

Vera Institute of Justice

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Portfolio
of
Demonstration Projects,
Research & Technical Assistance

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Introduction

Helping to Build a Just Society

Since 1961, the Vera Institute of Justice has served as a source of innovative, practical solutions to persistent problems of urban government. By designing and testing demonstration projects in partnership with public officials, Vera works to improve the fairness and effectiveness of a wide range of government systems and services dealing with crime, poverty, and hardship.

The Institute is based in New York and mounts most of its demonstrations in one or another of New York City's diverse communities. Vera's longstanding relationship with this city and its government ensures that the Institute's ideas for reform remain intensely practical. At the same time, Vera designs its demonstrations to generate knowledge that is useful across the country and abroad.

Although its efforts began in criminal justice, Vera soon found that this work was leading its planners to design demonstrations that crossed over into the reform of employment, child welfare, health, and educational services. Since the mid-1960s, Vera has operated demonstration projects in all of these areas, in addition to its continuing work on crime and criminal justice.

Vera's Demonstration Projects

Vera's ideas for reform begin in the experiences of its staff as they work in the

streets, courts, schools, jails, and other institutions of the city. Vera project planners use these experiences and insights to recast familiar problems in ways that suggest new, practical solutions. When a solution has promise, Vera designs a demonstration through which the idea can be refined and tested. At the same time, Vera looks for potential partners in government who have an interest in solving the problem. When these elements are in place, Vera seeks private grants and public funds to support the demonstration, measure the results, and—if the innovation succeeds—expand the demonstration.

Vera does not continue to operate its projects after their demonstration periods are complete. Vera closes its unsuccessful projects and spins off its successes into public agencies or independent not-for-profit organizations, freeing Vera's core staff to pursue new ideas and demonstrations. Vera therefore works closely with its public partners throughout the design, operation, and evaluation of its demonstration projects, encouraging these officials to participate in the learning that is essential to the ultimate institutionalization of successful reforms.

Action-Research

From the moment a new idea has promise, the design of a demonstration is a collaborative exercise involving both practitioners and professional researchers. This commitment to action-research means that Vera projects are designed to advance the

state of our knowledge as well as the state of practice; it means that the research tools needed to understand what each project is doing are built into its basic operations and that the actual demonstrations are accompanied by structured research.

Vera's research observes and analyzes the process of implementing new demonstrations, measures the extent to which the demonstrations are achieving their goals, and provides rapid feedback to project directors so that they can adjust their operations during the course of the demonstrations.

To conduct this research, Vera maintains a department of professional researchers skilled in quantitative and qualitative methods. The presentation of their research in articles, books, and papers—subject to professional review—serves both to disseminate the knowledge gained in Vera's demonstrations to a wide audience and to insure the integrity of the research itself.

Vera's Legacy

The value of Vera's approach to reform is evident in the range of its innovations enduring in New York. The city's Victim Services, Inc., Criminal Justice Agency, Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), Legal Action Center, Manhattan Bowery Corporation, Housing and Services, Inc. (HSI), and Wildcat Services Corporation all began as Vera demonstration projects, and were then spun off as independent not-for-profit organizations. Smaller demonstrations are occasionally turned over to existing not-for-profits, such as Vera's Job Site project, now part of The Lighthouse.

Other successful demonstrations have been institutionalized within

government agencies, including the Community Police Officer Program (CPOP) that brought community policing to every precinct in the city; the Early Case Assessment Bureaus (ECABs) operating in most of the district attorneys' offices; and the system of Desk Appearance Tickets (DATs) used to bring minor offenders before the courts without requiring them to spend a night in jail.

Vera's legacy, however, extends far beyond New York. Once Vera has operated and tested a demonstration, its staff provides a unique source of technical assistance both nationally and abroad, combining the sophisticated expertise of academic consultants with practical experience gained in the actual operation of front-line organizations.

Because successful innovation is highly dependent on local context, Vera does not encourage others simply to replicate its projects outside New York. Instead, Vera shares the lessons it learns so that local officials elsewhere can readily apply them to their own situations. This assistance may take the form of an individual publication or participation in a workshop; Vera researchers may conduct evaluations of programs outside New York using expertise and experience gained in Vera's action-research; Vera may invite selected officials from across the country to observe its projects first hand throughout their demonstration periods; or Vera may post a member of its staff to another jurisdiction, as it has in both London and Paris, to work alongside officials there in their own process of reform. For example, the Bail Information Schemes recently institutionalized in every Magistrates' Court in England and Wales are a product of Vera's collaboration with the British Home Office in the 1980s, inspired by Vera's very first demonstration: the Manhattan Bail Project.

This Portfolio

This portfolio describes the work underway at the Vera Institute in the last six months of 1994. Of particular significance during this period, Vera's computer technology group built a sophisticated but easy-to-use crime mapping tool for the New York City Police Department, and Vera's research department began examining the consequences of the nation's extraordinarily high level of incarceration on the communities from which prisoners come and to which they return. Also during this period, Vera launched

a project in New York County analyzing new ways that lawyers are assigned to represent indigent defendants in criminal cases.

The descriptions in the portfolio are necessarily brief, but each should convey the overall ambition of the project as well as its specific accomplishments in the current period. At the start of each description are the names of the Vera staff who managed the project during this time. Additional information about any specific project is available directly from these staff members or their successors.



Section One

Demonstration Projects

Employment for Boot Camp Graduates: *The Neighborhood Work and Vocational Development Projects*

- Mindy Tarlow, *Project Director*
- Kevin Curran, *Project Director, NWP*
- Tani Mills, *Project Director, VDP*
- Brad Dudding, *Finance Director, NWP/VDP*

Since first appearing in 1983, boot camp programs have steadily broadened their appeal among the nation's legislators as they struggle to contain spiraling correctional costs. Over half the states now operate programs for young adult offenders that replace traditional jail and prison regimens with rigorous programs of two-to-six months. These programs typically include an intensive mix of military drill, physical labor, group discipline, and classroom work. The country's largest is New York State's Shock Incarceration Program, which graduates more than 2,000 offenders each year, about twice that of any other state.

The problem for the young people leaving these programs is that while they may have been changed by their experience, those changes are short-lived when, with a criminal record to explain, they return to neighborhoods that provide little opportunity for legitimate employment. Whatever discipline and ambition the Shock Program may instill vanishes within days if it is not reinforced in the community.

The Vera Institute of Justice and the State Division of Parole have worked together to design, to implement, and to

operate a pair of projects that try to solve this problem for the 1,000 or so graduates returning to New York City each year. Basically, the Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) operates as a day-labor employer, providing shock parolees with an immediate source of paid work experience upon their release, while they are looking for full-time, unsubsidized employment. The Vocational Development Program (VDP) provides employment skills training and job development services for the shock parolees, helping the participants to use the experience they gain in NWP and recommendations of their NWP Supervisors to obtain regular employment.

Together, NWP and VDP produce extraordinary results. Since the start of their work with shock graduates in 1989, they have been placing about two-thirds of their participants into full-time unsubsidized employment within 66 days of release. Due in part to NWP and VDP, shock parolees are almost one-third as likely to return to prison within a year of parole as similar parolees not in the "aftershock" parole program (8% for shock parolees; 23% for regular parolees).

How the Projects Work

The platoons that train together in boot camp graduate together six months after the start of their sentences. Technically, they are paroled earlier than they would have been if they had not been in the Shock Incarceration Program. Every

Thursday another platoon graduates from one of New York State's boot camps, and all of the New York City residents in each platoon (25 per week on average) are directed to report the next day to the NWP/VDP offices. The requirement to report as a group the day after release is crucial to maintaining the discipline learned in boot camp and is a condition of parole.

At NWP/VDP, staff clearly outline the programs' expectations for all participants. Each individual is ensured a job if he or she remains focused and motivated. When a participant shows up for appointments with the assigned job developer, he or she must be on time and dressed for an interview. During the four-day work week at NWP, the new worker must arrive at the site on time, wearing regulation work boots and ready to work. Their conduct on the site must be cooperative and productive at all times. Drinking or drug use are strictly forbidden.

During the first week after release from shock camp, the platoon attends life skills training in which they learn how to dress for a job, prepare a résumé, resolve a conflict, and hold onto a job once they are hired. VDP staff also helps participants determine accurate work histories and identify special interests or abilities that can enhance their opportunities for job placement. VDP then assigns each participant to a Job Developer for assessment, and together they draw up an individual employment plan. The Job Developer works to improve the participant's interviewing skills while encouraging and developing independent job-search strategies.

At the end of the first week, NWP hires the participants to do maintenance and repair work. NWP expects each parolee to work four days each week at one of its

many work sites around the city until they land a permanent job. On the fifth day each week, the participants work with their VDP Job Developer and attend job interviews with potential employers.

The NWP work is crucial to the success of the program. The work assignments tend to be physically demanding and low skilled—debris clearing in state parks and on state highways, furniture moving, setup for concrete pours, wall preparation, and painting. Although not complicated, these jobs do require discipline and provide the participants with an accurate sense of the demands they can expect from a real employer. The feel of a real job is enhanced because the state agencies receiving the services expect professional work. NWP receives work requests from city college campuses, state agencies that operate residential centers, and other government departments that require regular maintenance work including court facilities throughout the city. The agencies use funds already earmarked to buy these services to support NWP, and NWP pays the parolees minimum wage. NWP puts a check in the hand of each working participant at the end of the shift. This cash offers some support while they look for regular employment.

The NWP supervisors conduct the work sites as employment labs. They work closely with VDP job developers and swap helpful information regarding each participant's strengths and weaknesses in daily phone calls from the work sites. They focus particular attention on the participant's acquisition of basic but essential skills for employment — getting to the job on time, listening to a boss, working a full day, wearing the right clothes, and bearing up under criticism from a supervisor.

As long as the participant sticks with the program, the Job Developer is responsible for marshaling appropriate resources that can improve the parolee's employability. An individualized case management approach allows the Job Developer to point out special problems or goals to the NWP Supervisor overseeing the transitional work experience.

In addition to job placement, VDP staff provides parolees with special assistance: locating children in foster care and helping to establish visitation, retrieving property from jail or prison, finding housing, and obtaining documents from the Immigration and Naturalization Service necessary for employment. After placement, the VDP Job Developer monitors the participant's performance for several months through regular visits to the workplace. In this way VDP staff helps the newly hired employee maintain motivation while trying to resolve problems that arise.

Not everyone makes it through this program. Some parolees relapse into drug use. A very few are arrested for new offenses. But most stick to it and find jobs. From July through December 1994, VDP worked with 520 parolees and made 460 placements with an average hourly wage of \$5.80. Recent data collection shows that over 50 percent of all placements include fringe benefits. Placements continue to be strongest in the general service, manufacturing, and retail/wholesale industries with the food services sector still providing a sizable number of openings. The City Department of Employment awarded a rating of "Excellent" to Vera's employment services for parolees for the period of 1992 to 1994, naming VDP as one of the strongest performers in their portfolio of programs for those deemed hard-to-employ.

Vera will spin off NWP/VDP as an independent not-for-profit organization in 1995. Even as we prepare these projects for independence, others are already looking to them as models for similar programs. Vera responded to a request from the New York City Department of Probation for a pilot program using the NWP/VDP design to test whether such intervention will help probationers fulfill their obligations successfully and avoid further involvement in the criminal justice system. In November 1994, a small number of probationers were incorporated into the ongoing program, following the same schedule as that set for the Shock parolees. This effort is still in progress.

In September 1994, by way of broadening its participant base, Vera approached the State Department of Correctional Services with an offer to provide employment services to the Work Releasees returning to New York City from the State's pre-release correctional facility in Gowanda, New York. Vera and the Department agreed on the terms of a pilot in December to serve 300 releasees, which will commence in 1995.

As part of an effort to further understand the needs of its participants, in April 1994, Vera contracted with an ethnographer to conduct a study examining why some participants fail while others succeed. The ethnographer selected a target group before graduation from Shock Incarceration and is following its progress since returning to the City. In addition, the ethnographer will study the readjustment of participants who completed the NWP/VDP program and incorporate their results with those of the more recent enrollees. As this research concludes over the next several months, we expect to gain insights that will allow NWP/VDP to better serve its participants.

Independence for People with Developmental Disabilities:

Job Path

—Fredda Rosen, *Project Director*

—Emily Ellis, *Deputy Project Director*

Job Path is a long-standing Vera demonstration program that develops and tests ways of enabling people with developmental disabilities to work and live in integrated non-institutional environments. The program works in partnership with city, state, and federal governments and with a wide range of private businesses and nonprofit organizations. Currently, Job Path is piloting five new efforts, each with a different focus but the same overarching goal: to help people with severe disabilities become full participants in mainstream community life.

The newest initiative, recently funded by a grant from the Dole Foundation, will demonstrate how employers can provide “natural supports” so that people with developmental disabilities can work without intensive, costly social service agency intervention. Although many individuals with disabilities work in the mainstream, they often find themselves less than full members of the workplace culture. The traditional practice of providing an agency-funded “job coach” to help the worker with a disability learn the job can be stigmatizing. In addition, the practice excludes from the training process the supervisors and co-workers who know the job best.

In partnership with United Parcel Service, Job Path will address these problems through a two-pronged effort. The demonstration’s first component will build capacity for providing natural supports within UPS, enabling the company to train and support people with

developmental disabilities on their jobs. The second component will encourage the use of natural supports throughout the shipping distribution industry by helping UPS installations in other localities and other package distribution companies to adapt the demonstration’s techniques. “UPS is very enthusiastic about our partnership with Job Path and the opportunity to establish natural supports for individuals with developmental disabilities,” says Michael Ridolfi, the Metro New York District Work Force Planning Manager at UPS.

The second new effort targets individuals who previously had not been considered candidates for employment. This project tests whether Job Path’s supported work strategies, which combine work and on-the-job counseling support, can help people with the most severe disabilities move into the workforce. One group of current trainees is multiply disabled: they are blind, have a developmental disability and a secondary psychiatric diagnosis. Job Path is also testing whether supported work techniques can help people with traumatic brain injuries.

A third experiment targets people served in the state’s most intensive and restrictive setting, Medicaid-funded day treatment programs. This experiment is a good example of how this long-standing project continues to produce innovation. The obstacles to reform in the day treatment system are daunting: service providers are reluctant to exchange stable Medicaid funding for less-familiar supported employment grants; parents have genuine concerns about their severely disabled sons and daughters leaving the safety of day treatment for the vagaries of the work world; potential participants, though eager to work, have had little exposure to the

world beyond the day treatment center and are comfortable with the structure and social network they've found there.

As they began to work with day treatment participants, Job Path staff found that they needed more powerful tools than existed in the Job Path program. And, given the range of their needs, helping day treatment participants move into the workforce seemed a limited — and limiting — goal.

As a result, Job Path staff redesigned the project to find ways to help participants achieve satisfaction and self-sufficiency in their personal lives as well as through work. The project uses the techniques of "person-centered planning," an approach that enables people with severe disabilities to make choices and find activities of interest that connect them to their communities and their neighbors. Using a staff team of four who work as "community facilitators," outside their usual roles as counselors or job developers, Job Path has targeted a small number of day treatment participants and other Job Path trainees, focusing on those with the most severe disabilities.

In addition to asking, "What kind of work would you like to do?", the team finds out how participants would like to live their lives: how and where they would like to live, what kinds of relationships they would like to have, how they would like to spend their leisure time, and what kinds of services they need. The goal is to help participants, most of whom have had little opportunity to make choices about their lives, identify their goals and dreams, and pursue them.

The team's work is not done in office counseling sessions. Team members spend time with participants and their families and friends at home, at work or in the day

treatment program, and in their neighborhoods. The idea is to help each participant create a "circle of support," a cadre of people who will support the individual's plans and activities.

A three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration has expanded the project's work. The grant, which began January 1, 1994, supports activities to help individuals with severe disabilities become involved in social and recreational activities in their communities.

The project is helping participants extend their lives beyond the day treatment center. One young woman works at an advertising agency and no longer attends day treatment. She goes to aerobics classes at a neighborhood health club in the evenings and is beginning to think about finding her own apartment. Another participant has a part-time job at a fast food restaurant and volunteers at the ASPCA, while still another is making friends with the regulars at his local bowling alley.

Job Path's fourth pilot effort uses person-centered strategies to provide new opportunities for special education students when they leave school at age 21. The work has been undertaken in partnership with the New York City Board of Education's District 75, which operates the Board's programming for students with the most severe disabilities. These students have limited post-special education options; the vast majority leave school for facility-based day treatment and sheltered workshop programs.

Using the person-centered approach, Job Path and District 75 staff are averting sheltered placements for a few individuals. Post-graduation plans for one young man include a supermarket job, and membership

at a nearby recreation center where he enjoys working out and socializing with other members.

The District 75 officials who are responsible for graduating students want to make this kind of graduation plan the rule rather than the exception. They are discussing with Job Path staff the possibility of an expanded partnership that would build the District's capacity for making and implementing person-centered plans, and change outcomes for students District-wide.

Operating parallel to the person-centered planning work but sharing its approach and values is Job Path's "supported living" project, the fifth new effort. The demonstration aims to help people establish their own homes and live independently in the community. Job Path staff work with participants to find safe, affordable housing and locate durable support services. The project's focus is on arranging "natural" supports from family, friends, or neighbors. Six participants are now living in their own apartments.

One new participant in the supported living project is a lively young man who loves rap music and dreams of becoming a disk jockey. Because of a neurological condition and self-injurious behavior, he has lived in institutions since he was ten years old. Now 20, he is eager to leave, but found the doors of traditional group homes closed to him because of the nature of his disability. With his involvement and his family's support, Job Path will help him find an apartment and hire staff who can assist him in using positive strategies to overcome the self-injurious behavior. Job Path will also help him fulfill his other goals of finishing school and finding a job.

Over the coming year, the five new projects should yield practical information

that can be used to spur change in the current service system. In that same fashion, Job Path's supported work program served as a model for reform in the past decade. Vera created Job Path sixteen years ago to test the hypothesis that techniques of "supported work" — developed by Vera in work with ex-offenders, ex-addicts, and others — could help people with developmental disabilities move into the mainstream workforce and gain greater independence. Within a few years, those techniques proved successful, and supported work has now become the standard strategy across the country to assist persons with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment.

Job Path's work began in the late 1970s when New York State fundamentally changed its treatment of people with developmental disabilities, entering a consent decree in the litigation over Willowbrook. The consent decree mandated the movement of people from the custodial care of large institutions to small, residential facilities in neighborhoods across the state. The new policy was based on the idea that people with developmental disabilities would be part of community life.

In practice, however, even after leaving the large institutions, many of these people spent their days in segregated sheltered workshops. Vera established Job Path in partnership with New York State to demonstrate that people with developmental disabilities could work in the conventional labor market. The demonstration has been effective; more than 1100 Job Path trainees have become employees of banks, law firms, department stores, restaurants, and other large and small businesses in New York City.

In the mid-1980s, Vera staff began to adapt Job Path's techniques to two

populations for whom the program as originally designed seemed inadequate: those with disabilities so severe that their school or workshop counselors thought that they could never work, and those who entered Job Path but had difficulty holding their jobs when counseling support was diminished. These individuals needed long-term, even lifelong support in order to work. To meet their needs, the staff introduced a new "supported employment" component.

Today, Job Path offers two employment options: transitional employment, based on the program's original model, is for people who, given a structured work experience and intensive but time-limited support, can learn to work independently; supported employment is designed for those who need ongoing support in order to work. Over the last six months, the transitional and supported employment programs moved 46 Job Path trainees into mainstream jobs at an average weekly wage of \$198.

One young man who was recently hired dreamed of working in the entertainment industry, but because of his cognitive limitations and a seizure disorder, a psychologist recommended a sheltered workshop. Job Path determined that with memory aids and the support of a structured environment, he could thrive on a job. Today he is working at a broadcasting company as a mail clerk. "I like going to soap operas and meeting new people," he says. "Finally, after many years, I'm very happy to be working for a big entertainment company."

A New Kind of Public Defender: *The Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem*

—Leonard Noisette, *Project Director*

—Robin Steinberg, *Deputy Project Director*

The Neighborhood Defender Service (NDS) is developing and testing a new design for urban public defender offices. With funding primarily from the City of New York, it provides criminal-defense and related services to residents of Harlem who cannot afford to hire legal counsel. NDS was planned as a five-year demonstration project, and it anticipates spinning off from Vera and operating as an independent agency in June 1996.

Using its alternative model of criminal-defense services for the indigent, NDS seeks to provide high-quality, client-centered representation in all legal matters relating to a criminal accusation. It also strives to assist clients over time with a variety of problems rather than focusing exclusively on the individual case of the moment, to perform aftercare and preventive services to reduce further involvement with the criminal justice system, and to educate the community it serves regarding a broad range of criminal justice issues. By successfully providing such services to its clients, NDS also aims to demonstrate that reducing unnecessary pretrial detention and inappropriate imprisonment can save money and time.

Program Design

NDS is different from traditional public defender offices in four ways. It is based in the neighborhood; it emphasizes early intervention; it uses a team approach; and it focuses on the client.

Neighborhood based. Unlike traditional defender offices, NDS operates from the

community where its clients live rather than in or near the courthouses in which their cases are prosecuted. From a centrally located office, NDS offers its services to eligible members of the Harlem community and encourages residents to request those services as early in the case as possible. The office is open and active seven days a week.

Early Intervention. NDS was designed to begin its work for clients earlier than traditional defenders. Instead of waiting for a court to assign counsel to a defendant, NDS gets involved as soon as an indigent person accused of a crime asks for assistance. Many clients are first interviewed by NDS staff at the police station, immediately after arrest when they or a relative call the NDS 24-hour line. Some contact NDS even earlier, if they or their relatives hear that the police are looking for them. In these latter cases, NDS begins its investigations before arrest and can help clients to surrender voluntarily.

The primary aim of early intervention is to permit the attorneys to bring to the first court appearance knowledge about the defendant and the case. Vera planners hoped that this would permit NDS lawyers to provide the arrainging judge with accurate and meaningful information about both the facts of the case and the defendant's community ties, possibly persuading the judge that the defendant could properly be released rather than incarcerated until trial. In addition, the planners hoped that early intervention would put NDS defense teams in a better position to evaluate the strength of the prosecutor's case and therefore make better strategic decisions in the course of plea bargaining and trial preparation.

Team Defense. NDS provides legal services through a team of lawyers, paralegal investigators, administrative

assistants, and interns, rather than through individual attorneys. The team-based model results in collaborative work between staff of different experiences and backgrounds, and it allows the office to continue work on a case despite the temporary unavailability of any one lawyer.

The staff at NDS is unusual for a public defender. One-third are lawyers, in contrast to about two-thirds in most defender services. Most of the nonlawyers — the administrative assistants, interns, and community workers — operate in teams alongside lawyers rather than in separate divisions. The community workers, who handle most of the investigations, are young college graduates rather than the retired police officers employed by many public defenders.

Team defense at NDS is heavily dependent on the NDS computer system. Every staff member works at a personal computer connected to the NDS local area network. Team members record their work on a variety of custom-designed screens, allowing their colleagues to keep up to date on all that is happening on their cases, and to relay advice and suggestions in what become overlapping electronic discussions of strategy.

Client-centered Representation. NDS teams represent eligible Harlem residents in any courthouse in New York or Bronx county where they may be charged with a criminal offense. Traditional defenders are typically assigned to courthouses, and their relationships with clients are defined by where the accused is being prosecuted.

The NDS client-centered approach also allows it to represent clients in any number of civil matters that are related to their criminal charges. In New York City, as elsewhere, prosecutors are increasingly

using civil proceedings to punish offenders for criminal offenses. In addition to their criminal charges, many NDS clients face legal proceedings that seek forfeiture of cars, cash, and leaseholds, or actions for eviction, termination of their parental rights, cancellation of public benefits, or deportation. NDS is able to represent its clients in all such parallel proceedings.

The broader relationship between defense team and client is evident as well in the priority accorded to alternatives-to-incarceration plans and aftercare such as help with shelter, benefits, job training and placement. And, if a particular client returns to the office months or years later with another case, the same team will represent him or her. All of these features encourage team members to assist clients over time with a wide range of problems, rather than focusing exclusively on the individual case of the moment.

Community Outreach

In December 1990, NDS began serving the residents of Harlem. By the end of 1994, NDS had represented more than 4,000 clients, mostly in felony cases.

From its inception, NDS had as a goal to maintain a caseload primarily by responding to clients' requests for its services. This aim was part of the recognition that NDS can best serve its clients, and the system as a whole, when it commences work as early in the case as possible. NDS planners recognized that for some period of time the agency would have to supplement such a caseload with traditional court assignments. Through its outreach activities, however, NDS strove to educate the Harlem community about the availability and importance of its early-entry capacity so that the necessity for court assignments would decrease over time.

Consistent with these efforts, the percentage of NDS cases that began with a request for representation from a client or family member has steadily increased over the life of the project. As of September 1994, NDS has been able to maintain a full active caseload exclusively on such cases — an accomplishment that few knowledgeable people believed was possible.

NDS outreach and education activities take a variety of forms. Staff have created and regularly disseminate leaflets, posters, and other material throughout the Harlem community, and have conducted countless presentations to community groups. NDS also created a network of more than 300 organizations and influential members of the community with whom it collaborates in providing an array of services. The project was recently awarded the Circle of Hope Award by the Grand Central Partnership's Social Services Division in recognition of "outstanding service to homeless people in the Grand Central District."

In addition, NDS has been involved in a variety of youth activities. In the winter of 1993-94, NDS taught its fourth semester of a ten-unit high school curriculum called "Conflicts with Cops." Created by NDS staff, the course uses lectures and role playing to teach young people how to manage and diffuse encounters with police officers. This fall and last, staff participated in the Career Academy of a local junior high school, holding weekly sessions on-site to expose a group of students to the work of a defender office and employment opportunities in the legal field. For the past two summers NDS has sponsored a summer youth employment program for Harlem teens under the auspices of the New York City Department of Youth Services. The youths are assigned to the NDS Outreach Unit and assist in the dissemination of

literature about the project. This past summer, coordinators expanded the scope of the program to include office skills training and exploration of employment options.

Results

In December 1993, the Vera Institute's research staff provided the second of three planned evaluations of the impact of NDS representation. The researchers measured impact by comparing clients represented by NDS who were arrested between January 1991 and June 1992 with a sample of matched clients who were represented by traditional defenders in the same courts over the same time. As with earlier research, the results showed that NDS clients had higher release rates, lower conviction rates, and fewer sentences of incarceration, but only slightly so.

The rates of pretrial release shown by the research were disappointing. Although NDS clients were released slightly more

often than defendants of the same race, age, gender, prior record, and current charge, the difference was not large enough to be reliably attributed to NDS representation. In the beginning of 1994, NDS began adjusting its early case entry protocols in an effort to increase rates of pretrial release. The impact of this change should be apparent in the next phase of research, now underway.

In contrast, the incarceration imposed on NDS clients was significantly less than that imposed on similar clients represented by traditional defenders by a wide margin. The researchers found that the 395 NDS clients in the sample were sentenced to substantially fewer days of incarceration (39,835) than 395 matched defendants. These results suggest that the additional information that NDS teams are able to provide to judges and prosecutors by virtue of the model's focus on social service intervention, particularly alternatives to incarceration and aftercare, has a meaningful impact.

Section Two

Project Development & Exploratory Research

Legal Coercion in Drug Treatment

—Douglas Young, *Project Director*

For the past two years, Vera has been examining how the powers of the criminal justice system can be used to improve the effectiveness of drug treatment for offenders. This research began in early 1992 with a small pilot study aimed at exploring addicts' perceptions of legal pressures to enter and to remain in treatment. In October 1993, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) provided support for a more formal evaluation of the treatment-diversion model used by the Kings County District Attorney's Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison (DTAP) program. DTAP diverts repeat, nonviolent defendants who are bound for prison to long-term, residential, community-based drug treatment. Vera's research advanced again in October 1994, with the awarding of a five-year grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to support expansion of the earlier research and collaboration on a study of DTAP's long-term effectiveness.

Interest in DTAP has been spurred by the program's treatment retention rates, which are two to three times higher than those reported in research on comparable treatment services. Vera's experimental research focuses on identifying the factors responsible for DTAP retention. Are DTAP participants uniquely predisposed to stay in treatment? Or, more likely, does DTAP operate in unique ways to enhance

retention? If it does, what program practices are most critical? Is it DTAP's unique enforcement capacities or the severity of the consequence for failing in DTAP? Or is it the program's close association with the treatment sites?

Vera is examining these and related questions by studying two groups of treatment clients — Brooklyn DTAP participants and a matched comparison sample of persons attending the same treatment programs under some other criminal justice mandate (such as probation, parole, or a court referral). In addition to tracking these individuals' retention in treatment, Vera researchers collect extensive interview data upon admission to treatment and about two months later. The data, gathered from standardized psychosocial assessment instruments, scales of program involvement, and specialized measures tapping client motivation and perceptions of legal pressure, will be analyzed to examine how such factors influence length of stay in either group.

Subjects began entering this research in March; by the end of 1994, 113 persons were participating, including 71 Brooklyn DTAP clients. During the final quarter of the year, Vera researchers also began interviewing a sub-sample of the subjects' referral and supervision agents (probation officers, Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime counselors). So far, retention in the two study groups has followed

expectations: as of December 31, 90 percent of the DTAP sample and 64 percent of the comparison group were still in treatment. The first phase of this research is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1995, involving approximately 180 subjects who will be tracked for at least six months post-admission. We anticipate issuing a report to NIJ near the end of the year.

Data collection for the second, expansion phase of this research will begin in the spring under NIDA support. A much larger comparison sample will be identified in this phase, affording a broader picture of how legal coercion operates and is perceived in more conventional, non-DTAP settings among offenders mandated to treatment from probation, parole, or the courts. Treatment clients who entered the research in both its phases will be tracked for a much longer period in the NIDA-funded project: until they leave or complete treatment. Other areas of expansion include interviews with additional referral and supervision agents, and interviews with subjects as they complete treatment or soon after they drop out of the program.

Under the NIDA award, Vera staff are also collaborating with investigators from the New York City Criminal Justice Agency, the Kings County DA's office, and the Research Triangle Institute on a formal study of DTAP's effectiveness. Also beginning in the spring, this quasi-experimental research will focus on a group of DTAP participants and a matched sample of individuals who were arrested and convicted in a borough other than Kings and did not have the opportunity to attend Brooklyn DTAP. Both groups will be interviewed at admission to treatment or prison and then followed for up to a year after their return to the community. In addition to the program's cost-effectiveness, this research will assess DTAP's effects on

criminal recidivism, return to drug use, and ability to hold a job.

Evaluation of DTAP Expansion

—Douglas Young, *Project Director*

Since 1992, Vera has also been monitoring the New York State-sponsored expansion of the Drug Treatment Alternative-to-Prison program to the Manhattan and Queens District Attorneys offices, and the City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP). These programs, which have now been operating for about two years, mirror the goals of the Kings County program (which began in the fall of 1990). All DTAP programs aim at diverting defendants charged with a second felony offense (and thus bound for prison under the State's mandatory sentencing laws) to 15-24 month residential therapeutic community (TC) treatment programs. Participants who drop out or are expelled by the program face the legally mandated prison term (typically 2-4 or 3-6 years); charges are dismissed if the person completes treatment.

During the latter part of 1994, Vera staff conducted data analyses and prepared the Institute's second annual report on DTAP expansion. A draft of this report was circulated to DTAP administrators and State and City officials in November, and the report will be issued publicly in early 1995. This report expands upon Vera's *First Year Report on DTAP Expansion* (December 1993), with updated information collected through June 1994, representing the expansion sites' first eighteen months of operation.

The report reflects the descriptive focus of this research, which is being conducted with limited funding. Vera

researchers track program performance of the three expansion sites in the form of participant admissions, terminations, and dispositions, and they interview participants upon entry to treatment. There is no comparison or control group in this research. Some of the central findings discussed in the new report, *Diverting Drug Offenders to Treatment: Year Two of DTAP Expansion*, include:

- *Prosecutors who implement DTAP can identify and place substantial numbers of nonviolent, second felony defendants into treatment. Together, the four DTAP sites placed 463 defendants in treatment, or about 25 per month during our study period.*
- *DTAP has gained widespread support from the existing residential drug treatment community. More than two dozen private treatment providers, including what are widely regarded as the largest and most reputable TCs in New York City (and the country), are now admitting DTAP clients.*
- *Despite this support, the dearth of readily accessible residential treatment beds remains the most frequently voiced concern among DTAP administrators.*
- *DTAP participants show more severe problems than most treatment clients, and we expect they have more severe problems than offenders placed in most diversion programs. About two-thirds of DTAP participants do not have a high school diploma or a GED; only one-fifth had full-time work at the time of their arrest; 38 percent reported daily use of crack and 24 percent were using heroin daily; and based on official criminal records (which were unsealed and thus would provide under counts of actual*

numbers), they averaged five prior arrests (three felony-level), three convictions, and one jail sentence.

- *DTAP programs have high retention rates, suggesting considerable promise for the program's long-term effectiveness. About two-thirds (65 percent) of the 463 admissions remained in treatment at the close of our reporting period. At one month after admission, 86 percent were still in treatment; 73 percent were in after three months, and 63 percent after six months (there were too few admissions to look closely at longer-term retention). These rates are 1½-2½ times higher than rates in comparable treatment programs.*

- *All four DTAPs have high rates of return to custody (from 80-92 percent) for those who fail in treatment. In three of the four sites, the average time to return to custody is a week or less.*

These interim findings will be updated yet again in the early summer of 1995, as Vera continues monitoring the DTAP expansion sites in New York City.

Local Crime Victimization Surveys —Lola Odubekun, Project Director

Vera has completed New York City's first local crime victimization survey since the 1970s. Unlike public opinion polls, which ask a few general questions about crime along with other issues, this study covered twenty-two specific crimes and obtained detailed information on the circumstances surrounding the "most serious" experience of victimization, as defined by the victim.

The survey was designed to supplement statistics on crimes reported to the police as well as to provide a range of information on people's perceptions of crime levels in the city, of neighborhood disorder, and of criminal justice officials such as judges and police officers. The 35-item questionnaire was administered to 1,199 residents of the five boroughs of New York City by telephone and in face-to-face interviews with 26 public housing residents in Red Hook, Brooklyn, during the summer of 1994.

Preliminary analyses of the data reveal changes in the level of crime victimization for different offenses as well as changes in reporting victimizations to the police, since the last local city survey of 1974. The results also indicate widespread concern among New York City residents about specific quality-of-life problems in their neighborhoods. Responses to the in-depth interviews were, in many respects, similar to those of the citywide respondents, but they also show differences, particularly regarding perceptions of crime in New York City and the circumstances surrounding their experiences of victimization. Red Hook residents expressed great fondness for their neighborhood, but agreed that the neighborhood faced very serious crime problems involving drug sales and related gunfire.

Full details of the research results will be available, upon release of the final report by the Institute, in the spring of 1995.

Atlas of Crime and Justice in New York City: Second Edition

The victimization survey follows Vera's publication in October 1993 of the first *Atlas of Crime and Justice in New York City*—a collection of data from a wide range of city, state, and private criminal justice

agencies. The data are presented in a nontraditional format: thirty maps show the distribution of crime, the levels of census data, and the locations of social service agencies by precinct, community district, census tract, and zip code. Thirty-one charts present crime data over time; all maps and charts are accompanied by descriptive, nontechnical text. The maps show that decreases in crime for the city as a whole mask substantial local increases in some neighborhoods.

The *Atlas* provides a common framework for interagency discussion about the relations between New York's communities, crime, and criminal justice agencies. Although the *Atlas* was circulated primarily to state and city agencies, Vera has distributed hundreds of copies to individuals and has filled bulk orders from local colleges for use in undergraduate courses in criminal justice and urban planning.

Vera plans to publish a second edition of the *Atlas* in the summer of 1995.

Employment for Welfare Applicants

—Meryl Schwartz, *Project Director*

Government officials at all levels are feverishly debating welfare reform. The most common plans propose programs that move people from welfare to work. To design successful programs that achieve this goal, policymakers will need an accurate understanding of the kinds of people they are trying to help and the kinds of problems they face. The value of one approach over another depends on whether people seeking

public assistance are trying to avoid work or want jobs, whether they have no skills or have significant job experience, whether the obstacles preventing them from working are simple or complex, and whether or not these obstacles are amenable to government-supported solutions.

From April to November 1994, the Vera Institute conducted a small experiment for the New York State Department of Social Services (DSS) to explore some of these questions. In December, the Institute began planning a follow-up project to expand on its findings from the experimental research.

The 1994 study was initiated to aid the implementation of Jobs FIRST, the DSS welfare reform plan that aims to reduce reliance on public assistance by promoting self-sufficiency through employment. Among the proposals in Jobs FIRST is a novel strategy to target employment services to people applying for Home Relief by helping them find jobs before they ever get on welfare.¹ Jobs FIRST encourages local welfare agencies to use the month-and-a-half gap between the submission of an application for assistance and the beginning of benefit receipt to provide applicants with employment and other services, in contrast to the traditional approach of providing services to people after they begin receiving benefits. DSS selected the Home Relief population for this approach because single applicants face fewer obstacles to employment than applicants with children

— they don't need child care, a significant number are immediately employable, and the entire cost savings from diversion can benefit state and local government.² Recognizing the inherent danger in this design — that expensive services might be delivered to people who would never have received services in the first place if their applications were denied or they found employment on their own — DSS wanted to understand more about the target population at the outset of the planning process.

Vera undertook this study because of its unique ability to provide welfare applicants with immediate temporary work and to assist them in finding permanent employment through its Vocational Development Project (VDP) and Neighborhood Work Project (NWP). DSS cites VDP/NWP as a model of employment and training programs that do exactly what they want to do — get people “temporary jobs, an immediate source of income, and a connection to the labor market.”³ VDP and NWP have successfully provided services to people on parole for over ten years. Together, they combine the two essential features in finding work: knowing how to find a job and having a work history to show to a potential employer.

The study was conducted in two stages. The first was designed to probe the interest in employment among single employable applicants for Home Relief. It

¹ Home Relief is New York State's cash assistance program for people not eligible for federally reimbursed benefits, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI), Social Security (SSDI) or Veterans Assistance. Recipients are typically single adults between the ages of 18 and 64. Approximately 244,000 men and women are receiving Home Relief in New York State.

² Unlike some cash assistance programs which receive partial federal reimbursement, Home Relief is entirely supported by state and local government.

³ NYS Department of Social Services, *New York's Welfare Reform Agenda: "A Jobs FIRST" Strategy*, January 1994, p. 3.

consisted of interviews with 253 randomly selected employable applicants in New York City. From that pool, a smaller group of 41 people was selected to participate in a second phase which evaluated whether NWP/VDP, designed for a different population of the hard to employ, could help applicants for Home Relief get jobs instead of welfare.

Among the most significant findings are:

- A significant number of employable Home Relief applicants have held jobs. More than half have worked in the last year, more than a third in the last six months. The applicants we surveyed who had been employed reported a median income at their last job of \$462 per week. Roughly a fourth had collected unemployment benefits in the last six months, while only 10 percent had relied on public assistance during the same period.

- The vast majority of these applicants would prefer a job to welfare, but not at minimum wage without health insurance. Of those surveyed, 78% said they would prefer a job to continuing with their application for public assistance. This percentage dropped to 16% when NWP/VDP was described and they were told that they would be ineligible for Medicaid.

- Among those who accepted a place in NWP/VDP, almost a third found permanent jobs — half with health insurance. Less than a third went on public assistance. In comparison, half of those placed in a control group went on welfare.

Contrary to the popular image of the Home Relief applicant as a young African American male with no history of employment, the Home Relief applicant pool is a very diverse group. It includes

both men and women who have long work histories and who have never worked before, people who earned significant incomes and those who have never made more than minimum wage, people with specialized skills and people with none. It is this diversity that suggests that no single strategy to promote employment will be sufficient to move these people from welfare to work.

A particularly intriguing finding was the high level of concern among applicants about accepting low-wage employment without health insurance or Medicaid. A significant number of those surveyed indicated that although they are healthy, they would not take a minimum-wage job without insurance because they would be ineligible for Medicaid. With support from the Commonwealth Fund, we are planning a series of focus groups to understand what these people mean when they say that they need Medicaid. We hope that the answer to this question will help us design services for welfare applicants who want to work but cannot do so today because of issues of medical care and insurance.

Guardianship and Child Welfare

—Meryl Schwartz, *Project Director*

In January 1993, Vera began an exploration of the ways in which the legal relationship of guardian to ward might be used to protect children who come to the attention of the child welfare system. Guardianship is not a new legal device, but child welfare agencies in the United States only occasionally use guardians to provide long-term care for children who cannot live at home, and there are varieties of guardianship that have not been tried in a programmatic way anywhere.

In June 1993, Vera published an analysis of the value of guardianship for children in foster care who can neither be reunited with their parents nor adopted. That paper, *Reinventing Guardianship: Subsidized Guardianship, Co-guardians and Child Welfare*, also described how the use of co-guardianship might prevent children at risk from entering the foster care system in the first place. Vera's work was presented at an all-day conference in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on "Helping Families in Crisis." Papers will be published in a Symposium Issue of the NYU Review of Law and Social Change.

There are roughly 400,000 children in foster care in the United States. Almost a quarter of these children have no hope of a permanent home and are expected to remain in foster care until they reach adulthood. The child welfare system has long relied almost exclusively upon adoption to provide the permanency that experts in child psychology believe is necessary for the healthy development of children who cannot return home. For those children who cannot be adopted, there is no other hope of permanency.

There are many reasons why children cannot be adopted. In some cases the child welfare agency cannot find potential adoptive parents, especially for sibling groups, children with severe psychological or medical conditions, and the growing number of infants born addicted to drugs or with AIDS. In other cases, however, children remain in foster care because of the nature of adoption itself rather than the unwillingness of families to provide them a permanent home.

Before an adoption can take place a child must be "freed" from its biological parents and all parental rights terminated—including the right to continued contact

with the child. Some children and even some potential adoptive parents resist this rigid requirement. Older children frequently reject adoption because they want to maintain a real or emotional connection with their biological parents. Some foster parents, particularly kinship foster parents, whose cultural traditions embrace the extended family, resist adoption when it means severing ties with other members of the family network.

It is these children for whom subsidized guardianship may prove more appropriate than adoption. Guardians have a legal duty to care for and protect the children in their care. It is said that they stand in the shoes of the child's parents and accordingly can make important decisions for the child. The appointment of a guardian does not require a termination of parental rights, and parents retain the duty to support and, where appropriate, the right to visitation. The subsidy, like the adoption subsidy, enables families to become guardians for children who would otherwise remain in public care.

At least ten states are already operating small subsidized guardianship programs as a permanent plan for children who cannot return home or be adopted. The programs benefit both older children who resist adoption and adoptive parents who find termination of parental rights inconsistent with deeply held cultural values — as demonstrated by the prevalence of subsidized guardianship programs in states with significant Native American populations. The programs have succeeded in achieving permanence for children whose only other option was long-term foster care.

There are several advantages to using subsidized guardianship as a permanency option for children in foster care. When a

guardian is appointed, the child is discharged from foster care to a permanent caregiver who cannot be removed without good cause. The guardian no longer has to consult with the child welfare agency before authorizing medical treatment or making educational decisions. There is no longer a need for a caseworker, resulting in fiscal savings from a reduction in administrative costs. Judicial resources are saved when custody of the child switches from the state to the guardian, because there is usually no continuing judicial review. The cost of judicial proceedings to extend foster care placements are saved, and judges are free to devote more time to their remaining cases.

The principal barrier to enacting a subsidized guardianship program is funding. Unlike foster care maintenance payments and adoption subsidies, current law does not provide any straightforward federal reimbursement for payments made to guardians. As a result the federal government may realize substantial savings while state and local governments see none. Fiscal savings from a reduction in administrative costs may be offset by the increased burden on state and local funds. Without a way to share in the federal savings, costs to some states might increase. Additionally, children discharged from foster care to guardians may lose eligibility for federally reimbursed medical assistance.

States have always had the option of appointing guardians to care for dependent children, but have rarely chosen to do so. It appears that guardianship is under utilized because there is no subsidy in most states. The subsidy, however, is an integral part of a guardianship program because it ensures that the children will be adequately supported and enables foster parents to accept the responsibility of becoming guardians. The child welfare system has long relied upon maintenance payments

and subsidies to find adults to care for needy children. Guardianship subsidies are necessary for the same reasons.

Guardianship also offers a promising opportunity to prevent foster care for children at risk. When a parent needs assistance, the law permits the court to appoint a co-guardian with legal authority to act alongside that parent. Adding a co-guardian to a family in trouble could enable that family to remain intact. By formalizing the kinds of arrangements that many families already make informally during difficult times, overburdened parents could begin to address their own problems and learn new ways to help their children, without the costs and traumas of removal. The co-guardians could be grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, friends, or any other person known to or interested in the family. Because co-guardians would be added to troubled families, a child welfare agency administering such a program would have to commit to provide access to ongoing support services to support the co-guardian relationship. Vera is currently exploring the possibility of piloting a demonstration project in New York City to test this novel use of guardianship to prevent the removal of children from their homes.

The Unintended Consequences of Incarceration

—Karen Fulbright, *Director of Research*

American penal policy and practice over the last fifteen years has greatly increased the number of people in prison. A million more people are behind bars in the United States today than there were in the late 1970s. Approximately 20 million Americans have passed through our prisons

and jails in those fifteen years in what is perhaps the most costly social experiment attempted in this country this century; yet little is known about the impact of these policies on American communities.

It is possible that the excessive use of prison might unintentionally be increasing crime. For sentenced offenders, time spent in prison might itself unstring systems of social support that prevent these offenders from committing more crime when they return to their communities. Similarly, the experience inside prison might harden offenders, teaching habits that help them survive in prison, but making them unable to conform once released.

Excessive use of prison may increase crime in future generations by depriving children of fathers and mothers. It may also be weakening the culture of the poorest communities by socializing so many young men behind bars only to return them to their homes. Indeed, a justice system dependent on so many prison sentences may do more than increase crime: it may undermine educational systems, overburden child welfare and subsistence programs, and debilitate public health systems.

With support from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the Vera Institute of Justice has commissioned five papers from scholars—largely from the fields of sociology, psychology, and

economics—to collect current knowledge about the potential consequences of incarceration and to propose a rigorous research plan to expand this knowledge.

Two authors are focusing on the correlation between incarceration and crime rates. One of these authors is examining what is known about the potential generative effect of incarceration on crime; the other is exploring what youth development theory, data on juvenile correctional systems, and data on crime rates suggest about the impact of confinement on youth ages sixteen and younger.

Three authors will explore the effects of incarceration on children, families, and communities. One of these authors is examining the implications, for children and the systems that serve them, of having substantial numbers of children growing up with parents who are incarcerated. The second author is focusing on the economic consequences of incarcerating substantial numbers of people from a single community, while the third author is examining the social consequences for the community.

The Vera Institute and the Clark Foundation will host a meeting in June 1995 at which the papers will be presented and discussed. Vera will then publish and disseminate the written materials.

Section Three

Technical Assistance

Community Policing

From 1984 through 1990, Vera designed and organized New York City's first demonstration of community policing: The Community Patrol Officer Program (CPOP). Early in the demonstration, the project proved very popular and was expanded to every precinct in the city. The CPOP demonstration ended in the fall of 1990 when then Commissioner Lee Brown decided to make community policing the operational framework for the entire department. Since then, Vera's project and research staff have been assisting New York and other cities to build on our experience with community policing and institutionalize the best practices. Three such efforts are described here.

Police Patrol Deployment — New York City's Model Precinct

—Michael Farrell, Associate Director for Police Projects

The Model Precinct Project was implemented in the spring of 1991 to provide the New York City Police Department with an experimental precinct in which to test practices and procedures designed to support a community-oriented, problem-solving style of policing. Its introduction followed a decade of work between Vera and the New York City Police Department on community policing that began with the Community Patrol Officer Program. At that time, the Police Commissioner had completed a resource allocation plan for the

NYPD which, in addition to calling for an increase of more than 5,000 police officers, committed the entire NYC Police Department to a community-oriented, problem-solving approach to police work.

The Model Precinct Project was designed to assist in moving the Department from traditional deployment practices to deployment strategies that support a community-oriented style of policing. To permit this, the Police Department staffed the experimental precinct, the 72nd in Sunset Park, with the full complement of personnel called for by the allocation plan—a staffing level which other precincts would not reach for a number of years.

When the Model Precinct Project began, several specialty units were combined into a single Special Operations Unit responsible for patrolling small beats on foot. In all precincts, community police officers took on warrant and fingerprint responsibilities, eliminating these specialized units; in the Model Precinct, the larger Anti-Crime and Street Narcotic Enforcement Units (SNEU) were also incorporated into Special Operations. The officers in this consolidated unit were then cross-trained in each of the specialized areas. As a result, plainclothes anticrime work and street narcotics enforcement work became tactics, not organizational units, available for use when problems in a beat area required them.

In late 1992, the Police Department reviewed the effort to combine warrant

execution and fingerprinting with beat police work citywide. Fingerprinting was dropped from the tasks of beat officers. In the 72nd Precinct, the Anti-Crime and SNEU narcotic enforcement functions were reviewed. The narcotics enforcement work fit well with the work of the beat officers, so the organizational arrangement was continued. In contrast, the elimination of the plainclothes anticrime unit caused problems, so a special unit was re-established, smaller than its predecessor, allowing beat officers to use plainclothes tactics as necessary. This approach has been widely seen as successful.

Another organizational dilemma confronting the Police Department is how to integrate its "sector cars" (those responding to 911 calls) into the problem-solving activities undertaken by the beat officers. When the Model Precinct Project started, Vera staff worked with police commanders to redraw the beat and sector lines, creating sixteen foot beats and eight sectors; all but one of the sector's coterminous with a pair of beats. This should have allowed sector car officers to work with beat officers on common problems, but Vera's analysis of the calls for service handled by model precinct units during the first year disclosed that the sector cars spent more time answering calls outside of their assigned sectors than in them because of "cross-sector dispatching" by the Communications Division.

In the spring and summer of 1992, Vera tested methods to reduce cross-sector dispatching, including dispatching low-priority calls from the precinct rather than from the 911 Communications Section. This is done in other precincts on some calls, but the range of calls eligible for precinct dispatch was widened as part of these experiments. The result, as expected, was to increase the time devoted by the cars to their assigned sectors where they could help identify persistent problems.

Vera staff has also worked with precinct managers to organize opportunities for the sector personnel and the Special Operations Unit to work together on problem solving. Initially, problem-solving strategy meetings were held on a beat level, run by beat supervisors, with the sector officers invited to attend. Attendance by the sector officers was sporadic and the discussion was dominated by beat officers. Vera staff and precinct managers reorganized these meetings so that they are held by sector rather than by beat, with attendance mandatory for sector and beat personnel, both officers and supervisors. This new structure is helping to integrate the sector officers into the problem-solving discussions, and the formulation of this sector team concept is deemed one of the most important accomplishments of the model precinct.

Four years into the project, many techniques have been tested and refined. Some of the experimental strategies developed in the 72nd Precinct have been adopted in other precincts, while others continue to be refined at the model precinct. Overall, the experience of the 72nd Precinct has informed police management on a wide range of issues involved in delivering effective police services in a community-oriented, problem-solving manner.

With the inauguration of a new Mayor and the appointment of a new Police Commissioner in January 1994, the Police Department began an extensive review of its operations with the intention of improving the delivery of police services to New York City residents. To accomplish this, the Police Commissioner appointed fourteen working groups to review the entire scope of department operations and to suggest ways to improve them. While this "re-engineering" may lead to significant changes in department organization and operation, the Police Commissioner has indicated that the De-

partment remains committed to providing police services in a community-oriented, problem-solving manner. As the administration adapts community policing, the model precinct may continue to provide a place where new ideas can be tested, and practice can be closely observed.

In the meantime, Vera's staff continues to work with the Department on the development of community policing strategies. During the past year, Vera's staff has participated in the Department's re-engineering efforts, serving on two committees, including the one responsible for redesigning precinct operations. In addition, Vera's staff has worked with the Office of the Chief of Patrol, developing a new patrol deployment experiment that was implemented in July 1994 in the 49th Precinct in the Bronx. While the 49th Precinct project differs from the model precinct in a number of ways, Vera staff has assisted the precinct's management in finalizing project design by incorporating many of the model precinct's successful strategies. The sector-team concept, pioneered in the model precinct, was replicated in the 49th Precinct, as were elements of the data management system developed to support field operations in the 72nd Precinct. Vera's staff also worked with staff of the Police Academy to design a training program for 49th Precinct personnel, and participated in that training.

Although the sector-team concept only has been in operation in the 49th Precinct for six months, the Police Department has begun to regard its early results as extremely positive. Unlike the model precinct, where beat and motorized officers were assigned to different precinct units with different supervisors, these officers are now assigned to both sector- and tour-based work teams under the direction of a single supervisor. To accomplish this, the precinct's community policing unit was

disbanded and the beat officers assigned to the sector teams. As a result, both groups have begun to work together as a team to deal with sector-based problems. The beat officers in the 49th Precinct report that this new arrangement has succeeded in breaking down the barriers that formerly existed between beat and sector personnel in that precinct. Given the initial favorable results of this pilot program, Vera staff is working with the staff of the Office of the Chief of Patrol to identify a second precinct in which to test the sector-team concept, and it will assist the Department in implementing and monitoring that project.

A Performance Measurement System — Jerome McElroy, Consultant

In March 1993, Vera embarked on a two-year project with the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to develop a system that can measure the performance of community policing at the precinct and the beat level. This performance measurement system for community policing will be one of the first of its kind in the nation and should allow the NYPD to assess its progress and its effectiveness in articulating goals, specifying roles, documenting change, and measuring achievements at the neighborhood and the precinct levels.

During the past year, Vera researchers have been studying existing performance measurement systems in police departments across the country. While many police departments have instituted or are in the process of adopting the community policing approach, few have developed a systematic method for assessing their organizational progress in implementing it or for assessing individual police performance. The NYPD/Vera performance measurement system will seek to accomplish both of these objectives.

While police performance has traditionally been measured by crimes reported, arrests made, 911 calls answered, and the time it takes to answer them, these measures fail to capture the effects the police can have on the overall quality of life (for example, by reducing fear among residents). Under community policing, residents are important partners in identifying problems and in developing solutions for them. They are also important in evaluating the effectiveness of the problem-solving efforts. Therefore, a new performance measurement system should integrate community feedback with descriptions by officers of their own operations, as well as with the traditional statistical measures, such as arrests.

Indeed, a citizen survey will lie at the core of the performance measurement system, now under development. A telephone survey of randomly selected households in each precinct being evaluated will ask residents to state concerns about conditions in their neighborhood, their perceptions of the level of fear in the neighborhood, their awareness of police presence and activity in the community, and their satisfaction with the police services. Also, the system will rely on in-depth interviews with community residents concerning the design, the implementation, and the effects of strategies intended to alleviate the problems that directly affect them.

The results should provide useful information for the Police Department's organization at three levels:

1. The precinct should get information on the problems, the strategies, the activities, and the effects of the Precinct Commander's managerial decisions.
2. The borough should have information, in due time, on the precinct's responsiveness to community problems, on both

the borough-level's and precinct-level's effectiveness in solving problems, and on the effectiveness of involving other public and private sources in the problem-solving process.

3. The headquarters should receive citywide information to identify priority problems in each neighborhood, to attempt strategies to correct problems, and to observe the effects.

It is expected that the Police Department will authorize Vera to test these instruments within a single precinct in the fall of 1994.

*Computer Tools for Crime Analysis:
Crime Mapping and the Electronic
Beatbook*

—Michael Farrell, *Associate Director for
Police Projects*

—Richard Zorza, *Counsel for Technology*

To aid in community policing efforts, Vera has worked with the New York City Police Department to develop sophisticated technological tools for more effectively analyzing crime.

The **Electronic Beatbook** began as an effort by Vera to create a computerized version of the paper Beatbook that has been kept for each beat in every precinct since the start of community policing in the mid-1980s. It provides officers an easy way to share information about chronic beat problems as well as new problems needing immediate attention. The Police Department then decided to install computer networks in all precincts, permitting Vera staff to help shape the way that beat officers work together, use historical data, and analyze their own efforts. The result is a powerful officer-oriented information system used on a pilot basis in the 72nd

Precinct since February 1993, where it has proved both useful and popular.

In addition to keeping track of data, the Electronic Beatbook serves as a "coach," offering suggestions and requiring responses to questions at critical points in the problem-solving process. For example, when an officer chooses a chronic problem as a priority for the coming month, the Electronic Beatbook requires the officer to respond to a series of questions related to the effectiveness of the actions and strategies previously applied to the problem.

The application gives officers new abilities to perform their own investigations and research by drawing upon information entered by anyone in the precinct as well as 911 (calls-for-service) and complaint databases. Relevant information may then be printed out, saved for future review, or included in a new Beatbook entry. Activities, observations, meeting notes, and results are later combined by the system to produce Electronic Beatbook reports: clear, logical histories of problems, locations, and issues over time. These reports can then be shared with other Community Beat or Community Sector Officers, supervisors, or members of the community involved in a particular problem or set of problems.

In the first six months of operation, the Electronic Beatbook was used by 85 officers for an average of one 20-minute session per week. As a group, they compiled the equivalent of 243 typewritten pages spread over thousands of individual entries. Qualitatively, the officers started to record information that was much more relevant to the conditions they were working on, including documentation of steps taken to implement strategies, contacts made with community members, and collaboration with outside agencies.

The Police Commissioner and the Chiefs of Department and Patrol visited the 72nd Precinct in March 1994, to view a demonstration of the Electronic Beatbook. Although the Electronic Beatbook is ready to be expanded into other precincts, the Police Department is waiting to complete its precinct organization before proceeding.

In the meantime, Vera is exploring the potential for creating similar applications on handheld computers that officers can take into the field. While not suitable for extensive documentation and planning, these portable models can offer most of the powerful information retrieval resource capabilities available on the Electronic Beatbook. Handheld computers can also be used for direct entry of data required on a wide variety of written forms. This data can be transmitted directly into desktop computers when officers return to their station house.

Just as the Electronic Beatbook has streamlined the New York City Police Department's methods for filing reports and has encouraged cooperation among its officers, electronic **Crime Mapping** has enhanced its capacities for speedy and effective police deployment.

For many years the Department has made extensive use of so-called pin maps, large wall maps of the City and its police precincts into which are laboriously pushed color-coded pins representing the times and types of criminal complaints. In the fall of 1994, the Office of Management Analysis and Planning (OMAP) and the Patrol Services Bureau (PSB) of the Police Department asked Vera to help it develop an electronic mapping system. Such a system would enable police personnel at all levels to perform their own electronic pin mapping of crime patterns.

Working in collaboration with technical and managerial staff of both OMAP and PSB, Vera staff put in place a preliminary version of this system within eight weeks—using data provided by the Management Information Systems Division (MISD) of the Department. The mapping system is currently being tested at two borough Commands and in one precinct. It has three components:

The *Query Module* allows users to check off on a computer screen what they want displayed on the map: the borough, precinct(s), type(s) of crime, police agency, date range, time range, and whether domestic violence or gun crime was involved. The system responds with the total number of complaints that meet these criteria.

In the *Display Module*, the computer builds a map of the chosen area, indicating with a series of graduated dots all the complaints that fall within the chosen criteria. The bigger the dot, the more complaints at the same address. At a glance, the user can evaluate the distribution of complaints and make appropriate choices or recommendations.

Finally, the *Presentation Module* allows the user to customize the map even further: to show different crimes with different colored icons; to shrink or expand the focus of the map; to bring up the names of streets, hospitals and schools in the area; to display several maps simultaneously; and to print out copies of the finished maps.

Headquarters staff at the NYPD have developed a detailed training manual for this system. When testing is completed, the system will be more broadly disseminated within the borough commands and precincts of the Department.

Vera, OMAP, PSB, and MISD have begun preliminary work on linking this mapping system to the On-Line Complaint System currently being implemented by MISD throughout the Department. When fully integrated, these two systems will give all levels of the Department state-of-the-art geographic crime-analysis tools that are immediately responsive to events on the street.

Sentencing Reform

From 1979 through June 1994, Vera designed and operated a series of demonstration projects to test new forms of criminal sentence that could serve as alternatives to incarceration for adult offenders. Today, Vera is using the experience gained in these projects to assist New York City, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Federal Judiciary to improve sentencing practice throughout the country and expand the alternatives available to judges.

National Work on Day Fines

—Julie Eigler, Coordinator

Since 1991, Vera has been providing technical assistance to jurisdictions participating in a nationwide demonstration of day fines, a federally-funded effort to refine this sentencing tool for wider use throughout the United States.

A day fine is a criminal sentence that penalizes offenders by requiring them to pay money. However, unlike a standard fine stated in dollars, a day fine is stated in

units, each unit representing the offender's daily disposable income. (Hence, the name "day fine.") The impact of day fines is to produce a monetary penalty that similarly punishes offenders who have committed similar offenses but who have very different incomes. Rich or poor, you might be fined 20 units for shoplifting or 70 units for assault; but what you pay for each unit is determined by your income.

The History of Vera's Work with Day Fines

Vera has been researching and experimenting with day fines for over a decade, studying day fines in Europe—where they originated and are commonly used—and exploring the introduction of day fines in the United States. In 1988, with the support of the National Institute of Justice, Vera launched the first American demonstration of day fines in New York's Richmond County (Staten Island) Criminal Court. This year-long experiment proved that judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys were willing and able to use day fines instead of standard fines. Moreover, research indicated that day-fine amounts increased incrementally, in contrast to the clustering of fine amounts observed prior to the use of day fines. For example, \$50, \$100, or \$250 were the common fine amounts. Under the day-fine system, amounts were widely dispersed—an offender might receive a fine of \$84.15—suggesting that judges used the tool as intended: to fine offenders based on their individual economic circumstances.

Encouraged by the success of the Staten Island project, Vera began designing a second demonstration, in Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona, supported by the State Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections. In response to the county court's desire to conserve its proba-

tion resources for high-risk, high-needs offenders, planners created FARE (Financial Assessment Related to Employability) Probation, a day-fine sentence targeted at nonviolent felony offenders. Preliminary results supplied by the RAND Corporation indicate that FARE Probation successfully diverted low-risk offenders bound for traditional, supervised probation. Furthermore, site results suggest that approximately 89 percent of offenders receiving FARE Probation pay their fines in full.

The National Demonstration

With the practicality of day fines established through these two pilots, in 1991 the Bureau of Justice Assistance funded a broader demonstration of the concept. BJA selected three states—Connecticut, Iowa and Oregon—in which to introduce day fines in selected courts. Vera provided the technical assistance—helping local planners set up, monitor and evaluate their day-fine programs. Although in February 1995, the BJA-funded demonstration periods will formally end, most of these day-fine programs will continue and, in some cases, expand with local support.

The Connecticut project is based in Bridgeport's Geographical Area 2 Court, a mixed jurisdiction court handling low-level felonies and misdemeanors, and is sponsored by the judiciary's Office of Alternative Sanctions. The court serves a majority of low-income offenders. In addition to implementing day fines, the court incorporated the use of installment payments, ending the requirement that all offenders pay their fines in full at sentencing. These changes have made monetary penalties more applicable to low-income offenders. The day-fine caseload is currently increasing and will be supported by the judiciary's budget as of February 1995.

Iowa's project is located in Polk County, the most populous county in the state, and was initiated by the Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning. A wide range of offenses are fine eligible, but in practice, offenders charged with alcohol-related motor vehicle offenses are the most common day-fine recipients. Fine payments are closely monitored and collection rates are excellent. The number of offenders paying in full increased dramatically from 32 percent, prior to the demonstration, to 72 percent. The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division hopes to demonstrate the feasibility of day fines in four additional court settings in an effort to expand their use statewide.

The Oregon Criminal Justice Council introduced day fines in four Oregon counties—Marion, Malheur, Josephine and Coos—with mixed results. While two sites are closing at the end of the demonstration period, day-fine programs in Marion and Malheur will continue.

The Vera Institute will publish a program brief about day fines and a detailed implementation manual in early 1995.

The Federal Sentencing Reporter

—Daniel Freed & Marc Miller, *Editors*

—Sarah Lyon, *Publication Manager*

The Federal Sentencing Reporter (FSR) is a bimonthly journal of articles, cases, and commentary on sentencing in the federal courts. FSR is an effort to encourage the development of a common law of sentencing in the federal system. Vera created FSR in 1988, in the wake of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, the establishment of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and the development of an

initial set of sentencing guidelines for federal offenders. Although individual practitioners and institutions can and do subscribe to FSR, each issue is provided for the judiciary and sent to every Federal District Judge and Federal Chief Probation Officer in the nation.

In appearance, FSR resembles many specialist legal reporters. Published for Vera by the University of California Press at Berkeley, FSR tracks the evolution of the federal guidelines and sentencing case law, provides a forum for scholarly debate, and compares the federal system to sentencing developments in the states and other countries.

In six years, it has formed an intellectual bridge between judges in courts across the country who find a discussion of individual sentencing decisions useful in their own roles. This is not a journal published for scholars, nor does it aim—as many legal reporters do—to provide practitioners with fast answers to routine problems. The participation of sentencing judges in the FSR—through the submission of commentary or simply through the reproduction of their sentencing opinions—lies at the heart of this effort to reform sentencing theory and practice at the level of the individual case.

Each issue focuses on one major topic, combining short articles and cases. In the second half of 1994, FSR began its seventh year by publishing three issues, addressing "The Disproportionate Imprisonment of Low-Level Drug Offenders," "Three Strikes Statutes: Goals, Problems, and Precedents," and "Viewing the Guidelines as a Criminal Code." FSR appears on the legal electronic databases Lexis and Westlaw.

Courts and the Adversary System

In 1990, Vera launched its demonstration of a neighborhood-based public defender office: the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (see pages 11-13 above). The expertise gained in that project has allowed Vera staff to assist New York City and its courts in additional ways, most recently monitoring the system for assigning counsel to indigent defendants. New York City's Coordinator of Criminal Justice also asked Vera to apply the lessons learned in integrating technology with court reform at the Neighborhood Defender Service to two other efforts described here.

Manhattan Criminal Court Arraignment Study

— Angela Burton, Senior Planner

In September 1994, Vera began to monitor new procedures instituted by the City of New York, the State Courts, and the Legal Aid Society to increase the share of indigent criminal defendants represented by the Legal Aid Society. Under contract to the City of New York, the Legal Aid Society is responsible for providing free representation to all indigent defendants except in homicide cases and those involving a conflict of interest. However, over the years, private lawyers assigned by judges according to County Law Section 18-B ("18-B lawyers") have assumed an increasingly larger percentage of such cases in Manhattan. This shift in caseload reduced Legal Aid's share of indigent cases to 59 percent of the total. The new assignment procedures, which were implemented in conjunction with the New York State Office of Court Administration and the New York City Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, were designed to increase the Legal Aid share to at least 75 percent.

Vera's role in the project originally consisted of: (1) collecting data about the functioning of the experiment through an in-court monitoring process in September 1994 and again in January 1995, and (2) compiling weekly data collected by the Police Department focusing on key elements involved in the progress of a case from arrest to arraignment.

As originally conceived, the in-court monitoring component involved the collection of data during every arraignment session for four consecutive weeks in September 1994, and then again in January 1995. In order to cover all of the 28 arraignment sessions conducted during each week, approximately 30 law students from local law schools were recruited to become part of the court process during each of those four-week periods.

Vera staff trained the volunteers to log in the time of each step in the arraignment process by using a laptop computer specially programmed for use with bar code labels and a bar code scanning device. The volunteer was to receive all newly docketed cases from the court clerk, deliver the files to the Legal Aid Society supervisor on duty, and receive the files back from the supervisor after the Legal Aid Society had determined either to keep the case or return it for assignment to the 18-B attorneys because of a conflict of interest. The law student volunteers were also to record the nature of any conflict of interest, and note any other aspect of the experiment or the courtroom process that, in their judgment, deserved special mention. The bar code scanning method allowed the students to quickly capture the information at each stage without undue interruption in the courtroom flow.

The in-court monitoring began as scheduled on September 19, 1994. As the

project proceeded over the next few days, it became clear that some adjustments were needed in the computer program, and that more effort had to be put into facilitating the integration of the law student volunteers into the flow of the courtroom process. At the same time, rumors were circulating that a strike by Legal Aid Society attorneys was imminent. Those rumors turned out to be correct, and the Legal Aid attorneys went on strike several days after the in-court monitoring began. Although the strikers returned to work only a few days later, that event effectively put an end to the experimental part of the project.

Nevertheless, the second component of the arraignment study was well underway and remained valuable. As planned, Vera receives downloads of information compiled by the Police Department in its On-Line Prisoner Arraignment (OLPA) reports. The data is collected by the Police Department in conjunction with the Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator and the Office of Court Administration. This part of the study focuses on several key elements involved in the progress of a case from arrest to arraignment in the Manhattan Criminal Court. The elements, sorted by attorney type and arraignment part, include number of cases arraigned, charge class at arrest (felony or misdemeanor), number of cases disposed by plea, time elapsed between the defense assignment of the case and readiness for arraignment, and the total average arrest-to-arraignment time. On December 6, 1994 the first interim report of the Manhattan Criminal Court Arraignment Study was completed and delivered to the Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator.

In early 1995, Vera staff will return to the arraignment courts for in-court monitoring. This will provide confidence levels for the data elements reported in the

interim reports. A final report to the Criminal Justice Coordinator will be presented by March 31, 1995, when the project is scheduled to end.

Computerization of the Midtown Community Court

— Richard Zorza, *Counsel for Technology*

The Midtown Community Court has been open since October 1993, processing misdemeanor arrests in the Midtown area, and forging new dispositions in these minor cases. In the spring of 1993, the City's Criminal Justice Coordinator and the Court's Coordinator asked the Vera Institute of Justice to take responsibility for integrating computer technology into the Court design. Vera and its technical partners have built a computer platform that is intended not only to serve the Court's current needs, but to allow the Court to change procedures in future innovations.

The Court's computer system brings together information from a wide variety of electronic and nonelectronic sources and displays it in a way that assists judge, counsel, and court staff in reaching a decision about the appropriate disposition in each case that comes before the Court. The Court's computer system is used by all the participants — judges, clerks, defense lawyers, prosecutors, defendants, CJA staff, social service staff, court administrative personnel, and members of the public.

The system has the following components:

Defendant Interview and Verification Module. Allows the Criminal Justice Agency to use a set of handheld, pen-based computers to record its individual interviews with defendants shortly after their arrest. The interview includes the standard questions about "community ties" which CJA already

asks in all New York City courts. At the Community Court, interviewers also ask additional questions designed to assist the court in selecting an appropriate sentence. The project is experimenting with computers that recognize handwritten text, so that all data is input during the interview, and there is no need for subsequent data entry. The hope is that, if successful, this technology may be used citywide to speed the interview process.

The Community Court software also helps CJA staff to verify the information collected in the defendant interview. The software then calculates the "release score" and presents it electronically to the judge.

Electronic Data Gathering Module. Links the computer systems of the Office of Court Administration (OCA), the State Division of Criminal Justice Services, the New York City Police Department, and the New York County District Attorney. The system brings data from all these agencies into the Court's computer system, including document images from OCA.

Judicial Desktop Module. Designed in consultation with the Judges of the Criminal Court, this module displays the electronically collected information in a mode that makes it instantly accessible. Nineteen-inch color screens have been programmed to show the arrest information, the complaint, the defendant's rap sheet, and the assessment information. The screen includes options that allow the judge to review in detail the defendant's prior history in the Community Court, including his or her compliance with alternative sanctions. It also searches the rap sheet to obtain further information about the defendant. The judges who preside in the court have been pleased with the system, and have asked Vera to build software that will allow them to input dispositions themselves as they

decide cases. The new version of the Judge's Desktop now being designed will also include software that analyzes success rates for alternative sanctions for different kinds of defendants, and displays predictions for the judge.

Court Flow Module. Tells system users when a case is ready for their attention and provides detailed information to court managers about when each step is completed or how long it is delayed.

Alternative to Incarceration Module. Allows the court's social service staff to track every contact and interaction on behalf of a defendant. The staff records each monitoring call to confirm that a defendant is attending an assigned program, to obtain assistance for that defendant, and to keep contact with the defendant or his/her family. The system includes visual and color coded systems that remind the staff of their tasks, and remind the judge to review the defendant's compliance with the court's orders.

Public Access Module. Enables anyone in the court, including those in the holding area awaiting arraignment, to view displays of the court's schedule and the results of its completed cases. This module reflects the commitment of the court's designers to promote public participation in the administration of justice.

As a result of Unified Court System's experience in this experiment, they are modifying their plans for the future to build systems similar to the Community Court experiment. Their cooperation has been critical to the success of the project.

The designers of the court, the Office of Court Administration, and Vera are now planning several enhancements to the system including the following:

Police Feedback and Warrant System. This will inform every police officer of the disposition in cases where he or she has made an arrest. The officer will learn about sentence, warrants, and instances of re-arrest. This information will include computer-stored photographs of the defendant. It will be available both on line and in paper form and will be used in the preparation of photo warrants.

Community Mapping System. This will show judges and the community where crimes are occurring and how these patterns change over time, enhancing their knowledge about the impact of law enforcement strategies and sentencing.

Electronic Filing System. Electronic document filing by police, the DA, and other agencies will enable the clerk to focus on information management and court flow supervision.

Justice System Networking. To provide judge and counsel with more information on the spot, Vera and the court are working with the Parole, Probation, and Correction agencies so that information about a defendant's status will be electronically imported and displayed on the Court screens.

The Community Court's Coordinator, the Office of Court Administration, the City, and the Brooklyn District Attorney are currently planning a second community court to be located in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Again, Vera is organizing the use of technology for this project. Extensive use of video, electronic kiosks, and integrated information systems will help to create a Justice Center which will allow community members to access and make use of a wide variety of court services from Red Hook.

Modernization of the Assigned Counsel System

— Richard Zorza, *Counsel for Technology*

New York City fulfills its constitutional obligation to provide legal representation to indigent criminal defendants through the Legal Aid Society, the office of the Appellate Defender, the Neighborhood Defender Service, a handful of law school clinics, and individual attorneys in private practice working under the Assigned Counsel Plan. In 1992, responsibility for the administration of the Assigned Counsel Plan passed from the state government to the city government, and in planning for this new role, city officials asked Vera to provide technical assistance in creating a computer system to support the plan.

The computer system for the plan has been designed as an efficient, easy-to-use bill processing system that will provide sophisticated oversight and audit control. In the fall of 1993, the project installed interim audit tools. These tools permit plan staff to question participating attorneys about vouchers that appear to request payment for excessive hours of work. The result is that attorneys modify their requests in some cases, saving the city money.

When the system is fully implemented, assigned attorneys will bill the city for their services on forms that will be scanned into the computer system and checked against data from the Office of Court Administration computer system. The information on these forms, when scanned and electronically indexed, will provide more usable data to the attorneys and the administrators than did the previous paper system, and will dramatically reduce data entry costs. As a result, the administrators should find themselves with more information about the quality of legal services

being provided, and with more time to use that information for training and oversight.

Although controls will be tighter, attorneys who submit proper bills will receive payment sooner than was possible without this system. Payment will also be hastened when the city is able to expedite the statutorily required approval of payments by judges.

Another benefit should be assistance in budgeting. Until now, the Office of Management and Budget and the Comptroller's office have had to forecast the expenditure of funds through a projection system that did not reflect reality. It was not unusual for millions of dollars of attorney bills to hit the city's accounts months after the close of the fiscal year in which the services were delivered. The speed of the new system and its links to OCA data should assist officials in budgeting the costs of assigned counsel in a timely fashion.

Finally, the city will gain an important new source of data that will indicate how the criminal justice system is functioning. Apart from information about attorney costs, the new system will provide fresh insight into the ways in which cases move through the court system, increasing the staff's ability to identify delays and improve the overall system of justice.

During 1994, Vera had taken major responsibility for moving the project forward. By the end of the year, Vera's programmer had completed the design of

the database and the programming of the data entry portion of the system. He had completed both the design and the coding of the audit mechanisms, as well as the module that will allow reviewers and auditors to view an image of the voucher at any stage of the processing. He had also completed the portion of the system that generates customized "sign-off" documents for the judge responsible for approving the payment to the attorney.

Significant work remains to be done by Vera and Criminals Justice Coordinator staff in testing the completed portions, in programming the interface with the State Office of Court Administration, and in arranging the transfer of existing cases into the new system. In addition, work remains to be done by the City Financial Information Services Agency (FISA), which is responsible for the scanning portion of the project and for the interface with the city's check-generating software.

Building on the expertise gained in the work, Vera is now helping the Coordinator of Criminal Justice to explore options for building a system of shared information between approximately 30 city criminal justice agencies that will reduce repetitive entry of arrest data, court data, and criminal record data. A number of agency-to-agency links are already in place or planned. Such a system has been planned, and even funded, before; but the computer technology used in the Midtown Community Court and in the Assigned Court Counsel System has finally made a broader system worth reconsideration.

