

# The Compiler

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Fall 1997

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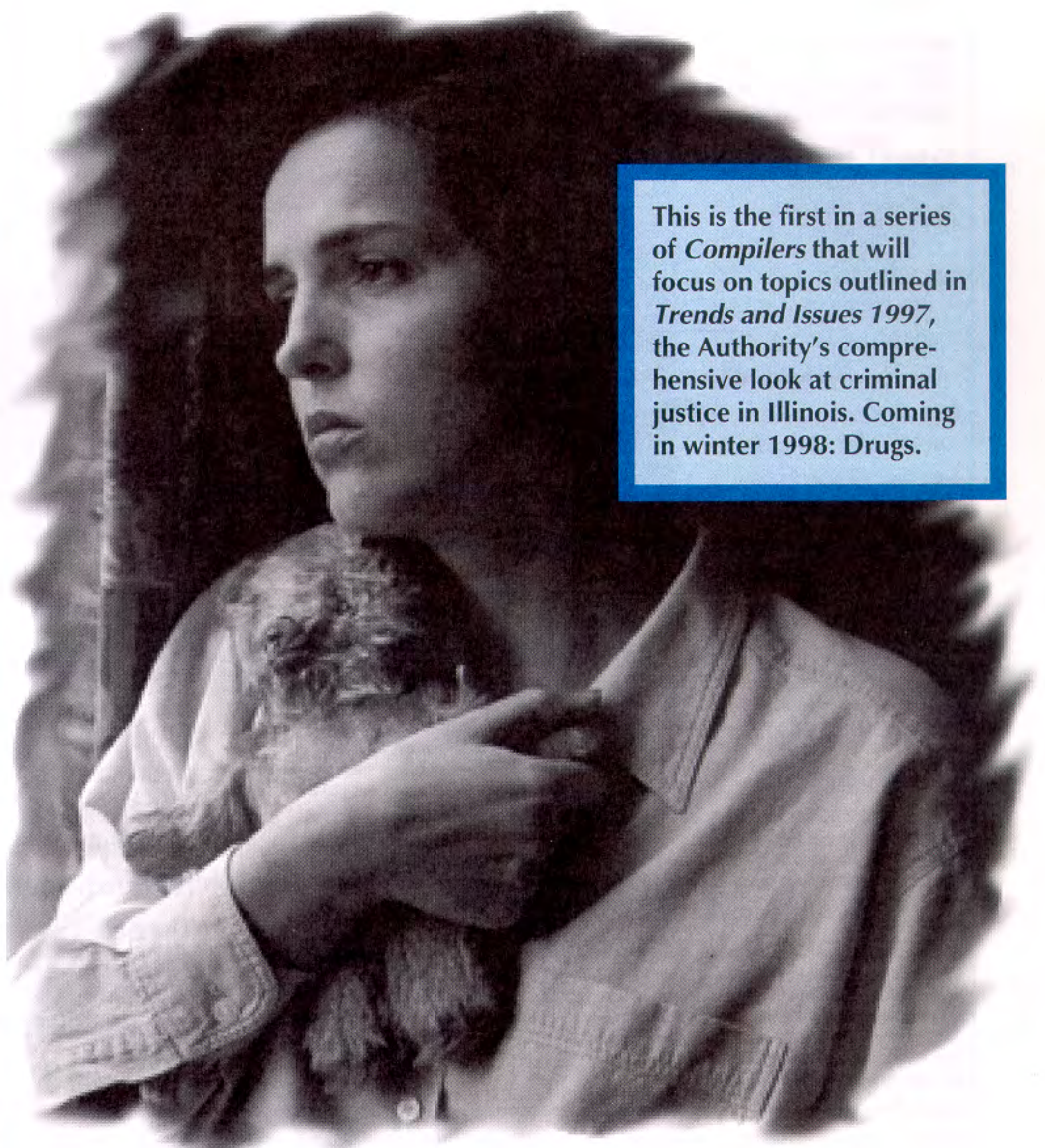
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## Responding to juvenile crime



This is the first in a series of *Compilers* that will focus on topics outlined in *Trends and Issues 1997*, the Authority's comprehensive look at criminal justice in Illinois. Coming in winter 1998: Drugs.

THE COMPILER is published by authority of the State of Illinois by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

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Created in 1983, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice. The Authority works to enhance the information tools and management resources of state and local criminal justice agencies, and it serves as a statewide forum for criminal justice coordination, planning and problem solving. It also is responsible for research, information systems development, and administration of federal anti-crime funds. The Authority's specific powers and duties are spelled out in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Act [20 ILCS 3930/1 et seq.].

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is governed by a 15-member board of state and local leaders from the criminal justice system, plus experts from the private sector. Authority members help develop priorities and monitor their progress. The agency's day-to-day work is carried out by a full-time professional staff working out of the Authority's Chicago office.

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### Authority begins research using risk factors as indicators of crime and violence

The Authority has begun research aimed toward a more effective long-range planning process that involves examining various risk factors for crime and violence. In addition to traditional measures of crime, the Authority hopes that these risk factors will help identify communities that may be at future risk of serious crime and delinquency problems. Policymakers may then be able to apply this information toward more proactive or preventative measures.

At the Authority's Sept. 5 meeting, staff Research Analyst Tracy Hahn described how the Authority will analyze six risk factors and use them as benchmarks for identifying communities or populations at risk. The Authority's preliminary work in this area focuses on the following six factors that have been cited in research literature as associated with crime and delinquency:

- child abuse and neglect;
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC);
- unemployment;
- substance-affected infants;
- teenage births; and
- high school dropout rates.

Authority staff will conduct a detailed analysis of these factors to determine their relationship with levels of crime and delinquency, and will continue to track these factors over time.

### Criminal justice leaders meet for *Trends and Issues* assembly

On July 8, the Authority hosted a one-day assembly of criminal justice leaders from across Illinois to discuss five important issues culled from *Trends and Issues 1997*, the Authority's comprehensive look at criminal justice in the state. The assembly gave experts from different disciplines the opportunity to discuss these issues and offer guidance on policies and the allocation of resources.

More than 80 people took part in the assembly at the Ramada O'Hare in Rosemont, Ill. The participants broke into small groups to discuss the following topics: juvenile crime and justice; resources for community-based sanctions; aging of the prison population; victims' rights and prosecutors' discretion; and females in the criminal justice system. A brief report summarizing these issues and the discussions is available from the Authority.

### Authority tent popular at state fair

The Authority's tent at the Illinois State Fair was a busy site this year. A 37-foot McGruff the Crime Dog balloon grabbed attention outside, and coloring exercises and safety demonstrations drew big crowds inside.

A table set up by the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, where children colored in paper "STOP violence" signs, was extremely popular. Other activities included a computer

demonstration with local crime statistics, Polaroid snapshots with McGruff, a puppet show, and self-defense demonstrations.

The Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council displayed a recovered stolen vehicle that had been stripped for parts, which attracted fairgoers and helped promote the Park Smart campaign (featured on page 19).



Photo by Kristi Turnbaugh

*Coloring "STOP violence" signs, and a McGruff puppet show were popular features with children at the Authority's state fair tent.*

### **Criminal justice survey completed**

When it comes to workload problems created by violent crimes, domestic violence and child abuse are the top concerns of criminal justice agency heads in Illinois, according to a survey commissioned by the Authority. The "Needs Assessment Survey of Illinois Criminal Justice Agencies" was conducted by the Institute for Law and Justice, Inc., of Alexandria, Va.

The report, completed in June, details the responses of police chiefs, state's attorneys, judges, jail administrators, public defenders, and probation directors to a survey on workload problems and other needs. The institute sent surveys to 1,128 agency heads, and 651 agencies responded.

In general, those responding to the survey indicated that problems with violence have worsened over the last year. As for solutions, most respondents favored a mixture of approaches, including more youth prevention programs, better employment opportunities, and more severe punishments. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Authority. The Authority's August 1997 *On Good Authority* contains a brief overview of the findings.

### **ICASA praises Authority at 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary fete**

The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>. The coalition marked the occasion by acknowledging the contributions of numerous individuals and organizations on behalf of victims of sexual assault. Authority Acting Executive Director Candice Kane and Authority member

Barbara Engel received individual medals for their work. ICASA also acknowledged the work of the Authority as a whole, the Office of the Attorney General, the Illinois State Police, and the Office of the State's Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor, among other honorees.

Formed in 1977 as the Illinois Coalition of Women Against Rape (ICWAR), the coalition over the years has helped change practices in hospitals, police departments, courts, and within the field of psychiatry. The coalition also helped bring about legislation that overhauled sex crime statutes and responded to the needs of rape victims. ICWAR changed its name to the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault in 1984.

From its early days, when the nine rape crisis centers in the original coalition had few resources and relied heavily on dedicated volunteers, the coalition has grown to include 29 sexual assault centers and 14 satellite programs. The work of these centers is being supported this year by \$6.8 million in federal and state grants administered by the Authority and the Illinois Department of Human Services.

### **Authority receives awards from JRSA**

The Authority recently received two awards from the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA). The first, the 1997 Philip Hoke National Award for Excellence in Analysis in the statistical/management report category recognized the Authority for its *Trends and Issues 1997* publication, a comprehensive look at criminal justice in Illinois.

The Authority also received the Award for Technical Excellence for the Research and Analysis Unit's development of an exemplary criminal justice World Wide Web site. The Authority's Research and Analysis site demonstrates a variety of applications, including electronic publishing and the on-line dissemination of criminal justice data. It provides information on current research and evaluation projects, grant opportunities, and crime prevention tips. It also contains an on-line handbook that criminal justice agencies can use to establish a presence on the Internet.

Development of the award-winning site began in early 1996 as part of the Authority's Criminal Justice Web Project, which was partially supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. The goal of the project was to help the criminal justice community harness the Internet by modeling applications that criminal justice agencies could use to establish and maintain a viable presence on the Web.

(Continued on page 17)

**For copies of reports mentioned in *The Compiler*, contact the Authority's Information Clearinghouse at (312) 793-8550.**

# Breaking the cycle of juvenile violence

By Roger Przybylski

Juvenile crime continues to be the focus of much attention in Illinois and across the country. At the national level, Congress has introduced legislation to extend federal jurisdiction to selected crimes committed by juveniles, and several states are currently debating juvenile justice system reforms. In Illinois, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, which would significantly change the way juvenile offenders are handled, will likely be reintroduced in the legislative session in November.

The mounting concern about juvenile crime and the need for juvenile justice reform are due, at least in part, to the surge in juvenile violence that began nearly a decade ago. This surge stands in sharp contrast to the falling violent crime rates that most of the country has experienced in recent years.

## Contradictory trends

Professor James Alan Fox of Northeastern University suggests that the nation is experiencing two crime trends — one for the young and one for the mature — that are moving in opposite directions. From 1990 to 1994, the overall rate of murder in America declined about 4 percent. For this same period, the rate of killing at the hands of adults aged 25 and older declined 18 percent, and that for young adults, aged 18 to 24, rose only 2 percent. However, the rate of murders committed by teenagers aged 14 to 17 jumped 22 percent.

The escalation in youth crime during the past 10 years actually occurred while the population of teenagers was on the

decline. But this demographic trend is about to change. By the year 2005, the number of teens between the ages of 14 and 17 will increase by 20 percent nationwide. (In Illinois, the teenage population is expected to grow more modestly, rising by 20 percent by the year 2010.) As a result, Fox argues, we will likely face a future wave of youth violence that will be even worse than that of the past decade.

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**“Demographics do not have to be our destiny.”**

— *Attorney General Janet Reno*

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Although these demographic projections are cause for concern, the future is far from predetermined. As Attorney General Janet Reno recently stated, “Demographics do not have to be our destiny.” More young people will not mean more violence if the rate of offending can be reduced.

## Precursors of violence

Several studies on juvenile crime and victimization provide valuable new knowledge about the precursors of violence and the steps that must be taken to interrupt the trajectory toward a criminal career. These studies offer new insights about the pathways to delinquency and the cycle of violence that often begins in the home. Taken together, they offer compelling evidence that the best way to influence the rate of offending and reduce

juvenile violence is through a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates both prevention and early intervention.

The National Youth Survey, conducted by the University of Colorado, Center for Violence Prevention, has been studying a nationally representative sample of about 1,700 youths since 1976. The most recent wave of interviews occurred in 1993, when many of the youths were already in their thirties. One of the major findings from the survey is that there is a considerable time lag between the peak age of offending and the peak age for arrest, suggesting that the justice system is intervening too late. The peak age of serious violent offending in the NYS sample was 17, while the age of onset was even younger. In contrast, arrests peaked around the ages of 18 and 19, and arrest rates remained high until age 25.

## Risk factors

The National Research Program on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, has studied large samples of high-risk, inner-city youth in Denver, Pittsburgh, and Rochester, N.Y. The OJJDP-sponsored research found that chronic violent offenders exhibited co-occurring problem behaviors and multiple risk factors, such as dropping out of school and gang membership.

Dropping out of school can have a profound impact on a young person's life. While high-school dropouts experience lower earnings and more unemployment during their work careers, they also are more likely to end up on welfare or in prison than students who complete high school or college.

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*Roger Przybylski was director of the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit from 1994 through September 1997.*

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## Suffering abuse and neglect as a child increases the likelihood of engaging in violent crime by 38 percent.

— *Researcher Cathy Spatz Widom*

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Another important finding from the OJJDP research was that children who were neglected or abused, or who witnessed violence in the home, were more likely to commit violent acts themselves later in life.

This cycle of violence also has been documented in a series of studies sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the National Institute of Mental Health. The research is examining the lives of 1,575 child victims identified in court cases of abuse and neglect dating from 1967 to 1971. By 1994, almost one-half of the victims — most of whom were then in their late twenties and early thirties — had been arrested for some type of offense. Eighteen percent had been arrested for a violent crime.

Cathy Spatz Widom, a researcher from the State University of New York at Albany who has studied extensively the impact of abuse and neglect, has reported that suffering abuse and neglect as a child increases the likelihood of engaging in violent crime by 38 percent. And while the likelihood of later violence is greater for children who experience violence firsthand, neglected children also display an elevated level of violence later in life.

### Prevention and early intervention

It is apparent from each of these studies that reducing juvenile violence requires a multidisciplinary prevention and early intervention effort involving a variety of institutions. Risk-focused approaches to prevention have been successfully used to reduce cardiovascular disease and traffic fatalities, and they hold considerable

promise for reducing juvenile violence. Risk factors can be found not only in the family, but in schools, the community, and the individual and his or her peers. Protective factors that can mediate the impact of risk factors have also been identified. The interaction of risk factors and protective factors explain why some youth succumb to delinquency and others do not. As risk factors are decreased and protective factors enhanced, the likelihood of delinquency and violent offending can be reduced.

Recent research by the Rand Corporation provides compelling evidence that prevention and early intervention efforts not only work, they also can be cost-effective. In its recent study, "Diverting Children from a Life of Crime, Measuring Costs and Benefits," Rand assessed the cost-effectiveness of several prevention strategies, and found that they compared favorably with a high-profile incarceration alternative (California's three strikes law guaranteeing extended sentences for repeat offenders) in terms of serious crime averted per dollar expended. While the estimated crime reductions that were achievable through the additional incarceration of the three strikes law were considerable — about 20 percent — the monetary cost of implementing "three strikes" was approximately \$5.5 billion per year. For less than \$1 billion more per year, Rand reports, parent training and graduation incentives could roughly double the amount of crime reduction.

In light of what we know about the precursors of violent offending, prevention and early intervention programs are critical. The juvenile justice system cannot solve the complex problem of juvenile

violence unilaterally; it cannot make up for the failures of families and the shortcomings of other institutions.

### Breaking the cycle

In Illinois, more than 1.3 million cases of child abuse or neglect were reported to the Department of Children and Family Services between fiscal years 1983 and 1995; the number of cases reported annually has skyrocketed. And although we know that three out of every four state prison inmates did not complete high school, an intolerably high number of children — more than 35,000 — drop out of school in Illinois each year. If we are to have an appreciable impact on violent juvenile offending, the number of children exposed to these risk factors must be reduced. Until we break the cycle of violence that starts in the home, and find ways to keep young people in school, there will always be a pool of individuals predisposed to delinquent behavior.

Reducing juvenile violence requires the coordinated efforts of social service agencies, juvenile justice agencies, schools, and other institutions in both the public and private sectors. Improving public safety requires breaking the cycle of violence and preventing juvenile violence before it occurs. ■

# More states seeing benefits of early intervention and prevention programs

**S**UBSTANTIAL RESEARCH INDICATES that the best programs and policies to prevent juvenile crime are based on a continuum of care that starts early in the child's life and continues through the teens. Studies show that quality early education and care in preschool and beyond help children get better grades and reduce dropout rates. Better education provides access to more employment opportunities, which in turn helps reduce crime.

## Prevention in early childhood

State legislatures are increasingly seeing the advantages of supporting strong early childhood programs. As of 1995, 27 states funded preschools, 14 states supported Head Start programs, and eight states supported both.

For the last several years, **Colorado** has heavily funded early childhood education and care. In 1996, the General Assembly increased funding for at-risk preschools by \$4.2 million to accommodate 1,850 more preschoolers. Increased legislative support means that Colorado serves 8,500 at-risk children across the state. In addition, the legislature allocated \$7 million for violence prevention programs and approved third-year funding for a pilot program for family centers in at-risk communities.

## Child abuse and neglect prevention

Because much research connects child abuse and neglect with juvenile crime, lawmakers are increasingly funding programs aimed at reducing abuse and neglect. The Healthy Start Program, started in **Hawaii** in 1985, focuses on families at risk of child abuse and neglect. Social workers visit new parents at home and provide child care education, as well as health-related services

for infants. Evaluations show substantial decreases in abuse and neglect; only 0.5 percent of program participants reported child abuse or neglect, compared with confirmed abuse and neglect in 2.7 percent of nonparticipating families. Due to Healthy Start's success, the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse launched a national initiative called Healthy Families America to help all states and the District of Columbia develop similar programs.

In 1994, **Tennessee** created a Healthy Start program along with an initiative to provide early child care and education for at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds, and double the number of school-related family centers, among other resources.

## Family preservation programs

At least 21 other states have started comprehensive family preservation programs, including **Michigan**. Its Families First program, started in 1988, provides at-home counseling to families in danger of losing their child to foster care due to abuse and neglect. The program provides four to six weeks of counseling and communication education. Michigan's program reportedly has saved \$55 million in its first three years, and the program costs \$6,000 to \$8,000 less per family than the cost of a year in foster care.

## Sharing information

While youth who commit first-time, less serious offenses have contact with social services and schools, research shows that few of these resources are equipped to handle troubled children and their families. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office in **Minnesota** conducted a study on the extent of communication between child welfare agencies and the juvenile justice system. The study found that most delinquent children younger than age 10 who were referred to social services did

not get the help they needed. In addition, most of these children had contact with other public agencies – 91 percent of the children's families had received Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and 81 percent had a history of child abuse or neglect. Therefore, the researchers decided that the child welfare system could best identify and help these youth, and in 1995, the Minnesota legislature initiated an early intervention program for delinquents younger than 10. The program combines the services of the County Attorney's Office and Children and Family Services, among others.

Experts agree that effective prevention and intervention require that agencies outside the juvenile justice system get involved, and information sharing is a key component. In more than 30 states, laws allow the release of juvenile offenders' names under certain circumstances. For example, **Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Virginia** require law enforcement to notify school officials of students' delinquency. ■

— Kristi Turnbaugh

(Source: National Conference of State Legislatures (1996), "A legislator's guide to comprehensive juvenile justice.")

# After sharp rises, juvenile crime in Illinois stabilizes somewhat

By David Olson, Ph.D.

**M**uch of the recent national attention to juvenile justice can be attributed to increases in juvenile crime and the number of juveniles being processed by the juvenile justice system, particularly during the late 1980s and early 1990s. This article examines the most recent trends in juvenile crime — to determine if the increases which prompted the recent responses and attention has continued.

## Arrests

Like the rest of the country, Illinois experienced a decrease in the overall crime rate during recent years. This trend runs counter to that experienced during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The following analysis is based on data gathered from the Illinois State Police (ISP) and estimates calculated from a sample of law enforcement agencies surveyed by the Authority.

Between 1993 and 1996, Illinois' Index crime rate decreased 3 percent, compared to a 7 percent increase between 1985 and 1992. Similarly, the number of juveniles taken into police custody — particularly for violent, drug and weapon-related offenses — increased dramatically between the mid-1980s and early 1990s, but has since stabilized.

More than 7,600 juveniles were taken into police custody for violent Index offenses — including murder, criminal

sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault — in Illinois during 1995, 4 percent fewer than in 1993. Between 1985 and 1992, however, the number of juveniles taken into police custody for violent Index offenses increased 36 percent.

Similarly, the number of juveniles taken into police custody statewide in Illinois for unlawful use of a weapon decreased 15 percent between 1993 and 1995, but doubled between 1985 and 1992. On the other hand, the number of juveniles taken into police custody for drug violations has continued to increase: up more than 39 percent between 1993 and 1995, and 77 percent between 1985 and 1992.

## Delinquency petitions

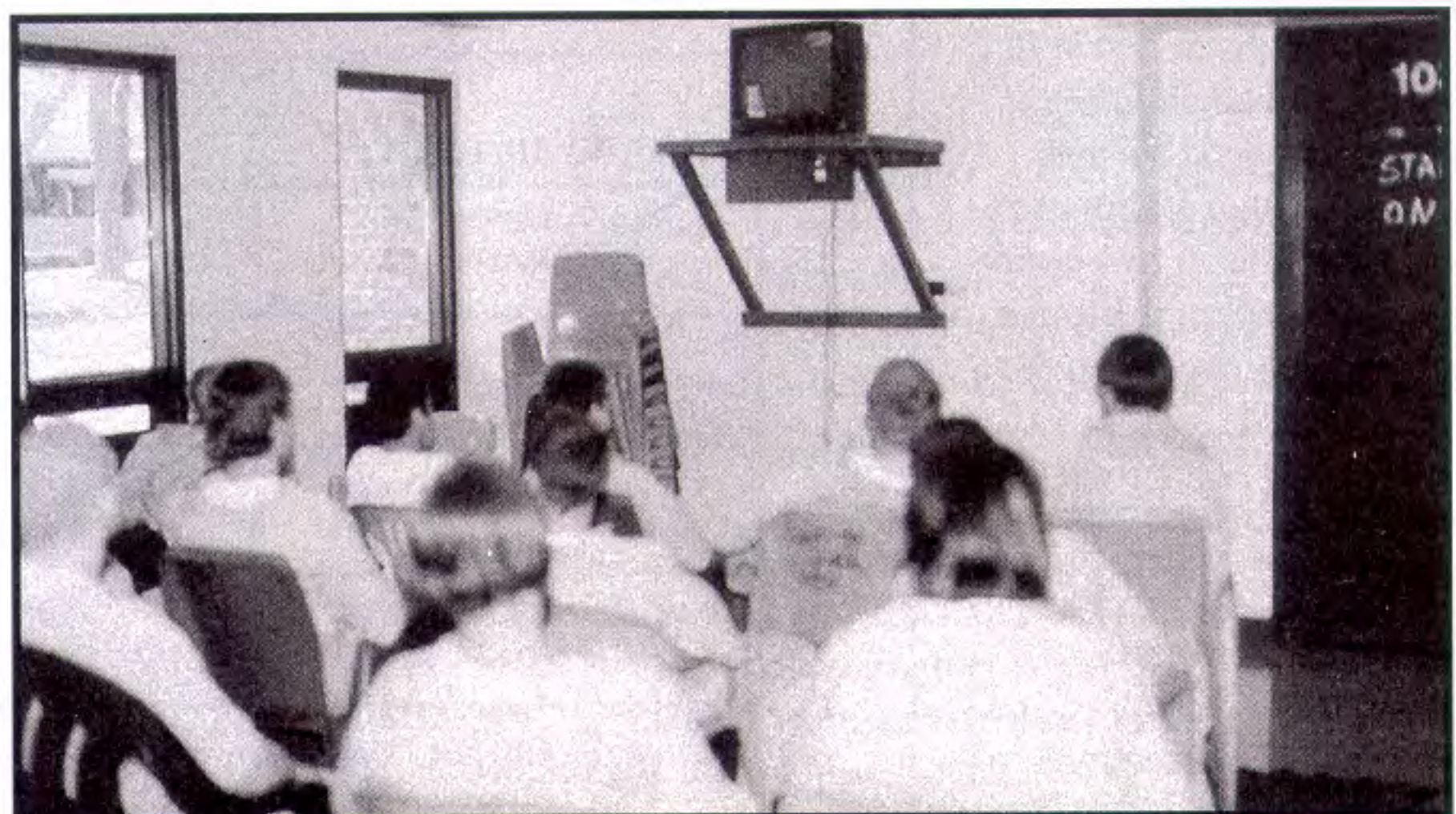
Between 1985 and 1994, the number of juvenile delinquency petitions filed in Illinois increased almost 60 percent. However, from 1994 through 1996 juve-

nile delinquency petition filings statewide decreased 2 percent.

In 1996, for the third year in a row, the number of delinquency petitions filed in Illinois' juvenile courts exceeded 30,000. By comparison, during the early to mid-1980s, the average number of delinquency petitions filed annually was 20,000. As with trends in juveniles taken into police custody, there were dramatic increases in juvenile delinquency petitions filed in Illinois between the mid-1980s and early 1990s.

## Juvenile probation cases

During 1996, for the second year in a row, the number of juvenile probation department cases, including probation, supervision, informal supervision, and others categories, exceeded 17,000. The 11,541 juveniles on probation at year-end 1996 as a result of being adjudicated de-



*Juveniles await processing at IDOC's St. Charles Youth Center*

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*David Olson, until recently a senior research analyst with the Authority, is an assistant professor of criminal justice at Loyola University Chicago.*

linquent was the highest total in Illinois since the early 1980s. During most of the 1980s and early 1990s, the number of juveniles annually supervised on probation as a result of being adjudicated delinquent averaged between 8,000 and 9,000.

Most juveniles supervised on probation in Illinois are male and have been adjudicated for property offenses. Between 1985 and 1991, the number of juveniles on probation in Illinois increased 26 percent, and have continued to increase during recent years. Between 1994 and 1996, the number of active juvenile probation cases in Illinois increased 11 percent.

### Juvenile detention admissions

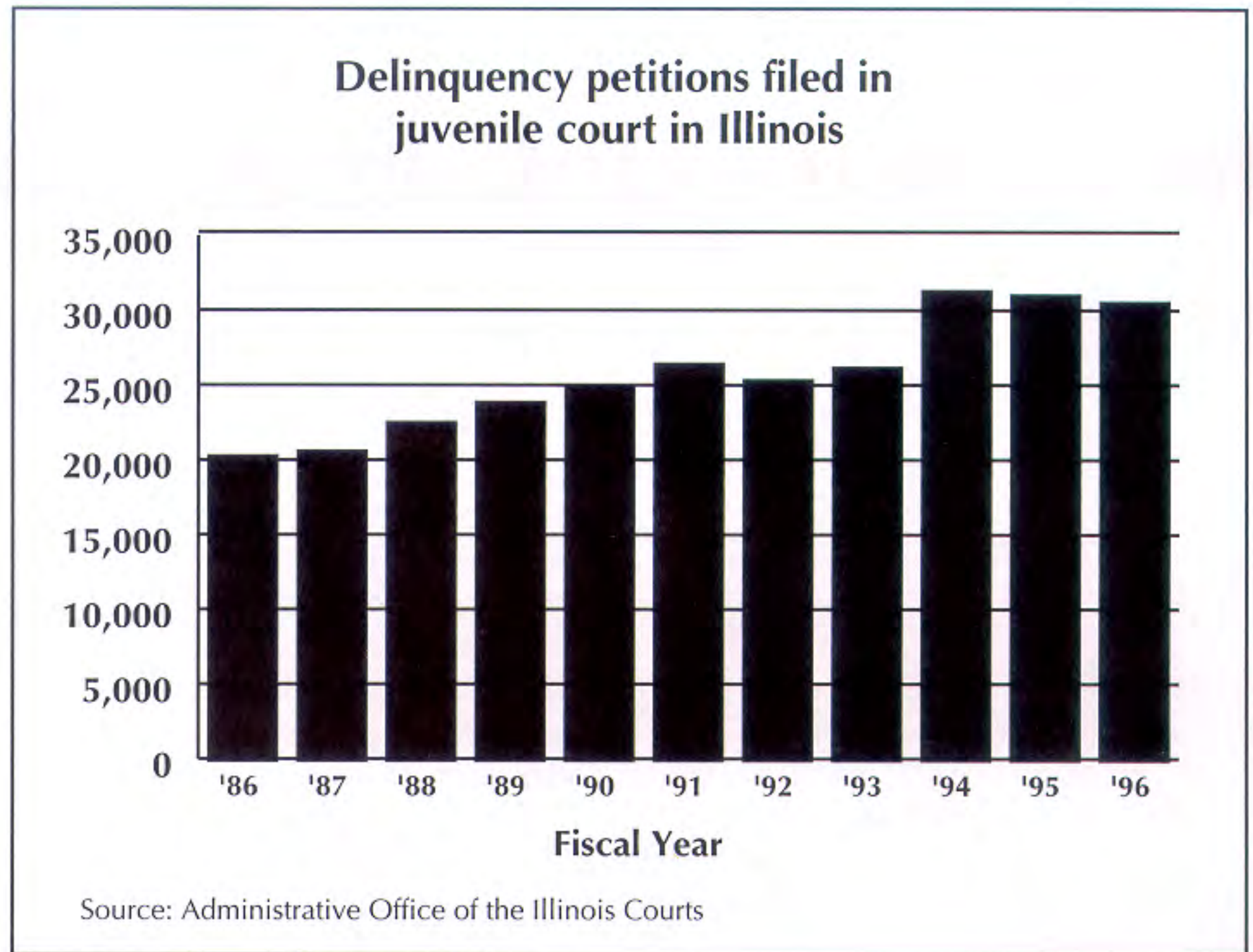
As with most juvenile justice system activities, admissions to temporary juvenile detention centers in Illinois increased considerably during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

During the late 1980s, annual detention center admissions averaged less than 15,000, and increased to approximately 15,600 by 1995. By 1996, the number of admissions to temporary detention centers in Illinois reached an all-time high of more than 18,800.

In addition to an increase in the number of individuals being processed through the juvenile justice system in Illinois, part of the increase in numbers at detention centers can be attributed to an increased capacity. Between 1989 and 1996, two new detention centers opened in Illinois (in McLean and Will counties), and an additional 156 available beds became available through additions to existing facilities. The current statewide capacity of Illinois' temporary juvenile detention centers is 1,004.

### Juvenile admissions to IDOC

The number of juvenile admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections has reached record levels during recent years. During state

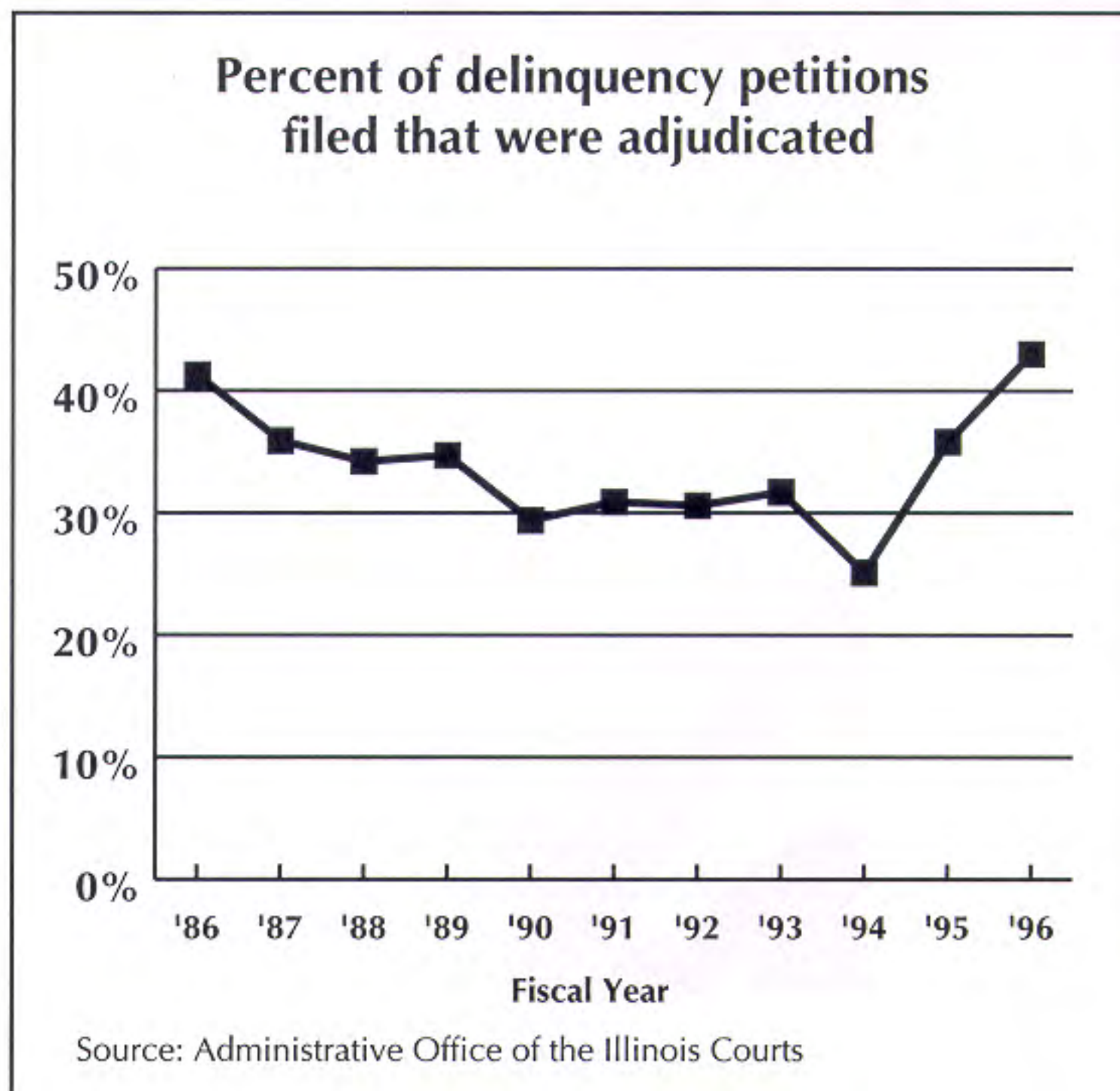


fiscal year 1997, more than 2,700 juveniles were committed to the IDOC, compared to less than 1,500 annually during the 1980s. Between fiscal years 1985 and 1994, admissions to the Juvenile Division of IDOC increased 51 percent. Between state fiscal years 1995 and 1997, admissions jumped 47 percent.

### Conclusions

There has been a stabilization in the juvenile system in recent years after the trend of exploding caseloads during the mid-1980s and early 1990s. However, this ebb in the flow of cases has not been experienced across all components of the juvenile justice system — particularly not at IDOC — nor in all counties or regions of Illinois. Part of the increase in IDOC commitments can be attributed to a trend in recent years toward incarcerating a larger proportion of adjudicated delinquents.

Despite the stabilization in recent years, the sheer volume of activities and cases are at all time highs. ■





## Gathering data

# Why an offender-based tracking system is needed for studying juvenile crime

By Mark Myrent

Effective intervention and prevention strategies for juvenile offenders depend on the availability of complete and accurate information on the nature and magnitude of their offenses and the responses of the justice system.

Unfortunately, there is no mechanism for tracking juveniles (or adults) from the commission of an offense through final case termination — an “offender-based tracking system.” The absence of such a system limits the abilities of researchers and policymakers to answer basic questions about how we respond to different types of juvenile crimes and juvenile offenders. Some very basic questions cannot be easily answered. For example:

- What portion of juveniles taken into custody for violent offenses are committed to IDOC?
- What portion of juvenile drug offenders are being placed in residential drug treatment facilities?
- Are minors adjudicated for cannabis violations more likely to receive probation than those arrested for controlled substance violations?
- Are juvenile property offenders who are referred to court more likely to be placed in diversionary programs or to be formally adjudicated?

While the complete picture of crime committed by juveniles and the system’s response to these offenders is blurred, various statistical snapshots are available

from a variety of sources. Users of these data sources, however, should be aware of their limitations.

### Offenses committed by juveniles

One of the most glaring gaps in available data involves the simple tabulation of offenses committed by juveniles. The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), which are the primary source of offense data nationally, as well as in Illinois, are based on crimes reported to police. There is no attempt to categorize offenders at this stage, since a considerable amount of time may pass before a perpetrator is identified — and, of course, many crimes remain unsolved for long periods of time. The UCR offense data do not distinguish crimes committed by juveniles from those committed by adults.

The National Crime Victimization Survey collects information on crimes against individuals and households, whether or not those crimes were reported to police. The data are derived from interviews with a nationally representative sample of households. People surveyed are asked to identify the age of offenders (and hence whether it involved a juvenile), but these data, too, have shortcomings. For example, they exclude many major categories of crime, such as homicide, arson, commercial crimes, and crimes against children under age 12. In addition, the quality of the data is dependent on the ability of those surveyed to accurately recall and describe victimization experiences from the previous six months. Finally, the sample of households included in the NCVS are selected for the

purpose of providing national estimates, and are of limited use in calculating estimates in Illinois.

### UCR arrest statistics

As a proxy measure of juvenile crime, some researchers have looked to arrest statistics captured by the UCR system. The use of arrest statistics to estimate the *volume* of crime committed by juveniles (and adults) is problematic for several reasons. First, changes in arrests statistics over time in a particular jurisdiction could signify a change in the actual number of offenses or they could be the result of a change in policing. Second, in many instances, no offender is ever arrested, or even identified. Thus, arrest totals will not reflect crimes committed by juveniles when the offenders were not apprehended.

UCR arrest data also are a limited source of information on juveniles apprehended by police. This is principally due to the fact that juveniles are not *arrested* by police in the way that adult offenders are — they are *taken into police custody*. For UCR purposes, however, the police are still asked to report data pertaining to “juvenile arrests.” The result is that police agencies must decide what level of contact with a minor constitutes an “arrest.” Upon taking juveniles into custody, police have several options for handling them. One of the most common options, particularly for minor offenses, is the station adjustment — an informal disposition that officers may use in lieu of formal court action. Interviews conducted by Authority staff with police officials

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Mark Myrent is a senior research analyst with the Authority.

across the state indicate that while some agencies report all their contacts with juvenile offenders as UCR arrests, others report only those instances in which juveniles are referred to court, and still others employ different reporting criteria.

This situation has continued to worsen in recent years. Since 1993, the Illinois State Police (ISP) — which manages Illinois' UCR program — has shifted to a more generalized offense and arrest reporting procedure. The state reporting system requires only that police agencies report monthly totals that combine adults arrested with juveniles taken into police custody. There are no statistics that pertain specifically to juvenile offenders.

Recently, the Authority collected data on juveniles taken into police custody from a sample of law enforcement agencies in Illinois for the 1993-1995 period. These data were used to construct the statewide and regional estimates that were presented in the preceding article on juvenile crime statistics.

### **Juvenile court statistics**

Statewide prosecution and court case data pertaining to juvenile offenders also have some significant gaps. For example, there is no statewide system for compiling data from state's attorneys in Illinois. Therefore, information concerning prosecutorial decisions — such as juvenile cases accepted or rejected for prosecution — is not available.

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) does compile information on juvenile cases after a delinquency petition has been filed, or after a juvenile case has been transferred to criminal court. AOIC collects data from each county on delinquency petitions filed (and other types of juvenile court petitions), petitions continued under supervision, adjudications, criminal prosecutions of juveniles, admissions to county-based juvenile detention centers, and commitments to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) — plus placements in foster homes, group homes, residential treatment facilities, and with relatives. These data, however, lack infor-

mation on offense types and demographic characteristics of the minors involved.

The AOIC's Probation Division collected detailed, case-level data for juveniles placed on probation in Illinois during specific months in 1990 and 1995. Although limited to those specific periods, these data do provide information on the types of offenses for which juveniles were adjudicated and socioeconomic characteristics of offenders.

### **Juvenile detention and incarceration statistics**

The most detailed statistics on juvenile offenders are those that pertain to their detention and incarceration. The Juvenile Monitoring Information System, operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services, contains case-level information on minors placed in juvenile detention centers and in county jails in Illinois — both during the pretrial phase and as a post-adjudicatory disposition after a finding of delinquency. These facilities report demographic characteristics and offense information on juveniles.

Various data about juveniles under the supervision of the Illinois Department of Corrections' Juvenile Division are available from IDOC's Juvenile Tracking System. This information includes custodial populations, admissions, exits, and lengths of stay. Case-level information contains details concerning offenses, as well as demographic characteristics such as age, sex, race, and county of origin.

### **Computerized Criminal History**

A relatively unexplored source of information on juvenile offenders is ISP's Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system. The system collects individual case-level data on criminal offenders from law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and corrections, and comes closest to the concept of an offender-based tracking system. Although the CCH system was designed primarily to produce criminal history transcripts on individual offenders, it also offers a potentially rich source of information on groups of arrestees and

the processing of their criminal cases. For example, police, state's attorney's and courts are required to submit information to CCH on all juveniles taken into custody for forcible felonies. Unfortunately, audits conducted by ISP indicate that many agencies are not submitting information to CCH on juveniles they take into custody.

The Authority and ISP are working together on several initiatives that are expected to improve the quality of criminal history records. These steps include an increased use of computer-based reporting systems by law enforcement agencies, circuit court clerks, and IDOC. ISP is redesigning the CCH system to accommodate this ongoing transition to electronic reporting and speed up information processing. Another initiative is the development of training materials and technical assistance mechanisms to assist agencies in the criminal history reporting process and ensure that information is reported in a uniform manner across jurisdictions.

Planning in criminal justice is hampered by the absence of a single comprehensive information system which reflects all of an offender's contacts with the system. Such a system could provide a better view of the forest that is the juvenile justice system. But as long as we must rely on limited data from singular points in the system, we will only be able to see the trees. ■

## Criminal court

# States broaden scope of transfer laws

By Daniel Dighton

**T**ransferring juveniles to adult court continues to be a major focus of juvenile legislation across the United States, and Illinois is no exception. Provisions for the automatic transfer of juveniles have been expanded five times in Illinois between 1990 and 1995. The General Assembly is expected to consider a bill during the fall veto session that would further expand the scope of automatic transfers to criminal court.

The debate over juvenile transfer was featured in the Summer 1996 issue of *The Compiler*. Considering the prominence of the topic in juvenile justice, it is worth taking another look at the evolution and impact of these laws.

### Background

As public officials have struggled to deal with highly publicized increases in violent and serious juvenile crime over the past couple of decades, the approach to these young offenders has shifted considerably from the reform-minded ways of the past. The trend in recent years has been to turn away from the traditional offender-based system, which focused on the individual characteristics and needs of the offender, and toward an offense-based system, which mandates sanctions based on the offense. This trend is most obvious in the shift toward the legislatively mandated, or automatic, transfer of juveniles to adult court for certain crimes.

This shift toward adult sanctions for some juvenile offenders arose out of concerns that, for serious offenders, the short terms of incarceration allowed in the juvenile system posed a public safety risk. Juvenile sanctions were considered insufficient for these serious offenders, and longer terms of incarceration were deemed necessary. The answer was to sentence them as adults in criminal court.

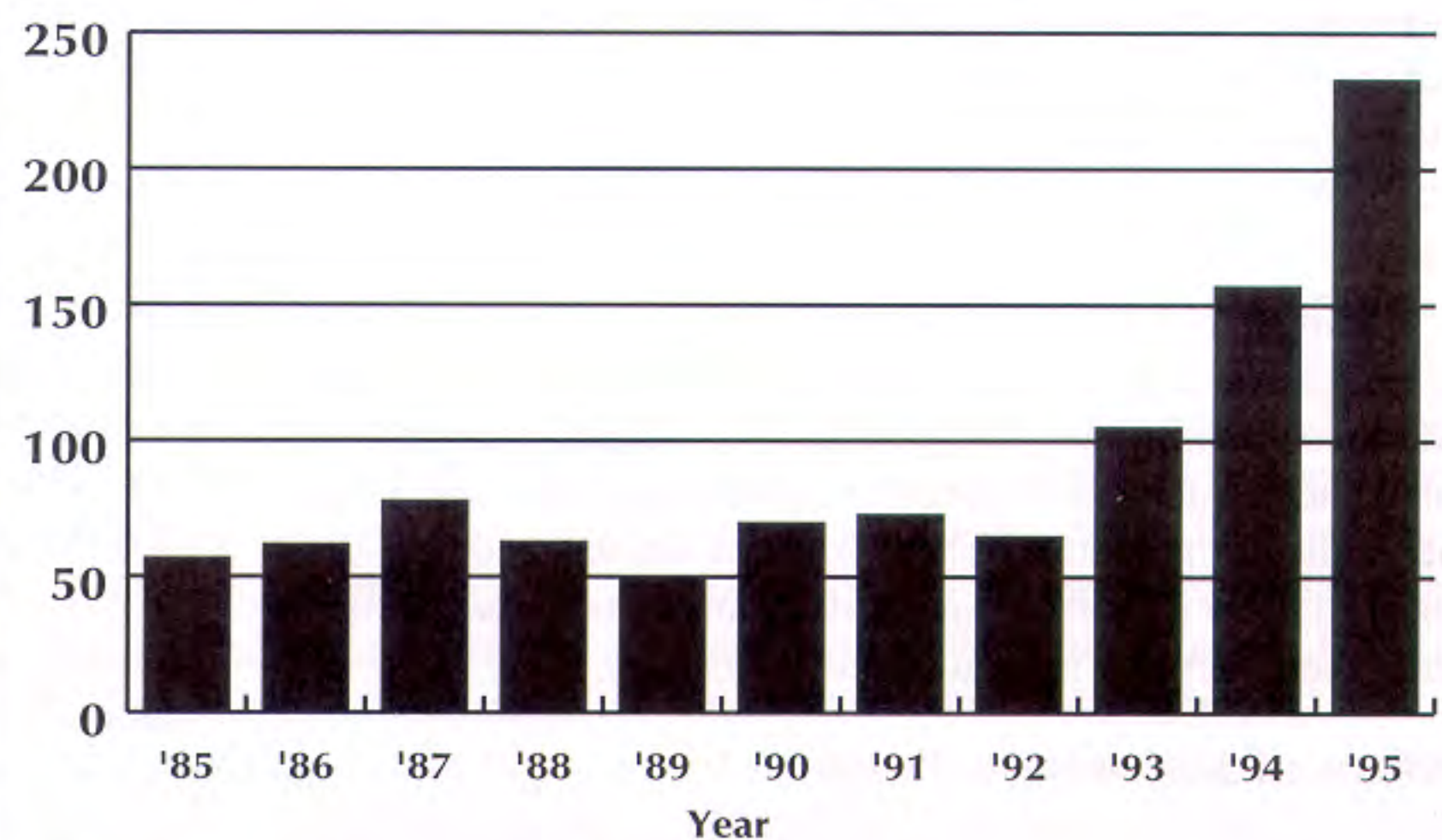
In Illinois, all incarcerated offenders under the age of 17, even those sentenced in criminal court as felons, first go to the Juvenile Division of the Illinois Department of Corrections. There, ju-

venile felons are housed with the general population. Felony offenders can be transferred to adult facilities any time after they turn 17, or they may remain in the Juvenile Division until they turn 21, at which time they must be transferred to an adult facility to complete their sentence.

Critics of laws that treat juveniles as adults argue that the adult correctional system is not equipped to provide services and treatment that might help rehabilitate young offenders. They also point out that young offenders in adult facilities will be influenced by hardened criminals, and they are vulnerable to rape and other abuse, which might lead to suicide.

As the American Civil Liberties Union stated in a fact sheet on juvenile crime: "Putting young offenders in adult prisons increases, not lessens, their propensity for committing crime. While in prison, the juvenile offender will learn from older, more hardened criminals. When he is released back into the community in his twenties — undereducated, unsocialized, unemployable, and

**Juvenile transfers to criminal court  
outside Cook County**



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

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*Daniel Dighton is a public information officer with the Authority.*

at the peak of physical power — he will be the very model of the very person we wished to most avoid.”

### Studies on the impact of juvenile transfer

There has not been a comprehensive study on the impact of transferring juveniles to criminal courts. But some limited studies have indicated that transfers have not had the intended impact of deterrence and do not necessarily result in tougher sanctions.

A Florida study showed that transfers did not have a deterrent effect, and recidivism rates were actually higher among juveniles transferred to criminal courts than for those handled in the juvenile system. The 1994 study for the Florida Corrections Commission, which compared a sample of transfers and non-transfers from 1987, found that “juveniles transferred to adult court were more likely than non-transfers to re-offend, to re-offend earlier in their at-risk period, to commit more subsequent offenses, and to commit more serious subsequent offenses.”<sup>1</sup>

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**A Florida study showed that transfers did not have a deterrent effect, and recidivism rates were actually higher among juveniles transferred to criminal courts than for those handled in the juvenile system.**

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The authors of the study went on to say that, “to the extent these matched cases are fully comparable, it would appear the range of sanctions resulting from transfer are substantially less effective than are traditional juvenile justice treatments.”<sup>2</sup>

It has also been pointed out that cases transferred to criminal court are likely to take much longer to get through the system, and they do not necessarily result in more severe sanctions.

In a 1993 study in St. Louis, researchers found that while all of the cases in their sample that went through the juvenile system had been adjudicated, nearly two thirds of sample cases transferred to criminal court had either been taken under advisement or were still pending.

Among those cases that went through juvenile court, nearly half resulted in probation and 20.7 percent were sent to juvenile institutions. During the same period, only 6.3 percent of the cases in adult court had resulted in prison sentences, and 17 percent resulted in probation. These findings led the study’s authors to point out that for juveniles transferred to criminal court, “there were no immediate consequences.”<sup>3</sup>

### History of transfer

Transferring juveniles to adult court has largely been an issue of the last two decades. Most states have always had ways of trans-

ferring juveniles to adult court, and by 1970 every state allowed some form of waiver.<sup>4</sup> But it was rare until the early 1980s. Even today, the vast majority of juvenile cases are handled in juvenile court. There were 31,161 delinquency petitions filed in Illinois in 1994. For the same year, only about 500 juvenile cases were transferred to criminal court. More than 350 of those transfers were in Cook County.<sup>5</sup>

The traditional reform-minded approach to juvenile offenders that had prevailed in the United States for much of this century, came under tougher scrutiny in the 1970s. By the early 1980s there was a clear shift toward deterrence and punishment, and the most violent offenders began facing adult sanctions with more and more frequency.

In general, states allow transfers in three ways: judicial waiver, prosecutorial waiver, and legislative, or automatic, transfer. Prosecutorial waiver gives the prosecutor the option of filing a case in either juvenile or criminal court. This is the least common form of transfer and is not used in Illinois.

Under judicial waiver, a juvenile court judge has authority to send certain types of cases to criminal court, usually after a petition has been filed by the prosecutor. Until relatively recently, judicial waiver had been the most common means of transfer in the United States.

But automatic transfer is fast becoming the predominate method, and accounts for the majority of transfers in Illinois. Under automatic transfer, state statutes specify offenses for which juvenile offenders of a certain age must be transferred to criminal court.

There has been a flurry of state legislative activity regarding juvenile transfers in recent years. A 1995 study by the federal General Accounting Office, found that since 1978, 44 states and the District of Columbia have amended statutes regarding the transfer of juveniles to criminal court. In most instances the changes increased the number of transfers, either by lowering the age for eligibility or by broadening the scope of offenses subject to transfer.<sup>6</sup>

A review of state legislative activity for 1995 by the National Conference of State Legislators showed that 10 states added crimes for which juveniles can be transferred to criminal court. At least seven other states lowered the age at which offenders can be transferred for certain crimes, or otherwise toughened their transfer laws.<sup>7</sup>

## Juvenile transfer in Illinois

Illinois law provides three methods of transferring juveniles to criminal court:

- **Discretionary, or petitioned, transfer:** The juvenile court judge may permit transfer of a minor 13 years old or older when a motion has been filed to transfer the case to adult court.
- **Presumptive transfer:** Applies when there is probable cause that a juvenile has committed a Class X felony or certain other offenses, and the juvenile is unable to convince a juvenile court

judge that the juvenile is amenable to the care, treatment, and training programs available to the juvenile court.

- **Automatic transfer:** Applies when a juvenile of a specified age has committed offenses that under state law must be handled in criminal court.

Since 1982, Illinois law has required that juveniles at least 15 years old who are charged with certain offenses be transferred to criminal court. Originally, these offenses were limited to first-degree murder, aggravated criminal sexual assault, and armed robbery with a firearm. The state has since added several offenses that require automatic transfer, notably certain drug and weapons offenses on public school or public housing grounds, and certain gang-related crimes. Automatic transfers accounted for about 60 percent of all transfers in Illinois between 1985 and 1995.

Since 1995, prosecutors have been able to petition for a presumptive transfer for most Class X felonies and under some other limited circumstances. This type of transfer shifts to the minor the burden of rebutting the presumption, which is created by a finding of probable cause, that the minor should be transferred.

An Authority analysis of 503 transfer cases in Cook County between 1992 and 1994 showed that drug offenses were the most common cases transferred, accounting for 27 percent of transfers. Murder was the next most common (22 percent), followed by armed robbery (19 percent), unlawful use of a weapon (9 percent), and aggravated criminal sexual assault (8 percent).

In the Authority study, juveniles convicted of drug and weapon offenses in criminal court were less likely to be incarcerated than those convicted of person offenses. Only 37 percent of convicted drug offenders were sentenced to IDOC, and only 9 percent of weapons offenders were incarcerated. By contrast, all juveniles convicted of murder or armed robbery in criminal court were sentenced to IDOC.

According to data from the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, outside of Cook County, 495 juveniles were transferred to criminal courts between 1993 and 1995. An Authority analysis, based on admissions to IDOC, showed that 40 percent of these transfers outside of Cook County resulted in incarceration.

### Proposed changes in Illinois

The General Assembly is expected to take up Senate Bill 120, "The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1997," during the fall veto session. At the time *The Compiler* went to press in early October, no final action had been taken, but the following is an overview of some of the provisions in the bill regarding transfer as they stood at that time.

The bill retains basically the same automatic transfer provisions that currently exist, and adds aggravated battery with a firearm to the list. Automatic transfer is referred to as "excluded jurisdiction," and from the beginning those cases are the exclusive jurisdiction of the criminal courts.

Weapons and drug offenses on school or public housing grounds are handled essentially the same, but are shifted from the

### Automatic transfer laws in Illinois

Offenses	Age when law applies	Year law took effect
First-degree murder, aggravated criminal sexual assault, armed robbery with a firearm	15	1982
Drug/weapon offenses on or within 1,000 feet of school property	15	1985
Felony/forcible felony in furtherance of gang activity with prior felony/forcible felony adjudication	15	1990
Drug offenses on or within 1,000 feet of public housing property	15	1990
Subsequent charges of escape/bond violation for minors already transferred to criminal court	13	1991
Aggravated vehicular hijacking	15	1995
First-degree murder committed during a criminal sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual assault, or aggravated kidnapping (excludes minors charged through accountability)	13	1995

automatic transfer category to “mandatory transfer.” Mandatory transfer requires a hearing and a finding of probable cause in juvenile court. Once probable cause is established, a case subject to mandatory transfer must be transferred to criminal court. Minors charged with forcible felonies committed in furtherance of gang activity, who have prior felony adjudication, are also in the mandatory transfer category.

In addition to mandatory transfer, presumptive and discretionary transfers are retained in the bill. These also require a hearing in juvenile court, the same as current law. The bill includes some minor modifications and additional factors that must be considered by the juvenile court judge before transferring the case to criminal court, but essentially these transfer clauses are the same as current law.

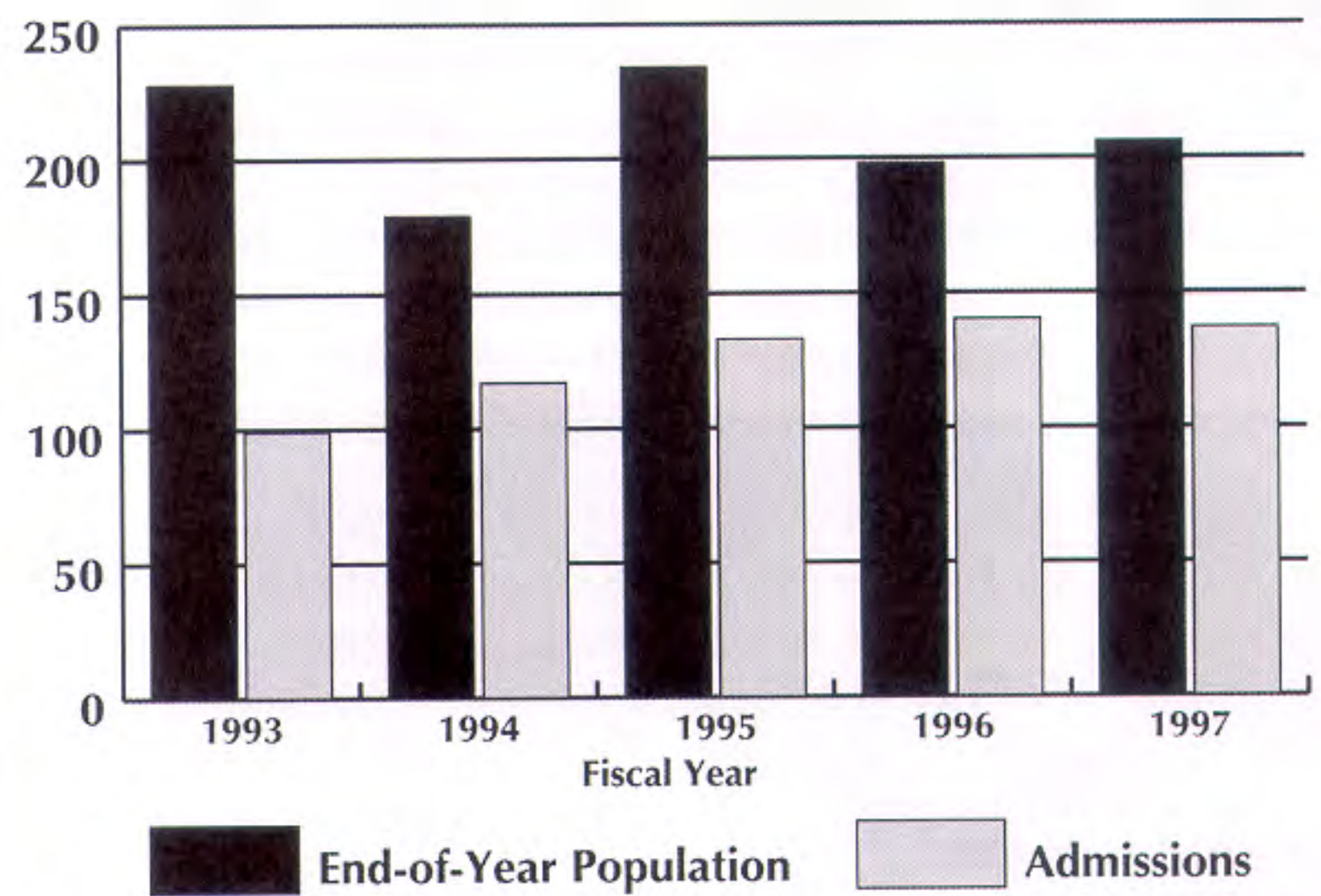
Senate Bill 120 would add a new feature to mandatory, presumptive and discretionary transfers called Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile (modeled after a program in Minnesota). Instead of petitioning the court for transfer, prosecution can be pursued under an EJJ proceeding in juvenile court. If the minor is found guilty, the juvenile court will impose a juvenile and an adult sentence, but the adult sentence is suspended. If the minor violates the conditions of the juvenile sentence, the adult sentence will be imposed.

## Conclusion

The attention given to violent juvenile crime in recent years has led to radical changes in how we deal with juvenile offenders. Laws are being added that are intended to hold minors more accountable for their actions and protect society. The consequences have been that in the short run, this has resulted in more admissions to juvenile and adult institutions. In the long run, these young offenders will leave prison and return to their communities at relatively young ages, with their formative years having been spent in correctional institutions. It is important to consider whether many of these young offenders, particularly the nonviolent ones, might have been better served in community-based programs.

The need to protect society must be balanced with an interest in changing the behavior of juveniles who are violent or chronic offenders. More must be done to steer children away from a life of crime before they are faced with adult sanctions in a criminal court. There are no easy answers for the problem of serious juvenile offenders, but the option under EJJ of imposing a juvenile sentence while suspending an adult sentence makes sense. This will only be effective, however, if these juvenile offenders get the support they will need to make changes in their lives and step away from the criminal elements that often pervade their environment. ■

### Juvenile felons sentenced to IDOC from criminal courts



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

#### Notes:

1. Charles E. Frazier, et. al., “Juvenile justice transfer legislation in Florida: Assessing the impact on the criminal justice and correctional systems,” *Reports of the Florida Corrections Commission* (1994), from Internet, p. 2.
2. Ibid.
3. Kristine Kinder, et. al., “A comparison of the dispositions of juvenile offenders certified as adults with juvenile offenders not certified,” *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* (1995), p. 40.
4. Eric Fritsch and Craig Hemmons, “Juvenile waiver in the United States 1979-1995: A comparison and analysis of state waiver statutes,” *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* (1995), p. 23.
5. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, *Trends and Issues 1997*, p. 174.
6. SEARCH, “Privacy and Juvenile Justice Records: A mid-decade status report,” Bureau of Justice Statistics (May 1997), p. 15.
7. National Conference of State Legislatures, “Juvenile Crime and Justice State Enactments 1995,” *State Legislative Report*, p. 3.

# Juvenile records becoming more open

**O**NCE ALMOST OBSESSIVELY PROTECTED BY STRICT confidentiality laws, juvenile offense records are fast becoming more available to justice officials and the public.

This trend with juvenile records marks a distinct shift away from two long-held tenets of the modern juvenile justice system: that juveniles are not mature enough to be responsible for their actions, and that they can be rehabilitated. It is yet another example of how juveniles are being treated more like adults in the criminal justice system.

Fueled by concerns that more juveniles are committing violent offenses, the new laws seem to reflect a feeling that these violent juveniles need to be held accountable and that the public has a right to know of their crimes.

## Impact of transfers to adult court

The transfer of violent or serious juvenile offenders to criminal court has played a significant role in changing how juvenile records are handled. As a recent report on juvenile records prepared by SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, pointed out, "juvenile records must be improved in order to permit judges to identify 'hardened' juvenile offenders who are candidates for processing in the adult courts."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, more than a dozen states in 1995 passed legislation treating juvenile records or proceedings more like that of adult criminals, including the use of photographs and fingerprints. A proposed law in Illinois pursues a similar course.

The SEARCH report observed that:

Without much debate, the traditional juvenile record regime – manual records maintained on a decentralized, local basis and cloistered from eyes outside of the juvenile justice system – is giving way to an automated, centralized system providing records to criminal justice and even to noncriminal justice users. There are those who regret the impact that these changes are likely to have on a juvenile's chances for rehabilitation and a second start. In an era, however, where both the substance and, particularly, the perception of frequent, remorseless, violent juvenile crime is so high, this result – right or wrong, good or bad – seems inevitable.

## Current laws

Illinois law allows the general public access to the name, address, and offense of minors convicted in criminal court or adjudicated delinquent for first-degree murder, the attempt to commit first-degree murder, aggravated criminal sexual as-

sault, or criminal sexual assault. Recent amendments to the law require that access be given to the records of minors who are at least 13 years old and convicted of or adjudicated delinquent for:

- an act in furtherance of the commission of a felony as a member of or on behalf of a criminal street gang;
- a felony involving the use of a firearm; and
- certain felonies or certain repeat offenses involving drugs.

Criminal justice officials in Illinois, including police, prosecutors, probation officers and judges, have access to information on juvenile offenders. But, as the Legislative Committee on Juvenile Justice pointed out in its May 1996 report, the state lacks a system that makes these records readily available, and records lack adequate information on the disposition of cases.

## Inadequate reporting

Local law enforcement agencies are required under state law to report juveniles taken into custody for certain offenses to the Illinois State Police. These offenses include unlawful use of weapons; forcible felonies; Class 2 or greater felonies under the Cannabis Control and Controlled Substances acts; and offenses under Chapter 4 of the Illinois Vehicle Code. But the Legislative Committee report noted that these reporting requirements were not being met by many local agencies.

The report noted that the failure of law enforcement to take and submit fingerprints of juveniles to the Illinois State Police "hinders enforcement, planning and policy setting." Among the recommendations by the Legislative Committee were to "require fingerprinting and reporting for juveniles aged 10 and older to the same extent as adults, that is Class B misdemeanors and above."

Senate Bill 120, "The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1997," incorporates that recommendation in amending the Criminal Identification Act.

S.B.120, which is expected to be taken up by the General Assembly during the fall veto session, also would require state's attorneys to notify ISP of all delinquency petitions filed and clerks of court to report dispositions of those petitions. This also was recommended by the Legislative Committee on Juvenile Justice.

S.B. 120 also amends the Illinois School Student Records Act to require schools to include in student temporary records information regarding serious disciplinary infractions. The bill would require schools to maintain student temporary records for 10 years. ■

— Daniel Dighton

# Juvenile justice reform in other states

By Kristi Turnbaugh

While several states are emphasizing the importance of prevention and intervention programs to prevent juvenile delinquency and crime, most states are developing and implementing laws stressing punishment and accountability. Regardless of the approaches, however, it is too soon to tell if these new laws have significantly reduced juvenile crime. The profiles below discuss two states' responses to the growing juvenile crime problem.

## Texas

Although Texas' overall crime rate continues to drop, its juvenile crime problem is growing. Between 1986 and 1996, there was a 282 percent increase in violent crimes committed by youths aged 10 to 16. Part of the reason given for the decline in adult crime rates is that Texas incarcerates more offenders for longer terms and reduces the number of offenders out on parole, thereby reducing opportunities to reoffend.<sup>1</sup> However, until recently, juvenile offenders did not receive such strict sentences, even when the crimes were serious.

As juvenile crime rates continued to climb in the early 1990s, the Texas legislature commissioned a study to comprehensively review and update the state's entire Family Code, the set of laws that governs the juvenile justice system. The study results led the legislature to develop and pass an extensive reform act in 1995 that features some of the nation's toughest responses to violent juvenile crime.<sup>2</sup>

Texas' new juvenile justice system mixes elements from the state's existing adult criminal justice system and old juvenile justice system. While the new juvenile justice system is more punitive and severe than before, the juveniles, regardless of their offense or criminal history, are still under the jurisdiction of juvenile court judges.

### Graduated sanctions

A major part of the reform asks local juvenile courts to start a seven-step system of graduated sanctions for juveniles. The system aims to ensure that juvenile offenders face uniform and consistent consequences that correspond to both the seriousness of the offense and the offender's delinquent history, while protecting the public.

Although the sanctions model is not mandatory, courts that do not follow the guidelines must report deviations to the Texas

Juvenile Probation Commission, said Nancy Arrigona, director of research and evaluation for the Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council. The sanctions model eliminates the disparity in sentencing and gets delinquents into the system faster; ideally, then, the threat of the harsher future sanctions will prevent the juvenile from reoffending, Arrigona said.

### Other provisions

Cases in which a youth is charged with a violent offense or an offense involving the use of a firearm or other weapon are automatically forwarded to the prosecutor's office. The new Family Code lowers the age at which a juvenile can be tried as an adult for capital murder, first-degree felonies, and aggravated drug crimes to 14. It had been 15.

The code expands the state's determinate sentencing statutes, widening the list of felonies for which youths can be sentenced and allowing judges to impose sentences of up to 40 years. This includes the possible transfer from the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), the entity responsible for the secure care and control of juveniles committed to state custody, to the adult prison system once the offender turns 16. The new law will add more probation officers and 2,360 more TYC beds by the end of 1998, including boot camps and "tough love" academies. More than \$37 million was provided for construction of the additional bed space.<sup>3</sup>

### Juvenile records

Another major provision of the law includes the establishment of a statewide computerized juvenile justice records system to include offenders' names, descriptions, fingerprints, state ID number, offenses for which the youths are taken into custody, detained or referred, and case dispositions. The reform opens most hearings on juvenile cases to the public. In addition, the law requires juvenile offenders' parents to attend court hearings, authorizes local governments to impose juvenile curfews, and expands the rights of victims of juvenile crime to have information about their cases.

## Minnesota

The Minnesota Supreme Court in 1994 commissioned a task force to study the state's juvenile justice system and make recommendations for its reform. During the yearlong study, the task force concluded that the juvenile justice system was not the answer to preventing the state's rising juvenile crime, that the best solution was proactive, through the strengthening of families and communities, and the implementation of prevention and intervention programs. According to the task force, the juvenile justice system had to be reactive and recommended it improve its ability to respond to crime by providing a continuum of monitor-

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*Kristi Turnbaugh is a public information officer with the Authority.*



ing and effective programming for juveniles, while ensuring public safety.<sup>4</sup>

Minnesota's task force found that the major problem with the juvenile justice system was that it was not working for the most serious and repeat juvenile offenders. Therefore, the study recommended that the state 1) preserve the elements of the juvenile justice system that were working for the less serious offenders, and 2) implement changes that would target the serious and repeat juvenile offenders.

### **Blended sentences**

To target the more serious and repeat juvenile offenders, the state created an inclusive blend of sentencing, which means that the juvenile court can impose sanctions that involve both the juvenile and adult correctional systems. With that, Minnesota also created the youthful offender category of Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile, or EJJ. This includes two types of juvenile offenders: 1) 14- to 16-year-olds who the prosecutor wants to certify as adults. These youth can receive adult sentences that are stayed and get a juvenile disposition instead. If the juvenile commits another crime, the court has the option of sending the juvenile to an adult facility to fulfill the adult sentence, and 2) 16- and 17-year-olds who commit aggravated assault and another more serious crime, or any crime that involves the use of a handgun. These cases are tried in the juvenile court, with a right to jury trial and counsel. Once convicted, the juvenile will receive an adult sentence that is stayed. Again, if the sentence is violated, the juvenile can be sent to the adult system to fulfill the adult sentence.

This graduated sanctions model provides a dispositional option for juvenile court judges facing juveniles who have committed serious or repeat offenses, and gives offenders a last chance in the juvenile division. "All juvenile justice reforms have to give adult criminal safeguards, but this system provides a longer handle on certain juveniles," said Barry Feld, a law professor at the University of Minnesota and a member of the task force.

Other provisions of the law allow schools to access juvenile data more easily and counties to establish local curfews. The law also implements sex offender registration for juveniles. ■

### **Notes:**

1. Texas Attorney General Dan Morales, "Juvenile Justice Reform in Texas," from Internet, (1996).
2. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, *State Responses to Serious and Juvenile Crime*, (July 1996).
3. *Criminal Justice Newsletter*, "Texas governor signs bill to make juvenile code stricter," (June 1, 1995).
4. Minnesota Supreme Court Advisory Task Force on the Juvenile Justice System: Final Report (January 1994).

### **"In Brief," continued from page 3**

Throughout the project, the Authority collaborated with the Office of International Criminal Justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago, to design and demonstrate strategic Internet applications and explore the content, policy, and technical issues that emerged during the process. The electronic handbook for developing a Web site is based on project experiences.

The handbook presents an array of material — some policy-oriented and some technical — which will help criminal justice officials think about how to adopt this technology for their own purposes. The handbook makes extensive use of hypertext capabilities to refer users to examples of Web pages and specific applications relevant to criminal justice agencies. Links to a comprehensive array of technical documents are included.

The handbook and other material on the Authority's site can be found at: <http://www.icjia.state.il.us>.

JRSA is a national professional association of criminal justice analysts, researchers, and practitioners. The group's mission is to promote the development, analysis, and dissemination of objective and accurate information to support sound policy development.

### **Departures ...**

The Authority would like to acknowledge the contributions of several key staff members who recently moved on to pursue other career opportunities.

Associate Director **Steve Tapke**, who headed the Information Systems Unit and had been with the Authority since its inception in 1983, left in September and now works with the Schaumburg Police Department.

Associate Director **Roger Przybylski**, who came to the Authority in 1985 and had headed the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit since April 1994, left at the end of September to pursue private consulting work.

**Andy Krok**, who oversaw the Correctional Institution Management Information System (CIMIS), left in July to work for the Illinois State Police. Andy had been with the Authority since 1984.

Senior Research Analyst **David Olson**, who had been with the Authority since 1988, left his full-time position in August to become an assistant professor of criminal justice at Loyola University Chicago. David will continue to work part time for the Authority.

Research Analyst **Jeff Travis**, who had been with the Authority since 1990, left in July to work for Morningstar Inc., a financial company in Chicago.

The Authority thanks each for their years of dedication and quality work. They all made a significant imprint on the work of the Authority, and they will be missed. We wish them luck. ■

# New information network for victim service agencies

By Michelle Waul and  
Andrea Carr, Ph.D.

**I**N AN EFFORT TO ENHANCE VICTIM SERVICES IN ILLINOIS, the Authority is developing an information network for victim service agencies across the state. The InfoNet will facilitate data collection, improve the quality of victim service data available, and provide an integrated means of communication.

The InfoNet will include a database for recording program activity and will have Internet/Intranet capabilities for reporting program data. This system will enable participating agencies to:

- record program data in a more efficient and meaningful manner;
- exchange monthly data electronically via the Internet;
- communicate with each other and the Authority via e-mail; and
- access the Internet and its varied resources.

## Why the InfoNet was needed

Currently, most nonprofit victim service agencies do not have the resources or expertise to develop and implement an automated data collection system. Domestic violence and some sexual assault programs that receive funds through the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence or Coalition Against Sexual Assault have been using an automated system for several years. But this system is difficult to use and collects limited information. As a result, there is very limited useful data available from service providers.

Most agencies collect data that focus on the incidence and prevalence of victimization experienced by clients and some demographic information. There are only limited data being collected on outcomes of the criminal justice system and service delivery. Without more meaningful and reliable data, local programs, statewide coalitions, and the Authority are limited in their ability to effectively plan and improve upon the delivery of services across the state.

## Monthly electronic reporting

A new database system is at the heart of the InfoNet system. It will allow program sites to electronically report three kinds of data:

- data on individual clients served by these victim services programs;
- program level data, such as training provided by the program sites, or educational programs held; and
- financial data.

The database is being designed to ensure program sites can easily comply with all federal data reporting guidelines. However, it is also being designed to ensure a maximum amount of data to aid program planning and development at the local program and state levels. As such, the system is being developed with a greater emphasis on outcome measures of the criminal justice process as experienced by program clients. The new database also will track clients until a case is closed, or until the program no longer has contact with the client. Finally, the new reporting system can be customized by the local programs to collect other data that will aid program planning and development at the local level. The database is initially being beta-tested as a local database.

## Internet/Intranet access

The e-mail capacity of the new system will improve communication between program sites and the Authority, and it will permit quick, direct communication among individual sites. The Internet/Intranet access will allow local programs to get Authority information electronically, including program and financial reporting guidelines, requests for proposals, and relevant research findings from our research unit. In addition, we intend to develop specific discussion forums on our Intranet (that part of the network that will have limited membership and will not be available to the general public of the Internet) in each victim service area.

Security for such an information network is essential, especially as we ask program sites to report on the clients they serve. The InfoNet has multiple levels of security built in to the system. We believe this will provide a secure system that presents no greater risks than program sites currently undertake in storing client-level data.

## Participants and implementation

The \$1 million InfoNet system is being implemented at more than 200 sites across the state, including domestic violence and sexual assault programs (through the statewide coalitions), child advocacy centers, and police and prosecutor-based victim service agencies. Distribution of the InfoNet local database to program sites began in September and has been followed by regional training sessions. ■

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*Michelle Waul is a grant monitor with the Authority's Federal and State Grants Unit, Andrea Carr is a criminal justice specialist with the unit.*

# Governor proclaims Oct. 13-20 state "Park Smart Week"

By Gerard Ramker, Ph.D.

**A**S PART OF THE LATEST CAMPAIGN to reduce vehicle theft in Illinois, Gov. Jim Edgar proclaimed the week of Oct. 13-20 as "Park Smart Awareness Week."

Noting that vehicle theft costs Illinois consumers and insurers close to \$1 million per day, the governor's proclamation sought to increase public awareness of vehicle theft and vehicle safety. The governor and State Police Director Terrance Gainer both planned news conferences as part of "Park Smart Awareness Week." Other activities planned for the week included public service announcements and a direct mail campaign.

## The Park Smart program

Park Smart is a public relations program of the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council and Illinois Anti-Car Theft Committee. It is designed to educate the public about common-sense methods for keeping their cars from being stolen. The main focus of Park Smart is to encourage motorists to lock their car doors, roll up

windows, use anti-theft devices, and keep valuables out of sight inside the vehicle.

"Reducing auto theft requires a comprehensive educational program for drivers in Illinois," Gainer said. "Illinoisans must follow these simple, common

Figures released recently by the Illinois State Police showed that reports of vehicle theft declined by 3.6 percent in the first half of 1997.

## State fair crowds learn to "Park Smart"

Staff from the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council and Park Smart ran an information booth at the Authority's tent at the Illinois State Fair in August. Their efforts helped educate the public on steps they can take to protect against vehicle theft.

Volunteers passed out key chains that included Park Smart tips, and fairgoers picked up Park Smart brochures inside the tent. The remnants of a Chevrolet Blazer recovered after being stolen and stripped for parts was a popular attraction.

"Thousands of Illinois drivers came away from the fair with valuable information on preventing auto theft. In that respect, Park Smart's presence at the fair was very worthwhile," said Tim Bryers, Park Smart media coordinator.



Photo by Kristi Turnbaugh

*At the state fair, auto mechanics demonstrate how professional car thieves strip a vehicle. Professional thieves can strip a vehicle in minutes, and then sell the parts to dishonest auto shops. The demonstration was part of the*

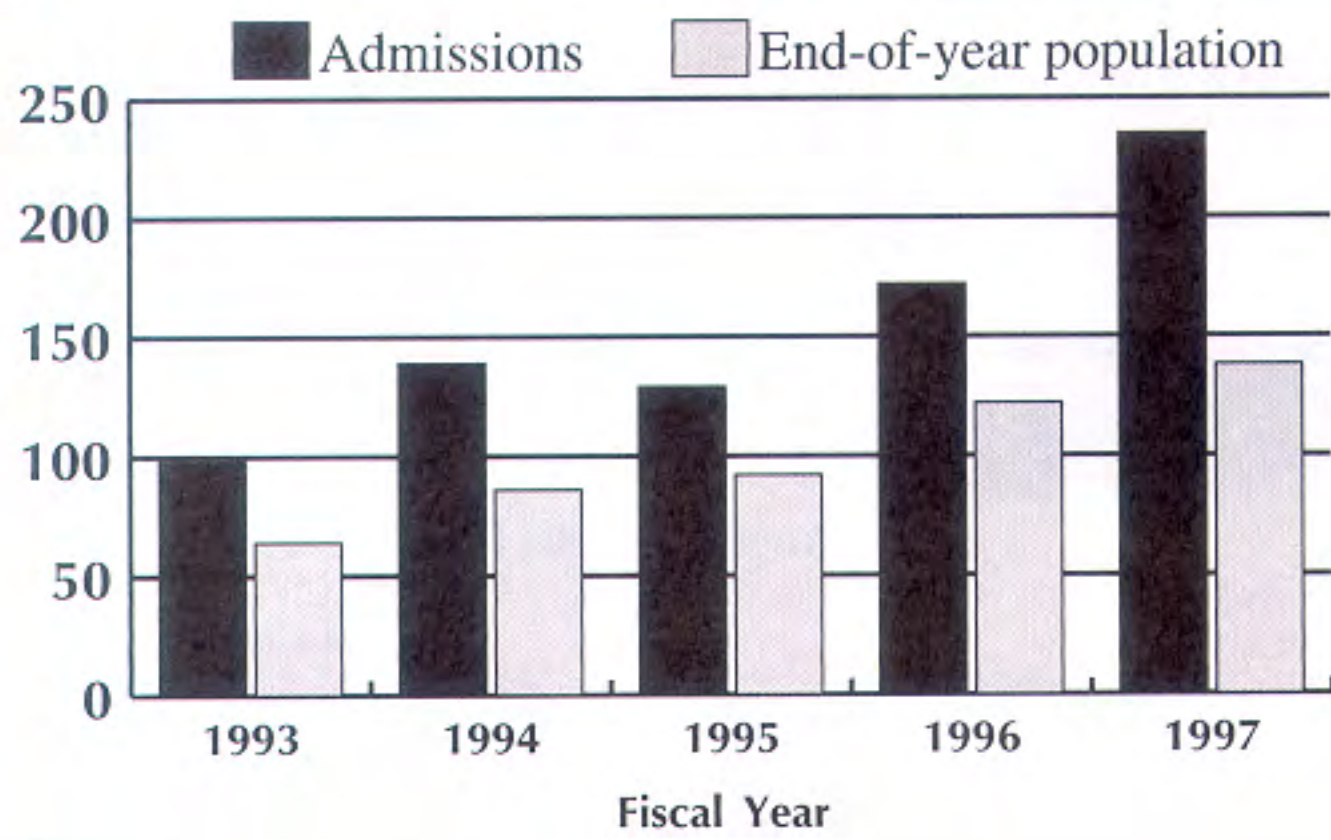
sense guidelines. Citizens should know that if they park smart they significantly lower the chance that their vehicle will be stolen.

"I applaud the governor's recognition of the Council's success. Vehicle thefts have declined by over 22 percent since 1991," Gainer said. "However, auto theft prevention is an ongoing battle. We can still do more in our war against vehicle theft in Illinois."

*Gerard Ramker is program director of the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council.*

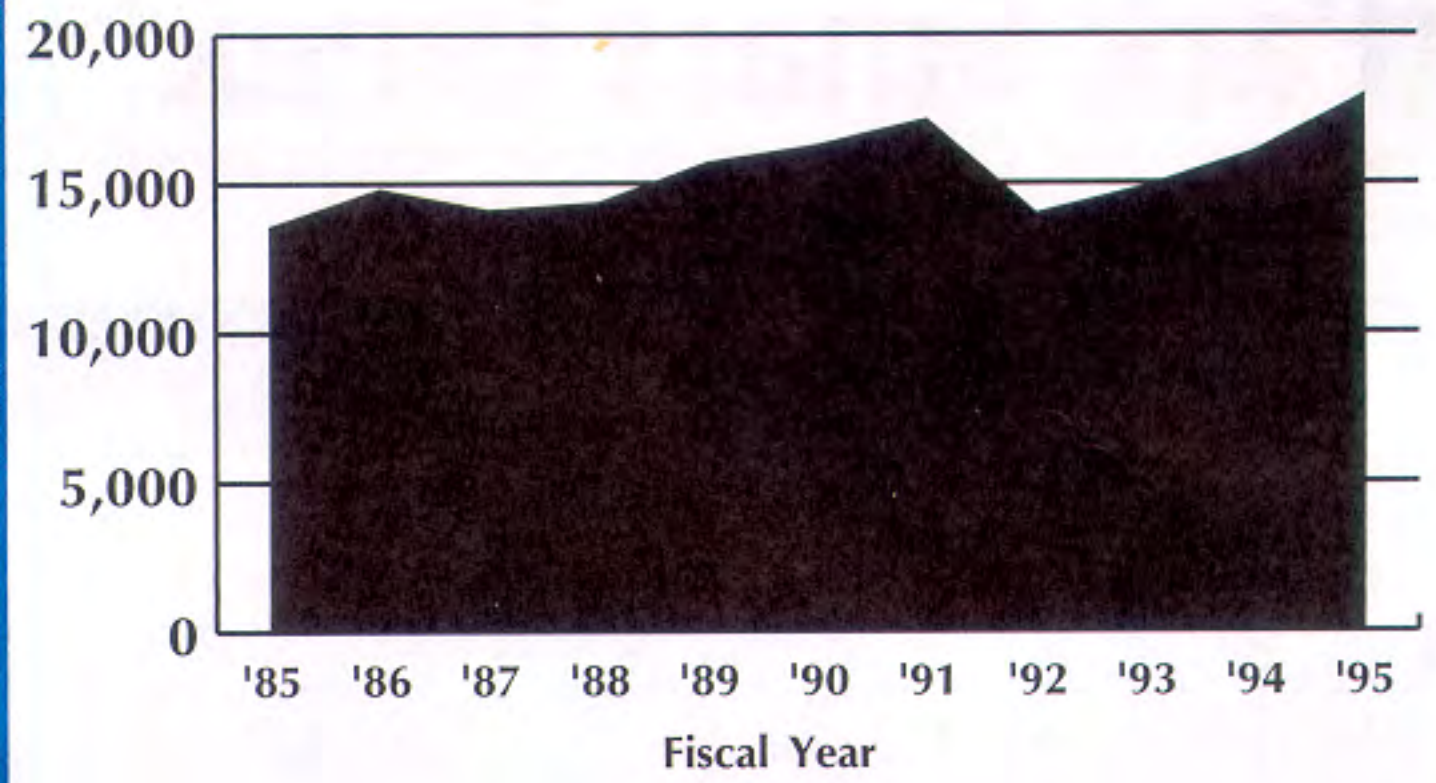
# Trends

Juvenile females incarcerated at the Illinois Department of Corrections



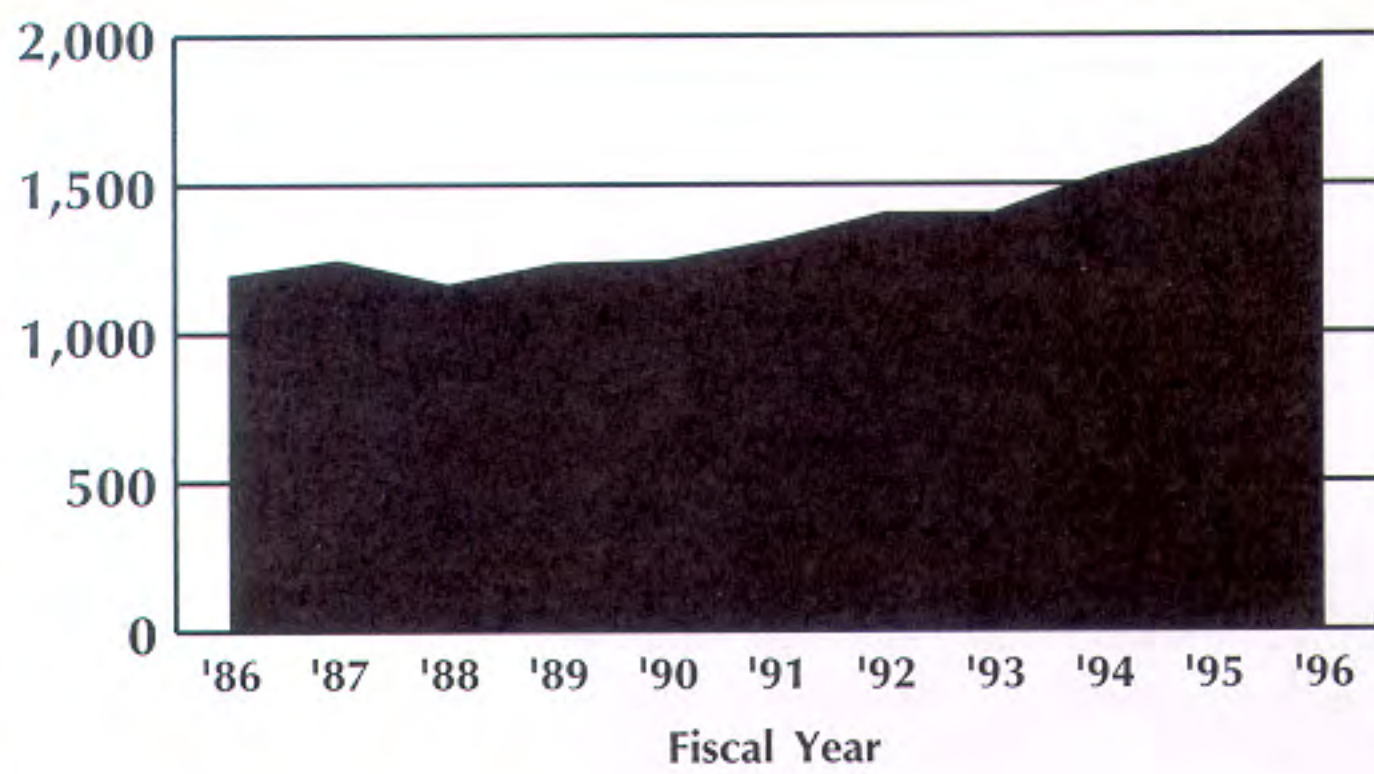
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Juvenile probation cases in Illinois



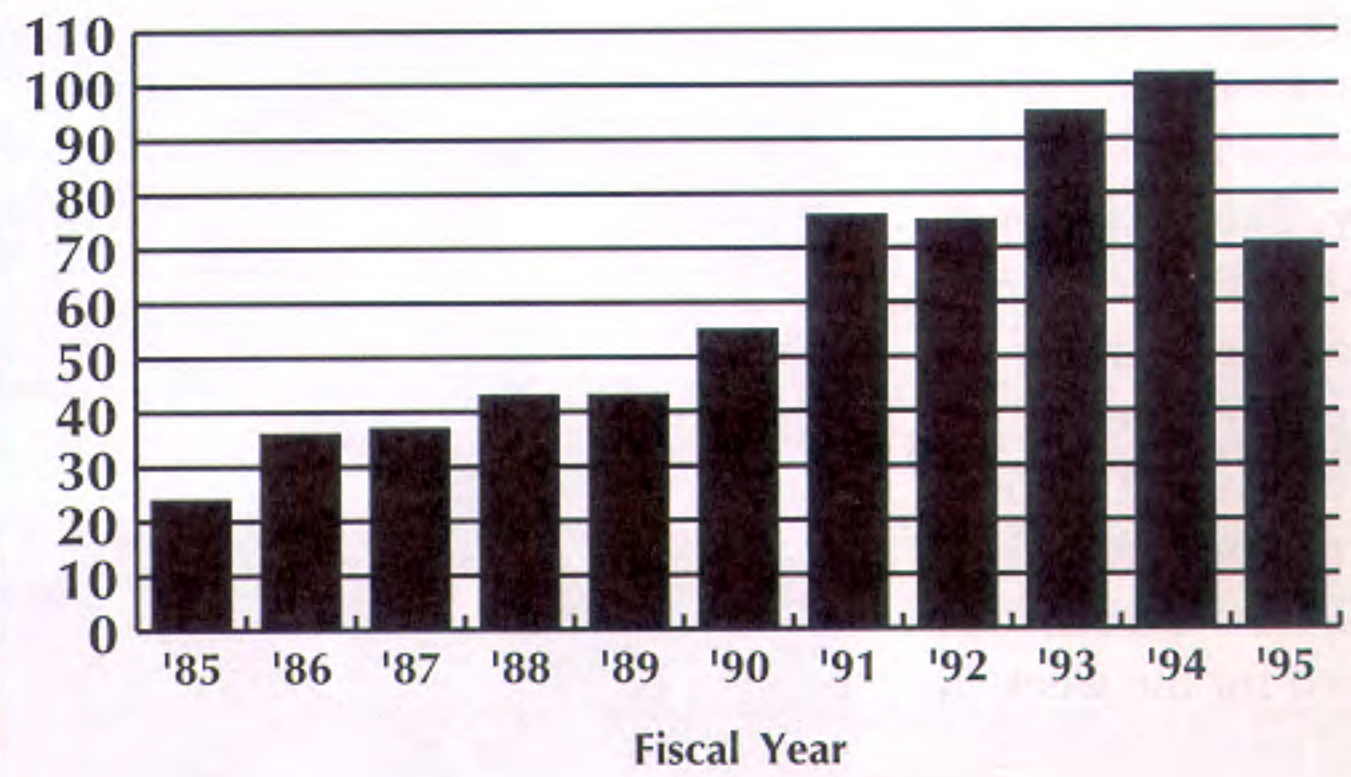
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Institutional population of IDOC's Juvenile Division



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Juveniles taken into police custody for murder in Illinois



Source: Illinois State Police/ICJIA



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