas, and Seattle, Washington. We did our fieldwork between October 1972 and May 1973.

CHAPTER 2

LACK OF STANDARDS: THE BASIC PROBLEM

In 1967 the Task Force on Juvenile Delinquency of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice stated that hundreds of different types of juvenile delinquency prevention projects were not only plausible but were being tried out. The task force stated that the overwhelming need was to find out how well the projects worked, to stop funding those that did not work, and to give greater support to those that did. It noted that evaluations done to date were not adequate to draw conclusions as to the merits of similar projects. The task force stated:

"Evaluation is presently done program by program. Each evaluation starts from its own premises, considers its own class of effects, develops its own indicators of success, follows up for its administratively feasible length of time. It is an almost impossible task to compare results. * * * If we are to find answers to policy questions of national scope, ways will have to be found to focus attention on common central issues. * * * The relevant Federal group can identify key questions regarding prevention programs, specify the types of indicators that would mark success, and perhaps indicate the time interval over which effects should be observed. The local evaluators, project-based or in universities or research centers, would be free to pursue whatever other outcomes they were interested in. But, somewhere in the research scheme, they would collect data on the identified issues. The data would be comparable across projects, and out of 20 or 30 or 100 projects, conclusions would emerge of major import."

The above quote is still appropriate when reviewing steps LEAA and SPAs took to develop information on projects' impact. The difficulties of evaluating LEAA-funded projects stem largely from LEAA's failure to provide adequate leadership in developing the systems necessary to produce impact data so project results can be compared. LEAA has encouraged

evaluations but has not established or suggested criteria to measure results. Neither has LEAA identified the type of data that should be collected so results could be compared.

A standard range of acceptable accomplishment rates is necessary to evaluate project success. Quantifiable goals for specific projects indicate the project planner's intentions but cannot be used to compare the project's success to similar projects unless the goals for all are similar and similar data is collected for each project.

LEAA guidelines for 1972 Comprehensive State Plans stated that:

"Program and project evaluation is necessary as a basis for updating and revising future plans, and to gauge success of implementation. Too little is known about the degree to which current projects and programs have been effective * * *."

The guidelines defined "evaluation" as answering whether

- the grantee accomplished what it said it would,
- the project contributed to the SPA's goals and objectives, and
- the project had side effects.

The guidelines then required that States consider and select one of the following alternatives for evaluating projects the SPAs funded:

- Evaluate 15 percent of the total number of subgrants awarded in fiscal year 1972.
- Evaluate 15 percent of the total dollar value of subgrants awarded in fiscal year 1972.
- Evaluate all the subgrants awarded in one program area.

The guidelines, however, did not suggest any standards or criteria to insure that comparable data would be obtained so the results of the evaluation studies could be compared.

For example, should LEAA or SPAs consider detoxification centers effective if they prevented 40 percent of their patients from being arrested for drunkenness for 60 days after release from the center? Should the percent be 60 or the number of days be 30? Without obtaining comparable data from similar projects, LEAA cannot develop the baseline information necessary to establish success standards.

Merely requiring evaluations is insufficient. LEAA must consider how the evaluations can be standardized so SPAs and LEAA can objectively develop strategies for allocating their resources.

RECENT LEAA AND SPA ACTIONS TO IMPROVE EVALUATIONS

In the fall of 1973 LEAA began to plan efforts to improve its ability to evaluate the results of LEAA-funded projects.

In response to the congressional mandate in the Crime Control Act of 1973 that LEAA strengthen its evaluation capability, LEAA plans to:

- Strengthen SPAs' capabilities to design and implement project evaluations by providing more technical assistance to them.
- Improve the SPA evaluation coordination to permit evaluators to comprehensively report on the overall results by expanding the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice activities.
- Develop a nationwide system for collecting and analyzing operating data generated in implementing LEAA-funded projects.

To implement these plans over the next few years, LEAA has made several organizational changes. LEAA established

- a separate evaluation division in October 1973 in the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to evaluate LEAA's programs and

--an office of planning and management in October 1973 to oversee the development and implementation of comprehensive LEAA and SPA evaluations.

Other actions which LEAA has taken or has proposed to take are noted in the Department of Justice comments on this report. (See app. I.)

Two SPAs reviewed have also tried to improve their evaluation capability by developing standards for certain types of projects. Missouri has established standards for planning, organizing, and administering group homes and requires that certain information be collected on each participant's activities. Washington is developing a standard information system for group homes. Washington also has recently approved guidelines for youth service bureaus that set forth basic functions that youth services should offer, organizational models, and minimum statistical data that each youth service bureau must develop.

These actions are in the right direction, but without LEAA leadership and guidance there is no guarantee that the Missouri and Washington systems will be compatible either with each other or with systems other SPAs may be developing. LEAA guidance and direction are essential if nationwide data is to be gathered on project effectiveness.

CHAPTER 3

ALCOHOLIC DETOXIFICATION CENTERS

Detoxification centers are an alternative to placing drunks in jail (drunk tank). Are centers successful? To find out, it is necessary to compare the results of the operations of similar centers against success standards.

When LEAA started funding detoxification centers, it had the opportunity to establish an information system that could have been the basis for developing treatment standards and criteria for projects it funded. Such standards could have been established while still providing sufficient flexibility so the centers could respond to particular local conditions.

LEAA, however, has not gathered adequate data from LEAA-funded projects and has issued no guidelines on the range of services LEAA-funded detoxification centers should offer, the average per patient costs that should be incurred, or the long-term benefits that alcoholics should realize from going to such centers.

NEED FOR CENTERS

In 1971 a consultant task force for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reported that about 9 million people in the United States have serious alcoholic problems: 5 million are chronic addictive alcoholics and 4 million drink so much that their jobs are affected or their health is impaired.

The skid row alcoholic, the most visible victim of alcoholism, constitutes an estimated 3 to 5 percent of the chronic addictive alcoholics. Alcoholics account for about one-third of all arrests reported annually nationwide. In 1971 the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that 1.4 million arrests were for public drunkenness. Many of these actions involve the repeated arrest of the same persons, reflecting the familiar pattern of the revolving-door alcoholic--intoxication, arrest, conviction, sentence, imprisonment, release, intoxication, and rearrest.

In 1967 the Task Force on Drunkenness of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that communities establish detoxification units

as part of their comprehensive treatment programs. The task force believed the establishment of detoxification centers was the best alternative to traditional methods (such as drunk tanks) of handling intoxicated offenders and a prerequisite to revising existing laws so that being drunk in public could be considered an illness rather than a crime. The task force believed the centers should provide not only a "dry out" period but should also provide such therapeutic and aftercare programs as

- physical examinations;
- emergency units for treating acutely intoxicated persons;
- transportation to hospitals if advanced medical care was necessary; and
- supplemental aftercare community activities, such as those provided by Alcoholics Anonymous, local missions, and housing and employment counseling centers.

LEAA funds have helped establish or maintain alcoholic detoxification centers so police departments will not have to care for drunks and police officers can deal with more serious law enforcement matters.

PROJECTS REVIEWED

We reviewed three detoxification centers: ✓ Alcoholic Recovery Center, Portland, Oregon; the Kansas City Sober House, Kansas City, Missouri; and the Seattle Treatment Center, Seattle, Washington. The Portland and Kansas City centers were in skid row; the Seattle center was 2 miles from skid row. All three centers, however, treated primarily the skid row alcoholic. This is to be expected since skid row is the major location where persons are picked up for public drunkenness.

Each project has received the following funds for its operations:

27
3A
A5

	<u>Total</u> <u>grant</u> <u>budget</u>	<u>LEAA funds</u> <u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>of</u> <u>total</u>	<u>Months</u> <u>of</u> <u>opera-</u> <u>tion</u>	<u>Grant period</u>
Kansas					
City	\$253,664	\$170,000	67	24	5-71 to 5-73
Portland	688,677	407,301	59	21	10-71 to 6-73
Seattle	962,322	385,090	40	18	7-71 to 12-72

The goals of these projects were to reduce the number of public drunks arrested and jailed and to help the patients cope with their alcoholic problems so they could eventually become rehabilitated and not be a burden to themselves or society. The police officer brought the drunk to the center without arresting him. If the center refused to admit the drunk because of his belligerence or the lack of room or if he refused to remain at the center, he was usually arrested and jailed.

Other admissions could be made by the alcoholic himself, outreach workers, or other treatment agencies. Centers retained the chronic alcoholics for 3 to 5 days and offered various therapeutic techniques. The alcoholic's participation was essentially voluntary even if the police brought him to the center. The purpose of the procedure is to dry out the alcoholic, build him up physically, begin social rehabilitation, and return him to the community under circumstances favorable to his efforts toward increased sobriety. The centers hoped that a short-term treatment might have some positive impact on the revolving-door pattern of the chronic public drunk.

How serious can the revolving-door problem be? The following case histories of five patients treated by the Seattle center illustrate the problem.

<u>Patient</u>	<u>Time period</u>	<u>Number of admissions</u>
1	March and April 1972	City jail, 6 Seattle project, 3
2	March and April 1972	City jail, 3 Seattle project, 4
3	March and April 1972	City jail, 5 Seattle project, 2
4	March and April 1972	City jail, 5 Seattle project, 4
5	March 1972	City jail, 4 Seattle project, 2

The three centers had significantly different costs. Seattle costs were \$43 a day per patient, Portland costs were \$25, and Kansas City costs were \$23. The length of stay at the centers ranged from an average of 2.6 days to 4.1 days, and the cost per patient stay varied from an average of \$60 in Kansas City to \$146 at Seattle.

The major difference in cost was attributed to the difference in the medical services provided, the number of supporting personnel employed, and the cost of providing the facility. Seattle had a large medical staff--6 part-time doctors, 1 full-time doctor, and 14 registered full-time nurses. Portland had doctors as part-time consultants and 6 registered full-time nurses. Kansas City had one consulting physician and one registered full-time nurse. Each patient entering the Seattle center was given a complete medical examination. Registered nurses in Kansas City and Portland evaluated patients' medical problems upon admission but did not ask doctors to examine patients unless they appeared ill.

Rental costs and total staffing at the centers were as follows.

	<u>Average monthly rent for facility</u>	<u>Beds</u>	<u>Paid staff</u>	<u>Paid staff per bed</u>
Kansas City	\$1,335	55	14	0.25
Portland	600	50	34	.68
Seattle	^a 6,433	59	82	1.4

^aRent ranged from \$5,000 to \$10,300.

LEAA has no guidelines regarding the amount of medical services to be provided at a detoxification facility, the type or number of staff to be employed per patient, or the amount of rehabilitative services to be provided by detoxification centers funded with LEAA funds.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Given the lack of guidelines as to what constitutes detoxification centers and as to what evaluations should consist of, what type of evaluations were made of the three projects? We had to assess the adequacy of the evaluations before attempting to comment on the impact of the projects. A detoxification center can best measure its effectiveness by establishing quantifiable goals, gathering statistics in like measurable units, and comparing outputs with goals.

None of the three centers had outlined measurable quantified goals that related to the problems they were attempting to diminish. Each project, however, did quantify service delivery goals. Kansas City planned to treat 3,600 annually; Portland, 2,500 during its first year of operation; and Seattle, 8,700 annually.

The three subgrantees did not identify quantified goals, such as (1) the percentage or number of patients who should be rehabilitated, (2) the percentage or number of patients who should be referred to follow-on treatment facilities, and (3) the number of patients who stop drinking or maintain periods of sobriety.

Grant applications for LEAA funds should include a section that contains the grantee's criteria and project evaluation plans. The evaluation component in the nine applications¹ for the three alcohol centers reviewed did not describe the criteria or evaluation plan.

LEAA's 1971 SPA guide stated in relation to grant application evaluation components or plans:

"Evaluation is simplified if the subgrantee application contains clear and quantifiable statements of the expected results of the project. These statements should include both input measures (e.g., numbers of addicts treated) and output measures (e.g., numbers of addicts rehabilitated)."

¹ Project applications usually request funding for 1 year or less. Since each of the three projects had been funded for more than 1 year, each project had submitted at least two applications.

Neither LEAA nor the SPAs assisted the three projects in developing methods to insure acceptable evaluations.

The first two grant applications of the Kansas City project did not specify grant goals, statistics to be kept, or an evaluation plan. The last two grant applications contained goals to be evaluated, such as the police time reduced in processing public drunkenness cases, the number of cases to be handled by the municipal court, and the number of persons sentenced to the city's correctional institution. However, no criteria were given stating how many patients were to be rehabilitated or referred to aftercare facilities.

The evaluation plan of the two Portland grants stated only that Portland State University would evaluate the grants. Because a contract award condition was placed on the subgrantee to revise the evaluation component and get SPA approval, the university provided a general outline to be used for the project's evaluation. The SPA had also recommended that the SPA evaluation specialist be involved in the project but did not solicit his advice or present the evaluation procedure for his approval.

The evaluation plan of the three Seattle grants essentially consisted of one paragraph. It stated that an evaluation would be done by the Seattle-King County Alcoholism Commission. Neither input nor output measures were stated.

Inadequate evaluations

Independent evaluators evaluated the three detoxification centers. The Seattle-King County Commission on Alcoholism evaluated the Seattle project; Portland State University, the Portland project; and representatives from another detoxification center, the Kansas City project. Two Seattle project evaluators monitored and worked weekly, whereas the other two projects' evaluators made one annual evaluation. Evaluation results showed that each of the three centers needed improvements. However, the three evaluations examined different aspects of the centers' operations and used different evaluation techniques. None of the evaluations developed followup data on patients so LEAA could determine the centers' impact or compare the projects' effectiveness.

Kansas City

The Kansas City evaluation report described in detail the operations of the nonmedical project but compared the methods of the Kansas City project to those of a St. Louis medical detoxification project, rather than concentrating on determining whether the Kansas City project was achieving its objectives. For example, the evaluation report criticized the project because it did not have comprehensive medical services, but the report did not demonstrate that patients in the Kansas City project received less than needed care. The report also recommended improving the staff and services offered patients.

Project officials objected to the report, noting that it ignored one project purpose--to show that alcoholics do not need attending medical staff during the sobering-up period. Because of controversy over the report's usefulness, no followup was made on patients.

Portland

The Portland center evaluation, completed in September 1972, covered the first year of the project's operation and included

- assessing the project's goals and objectives, facilities, personnel, and evaluation procedures;
- determining police department and follow-on treatment center views of the usefulness and success of the project; and
- comparing the Portland center's administrative practices with those of three other detoxification centers in the country to determine if such things as goals, admission procedures, and staff arrangements were similar.

The evaluation primarily described the center's activities and presented limited statistical data on the impact of center services on patients treated. SPA officials said the evaluation report was too general, had limited statistical data to support its conclusions, and made no recommendations to correct deficiencies it noted.

For example, the report noted that the center, because of inadequate funding, had not developed followup information to indicate whether such services as outreach or counseling had an impact. The report, however, stated that followup was not done during the evaluation because of the cost and mobility of the population group and did not suggest ways that the center might develop such data.

Although quarterly and subsequently monthly progress reports were submitted to the SPA on project activities, the reports mainly described what the project was doing and how many patients it was treating. The reports did not say how much the center helped patients.

Seattle

The Seattle-King County Commission on Alcoholism did a continuous evaluation using methods the commission and the project staff developed. SPA officials did not participate in the evaluation planning.

The evaluation team gathered quarterly statistical reports concerning the number of patients admitted each month, the number of alcoholics brought in by the police, the occupancy rate of the beds, the number of patients referred to follow-on treatment facilities, and the number of patients released with approval of the project's medical staff or transferred to a hospital for additional medical treatment.

The team did not gather followup data on released patients to determine if they had changed their drinking habits. The quarterly reports, however, varied in both the information cited and the manner presented. The lack of consistency reduced the value of the reports.

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

We attempted to determine the extent to which the projects were achieving their goals so we could provide some indication of the success achieved and the type of standards that could be developed to evaluate a project. To the extent possible, we used the findings of independent evaluators or the information collected by the projects. Often, however, we had to develop our own data to determine the project's impact. Two of the three projects achieved certain

goals, but all three projects had little success in reducing the revolving-door problem.

Data from Kansas City and Seattle indicated that the projects had varying degrees of success in achieving the goal of reducing the number of arrests for public drunkenness. In Kansas City, the number of police arrests for drunk-in-public offenses decreased 39 percent between calendar years 1970 and 1971 and an additional 14 percent between 1971 and 1972. However, the number of similar arrests in Seattle between 1970 and 1971 decreased by 1 percent but increased by 9 percent between 1971 and 1972.

We could not obtain comparable data for the Portland project because Oregon law stated that after July 1, 1972, public drunkenness and drinking in public were no longer criminal offenses. However, in the 9 months preceding July 1, 1972, police arrests in Portland for these offenses decreased 31 percent when compared with similar arrests in the same 9 months a year earlier.

Another means of determining the impact of the detoxification center is to determine the rate and frequency of readmission for drunkenness. Detoxification centers should try to develop programs to help break the revolving-door cycle.

A generally accepted definition of "readmission" is that the patient has been admitted previously to the center. No time limit is usually considered in determining readmission rates. The longer the project has been operating, the more people have been admitted; thus, there is a greater potential for readmitting previous patients.

The three projects had been operating between 1 and 2 years when we gathered the following comparable readmission data in January 1973.

<u>Centers</u>	<u>Readmission rates</u> <u>January 1973</u>
Kansas City	69%
Portland	71
Seattle	73

Are these rates acceptable? LEAA has not issued any standards noting a range of acceptable readmission rates. Therefore, we cannot state whether the readmission rates are excessive.

Another measurement of detoxification centers' impact is the extent to which centers got patients enrolled in follow-on treatment programs once they leave. Without such treatment, it would be very difficult to break the revolving-door cycle.

Most patients were referred to private homes, hotels, missions, or other nontreatment facilities. Available records of the three projects listed the number of patients referred to follow-on treatment facilities as follows:

	<u>Months covered</u>	<u>Patients</u>	<u>Patients referred to follow-on treatment facilities</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Kansas City	22	6,669	1,750	26
Portland	15	4,940	408	8
Seattle	10	4,589	1,025	22

The centers did not compile statistics on the number of patients who actually enrolled in follow-on treatment programs after being referred to them.

Although the detoxification centers may not need information on a patient's progress once he leaves, SPAs should work with the centers to develop such data to determine which, if any, follow-on facilities are having a positive impact and are breaking the revolving-door cycle.

Conclusion

Were the three centers effective enough to be considered successful? It is difficult to say because no standards have been established. Although the three centers varied widely in costs and services provided, generally their achievements varied little. The data developed on the impact of the three centers cannot be compared with data on the operation of similar centers to determine relative effectiveness because neither LEAA nor SPAs have collected such information.

However, the information does indicate that the centers have a significant problem in trying to eliminate the revolving-door pattern, even though they have reduced police involvement.

CHAPTER 4

DRUG-COUNSELING PROJECTS

Drug-counseling projects are established in local communities to assist drug abusers who request help. LEAA has established no criteria on what services should be provided by such projects, what type of staff should be used, or what results should be expected from drug-counseling projects. No reporting format exists to obtain adequate and comparable data from similar projects.

Significant variations in the activities of drug-counseling projects reviewed and the lack of data on their impact illustrate the problems in trying to assess their effectiveness.

WHY DRUG-COUNSELING PROJECTS ARE NEEDED

The National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse stated in its second report to the President and the Congress¹ that, for most of the past decade, the need to solve the drug problem has been a recurrent concern of the public and that drug use may be related in part to the apparent increase in crime and other antisocial behavior. It stated further that the drug problem has resulted in serious inquiry into the causes for drug use, in a massive investment of social efforts to contain it, and in a mobilization of medical and paramedical resources to treat its victims.

LEAA has participated in attempts to reduce drug problems by providing funds to State and local governments for increased investigation and apprehension capabilities, drug research, and drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation programs. LEAA estimates that it spent about \$189 million between fiscal years 1969 and 1973 on such programs. Some of the LEAA funds have been used for locally planned and operated drug rehabilitation and education projects.

Until 1973 LEAA did not restrict the type of drug projects it would support with either discretionary or block

¹"Drug use in America: Problem in Perspective," U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1973.

grants. In June 1973 LEAA issued guidelines discontinuing the use of its discretionary funds for drug treatment and rehabilitation projects which served persons other than those in penal institutions. LEAA adopted this policy primarily because the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 designated other agencies, such as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), as having primary responsibility for funding projects to educate the public about drug abuse and to develop programs to prevent it.

LEAA did not change its policy of allowing SPAs to determine the type of projects they fund with block funds. SPAs therefore are still funding drug treatment projects to prevent, decrease, or stop drug abuse through education and counseling. These projects generally are not geared to cope with the "hard drug" user that requires medical assistance.

PROJECTS REVIEWED

We reviewed drug-counseling projects only in Kansas and Missouri; Oregon and Washington SPAs did not fund drug-counseling projects when we began our work unless they served persons in the correctional system. These States adopted this practice primarily because other organizations, such as HEW, were funding such projects. Many other SPAs, however, continue to fund drug-counseling projects similar to the ones we reviewed in Kansas and Missouri.

We reviewed the [✓]Narcotics Service Council juvenile treatment project, called NASCO West, in St. Louis County, Missouri, which received its first LEAA grant in February 1971, and the Drug Intervention Group project in Johnson County, Kansas, which received its first LEAA grant in June 1971. The St. Louis project was still receiving LEAA funds at the time of our review, but the Kansas SPA stopped funding the Johnson County project on December 31, 1972, because the project was poorly managed and the community did not support it. The St. Louis project had received about \$177,000 in LEAA funds as of April 1973, and the Johnson County project, about \$171,000 as of December 1972, when it was terminated.

The basic objectives of both projects were to rehabilitate youthful drug abusers and prevent youths from taking

drugs. Both projects dealt primarily with youths who used depressants, stimulants, or hallucinogenic drugs. Project participation was voluntary.

The projects brought youths together in groups to discuss problems, share experiences, and offer alternatives to drug use. Group therapy was used to help participants cope with problems that had turned them to drugs. The projects also provided group counseling to parents and other adults to help them understand the youths' drug problems and to foster communication and understanding between users and nonusers.

The St. Louis County project was directed by a clinical psychologist, assisted by three full-time counselors with degrees in psychology, two ex-drug users, and a research assistant. Seventeen paracounselors (prior participants) also assisted during group therapy sessions. Group sessions were scheduled for different age groups, were run by professional counselors, and were conducted at the facility housing the project. In addition, the project offered individual counseling as needed.

The Johnson County project was directed by a professional psychologist, assisted by a coordinator, an administrator, a registered nurse (who supervised the 24-hour telephone crisis service), volunteer crisis team members, 12 part-time nonprofessional group leaders, and six part-time community liaison workers.

Groups were established for drug users and for adults interested in learning how to effectively communicate with drug users. Group sessions, run by persons of the same age as the rest of the group, met at many different locations. The groups selected their leaders who received some training in how to run such groups by professional staff members or consultants employed by the project. Groups could accept or reject applicant requests to join the groups submitted to them by the project's directors. Individual counseling was not offered to participants and little, if any, centralized management or direction was given to them.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Neither LEAA nor SPAs had established criteria for evaluating drug-counseling projects. In addition, neither LEAA nor SPAs had helped the projects establish an adequate information system or evaluation approach.

Consultants from St. Louis University evaluated the St. Louis County project to determine the reaction to the project by the community and participants and to identify what the community and participants believed to be the project's strengths and weaknesses. Most empirical data was gathered through interviews; the consultants made no other attempt to assess project impact on the participants.

The study concluded that the community and participants generally believed the project worthwhile. The St. Louis County project had no other evaluation.

A doctoral candidate at Kansas University obtained information on the Johnson County project for his dissertation, which concerned the project's approach to rehabilitating young drug users. Over a 3-month period he compiled data for 36 persons who participated in the project during a 7-month period. Of the 36, 16 dropped out of the project after a short period. His findings regarding the 20 remaining participants indicated that some decreased their drug use regardless of how active they were in the project and that most believed the project helped them understand their problems.

The project's first grant stated that a consulting firm would evaluate the project's activities. Officials of the SPA and the project, however, disagreed over the consulting firm that would do the evaluation because the project director wanted to use a firm in which he and his wife were officers. As a result no evaluation was performed.

The evaluations of the two drug-counseling projects did not develop sufficient information to measure their impact. Information that should be developed to measure a drug-counseling project's effectiveness includes: changes in drug use or participants' changes in their social outlook and the degree of participation.

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

We attempted to determine the extent to which the two projects were helping participants. This was done to provide some indication of the success rate and the type of standards that can be used to measure the accomplishments of drug-counseling projects.

The staff of the St. Louis project had accumulated some useful data for analyzing project success. We obtained some incomplete information from the staff of the Johnson County project, but it was of little value in indicating the project's impact on participants.

St. Louis

Initially the St. Louis project obtained data on the extent of participants' drug use before they entered the project but kept only limited data on changes in their drug use while they were in the project or after they left. In August 1972, about 18 months after the first grant period started, the project staff began keeping more complete data, including followup on participants, and began analyzing the data to determine changes in drug use.

Our fieldwork for this project, completed in December 1972, showed that data on changes in drug use was available for 169 of the 372 youths who entered the project through October 31, 1972. The data is summarized below.

Type of user when treatment started	Participants	Change in drug use			
		Off drugs	Reduced use	No change	Increased use
Heavy users (note a)	38	13	9	16	-
Moderate users (note b)	67	26	24	15	2
Slight users (note c)	53	30	-	21	2
Former users who occasionally used drugs (note d)	<u>11</u>	-	-	<u>10</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>169</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>5</u>

^aA heavy user takes drugs one or more times each day.

^bA moderate user takes drugs 3 to 5 times a week.

^cA slight user takes drugs at parties or when he is with friends. He takes drugs 1 or 2 times a week.

^dThese participants were considered as nonusers originally but had histories of occasional drug and marihuana use when they entered the project.

BEST DOCUMENT AVAILABLE

The data was based on the participants' oral statements regarding their progress and on the staff's opinion.

The staff also rated the social adjustment progress for 160 of the 372 participants because the staff believed that social adjustment problems were the underlying causes for drug use and must be treated also. The staff's ratings showed that 28 participants were much improved, 42 were moderately improved, 45 were slightly improved, and 45 had not improved. The data, although subjective, indicates that the staff believed most participants were being helped by the project.

Adequate records available on the school status of 123 participants showed that only 10 of the 103 who were attending school when they entered the project subsequently dropped out of school, whereas 9 of the 20 who did not attend school had returned after they entered the project. Employment data for 63 participants showed that 33 were employed when they entered the project and 32 were still employed when data was collected. When 22 others entered, they were out of school and not working, but 6 later started work. The remaining eight were in school when they entered the project but later dropped out and five went to work.

Continued participation in the project by a youth is another indication of the interest generated by a project. Staff members believed a youth must attend at least three group therapy sessions before a participant-counselor trust can be established, after which the youth generally feels comfortable and begins to discuss his problems. About 71 percent of the youths who entered the project had attended more than three sessions, according to records maintained by the staff.

Johnson County

The project staff did not record any data on the number of participants, their former drug use, or the extent of their change in drug use. According to the staff, the lack of records on drug use stemmed from the participants' fear that their names would be given to law enforcement officials because the county attorney had once requested the names of all drug users participating in the project. Consequently, there was no base upon which to assess project impact.

A guarantee of the confidentiality of information developed on participants in drug-counseling programs is needed but followup data should be available. Without such data, there is no good basis for deciding whether to continue funding such projects. Anonymity can still be guaranteed while impact data is provided.

Conclusion

Were the two projects successful? We cannot say because no criteria exist regarding the impact such projects should achieve in terms of (1) changes in drug use by participants, (2) degree of social adjustment changes, or (3) the average number of sessions attended by participants. However, the St. Louis project appeared to help a significant number of youths to stop or reduce drug use. The Johnson County project did not even collect basic data needed to assess effectiveness.

CHAPTER 5

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS

Youth service bureaus attempt to:

- Keep youths who have committed crimes from getting involved further with the justice system.

- Prevent youths who have not committed crimes from doing so.

They attempt to do this by coordinating community services available to youths and by providing needed services not available in the community. Moreover, they work with law enforcement agencies to encourage them to refer youths to the bureaus rather than to the juvenile court for prosecution.

Many difficulties existed in trying to assess the projects' impact. Neither LEAA nor the SPAs reviewed had issued guidelines on (1) how bureaus should be organized, (2) what services should be provided and how they should be delivered, and (3) what information such projects should maintain. Moreover, there are no common criteria to judge the success of youth service bureaus.

The lack of guidelines resulted in significant variations in the projects' operations and data collected on the projects' impact. These problems made it difficult to compare the effectiveness of the three projects.

NEED FOR YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS

In 1967 the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that youth service bureaus be established in comprehensive neighborhood community centers to assist juveniles, both delinquent and nondelinquent, referred by the police, the juvenile court, parents, schools, and other sources. The growth of youth service bureaus has been widespread partly as result of the availability of Federal funds. In 1969 the National Council on Crime and Delinquency identified fewer than 12 youth service bureaus. A 1972 nationwide study financed by HEW reported that 155 bureaus had received Federal funds and that LEAA was the most significant funding source for the bureaus, having provided funds for 135 or about 87 percent.

PROJECTS REVIEWED

We reviewed the operations of three projects--Youth Eastside Services, Bellevue, Washington; Youth Services Bureau, Portland, Oregon; and Project Youth Opportunity, St. Louis, Missouri.

Details on project funding are shown below.

	<u>Total grant budget</u>	<u>LEAA funds</u>		<u>Months of operation</u>	<u>Grant period</u>
		<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent of total</u>		
Bellevue	\$286,922	\$174,196	60.7	36	7-70 to 6-73
Portland	187,670	98,840	52.7	24	7-71 to 6-73
St. Louis	230,856	154,866	67.0	25	11-71 to 12-73

The projects' directors stated that the primary goal of their projects was to influence youths to change their behavior in order to keep or divert them from the juvenile justice system. However, only the St. Louis project had quantified its diversion objectives. Its goal was to reduce by 3.5 to 7.5 percent the number of youths referred to the court who have had previous court contact and reduce by 7.5 to 10 percent the number of youths referred to the court for the first time.

Project records did not fully document the number of participants but indicated that the Portland and St. Louis projects each served about 2,500 a year compared with about 4,500 a year at Bellevue. The Portland staff made about 5,000 contacts with these people, whereas the St. Louis and Bellevue staff made an estimated 14,000 and 28,000 contacts, respectively. The organization and facilities for the three projects varied considerably and accounted, in part, for the differences in the number of people involved and total contacts made.

--Bellevue had 10 staff members and about 150 active volunteers. The facilities used were an old house and several small buildings.

--Portland had 10 permanent staff members who were usually supported by three Neighborhood Youths Corps

workers and four university students working for college credit. The project had no active volunteer program. The facility was a storefront office.

--St. Louis had six staff members and used volunteers for specific events. The facility was an office in a suburban business district. In addition, school facilities were used for some activities.

The Bellevue project, with 150 active volunteers, offered more services than the other two projects.

Bellevue

The project's original purpose was to provide a drop-in counseling center for adolescents to combat drug problems. Later the project expanded to provide a broader base from which to combat delinquency. The services offered included: a 24-hour crisis phone; a "flying squad" for providing on-the-scene assistance to drug abusers or other juveniles with serious problems; an employment center; a licensed foster care program; parent education programs; individual, group, and family counseling; and a drop-in center. Besides providing an informal place for young people to go, the drop-in center offers lectures, films, and group discussion and has an arts and crafts workshop.

The project provided free services. Project participation was voluntary. The project director did not have statistics showing the youths' involvement with juvenile court but estimated that about 20 percent of young persons counseled had committed serious crimes. Counseling was primarily carried out by volunteers (i.e., psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers).

Portland

Project services included job placement; individual, marriage, and family counseling; legal services; health counseling; runaway counseling; and drug counseling. In addition, the staff worked toward getting youths and adults involved in the community and getting additional needed

services. Project staff worked with police and juvenile court officials to insure that appropriate youths were referred to the project.

The project offered free services and participation was voluntary. Court records showed that about 38 percent of the youths counseled and 25 percent of those seeking employment had had some official contact with juvenile court.

St. Louis

This project provided counseling and job referrals to the youths within the target area and sponsored recreation and community meetings to help the community solve its problems. The project staff was to contact youths through schools; street interviews; referrals from police, juvenile court, and others; and walk-ins to the project offices.

The project provided free services to youths and participation was voluntary. According to juvenile court records, about 13 percent of the youths contacted had been referred to juvenile court for delinquency.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Neither LEAA nor the SPAs which funded the projects reviewed had established evaluation methods for youth service bureaus. None of the funding applications the projects submitted to SPAs described how objective information would be gathered to evaluate impact on delinquency.

Bellevue

Though the project had been evaluated twice, evaluation methods were not described in the grant application. Neither evaluation developed objective evidence showing the impact on the project. Graduate students from the University of Washington made the first evaluation, which was funded by the project. University of Washington students working for credits made the second study, which was not financed by the project.

The first study developed information concerning

--administrative problems as determined by interviews with staff, volunteers, and participants and

--community support determined through interviews with area residents.

It recommended ways to improve project management.

The second study consisted of questioning juveniles and adults who resided in the community to determine their knowledge and support of the project's activities. This study neither developed objective data on the youths served by the project nor contained recommendations.

Portland

The applications submitted for this project for its first two LEAA grants indicated that the project would be evaluated during each grant period and noted the general areas to be evaluated. However, the applications did not define the evaluation methods to be used. Only the evaluation for the first grant period was completed at the time of our review.

The SPA evaluation specialist met with the independent evaluator to agree on methods for the first year's evaluation. The evaluator developed information on the project by

- analyzing project records to determine the number of target area youths that had been served by the project's counseling and employment programs,
- checking juvenile court records for all target area youths served to determine if they had contact with juvenile court before or after their contact with the project,
- interviewing juvenile court officials to obtain their views on project impact, and
- obtaining information on the number of juvenile court dispositions in 1970 and in 1971 for the target area and the county as a whole to determine whether the trend for the target area in 1971 differed from that of the entire county.

The results of this evaluation are discussed on pages 41 and 42.

The SPA evaluation specialist had received a copy of the evaluation report and considered it adequate.

St. Louis

The applications submitted for this project (1) indicated that evaluations would be made, (2) identified areas to be reviewed, and (3) showed general evaluation approaches. There was no indication that the SPA helped the project to develop evaluation methods.

Staff members of the Young Men's Christian Association, sponsors of the project, made the first evaluation about 4 months after the project began. It consisted mainly of interviews with school officials and local businessmen to find out if they knew of the project and what impact they thought it had.

A consultant associated with Southern Illinois University made the second study. She

- contacted 125 randomly selected youths who had contact with the project to determine the extent of their participation and to determine whether they believed the project had influenced them to stay out of trouble,
- sent questionnaires to participating agencies to determine their project involvement, and
- interviewed project staff and some of the volunteers to obtain their views on the project's impact.

Both evaluations primarily concerned assessing attitudes about the project, rather than gathering quantitative data on the impact of the project on participants. Both types of information are needed to fully evaluate the project's effectiveness. On the basis of a review of the project's studies; SPA officials concluded that the project's impact had not been objectively evaluated. The project director agreed with the SPA's conclusion but said funds budgeted for evaluation were inadequate for an in-depth evaluation.

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The evaluation of the Portland project was most adequate for assessing project impact. It combined objective

information from project and court records with subjective evidence for judging the impact. This approach could be used to assess the impact of most youth service bureaus.

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

We tried to determine project effectiveness to provide some indication of the success achieved and the type of standards that can be developed to measure a project's accomplishments. Assessment of youth service bureaus' impact requires, as a minimum, that data be collected on the number of offenses committed by youths before and during project participation and the number of youths referred to and dealt with by the juvenile courts before and during participation. Followup information on youths' activities once they leave the project is also desirable.

To the extent possible to assess effectiveness, we used the results of the project evaluations and data the project staff gathered. Often, however, we had to develop our own data to try to determine the project's impact. The following information shows that data was adequate to provide a basis for judging the impact of the Portland project but points up the difficulties in trying to assess the other projects' impact.

Bellevue

According to the director of the Bellevue project, the project makes an agreement with each youth counseled that restricts access to records kept on the youth to his assigned counselor and the paid project staff. He said these agreements, unless waived by the youth, prevented any outside evaluation team from doing followup to determine the rate of referrals to the courts on the youths before and after project contact. As a result, we could not determine the project's impact.

Our analysis of statistical data on juvenile and adult arrests in Bellevue, however, indicated that the project may have had a positive impact. Between 1965 and 1969, juvenile arrests as a percent of total arrests averaged about 34 percent and ranged between 30 and 37 percent. The Bellevue project received its first grant in 1970. Between 1970 and 1972 juvenile arrests averaged about 27 percent of all arrests and ranged from 24 to 30 percent. The drop in the percent of juvenile arrests relative to all arrests is even more significant since, from 1965 to 1972, the juvenile population between 12 and 17 years of age steadily increased relative to the adult population (over 18 years of age).

The Bellevue Police Chief told us that he believed the youth service bureau project had reduced, to some extent, juvenile arrests relative to all arrests. He said, however, that other factors, such as increased concern for juvenile rights and increased emphasis on referring juveniles to their parents or other social service agencies if they get into trouble, also contributed to the decrease.

Portland

The evaluation team systematically analyzed the bureau's target area cases between March 6, 1971, and April 15, 1972. It determined that either the employment program or the counseling program had served 623 target area individuals. The team checked each of the above individuals against the juvenile court records to see if each had contact with the court before and after project participation.

Significant results of this analysis and the evaluation team's conclusions follow.

- Of the participants, 179 had had some contact with the court although only 26 (15 percent) had gotten into trouble after contact with the project. These 26 represented only 4 percent of the total youths served by the project during the period.
- Youths were diverted from the juvenile court system to the project in 20 cases as a result of an informal arrangement between the project and the court.
- For most cases it was difficult to determine whether the project directly helped keep the youths out of the juvenile court system. However, since only 26 of the 620 youngsters were referred to the court once they began participating, the project may well be having a positive impact although it is difficult to specify the impact.

The evaluation team believed other data supported their conclusions and reported that individuals closely associated with juvenile court believed the project was having a positive impact. According to the team, between 1970 and 1971 juvenile court dispositions from the project's target area decreased while juvenile court dispositions for all of Multnomah County, where the project was located, went up, as shown below.

Court Dispositions
1970 and 1971

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent of change</u>
Entire county	5315	5956	+641	+12
Project area only	701	647	-54	-8

Although the reduction may have been attributed to periodic variations in such statistics, the evaluation team believed the data might indicate the project's positive impact.

St. Louis

The project staff did not develop objective data to show the project's impact on youths contacted. To assess the project's impact in terms of reducing the number of first-time juvenile offenders and the number of repeaters, we examined juvenile court records. They showed that 218 youths (13 percent of our sample of 1,674 youths contacted by the project) had been referred to the courts for delinquent behavior. Detailed data for 191 of these youths showed that 52 (27 percent) were referred to the court after project contact; 30 (16 percent) were referred to the court before and after contact; 109 (57 percent) had been referred to the court only before contact. The 82 youths referred to the court after contact with the project represent 43 percent of the youths with detailed court records but only about 5 percent of the youths in our sample.

Some additional indication of the project's impact is provided by two sources. A consultant analyzed data on 125 youths selected at random from the approximate 1,800 youths in the project. She determined that 36 of the 125 believed the project had influenced them to stay out of trouble; 40 said they did not know whether the project helped them; 15 said the project had not helped them; 20 said they had not been involved in the project; and 14 did not answer.

The consultant also gathered data indicating the before-and-after legal status of participants to determine recidivism rates. However, she did not use this data in her final report. But the Missouri SPA staff did analyze her data and concluded that participants with court referral histories

experienced a decrease in recidivism while court referrals from the locations increased. For example, the data showed that 38 offenders had committed crimes in the 10 months immediately before the project began and 16 of the 38 had committed crimes during the 10 months after it began.

Although the data indicates that the project helped some offenders, the consultant's data also indicated that many had only minimal project contact. Thus, it is difficult to develop a direct causal relationship between the project and the fact that some offenders did not commit more crimes because of project services.

National survey

A further indication of the problems of assessing the impact of youth service bureaus is provided by a national study of youth service bureaus completed in November 1972.¹ One study objective was to try to determine whether the bureaus had diverted youth from the juvenile justice system.

The study team visited 58 youth service bureaus in 31 States and analyzed responses to questionnaires from 170 youth service bureaus. The study concluded that information on the impact of bureaus was so limited and individualistic that any national answer regarding the extent of diversion would be speculative. According to the study, "youth service bureau" and "diversion" have not been defined and youth service bureaus generally have inadequate data to measure impact.

Conclusion

Were the three youth service bureaus successful? Only one project--Portland--had sufficient data that reflected its impact. The data for the project indicates that it has been fairly effective in keeping participants from further contact with the juvenile justice system. However, since there is no standard for the achievements to be reached by youth service bureaus, we cannot say whether this project should be considered successful.

¹"National Study of Youth Service Bureaus," by the Department of California Youth Authority. HEW financed the report. Its publication number is (SRS) 73-26^25.

CHAPTER 6

GROUP HOMES FOR JUVENILES

Group homes for juveniles provide an alternative to probation or incarceration and shelter for youths who cannot live at home for such reasons as parental neglect. The primary goals of LEAA-funded group homes are to provide supervision, counseling, and recreation to the participants in a homelike atmosphere. The living routine is more structured than if the participants lived in their own homes but not as structured as if they were in institutions. The youths usually go to the neighborhood schools.

Comparing the success of group homes was difficult because LEAA has established no criteria as to what services are to be provided, what type of staff should be employed, or what goals the projects should achieve. In addition, no standard report format exists so comparable data can be collected from projects.

PURPOSE OF GROUP HOMES

The 1967 report by the Task Force on Corrections of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice estimated that the number of juveniles who would be confined by 1975 would increase by 70 percent and would place a tremendous burden on the existing community correctional systems. To help relieve this burden, the task force cited group homes as a possible community program whose approach was capable of widespread application.

Juveniles are placed in group homes on the premise that they can readjust better and are more likely to become useful citizens if they live in a homelike atmosphere, rather than living in the more structured environment of a boarding school or reformatory or being placed on probation and left in the environment where they got into trouble. The nationwide growth in the number of these homes has been said by corrections specialists to be one of several promising developments in community correctional programs because they are considered to be a viable alternative to prisons.

PROJECTS REVIEWED

We reviewed three group home projects for juveniles that have received LEAA funding: the Community Group Homes, Kansas City, Missouri; the Residential Homes for Boys, Wichita, Kansas; and the Clark County Group Homes, Vancouver, Washington.

Each project had received the following amounts, involving at least three LEAA awards.

	<u>LEAA Funds</u>				
	<u>Total</u> <u>grant</u> <u>budget</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per-</u> <u>cent</u> <u>of</u> <u>total</u>	<u>Months</u> <u>of</u> <u>opera-</u> <u>tion</u>	<u>Grant</u> <u>periods</u>
Kansas	\$210,739	\$136,143	65	40	9-69 to 12-72
Wichita	286,548	191,913	67	26	4-71 to 5-73
Vancouver	178,545	113,732	64	32	8-70 to 3-73

The objective of these homes was to operate facilities to provide a family environment in a residential setting where a youth's problems could be treated and corrected. It was anticipated that, with a resultant attitudinal change, a youth's behavior could be restructured and he could live a socially acceptable life. None of the projects had quantified the rate of success they hoped to achieve.

The costs of operating the three projects are shown below.

	<u>Average Participant Cost</u>		
	<u>Kansas City</u>	<u>Wichita</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>
Monthly cost	\$ 480	\$ 735	\$ 655
Average stay (months)	5-3/4	3-1/3	5-1/2
Average total cost per participant	\$2,760	\$2,448	\$3,602

The basic reasons for the cost differences were staffing, services offered, and the average length of stay by participants in each project.

Kansas City

The Kansas City project funded three different homes. One was for boys 14 years old and under, another was for boys 14 through 16, and the third was for all juvenile girls. Each home can house up to 10 youths at one time. At the time of our review, the project staff consisted of two houseparents, three social workers, and eight youth workers. The supportive services were provided by staff who were employees of other agencies, such as the county juvenile court, rather than by staff of the homes.

The social workers help supervise the group homes, provide liaison between the youths and the court, and try to resolve any family conflicts. The project staff and others provide individual and group counseling to help youths resolve problems with peers, family, and school and psychiatric assistance when necessary.

The Kansas City project has had difficulty in obtaining and retaining houseparents for various reasons, including the lack of qualified people and low pay. As a result, the home for boys ages 14 through 16 employed youth workers on 8-hour shifts to perform houseparent duties. The home for boys ages 10 through 14 had houseparents until they quit in July 1972. Youth workers were then used on shifts because no other houseparents could be found. Houseparents have always staffed the home for girls.

Youths placed in these homes have usually committed crimes and are considered to need treatment outside their homes but generally are not considered to need long-term institutional treatment. Some youths are admitted because of truancy, running away from home, or parental neglect. Juvenile court judges decide which youths are to be placed in the homes. All participants are expected to attend the local schools.

Wichita

The Wichita project funded two group homes for selected 16- and 17-year-old males from Sedgwick County. The two homes could house a total of 20 youths at one time. At the time of our review, the staffing consisted of an executive director (part time), a secretary, two house directors, two assistant house directors, six youth supervisors, and two cooks.

The professional staff, consisting of a house director, an assistant director, and three youth supervisors at each home provided individual and group counseling. A psychiatrist conducted weekly group counseling at only one home. The project director planned to replace group counseling shortly with regular individual counseling because he believed it to be more desirable for the youths. Individual psychiatric assistance was available to participants of both homes on an as-needed basis. The plan to eliminate group counseling is contrary to the recent position of an SPA monitor who recommended that group counseling be offered in both homes.

Youths placed may be regular participants or temporary residents who, for example, are awaiting a court decision on where they will be placed. A screening committee, consisting of members from several local agencies, reviews data on each applicant and assists the staff in choosing participants.

All participants were encouraged to enroll in some type of educational or vocational training program. Employment was also encouraged when it could be incorporated into the educational program or when a participant rejected educational opportunities.

Vancouver

The Vancouver project operated eight homes at the time of our review, three for girls and five for boys. The homes could house 6 to 8 girls or 8 to 10 boys each. Youths placed ranged from 11 to 17 years of age and were not segregated by age. About 40 percent of the participants are from the county in which Vancouver is located. At the time of our review, the project employed a project director, a business manager, 2 program directors, an assistant program director, a nurse, a research analyst, 10 houseparents, 7 relief parents, and 4 office staff members. A clinical psychologist served as a consultant.

Youths placed in the homes have usually been involved in limited or no criminal activity. The Juvenile Court believes they need treatment outside their own homes but do not need long-term institutional care. Professional staff of the homes determine if a youth is to be placed in a home. School attendance is required. The group home

staff expect the public schools to provide in-depth counseling to the youth when necessary.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Neither LEAA nor SPAs had established evaluation methods. The applications submitted for funding these projects generally did not describe project evaluation methods. SPAs had not actively assisted project staff to develop evaluation methods. However, the evaluation of the Kansas City project was adequate and the methods used served as a model for evaluating the impact of other group homes in Missouri.

All the projects had maintained records on each youth served, including his legal status when he entered the project and his progress during his stay in the home. Only one project, however, had collected adequate followup information, but the information was not maintained so statistics could be readily prepared. Followup information on the youths' legal status is essential to assess the projects' impact.

Kansas City

The first three grant applications for this project did not mention any project evaluation plans. The application for the fourth grant briefly described the only evaluation made of the project. The Juvenile Court employed a research psychologist who developed and evaluated information in the following areas:

- The frequency of law referrals before, during, and after group home placement.
- The type of problems (such as burglary, drugs, truancy, runaway, parental neglect, or traffic violations) before, during, and after placement.
- The relationship between length of stay and number of law referrals.
- The general adjustment of participants during and after their stay using staff member comments on youth progress and comments on youths' school behavior.
- The placement of the youths following release from the home.

SPA officials believed the evaluation approach was sound, and the report was used as the guide for developing evaluation guidelines for all the SPA-funded group homes. The guidelines are to include a report format to be maintained by the homes on each child admitted.

Wichita

The application for the first LEAA grant for this project stated that a self-evaluation would be done and requested SPA assistance to develop the evaluation approach. However, we found no evidence of SPA involvement.

The self-evaluation consisted of the following steps.

- A staff discussion was conducted to obtain comments on the viability of the project.
- Questionnaires solicited opinions on project operations from about 20 participants, the staff, the consulting psychologist, and several probation officers.
- Statistical data was compiled on the number of participants, types of offenses participants committed before and after placement, reasons why participants were released from group homes, and length of stay.

Some of the statistical data was incomplete and inaccurate.

Vancouver

Although the applications submitted for the project for the first and second LEAA grants stated that a consultant would evaluate the project, they did not describe the methods to be used. Two independent consultants reviewed the project, but concentrated on its administration rather than effectiveness.

Staff members made two other evaluations and developed data on most participants released from the homes, such as where the participant came from, why he left, where he went after release, and where he was at the time of the study.

Neither staff evaluation developed data on participants' referrals to juvenile court before and after they came to the home. Nor did the evaluators determine whether the

participants had been in and out of an institution between the time they were released from the home and the time of the study.

An SPA monitoring report on this project stated that it was efficiently run and had generally been free of problems. According to an SPA official, the SPA is developing a standard reporting system for group homes so that data received from them will be comparable.

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

We developed better data on the impact of group homes than for the three other types of projects reviewed. Yet, without standards against which to measure the results, determining project effectiveness is very difficult. Nevertheless, the results do provide a basis to begin developing such standards.

One measure of a group home's impact is the extent to which youths get into trouble once they leave the home. Without criteria regarding the number of youths expected to get into trouble again, we cannot say whether the projects were successful, but the data available indicates little project effectiveness in reducing the delinquent behavior of participants.

At the time of our review, the three projects had received 442 youths into their homes and had released 319. We obtained selected data from the projects' records for 104 of the 319. We also did certain followup work at juvenile courts having jurisdiction in the project areas.

As shown below, about as many participants were dismissed from the homes because they misbehaved as were released because they were considered to have completed the program or were over legal age.

<u>Reasons for leaving homes</u>	<u>Number of former participants</u>				<u>Percent of total</u>
	<u>Kansas City</u>	<u>Wichita</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Poor behavior	22	16	9	47	45.2
Completed program or over legal age	10	14	22	46	44.2
Transferred to an- other program (such as Job Corps)	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>10.6</u>
Total	<u>35</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>104</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Followup data in project records for the 104 former participants showed that most were living in the community.

<u>Residence</u>	<u>Former participants</u>				<u>Percent of total</u>
	<u>Kansas City</u>	<u>Wichita</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Living in community with relatives, others, or on their own	21	24	20	65	62.5
In military service	-	3	1	4	3.8
In penal or mental institutions	5	3	12	20	19.2
In other group homes	-	-	4	4	3.9
Unknown	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>10.6</u>
Total	<u>35</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>104</u>	<u>100.0</u>

However, 65 percent of these youths had further involvement with juvenile court after leaving the home.

<u>Number of referrals to courts for misbehavior after leaving residential homes</u>	<u>Former participants</u>				<u>Percent of total</u>
	<u>Kansas City</u>	<u>Wichita</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>	<u>Total</u>	
None	7	17	12	36	34.6
One to three	19	14	26	59	56.7
Four or more	<u>9</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8.7</u>
Total	<u>35</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>104</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Although many youths were referred to juvenile court for misbehavior after leaving the homes, the average frequency of these referrals had decreased slightly.

	<u>Average yearly frequency of court referral rate</u>		
	<u>Kansas City</u>	<u>Wichita</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>
A year before placement	2.69	2.35	1.74
After release from home	<u>2.12</u>	<u>.80</u>	<u>1.25</u>
Amount of decrease	<u>.57</u>	<u>1.55</u>	<u>.49</u>

The decreases in court referrals, however, cannot be attributed solely to behavioral changes achieved by the homes.

For example, upon leaving the home, some youths were too old to be charged with offenses peculiar to juveniles, such as truancy, for which they could have been referred to juvenile court. Others were living in different settings than before they entered the group homes, such as with different relatives or in different cities.

Data developed by some of the projects' evaluators also indicated the same trend regarding the number of youths whose behavior the projects did not change. The evaluator of the Kansas City project noted that, for 48 participants released or transferred from the homes by April 1972, half were transferred to more restrictive boarding schools. Vancouver's evaluator developed detailed statistics on 75 of 79 youths released from the homes during 1972. About 51 percent (38) were referred back to juvenile court for new offenses after release from the home.

Conclusion

Is it acceptable, for the participants on whom we obtained data, that

- 45 percent were released from the group homes for poor behavior?
- 65 percent had problems which resulted in referral to juvenile court once they left the homes?
- 23 percent were sent to penal or mental institutions once they were released from the homes?

The SPA juvenile specialist for Washington State advised us that about 46 percent of all youths in the State referred to juvenile court for an offense would be referred to the juvenile court again regardless of whether they had been in institutions, group homes, or foster homes. Thus, he believed that the referral rate for a group home should be much better than the average referral rate back to the juvenile court if a group home is to be considered effective. However, until LEAA and the SPAs establish criteria, no adequate basis exists for assessing whether the percentages we developed indicate success or failure.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Common difficulties are involved in trying to assess the impact of the four types of projects reviewed:

- No standards or criteria had been established regarding success rates.
- Adequate and comparable data was not maintained by similar projects.
- Project evaluations used different techniques and different information sources and had different scopes. Moreover, most evaluations did not present data on project effectiveness and for those that did the evaluators had no nationally acceptable standards or criteria to use in evaluating project achievement.

Without comparable data, adequate standards and criteria cannot be developed and objective decisions cannot be made regarding such projects' merits and the desirability of emphasizing such approaches to help reduce crime. One purpose of LEAA funds provided to States is to encourage the development of new and innovative projects to fight crime, but without information on whether such projects work, determining whether such funds have been spent effectively is not possible.

Recent actions indicate that LEAA is committed to evaluating its programs. However, LEAA has not required that comparable data be gathered for similar projects so standards can be developed to assess project impact.

LEAA and SPAs could establish a statistical impact information and reporting system whereby data could be available on the impact of similar projects. LEAA could specify the types of data to be collected and the way it would be reported. This would insure that comparable data on similar projects could be collected. Projects could then provide such data to SPAs so the impact of similar projects in the State could be determined. States could then provide their

information to LEAA so a national perspective could be developed.

Such a standardized reporting system would obviate the need for many independent individual project impact evaluations but still provide project directors with information on what impact their projects have had. Evaluations of specific projects could then use the statistical data developed for the impact information system to do analyses, for example, to determine which services appear to have a more positive impact on project participants.

If SPAs still considered it desirable to approve evaluations of specific projects, they would have a basis for assuring themselves that the study results were adequate in scope to measure the project's accomplishments and were presented so the results could be compared to evaluations of similar projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

To develop the information necessary to assess the impact of LEAA-funded projects, we recommend that the Attorney General direct LEAA, in cooperation with SPAs, to designate several projects from each type of LEAA-funded project as demonstration projects and determine information that should be gathered and the type of evaluations that should be done to establish:

- Guidelines for similar projects relating to goals, the type of staff that could be employed, the range of services that could be provided, and expected ranges of costs that might be incurred.
- Uniform information to be gathered on similar projects.
- Standard reporting systems for similar projects.
- A standard range of expected accomplishments that can be used to determine if similar projects are effective.
- Standardized evaluation methods that should be used so comparable results can be developed on the impact of similar projects.

In developing the standards, LEAA should coordinate its efforts with those of other Federal agencies funding similar projects.

Information such as the following should be gathered for the various projects reviewed.

Detoxification centers

- The number of admissions for a specified period.
- The number of the above admissions that had been admitted previously to the center within the past 60 days or another specified period.
- The source for the admissions; i.e., police, hospitals, or private referrals.
- The number of persons referred to appropriate after-care facilities.
- The number of persons who contacted and remained under treatment of the aftercare facilities for a specified period.
- The costs incurred per patient-day.
- The number of arrests for public drunkenness during the same period for which admissions are recorded.

Drug counseling

- For each participant:
 1. A record of his drug use before participation and at periodic intervals during and after participation.
 2. A record of his legal status (probation, parole, etc.) before, during, and for a prescribed period after participation.
 3. Periodic staff evaluations on the social progress of the participant.
 4. The reason participants ceased to be active in the project, as given by the participants and staff.

- The number of counseling sessions conducted by the project staff and the number and type of persons attending.
- The sources contacted to encourage referral of youths needing or seeking drug counseling.

Youth service bureaus

- Police and court statistics at selected intervals for the age group to be served by the project.
- Individual case file histories that cite:
 1. Referral source and legal status of the youth at the time of initial contact by the project.
 2. Any change in the legal status of the participant during participation and for a specified period thereafter.
 3. The type and extent of counseling or other services received by youths during participation.

Group homes

- The reason for each placement.
- The number of referrals to juvenile court for each participant before and during confinement in the home and for a specified period thereafter.
- A periodic staff rating on the social adjustment of each participant during his stay.
- Why the participant was released from the home, where he went after release, and where he was 6 months and 1 year after release.

On the basis of the standards developed from the demonstration projects, the Attorney General should direct LEAA to:

- Establish an impact information system which LEAA-funded projects must use to report to their SPAs on project effectiveness.

- Require SPAs, once such a system is established, to develop, as part of their State plans, a system for approving individual project evaluations only when such efforts will not duplicate information already available from the impact information system.
- Publish annually for the major project areas the results obtained from the impact information system so the Congress and the public can assess the LEAA programs' effectiveness.

In developing information on the impact of projects, LEAA will have to arrange the data so the confidentiality of the individual is protected.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO EVALUATION

The Department of Justice generally agreed with our conclusions and recommendations regarding the need for greater standardization of goals, costs, types of services, and information to be collected on similar projects so better evaluations can be made. However, the Department did not agree with our recommendation that the way to implement the needed improvements was to have LEAA ultimately establish general criteria regarding each item. (See app. I.)

The Department believes it is inconsistent with the philosophy of the "New Federalism," as defined by the Administration, for LEAA to require the States to adopt such guidelines.

The Department noted, however, that LEAA has provided the States with technical assistance publications through such actions as dissemination of operational and result information in its Prescription Package and Exemplary Projects Programs, which should assist them in evaluating their projects.

We believe the information in such publications is beneficial but generally is not comprehensive enough to provide an adequate basis for determining the specific comparable data that should be collected for similar projects needed to establish acceptable standards and criteria. Moreover in issuing such information, LEAA points out that the information does not necessarily represent the official position of the Department of Justice. Each State can implement all, some, or none of the suggestions made in the publications.

For example, the handbook on the community-based corrections program of Polk County, Iowa, contains a good description of the project's procedures, costs, and results of some evaluations made of its activities. However, there is nothing in the handbook indicating that the criteria and standards used by the project have been independently evaluated against those of similar projects and have been determined to be what similar projects should adopt.

The Department also noted that the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals discussed the problem of program measurement and evaluation and made

certain appropriate recommendations. The Department implied that this action, along with those discussed above, was adequate to solve the problems we noted.

The Commission's recommendations pointed up the need to develop adequate data bases so specific goals and standards could be developed. The Commission's role was not to make specific recommendations regarding the exact types of data that similar projects should collect so specific standards and criteria could be developed. Thus, LEAA and the States can use the Commission's findings, along with other reports, as a basis for starting to develop the specific processes needed to obtain the data to develop specific standards and criteria.

Accordingly, we do not believe the Department's actions to date will insure that the same general guidelines and criteria are applied to similar projects so effective evaluations and adequate national accountability can be achieved. LEAA must take a more active leadership role in developing the guidelines and criteria the States should adopt if the Department is to be able to report on the relative impact of various States' programs. Otherwise the States may go their own ways, develop systems that are not compatible with each other, and collect data that cannot be consolidated to provide a national indication of the impact of LEAA funding.

We do not believe that adoption of such guidelines and criteria by LEAA will undermine the program's effectiveness or eliminate the States' prerogative to determine the needs of its criminal justice system and the types of projects to be funded. Nor would such criteria prevent individual projects from shaping their programs to meet the unique needs of their communities.

We believe our position on the need for LEAA to establish general criteria for the grant projects and to require the SPAs to adopt such criteria is consistent with the concerns of the Congress when it passed the Crime Control Act of 1973.

The act notes that no comprehensive State plan shall be approved unless it

--provide(s) for such fund accounting, audit, monitoring, and evaluation procedures as may be necessary

to assure fiscal control, proper management, and disbursement of funds received under this title;

"--provide(s) for the maintenance of such data and information, and for the submission of such reports in such form, at such times, and containing such data and information as the National Institute for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice may reasonably require to evaluate pursuant to section 402(c) programs and projects carried out under this title and as the Administration may reasonably require to administer other provisions of this title."

In its report on the proposed amendments (H. Rept. 93-249, 93d Cong., 1st sess. 4-5) the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, stated that it had rejected proposals to convert the LEAA program into a simple "no strings attached" special revenue-sharing program and by doing so had retained Federal responsibility for administering the program and for assisting the States in comprehensive planning. The report further stated "The committee feels that LEAA has in the past not exercised the leverage provided to it by law to induce the States to improve the quality of law enforcement and criminal justice."

Moreover, the report noted that the 1973 law greatly strengthened the role of the LEAA's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice in evaluating projects. The report stated:

"In performing its evaluation function, the Institute will find it necessary to evaluate programs or projects on the basis of standards. * * * The State plans themselves must assure that programs and projects funded under the Act maintain the data and information necessary to allow the Institute to perform meaningful evaluation."

To insure that all the State plans require projects to develop consistent data and information, it is essential that LEAA develop guidelines and criteria which the States must follow.

When these amendments were discussed on the floor of the House of Representatives, the new requirements for LEAA

to begin careful evaluation of the programs it funds were cited. These requirements were to enable LEAA to insure that the substantial Federal resources it controls are directed into effective efforts to control and reduce crime.

During the House discussions, one Representative stated:

"I hope that the National Institute will make major use of this new authority so that LEAA will no longer simply throw money at the problems of crime in a vague hope that something will work."

We do not believe that the Department's proposals for carrying out our recommendations will insure that LEAA provides the type of leadership envisioned by the Congress when it passed the 1973 act.

The SPAs reviewed agreed with our conclusions and recommendations and noted that they would be helpful in improving their evaluation efforts.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CONGRESS

Although the Crime Control Act of 1973 requires the Administration to provide more leadership and report to the Congress on LEAA activities, the Department of Justice's responses to our recommendations indicate that LEAA's actions will not be consistent with the intent of the Congress.

Therefore, we recommend that the cognizant legislative committees further discuss this matter with officials of the Department.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

February 8, 1974

Address Reply to the
Division Indicated
and Refer to Initials and Number

Mr. Daniel F. Stanton
Assistant Director
General Government Division
United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Stanton:

This letter is in response to your request for comments on the draft report titled "Difficulties of Assessing the Impact of Certain Projects to Reduce Crime."

Generally, we are in agreement with the report and share GAO's concern regarding the need for effective evaluation of programs and projects funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). Although the report acknowledges that LEAA has encouraged program and project evaluation by the States and units of local government, it does not comment on many of the positive actions previously implemented or initiated by LEAA prior to issuance of the report. As early as 1971, instructions to the States outlined the importance of evaluations and provided minimum guidelines to implement an evaluation system.

The LEAA High Impact Anti-Crime Program has a sophisticated multi-faceted evaluation component which addresses not only project evaluation but program and process evaluation as well. Efforts are underway to determine those factors (e.g., organizational, historic, demographic) which are most critical in the development and implementation of a crime control program. On its own initiative,

APPENDIX I

LEAA has improved and upgraded its evaluation capabilities through research and technical assistance programs. These programs are designed and intended to assess the impact of LEAA's program and to provide technical assistance to operating units of the criminal justice system. Examples of these efforts are as follows:

1. Technical assistance contracts have been awarded to consultants with expertise in the disciplines of police, courts, and corrections for the purpose of providing a wide range of services, including project evaluations, to State and local criminal justice agencies.
2. Through the auspices of an LEAA technical assistance grant, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency printed 2,500 copies of a publication, "The Youth Service Bureau: A Key to Delinquency Prevention," for distribution to the criminal justice community. This publication describes the purpose, organization, administration, functions, and evaluations of youth service bureaus.
3. An LEAA technical assistance publication, "Guidelines and Standards for Halfway Houses and Community Treatment Centers," sets forth operational guidelines and evaluation standards applicable to group homes for juveniles.
4. Researchers at the University of Michigan operating under a National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice grant are conducting a 5-year national assessment of juvenile corrections. This study will develop criteria having a major impact on the implementation of policies and programs for handling juvenile and youthful offenders throughout the United States.

APPENDIX I

It is of concern to us that the report does not take into consideration such factors as (1) the appropriate relationship between LEAA and the States within the context of the New Federalism, or (2) the optimum involvement of LEAA in State and local programs. LEAA believes that the concept of Federal leadership does not require the establishment of mandatory evaluation standards for the States. The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals addressed the issue of program measurement and evaluation and reported out the methodology and philosophy to accomplish effective evaluation. LEAA has taken the position that the standards and goals developed by the Commission are subject to voluntary acceptance by the States and are not to be used as a condition of project funding. LEAA's goal in terms of evaluation is to be responsive to the issue of accountability. Specifically, we must assure the most worthwhile expenditures of Federal funds. To accomplish this goal, LEAA's efforts have been directed toward research, models, and the development of evaluation techniques. While it is beneficial to know the results of specific projects, it is LEAA's position to assure a broader systems perspective that examines the combination of activities that best achieves an overall goal and the implications and effects of actions and decisions in one part of the system on the others. Concentrating on specific project evaluation would not address these broader issues.

LEAA interprets its role as being limited to increasing the capabilities of local government by means of example, experiment, research, development, and funding incentives which encourage, but do not force, fund recipients to adopt Federally supported projects or project goals. LEAA has and will continue to lend technical assistance and support to States to the greatest extent possible, but the primary role for project evaluation must remain with the States.

APPENDIX I

The report recommends that LEAA establish operational guidelines for similar type projects relating to general goals, the type of staff to be employed, the range of services that could be provided, and expected ranges of costs to be incurred. If GAO's intention is for LEAA to mandate goals and operational standards for all criminal justice programs of a certain type--e.g., youth service bureaus--the proposal is viewed as inappropriate to the LEAA mission. However, if the recommendation is intended to suggest that LEAA provide State Planning Agencies (SPAs) and State and local criminal justice agencies with summaries of the experience of typical programs throughout the country for their general guidance in terms of necessary staffing, costs, and expected results, LEAA fully supports the recommendation and is pursuing several major programs in this area.

One of LEAA's objectives, as noted in the GAO report, was the establishment of a separate Evaluation Division within the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. This Division is being staffed by highly qualified specialists in operations research, mathematics, statistical analysis, and experimental design. These specialists will analyze the data collected from the individual projects and programs, evaluate it, and develop from it the necessary standards and criteria to permit nationwide comparisons of similar projects.

In addition, two new LEAA programs have been initiated within the Technology Transfer Division of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. These two programs, namely, the Prescriptive Packages and Exemplary Project programs, will provide model designs for furnishing State and local officials with reliable and tested information on the operation of specific classes of projects for their use on a voluntary basis.

The purpose of the Prescriptive Packages series is to provide criminal justice administrators and practitioners with background information and operational guidelines in selected program areas.

The guidelines are a synthesis of the best research and operational experience already gained through the implementation of similar direct projects around the nation. The guidelines have been specifically designed for practical application and represent one significant means of effecting technology transfer.

Listed below are three prescriptive packages that have been recently published and nine others that are in various stages of development.

	<u>Title</u>	<u>Status</u>
1.	Handbook on Diversion of the Public Inebriate from the Criminal Justice System	Published
2.	Methadone Treatment Manual	Published
3.	Case Screening and Selected Case Processing in Prosecutors' Offices	Published
4.	Improving Police/Community Relations	Being printed
5.	A Guide to Improving Misdemeanant Court Services	Under review
6.	Counsel for Indigent Defendants	Under review
7.	Guidelines for Probation and Parole	Being prepared
8.	Neighborhood Team Policing	Under review
9.	Police Crime Analysis Units and Procedures	Being printed
10.	Evaluation Research in Corrections	Being prepared
11.	A Manual for Robbery Control Projects	Recently funded
12.	Offender Job Training and Placement Guide	Recently funded

APPENDIX I

The following topics, many identified in a spring of 1972 survey of criminal justice planning and operating agencies, are potential subjects for prescriptive packages to be initiated in fiscal year 1974.

1. Major Violation Apprehension and Prosecution Procedures. An examination of methods employed in a variety of law enforcement jurisdictions to increase the effectiveness of arrest and prosecution efforts in the case of major criminal offenders.
2. Law Enforcement Case Review Procedures. An examination of methods employed to identify, analyze, and correct problems involved in the processing of criminal cases from the point of arrest to disposition of charges.
3. Prison Grievance Procedures. An examination of methods and procedures employed in a variety of adult correctional institutions to handle inmate complaints and grievances.
4. Prison and Jail Medical Care Practices. An examination of potential as well as present methods of more effectively delivering medical care to prison and jail inmates.
5. Improved Handling of Juvenile Drug Abusers. An examination of various operational projects and methods employed in the handling of juvenile drug abusers.
6. Improved Burglary Control Efforts. An examination of the many police burglary control projects currently in operation as well as a general review of work done in the area of "target hardening."
7. State and Regional Procedures for Implementing Standards and Goals Recommendations. An examination of newly developed and potential plans, methods, and procedures for implementing standards and goals recommendations at State and regional levels.

The Exemplary Project program was initiated to focus national attention on outstanding criminal justice programs that are suitable for inter-community transfer. Over the next year, approximately 12 projects will be given an "exemplary" designation. For each project a manual will be prepared containing comprehensive guidelines for establishing, operating, and evaluating similar projects. These guidelines will be designed to take a criminal justice administrator step by step through the program's operation and will include considerable detail on such matters as budgeting, staffing, and training. Information will also be available on potential problem areas and measures of effectiveness.

To date, two programs have been selected as "exemplary": a community-based corrections program in Polk County, Iowa, and the Prosecutor Management Information System (PROMIS) of the United States Attorney's Office, Washington, D. C. In addition, the following five projects are to be validated under contracts awarded in October:

1. Operation De Novo, Minneapolis, Minnesota
2. Dade County Pre-Trial Intervention
3. D. C. Public Defender Service
4. Los Angeles Police Department's Automated Worthless Document Index
5. Providence Educational Center, St. Louis, Missouri

The report also recommends that LEAA establish (1) uniform information to be gathered on similar-type projects, (2) standard reporting systems for similar-type projects, (3) a standard range of expected accomplishments that can be used to determine if similar-type projects are effective, and (4) standardized evaluation methodologies that can be used to develop comparable results on the impact of similar-type projects.

APPENDIX I

LEAA certainly recognizes the necessity for such data and is in agreement with the recommendations. LEAA's effort in the research and technical assistance programs, coupled with the Exemplary Projects and Prescriptive Packages programs as herein described, demonstrates LEAA's determination to be responsive to the conditions highlighted by the report.

Finally, the report recommends (1) establishing an impact information system which LEAA funded projects must use to report to their SPAs on the effectiveness of their projects, (2) requiring SPAs, once such a system is established, to develop, as part of their State plans, a system for approving individual project evaluations only when it can be determined that such efforts will not duplicate information already available from the impact information system, and (3) publishing annually for the major project areas the results obtained from the impact information system so that Congress and the public will have a basis for assessing the effectiveness of the LEAA program.

LEAA considers the recommendations to be appropriate and implementing action has been initiated. As a part of this effort, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service was established through a contract with the General Electric Company. Further, plans are being formulated to incorporate these recommendations in the Grants Management Information System (GMIS) program. In addition to the GMIS program at LEAA headquarters, data centers are under development in each State. These centers will provide the capability necessary to review past evaluations of similar projects and avoid duplications of effort.

We appreciate the opportunity given us to comment on the draft report. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Glen E. Pommerening
Acting Assistant Attorney General
for Administration