

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

### **Introduction:**

The Grand Jury Criminal Justice Committee, in pursuing its goals for the year, became acutely aware of the increase in the number and severity of crimes committed by juveniles. How this problem is being addressed in Alameda County was the focus of its investigation.

### **Juvenile Justice**

### **Overview:**

There are many programs specifically established to respond to the juvenile offender and those at risk. Alameda County has two advisory groups, the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Juvenile Delinquency Commission, as well as other juvenile-oriented programs which are intended to supplement the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department.

**Recommendation #19: That the Board of Supervisors, together with the Superior Court, specify a person to coordinate functions and communication between juvenile justice programs and commissions.**

### **Findings:**

The court, in its efforts to meet the needs of juveniles, has found difficulty in overseeing the existing multiple programs. There appears to be compartmentalization in some instances and there is evidence of duplication of effort in others.

Investigation showed that committees and commissions (e.g., Juvenile Justice Commission, Juvenile Delinquency Commission, Children's Interest Commission) are unaware of the role and activities of each other. Study also showed little or no coordination between juvenile justice programs and social services.

### **Justification:**

By providing coordination among the commissions, programs and services, juvenile needs can be met in a more logical and effective way. The work of the courts will get full benefit.

**Recommendation #20: That the Board of Supervisors support efforts of the community and private organizations in seeking solutions to juvenile problems since government cannot possibly meet all the needs of a complex society.**

**Findings:**

The Criminal Justice Committee found outstanding examples of recent efforts of the community and private sector in Alameda County: Alameda County Team Intervention, Organization Networking (A.C.T.I.O.N.); Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA); Community Schools; Juvenile Justice Connection Project (JJCP); and the Youth Skills Development Project (YSDP).

**Probation Department**

**Overview:**

Probation Department personnel is trained in legal procedures, but an ever-increasing and complex caseload has brought about unsolved problems in management areas.

**Recommendation #21: That intensified effort be initiated in the Probation Department for management training to better utilize skills and increase accountability of managers and supervisors.**

**Findings:**

The Criminal Justice Committee found that the Probation Department is acting in a crisis mode. This situation is unfair to personnel, parents and clients. There are excessive delays in implementation of simple programs and a marked slowness in response to requests for improved communication with the public.

**Justification:**

With intensified management training and skillful use of personnel, long-standing problems can be alleviated and future problems avoided.