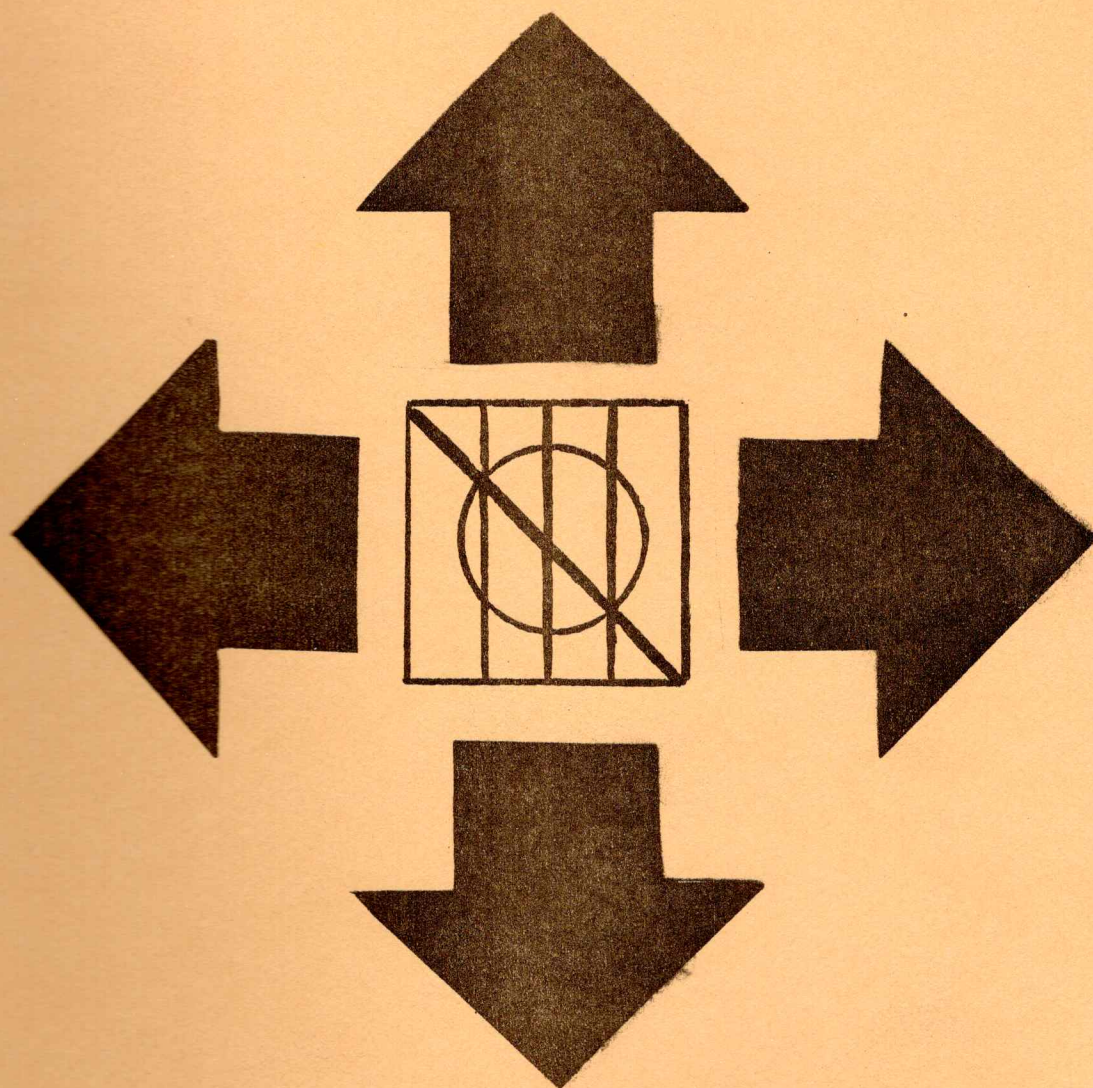


MACON COUNTY DAY PROBATION AND DIVERSION SERVICE



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All services are free and
provided without regard to race,
creed, color, national origin, or
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Day Probation

	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. Background	2
III. Purpose	2
IV. Target Population	3
V. Program Components	3-5
VI. Coordination	5

Diversion

I. Background	6
II. Purpose/Goals	6
III. Referral Procedures	6
IV. Counseling Services	6-7

Community Education

I. Purpose	8
II. Programs	8
A. Shoplifting	8
B. ASK (Answers, Services, Knowledge).	8-9
SUMMARY	9
PROGRAM FLOW CHART	10

I. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide interested individuals a description of the Day Probation and Diversion Services programs.

These topics will be discussed:

1. The program's background and how it has evolved,
2. The purposes of the program components, the intended clients, and
3. The program's organizational framework.

II. Background

In 1973, the Day Probation and Educational Services Program began operation. The program is the result of an intensive effort by representatives from varying community points of view. Members of the County Board, juvenile judges, the probation officers, public school personnel, mental health workers and concerned citizens, were successful in their efforts to secure initial funding for the program from the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (ILEC).

Several facts motivated these efforts to develop the program.

- 1) Macon County had a high rate of juvenile commitments to the Department of Corrections-Youth Division in the State of Illinois.
- 2) Steadily increasing costs for institutional placements.
- 3) The comparatively high drop-out, suspension, and expulsion rate in Macon County Schools.

These and other facts spurred efforts to develop services designed to deal with these problems. The Day Probation Program was the first component developed to address the needs of the adolescent who is participating in delinquent activities.

III. Purpose/Goals of Day Probation

Day Probation is a community-based, non-residential, intensive intervention correctional program for adjudicated juvenile offenders. The program is an alternative to commitment to the Department of Corrections or other institutional placement. Our intervention efforts are based upon a socio-cultural conception of delinquency, and in addition to providing needed social services, our change efforts are focused on the client's family, his/her peer group, and academic progress.

Given this overall purpose, Day Probation attempts to accomplish the following goals:

- 1) To significantly reduce the recidivism rate of Day Probation clients.
- 2) To reduce the school drop-out rate of Day Probation clients.
- 3) To reduce the rate of referral of adjudicated youngsters to the Department of Corrections or out-of-home placement in foster home or institutions.
- 4) To provide students with experiences in developing realistic goals and effective plans for goal attainment.
- 5) To develop and improve skills which will better enable students to cope with their adult roles, both socially and personally.
- 6) To prepare students with study skills necessary for re-entry to the student's home school.
- 7) To provide students the opportunity for achievement in established academic areas.

IV. Target Population

The population for whom the program is designed are adjudicated offenders from Macon County who are between the ages of 12 and 17, at least in the 7th grade, have above T.M.H. level intelligence, and are at risk (i.e. close to being committed to the Department of Corrections, or an institution).

Youngsters who have been adjudicated for less serious offenses such as habitual truancy, curfew, or being beyond parental control and who meet other criteria, will be considered for admission on a low-priority basis.

V. Program Components

Once a client enters the program, he/she becomes involved in a wide variety of services and activities. These include individual counseling, a structured activity program, group guidance sessions, and of course, academic classes. Clients attend daily, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.. Meetings with the family or special activities can be scheduled after the daily program is completed.

A. Orientation

Assigned caseworker and educator are responsible for the orientation of client and parent or guardian. This shall include filling out necessary forms, presenting information in handbook, and a tour of the facilities.

B. Client Assessment

An assessment of the client's social and academic skills is made in their first two to three days of attendance. This assessment includes referral information, testing, group activities, and observations. These tools are utilized by the team to help establish initial academic and behavioral programming.

C. Physical Environment

The physical structure is primary in setting the tone for learning activities. Three rooms are utilized for very distinguishable purposes. The Resource Room is a room for quiet, independent study. Group activities, projects, lab work, A-V media, and constructive leisure are available in the Activity Room. The Lounge provides a relaxing atmosphere for break time, counseling groups, and the partaking of food and drink (lunch room).

D. Level System

The purpose of utilizing a level system is to provide for more control initially over a student's inappropriate behavior while providing for a growth process leading to re-entry to a student's home school.

Level I is based on behavior modification system in which appropriate behaviors are rewarded with points. The student may use these points to "buy" reinforcers such as leisure projects and time, excursions, and extra passes. The behaviors which are to be rewarded are those which we have found to be generally troublesome to the majority of clients attending Day Probation. It is our belief that these behaviors interfere with client/staff interactions, barring communication. By addressing these initial behaviors in an efficient and timely manner, we hope to pave the way for more open communication. Once the communication channels are open, further exploration can follow. By Level II, the child's basic behavior pattern should be smooth enough for real personal growth to begin.

During Level II, exploration of the student's interaction in all spheres of his/her life will begin to be explored. This level is an independently designed contractual program in which the student role becomes more and more prominent.

E. Curriculum

The curriculum is a flexible tool designed to meet the academic, social, and personal needs of our clients. Basic instruction is offered in the areas of language arts, reading, math, social studies, science, health, and adult living. Also incorporated into the program day are constructive leisure activities, individual instruction, and counselor-led guidance groups, as well as individual counseling sessions.

1. Groups: Clients are scheduled into required groups according to need and/or skill level. Groups average 4-8 members and usually are 20-40 minutes in length. Some groups are offered on specialized topics for which clients have the option to attend. Some examples are: Update, classes on Amish culture, maple syrup production, and pottery.
2. Independently Structured Time: Learning Activity Packets, Student Workbooks, Textbooks, Puzzles, Games, and Audio Visual Aids are used to help improve clients' academic skills. Individual writing and specialized activities also enhance the personal and social growth of our clients. Independently Structured Time normally comprises 2-3 hours of an individual's six-hour day.
3. Special Activities - The flexibility of this program affords the freedom to arrange special activities and field trips. These events are used as reinforcers for achieving established criteria. Special "star" activities are planned spontaneously to reward the group for "good days." Field trips may be the culmination of several days or weeks of classroom study and preparation.

4. Master Schedule: To accomodate the three major components mentioned above and allow for program flexibility, the staff cooperates in *preparing each week's schedule of groups and activities*. From the posted master schedule, the clients plan their week and complete their assignment cards.

F. Client Scheduling

The client meets with his/her caseworker and an educator every three weeks to assess progress and revise educational and behavioral program. The client's schedule is then developed from these changes. Client's input on Level I is minimal, except for expressions of questions and concerns due to the structured nature of that Level. Level II clients, however, are encouraged to participate in decision-making as this will lead to increased ability to control their own lives.

Wherever possible, clients receive school credit for academic work. Due to the difficulty in comparing our clients' work to a "regular" academic setting, a specialized grading system is used.

VI. Coordination

In order to provide comprehensive services and advocacy it is necessary to coordinate and cooperate with other community institutions. Regular meetings are held with the client's probation officer, in order to assess the progress the client is making. Information is gathered from the client's "home school" at admission and meetings held prior to re-admission with appropriate school personnel. We occasionally utilize services of other agencies in the community, such as CETA, DCFS, or Youth Advocate, when needed or appropriate.

DIVERSION SERVICE

I. Background

The Diversion Service was a major expansion of the Day Probation program in 1975. Because of the large number of Macon County youths coming to the attention of law-enforcement agencies for alleged criminal offenses, the Board of Directors approved the development of the diversion concept.

Initial funding came from the Illinois Commission on Delinquency Prevention.

II. Purpose/Goals

The purpose of this program component is to reduce the number of youth of Macon County for whom a petition request is made to the Macon County Circuit Court. We believe that with a short-term intensive intervention at a significant point in a youth's sampling of deviant behavior, the youth will become able to resolve his conflicts in a more pro-social manner. Experts agree that it is not only far more economical for society and productive for the child, to channel a child who has "acted-out" toward his community as early as possible in his participation in deviant behaviors.

The goal then is to:

- 1) reduce the number of juvenile petition requests to the Macon County juvenile court
- 2) alleviate personal, family, and school problems that impede pro-social behaviors

III. Referral Procedures

The Decatur Police Department juvenile detectives initiate referrals to the Diversion Service. When a child and his parents are interviewed for an alleged offense, the detective may see the child as amenable to counseling instead of going to court. If the parents and the child agree that seeing a counselor would be beneficial, a referral is made. The service is voluntary and non-coercive.

IV. Counseling

Upon receipt of the referral, the worker assigned to the case makes an initial contact as soon as possible. Counseling sessions are conducted in the client's home on a weekly basis for approximately an hour.

The primary focus of this counseling effort is upon the factors that have contributed to the criminal offense and how continuing to participate in a deviant career can be detrimental to the child, his family, and his community.

Our delinquency intervention methods are ultimately based upon how we define the problem. We associate the following conditions with delinquency:

1. Delinquent behavior is learned in the same manner as other social behavior.
2. Acts of delinquency occur in specific situations under specific conditions (a youngster is "delinquent" for only a small proportion of his/her time).
3. Young people who become habitual offenders tend to become members of peer grouping characterized by pro-delinquent and anti-conventional behavior. Members of such grouping tend to receive support and encouragement from each other for acts of delinquency and pro-delinquent behavior.

Other areas of concern to the total family may also be explored. Examples include: communication skills, school problems, family management practices, health or job concerns.

If the family's problems appear to be of such severity or long-term nature a referral to another community agency may be suggested.

Occasionally we will facilitate the referral process by initiating the original request and coordinating the service.

After termination of the weekly sessions, a follow-up period is scheduled. This may be only an occasional visit or several telephone checks over a period of time.

The Diversion counseling service is provided for up to three months.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

I. Purpose/Goals

The third program component developed by Day Probation is a prevention effort using educational programs. The purpose is not to make children amateur lawyers, but to prepare them for citizenship. We attempt to make them aware of the laws that specifically effect them because of their status as juveniles and other crimes that they may be vulnerable to.

We feel that given adequate information and awareness about the community's expectations as defined by the statutes, many youngsters will make better decisions about their actions.

A. Shoplifting Program

The first program developed was the Shoplifting Clinic. The specific act (shoplifting) was chosen because it is often a crime youngsters commit without knowing the adverse consequences to themselves and the community. This program is presented annually to middle school students in Macon County. A stimulus film, "Shoplifting - The Losing Game," develops the theme of the pressures that may be operating when a teenager enters a large shopping center. Using the services of local lawyers, merchants, and school liaison police officers, the students are educated about the perceptions these representatives of varying segments of the community have toward a child who is apprehended in the act of shoplifting. To conclude the program the Diversion counselor distributes a "self-control manual" and teaches the students several techniques about how to control the impulse to "lift."

B. A.S.K. (Answers, Services, Knowledge)

Many questions asked by the students in the shoplifting programs about their other concerns in the area of juvenile crime encouraged us to develop a summer outreach program in the area parks.

The emphasis of this program is toward the younger child. It is an attempt to make them aware that a major part of "growing up" is the acceptance of the increasing responsibilities that are a part of this process. Taking responsibility for their own actions and their responsibilities toward their family, school, and community.

Twelve parks were selected for the two-day program. The emphasis of this program is toward the responsibilities and rights children have.

A variety of stimulus games were developed that keyed in on such areas as specific types of crime children commit, the juvenile justice system, school rules, and family responsibilities. The children are given small prizes donated by local merchants and a sticker to wear that says "I've Been Asked."

This program was modified for classroom use and is offered to local schools for presentation to 5th and 6th grades. Here again, the focus

A.S.K., Cont.

is on the necessity of laws and the responsibilities that children have toward themselves, their schools, family, and community.

These programs, over a year's time, impact in excess of 3,000 children.

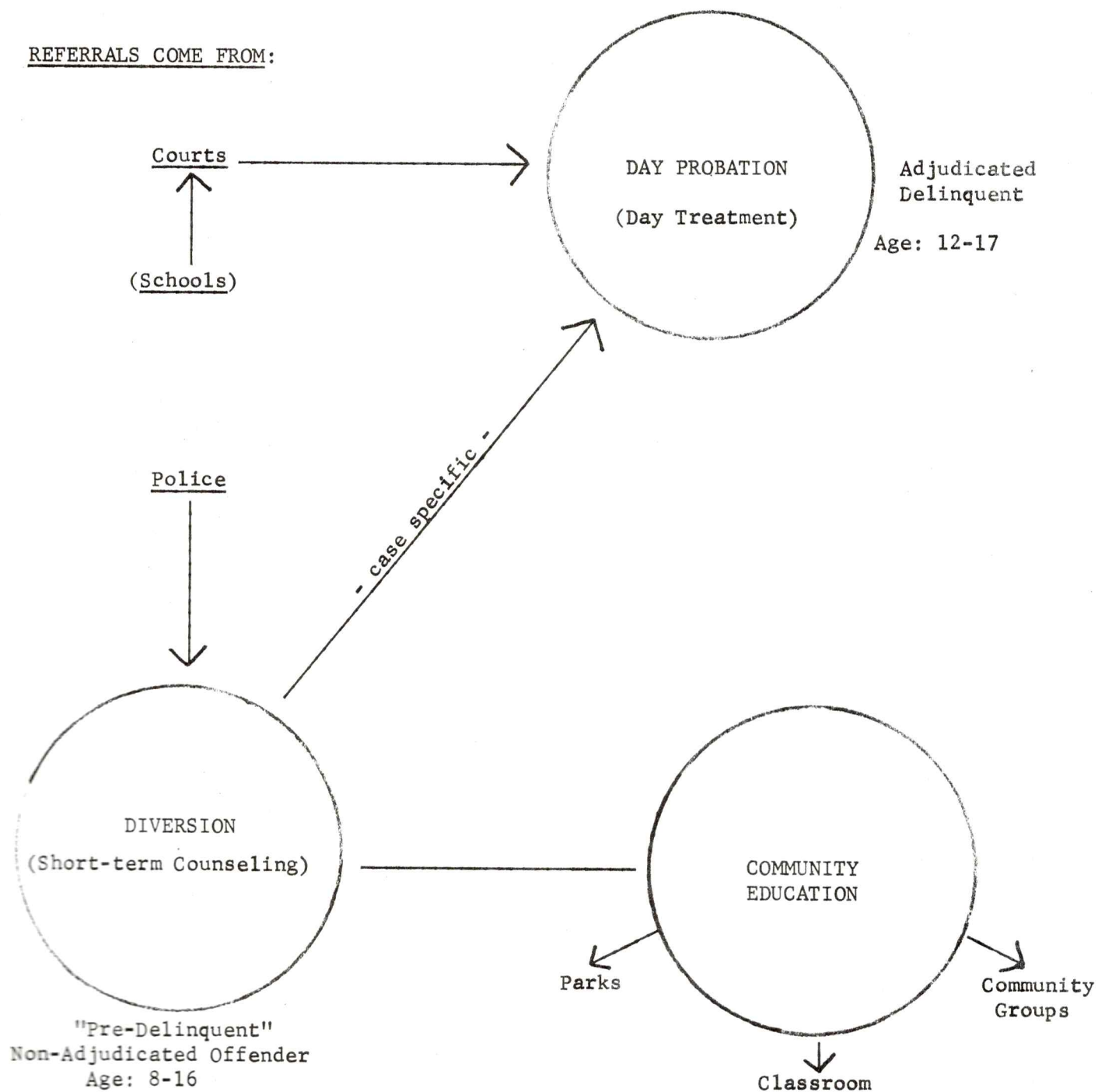
SUMMARY

Macon County Day Probation, Diversion Service, and the Community Education Components have been developed by local citizens with a purpose of providing the young people in our community some alternatives. These alternatives range from preventive educational strategies, a counseling service to divert them from the juvenile justice system, to a treatment program for those who need intensive intervention.

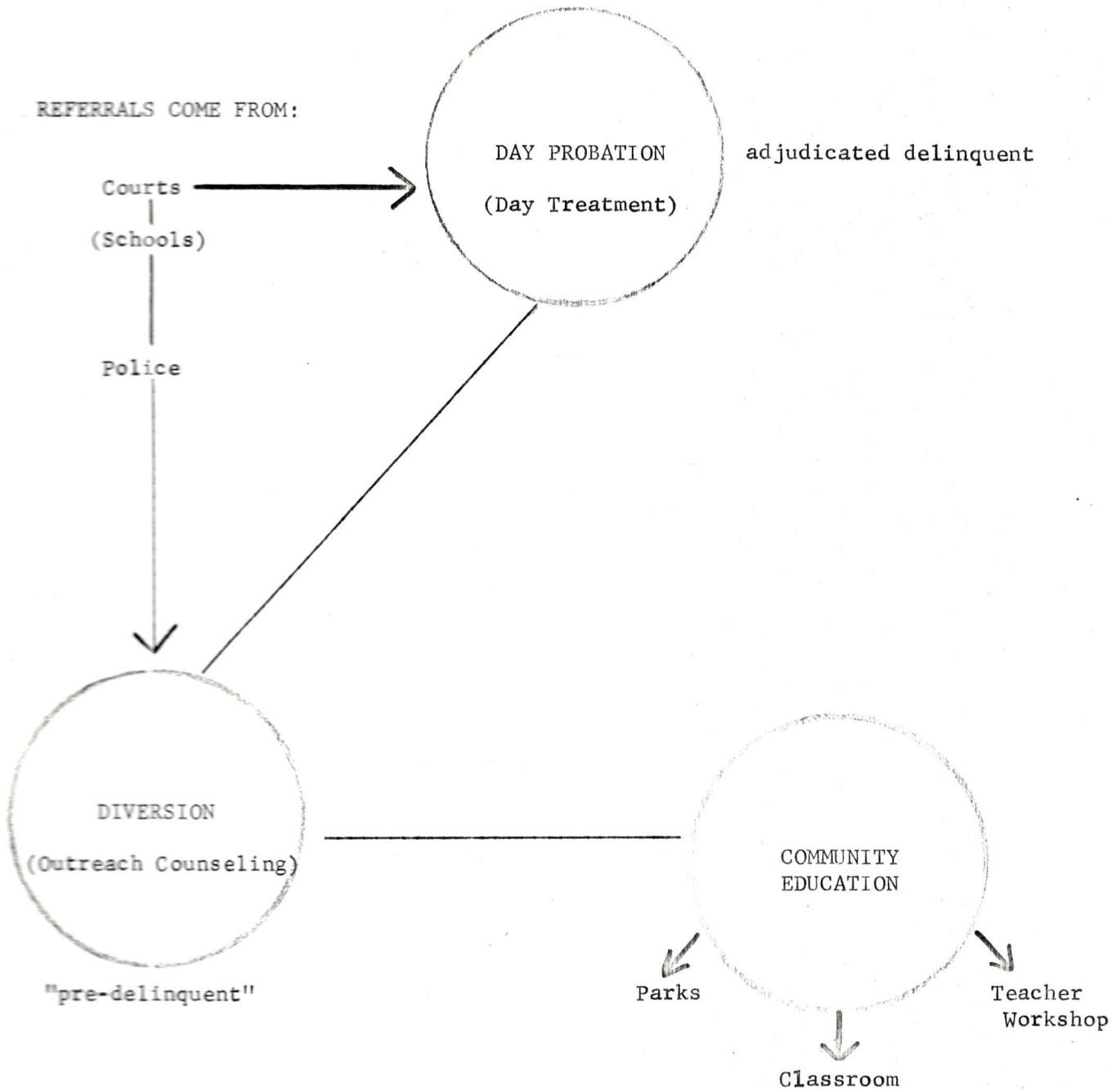
Because these services are locally controlled and funded, they are, and will continue to be, responsive to the community's needs. The following sources currently provide major funds for the program.

Macon County Board of Supervisors
Decatur Township Federal Revenue Sharing Funds
City of Decatur (Community Development Block Grants)
Macon County Ceta Services (staff)
School District #61 (staff)

MACON COUNTY DAY PROBATION AND DIVERSION SERVICES

REFERRALS COME FROM:

MACON COUNTY DAY PROBATION AND DIVERSION SERVICES



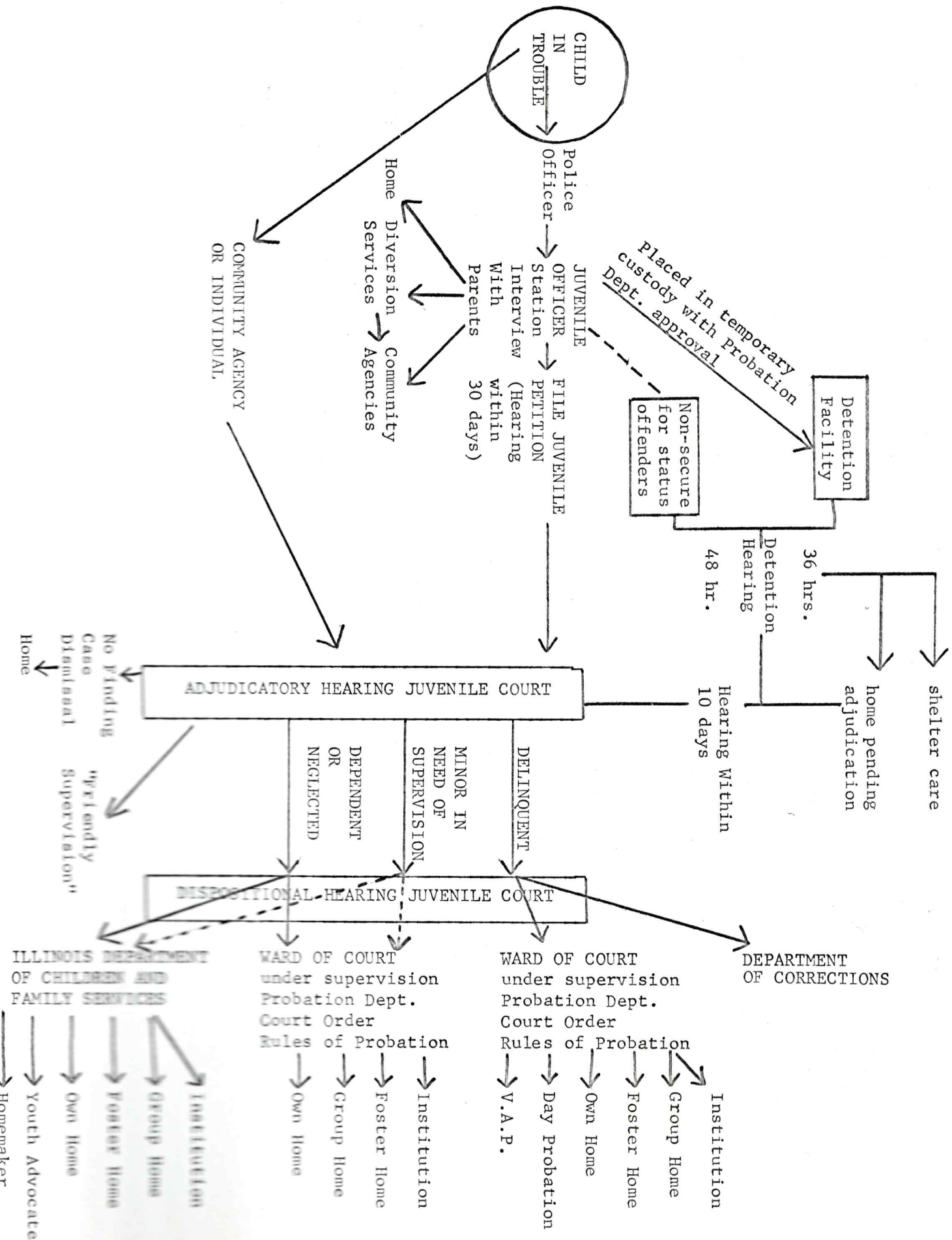
FUNDING SOURCES

Macon County

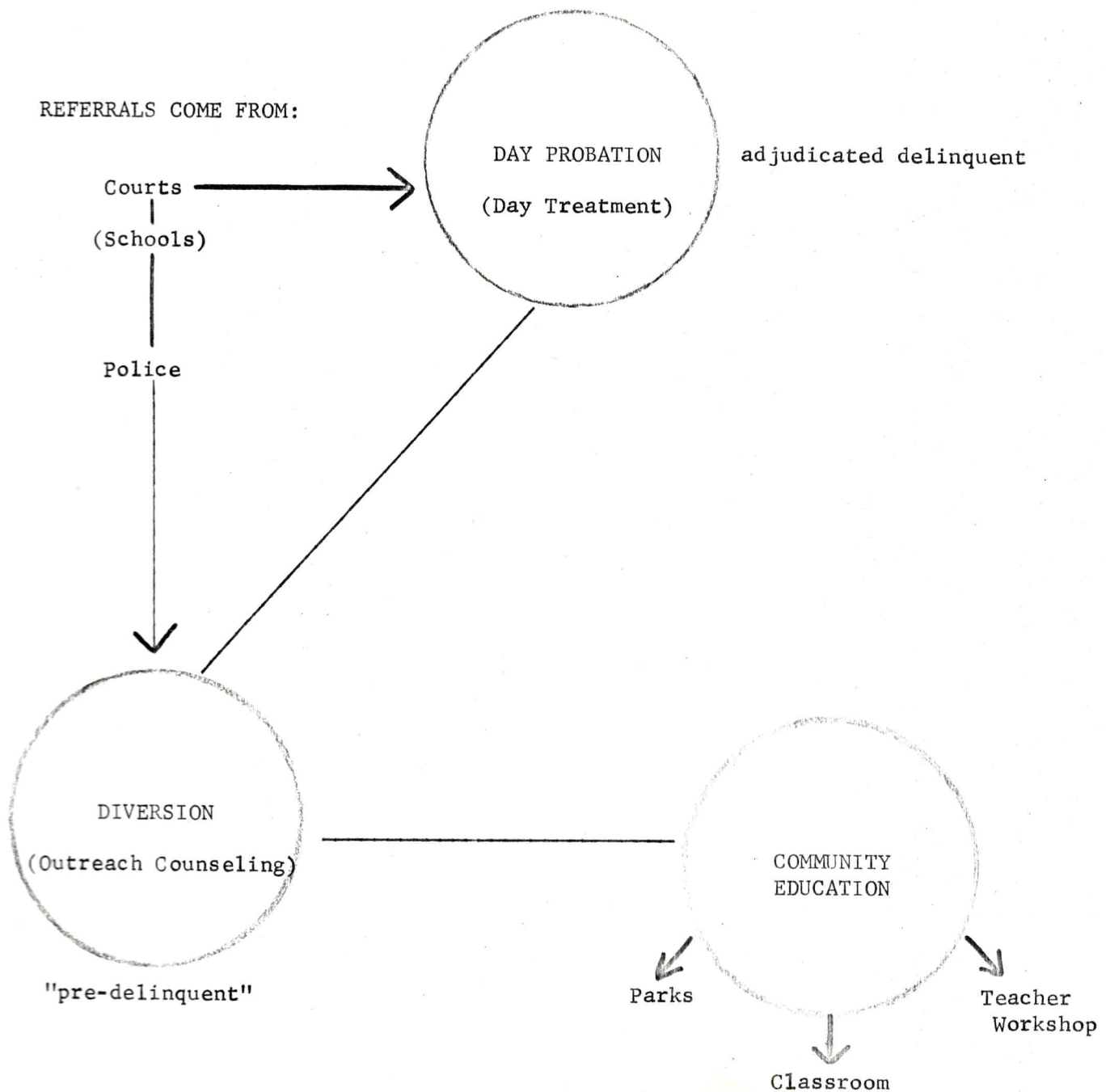
City of Decatur (Block Grant)

Decatur Township (Federal Revenue Sharing)

District #61 (provides two teachers)



MACON COUNTY DAY PROBATION AND DIVERSION SERVICES



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City of Decatur (Block Grant)
Decatur Township (Federal Revenue Sharing)
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