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Justification Review



March 2002

Report No. 02-17

Most Delinquents Sent to Community Supervision; Program Could Improve

at a glance

The Department of Juvenile Justice Probation and Community Corrections Program provides supervision to delinquent youth in the community to help protect the public from juvenile crime.

Placement of this program within the Department of Juvenile Justice is consistent with its mission and is preferable to placement in the Department of Corrections or local government because it enhances consistency and provides a continuum of sanctions for delinquent youth throughout the state.

To improve the program, we recommend that the department

- use a systematic, research-based approach to initiating and discontinuing programs;
- reduce \$275,310 and avoid \$637,374 in costs annually by using consequence beds instead of residential programs to sanction youth for violation of probation;
- develop a funding methodology for juvenile assessment centers;
- improve accountability for treatment services by accurately tracking the number of youth assessed for, referred for, and receiving mental health and substance abuse treatment; and
- strengthen contract monitoring.

Purpose

This report presents the results of our program evaluation and justification review of the Probation and Community Corrections Program administered by the Department of Juvenile Justice. State law directs OPPAGA to conduct justification reviews of each program operating under a performance-based program budget. This report assesses agency performance measures and standards, evaluates program performance, and identifies policy alternatives for improving services and reducing costs. Appendix A summarizes our conclusions regarding the nine areas the law requires be considered in a justification review.

Background

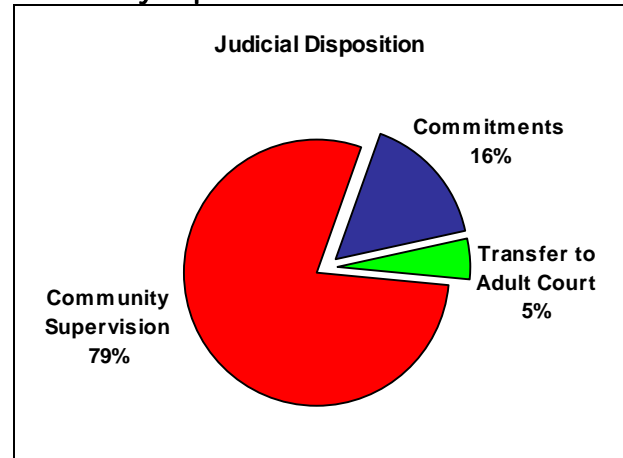
In Florida, youth under age 18 charged with a crime may be “referred” to the Department of Juvenile Justice. A referral is similar to an arrest in the adult criminal justice system. The department assesses referred youth to determine the degree of risk they pose to public safety and whether they have extenuating needs, such as for mental health or substance abuse treatment. The department uses this information to make recommendations to the state attorney.

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The state attorney then decides whether to drop the charges or ask the judge to either send the youth to a community supervision program or incarcerate the youth in a residential facility. The most common disposition for juveniles is community supervision, as shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 2 describes the Probation and Community Corrections Program's main services and activities. The department provides some of these services and contracts for others. The department does not compile data on the number of youth and the cost per youth served in each program.

Exhibit 1
Judges Place the Majority of Delinquent Youth on Community Supervision



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice data for Fiscal Year 1999-00.

Exhibit 2
The Probation Program Provides Many Types of Services

Type	Program Services	Descriptions
Cooperative	Juvenile Assessment Centers	Juvenile assessment centers serve as a central screening and intake center for youth referred to the department. The department, local law enforcement, the school districts, and community service providers work together to assess the juveniles' risk to the community and expedite the appropriate legal proceedings or treatment referrals. Twenty-one juvenile assessment centers serve 47 counties.
Department Core Services	Probation	<p>State law requires intake and case management for all youth who have been referred to the department. Delinquency case management services include those described below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intake: Juvenile probation officers or providers under contract to the department conduct an initial screening to assess each youth's risk to public safety and whether he or she has extenuating needs, such as for substance abuse treatment. Juvenile probation officers use this information to make placement recommendations to state attorneys. Intake is conducted at a juvenile assessment center if one is operating in the area. Probation: Juvenile probation officers supervise youth in the community by contacting them at home, work, and school to ensure that they are meeting the terms of their court-ordered sanctions, such as victim restitution, community service, curfew, and/or participation in substance abuse or educational programs. The number of contacts varies, but is generally three times per month. A juvenile's failure to comply with the conditions of probation by committing a technical violation, such as staying out after curfew, or a new offense will prompt the juvenile probation officer to file a report with the state attorney. Probation officers also monitor youth that judges have sentenced to incarceration in residential commitment programs and work with the youth to develop transition plans for their return to the community. Probation generally lasts six months. Conditional Release or Post-Commitment Probation: Most youth returning to the community from a residential commitment program are placed on conditional release for five to seven months to assist them with successful readjustment, including enrolling in appropriate educational and vocational programs. Juvenile probation officers or contracted staff provides supervision. Judges may directly discharge youth without post-release supervision if they are 19 years of age or have exhibited exemplary behavior while in residential commitment. Youth Custody Officers: These officers serve juvenile warrants on youth that violate their conditions of probation, including committing new law violations.

Type	Program Services	Descriptions
	Intensive Supervision	This form of probation provides more frequent contacts of five times per week. To be eligible for intensive supervision, youth must meet criteria that indicate they are at high risk of re-offending. Special funding is available for youth on intensive supervision to obtain treatment or services. Length of stay in intensive supervision is four to six months.
Contracted Services	Diversion	Diversion programs provide sanctions and services to non-violent juveniles who have violated the law to divert them from the court system. Most diversion programs are contracted or community operated. Diversion programs include Teen Court and arbitration.
	Juvenile Alternative Services Program	The state attorney may divert youth from the judicial system to this alternative program. Contracted staff monitor youth to ensure they complete specified condition, such as community service hours or payment of restitution to the victims of their crimes. The program originally operated in most circuits, but has been discontinued everywhere except in Circuit 11 (Miami-Dade County). Length of stay in the program is approximately four months.
	Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services	State attorneys may also divert youth from the judicial system to this alternative program. Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services is modeled after a California program referred to as the 8% Solution because it was based on the theory that 8% of youth account for most chronic offenses and can be identified by poor school performance, family problems, substance abuse, and pre-delinquent behavior. Youth are eligible for Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services for similar factors; however, in Florida these youth constitute 14% of the delinquency population. Supervision of youth is more frequent than probation, with three contacts per week. This program differs from intensive supervision in three ways: it is contracted instead of department operated; it serves youth who have been diverted from the court system and not sentenced by a judge; and no designated funds are available to obtain extra treatment services for youth. Length of stay in the program is five to seven months.
	Early Delinquency Intervention Program	This program is intended to divert youth from further involvement in the juvenile justice system. It consists of one to six weeks of residential treatment followed by community supervision. The program operates seven days a week. After a comprehensive assessment, contract staff work with youth and their families and community service agencies to address the youths' needs. Length of stay in the program is six to nine months.
	Multi-Systemic Therapy	Certified therapists work with adjudicated youth in their home, school, and community. Research has shown this program to be very effective. It focuses heavily on the family environment, providing parents with resources and strategies for effective parenting. It is a highly structured and controlled intervention that targets chronic, violent or substance abusing youth, ages 12 to 17, at high risk of residential placement. Length of stay in the program is approximately four months.
	Day Treatment	Youth referred by the department to "non-residential delinquency rehabilitation" report to provider facilities every weekday and spend the day under supervision in educational classes and treatment. Providers also supervise youth's fulfillment of community service and victim restitution requirements. In some cases, youth spend the first 30 days of conditional release in a day treatment facility. Length of stay in the program is three to six months.
	Conditional Release	The department contracts with providers to supervise youth who have been released from incarceration in residential facilities. The program provides supervision contacts and case management services. Length of stay in the program is five to six months.
	Independent Living	Group homes for juveniles 16 to 19 years old who are on conditional release, in day treatment, or on probation and cannot return to their home. Independent living provides 24-hour supervision, educational, vocational, and counseling services that emphasize positive life skills and move youth toward living on their own.
	Non-Residential Sex Offender Treatment	Provides long-term day treatment and educational services to sex offenders. Length of stay in the program is 12 to 18 months.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Juvenile Justice information.

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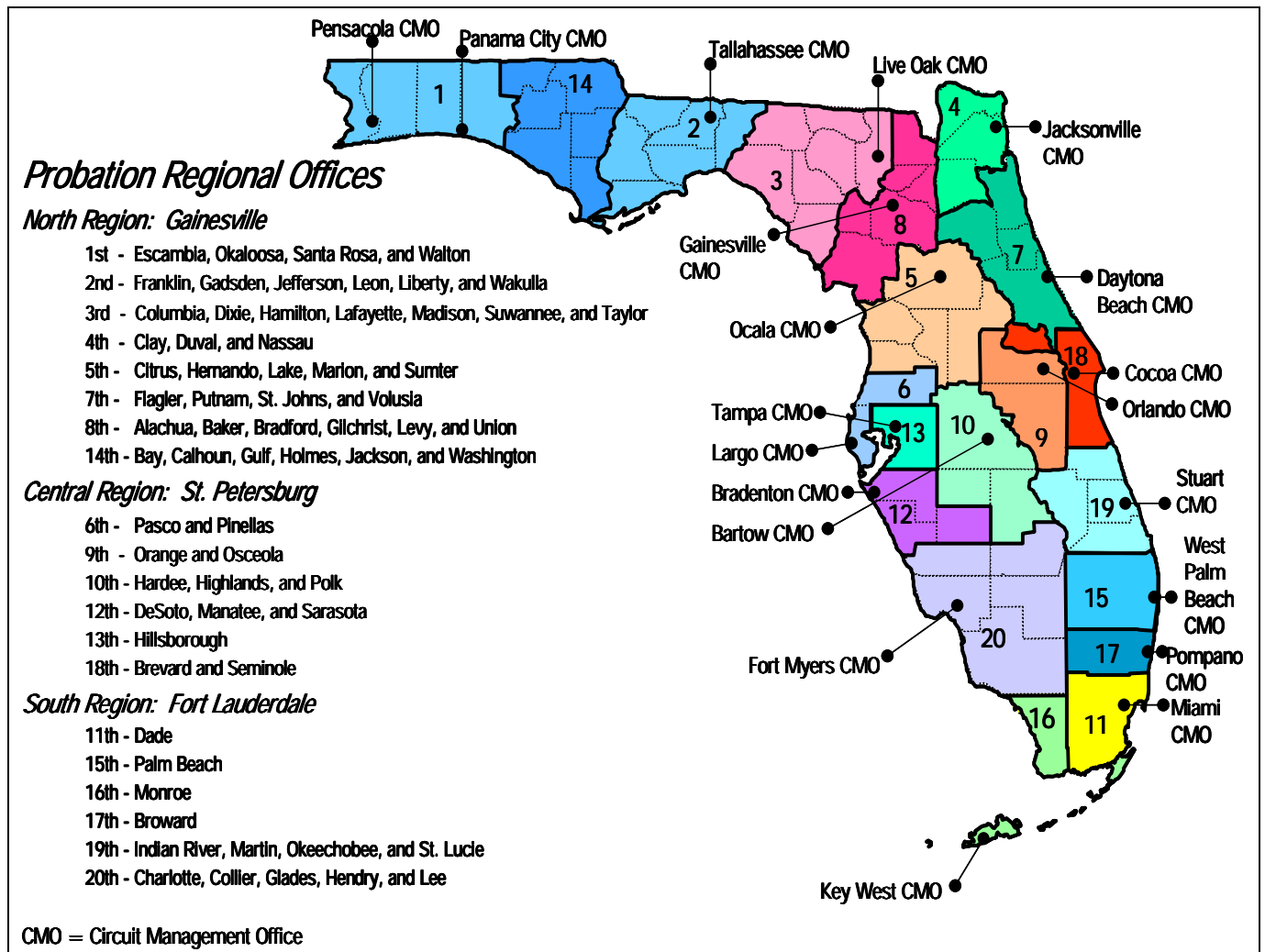
The Assistant Secretary for Probation and Community Corrections administers the program. In addition, a probation circuit manager supervises staff in each judicial circuit. As shown in Exhibit 3, there are 20 judicial circuits throughout the state. The department recently reorganized to be consistent with the judicial circuits to make it easier for department staff to work closely with juvenile judges, state attorneys, public defenders, and community providers.

The Legislature appropriated the Probation and Community Corrections Program \$133.5 million

and 1,525.5 staff positions for Fiscal Year 2001-02, as shown in Exhibit 4. The \$133.5 million represented a \$19.3 million (13%) decrease from the previous fiscal year, consisting primarily of a \$6.1 million (34.3%) decrease in trust funds and a slight \$13.2 million (10%) decrease in general revenue.¹ Approximately 91% of program funding is from the general revenue fund, and trust funds provide the remaining 9%.

¹ Appropriations prior to Fiscal Year 2000-01 are not comparable due to department reorganization that occurred July 1, 2000.

Exhibit 3
Probation Circuits Mirror Judicial Circuits



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

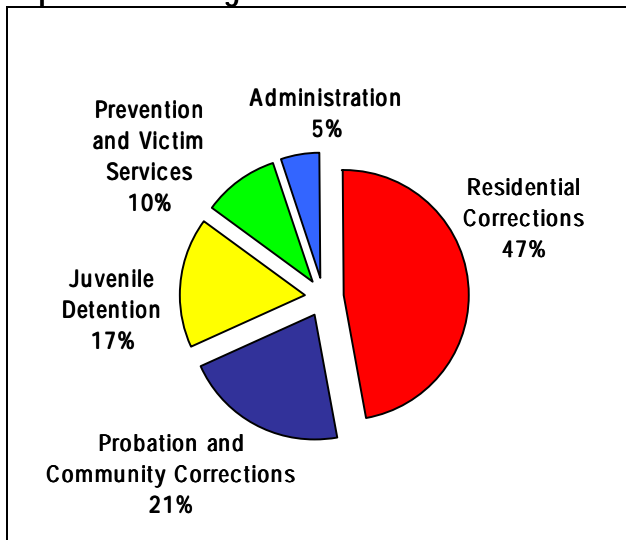
**Exhibit 4
Program Appropriations Decreased**

Legislative Appropriation	2000-01	2001-02
General Revenue	\$134,904,779	\$121,753,334
Trust Funds	17,857,897	11,734,970
Total	\$152,762,676	\$133,488,304

Source: General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Years 2000-01 and LAS/PBS System for Fiscal Year 2001-02.

The program represented 21% of the agency's operating budget in Fiscal Year 2000-01, as shown in Exhibit 5.

**Exhibit 5
Probation Program Is One-Fifth of the Department's Budget**



Source: LAS/PBS System for Fiscal Year 2001-02.

Program Placement

Statutes require OPPAGA to evaluate the organizational placement of programs during justification reviews. We concluded that the Juvenile Probation and Community Corrections Program should remain within the Department of Juvenile Justice.

The 1994 Juvenile Justice Act directs the Department of Juvenile Justice to address the public safety interests of citizens of Florida,

meet the needs of juvenile offenders, and provide a continuum of care and services to maximize the use of state resources. The department administers the Probation and Community Corrections Program as a part of this continuum. Placement of this program within the department is consistent with this mission and is preferable to placement in the Department of Corrections or local government because it enhances consistency and provides a continuum of sanctions for delinquent youth throughout the state.

Transferring the program to either of these alternative placements would interrupt the juvenile justice continuum that sets Florida apart from juvenile justice systems in many other states. Presently, Florida has a seamless system from the first time youth are arrested to their release from the juvenile justice system. Probation staff is a key component of the entire juvenile justice system, for it assesses all youth referred by local law enforcement agencies to the department and recommend to state attorneys whether youth should be ordered to a diversion program or sentenced to probation or a commitment program.

If the Probation Program were transferred to the Department of Corrections' Community Corrections Program, the continuity of juvenile supervision would be broken. In addition, this option would increase state costs because probation officers that work for the Department of Corrections draw special risk retirement, whereas juvenile probation officers do not. Also, the supervision requirements of adults and youth sentenced to probation are different. Juvenile probation officers must interact with a juvenile's family and school while adult correctional officers do not. It would be challenging to serve both youth and adults within one program because court systems process juveniles and adults separately, so staff would have to work within two criminal justice systems. And, as state resources become more limited, growth in adult caseloads could affect the assignment of cases to juvenile probation

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officers if both adult and juvenile probation officers worked in the same program.

Another alternative placement would be for local governments to assume responsibility for juvenile probation. This option could transfer program costs to local governments and increase flexibility to local conditions. However, we do not recommend this option for three reasons.

First, as discussed, transferring the supervision of delinquent youth from the Department of Juvenile Justice to local governments interrupts the juvenile justice continuum that sets Florida apart from juvenile justice systems in other states. It is difficult to predict the impact on the other parts of the juvenile justice continuum if probation were transferred to 67 different local government entities.

Second, the transfer of the supervision of youth in the community from a state agency to local governments would reduce consistency in services. Presently, no matter where a delinquent youth is sentenced by one of hundreds of local courts, the procedures for supervising that youth in the community will be similar. Juvenile probation officers contact the youth and his/her family, visit the youth at school, and ensure that the youth meets all conditions of the court order. Juvenile probation officers have a consistent system for responding when youth violate those conditions or commit new crimes. If local governments become responsible for supervising youth sentenced to probation, it is probable that each of the state's 67 counties will develop its own procedures for supervising the youth and responding to violations. Consistency is important for ensuring public safety and holding youth accountable for their actions.

Third, maintaining the program at the state level provides the structure for appropriate contract procurement and monitoring. Probation and community corrections maintain 102 contracts for programs throughout the state.

Centralizing contract management should provide consistency and allow economies of scale. Transferring this responsibility to local governments would fragment these processes, increase costs, and weaken accountability.

It would be time consuming and expensive to coordinate the activities of 67 county governments and establish accountability for outcomes.

- We recommend that the Department of Juvenile Justice continue to supervise juveniles sentenced to probation.

Measuring Program Performance

The Probation and Community Corrections Program was created as part of the department's reorganization on July 1, 2000. The department developed four outcome measures that assessed the percentage of youth who remained crime free during or after release from juvenile probation and community corrections programs, as shown in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6 Success Cannot Be Determined Without Performance Standards

FY 2000-01 Measures	Performance
Percentage of youth who remain crime free during conditional release supervision	65.0%
Percentage of youth who remain crime free one year after release from conditional release	58.5%
Percentage of youth who remain crime free one year after release from nonresidential commitment	67.1%
Percentage of youth who remain crime free one year after release from probation	79.1%

Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

However, these measures are currently only marginally useful for assessing its results due to three limitations. First, although the Legislature set standards for the measures for subsequent years, it did not adopt standards for the transition Fiscal Year 2000-01. Therefore, it

cannot be determined whether performance for that period met legislative expectations. Second, because the measures were new, there is no historical data available to assess performance trends over time. And finally, the validity and reliability of the data is questionable.

This data is collected and entered by probation officers statewide. However, the department has not developed a guide to define each measure or detail how staff is to collect and verify the performance data. The department's inspector general reported in October 2001 that the performance measures do not contain accurate, complete, consistent, and supportable documentation for the collected data.²

To address this problem, the department hired data integrity officers to review the data entered by probation officers and train staff how to record it. However, the department should expand this effort by following the example set by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, which distributes a *Performance Measures Guide* to its entire staff. This guide provides a clear definition of every performance measure, describes the data source, and explains the specific steps required to gather performance data and ensure the quality of the data.

- We recommend that during the 2002-03 fiscal year, the department develop a guide to assist staff in defining and entering data consistently.

Options for Improvement —

Our review of the Probation and Community Corrections Program identified several options for improvement. Specifically, the department should

- use a systematic, research-based approach to initiating and discontinuing programs;

- reduce \$275,310 and avoid \$637,374 in costs annually by using consequence beds instead of residential programs to sanction youth for violation of probation;
- develop a funding methodology for juvenile assessment centers;
- improve accountability for treatment services by accurately tracking and reporting the number of youth assessed for, referred for, and receiving mental health and substance abuse treatment; and
- strengthen contract monitoring.

The department should use a systematic, research-based approach to initiating programs

Historically, judges have sent the majority of adjudicated delinquents to community supervision. The department has initiated and discontinued numerous community programs over the years. However, these changes have not been based on a systematic approach that seeks to replicate success and eliminate poor performers. In reviewing these programs, we found that the department

- lacks a systematic planning and decision-making process for initiating programs;
- has not designed programs to replicate those that research has proven to be effective; and
- has not collected the information needed to assess program success.

As a result, it is problematic for the department and the Legislature to make sound investment decisions when selecting programs for funding.

A systematic planning and decision-making process is essential for initiating new programs and replicating proven programs, as well as discontinuing ineffective programs. During the past decade, national juvenile justice research has identified a number of models that substantially reduce the onset of delinquent behavior or lower recidivism and has calculated the benefit these programs provide to taxpayers

² *Assessment of Juvenile Offender Program*, Review Report R20103, by the Department of Juvenile Justice Inspector General, October 10, 2001.

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for each dollar spent, as shown in Exhibit 7. In general, the more effective programs use multiple approaches of intervention that address family, school and community issues, have higher levels of treatment intensity and duration, and a greater degree of structure.

However, despite this wealth of research, the department has only four contracts for multi-systemic therapy programs, and none of the other highly effective programs exist in Florida. The department has continued to develop programs in response to the budget, rather than planned to replicate successful, research-based programs and requested the budget to support them.

When the department decides to request funding to initiate a program, it should be able to describe what the purpose of the program is, how the department will measure whether the program achieves its intended purpose, who the program will serve, what the program activities will consist of, whether the state or a vendor will provide the services, and what the unit and program costs will be. Program performance and juvenile justice research should be used to determine whether to add, continue, or terminate programs.

Instead, the department's planning process is *ad hoc* and budget-driven. For example, the department developed the Intensive

Supervision Program to replace an existing program that cost more. Especially in tight budget years, program administrators need to devise creative solutions to respond to budget reductions. However, in proposing these programs to the Legislature, the department was unable to describe with any degree of specificity the services that the programs would provide, the expected outcomes, why the state or a contractor should provide the services, or how the program costs were derived.

Also, while these programs incorporated some features of proven program models, they did not incorporate elements that appear to be critical to success. For example, the department refers to the Intensive Supervision and Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services programs as implementing California's successful 8% Solution Program, which serves selected youth who are considered to be at high risk for delinquency.³

³ The Orange County California Probation Department's long-term research showed a small portion of the juvenile population (8%) accounts for the majority of repeat crimes. The intervention program known as the 8% Solution focuses on youth 15 years of age or younger who have three or more risk factors such as school behavior problems, family concerns, substance abuse, and pre-delinquent behaviors.

Exhibit 7

National Research Cites Highly Effective Programs That Produce Significant Benefits to Taxpayers

Program	Benefits Per \$1 of Cost	Program Description
Aggression Replacement Training	\$19.57	A cognitive behavioral intervention that attempts to reduce anti-social behavior
Multi-Systemic Therapy	8.38	Trained therapists work with youth and their families following an exacting set of principles and procedures
Adolescent Diversion Project	7.62	Using behavioral contracting and child advocacy
Functional Family Therapy	6.85	Focuses on increasing family problem solving skills and improving interactions among family members

Source: Washington State Institute of Public Policy, 1998.

Florida's programs do serve high-risk youth. However, California's 8% Solution is a day treatment program in which youth spend every week day at the program for 18 months, attending school and receiving comprehensive mental health and substance abuse counseling by highly trained professionals. The California model also includes frequent interaction with youths' families. In contrast, Florida's programs provide three to four contacts per week for a period of five to seven months and limited referrals to community social services. As a result, there is little assurance that Florida's program will replicate the success of the California program, which provides much more intensive intervention.

Finally, the department is not collecting performance data that will allow it to assess program success. The state-run probation programs are aggregated for quality assurance review purposes, and therefore the intensive supervision programs cannot be compared to regular probation to see whether they perform better. While the department makes annual comparisons of cost and effectiveness (referred to as Program Accountability Measures) for residential commitment programs, it has not implemented a similar tool for community-based programs.

The department's failure to capture information about youth in community programs reduces program accountability and precludes the department from determining whether programs are effective and should be continued. We recommend that the department take the steps below to improve planning and evaluation for probation programs.

- Immediately establish a process to document why programs are initiated. This process should address, at a minimum, the purpose of the program; how the department will know if the program achieves its intended purpose; who the program will serve; what the program activities will be, how it determined whether the state or a vendor will provide the services; and what the unit and program

costs will be. The department should include this information in its Legislative Budget Request when requesting funds for new programs.

- To the greatest extent possible, incorporate features that research has proven to be effective into new programs.
- Initiate data collection and reporting procedures when programs are initiated so that performance can be assessed.
- Develop Program Accountability Measures (PAM scores) for community supervision programs, as it already does for residential programs.
- Staff should use this information as part of a routine review and assessment process to determine whether to continue or eliminate programs.

The department could reduce \$275,310 and avoid \$637,374 in costs by using consequence beds instead of residential programs to sanction some youth

In the 2000-01 fiscal year, 410 of the 6,049 youth that were admitted to residential programs for the first time were committed for non-law violations of probation. Non-law violations occur when youth violate conditions of probation such as curfew. Committing youth who have non-law violations to residential programs is costly and inefficient. The department needs intermediate sanctions to offer judges as an alternative to commitment for these youth.

Approximately 15%, or 63 of the 410 youth did not appear to have a serious criminal history that would warrant incarceration in a program for a non-law infraction.⁴ These 63 youth had a mean of 1.06 adjudicated misdemeanors and a low seriousness index score.

⁴ These youth had no prior felony adjudications, no felony charges in the past year, no new-law violation of probation in the past year, no felony charges more than a year ago followed by misdemeanors in the past year, two or fewer misdemeanor adjudications prior to admission, no more than one misdemeanor assault or battery adjudication, and no misdemeanor assault or battery adjudication followed by a new misdemeanor charge (for any offense) in the past year.

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The seriousness index indicates the youth's delinquency history, with a higher score indicating more serious adjudicated offenses in the juveniles' criminal history.⁵ The 63 youth had a seriousness index score of 4.3, whereas the average score for first-time admissions to low and moderate-risk facilities was 17.7.

Thirty-four of the 63 youth were committed to low-risk facilities, which have a three-month length of stay; the remaining 29 youth were committed to a moderate-risk facility for a four-to-six-month stay. After release, youth are supervised on conditional release for six months. The average incarceration cost of a youth in low risk is \$8,000; the cost of moderate risk is \$14,800. The cost of conditional release supervision following release is an additional \$4,300 per youth.

Research indicates that a brief confinement may be more effective than a full-length commitment program for youth that violate probation, and it would be considerably less expensive.⁶ If the 63 youth with a non-law violation of probation and no felony history were to be assigned to five days in a consequence bed instead of four to six months in commitment, the department could avoid residential placement costs of \$637,374 and reduce \$275,310 in conditional release costs for these youth.⁷ (OPPAGA's supporting calculations are provided in Appendix B.)

In an effort to achieve such savings, the Legislature responded to a 1997 OPPAGA recommendation to fund short-term consequence beds as an alternative to commitment for non-law violation youth. In Fiscal Year 1999-00, the Legislature appropriated \$3 million for 60 consequence beds, and added \$7.4 million for 96 more beds the following year. The department began to

build 12-bed consequence units onto detention centers to take advantage of existing sites and infrastructure.

Consequence bed construction was completed in St. Johns and Dade counties in fall 2001, but these new beds were used for detention center overflow.⁸ (Most detention centers routinely operate over capacity.) Using \$839,000 in operating funds for the 2000-01 fiscal year, the new beds were staffed with new employees that were being trained to work in the consequence units. Because the new employees needed to complete their training by working under the supervision of detention supervisors, the department assigned staff to work with the overflow detention population rather than start the new program.

Now, due to budget shortfalls, the department has indefinitely postponed implementation of the consequence units. On January 1, 2002, the department terminated the personnel it had hired and trained to work the consequence beds. Its Legislative Budget Request for the 2002-03 fiscal year cut all operating funds (\$2.7 million) for the units. The department would like to use the completed consequence beds for detention overflow, but reports that in most cases the elimination of staff will prevent this.

Due to budget shortfalls the department is not operating consequence beds; however, it is an ineffective use of scarce resources to continue sending youth with non-law violations of probation to costly residential facilities.

- As soon as is economically possible, we recommend that the department implement the Legislature's intention to operate consequence beds throughout the state for non-law violators, which could reduce \$275,310 and avoid \$637,374 in costs annually.

⁵ Scores for adjudicated offenses are summed for each individual (eight for violent felony, five for other felony, two for misdemeanor, and one for other delinquency offenses).

⁶ *Review of the Department of Juvenile Justice Residential Commitment Services*, Report No. 96-48, February 10, 1997.

⁷ The reduction in commitment costs would be a cost avoidance rather than a cost savings because the program would still operate, housing other youth who are now on a waiting list.

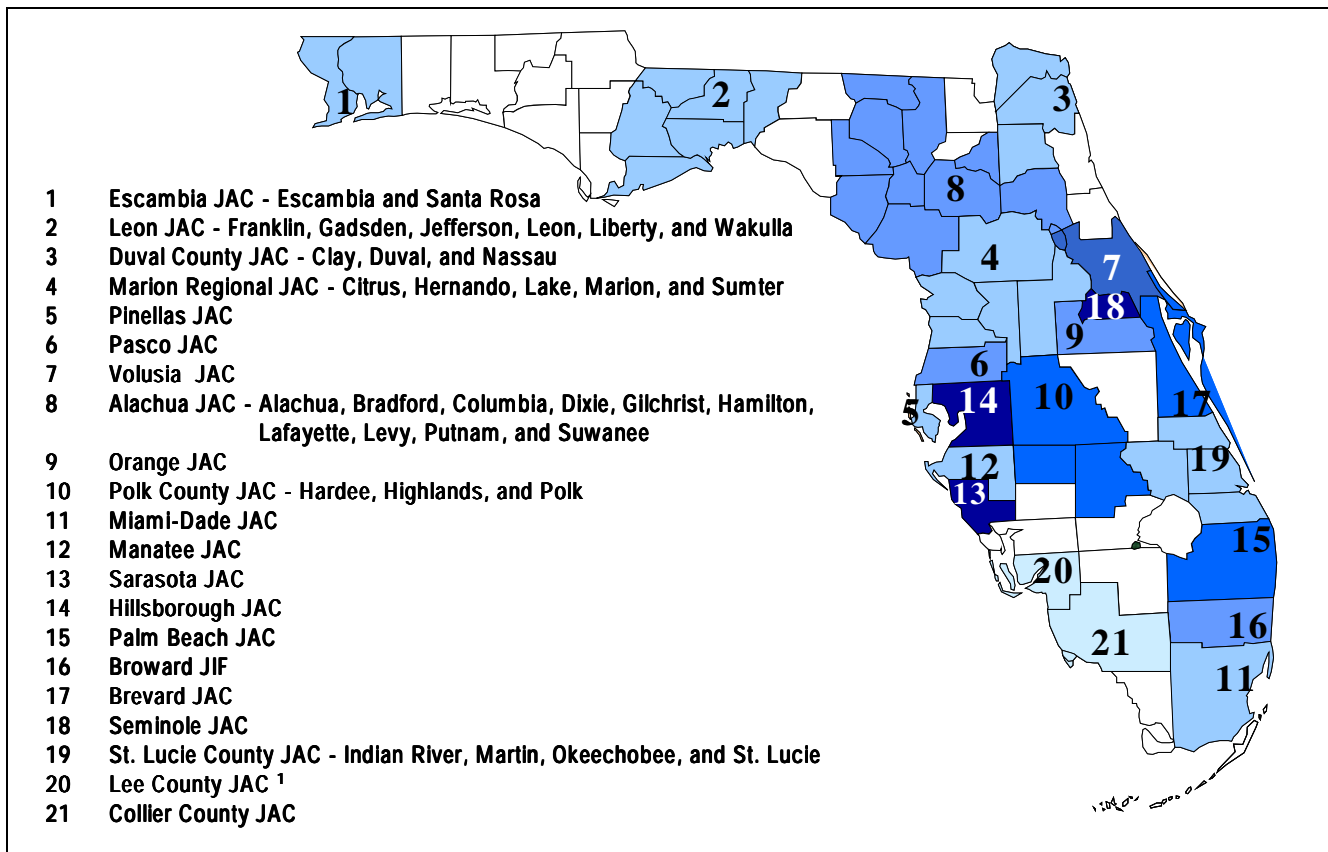
⁸ Due to department accounting practices, it is not clear how the remainder of the construction money was used; see *Operational Audit of Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Fixed Capital Outlay Appropriations and Contracted Services for Beds*, Auditor General Report No. 02-057, October 2001.

The department needs to develop a funding methodology for juvenile assessment centers

Twenty-one juvenile assessment centers serve 47 counties throughout the state, as shown in Exhibit 10. In the remaining 20 counties, youth are detained at law enforcement offices, department offices, and other sites until juvenile probation officers assess them. The centers are generally funded by combinations of private, local, and state funds. The Legislature appropriated \$5.3 million for the assessment centers in Fiscal Year 2001-02. However, a distribution formula for allocating these funds among the centers has not been adopted.

Juvenile assessment centers provide a central location where law enforcement officers can bring juveniles accused of committing a crime. The centers allow the officers to immediately return to their patrol duties while assessment center staff assess juveniles' risk to the community and expedite the appropriate legal proceedings or treatment referrals. Most centers integrate the efforts of law enforcement, school districts, social services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Because these partnerships vary from community to community, each center's operation is unique. The department is presently working on identifying the core services that should be provided at each assessment center.

**Exhibit 10
The State's 21 Juvenile Assessment Centers Serve 47 Counties**



¹ A new facility is under construction and will open in September 2002. In the interim, operating funds are used to purchase screenings and assessments.

Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

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When communities first began to operate juvenile assessment centers, in the mid-1990s, the Legislature provided some start-up funding. The initial centers were viewed as so successful at relieving the workload of law enforcement and centralizing youth intake and assessment that more communities organized to create assessment centers. As the number of centers has increased and the funding needs have grown, the Legislature has sought some basis for appropriating funds. Currently, the department bundles the assessment center funding requests so that they are not identifiable in the budget, thereby making them more difficult to review.

Further, the department has not developed a systematic methodology for allocating funds to assessment centers. For example, the Miami-Dade Juvenile Assessment Center received \$732,240, while most of the assessment centers received less than half that amount, as shown in Exhibit 11.

This allocation does not appear to be based on any specific assessment of financial need, such as youth served, youth at risk, or services provided at the centers. Staff reported that they allocate operating funds based on the amount that each assessment center received the year before, although it is not clear how the original funding was derived. The department also allocates additional funds to some of the centers from contracted case management service dollars. Department staff could not explain how the department determines these additional allocation amounts or why some assessment centers receive contract monies while others do not.

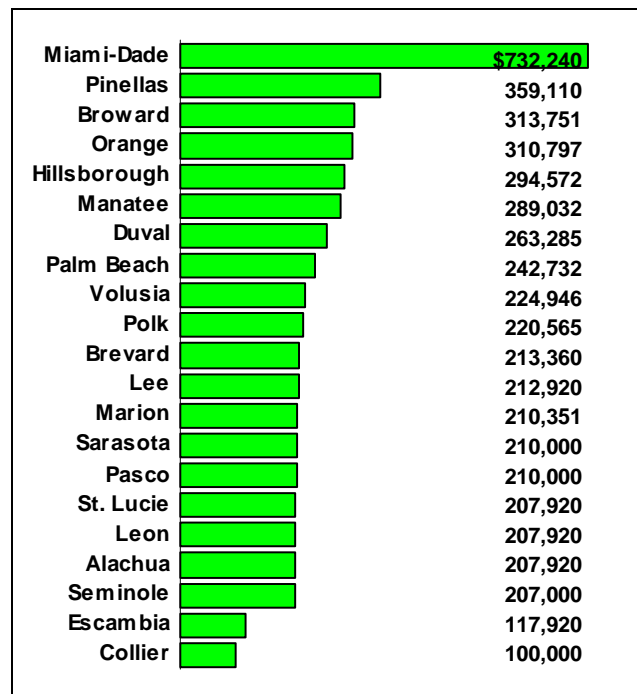
We recommend that the department take the actions described below to assist the Legislature with future funding decisions concerning the juvenile assessment centers.

- By July 1, 2002, identify core juvenile assessment center services and use this information to develop a funding

methodology to recommend to the Legislature.

- Identify in its Legislative Budget Request the funding intended for each juvenile assessment center. The request should specify the amount needed to operate each center, the amount of funds contributed by other entities, and whether the state funds will be spent on core services.

Exhibit 11
Funding for Assessment Centers Varied in Fiscal Year 2001-02



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

The department needs to improve accountability for treatment services

There has been little accountability for the provision of mental health and substance abuse services to delinquent youth on probation. The Department of Juvenile Justice has not tracked the number of youth on probation assessed, referred, or provided treatment services. This lack of basic information makes it difficult to determine if the Legislature’s intent to target

limited resources to this population is being addressed.

This is an important issue, as the Legislature has recognized that mental health and substance abuse issues are the underlying cause of many youth entering the juvenile justice system. In 1999, the Legislature created the Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse to conduct a systematic review of the overall management of the state's mental health and substance abuse system. The commission found that more than two-thirds of children in juvenile justice settings have a mental or addictive disorder.

In its final report, one of the commission's key recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature included expanding access to services by specific groups who are inadequately served, including children and their families in the juvenile justice system.⁹ Senate Bill 1258, passed by the 2001 Legislature, addressed these concerns by establishing the Behavioral Services Integration Workgroup to improve integration of mental health and substance abuse services across Florida government.

In addition, the recent settlement of an 11-year lawsuit against the State of Florida should improve department accountability for mental health needs of delinquent youth. As part of the June 2001 settlement agreement in the *M.E. vs. Jeb Bush, et al.* lawsuit, which the court has preliminarily approved, probation officers must make appropriate referrals for youth under their supervision and follow through to determine whether the youth and/or family attend an initial appointment.¹⁰ If the youth and family choose not to participate in mental health or substance abuse treatment, the youth's probation supervision plan must document this fact as well as the type of service

recommended and the service provider to whom the youth and family were referred.

However, this information will be kept in individual case files, and the department still does not have any system, automated or manual, to identify the type of services recommended and the number of youth actually receiving the treatment services. As part of the settlement agreement, the department's quality assurance system will collect preliminary data for a baseline survey. However, the department will not be able to analyze or report on the statewide treatment needs of probation youth.

To document adequately the need for and provision of mental health and substance abuse treatment services to delinquent youth on probation, we recommend that the department

- by December 31, 2002, add data fields to its automated Juvenile Justice Information System and accurately track and report the number of youth assessed for mental health and substance abuse treatment needs, the number referred to treatment, and the number that receive treatment.

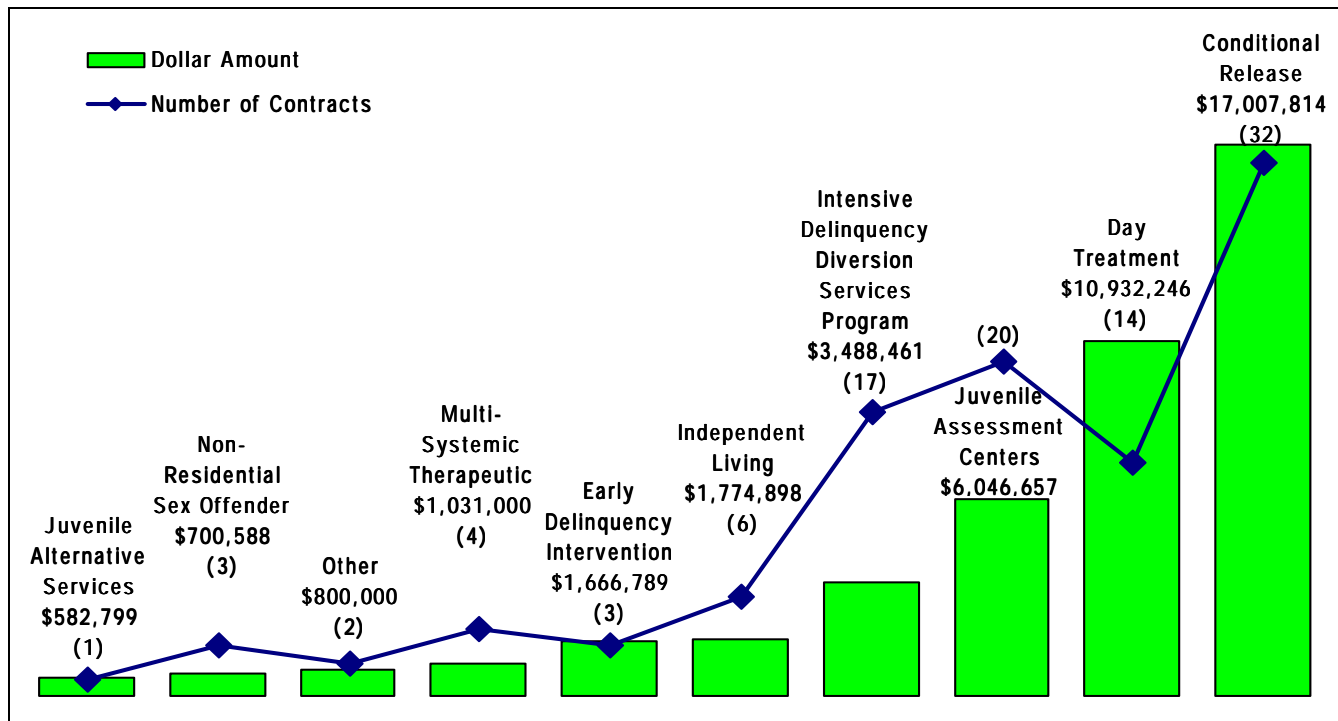
The department needs to strengthen contract monitoring

For Fiscal Year 2001-02, the Probation and Community Corrections Program committed \$44 million for 102 contracts, as shown in Exhibit 12. However, the program has not developed standardized forms or schedules for monitoring these contracts consistently statewide. Also, although contractors provide performance information, the department has not developed a process for collecting and analyzing the data so that it can quickly identify problems or determine whether programs merit continued investment of state dollars.

⁹ Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse, *Final Report*, January 2001.

¹⁰ United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida, Miami Division, Case No. 90-1008-CIV-Moore/O'Sullivan.

Exhibit 12
The Department Committed \$44 Million for 102 Probation Contracts ¹



¹ Exhibit 2 provides descriptions of each program. One contract may pertain to multiple program locations.
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Juvenile Justice data for Fiscal Year 2001-02.

Contract monitoring is essential for ensuring that the department receives the services it pays for. According to management literature, monitoring is key to privatization, for when a government’s direct role in the delivery of services is reduced through privatization, more sophisticated monitoring and oversight are needed to protect the government’s interests. ¹¹

Without standard monitoring procedures, the department cannot determine whether these programs are performing as expected. One example is the department’s new Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services Program. The department issued requests for proposals for this new program in July 2000 and expected providers to begin operations in September 2000. When the department held its first statewide meeting with all program providers in February 2001, staff learned that many

program providers were not serving the number of youth they were contracted to serve because state attorneys were not referring youth to the program. If the department had been monitoring and reviewing information on this new program, it could have addressed this problem early on.

Also, while department contracts require vendors to provide performance data, it has not developed a process for analyzing the information to assess program performance. The contract required the Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services Program providers to report on five performance measures, and required providers to meet specified performance standards for each measure. Four measures refer to successful participation in the program; the fifth refers to recidivism and parallels the program’s legislative performance measures (as shown in Exhibit 6 on page 6).

¹¹ *Privatization, Lessons Learned by State and Local Governments*, United States General Accounting Office, March 1997.

- A minimum of 70% of the youth placed in the program shall remain crime free during their participation in the program.
- Eighty percent of the youth admitted to the program shall complete the payment of required restitution.
- Ninety percent of the youth admitted to the program shall complete required community service hours.
- A minimum of 80% of the youth admitted to the program shall successfully complete the program.
- A minimum of 70% youth successfully completing the program shall remain crime free for one year after release.

As required by the contract, the providers submitted quarterly reports to the contract managers on the four participation measures. The contract managers placed quarterly reports in their files but did not analyze them, and department staff did not review the quarterly reports or any performance data when the contracts came up for renewal.

Thus, in September 2001, the department renewed the contracts with all 17 Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services providers—a total of almost \$3.5 million—without knowing how they were performing or why some were performing better than others. It arguably takes some time before a definitive analysis can be made of a new program's effectiveness. However, performance data for these new programs did exist. Our preliminary analysis indicates that the successful completion rate for the programs ranged from 18% to 90%, with the majority of providers in the 30-40% range. Only one provider (with two programs) met the standard of 80%.

The department could have used its data on the performance measures to identify best practices that led one provider to have higher success rates than others, and could have revised the terms of the renewal contract to include these practices, if warranted. Instead, the contracts were renewed without the benefit of

monitoring information. Although the department is revising its contracting and monitoring process, it has not resolved these limitations.

To improve the contract monitoring process, we recommend that the department take two actions.

- Implement consistent statewide monitoring procedures, including standards, forms, and schedules, by December 31, 2002.
- Use the successful completion data provided by the vendors to track program operation throughout the year and to determine whether contracts should be renewed.

Recommendations

Placement of the Probation and Community Corrections Program within the Department of Juvenile Justice is consistent with the department's mission and is preferable to placement in the Department of Corrections or local government because it enhances consistency and provides a continuum of sanctions for delinquent youth throughout the state.

To improve the program, we recommend that the department take the actions below.

- During the 2002-03 fiscal year, develop a guide to assist staff with defining and entering data consistently.
- Immediately establish a process to document why programs are initiated. This process should address, at a minimum, the purpose of the program; how the department will know if the program achieves its intended purpose; who the program will serve; what the program activities will be; whether the state or a vendor will provide the services; and what the unit and program costs will be. The department should include this information in its Legislative Budget Request when requesting funds for new programs.

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- To the greatest extent possible, incorporate features that research has proven to be effective into new programs. Also, initiate data collection and reporting procedures when new programs are begun so that performance can be assessed.
- Develop Program Accountability Measures (PAM scores) for community supervision programs. Staff should use this information as part of a routine review and assessment process to determine whether to continue or eliminate programs.
- Track the number of juveniles sentenced to residential commitment programs for law and non-law violations of probation.
- As soon as is economically possible, implement the Legislature's intention to operate small consequence units throughout the state for non-law violators, which could reduce \$275,310 and avoid \$637,374 in costs annually.
- By July 1, 2002, identify core juvenile assessment center services and use this information to develop an equitable funding methodology to recommend to the Legislature. Also, identify in its Legislative Budget Request the funding intended for each juvenile assessment center. The request should specify the amount needed to operate each assessment center, the amount of funds contributed by other entities, and whether the state funds will be spent on core services.
- By December 31, 2002, add data fields to the Juvenile Justice Information System and accurately track and report the number of youth needing mental health and substance abuse treatment services, the number referred to treatment, and the number that receive treatment.
- Implement consistent statewide monitoring procedures, including standards, forms, and schedules, by December 31, 2002.
- Use the successful completion data provided by the vendors to track program operation throughout the year and to determine whether contracts should be renewed.

Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice for his review and response.

The Deputy Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice provided a written response to our preliminary and tentative findings and recommendations. The department's response is reprinted in Appendix C on page 21.

OPPAGA provides objective, independent, professional analyses of state policies and services to assist the Florida Legislature in decision making, to ensure government accountability, and to recommend the best use of public resources. This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by telephone (850/488-0021 or 800/531-2477), by FAX (850/487-3804), in person, or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475).

Florida Monitor: <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/>

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John W. Turcotte, OPPAGA Director

Appendix A

Statutory Requirements for Program Evaluation and Justification Reviews

Section 11.513(3), *Florida Statutes*, directs OPPAGA program evaluation and justification reviews to address nine issue areas. Our conclusions on these issues as they relate to the Probation and Community Corrections Program are summarized below.

Table A-1
Summary of the Program Evaluation and Justification Review
of the Probation and Community Corrections Program

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
The identifiable cost of the program	The Legislature appropriated \$133.5 million and 1,525.5 FTEs for Fiscal Year 2001-02.
The specific purpose of the program, as well as the specific public benefit derived therefrom	The purpose of Probation and Community Corrections program is to protect the public from juvenile crimes and rehabilitate delinquent youth while supervising them in their communities.
Progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes associated with the program	The Probation and Community Corrections Program was created as part of the department's reorganization in 2000. The program is so new, the performance measures are not useful for assessing performance because no performance standards have been adopted, no clear procedures have been established for collecting data, and the validity and reliability of the performance information has not been established. Also, following the reorganization prior performance measures were deleted and new ones were added.
An explanation of circumstances contributing to the state agency's ability to achieve, not achieve, or exceed its projected outputs and outcomes, as defined in s. 216.011, <i>F.S.</i> , associated with the program	In the Performance Measure Assessment section in its Long Range Program Plan for Fiscal Years 2001-02 through 2005-06, the department addresses revision of one measure but it does not report performance standards or actual performance results.
Alternative courses of action that would result in administering the program more efficiently or effectively	The 1994 Juvenile Justice Act directs the Department of Juvenile Justice to address the public safety interests of citizens of Florida, meet the needs of juvenile offenders, and provide a continuum of care and services to maximize the use of state resources. The department administers the Probation and Community Corrections Program as a part of this continuum. Placement of this program within the department is consistent with this mission and is preferable to placement in the Department of Corrections or local government because it enhances consistency and provides a continuum of sanctions for youth throughout the state
The consequences of discontinuing the program	If the Probation and Community Corrections Program were to be discontinued, there would be no "in-between" sanction of community supervision. Youth would either not be supervised or they would be incarcerated to be supervised. Incarceration costs range from \$8,000 to \$14,800 per case for low- and medium-risk levels, whereas probation costs \$964 per case.

Justification Review

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
<p>Determination as to public policy, which may include recommendations as to whether it would be sound public policy to continue or discontinue funding the program, either in whole or in part, in the existing manner</p>	<p>This program provides beneficial supervision of juvenile offenders in the community and should be continued. However, OPPAGA recommends that the department take the actions below to improve efficiency and effectiveness of program activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the 2002-03 fiscal year develop a guide to assist staff with defining and entering data consistently. ▪ Immediately establish a process to document why programs are initiated. This process should address, at a minimum, the purpose of the program; how the department will know if the program achieves its intended purpose; who the program will serve; what the program activities will be; whether the state or a vendor will provide the services; and what the unit and program costs will be. The department should include this information in its Legislative Budget Request when requesting funds for new programs. ▪ To the greatest extent possible, incorporate features that research has proven to be effective into new programs. Also, initiate data collection and reporting procedures when new programs are begun so that performance can be assessed. ▪ Develop Program Accountability Measures (PAM scores) for community supervision programs. Staff should use this information as part of a routine review and assessment process to determine whether to continue or eliminate programs. ▪ Track the number of juveniles sentenced to residential commitment programs for law and non-law violations of probation. ▪ As soon as is economically possible, implement the Legislature's intention to operate small consequence units throughout the state for non-law violators, which could reduce \$275,310 and avoid \$637,374 in costs annually. ▪ By July 1, 2002, identify juvenile assessment center core services and use this information to develop a funding methodology to recommend to the Legislature. Also, identify in its legislative budget request the funding intended for each juvenile assessment center. The request should specify the amount needed to operate each assessment center, the amount of funds contributed by other entities, and whether the state funds will be spent on core services. ▪ By December 31, 2002, add data fields to its automated Juvenile Justice Information System and accurately track and report the number of youth assessed for mental health and substance abuse treatment needs, the number referred to treatment, and the number that receive treatment. ▪ Implement consistent statewide monitoring procedures, including standards, forms, and schedules, by December 31, 2002. ▪ Use the successful completion data provided by the vendors to track program operation throughout the year and to determine whether contracts should be renewed.
<p>Whether the information reported pursuant to s. 216. 031(5), <i>F.S.</i>, has relevance and utility for evaluation of the program</p>	<p>The program outcome measures assess the recidivism rate, which is a key indicator of performance. While recidivism is an important measure that reflects changed behavior, there is a considerable time elapse before results are available. Internal measures should be considered for management purposes, such as the successful completion rate for programs or the percentage of youth who complete required restitution and/or community service hours.</p>
<p>Whether state agency management has established control systems sufficient to ensure that performance data are maintained and supported by state agency records and accurately presented in state agency performance reports</p>	<p>According to the Inspector General's <i>Assessment of Juvenile Offender Program</i>, Review Report R20103, October 10, 2001, the performance measures for the Probation and Community Corrections Program do not contain accurate, complete, consistent, and supportable documentation for the collected data due to insufficient review of the data.</p>

Appendix B

Calculating Costs of Consequence Units and Commitment for Non-Law Violations of Probation

Table 1

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Component	Number of Youth	Average Length of Stay	Average Cost Per Case
Probation	63	231 days	\$ 964
Consequence Unit	63	Assume 5 days	575
Level 4	34	84 days	7,967
Level 6	29	168 days	14,823
Conditional Release	63	181 days	4,370

Calculating Consequence Unit Costs

Assuming that the probation begins before and continues after the stay in the consequence unit

Probation cost per case	\$ 964	(Table 1, column 4)	(Remains the same)
Consequence unit cost	+ 575	(Table 1, column 4)	(For a five-day stay)
Total cost per case	\$ 1,539		
	X 63	(Table 1, column 2)	
Total cost for 63 youth	\$ 96,957		

Calculating Commitment Costs

Assuming that the violation occurs halfway through the probation period and case management continues during commitment at the rate of 10% of regular probation

Level 4 Commitment	Probation cost per case	\$ 482	(1/2 of \$964 per case)
	Commitment cost per case	7,967	(Table 1, column 4)
	Case management cost per case	+ 35	(1/10 of \$4.17 per day @ 84 days)
	Total cost per case	\$ 8,484	
		X 34	(Table 1, column 2)
	Total cost for 34 youth	\$ 288,456	
Level 6 Commitment	Probation cost per case	\$ 482	(1/2 of \$964 per case)
	Commitment cost per case	14,823	(Table 1, column 4)
	Case management cost per case	+ 70	(1/10 of \$4.17 per day @ 168 days)
	Total cost per case	\$ 15,375	
		X 29	(Table 1, column 2)
	Total cost for 29 youth	\$ 445,875	
Total Cost of Commitment	Level 4	\$ 288,456	
	Level 6	445,875	
	Total	\$ 734,331	

Justification Review

Cost Avoidance

Cost of commitment	\$ 734,331
Cost of consequence unit	<u>— 96,957</u>
Cost avoidance	<u>\$ 637,374</u>

The state avoids the expense of incarcerating these youth; however, the beds would continue to operate with other children (probably those on the waiting list), so the state would not be able to reallocate these funds.

Cost Savings

All youth are supervised on Conditional Release following commitment.

Conditional release per case	\$ 4,370	(Table 1, column 4)
	<u>X 63</u>	(Table 1, column 2)
Total cost for 63 youth	<u>\$ 275,310</u>	

The \$275,310 not spent on conditional release would be a savings because the revenue could be reallocated to another budget item.

Appendix C



STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

March 6, 2002

John W. Turcotte
Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis and
Government Accountability
Claude Pepper Building
111 West Madison Street
Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Mr. Turcotte:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to your recent draft **Justification Report of the Department of Juvenile Justice Probation and Community Corrections Program**. Please also express my thanks to your staff, particularly Kathy McGuire, Anna Estes and Bernadette Howard, for their excellent work and cooperation in completing the review and allowing us to provide what we hope was constructive feedback.

What follows are brief responses to each of your major recommendations, and, when appropriate, the related findings upon which you based your recommendations. As you will see, we are generally in agreement in whole or in part with each of your recommendations. For the sake of brevity, I have excerpted the key phrases of each recommendation.

“Placement of the Probation and Community Corrections Program within the Department of Juvenile Justice is consistent with the department's mission and preferable to placement in the Department of Corrections or local government...”

Response: We agree. Probation and Community Corrections plays an important and critical role in the juvenile justice continuum. It's absence or removal from the juvenile justice system would create inefficiencies and severely disrupt our ability to provide consistent and equitable services statewide.

“...Develop a guide to assist with defining and entering data consistently.”

Response: We acknowledge the findings as described in the report and have taken actions to correct deficiencies. As of February 18, 2002 Probation Unit Supervisors review the following critical elements for accuracy as part of their case file reviews: demographics, correct case type, referrals, charges and dispositions. State Attorney recommendations are completed on JJJS in the required

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timeframes (24 hours if youth is detained and 20 days if youth is not detained), and MAYSI's are completed on JJIS and copies are placed in each case file. Policies and procedures will be developed to ensure that the reviews are completed and appropriate corrective action measures are implemented. The JPO Supervisor will submit monthly case review reports to their Circuit Managers who will submit a monthly report to the Regional Directors. The Assistant Secretary for Probation and Community Corrections will review the monthly reports with each of the three Regional Directors. The Data Integrity Officers are developing a JJIS User Guide that will assist staff in defining and entering data consistently. It is expected that this guide will be available for use by approximately July 1, 2002. The following procedures have been identified as critical for the Probation & Community Corrections branch: all forms should be completed in JJIS; the JJIS Minimum Standards for Data Entry must be entered accurately; JJIS data entry should follow the approved Business Rules as developed by the Data Integrity Officers and approved by the JJIS Steering Committee; corrections must be made immediately upon receipt of JJIS exception reports from the Data Integrity Officers and/or Data & Research.

“Immediately establish a process to document why programs are initiated.”

Response: We agree in concept. The department will make a concerted effort to document this information whenever feasible in developing legislative budget requests. Legislative member special projects and new program ideas that develop during legislative budget sessions do not always make such a process possible or practical.

“To the extent possible, incorporate features that research has proven to be effective into new programs.”

Response: We agree with this approach, however, we do not concur with the reports conclusion that the department does not design programs to replicate those that research has proven to be effective. For example, last year we implemented the Intensive Delinquency Diversion Service (IDDS) program. It was designed to replace the JASP model whose mission had become distorted (see Auditor General Report NO. 12293 dated May 10, 1994). The department used the data developed in Orange County, California {"The 8% Solution"}, and replicated elsewhere, on risk factors correlated with repeat offenders. These risk factors are: age 15 or younger at the point of first referral, significant family problems, school problems, drug or alcohol use and delinquent peers. We used this data to help design our own similar (but not exact) version of this early diversion protocol. It is different from the Orange County model on two key points. IDDS does not have the entire service response that the California model implemented and IDDS has been designed as a program that diverts youth from the juvenile justice system, while the California version serves youth who are on probation status only. One could argue that IDDS is an application of the new knowledge gained from the Orange County project and applied to a different population cohort of these same high-risk youth. We believe we took the opportunity to use the intervention technology developed in the "8%" initiative, and to apply it even earlier in the legal process.

“Develop Program Accountability Measures {PAM scores} for community supervision programs.”

Response: We agree in principle. The department will pursue this objective during the coming year. One must recognize, however, the complexities in creating such measures. The existing PAM scores for residential programs attempt to “level the playing field” in comparing one program to another. Youth and facilities in residential programs are assigned to different commitment levels, which makes comparison somewhat easier. Probation caseloads, on the other hand, are extremely varied and constantly changing. While we plan to pursue this objective, we do not expect that it can be achieved in a short period of time.

“Track the number of juveniles sentenced to residential commitment programs for law and non-law violations of probation.”

Response: This information is available and will be shared periodically with stakeholders.

“As soon as economically possible, implement the Legislature’s intent to operate small consequence units throughout the state...”

Response: We agree with the conceptual underpinning to this recommendation that a brief confinement may be more effective and less costly than a full-length commitment program for some youth who violate probation. We were starting to implement consequence units just prior to the recent statewide budget shortfall. All of the funding for consequence units was eliminated in special session. We are optimistic that the legislature will provide operating funds to activate these programs in the future.

“...Develop an equitable funding methodology {for juvenile assessment centers} to recommend to the Legislature.”

Response: We are not opposed to this recommendation, however implementation at this time may be premature. The department used a funding methodology as recently as two years ago in determining how to allocate state general revenue appropriated for Juvenile Assessment Centers after the legislature reduced funding statewide. Among the criteria we used were youth population at risk, referrals and local contributions. Different stakeholders in each community contribute different resources from their own budgets and communities and this has had a direct impact on how much is funded in the DJJ budget through the legislative process. No two assessment centers are alike. The department has worked with the provider community on identifying core juvenile assessment center services. There is general consensus and agreement that the department and providers will begin this year to develop quality assurance standards for juvenile assessment centers. We will develop a comprehensive funding methodology for juvenile assessment centers once we have agreement with providers on statewide standards upon which to base funding.

“...Accurately track and report the number of youth needing {mental health and substance abuse} treatment services, the number referred to treatment, and the number that receive treatment.”

Response: We have already adopted this recommendation. The Juvenile Justice Information System contains the necessary data fields and we will focus our training on the use of these data fields by staff. The Department completed a baseline study this year to assess the current mental health and substance abuse service delivery system in Florida's juvenile justice residential and correctional facilities, detention centers and juvenile probation units. The study includes data from a valid sample review of 678 juvenile offender files. In addition, Quality Assurance review teams identified and

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interviewed youth jointly served by the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Children and Families to determine the level of involvement of foster care staff in the DJJ performance planning process. Also, the Probation and Community Corrections Branch is participating with a multi-agency Behavioral Health Services Integration Workgroup, an effort contracted out to the Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida. This research group is working on a preliminary descriptive analysis of the behavioral health service needs of youth on conditional release and the degree to which these youth are provided with timely and appropriate services to meet behavioral health needs (e.g. mental health and substance abuse). The purpose of this effort is to serve as a foundation for developing model policies, procedures and programs to improve service access and integration in the community with appropriate monitoring procedures. Finally, there are some excellent community-based efforts underway throughout the state that have effectively addressed mental health and substance access for these youth. The Behavioral Health Services project will attempt to identify at least three such sites. Criteria for being identified, as a “best practice” site will be developed.

“Implement consistent statewide monitoring procedures.”

Response: We have implemented this recommendation in the current year. This fiscal year the department reorganized the contracting process and centralized certain responsibilities. Previous to this year, limited staff in the field handled significant aspects of all contracts. There has always been contract monitoring, but it had been performed in an inconsistent manner across the state. The roles of Contract Administration and the field Contract Managers are better defined, and the monitoring process is being refined. The goal is to have consistent tools and timeframes in which all programs are monitored statewide in Probation and Community Corrections. One of our action steps is to require consistent and uniform reporting from the provider community. Report formats will be developed, with input from our contract providers; to collect the critical data elements needed to inform our decision-making process. Our target date to implement the recommended uniform and consistent monitoring tools and timeframes is January 1, 2003.

“Use the successful completion data provided by the vendors to track program operation throughout the year and to determine whether contracts should be renewed.”

Response: This data is only one of several important pieces of information that will be considered in monitoring contracts and making future decisions about contract renewals. Completion data by itself may not adequately indicate provider performance. For example, failure may be the result of inappropriate placements outside of the provider's control. In any case, this information will be used when appropriate.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the report. We appreciate the work of your staff, and will actively pursue appropriate recommendations identified in this document to improve our operations.

Sincerely,

/s/
Francisco J. Alarcon
Deputy Secretary

FJA/PST/ja