

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 1987-1988 8672

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ALASKA PRISONER POPULATION

ALASKA POPULATION

WHITE:	<u>54%</u>	<u>77%</u>	
NATIVE	<u>34%</u>	<u>16%</u>	
BLACK:	<u>9%</u>	<u>3.4%</u>	
OTHER:	<u>3%</u>	<u>3.6%</u>	(6)

WHO ARE ALASKA'S PRISONERS?

The study, Running Toward Prison/Running Toward Success, includes background research on adult prisoners in the Third Judicial District.

The Third Judicial District encompasses the corrections facilities in Palmer, Anchorage and Kenai, housing over half of Alaska prisoner population. About one-fourth of the prisoners chose to participate in this study. This sampling totalled 351 individuals currently incarcerated.

We were cautioned by the Department of Corrections that prisoners who were functionally illiterate would not volunteer because they could not read or understand the questions. Further, two additional categories would not be reflected, those prisoners incarcerated pretrial, and Alaskan prisoners currently serving in federal or state prisons outside the State. This population includes many of the multiple and serial murderers and other hardcore long-term prisoners.

57% of the prisoners participating reported that they had run away or left home before the age of 15. The youngest was 8 years old at the time he left home.

Most of the responses revealed regret over circumstances in the family. The next highest group targeted the use of alcohol and drugs. Loneliness, lack of self worth, and inappropriate peer groups threaded a pattern through many of the answers.

Some of the replies submitted in response to the question, "What do you believe could have been done when you were a juvenile that would have helped you stay out of prison and become a more productive person?"

"Been pulled from the home and put in a foster home. If someone would have believed me when I told police what was happening instead of stepfather. Back then all I needed was someone who cared, someone I could call my friend, someone I could trust to talk to."

"Some kind of love or attention, parents not drinking. Who knows to late now?"

"Maybe visit a prison on the inside, maybe a scary experience would help, a tough prison."

"Not letting me do as I please and punish me when I did wrong. But not physical abuse."

"More exposure to religion at an early age. Better sexual education, from the purely physical to more on the moral values of sexuality."

"I think that having proper sex education and drug and alcohol prevention classes."

"To be able to say my feelings and not stuff them."

"Seek help on being abused. To have known about sexual abuse back then and got some counselling."

"Nothing, as I chose the situations and acts myself."

"Not such an early sexual experience or start. Better communication with parents and friends. Not moving so much or so often. More religious contact. Not having my sisters sexually abused by my dad by either no divorce or

to two-thirds of the cocaine sales in Dallas, Detroit and Philadelphia.

Street kids, high school kids, and drug experts are reporting crack is beginning to show up in Alaska.

Called the drug pusher's dream, crack can be bought by school kids with allowances and lunch money and is more addictive than heroin. (5, 9, and 10)

HOW BAD IS CRACK, REALLY? One drug enforcement officer responded this way: "If I had to choose between my kid doing crack or taking a chance with AIDS I'd have to think about it for a long time."

While much of this report is devoted to identifying and analyzing reasons why so many of Alaska's youths are in trouble, Section II is optimistically entitled Running Toward Success because there are positive workable solutions.

Alaska is uniquely suited to experiment with solving some of these problems. First, with the exception of the three major cities, the state of Alaska has responsibility for law enforcement. Second, over half the population of the state lives in one city. Third, Alaskans are separated by thousands of miles from the rest of the country.

The solutions are not going to be easy. These problems will not be solved simply by throwing money at them. It is going to require the same single-minded dedication that built the pipeline and rebuilt Alaska after the 1964 earthquake. The protection of kids must become just as important to the future of Alaska as the permanent fund and they must be protected as diligently. This is going to require a united and cohesive private, corporate, and state effort. With that in mind we present our recommendations.

Recommendations

LEGISLATIVE

PROBLEM: Additional priorities and funds are needed to increase pro-active drug enforcement against individuals who deal drugs to juveniles.

PROBLEM: Every year millions of dollars worth of property is seized nationally in drug raids. The funds are forfeited back to the federal government if the state makes no provision to claim it.

RECOMMENDATION: Enact Alaska legislation enabling the use of funds collected from forfeiture of assets of convicted drug dealers to be assigned to a fund to be used specifically for enforcement against traffickers who provide drugs to children and youth.

PROBLEM: Some laws designed for the protection of children are harmful, ambiguous and destructive. For example, juveniles are automatically remanded to adult court if they commit a traffic or game law offense, but they are treated like children if they commit violent or property crimes.

Example: If a juvenile is arrested for killing an animal illegally, he is charged as an adult. If he is arrested for murder his juvenile rights come into play, he will not stand trial (unless waived) or be found guilty of a crime.

RECOMMENDATION: Complete restructuring of juvenile laws to provide balance between protection of the minor, and the right to reasonable protection of the community as well as a realistic deterrent to serious criminal behavior. (11)

RECOMMENDATION: Legislation should be passed to allow for automatic waiver of 16 and 17 year olds with an unclassified felony offenses to be tried as adults. (12)

LEGISLATIVE

PROBLEM: Because juvenile cases* are secret there is no procedural review on handling.

RECOMMENDATION: A professional Board of Review is needed for review of questionable handling of juvenile cases. The board would be comprised of professionals in related fields and appointed by the Governor, the House and Senate and Alaska Chiefs of Police. Cases would be presented blind for procedural review only.

PROBLEM: In most cases juvenile offenders detained for treatment by Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) are not required to be evaluated by a psychologist or psychiatrist prior to release. Presently, the staff has the responsibility to approve the release of offenders.

RECOMMENDATION: All juvenile offenders need to have been evaluated and approved for release by a psychological professional trained in predicting dangerous and/or criminal behavior.

PROBLEM: Most institutionalized juvenile offenders have poor post-release placement. Many times the only placement is with their abusive family or a temporary foster home.

RECOMMENDATION: The first year after being released from a placement such as McLaughlin Youth Center (MYC) is the most crucial for continued counseling and monitoring. Use of a post-treatment placement or "half-way house" has been demonstrated to decrease crimes and to integrate the juvenile into the community. (19)

* A case is any situation where a child comes in contact with any public agency because of need.

LEGISLATIVE

PROBLEM: The numbers of juveniles who rape and molest have increased. While DFYS has some minor treatment interventions for juvenile molesters and rapists, no treatment programs have been established to decrease these offenses when the adolescents are released from DFYS. (8)

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a comprehensive treatment program. Several programs outside Alaska have clearly demonstrated a significant decrease in molestation and rapes after release. (i.e. The Sex Offender Therapy Program in Snoqualmie, Washington or The Hennepin County Home School In Minnetowka, Minnesota.)

PROBLEM: Juveniles do not take crime seriously. The state's criteria of "the least restrictive environment" is not always the most productive answer.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop sentencing guidelines to set up specific punishments for crimes committed by minors such as those for adult offenders, One state, Washington, has adopted such guidelines. (19)

PROBLEM: Law Enforcement is not presently allowed to fingerprint or photograph youths under age 18. Juveniles arrested on suspicion of murder have no fingerprints or photographs on file.

RECOMMENDATION: Juveniles 13 or older arrested for criminal offenses should be photographed and fingerprinted, limited to official use only. (Hawaii).

LEGISLATIVE/ADMINISTRATIVE

PROBLEM: Repetitive behavioral problems are not identified in a cohesive manner. Agencies do not consistently work together to solve juvenile problems early on. If a youth is in trouble with the school, law enforcement, parents, social services, and the community, it is important to find out early if he has a problem, if he is the problem, or both. He will not just go away. He will spend 24 hours every day doing "something" somewhere.

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of a concept SHODI, Serious Habitual Offender/Drug Involved Program, developed by the Justice Department, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

"SHODI is an excellent instrument for overcoming inter-agency turfing wars and early identification of kids who need help. The juvenile Serious Habitual Offender Drug Involved program (SHO/DI) is a law enforcement information and case management initiative for police schools, probation, prosecutors, social services, and corrections authority. SHODI enables the juvenile justice system to give additional focused attention to juveniles who repeatedly commit serious crimes with particular attention given to providing relevant case information for more informed sentencing dispositions.

"The program is based on the realization that the application of a more systematic approach and data gathering analysis planning and service delivery will increase the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system in dealing with serious juvenile crime. The SHODI approach is therefore a system wide effort to deal with the problem of criminal behavior among juveniles." (24)

PROBLEM: Sexually abused juveniles often act out rage and aggression by acts of criminal behavior against the community. (25)

RECOMMENDATION: Develop and fund adequate treatment programs for re-orienting and rehabilitating street kids who have been sexually abused.

LEGISLATIVE/ADMINISTRATIVE

PROBLEM: Research indicates that administrators sometimes attempt to subvert or disregard the will and the intent of the law makers if legislation is not popular with them. (While this is a common problem in many government bodies, strict monitoring must be maintained when children and the safety of the public are involved.)

RECOMMENDATION: Strengthen accountability of legislative intent in program implementation.

LEGISLATIVE/ADMINISTRATIVE/COMMUNITY

PROBLEM: Inadequate facilities for child placement and monitoring of group, transitional, and foster care homes.

RECOMMENDATION: Restructure handling of care facilities, prioritize monitoring, additional support care staff and foster parents. Restructure realistic control guidelines for handling of troubled youth in care settings.

LEGISLATIVE/ENFORCEMENT

PROBLEM: Many local police departments do not currently follow standardized investigative guidelines for missing children cases.)

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt missing children investigative guidelines developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

LEGISLATIVE/ENFORCEMENT

PROBLEM: Sexual abuse has been identified as a significant contributing factor to subsequent delinquent behavior.

RECOMMENDATION: Approach the problem of adults who are exploiting children from a dollar saving perspective. For example, the average male adult abuser will sexually exploit five children in a one year period. Fifty percent of the male juveniles so affected will act out in a violent or delinquent manner. The actual dollar costs saved by arresting the adult male abuser early becomes very evident. (25)

LEGISLATIVE/ENFORCEMENT/COURT

PROBLEM: Only 8 out of 100 persons arrested nationally for offenses against children received prison sentences of more than one year. Cases of adults who sexually exploit children, in some instances, are not prioritized by law enforcement and prosecutors due to the heavy case loads and lack of manpower.

RECOMMENDATION: Prioritize implementation and necessary manpower for statewide Child Exploitation Law Enforcement units and prosecutors.

LEGISLATIVE/ENFORCEMENT/COMMUNITY

PROBLEM: Although eleven percent of the total population of juveniles in Anchorage has been identified as at-risk of running, community members often believe the problem does not exist until they are impacted on a personal level. (27)

RECOMMENDATION: Realize that the community must share the problem because of the far reaching ramifications. A renewed coordinated effort must be developed between the private sector, service organizations, press and government agencies. The leadership must approach the potential for the future protection of children with the same determination they do the protection of the permanent fund for Alaska's future. This change must be inclusive. It will require commitment, money, and a reorganization of the current service structures.

LEGISLATIVE/COURT

PROBLEM: Children out of school - truant, expelled, suspended - spend too much time in the streets and are at risk of becoming runaways. (22)

RECOMMENDATION: Strongly recommend that the community and school district utilize the truancy law and in-district suspension as a means to keep the child off the streets and in school.

LEGISLATIVE/PARENTS

PROBLEM: Although drug abuse experts appearing on the ABC Network, "Good Morning America" reported 25% of all fourth graders in the nation have been offered illegal drugs, families often do not learn about involvement of children in drug and criminal activity until it becomes a lifestyle or the child runs.

RECOMMENDATION: Parents and the community must realize that any youth is susceptible to involvement. Become familiar with and pay attention to behavioral changes. Educate family members on the dangers of street life and drug involvement.

PROBLEM: Straight kids/street kids involvement with illegal drug and alcohol parties.

RECOMMENDATION: Parents must know where their children really are at all times. Know the friends and the parents of the friends and work together to set fair and reasonable guidelines. Pressure local law makers and enforcement officers to put a stop to illegal drug and alcohol parties and to notify parents of children involved.

ENFORCEMENT/COMMUNITY

PROBLEM: Bush native youth run a high risk of sexual exploitation and drug and crime involvement when they run or move to Anchorage.

RECOMMENDATION: Increase bush child safety education and native leadership support of service groups like "The Stranded Rural Alaskans."

RECOMMENDATION: Petition support through RATNet for more prevention programming to the bush communities.

PROBLEM: Shoplifting is the entry level crime for many straight kids as well as street kids.

RECOMMENDATION: Publicize the problem, utilizing public information methods such as the excellent anti-shoplifting media campaign sponsored several years ago by Anchorage business leaders.

RECOMMENDATION: The Juvenile Anti-Shoplifting Program (JASP) should be more widely utilized as a preventive education tool, as well as a first offense diversion program.

PROBLEM: Forty-four percent of Alaska's teenagers surveyed regularly use alcohol.

PROBLEM: In up to 90 percent of the child abuse cases in the state of Alaska alcohol is a significant factor.

PROBLEM: Fifty-five percent of all crime in Alaska has been determined to be alcohol-related. An additional seven percent alcohol and drug related. (7)

RECOMMENDATION: Approach the problem of juvenile drug/alcohol abuse and criminal activity with alcohol involvement from the same perspective as Alaska's approach to drunk driving - a public menace that has been measurably reduced by the cooperation of the public, media, and law makers.

ENFORCEMENT/COMMUNITY/PARENT

PROBLEM: Juvenile crime is usually progressive, with anti-social behavior often beginning at a very early age. (13 and 19)

RECOMMENDATION: If we are to solve the problem of juveniles Running Toward Prison, prevention must start early while crimes and anti-social behavior are still a big deal to the kid. Give kids as few rules as possible but enforce those rules that we give them. Teach young children to respect the law: "If you do the crime you do the time."

PROBLEM: Lack of coordination in community support systems for organizations concerned about the juvenile crime and runaway problem.

RECOMMENDATION: A task force comprised of representatives from each of the community service organizations, Chamber, Soroptomists, Rotary, etc. The task force would coordinate and network projects for needy juveniles or throwaways as a support group to social services and enforcement agencies. Most of these agencies have been involved with youth and juvenile crime prevention projects and some have expressed need for coordinated action and direction.

ENFORCEMENT/ADMINISTRATIVE

PROBLEM: Lack of cooperation between departments and agencies dealing with children's cases and needs.

RECOMMENDATION: Require sign-off and real participation by appropriate agencies of the Child Sexual Abuse Agreement for Alaska intended to ensure interaction and cooperation on sexual abuse cases requiring coordination among the agencies.

ADMINISTRATIVE

PROBLEM: Comprehensive statistics for juvenile recidivism by DFYS are inadequate or not documented.

RECOMMENDATION: Statistics for all juvenile crimes must be kept to demonstrate the true prevalence of these crimes and to show treatment intervention effectiveness.

PROBLEM: Youth with a history of non-documented violence are often ignored and pushed through the system. Because of the heavy case load, decisions are made at the institutional level to accelerate some youths through the system without regard for the needs of the youth or the safety of the community.

RECOMMENDATION: A complete evaluation of a juvenile's needs must be assessed as well as DFYS' ability to respond to treatment for those needs. DFYS must be held accountable for effective intervention.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY

PROBLEM: Discipline problems, anti-social school behavior, and truancy are often first indicators of troubled, abused, and delinquent children. In the two school years of 1984-86 the Anchorage School District recorded 6,316 suspensions in high school and 733 in elementary school.

RECOMMENDATION: The impact of school response on delinquency should be researched. Research is necessary to assist in the formulation of court and community policy; truancy enforcement, compulsory school laws, crimes in school, poor education, and frustrated learning experiences. It is vital to know how curriculum tracking or its absence in elementary and secondary schools affects delinquency. Included in the research should be a program of study designed to determine why some schools and some administrators are successful in keeping truancy and serious delinquency low, while others are not.

- (1) A Guide for Effective State Laws to Protect Children, Selected State Legislation, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- (2) Anchorage Crime Commission Report, 1985
- (3) Anchorage School District Drug Survey, 1983
- (4) Anchorage School District Discipline Report Summary, 1984-1985
- (5) Annual Drug Report 1985, Alaska State Troopers
- (6) Annual Report 1985, Alaska Department of Corrections
- (7) Annual Report to the Legislature 1985, Office of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Department of Health and Social Services
- (8) Burgess, Ann Wolbert, "Child Pornography and Sex Rings"
- (9) "Crack, a Dangerous Way to Take an Old Drug", Anchorage Daily News, July 6, 1986
- (10) "Crack Emerges as Drug of Choice", Anchorage Times, June 2, 1986
- (11) Crime in Alaska 1985, Department of Public Safety
- (12) FBI Bulletin, Youth Court for Juvenile Offenders, June, 1986
- (13) Hindelang, MJ, "Variations in Sex-Race-Age Specific Incidence Rates of Offending"
- (14) Illinois State Enforcement Agencies to Recover Children (I-SEARCH), Report 1986
- (15) "Juvenile Crime Statistics," Report on the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Family and Youth Services, March 25, 1986
- (16) Juvenile Rights vs. Society; Achieving a Balance, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- (17) Lewis, D.O., "Violent Juvenile Delinquents Psychiatric and Abuse Factors"

Appendix

CASE HISTORIES OF TEENAGERS 1976 ARE THESE YOUTH FILLING OUR PRISON TODAY?

Male / 17 Years old		Female / 16 years old	
Dates /	Type Contact	Dates /	Type Contact
6-15-72	Larceny from Building	1-13-76	Larceny from Building
6-14-73	Truant/Runaway	1-13-76	Larceny from Building
8-28-73	Truant/Runaway	3-30-76	Assault & Battery
9-19-73	Shoplifting	5-10-76	Assault & Battery
10-12-73	Suspicious Person	5-10-76	Juvenile Incident
11-8-73	Burglary	5-11-76	Assault & Battery
1-18-74	Extradition for Jurisdiction		
6-29-74	Stolen Vehicle	Male / 12 Years old	
8-3-74	Larceny from Auto	Dates /	Type Contact
7-15-74	Lost and Found Property	9-11-75	Runaway
8-30-74	Burglary	9-18-75	Vandalism
9-08-74	Burglary	9-30-75	Runaway
8-31-74	Burglary	9-30-75	Burglary
9-6-74	Burglary	10-30-75	Burglary
8-16-74	Larceny from Auto	4-29-76	Juvenile Incident
8-18-74	Larceny from Auto	Male / 13 Years Old	
6-25-74	Burglary	Dates /	Type Contact
8-12-74	Burglary	2-3-75	Runaway
8-12-74	Burglary	6-19-75	Vandalism
8-15-74	Burglary	2-12-76	Larceny
8-8-74	Burglary	3-10-76	Burglary
8-1-74	Burglary	3-8-76	Larceny
3-7-76	Traffic Violation	2-12-76	Larceny
4-30-76	Escape/Wanted Person		
4-21-76	Homicide	Male / 12 Years old	
		Dates /	Type Contact
8-1-73	Vandalism	10-23-72	Truant/Runaway
9-3-73	Vandalism	9-23-72	Discharge Firearm
9-28-74	Shoplifting	9-19-71	Shoplifting
4-14-75	Burglary	9-19-71	Shoplifting
8-28-75	Retention Found Property	4-27-73	Larceny from Building
2-4-76	Shoplifting	1-25-74	Burglary
2-4-76	Shoplifting	3-24-74	Burglary
2-4-76	Shoplifting	9-16-74	Possession Narcotics for Sale
2-4-76	Shoplifting	10-18-74	Runaway
3-5-76	Incorrigible Juvenile	10-15-74	Shoplifting
4-16-76	Larceny/Bike	2-5-75	Involved Robbery
4-28-76	Vandalism	4-25-75	Traffic Violation
3-31-76	Runaway	5-8-75	Accident with Injury
		5-21-75	Larceny from Building
		12-23-75	Larceny/Auto Accessories
		12-23-75	Burglary
		12-23-75	Larceny/Auto Accessories
Male / 17 Years old		Male / 17 Years old	
Dates /	Type Contact	Dates /	Type Contact
2-27-75	Traffic Violation	1-14-76	Vandalism
3-16-76	Burglary	3-26-76	Burglary
6-3-75	Embezzlement	7-10-76	Larceny
6-3-75	Possession and Sale of Drugs	2-4-76	Burglary
10-8-75	Disturbance		
2-4-76	Burglary		

(Material retyped Verbatim as provided in Sgt. Lacey's letter.)

Male / 12 Years old
Dates / Type Contact

10-31-75 Trespassing
11-17-75 Robbery
11-17-75 Suspicious Person
3-2-76 Juvenile Incident
4-26-76 Burglary
11-25-74 Burglary
12-17-74 Larceny
4-26-75 Vandalism
5-5-75 Shoplifting
6-18-75 Larceny
7-8-75 Larceny
8-18-75 Burglary
9-26-75 Juvenile Incident
10-26-75 Burglary

Male / 16 Years old
Dates / Type Contact

8-22-73 Juvenile Incident
10-8-73 Vandalism
10-18-73 Arson
7-8-75 Larceny
8-29-75 Sale of Drugs
11-18-75 Purse Snatching
5-12-73 Larceny from Building
5-23-73 Shoplifting
10-13-73 Disturbance
10-12-73 Assault & Battery
2-21-76 Burglary
3-19-76 Larceny
4-25-76 Suspicious Person
6-11-76 Burglary

Male / 17 Years old
Dates / Type Contact

10-72 Shoplifting
2-73 Burglary
2-74 Aggravated Assault
4-74 Larceny from Building
5-74 Accident with Injury(Driver)
11-74 Juvenile Incident
2-75 Assault & Battery
3-75 Disturbance
7-75 Trespassing

Female / 17 Years old
Dates / Type Incident

7-73 Runaway
5-74 Runaway
8-74 Leaving Scene of Accident
4-75 Runaway
5-75 Runaway
6-75 Runaway
7-75 Runaway
9-75 Assault & Battery
6-76 Possession Narcotics for Sale

Male / 16 Years old
Dates / Type Contact

7-17-71 Larceny
8-21-73 Larceny/Bike
9-14-73 Juvenile Incident
1-1-74 Vandalism
3-1-74 Larceny from Building
5-21-74 Vandalism
2-13-75 Shoplifting
2-13-75 Shoplifting
2-13-75 Shoplifting
6-19-75 Larceny/Bike
7-7-75 Burglary
2-19-76 Larceny from Vehicle

Male / 16 Years old
Dates / Type Contact

8-74 Burglary
8-74 Runaway
12-74 Runaway
3-75 Burglary
6-75 Burglary
8-75 Accident with Injury(Driver)
8-75 Stolen Vehicle
10-75 Larceny/Auto Accessories
1-76 Suspicious Person
4-76 Juvenile Incident

Male / 16 Years old
Dates / Type Contact

7-7-74 Juvenile Incident
10-23-74 Aggravated Assault
1-2-75 Runaway
1-6-75 Larceny
7-22-75 Shoplifting
8-2-75 Stolen Vehicle
8-2-75 Curfew
11-6-75 Burglary
1-24-76 Burglary

Male / 17 Years old
Dates / Type Contact

3-9-72 Curfew
10-3-76 Larceny
3-29-76 Stolen Vehicle
3-29-76 Larceny from Vehicle
4-18-76 Larceny
4-29-76 Shoplifting
5-5-76 Larceny

(Material retyped Verbatim as provided in Sgt. Lacey's letter.)

GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF AGE-SPECIFIC ARREST RATES, 1965-1983

This appendix was designed to visually represent historical changes in arrest rates for individual age groups. An age-specific arrest rate refers to the annual number of arrests made per 100,000 persons of a prescribed age or ages. In the following three-dimensional graphs, arrest rates are presented on the vertical axis. The two horizontal axes display calendar years 1965-1983 and age. The height of the graphic surface represents the arrest rate. Surface peaks denote the age group and year when arrest rates were highest.

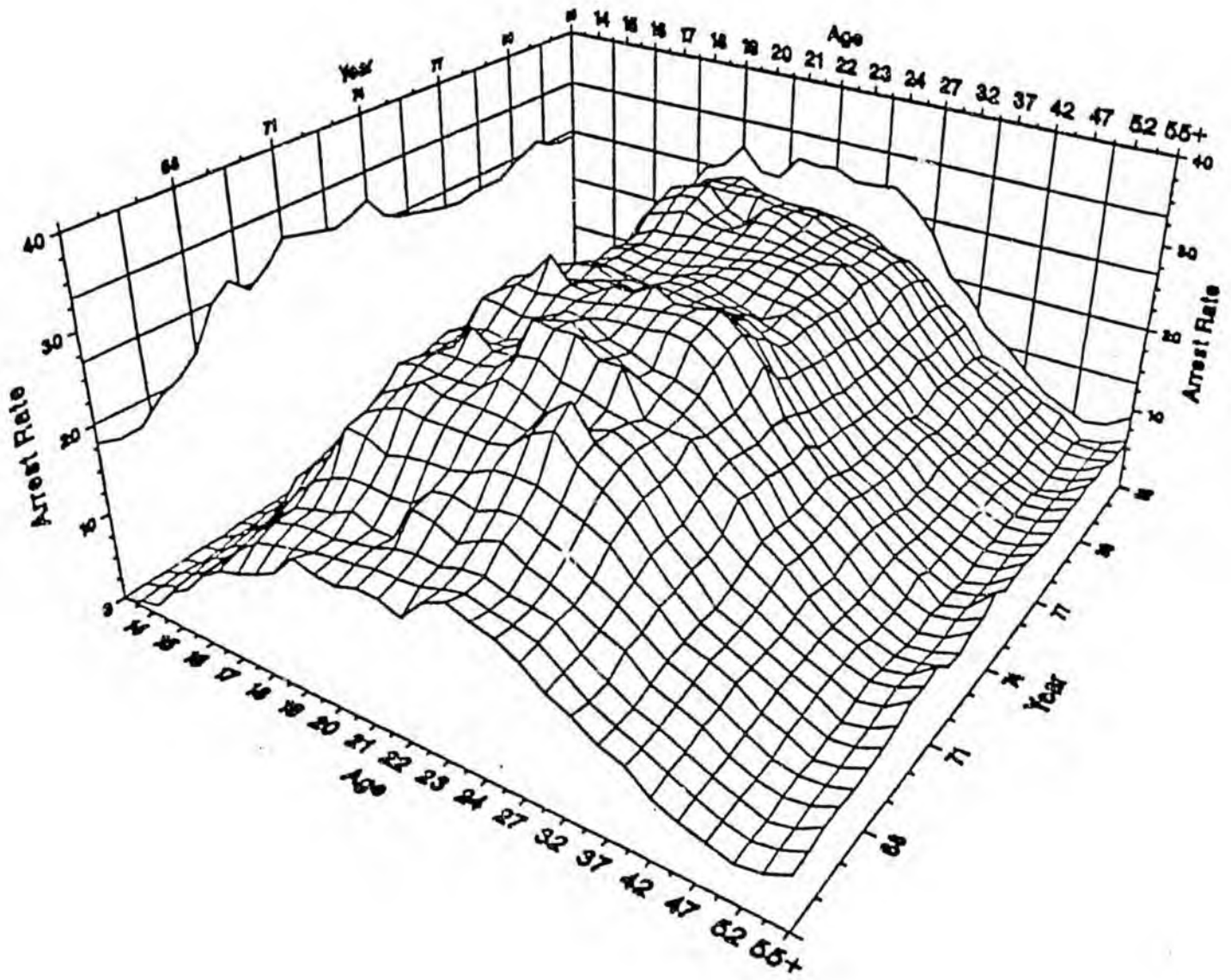
A three-dimensional graph was created for each of the eight Index crimes of murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Since the vertical scale (arrest rate) differs in magnitude from one crime category to another, the

calibration associated with each crime differs. For this reason, when the general appearance of the surfaces of two categories of crime are compared, caution should be exercised in order to avoid false graphic impressions leading to invalid conclusions.

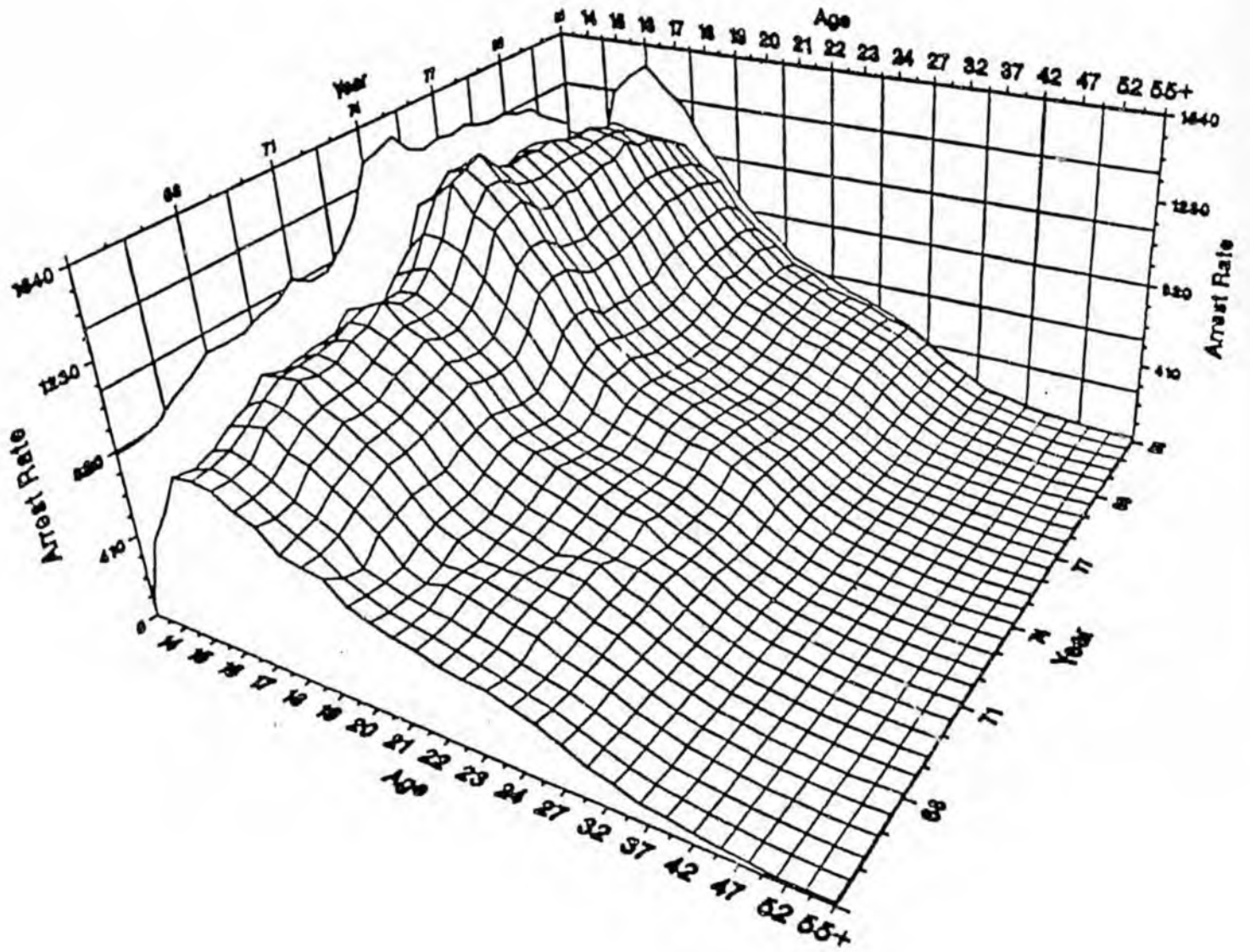
Arrest rate surfaces are projected on two vertical planes: the arrest rate/year plane and the arrest rate/age plane. The first projection describes the historical changes in the height of the peaks and the second indicates the age variations in the arrest rate.

This appendix addresses historical age-specific arrest rates from a graphic perspective. In a separate publication entitled *Age-Specific Arrest Rates, 1965-1983*, the rates used to construct the graphs are presented. Limited copies of this document are available from the national UCR Program.

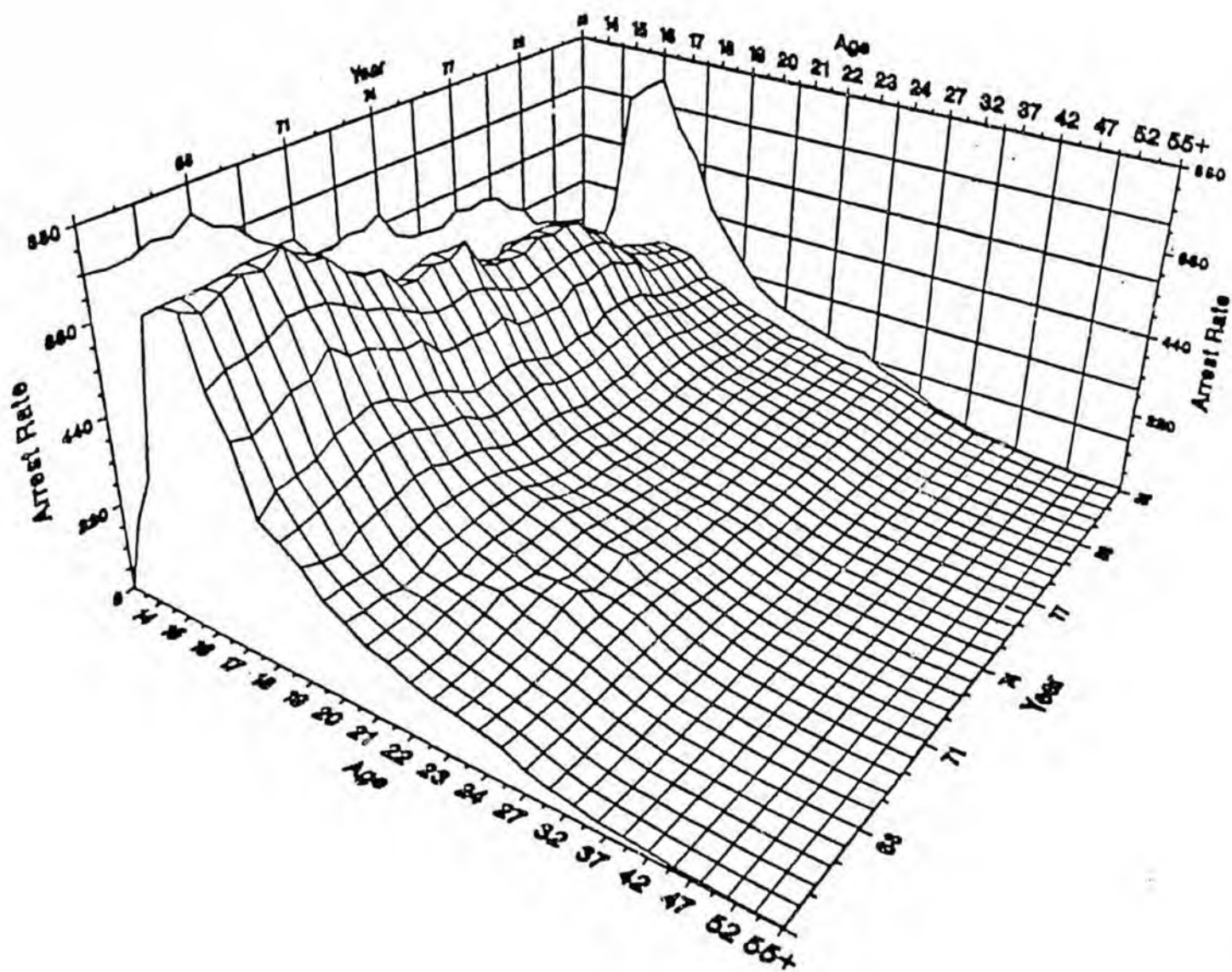
murder



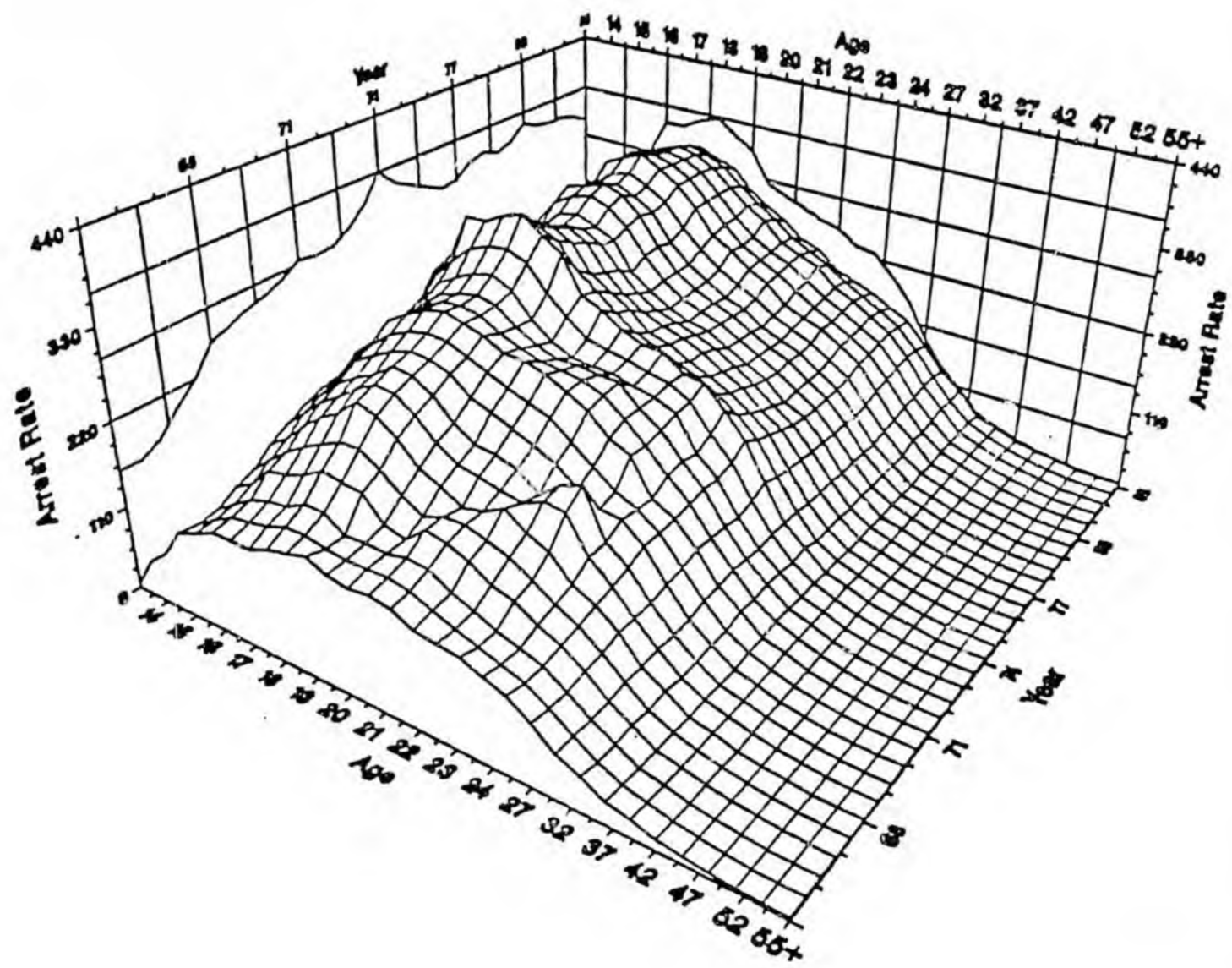
burglary



motor vehicle theft



robbery



"Well, when I was a juvenile I always wanted help from other people that care and will love me. But living in the ghettos no one did like that. I always wanted a family that understand with care and loving in the house. But that was a wish--as you know wishes don't come true."

"Sell drugs. More prostitution. Sell hot cars, and go to Mexico and spend my money.....".

"By having a mother and father stay married and not get devorst."

"It would have been a great help to understand my feelings and to express myself assertively. I do not believe for a minute that just because I am in jail that I am no longer a productive person. With this type of mentality no wonder society is in the condition it is. There will never be any hope for a human being that has been in prison as there is this type of milstone around his neck. Think rehabilitation not condemnation."

"NOTHING".

"Parents could have been better educated so they could have dealt with me better. It may have helped to have more life skills films in school. Parents don't seem to understand alot of the problems young people go through and they don't know how to instruct children properly so educating parents would probably be the most effective way to nip it in the bud."

"N/A. Had a very nice pre-teen and teen years."

"More intellectual education in the home and additionally of the ways, good & evil of the world & most important, RESPONSIBILITY."

"More education about alcohol driving and its consequences."

"Had a better family life and better parents that wouldn't have dump in to to society alone."

"Been taken away from parent, grandparents, and adopted at young age or good psychiatric help during grade school."

"To have a secure family and a healthy relationship. And to have parents that will guide you and not control you. And to support your decisions on the type of lifestyle that you like."

"Have a closer relationship with parents."

"My mother shouldn't have drank or had us at such a young age."

"Find someone more willing to take time to talk & understand. Better drug & abuse counselling. Listen to see what the kids want, think positive."

"The problem is not a juvenile nature."

"My DWI was directly involved w/my bad marriage & had nothing to do with my parents."

"My circumstances are different than most people in that I was not raised in this country. I came back from Europe when I was 18 with no knowledge of the drug culture. Had I had some experience or education I probably would not have gotten involved."

"Not have so many responsibilities. Have someone to talk to. Not be told how awful a person I was when I did mess up. Not to be allowed to move out of the house so early. Be allowed to be a child."

"Having people to talk to. Someone to depend upon. Having a direction in my life. Knowing I had some support. Basically a friend who would have understand me and what I was going through."

"Talking to people who had been incarcerated or in trouble with drugs or alcohol. If I could have pulled away from peer pressure. I feel alcohol is so socially acceptable that kids feel it's ok to use. I now realize that alcohol is a drug and it also poisons your system. I very much want to educate others (especially teenagers) about drugs & alcohol and plan on doing so while incarcerated and when I get out."

"I should have respected my parents for the discipline they imposed instead of becoming rebellious towards them and lawful authorities. Part of this rebellion included taking & using drugs, stealing, cutting school & part taking in acts of vandalism and violence. I wish I had stayed home."

"To know about dealing with your feeling and how to let them out and show em some way."

"Education on drugs & alcohol usage & effect."

"Mental health counselling."

"If my parents wouldn't have died on me at an early age I would not be a inmate now."

"I'm not sure but the people that I hung around had a lot to do with it."

"Job training."

"It's hard to determine, if I would of had a chance to grow up in a stable family it might of been different. I think if there was an adult that could of seen the problem at a young age, I wouldn't of gotten into so much trouble. If only there was someone around that understood how hard it was growing up in a violent family. It might have been different."

"Just think of anything to do to stay out of trouble."

"Listen to my parents--have better friends--don't use drugs or alcohol."

"My parents could have stayed together or at least handled to separation responsibility. The state could have provided some training andI could have realized what was really happening earlier in my life and taken on more responsibility. I hope this study helps young people of today not suffer similar hardships."

"In my case I do not feel anything could have been done better. I solely am responsible for being here, in spite of all the good in my life."

"Stay away from other persons and never listen to what they tell you to do and to be with my family for the rest of my whole life."

"More interesting parents and spending money."

"By recognizing my problems & admitting them and looking for help."

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VII

PRESENTATION TO THE LEGISLATURE/HOUSE HESS/FEBRUARY 24, 1987

Yvonne M. Chase, Director
Division of Family and Youth Services

The Division of Family and Youth Services is the state agency mandated to provide directly or to arrange, through contract, a wide range of client services which are designed to address neglect, abuse, and exploitation of children, youth, and adults, and delinquent behavior of youth.

The Social Services section of the Division of Family and Youth Services is legally mandated by state statute (47.17) to receive, investigate, and take necessary and appropriate action on reports of harm to children and adults, elder abuse, and detention of juveniles. The goal of the agency's action is to ensure the safety of the child or adult who has been reported to be in danger. Statewide, the division receives approximately 700 reports of harm to children each month. In addition to reports of harm, the agency receives 700 - 900 request per month for other services from individuals, families, agencies, and community members.

Family Services

Once a report of harm is received, the report is investigated to determine three things. First, has abuse or neglect occurred. Second, if so, is there danger of further harm. And, third, what must be done and by whom to prevent further harm to the victim. In the most serious cases in which the parent or caretaker cannot, or will not, assure a child's safety, the child must be removed from the home through emergency custody proceedings. Emergency removals occur in only approximately 10% of the situations report to the agency. Of all the reports of

harm to children received, approximately 1/3 reveal a family who will require ongoing service in order for the child to be protected.

Elder Abuse

The division is also legally mandated to investigate and to offer protection services to elderly person who are reported to have suffered from physical or economic harm by a caretaker.

Division Statistics

The divisions' statistic are divided into three major categories: Social Services, Youth Services, and Community Care Licensing.

For Social Services:

The number of individuals receiving Social Services rose
from 17,002 in FY 85
to 19,310 in FY 86

The number of children receiving Child Protective Services rose
from 7,702 in FY 85
to 9,222 in FY 86

The number of adults receiving Adult Protective Services rose
from 2,209 in FY 85
to 2,213 in FY 86

For Youth Services:

The average monthly client load for probation officers rose from 1,162 in FY 85 to 1,352 in FY 86 and increase of 16.4%.

1,995 individual detention admissions were made in state facilities, a 5.2% increase over FY 85.

163 individual admissions for state institutional treatment facilities, a 22% increase over FY 85.

Community Care Licensing:

The number of day care facilities, residential care facilities, and foster homes licensed by the division dropped from 1,951 to 1,680, a decrease of 14% from the prior year.

Abuse and Neglect

The prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect is a growing concern in Alaska as evidenced by the increase in referrals to the division, and the corresponding increase in identifying the service needs of these victims and families. Since 1978, the number of staff to provide needed services has increased on 66%, while the number of children receiving protective services increased by 222%. This increase in referrals is consistent with national trends: however, Alaska is among the top 10 states with the highest reporting ratio.

Abuse and neglect became a serious administrative concern in 1984 when client loads had grown to an overwhelming degree. Statewide, the division identified the need for 35 additional social workers in order to meet a standard of 50 clients per social worker. The administration and legislature responded to this critical need and 39 line and support positions were allocated to the division of FY 86.

The FY 87 revised budget has resulted in the need to maintain a vacancy rate of 16% in staff positions. The gains made in staff resources in FY 86 were cancelled! With the FY 87 revised budget, statewide client loads for individual social workers now average over 80 clients; and even without the required vacancies, 6.0 positions are now needed to meet the 50 client standard.

The FY 88 Governor's budget reinstates staff resources to the FY 87 authorized level and provides an increase in foster care; it is hoped that these two actions will maintain the essential protection services to prevent further harm to victims. However, preventive youth service funds for grants to private providers have been eliminated. With this level of funding for the Division of Family and Youth Services, the Department of Health and Social Services, other state agencies, and no funding for private providers for child abuse prevention services, long range solutions for the children and families will not occur.

This situation creates a compelling need to develop a rational and consistent basis to determine client loads, and to allocate the existing resources. In the next year, the division is committed to completing a

project for case management which will develop and provide the standard client assessment tools. These tools will assist in the identification of client risk, and what level of service is needed.

Youth Services

Those youths who are determined to require formal intervention are treated in one of three ways, depending on the type of court order:

1. First, they may remain in their own home while being supervised by a probation officer.
2. Second, they may be placed in either a foster home or residential care home while under the supervision of a probation officer.
3. Or third, they may be placed in a state youth facility.

Until 1981, the 41 detention and 92 treatment beds at McLaughlin served the entire state. Since that time, 38 new beds have been put on line -- 20 beds in Fairbanks, 10 in Nome, and 8 in Juneau at the Johnson Center.

There are two separate but related concerns facing Youth Services: resources and facility overcrowding.

Resource limitations are affecting the division in several ways. First and foremost, current year budget reductions are necessitating vacancies in probation officer positions. The Governor's FY 88 budget does not reinstate these reductions, and 15% of all authorized probation positions will remain unfilled next year.

Probation officers are clearly the front line offense to fighting juvenile crime. They initiate intervention services, and they are the key to all levels of intervention efforts. In order to use Youth Services resources most efficiently, there must be a high level of community based probation services to protect the public.

There is serious concern that in reverting back to 1980 levels of service to deal with 1986 caseloads, juvenile crime will start to rise and reverse the downward trend of the last 5 years. It is believed that the reduction in juvenile crime during this period has been largely attributable to increased and improved youth probation services. With reduced levels of services, intervention will not occur with the degree of certainty or timeliness which is essential to effectiveness. Many youth will either slip through the cracks or reoffend before action can be taken.

The average statewide caseload is currently 72% above the nationally recognized standard. Inability to provide adequate probation services will ultimately result in increasing pressures on the already overcrowded youth facilities. This will create additional costs to the public in the form of increased enforcement, increased court processing, and ultimately greater numbers of persons entering the adult prison system.

The second impact of resource reductions is on the youth facilities. As noted, as late as six years ago, there was a single facility to meet all statewide needs. The system growth of 38 beds has somewhat addressed this deficit in services. However, the current need for detention and treatment beds still far exceeds the existing capacity. This has resulted in ongoing court oversight of conditions in the McLaughlin Youth Center, and grand jury investigation of

conditions at the Fairbanks Youth Facility. There is imminent potential for class action litigation similar to the Cleary Prisoner Rights suit in the adult corrections system.

In order to address this serious deficit, the division developed a comprehensive plan which calls for the regionalization of treatment services. As part of this plan, the 20 bed Bethel Youth Facility was constructed as was a 20 bed expansion to the Fairbanks Youth Facility. Both of these projects were originally funded this year for seven months only. The funding for Bethel was for the detention component only -- as funds for the treatment program were not included. However, budget cuts necessitated not opening Bethel at all. Current year budget reductions have also resulted in the Nome Facility being reduced to detention services only. Increased costs largely associated with overcrowding have greatly limited our ability to operate within the reduced appropriations for McLaughlin and Fairbanks.

The Governor's FY 88 budget fully funds the Fairbanks Youth Facility -- both the existing operation and the new wing. It also partially restores funds for McLaughlin which were deleted this year. Funding is not included for Bethel or Nome Treatment program. It is our expectation that there will continue to be court oversight because of the overcrowding problem. Court intervention could result in expensive remedies, as could class action litigation.

An addition concern is that services in rural areas will be minimal, and rural youth will be underserved. In some areas, particularly the Western Region, youth will continue to be detained in adult lock ups and jails without statutorily required sight or sound separation from adult prisoners. This deficiency

oners. This deficiency will result in the state losing a quarter of a million dollars annually of Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funds starting next year.

Departmental Interface

DFYS interfaces with other divisions within DHSS plus with other departments in order to provide the necessary services to parents and children.

- o A single parent may need financial assistance which could be available through a referral to the Division of Public Assistance. A family in a rural community needs periodic assistance in caring for a handicapped child. In such situations, the itinerant public health nurse and the social worker often coordinate a visitation plan to ensure support, guidance, and monitoring for the child.
- o Food stamps, alcohol abuse counseling, and medical assistance are also services which need to be utilized by many of DFYS's clients.
- o The division also works closely with schools in planning for children. A major project, the Alaska Youth Initiative, is a cooperative effort between the Division of Family and Youth Services, Mental Health, and the Department of Education to improve service for those children who have serious treatment needs.

We are also involved in a special project the Alaska Youth Initiative, with the Department of Education and the Division of Mental Health. The purpose of this project is to develop shared funding and coordinated services for

Alaska's most disturbed youth by establishment of the Alaskan Youth Initiative (AYI). AYI is a demonstration program to return to Alaska disturbed youth presently in out-of-state placements and to encourage both state and local level multi-agency development and funding of appropriate individualized care programs for these youth. Further out-of-state placement will be discouraged unless necessary. To accomplish this, a limited number of in-state youth who are of similar level of disturbance to those presently in out-of-state placement will be accepted into the AYI. Individualized care programs will be developed for these youth through the same procedures used in developing programs for youth who are in out-of-state placements.

There are a r of serious issues facing the division today, and I would like to briefly familiarize you with these items:

1. There is a lack of foster care resources to keep up with the demand for placements.

As I noted earlier, the number of facilities licensed by the division has decreased in a time when people resources are essential -- because they provide the least restrictive setting for a child who much to located somewhere other than his/her own home. The division is presently unable to provide either the quantity or quality of training and support necessary for foster parents to work as part of the treatment team in assisting a child to work through the abuse and/or neglect and to develop as a positive human being.

The child who is removed form his/her home today is quite different than the child who went into placement 10 - 15 years ago. Today's

child may have been more seriously abused or neglected, and quite often will need intensive supervision and treatment.

(Historical perspective -- foster care nationally was discussed)

Additionally, the monetary stipend to foster parents have not been consistent with the challenge a particular child might bring. Several years ago, augmented foster care was developed as an incentive for foster parents who would take delinquent children. However, the abused and neglected children from the family services section of the division are often equally difficult to care for.

Liability insurance is another serious issue.

The issue of potential property losses to foster parents has been problematic to the department' recruitment and retention efforts and clearly of concern to some foster parents. Mechanisms used by the department to reimburse foster parents for losses suffered as a result of the conduct of children placed in their care have had neither statutory basis nor dedicated funding. These mechanisms have thus been functionally unsatisfactory and, because of funding limitations, potentially insufficient to deal satisfactorily with even a single large property loss (such as destruction of a foster family home by an intentionally set fire).

Unfortunately, the cost is high. The division of Risk Management within the Department of Administration suggested that coverage of the potential property losses of the roughly one thousand licensed foster

parents would cost between \$750,000 and \$1 million annually. This figure is an estimate of premium costs for providing coverage to the structures of foster parent homes only. The estimate is based on an assumed average on typical home value and an average premium costs among various locations within the state. The figure does not include an estimate of the costs of providing coverage for foster parents' personal property or vehicles. Nor does the figure include estimated costs of assessing or establishing values of the property covered or updating these values on a continuing basis as new foster homes are licensed or foster parent drop out of the program. Costs of providing coverage for property "under the lawful control" of foster parents caused by children in care were not considered due to the difficulty of estimating the potential value of such property.

(Use private insurance carrier -- history.)

If we are to use this most valuable resource (foster care), then the system will have to be re-structured so that adequate support is afforded to all members of the treatment team, staff, foster parents, biological parents, and other resource providers.

2. The role of the CPS (investiqator) has become more difficult as we prosecute more cases the lines have often become vague between the investigative and the treatment nature of the services we provide.
3. There is a lack of evaluation and treatment resources in the provider community for pre-school children (especially for children under 3 years of age).

4. There has been a continual rise in caseloads, and while you have heard that the Division of Family and Youth Services is understaffed, and that is true when compared to national caseload standards, additional staff is not the only answer.

More resources need to be available within the Department of Health and Social Services so that children and families who require some type of health and social service assistance, but are not an identified part of the population DFYS is mandated to serve, will be provided assistance through other resources.

For a number of children and families, where there is no abuse and neglect, DFYS is still the only resource: an example may be parents who need treatment resources for their child and do not have the ability to pay for these resources.

5. There are generally insufficient treatment resources to handle the volume of referrals. In a time when we are facing a lessening of resources, it is essential that we keep in mind the continuum of services that a child and family may need in order to make the changes that are necessary.
6. Out-of-state institutional placements are still necessary for a small number of Alaska children, for whom sufficient resources to meet their needs do not exist in Alaska. Outside placement present a number of problems: expense -- coordination with the child's family -- and adequate monitoring of the outside facilities is difficult with reduced resources.

7. Juvenile waiver for juveniles continues to be an issue. With regard to the waiver, there continues to be concern when a juvenile is waived to adult status, as to where he or she serves their time/in an adult or juvenile facility . . .
8. I C W A: Requirements and need to implement it is good social work.
9. Runaway Youth: their numbers continue to increase and the ability of the system to respond to their needs and to those of their parents is inadequate. As noted in a recent task force report on runaway youth, the present runaway problem did not develop overnight. It is in many ways a product of an evolutionary process in the juvenile justice system.

In Anchorage alone, it is estimated that at least 6,000 youth are significantly at risk of becoming runaway, castaway, or homeless youth each year. For the system, the consequences of not adequately addressing the problem are:

Increased numbers of runaways.

Increased family stress.

Increased child prostitution.

Increased sexually transmitted diseases in juveniles.

Increased exploitation of juveniles.

Increase in truancy and school suspensions.

Decreased ability of youth to become employed.

Increased demand for mental health, public safety, medical care, and vocational services.

For the Parent:

A growing concern about the whereabouts and safety of their child.

What has worked in other states ??? In many areas, the availability of safe shelters where children could seek counseling in a safe environment has been successful.

At this point, the Division of Family and Youth Services does not have the detention capacity to implement short term detention sentences for youth who commit minor offenses. This would be particularly problematic outside of major population centers where no juvenile detention facilities exist and juveniles are detained in adult jails, some of which do not provide sight and sound separation of juveniles from adult prisoners as required by law.

VIII



REPORT ON ANCHORAGE RUNAWAYS

Prepared by the

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH TASK FORCE
Bill Wood, Chairperson

Prepared for

Mayor Tony Knowles

Department of Health and Human Services
Municipality of Anchorage
December 1986



Report on Anchorage Runaways

Executive Summary

I. Background

In February 1986, Mayor Knowles established a Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force (RHYTF) to identify the types and causes of problems experienced by runaway and homeless youth in Anchorage. The RHYTF was also asked to develop recommendations that would improve the service system to runaway and homeless youth.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force consisted of twenty-five (25) members who represented municipal and state policy makers, Health and Social Services Commissioners, social service providers, private industry representatives, parent groups and others. The Task Force members (all volunteers) and staff have devoted thousands of hours to the project over the past ten months. The RHYTF held over thirty meetings including:

- regular task force meetings,
- a youth and parent panel discussion,
- a public hearing, and
- special committee and sub-committee meetings.

The RHYTF researched the perceived problems of runaway and homeless youth and reached consensus on the seriousness of the problems. Task Force recommendations were developed and ranked according to a continuum of care concept that is explained later in the report.

II. Findings

Conservative estimates indicate that over 6,000 youth, between the ages of 10 and 17, are at serious risk of running away each year.

It is also estimated that approximately 2,500 youth run away and 700 youth are forced out of their homes each year. Between 2,500 and 7,000 parents are directly affected by these events.

We found the problems of runaway and homeless youth to be multi-faceted and complex with existing municipal and state resources being totally inadequate. For example:

- * for each youth that enters McLaughlin Youth Center in any given month, there are close to fifty runaway and homeless youth on the streets;
- * there are at least as many runaway and homeless youth as there are people being treated by alcohol and drug programs in the Municipality;
- * there are 3 - 4 times as many runaway and homeless youth as the number of people admitted at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute each year.

Millions of federal, state, and local dollars are spent on these programs, yet very few dollars were appropriated last year to address runaway and homeless youth issues.

III. Recommendations

Recommendations related to preventing unnecessary runaway incidents:

Create a working group of juvenile justice and child protection professionals, school administrators, drug and alcohol services providers, and concerned citizens to do a thorough review of the truancy problem in Anchorage, leading to enforceable truancy laws. This group would act to implement systematic changes to address the truancy problem, rather than simply studying it and making recommendations.

Expand Anchorage School District drop-out prevention programs, such as SAVE I and II, SEARCH, and Re-Start.

Recommendations designed to intervene in situations when a youth is a runaway or homeless:

Expand home-based counseling services to assist and support dysfunctional or crisis-oriented families.

Expand crisis intervention counseling services to runaways and/or troubled youth and their families.

Establish coordinated, cooperative interagency procedures for case management of runaway youth and their families, including follow-up.

Recommendations related to providing adequate aftercare services for family and youth who have experienced a runaway incident:

Increase funding to runaway services providers to assure adequate follow-up of clients.

Increase long-term group living options for chronic runaway and castaway youth.

Provide focused training to foster parents on runaway issues.

IV. Why Does Something Need to be Done?

1. The number of children and families impacted by youth problems is staggering.
2. Youth-related problems are projected to increase dramatically over the next 2 - 3 years.
3. The problems demand attention and solutions because there are key opportunities to make fast, effective and economical changes.

If the status quo is maintained, the vast majority of the youth and families who do not get help will be filling our jails, mental hospitals, and drug and alcohol programs. There will be a measurable increase in unemployment, suicide, and criminal and sexual exploitation. These alternatives are not only unacceptable, but are also much more difficult and expensive to treat and eliminate.

The full Report on Runaway and Homeless Youth details the purpose and scope of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force, identifies and defines the problems associated with being a runaway or homeless youth, and describes all the recommendations identified by the task force. It is available from the municipal Dept. of Health and Human Services. Call 264-6730, or write the Municipality of Anchorage, Dept. of Health and Human Services, Abuse Prevention Office, P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650 for more information.

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH TASK FORCE

REPORT ON ANCHORAGE RUNAWAYS

DATE: January 12, 1987
TO: Mayor Knowles, Municipal Assembly
FROM: Bill Wood, Chairman, Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force
SUBJECT: Final Report

Enclosed is the final report of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force.

A public hearing was held on November 12th to receive comments and suggestions regarding the report contents. The public comments, information and data were incorporated into this report.

We appreciate your continued interest in this area and look forward to your direct involvement in making the recommended changes.

If you have any general comments, questions, or concerns, please contact me at 279-1940 or the task force's staff at 264-6508.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor's Office and the Department of Health and Human Services wish to thank the Task Force volunteers for the many hours of time they dedicated to this project.

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REPORT ON ANCHORAGE RUNAWAYS

Mayor's Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The Mayor's special Task Force on Runaway and Homeless Youth was established in late February, 1986, to improve the current service system to runaway and homeless youth in Anchorage.

Mayor Knowles asked the task force to do two things:

- 1) to identify the scope of runaway and homeless youth problems in Anchorage; and
- 2) to develop viable, cost effective solutions.

Additionally, he asked the Task Force to consider: how the service system to runaway and homeless youth operates, whether the community needs to continue in the same direction or if we should implement a different system.

The Task Force began with twenty-five (25) members and currently has about thirty (30) members. The members, all volunteers, have met at least twice a month since mid-March, with many additional subcommittees and special interest meetings.

Serving on the Task Force are:

- * municipal and state policy makers;
- * municipal health and social services commissioners, and youth commissioners;
- * representatives from various public and private agencies involved with runaway and homeless youth;
- * private industry representatives; and
- * parent groups.

B. SCOPE AND APPROACH

The Runaway Support Network, a one year, federally funded endeavor, produced two reports just prior to the formation of the Task Force - the Final Assessment Report of existing problems, issues and services and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Service System Plan. The Task Force used the reports to help develop the scope and approach for the project.

There were four major phases used by the Task force to direct their efforts. These included:

Phase 1. Established a workplan and an administrative structure

- * Reviewed background data and information
- * Identified Task Force goals and objectives
- * Drafted agendas to complement the goals and objectives
- * Developed a structure within which the Task Force could work
- * Outlined "ground rules" under which the Task Force would work
- * Drafted the outline of the Task Force Report

Phase 2. Problem Definition and Identification of causes

- * Defined and analyzed problems
- * Identified probable causes
- * Identified the consequences of not addressing the problem
- * Developed draft position papers on each problem area
- * Reached informed consent and considered "special interests"

Phase 3. Policy analysis

- * Collected and analyzed data
- * Identified and discussed existing community services
- * Developed recommendations and solutions
- * Developed a problem ranking tool
- * Ranked the problem areas and recommendations

Phase 4. Policy formulation and plan implementation

- * Developed alternative strategies/policies
- * Tested feasibility through public and private meetings
- * Drafted preliminary report

- * Reviewed preliminary draft report with the Mayor and the public
- * Finalized plan based on public feedback processes
- * Reviewed and monitored community commitment (ongoing)

It is the intent of the Mayor to appoint an implementation team to develop and implement the recommendations contained in this report.

C. ASSUMPTIONS

The members of the Task Force jointly agreed to a number of assumptions during the course of the project. These included the following:

- 1) The information, conclusions and recommendations contained in the Runaway Support Network (RSN) reports reasonably represented the status of the runaway situation at the time the reports were drafted.
- 2) The statistics contained in the RSN reports were reasonably accurate given the general lack of reliable historical data on the subject.
- 3) The other sources of data used in the development of problem statements and recommendations were relied upon to the extent reasonable and were not edited or revised in any way.

D. HOW THE REPORT WAS DEVELOPED

Each Task Force member was initially asked to provide a written position statement to include as much of the following as possible:

- Summary of the runaway services their agency provides or services they have used;
- Data sources that could be used by the Task Force;
- Identification of existing runaway and homeless youth networks;
- Personal and professional perceptions of the problems;
- Ways to improve interagency coordination; and
- Ideas on how to increase public input/awareness of the problems of runaway and homeless youth.

The above information was analyzed and meetings were held to review and discuss the information provided. This led to a list of characteristics of runaway youth and a list of services provided by agencies represented on the Task Force.

Subsequently, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force organized itself into three subcommittees which reflected the needs of the target population - prevention, intervention, and aftercare. Each of the subcommittees elected a chairperson(s) and began the development of problem statements for each of their selected topical areas.

Problem statements were developed by each subcommittee based on the following criteria:

- 1) Clearly define the problem
- 2) State the scope of the problem, within the last one to three years
- 3) Define the characteristics of the population(s) affected
- 4) Describe the costs and consequences of not addressing the problem
- 5) Identify the major contributing factors
- 6) Conduct a policy analysis
- 7) Make recommendations for change(s)

Task Force members next identified recommendations for addressing the problems. The categories of need and the recommendations were individually prioritized by each Task Force member. The criteria used in the prioritization process included:

- * Ease of implementation
- * Cost
- * Potential for positive impact
- * Severity of the problem if nothing is done
- * Overall priority based on how the Task Force member feels about the recommendation

A citizen participation concept, borrowed from the Health and Human Services Commission, was developed for the Task Force. The purpose of the concept was to assure reasonable participation of the public in the development of the project report.

A preliminary draft report was developed by the chairman, selected Task Force members and staff. The draft report was reviewed with the Mayor and presented to the public for comment at a number of public meetings and hearings. The information gathered from the meetings was incorporated into the final report and this report was published.

II. AREA OVERVIEW AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

A. INTRODUCTION

This report will show that the issue of runaway and homeless youth, and the problems they present to themselves, their families, and this community cannot be blamed on any particular source. The problems and the causes of these problems must be acknowledged and be owned by the Anchorage community before adequate steps will be taken to resolve them.

Research indicates that approximately 1,200 youth come into contact with agencies providing services to runaway and homeless youth annually in Anchorage.¹ Research also indicates that the number of youth served is typically only one-third to one-fifth of the total number of runaway or homeless youth in a community. This means that 3,600 to 6,000 youth, or up to one-fifth of the entire population of Anchorage youth between 10 and 17 could run away or become homeless each year.² When the number of runaways reported to the police in Anchorage is compared to the numbers reported in communities of a similar size in the Lower 48, the Anchorage rate is found to be about three times as high as the rate in the comparison communities.³

Runaway and homeless youth present problems to themselves, their families, and the community as a whole. A youth who is a runaway or homeless is much more likely to be exposed to an exploitive situation, to become involved in using, abusing or dealing drugs and/or alcohol, to be truant from school, and to have a lower sense of self-worth and self-esteem than peers who are not

1. Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report, Runaway Support Network, 1984
2. Population Estimates, 1985 Municipality of Anchorage, Community Planning
3. a) Anchorage Police Department Reports 1984, b) Crime in America, FBI 1984

runaways or homeless.⁴ Running away is frequently a symptom of family problems, such as divorce, or remarriage of parents, alcohol or drug related problems, and child sexual or physical abuse or neglect.⁵ Even when a youth runs from a caring family, the family experiences increased stress, increased chance of sibling runaways⁶, and the loss of parental control over the youth's behavior and actions.

The problems runaway and homeless youth present to our community include an increased incidence of child prostitution, increased levels of drug involvement (both drug dealing and abuse), increased numbers of runaways and homeless youth (friends of runaways are at greater risk of running away themselves), and increased demand for public safety, mental health, medical care (such as care related to sexually transmitted disease and unplanned teenage pregnancies), public assistance, and vocational services.

B. NATIONAL PROBLEM OVERVIEW

If 'running away from home' is defined as being away from home for at least 24 hours without parental permission, approximately one and one-half million (1,500,000) youth run away from home or are cast out of their homes each year in the United States. Many of these youth return home within one to three days and may not run away again. Others have left numerous times, each incident stretching familial bonds more and decreasing the potential for resolving the cause of the problems. Finally, about 20-30% of these youth have been forced out of their homes by their parents. We call these youth first time runaways, chronic runaways, and castaways, respectively.

4. Runaway and Homeless Youth In New York City, New York, New York State, Psychiatric Institute, January 1984
5. Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report, Runaway Support Network, 1984
6. Runaway and Homeless Youth: National Program Inspection, Seattle, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General, Region X, October 1983

Runaway behavior has been associated with⁷:

- 1) family issues and problems, such as a lack of ability to be a parent and lack of skills to respond to adolescent behavior, family stress (separation, divorce, parental stress and conflict, and relationship problems), parent-child conflict over values and perhaps inflexible or rigid standards imposed on the youth by the parent, and adolescent testing of limits and values;
- 2) school problems;
- 3) alcohol or drug use problems on the part of the parent or the youth;
- 4) problems with peers, such as a lack of skills to interact with peers successfully;
- 5) mental, behavioral, or emotional problems on the part of the parent or the youth;
- 6) major family problems, such as physical or sexual abuse or neglect, significant alcohol or drug problems in the home, or significant family stress, such as marital problems or domestic violence.

Castaway behavior (a parental decision to force a youth from his/her home) has been associated with⁸:

- 1) major family dysfunction, as described above under 6);
- 2) parents unable to nurture their children due to serious emotional or psychological problems, where historically the parent's needs have outweighed those of the child;
- 3) alcohol abuse by the parents and their friends;
- 4) a structurally and functionally unstable family; and
- 5) youth who have a substantial history of running away.

Once out of the home, being a runaway or being homeless usually has a serious impact on the experiences and future lifestyle of a youth.

7. Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report, Runaway Support Network, 1984

8. "Homeless Youth: The Saga of 'Pushouts' and 'Throwaways' in America", Report of the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Senate Judiciary Committee, December 1980, Washington D.C., Document #68-5910.

Various national research efforts indicate that runaway and homeless youth are seriously at risk of:

- exploitation related to child prostitution, such as child sex rings and/or 'kiddie porn';
- other trading on a one-to-one basis of sexual favors for shelter, food and/or clothing; and,
- increasing involvement in drugs or alcohol.

Additionally, castaway youth are found to have a much higher suicide rate than the general population.⁹

A longitudinal study of runaways twelve years afterward found these adults to have a reduced sense of well-being, lower paying jobs, more divorces, and higher incidence of runaways in their own children.¹⁰

The activities common to runaway or homeless youth, such as prostitution or drug dealing, are the result of a lifestyle that lacks parental oversight or safe alternatives for meeting basic needs. Without a parent to provide basic needs, and with no authorized adult to sign such necessary documents as school registration or job applications, the options for these youth are severely limited. The result is that runaway and homeless youth are a social problem, especially because they have no sanctioned way to play a contributing role in our society.

C. STATE PROBLEM OVERVIEW

The problem of runaway and homeless youth in Alaska is affected by physical, population and economic characteristics of Alaska, the legal response to runaway or homeless youth, and access to services by homeless or runaway youth.

9. "Homeless Youth Report Other Problems", Anchorage Daily News, February 6, 1984
10. Liebow, E., and et al "Runaway Children 12 Years Later - Follow-up" Journal of Family Issues, 1980

1. Alaska Characteristics Related to Runaway and Homeless Youth

Alaska has one of the highest rates in the nation of alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, rape, child abuse, and divorce.¹¹ Traditionally, these aspects of our community are attributed to five characteristics. The first is the distance between most Alaskans and their extended families and friendship networks. The highly mobile nature of the population is evident when the small number of adult Alaskans who grew up in Alaska is compared with the entire population. This mobile population may have a smaller interest in community issues, and may have difficulty in establishing new friends and identifying new support systems.

The second characteristic is the extreme seasonal cycle from light to dark, combined with the cold climate. Particular emphasis is usually placed on "Cabin Fever", or the tension and frustration that may result when the inclination to stay indoors due to the cold during the winter is re-enforced by the short days. The indoor nature of many people's winter lifestyles may be particularly stressful when combined with limited social contact that results from limited friendship networks and lack of access to extended family members and events.

The third characteristic of our community which contributes to the high rates of alcohol and drug abuse, etc. is the disproportionately high number of males aged 18 to 24 in our population. Research indicates that men in this age group are more likely to abuse alcohol or drugs and react to stress in a violent manner

11. a) i. Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies, Patterns of Drug Use: High School Survey, ii. Patterns of Drug Use: High School Survey, UAA, 1983, iii. Survey on Illicit Drug Use by High School Seniors, National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1982;
- b) Kizzia, Tom "Mayor Knowles Plans War Against Drunk Drivers, Domestic Violence" Anchorage Daily News, March 16, 1983
- c) American Humane Association, National Study of Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and neglect, U.S. Government Publication 1984
- d) U.S. Vital Statistics, 1985

than other age groups. The high proportion of men in this age group in Alaska means that our population is more inclined toward abuse and violence.

Fourth is the impact of the enormous challenge faced by the traditional Alaskan Native cultures in changing from a subsistence based to a cash based economy and the associated effects of this change on all the people of the state. All individuals feel stress when they change lifestyles. The impact of changes which result when an entire culture must suddenly face new values and ideals is far-reaching and, as yet, not entirely understood.

The fifth and final characteristic is the impact of a 'boom-bust' economy and attendant population swings. The dramatic shift in the economy in Alaska subjects families to the stress of sudden affluence or poverty. It also causes families to be moved or separated by both opportunities to be followed, or disasters to be avoided. Anchorage is the focus of this stress because it is the economic and population center of the state.

2. Legal Background and Analysis

The present runaway problem did not develop overnight. It is in many ways the product of an evolutionary process in the juvenile justice system itself. For decades, various kinds of wayward juvenile behavior were treated as delinquent, even though such actions as running away and truancy were only punishable if committed by minors and not by adults. The term "status offense" describes this unique kind of juvenile offense. Courts were free to impose detention and placement in correctional schools for runaway youth just as they did for those committing criminal acts.

In the early 1960's, a "due process" revolution of sorts began in juvenile courts across the land. Legislatures began separating status offenders from delinquents and labeling them under such terms as "Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS)" or "Children in Need of Supervision (CHINS)." Some limits were placed on juvenile courts in their ability to lock up these offenders, although most courts could place these youngsters on probation.

As the juvenile rights movement developed into the 1970's, several states began closely examining the treatment of status offenders. The result was a nearly nationwide movement throughout the decade to decriminalize such behavior. Concern over the treatment of status offenders ultimately resulted in federal legislation through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. In order to comply with the Act and receive federal funding for a variety of juvenile justice programs, states were required to mandate deinstitutionalization of status offenders. The Act prohibits the dispersal of federal formula grant funds to any state whose laws do not differentiate delinquent and status offender populations.

In Alaska in 1977, a substantial revision of the juvenile code was effected. Prior to the revision there had been three categories of children's proceedings: (1) Delinquency; (2) Dependency; (3) Child in Need of Supervision. The latter category consisted of typical status offense behavior -- habitual truancy, runaway, and incorrigibility. The revised code established only two categories of jurisdiction: (1) Delinquency; and (2) Child in Need of Aid. Runaway behavior became a part of Child in Need of Aid, along with abuse and neglect, and abandonment.

Under the new code, only delinquent minors could be detained or institutionalized in locked facilities. Runaways who had not been charged with a delinquent act could not be subjected to such confinement. Two primary options remained for law enforcement officials: (1) return runaways to their homes; or (2) place them in social services shelters. Recently, another option has come into use by parents and the community. This option is to use psychiatric facilities to hold youth under mental health commitment laws. The primary official response to the runaway problem, however, remains the task of the social services system.

Although shelter services for runaways did increase in the early 1980's, the level of services directed at this population has not kept pace with the growth of the problem. With burgeoning case-loads of child physical and sexual abuse, the Division of Family

and Youth Services has encountered significant difficulty in responding to the needs of runaway and castaway children. Now, nearly ten years after the revision of the Children's Code, the magnitude of the runaway problem presents one of the greatest challenges in the entire human services spectrum.

3. Access to Services

Runaway and homeless youth in Alaska are frequently denied state services due to state policies, priorities and funding decisions. The Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) prioritizes its caseload based first on visible physical abuse, then sexual abuse, potential cases of neglect, and finally others in need. The Division has not been adequately funded in the last four years to address many cases below the top two priorities. If DFYS could attend to runaway and homeless youth, there would be greater likelihood that these youth would have a safe place to stay each night, and that more assistance would be offered to the families to resolve the difficulties leading to a runaway event.

Both the Alaska State Troopers and the Anchorage Police Department also prioritize their work. In both cases, responding to reports of runaway youth is not high on the list. In an attempt to increase the attention paid to these reports, HB 19 was passed in the 1985 session. This bill requires the police and the Troopers to "attempt to find" reported runaways, but negative consequences do not result if the police choose not to look. The bill did not carry a fiscal note. It has had limited effect.

D. ANCHORAGE PROBLEM OVERVIEW

There have probably always been runaway and homeless youth in Anchorage. Four primary non-profit agencies have worked to meet the needs of these youth and their families: Alaska Children's Services, Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation (formerly Alaska Youth Advocates), Family Connection, and Salvation Army Booth Home.

In 1984, the Municipality joined these agencies in sponsoring the Runaway Support Network. This one-year project was funded by a

federal grant and sought to increase attention paid to runaway and homeless youth in Anchorage by studying the needs of these youth and their families and suggesting solutions. One result of the attention generated by the Network is this Task Force.

Others in this community stress the public safety threats presented by runaway and homeless youth and their potential for being exploited by adults. These issues are real, and represent one end of a spectrum. This spectrum stretches between the idea that all runaways represent a danger to the community and should be contained at all costs, to the idea that an individual would not run away from home without just cause. Furthermore, since runaways have not broken the law, they should not at any time be treated in the same manner as youth who have. This Task Force has sought to develop an approach to the needs, problems and community issues of runaway and homeless youth which is balanced between deterrence and confinement on the one hand and prevention and treatment on the other.

1. History and Development of Current Services

Residential services for Alaskan children and youth started with the Jesse Lee Home for Orphans in Unalaska. This church funded orphanage opened in the 1890's largely in response to the needs of orphaned Native children.

The orphanage moved to Anchorage in the 1960's. At that time, other churches in Anchorage were starting to provide social services to children and youth. The churches combined resources and formed Alaska Children's Services (ACS). This agency provided residential care including short-term and long-term receiving homes (which became the Emergency Shelter), group homes for long-term adolescent care, and an extensive program for foster family training and licensing. The Center for Children and Parents was also sponsored by ACS, and one of this agency's projects was funded by the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) to work with the University of Alaska and Chugiak Children's Services to develop family day care resources and licensing procedures in Anchorage.

The Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation (AYPF) started in 1972, using federal funds to provide legal advocacy for youth and children. This new program recognized the problems of runaway youth, reflecting a national trend toward identifying runaways as a population requiring special services. While providing advocacy, the need for crisis intervention and family counseling became apparent, and the Family Connection was established in 1974 using federal runaway youth funds. In 1978, Family Connection developed a volunteer foster family program and 24 hour crisis line to provide temporary shelter to children and youth not in state custody for short periods of time during which intervention services would occur with the runaway's family to stabilize the situation. Family Connection also started the Coordinating Agencies Group, which is designed to bring everyone providing services to a family together to coordinate the delivery of service.

The services provided by these three agencies remained relatively stable until the mid-1980's, growing to meet demand using state and local funds. By 1984, the staff of Family Connection and AYPF had changed substantially due to natural attrition. Since then, AYPF has provided more crisis intervention and family mediation services. Family Connection has shifted its services toward long term family counseling at the same time. The volunteer foster family program at Family Connection was discontinued due to underfunding, and Family Connection added a small income-based treatment component in its place.

In 1984, AYPF received a special appropriation from the legislature to open a five bed runaway shelter. This shelter has remained open on a year to year basis, and has been funded to date by a special appropriation from the legislature.

At about this time, DFYS and ACS were also having some serious difficulties concerning ACS's ability to refuse emergency care to a DFYS-referred individual. As a result of the SE difficulties, ACS no longer provides emergency care. During 1985, DFYS contracted with AYPF, the Salvation Army - Booth Home, and Alaska Baptist Family Services to provide this care. In 1986, AYPF

became the major provider of Emergency Shelter for DFYS in Anchorage.

E. PROBLEM STATEMENTS FOR EACH TARGET POPULATION

1. Pre-Runaway Youth

Problem

There are youth in Anchorage at risk of running away or of being thrown out of their homes. For most youth, these actions compound rather than alleviate their problems. For some of these youth, running away can be viewed as better than staying in an abusive, even dangerous, family situation. For other youth, perhaps the majority, the family situation is not abusive but is ineffective, and for these families especially, running away can be prevented.

Problem Scope

In 1985, there were an estimated 27,584 youth between 10 and 17 in Anchorage. This is an increase of more than 200% since 1980. Conservative estimates from the Final Assessment Report and elsewhere indicate that at least 6,000 of these youth (11%) are significantly at risk of becoming runaway, castaway or homeless youth each year.

- Based on the Final Assessment Report Data, Anchorage has at least 3,600 runaway, castaway and homeless youth each year. Approximately 73% are runaways, 19% are castaways and 8% are homeless.
- It is estimated that about 25% of runaways repeat. National data indicate that 80% of runaways return home within 2 - 7 days, but perhaps 20% stay away from home longer.
- Anchorage data show that running away is seasonal, with significantly fewer runaways during December and January, peaks in the spring and fall, and fewer in summer although not as few as during the winter (APD data). Also, most Anchorage runaways appear to stay in the vicinity.

In summary, there are probably about 6,000 school-age youth between 10 - 17 in Anchorage who are in danger of running away at least once. At least 3,600 youth do run away from home each year, an additional 700 are cast out, and about 300 will remain homeless. Of these 3,600 youth about 900 will repeat, about 700 will be on the street for longer than a week and at least 300 will become chronic runaways or "street kids".

Population Characteristics

Youth who are most at risk of becoming runaways or castaways are those whose personal, family, school, or peer characteristics resemble those of known runaways.

- Of the 1,200 runaway and castaway youth who do receive services in the community, females are twice as common as males, but the actual numbers may be closer to parity. Some data shows that males are more likely to be castaways than females. In Anchorage the modal age range for runaways is 14 - 16, but there have been pre-teen cases as well.

Consequences and Costs

Increased number of runaway, castaway, or homeless youth in Anchorage. As a result, increased juvenile justice system costs and demand for direct runaway-related and social services.

- Runaway youth have greater medical and emotional problems, such as increased risk of suicide, early pregnancy, and STD.
- Runaway youth are less likely to complete high school.
- A 12 year study found that runaways, as adults, were less economically advantaged and less satisfied with their lives, including having less stable marriages.

The overall conclusion is that social costs of runaway behavior repeat over generations.

It seems likely that the number of runaways is increasing, since factors closely associated with runaway behavior have been

increasing. Between 1972 and 1979, drug use by 12 - 17 year olds increased 139%, alcohol use for the same population increased 56%, and suicides by 15 - 19 year olds increased 140%. Between 1960 and 1980, the overall rate of divorce increased 140%, and the number of working mothers increased from 28% to 57%.

Contributing Factors

Generally, research shows that youth who have multiple problems, such as the following, are at greatest risk of becoming runaway, castaway or homeless youth.

- Being from a single parent home .
- Having parents who have recently divorced
- Having a custodial parent who has recently remarried
- Doing poorly in school, being truant from school
- Being from a home where drugs or alcohol is abused by either the parent or the youth
- Being a victim of physical or sexual abuse or neglect
- Having parents who do not 'talk things out' and explain reasons for their parenting decisions.
- Having parents lacking in parenting skills.
- Having both parents working and the subsequent high degree of unsupervised time for the youth
- Being a girl who is pregnant
- Experiencing severe emotional disability
- Having a history of runaway behavior in the family (parent or sibling)
- Having friends who have run away or who have self-emancipated
- Being from a family experiencing economic hardship

In general, families where anyone is abusing alcohol or drugs, where there is a physically confrontational parent-child relationship, where the family structure is changing, where the youth is having problems with school or has run away before are at the highest risk.

Sources

Municipality of Anchorage, Community Planning, Population
Estimates, 1985

Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report

Federal Family and Youth Services, Bureau Documents

2. First Time Runaways

Problem

There are youth who have run away from home for the first time, and are living with peers, friends, relatives or on the streets.

Problem Scope

There are approximately 800 first time runaways in Anchorage each year who come into contact with Family Connection or Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation, or are taken into temporary custody by the Division of Family and Youth Services. Most first-time runaways tend to go unreported or unserved by the system. Researchers have consistently estimated that the total number of first-time runaways may be between 3 and 5 times higher than the number served. The most conservative estimate of the actual number is 2,000 first time runaways.

Descriptive Characteristics

First time runaways tend to stay away from home for relatively short periods of time, such as one to three days. Runaways range in age from under 10 to age 18. It is likely that male runaways tend to seek help less frequently than females, that they are more likely than females to survive on their own without coming to the attention of authorities, and that female runaways are more likely to be reported by family and friends.

These youth come from families at all economic levels. The average runaway is about 15 years old, and known female runaways out-number males by 2 to 1.

Primary Causative Factors

- 1) Family issues and problems:
 - a. lack of ability to parent and lack of skills in dealing with adolescent behavior;
 - b. family stress (separation, divorce, parental stress and conflict, relationship problems);

- c. parent-child conflict over values; inflexibility or rigidity by parents in imposing standards on kids; and,
 - d. adolescent testing of limits and values.
- 2) School problems
 - 3) Alcohol or drug use problems (parent or youth)
 - 4) Problems with peers (lack of social skills, life skills)
 - 5) Mental, behavioral, or emotional dysfunction (kids and parents)

Secondary Causative Factors

- 1) Decline in the economy; gradually worsening economic condition
- 2) Highly transient population, including a significant number of military personnel
- 3) Lack of extended family support systems
- 4) Harsh environment, climate.
- 5) Conflicting messages given by adults to children regarding values and standards; tolerance of the widespread abuse of alcohol and drugs, particularly marijuana, by adult society on the one hand, while condemning teenage drug abuse on the other, is an example of this 'mixed message.'

Consequences and Costs

- Increased numbers of chronic runaway and castaway youth
- Increased family stress
- Increased child prostitution
- Increased sexually transmitted diseases in juveniles
- Increased exploitation of juveniles.
- Decreased educational level and an increase in truancy and school suspensions.
- Decreased ability of youth to become employed, especially those younger than 16
- Increased demand for public safety, mental health, medical care (e.g. unplanned pregnancies), and vocational services

Sources

Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report

Alaska Department of Labor, Alaska Labor Statistics

Anchorage Police Department, Annual Report, 1985

3. Chronic Runaways

Problem Statement

There are youth who are chronic runaways in that they have run away three or more times and they are living on the streets, with peers in unsupervised settings, or sporadically in shelters.

Problem Scope

There are approximately 300 youth annually in Anchorage who are chronic runaways who receive services and about 750 actual cases. Typically, each incident means a longer period away from home, and the chances for reunification decrease. Similarly, social services and state intervention increase. Also typically, the provocation for leaving is less and less severe with each incident.

Some of these youth may become self-emancipated. Many more chronic runaways end up leading a marginal life on the streets, open to exploitation, etc.

Descriptive Characteristics

The average chronic runaway is somewhat older and more independent than the average first time runaway. They may present a more significant level of emotional and behavioral dysfunction. It is common for them to be tied in with a network of other youth and adults that enable them to remain on the streets for longer periods of time.

Youth who are chronic runaways are more likely than first time runaways to have been victims of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

As with first time runaways, these youth may come from families at all economic levels. Male runaways tend to seek help less frequently than female. Many of these youth are the product of numerous failed out-of-home placements, e.g. foster care, shelters, or residential facilities.

The needs of this population differ from first-time runaways. They are more in need of training for job skills and independent living skills.

Primary Causative Factors

- 1) Major family dysfunction as exhibited by:
 - a. physical or sexual abuse or neglect
 - b. significant alcohol abuse problems in the home
 - c. significant family stress, e.g. marital problems, domestic violence
- 2) Alcohol abuse by youth

Secondary Causative Factors (Societal Factors)

- 1) Lack of appropriate intervention and follow-up on initial runaway act
- 2) Lack of support options to allow a minor who cannot or should not return home to gain skills necessary to live independently
- 3) Failure of the social services system to give sufficient priority attention to chronic runaways; lack of statutory differentiation based on the chronic nature of runaway and no mandate in the statutes for the Department of Health and Social Services to provide services for these minors
- 4) Lack of programs which categorically address the needs of chronic runaway youth

Consequences of Not Addressing Problem

- Increased system costs associated with not preventing chronic runaway
- Increased number of violent and abusive kids, thus perpetuating cycle of abuse
- Increased number of "street kids"
- Increased levels of delinquency and criminal behavior in youth
- Increased levels of prostitution among youth
- Increased exposure to exploitive individuals
- Increased likelihood of drug dealing and drug use
- Decreased educational levels

- Decreased ability to be employed
- Increased incidence of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease

Sources

Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report

4. Post-Runaway Youth and Their Families

Problem

Youth and their families experience difficulties in resolving family problems just after a runaway incident, contributing to further family dysfunction and possibly other runaway incidents within the family.

Problem Scope

There are between 800 and 4,000 first time runaways and at least 600 chronic runaways each year in Anchorage. The manner in which the families of these youth react when a runaway returns home has a significant impact on the continuing functioning of the family and the potential resolution of the problems which caused the incident.

An important factor in the continuing stability of the family after a youth returns home from a runaway incident relates to the cause of the incident. If there are serious dysfunctional qualities in the family before a youth runs away which are not resolved after s/he returns home, it is likely that the youth will continue to run away, increasing his/her potential to be seriously at risk of exploitation. Also, if serious problems exist in the family, the most healthy option for the youth may be his/her departure from the family under the DFYS protection.

A different aspect of the problems a family faces when a runaway returns home is related to the increased potential for siblings and friends of the runaway to follow suit.

Descriptive Characteristics

The characteristics of a runaway youth and his/her family reflect the characteristics related to First Time and Chronic Runaway youth.

It is important to recognize that a youth may runaway in response to family problems which might range from mild to serious issues, or may run away for reasons completely unrelated to the family.

Therefore, although most runaways do tend to come from families with higher levels of family stress, alcohol or drug abuse problems, or mental, behavioral or emotional dysfunction, some youth do leave healthy families.

No matter what the family background of the youth, there is stress when s/he returns home.

Causative Factors

All those factors which influence runaway or castaway youth apply.

Consequences and Costs

- Increased demand for family counseling
- Increased demand for parent support and friendship network
- Increased demand for youth and friendship network
- Without assistance, an increased potential for family dysfunction
- Without assistance, an increased potential for repeat runaway incidents

Sources

Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report

5. Castaway Youth

Problem

There are youth who have been forced out of their homes and whose family ties have been substantially severed.

Problem Scope

There are about 300 castaway youth who receive services in Anchorage each year. The actual number of castaway youth is closer to 700 each year.

These youth have limited employment and other skills, so they are often forced to break the law to survive. This group is likely to represent a disproportional burden on the justice system, and the physical and mental health systems, since traditional services haven't proved to be successful.

Population Characteristics

These youth tend to be older than first time runaways, and may have a higher male to female ratio.

Families which have cast out a youth frequently are extremely dysfunctional, due to problematic behavior on the part of the youth or lack of interest on the parent's part for being responsible for the youth. These youth and their family have often had unsuccessful involvement with multiple agencies in the past.

Since these youth have been rejected by their parents, they have serious emotional and self-identity problems. Castaways also frequently lack a value system due to lack of parenting. These youth have a higher rate of depression and suicide and are highly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and criminal behavior. Usually, traditional family treatment is ineffective because there is no family system present.

Primary Causative Factors

- Major family dysfunction
- Parents who are unable to nurture their children. For instance, parents who have serious emotional or psychological problems, where historically the needs of the parent have been more important than those of the child.
- Parents and their friends abuse alcohol or drugs
- Unstable family, both structurally and functionally
- Youth who have a substantial history of running away
- Inadequate socialization of parent and/or youth, such that the individual is critically wounded psychologically or emotionally. This leads to a perpetuation of the inability to cope or function in an adequate manner.

Secondary Causative Factors

Lack of programs and resources which categorically address the needs of castaway youth, including:

- A bridge between being on the streets and formal emancipation;
- Life Skills/Social Skills educational programs;
- A group living alternative to foster homes and other family-based residential care; and
- Services which do not require parental approval or contact and which are not focused on family reunification
- The lack of voluntary substitute care beds
- Failure to intervene effectively in an earlier stage of the problem
- Economic hardship, unemployment
- Lack of an effective therapeutic model

Consequences and Costs

- No break in the generational cycle
- Youth who may commit delinquent acts, prostitute themselves, or expose themselves to exploitation in order to eat and obtain shelter
- Youth who are highly likely to appear as adult offenders in the criminal justice system

- Youth who are unable or unwilling to attend school
- Youth who have experienced an interruption, and frequently a permanent one, in their education
- Youth who earn an inadequate income, earn it illegally, or end up as dependants on the Public Assistance system.
- Increased incidence of child abuse, sexual abuse and assault, criminal activity, mental illness, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Sources

Wasserman, Paul, Final Assessment Report

6. Parents of Runaway Youth

Problem

Parents of runaways feel guilty, angry, and helpless when their child runs away from home.

Problem Scope

About 800 "First Time Runaways" and 300 "Chronic Runaways" come into contact with the service system each year in Anchorage. Many do not get reported because parents have prior experience getting no response when reports are made to police. It is estimated that the total number of runaways may be between three to five times the number served. This means that there are between 1,100 and 5,500 households that are directly affected.

Descriptive Characteristics

Each time a child runs away from home, a parent experiences anxiety about his/her location, activities, and safety; frustration about the sudden lack of control over his/her behavior; and doubt about the parents ability to perform this role successfully.

About two-thirds of the known runaways are reported to the Anchorage Police Department or the AK Troopers. If a parent chooses to report his/her child missing, the parent must then face the reality that although the Police or Troopers are required by statute to attempt to find their child, this task has a low priority and rarely receives attention.

The parent must also confront the low priority given runaways by all parts of the system. Although running away is a highly disruptive act, if abuse or neglect aren't present in the home, running away is simply not perceived a serious enough problem to warrant attention by the Alaska Division of Family and Youth Services, Anchorage Police Department, or the Alaska Troopers under current staffing and priorities.