

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF COLORADO JUVENILE JUSTICE STUDY

Purpose of the Study: To develop juvenile justice positions that can be used to lobby the Legislature in this area that affects the youth of Colorado.

Background: Currently, the LWVCO has no juvenile justice positions. Whenever lobbyists have needed to lobby on juvenile justice issues, Children's Support Services positions have been used. See pp. 30-31 in Program for Study and Action. After the Legislature enacted a law lowering the age at which a juvenile can be charged and sentenced as adults from 14 to 12, the LWVCO League adopted a juvenile justice study.

Committee Members:

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We would like to thank all of the people at the Division of Youth Corrections and the Department of Corrections who assisted us as we researched this issue. Thank you to all of the local League members who participated in the survey mailed to local League presidents in January. We appreciate your time and efforts. Results of the survey are published elsewhere in the background material.

As a committee, we visited Youthful Offender Service in Pueblo, the Gilliam Youth Services Center, Mount View Youth Services Center, and Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center.

We encourage local Leagues to plan for two unit meetings to review the material and to answer the consensus questions. Please note: **Consensus deadline is March 1, 2001. Results of your consensus must be in the LWVCO office by that date to be counted in the consensus.**

DISCUSSION LEADER'S OUTLINE

Purpose of the Study: To develop juvenile justice positions that can be used to lobby the Legislature.

- I. Structure—pp.1-4
 - A. Chart—The Colorado Juvenile Justice System
 - Describes what happens to a juvenile from arrest to post sentence release
 - B. Chart—Juvenile Justice Services
 - Describes which governmental departments are responsible for each aspect of the juvenile justice system
 - C. Division of Youth Corrections—Youth Services Centers
 - Locates and identifies the number of beds in the Youth Services Centers around the state
- II. Programs and Services—pp.5-9
 - A. Prevention and Intervention Programs
 - 1. A look at harsh methods and whether they work to deter crime among juveniles
 - 2. Characteristics of programs that work
 - 3. Four observations about prevention programs
 - 4. Funding for prevention programs
 - 5. Programs that work
 - B. Restorative Justice Programs
 - 1. Allows offenders to make amends to their victims
 - 2. Heals violations to the community and the victim
 - 3. Colorado communities implementing the program
 - C. Services for Female Delinquents
 - 1. Increased numbers of female offenders
 - 2. Lack of facilities for females
 - 3. Issues that delinquent girls face
 - 4. Types of programs available for girls
 - D. Juveniles Charged as Adults
 - 1. Which juveniles are charged as adults
 - 2. What happens to those charged and sentenced as adults
 - a. Incarceration in an adult prison
 - b. YOS sentence—costs, numbers, and recidivism rates
 - E. Mental Health Services in Division of Youth Corrections
 - 1. Numbers with serious mental health needs
 - 2. Pilot programs that deal with mental health needs
 - 3. Number of beds for mental health problems
 - F. Community Assessment Centers
 - 1. Reason for community assessment centers
 - 2. How assessment centers impact juveniles' lives
 - 3. Goals of assessment centers
- III. Critical Issues in Juvenile Justice System—pp. 10-11
 - A. DYC Concerns
 - 1. Population Growth
 - 2. Privatization
 - 3. Mental Health population
 - 4. Growth in female population
 - 5. Need for a new data system
 - B. LWVCO Committee Concerns
 - 1. Population Growth
 - 2. Privatization
 - 3. Mental Health Population

4. Growth in female population
5. Need for a new data system
6. Fragmented system
7. Overrepresentation of minorities
8. Juveniles are behind in school
9. Transition services are missing or minimal

C. Discussion Questions

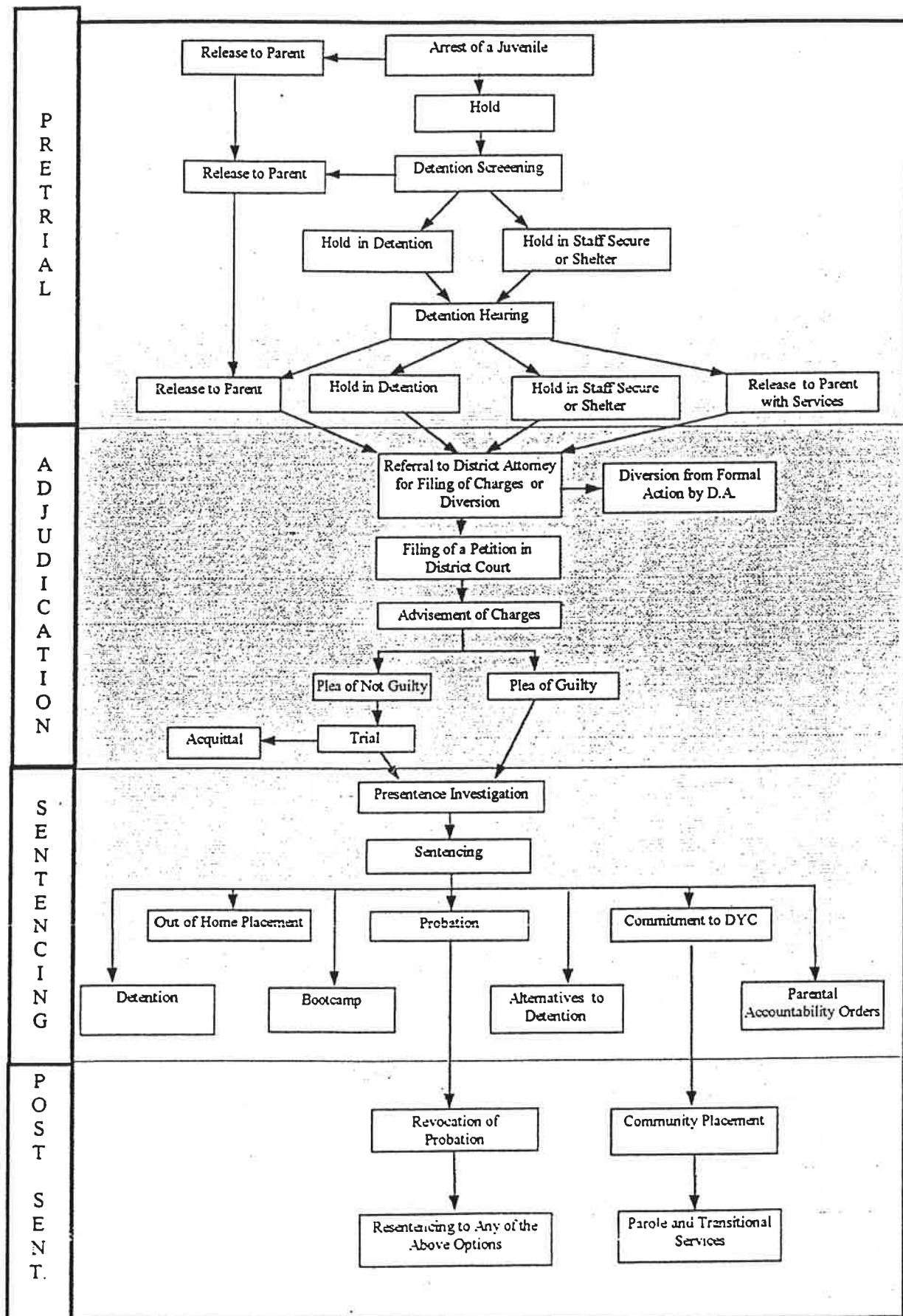
IV. Survey Results—pp. 12-14

- A. 10 Leagues responded
- B. Answers to questions
- C. Additional comments from around the state

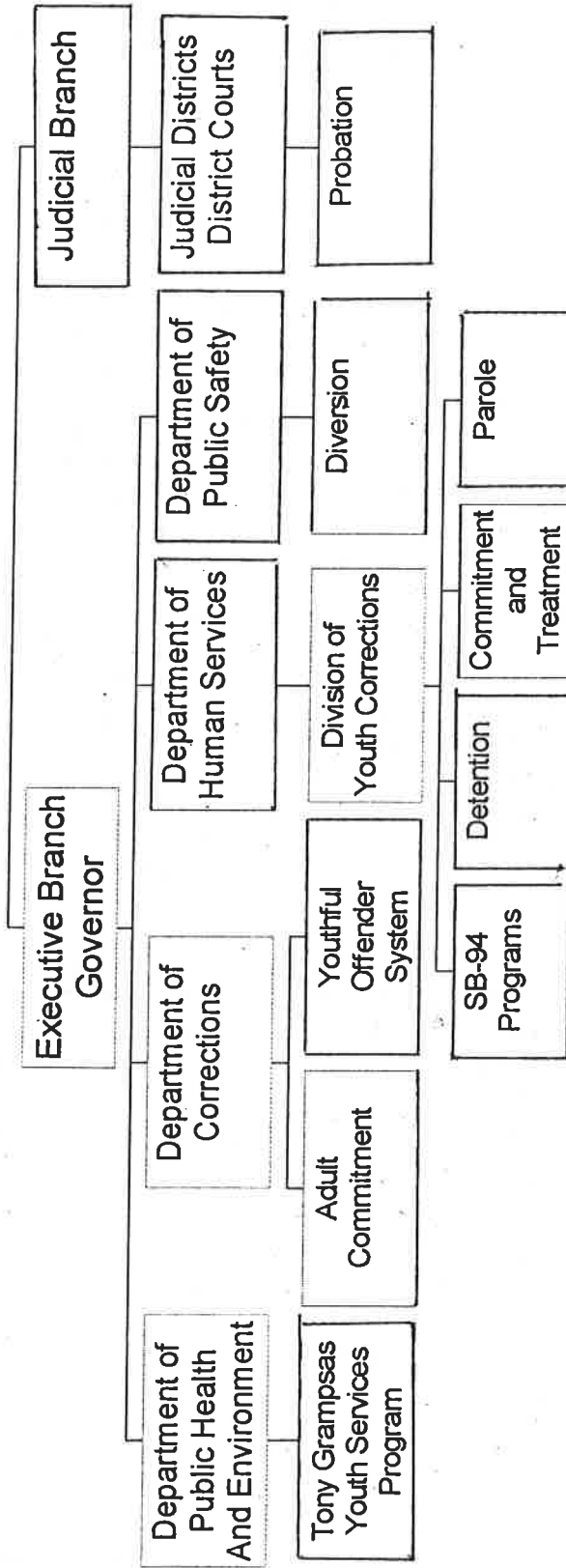
V. Consensus questions

- A. Deadline for receipt of answers—March 1, 2001
- B. Recorder sheet explanation

The Colorado Juvenile Justice System



Juvenile Justice Services



**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF YOUTH CORRECTIONS
YOUTH SERVICES CENTERS ***

ALL REGIONS

	<u># of Beds</u>
Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center -- state operated -- long-term commitment	162
Teen Quest, located at Mount View-- contracted -- <u>program for females</u>	20
(Ridgeview Youth Services Ctr. --opening about 7/ 2001 -- contracted --commitment for 500)	

DENVER REGION:

Gilliam Youth Services Center -- state operated --detention	78
Mount View Youth Services Center - state operated - commitment, detention, & orientation	28
Dahlia Center -- contracted -- detention	24
Fillmore Center (Youthtrack, Inc.) -- contracted -- detention	9
Youthtrack, Inc. - at Lookout Mtn YSC -contracted - commitment - orientation program, also other Metro regions and Southern	52
Youthtrack, Inc. (Alliance) - contracted - commitment - also Metro regions & Southern - RTC **	14
Youthtrack, Inc. (Excel) - contracted - commitment - also Metro regions - RTC	13
Third Way Center - contracted - commitment - also Central - RTC	12
Synergy/Threshold/Family - contracted , U of C Health Sciences Ctr. - commitment - also Metro regions and Southern - RTC	8
Youthtrack, Inc., Foothills - located at Mount View - contracted - commitment - transition - also other Metro regions	25
Youthtrack Inc, (PAL) - Aurora - contracted - transition - also other Metro regions	8
Court House - at Fort Logan - contracted - <u>females</u> - RTC	8

CENTRAL REGION

Marvin Foote Youth Services Center -- state operated --detention/commitment	103
Marvin Foote Youth Services Center-- state operated - assessment	15
Mount View Youth Services Center -state operated - commitment	65
Mount View Youth Services Center - Jefferson County assessment	13
Jefferson Hills - Lakewood - contracted - commitment - males & <u>females</u> - also for Denver, NE, Southern- RTC	49
Jefferson Hills - Aurora - contracted - commitment - also for Denver, NE, Southern - males & <u>females</u> - RTC	37
Centennial Peaks - Louisville -contracted - commitment - also for Metro regions - RTC	26
Mountain Star - at Fort Logan Mental Health Inst. - contracted - commitment - also for other Metro regions	5
Adventures in Change - Sheridan & Denver - contracted - RTC	13
Youthtrack, Inc. (Jeffco) - contracted - RTC	15

NORTHEAST REGION

Platt Valley Youth Services Center - Greeley -- state operated - detention	66
Platt Valley Youth Services Center - Greeley - state operated - commitment - assessment	66
Adams Youth Services Center - Brighton - state operated - detention	24
Midway Shelter - Greeley - contracted - detention	10
Turning Point Center for Youth and Families - Fort Collins- contracted - commitment - RTC	12

WESTERN REGION

Grand Mesa Youth Services Center - Grand Junction - state operated - detention/commitment & assessment	64
Robert DeNier Youth Services Center - Durango - contracted - detention/commitment - males & females	28
Hilltop House Job Corps - contracted - commitment	6
Hilltop Health Services - Grand Junction - contracted - detention/commitment - RTC	11
Youthtrack, Inc. - Grand Junction - contracted - commitment - RTC	13
Colorado West - Glenwood Springs - contracted - detention/commitment - RTC	16

SOUTHERN REGION

Zebulon Pike Youth Services Center - Colorado Springs - state operated - commitment	40
Spring Creek Youth Services Center - Colorado Springs - state operated - detention	100
Spring Creek Youth Services Center - Colorado Springs - state operated - commitment - assessment	10
Pueblo Youth Services Center - state operated - detention	39
Lyle Alzado Youth Home - Pueblo - contracted - commitment - RTC	9
Youthtrack, Inc. (San Luis Valley) - Alamosa - contracted - commitment - RTC	5
Youthtrack, Inc. - Colorado Springs - contracted - commitment - RTC	12
El Pueblo Boys Ranch - Pueblo - contracted - commitment - RTC	14
Lathrop Park Youthtrack Program - Walsenburg - contracted - commitment - also Denver, Northeast, and Central	31
Dale House - Colorado Springs - contracted - committed - transition to independence	10
Rebound - Grand Prairie - Ramah - contracted - commitment - regimented training program - also Denver	35

* The Division of Youth Corrections also places juveniles out of state in programs in Utah, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Iowa, and South Dakota. Currently these placements total to 173 beds

** RTC = Residential Treatment Center. These are facilities that provide mental health services and/or drug/alcohol treatment, treatment for sex offenders.

- Included are all facilities that have 8 or more beds.

--Data taken from DYC Budget Hearing Report, 1/10/2000; and DYC presentation to Colorado Legislature's Joint Finance Committee meeting, 2/1/2000.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE BRIEFINGS

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Today there is a great demand for violence and crime prevention programs. Recent national surveys show that more than 50% of those responding viewed violence and crime as a larger problem than unemployment, homelessness, health care, poverty, or the high cost of living. Crime prevention or control methods, which have been employed at both, the national and state levels, include:

1. Trying youth offenders as adults;
2. Legislating new gun control policies at both state and national levels;
3. Using boot camps or other shock programs to instill respect for authority and discipline;
4. Sentencing offenders to longer sentences by implementing the "three strikes" law;
5. Creating community-police partnerships to deal with crime, violence and drug abuse.

Of these strategies, numbers one, three and four are merely reactive, while two and five are more preventive.

According to Del Elliott of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence in Boulder, there is no research evidence that programs calling for more harsh punishment are more effective than treating juveniles in more traditional ways. Rather, available evidence suggests that juveniles charged as adults spend more time in pre-trial detention, are subjected to racial bias when determinations are made about which youths to transfer to the adult system, are less likely to receive treatment while in custody, and are at an increased risk of re-offending once released from custody. Three-strike laws are not only expensive, but they also appear to increase the risk of serious violence on the third arrest. Research evidence on the effectiveness of gun control legislation and community policing programs as preventive measures is inconclusive and limited at this time.

There are programs that seem to work. Programs that modify or enhance personal and social skills like problem-solving, moral reasoning, decision-making, self-control, and academic or job-related skills are effective when they are well-implemented and high quality programs. Programs that focus on family relationships and parenting are quite effective. Those programs that are most effective deal not only with the individual at risk but also with internal family dynamics and the family's involvement in the school, neighborhood and with the child's peer group. School based programs that focus on problem solving, competence building and resistance training are more effective. Community-based programs that work include police patrols in community, mentoring programs, and violence prevention programs.

Four important observations must be made about prevention programs. First, some community-based programs that were effective worked equally well in the correctional setting. Location of the program did not seem to be a critical factor. Second, the most effective programs were comprehensive and had multi-component and multi-context interventions. Third, very few of the studies had long term evaluations of the participants after they left the program. Evaluations that were done often showed that participants did not retain the positive effects after returning to their old friends, their families, and their neighborhoods. Sustainability of deterrent effects is problematic especially when the program was residential or institutional based. Fourth, the deterrent effects of even successful programs are generally modest—reducing repeat offending by about 10-20%.

Since 1995 Colorado has had a state-funded program, the Tony Gramscas Youth Services Program (TYGS) for youth crime prevention and intervention. Funding comes from state general funds, matching funds, and in-kind contributions from local sources. TGYS is administered by the newly created Division of Prevention and Intervention Services for Children and Youth in the Department of Public Health and Environment.

The program provides grants to community-based prevention and intervention programs throughout the state. In FY 1999-00 the TGYS awarded grants totaling \$7.9 million to 199 programs, 26% of which were early education programs. Grants also went to programs involving education, recreation, employment assistance, gang intervention, mentoring, and substance abuse counseling.

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS THAT WORK

Successful programs that meet scientific standards of proven program effectiveness in reducing adolescent violent crime, aggression, and substance abuse as identified by Del Elliott at the Center for the Study of Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder are:

- **Prenatal and Infancy Nurse Home Visitation** is a program that sends nurses into homes of at-risk pregnant women bearing their first child. Home visits promote the health of the mother and child, promote the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and provide support and parenting advice for the mother. (Prenatal to 2 years old)
- **Bullying Prevention Program** is a school-based program designed to reduce victim/bully problems among primary and secondary school children. Addresses incidents from teasing and taunting to intimidation and physical violence. Attempts to restructure school environment to reduce opportunities to bully and rewards for that negative behavior. (Elementary and secondary school)
- **Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies** is a school-based prevention program for elementary school children, which promotes emotional and social competence, including understanding, expressing and controlling emotions. (Multi-year elementary school)
- **Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America** is a mentoring program which serves children who are 6-18-years-old from disadvantaged, single parent homes. Provides children with a consistent, stable mentoring relationship. Mentors meet with youth at least three times/month for three to five hours. (Youth 6-18)
- **Quantum Opportunities** is an educational incentives program for disadvantaged teenagers. Provides sustained educational, developmental and service activities with a peer-group and a caring adult during high school. Helps at risk youth prepare to graduate from high school and to attend college by improving their academic skills. (High school years)
- **Multisystemic Therapy (MST)** targets specific factors in a youth's environment that contributes to anti-social behavior. This is an intensive, short-term program conducted by therapists.
- **Functional Family Therapy (FFT)** is a family treatment program to motivate youth and their families to change problem behaviors.
- **The Midwestern Prevention Project** is a community-based program designed to stop youth in junior and middle school from using tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. Program works over a 5-year period to combat drug use in the community. (Junior high and middle school students)
- **Life Skills Training** is a 3-year prevention program that targets alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use by giving students general life skills and resistance skills training. (Junior high and middle school students)
- **Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care** is an effective alternative to residential treatment for adolescents who are chronically delinquent and anti-social. Youth are placed in well-supervised foster families for 6 to 9 months where they undergo weekly individualized therapy. At the same time, parents receive behavior management techniques to use when the children are returned to their homes.

Most of the successful programs involve long-term (2-5 years), intense intervention. Successful programs are not cheap, but they are cost effective. Even the most effective programs have some failures (30-40% success rate). Some interventions (other than those listed above) were found to have harmful effects. Programs must, therefore be evaluated and implemented correctly. It is important to replicate successful programs correctly to protect our children and youth. It is also important to note that there may be other successful programs, but at this point, because of the lack of adequate funding, evaluation has not been possible and therefore, the programs' effectiveness has not been proven

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Restorative justice is a concept that defines crime as harm rather than as an offense against the state. It seeks to employ problem-solving methods for the victims and for the offender by acknowledging to the victims and the community the offender's responsibility for the crime. It offers opportunities for offenders to make amends to victims and to the community while receiving support for changing their lives to become responsible members of the community. The principles of restorative justice were incorporated into the Children's Code and local SB 94 programs in 1999. Additionally, state juvenile justice agencies were authorized to seek funds for establishing restorative justice programs.

According to the DYC 2000 report to the legislative joint justice committees, restorative justice has been included in the Department's vision statement. Restorative justice focuses on victim's rights and returning the offender to the community as methods of achieving justice.

Restorative justice tries to heal violations of people rather than merely punish violations of the law. This goal is achieved through a variety of programs in use throughout Colorado. In 1998 the Probation Service Office of Colorado Judicial Branch adopted a vision of restorative justice and urged each of the 22 probation departments to implement restorative justice measures. This spurred communities such as Fort Collins, Greeley, Durango, Boulder, Alamosa, Pueblo, Loveland, Grand Junction and Colorado Springs to divert more cases to victim-offender mediation, family group conferences, or circles in community settings. When an offender has admitted responsibility, victim and offender have reached an agreement about amends and the contract is completed, the case can be dismissed.

SERVICES FOR FEMALE DELINQUENTS

During 1998-99, 18% of the average daily population in detention facilities was female and 11% of the committed population was female—a significant increase from earlier years. The growth in the female population in detention and commitment centers is projected to continue through the first five years of the 21st century. At present, there are not enough facilities for females in the state system, and even with the addition of a planned 40-bed facility on the Mount View campus, services for females will lag behind. Teen-Quest, a 20 bed contracted facility located at Mount View Youth Services Center, has begun to deal with the gender-specific issues of females and has designed programs especially for girls. Girls there range from 14-18 and their average length of stay is 9 months. Many of the girls have been involved in incidents of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. A significant majority has substance abuse problems. Girls placed here have a history of chronic runaway behavior and/or have failed in out-of-home placements. Teen Quest provides a variety of therapy groups that address gender specific issues. Groups focus on self-advocacy, body image, self-esteem, culture, violence against women, self-confidence, skill building, healthy relationships, leadership strengths, managing boundaries, assertiveness, goal setting, assessing values, and empowerment. The primary goal of Teen Quest is to develop relationship skills that allow the girls to succeed in therapy.

JUVENILES CHARGED AS ADULTS

Under current Colorado law, juveniles may be charged and sentenced as adults if a serious crime is involved, particularly a crime of violence. In order to charge a 12 or 13 year old, the District Attorney must petition the juvenile court to transfer the case to the adult court. The judge makes the decision based on the best interests of the community and the juvenile. The decision about whether to charge 14 through 17 year olds in adult court is made by the district attorney. This direct file procedure is the more commonly used one for charging a juvenile as an adult.

If a 12 or 13 year-old is sentenced as an adult, the Department of Corrections (DOC) must arrange to have the juvenile housed in a juvenile facility until s/he turns 14, at which time s/he is transferred to an adult facility to complete the sentence.

The DOC typically houses juveniles at the Buena Vista Correctional Facility because it has a number of programs and treatment facilities and a staff more attuned to working with younger inmates. However, in 1997 the DOC reported that 40% of the juveniles were being held in higher custody levels and so had limited access to treatment and education programs.

As of June 2000, there were 27 juveniles in adult correctional facilities in Colorado. The majority of these were males who are 16 and 17 years of age.

If a juvenile is between 14 and 18 years of age and sentenced as an adult, the judge may suspend this sentence on the condition that the juvenile complete a sentence in the Youthful Offender System (YOS) for a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 7 years. This option is not available to certain offenders (e.g., first-degree murderers, sex offenders). If a youth fails to cooperate with the program, the YOS sentence can be revoked and the original sentence to an adult facility is imposed.

The YOS program located in Pueblo begins with a highly regimented boot camp orientation under close security. In later phases and under restricted minimum security, a variety of general educational and vocational programs is offered and a system of earning privileges is introduced. Finally, still under supervision, the juvenile is reintegrated into the community. In September 1999, YOS had 245 juveniles—96.5% were male and 3.5% were female—whose average age was 16.6 years. The ethnic breakdown was 40.4% Hispanic, 30.8% African-American, 25.3% Caucasian, and 3.5% other.

The average cost per inmate per day in the first phase of the program is \$154.69 and in the later phase is \$96.54. This compares to an average cost of \$71.93 in regular adult correctional facilities. Although the program is expensive, it seems to be succeeding. As of February 2000, the recidivism rate for YOS was reported to be 12.1%. (DOC defines recidivism as a return to prison in Colorado on a new conviction or a technical violation within 3 years of release.)

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN NYC

Juveniles with serious mental health needs have become a significant issue for the Division of Youth Corrections (NYC). Figures indicate that 20-25% of the juveniles in NYC have serious mental health problems, and there has been a dramatic increase in the number who are on psychotropic (Ritalin, antidepressants, antipsychotics).

When a juvenile enters detention, trained staff are supposed to do a suicide assessment and an assessment for major mental health problems. If the juvenile has a major mental health problem, a community mental health center is supposed to do a mental health prescreening before the detention hearing. If the prescreening indicates that the juvenile may be mentally ill, the recommendation to the court must be that there be a more extensive evaluation.

Currently there are two pilot programs that address juvenile mental health issues. Grand Mesa Youth Services Center in Grand Junction and Mount View Youth Services Center in Jefferson County partner with their local community mental health centers to provide detention-based screening, assessment, case management, crisis management, and community-based referral, as well as post-detention community-based mental health services.

Committed juveniles are screened by a mental health professional within 30 days after commitment. There are several options for placement of committed juveniles who have serious mental health problems. Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center has 60 beds available, 24 of them in the separate Cypress Unit which treats the most seriously ill juveniles. Lookout Mountain partners with the CU Health Sciences School of Psychiatry to provide a trained mental health staff. A new 20-bed NYC Mental Health unit is scheduled to open in Pueblo in 2002, and there are up to six beds available at both state mental health institutes. In addition, there are beds available in community residential treatment centers (RTC's).

Juveniles with serious mental health problems often stay in secure facilities longer than other juveniles with similar offenses because there are fewer options for community transition for them.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CENTERS

In an effort to find more effective and efficient ways to identify and help juvenile offenders, communities across America are looking at integrated systems for bringing services to these juveniles who are at risk for committing more serious and more violent offenses. The community assessment center (CAC) which brings together services in a timely, cost efficient manner is one method of integrating services.

The United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has identified four key factors, which have the potential to impact the lives of youth in a positive manner. The key elements are:

1. A single point of entry which helps both at-risk and delinquent youth and their families by bringing the services of several agencies together creating a "one-stop shop" to meet their needs.
2. Immediate and comprehensive assessment brings together staff from diverse groups (juvenile justice, mental health, child welfare) to assess the needs of the juvenile clients and their families.
3. Integrated case management supervised by a case manager or case management team allows managers to develop individualized programs for the youth, which include intervention from several sources as well as establishing short and long-term goals.
4. A comprehensive and integrated management information system is necessary to effectively monitor a client's progress in the program. Assessment centers must have an internal data-base that can be used to manage the information on the youth that it serves.

Although the idea of community assessment centers appears to be promising, full evaluations have not been done to determine the impact on the clients. The goal of the assessment center is not to bring more youth into the system, but rather to improve service delivery and, as a result, reduce the number of juveniles who enter or reenter the juvenile justice system.

DIVISION OF YOUTH CORRECTIONS CRITICAL ISSUES, FY 1998-99 REPORT

The following items were listed as critical issues in the DYC FY 1998-1999 report to the joint legislative justice committees meeting on February 1, 2000.

- I. Population growth: because the juvenile population in Colorado is growing, projections are that the number of juveniles in detention and commitment will grow to a point where present beds in residential facilities will not be enough.
- II. Privatization: reliance upon the private sector; need for better contract management and performance contracting.
- III. Mental health population: of 390 beds for mental health services, 50 were state operated, 340 in privately operated residential treatment centers.
- IV. Growth in female population: need for gender-specific programs.
- V. Need for a new data system with improved outcome and performance measures: client-level measures, program-level measures, and DYC-level measures. Client measures should include pre-/post-tests, treatment gains, reintegration activities, and discharge status. Program measures should include critical incidents (e.g. escapes, assaults, or suicide attempts), client and community safety, outcomes of clients served, monitoring reports, and audit findings. Division measures should include program outcomes, client outcomes, community safety and recidivism.

LWVCO CONCERNS RE THE STATE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM, 2000

The following items are considered to be of concern to members of the LWVCO Juvenile Justice Committee, after their study of the state juvenile justice system and reports from local leagues. (Underlined items are the same as those in the DYC issues listing.)

- I. Population growth: because the juvenile population in Colorado is growing, projections are that the number of juveniles in detention and commitment will grow to a point where present beds in residential facilities will not be enough.

The addition of the 500-bed Ridgeview Youth Services Center, projected to open in July, 2001, will help to accommodate commitments and will allow the return of juveniles now housed in out-of-state private facilities. There is concern, however, that detention facilities will remain inadequate. For example, Gilliam detention center in Denver is now under a court-ordered cap and operates from day to day on a release-less-serious to make-space-for-more-serious cases. This court-ordered cap has put increased pressure on other detention facilities in the metro area. It is interesting to note that from 1991 to 1998, the number of new commitments as a percentage of the state's juvenile population has risen only .02%, from .15% to .17%. The use of detention, however, has risen at a greater rate.

- II. Privatization: It is of concern to the LWVCO committee that such a high percentage of facilities are private, given recent reports of the lack of supervision of private foster homes and the apparent lack of appropriate evaluation of private as well as public programs.

III. Mental health population: of 390 beds for mental health services, 50 were state operated, 340 in privately operated residential treatment centers. By many accounts, at least 25% of the juveniles detained or committed have relatively serious mental health problems. It is not clear that all the private residential treatment centers have programs that really treat the problems, and program supervision and evaluation seem to be limited, at best. Furthermore, there generally are not treatment programs in the detention centers, where some juveniles spend much longer time than the average 15 days (those who are awaiting trial or placement, etc.).

- IV. Growth in female population and need for gender-specific programs: Although girls represent only a small portion of the juvenile justice population, their numbers are growing at a faster rate than for males, and girls in the system are often seen as suffering from and needing treatment for post-traumatic shock syndrome (e.g., from sexual abuse).

V. Need for a new data system with improved outcome and performance measures: client-level measures, program-level measures, and DYC-level measures. Client measures should include pre-/post-tests, treatment gains, reintegration activities, and discharge status. Program measures should include critical incidents (e.g. escapes, assaults, or suicide attempts), client and community safety, outcomes of clients served, monitoring reports, and

audit findings. Division measures should include program outcomes, client outcomes, community safety and recidivism. In general, LWVCO committee members are strongly in favor of adequate record-keeping and evaluations of treatment and programs. Without these measures, there is no way to know what is working, what might be damaging, what should be changed, etc.

VI. The system is fragmented; needed information is not always shared.

VII. Minorities represent a higher percentage in the juvenile justice system population than their percentage in the general population

VIII. On average, juveniles are about four year behind in school when they enter NYC facilities, and it is estimated that many are learning disabled in various ways.

IX. Transition services to reintegrate the juvenile into the community are often lacking or minimal, yet they are critical to prevent recidivism.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What problems/issues in the juvenile justice system stand out for you as most in need of immediate attention?
2. What additional concerns do you have about dealing with youthful offenders?
3. Are there other areas of the juvenile justice system you would like to see studied?

LWVCO SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the LWVCO Juvenile Justice study, the state study committee sent out a survey to local Leagues around the state. We received responses from ten local Leagues representing ten judicial districts. From the survey, we learned how juvenile cases are handled in different parts of the state. The following is a compilation of the surveys.

1. *What happens to juveniles who violate municipal or county ordinances in your community? To those who violate state laws? Who tries them?* See page one of the every member material for a discussion of what happens to juveniles who violate municipal or county ordinances.
2. *How are judges assigned to try juvenile cases? Are they assigned for a period of time or do they just draw cases randomly?* In most judicial districts, judges are assigned on a rotating basis—usually for a two-year period. In some districts, a judge may request juvenile cases. Many districts use a magistrate (a judge's assistant who is appointed not elected) to hear juvenile cases, except in those cases where the juvenile is tried as an adult or those juveniles who have jury trials. In one district, cases are assigned randomly unless a juvenile has had previous court appearances, in which case, s/he continues to see the same judge until s/he becomes an adult.
3. *Do you have a juvenile detention center in your community? If not, where are juveniles sent if they are sentenced to detention?* Nearly all of the communities reporting had detention centers. A few of the smaller counties' juveniles were sent to nearby counties to detention centers there. Some juveniles are still sent to detention centers that are quite a distance from home. There has been improvement, however, with the recent opening of new detention centers.
4. *Does your judicial district offer a juvenile diversion program? How does it work?* Every county that responded reported having diversion programs. To qualify for diversion, a youth must admit involvement, have no prior convictions, and the offense must be non-violent. Juveniles may be referred to diversion programs in various ways. Some counties allow referral by the police, while others require the district attorney or a magistrate to refer the juvenile to diversion programs. Diversion usually lasts 6 months—some counties can renew that time for another six months and in one county, the diversion program can last as long as 18 months. El Paso County has a specialized diversion program for sexual offenders, which requires 2 years of therapy.

Diversion programs, often funded with SB94 funds, keep kids out of court. Some judicial districts require the kids to live at home, while others require monthly meetings of both parents and the kids with program coordinators for progress reports. Diversion programs vary. Some types included are: community service, restitution, mental health therapy, life skills, victim-offender mediation, letter of apology, fines, school performance requirements, victim empathy programs, anger management classes, mentoring programs, and curfews.

5. *Do judges in your district consider a YOS (Youthful Offender Service) sentence for juveniles tried as adults? If not, why not?* Most judicial districts consider Youthful Offender System sentences for those youths that are being tried as adults. Most reported that they see very few offenders who fall into this category. Some judges like the option because it keeps youth from being housed with adults.
6. *What is your community doing to implement restorative justice for juvenile offenses?* The survey reported that most communities are enthusiastic about restorative justice. Restorative justice finds ways to help offenders to repair the loss they have caused both to the victim and to the community. Principles of restorative justice are incorporated whenever possible. Community service, victim empathy sessions, mediation sessions and victim impact statements are all ways that restorative justice is implemented in communities throughout Colorado. Mediation has proven to be an effective tool with juveniles. Adams County uses restorative justice principles for cases that involve property crimes and where there is consent by the victim and the offender.

7. *Does your community have a juvenile assessment center?* Currently, most of the counties reported they have or are in the process of setting up a juvenile assessment center. Some counties have a team or a person who does assessments but there is not a specific center where this happens. Those places reporting having assessment centers often described quicker processing of the youth.

Several surveys contained comments, which the committee felt gave a picture of the juvenile justice system in Colorado.

Jan DeWitt, director of The Hub—Larimer County's juvenile assessment center: "The system lacks a good juvenile assessment tool. Dedicated funding is lacking for juvenile assessment—much time is spent raising funds. If we are concerned community citizens, make certain local budgets always have a line item for juvenile assessment."

Pamela Linden from Platte Valley Youth Center in Greeley: "Kids are getting younger. The average age is 16. Kids can come to the Center at age 10. Often this place is much better than the home the youth comes from."

Judge Ballin from Boulder, district judge in the 20th Judicial District: "Mentally ill juveniles are a huge shame, maybe up to 25% are mentally ill." She has concerns about solitary confinement.

Joe Higgins, Director of Partners, Inc., Grand Junction: Judges from 21st Judicial District requested research be done to determine minority overrepresentation in 1993 and 1994 in the 21st Judicial District. Minority juveniles made up 13% of population; 18% of arrests; 25% probation; and 60% in lock up. Mesa County Minority Overrepresentation Committee started 3 years ago with grants for two bilingual staff people to go to court hearings for children and walk the families through the system and to be minority advocates. In 1999 minorities represented 18% of the population; 20% of arrests; 25% of probation; and 20% of lock up.

Dan Robinson, Director of the Grand Mesa Youth Services Center in Grand Junction: "Eighty percent of beds in the state are private. It's the government's job to deprive people of their freedom and not private industry. Conscience is taken away when privatization happens and the end goal is profit. Economics can be a hard driver and not have the best interests of the juveniles in mind when the decision-making processes occur. Local and state run facilities are receiving more mental health patients because the private institutions will not accept sex offenders or mental health patients. This is more costly for the state."

Mr. Robinson would like to see skill-building models in detention facilities—skills to get jobs. Without skills, juveniles often re-offend. Youth need some type of support system outside of the facility. They need a "safety net" or support system for 90 days or longer after they have been released. Often this component is missing or lacking.

Kelly Bowen, Psychiatric Case Manager and Therapist, Grand Junction: "It is critical that we all understand the importance of prevention, early identification and quick intervention when addressing the scope of juvenile justice. There is research that shows us situations, individual and family risk factors early in a child's life that can lead to the increased likelihood of antisocial behavior—abuse and neglect, severed family ties, mental health and substance abuse issues, poverty, lack of access to resources, etc. There is also research that indicates a child's brain and development can be permanently altered by exposure to these risk factors."

Thank you to the following Leagues who returned their surveys—Adams County, Arapahoe County, Archuleta County, Boulder Valley, Delta, Denver, Larimer County, Mesa County, Pike's Peak, and Pueblo. Your assistance was invaluable.

Comments from some of the local Leagues include:

Leaguers from Estes Park, Fort Collins, and Greeley/Weld were impressed with the positive, up-beat attitude of the staff of the facilities that they visited. They also remarked about the well-supplied computer room and library at The Platte Valley Detention Center in Greeley.

The Delta League reported that the Grand Mesa Youth Center is overcrowded.

JUVENILE JUSTICE STUDY
RECORDER SHEET

LWVCO
September, 2000

Each local League must **compile** the results of its consensus questions and send the results to the LWVCO office. Mail the completed consensus questionnaire after local Board approval by March 1, 2001. (Note: It must be in the office by that date to count in the consensus.) Keep a copy for your files.

Please include minority opinions. One group's minority may match another group's majority. Also, include the answers to the discussion questions on page 11 for the committee's information.

League _____

Recorder _____ Phone _____

Number of League members participating in consensus _____

Type of meeting: Unit _____ General _____ Other _____

Comments about the briefing and briefing materials:

Completed recorder sheet and consensus questionnaire must be in the LWVCO office by March 1, 2001.
League of Women Voters of Colorado
Attn: Juvenile Justice Committee
1410 Grant Street, B-204
Denver, Co 80203

Questions: Call Patty Schoedler 303-979-4782 or Carla Bennett 303-757-2930.

LWVCO JUVENILE JUSTICE CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

Please choose and rank the following answers, with #1 indicating the most important.

1. Should the League of Women Voters of Colorado support juvenile justice policies that promote:

- ☐ the rehabilitation, safety, and well being of the offender
- ☐ the protection of the community
- ☐ the juvenile's understanding of the harm done and therefore, the responsibility to make amends to the victim and the community
- ☐ an emphasis on alternatives to detention or commitment
- ☐ the juvenile's successful re-entry into the community
- ☐ other _____

Check as many as apply.

2. The features that the League believes a juvenile justice system should include are:

- ☐ early assessment of the needs of juveniles
- ☐ adequate funding
- ☐ appropriately trained staff
- ☐ readily available vocational and educational services
- ☐ adequate mental health and counseling services
- ☐ family involvement
- ☐ fair and impartial treatment of all offenders
- ☐ age and gender appropriate programs designed to meet the needs of the offender
- ☐ community involvement
- ☐ prevention programs
- ☐ early intervention programs
- ☐ frequent and thorough oversight of staff, programs, and facilities both public and private
- ☐ other _____

3. Should juveniles be charged and sentenced as adults?