



Pennsylvania Progress

Juvenile Justice Achievements in Pennsylvania

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FOLLOWING THE MONEY: Funding of Juvenile Justice Services in Pennsylvania

by Patrick Griffin

A lot of things have changed since the July morning in 1968 when a juvenile court in rural Pennsylvania briefly heard and even more briefly disposed of “the Matter of Charles Wilson, delinquent.” Wilson was a 16-year-old who had been involved, with a number of others, in a street fight. No one had been seriously injured, and Wilson’s role was “apparently confined to having thrown a few punches.” His previous record, such as it was, amounted to some minor vandalism in a public school three years before, when he was 13; he had caused \$8 worth of damage, but had successfully completed 14 months’ probation afterwards. (Also, he had once been accused of, but never prosecuted for, “using profane language in a diner.”) His lawyer—a stranger to him until just that morning—admitted Wilson’s involvement in the fight, but pointed out that he did not appear to be “one of the main perpetrators.”

Nevertheless, the court was not inclined to take the matter lightly. After noting that Wilson had “been in trouble before,” the judge addressed him directly from the bench:

You also have some trouble going to school, don't you?

Yes, sir.

Were you suspended from school also? You seem to be in need of some stricter discipline. Isn't that about right?

I don't know.

You don't know. Well, if you don't know, the court so finds from the testimony in this case and from your prior conduct. The court adjudges Charles Laverne Wilson a delinquent and commits him to the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. . . .

More than anything else about the conclusion of Wilson’s hearing, what surprises us now is its *suddenness*. Nothing has prepared us—not the equivocal crime, nor the slender juvenile history, nor the vague “trouble” in school—for what amounts, at least potentially, to a five-year prison sentence (to age 21). What is more important, nothing in Wilson’s previous interactions with the court seems to have *led up to it*. Wilson may or may not have been “in need of some stricter discipline,” as the judge put it. But what—short of Camp Hill—had been tried?

In fact, this was not the end of the story. Wilson’s sentence was set aside by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on a variety of due process grounds.¹ In subsequent years, a series of court decisions and legislative reforms formalized delinquency proceedings in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, instituting procedural and other safeguards designed to protect juveniles from

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arbitrary and unfair handling. Camp Hill itself was eventually emptied of juveniles, and the practice of incarcerating delinquents in adult jails and prisons prohibited.

But something else has changed since Wilson's day—something arguably just as fundamental to the character and quality of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice: the way it is paid for. If nobody would think of proposing a measure as drastic as state commitment for a youth like Charles Wilson nowadays, it is partly because of the range of less-draconic alternatives—local, in-home, and community-based programs for delinquents—that have grown up and flourished since the 1970s. And that growth has mostly been due to a brief, dry, technical-sounding piece of legislation called "Act No. 148, Laws of 1976," which decisively restructured the way services for Pennsylvania juveniles were funded, and in the process gave local communities both incentives and resources to intervene with delinquent youth closer to home.

This issue of *Pennsylvania Progress* will follow the money—first sketching out the ways local delinquency services are funded in Pennsylvania, with particular attention to the system of reimbursement established by Act 148, and then exploring the innovative uses one county has made of that system to improve its responses to delinquency.

FUNDING 101

It's a bit like plumbing. *Complicated* plumbing. Picking out the main pipes, seeing where they begin and end, is easy. Following all their twists and turns, their back-ups and reverse flows and feeder systems and by-pass valves, is hard.

This will be the easy version.

Money to pay for juvenile justice services in Pennsylvania—that is, broadly speaking, money to cover the costs of responding to, caring for, and meeting the needs of court-involved youth, including the costs of sheltering, supervising, counseling, and treating them—may come from private, federal, state, or county sources.² The source tapped will depend in part on the kind of service and the setting in which it is provided—maintenance or treatment, in-home or out-of-home, community-based or institutional, non-secure or secure, etc. But in general the four main sources must be tapped in the order listed. Private

funds—money that "belongs" to an individual juvenile, such as support payments from the family and income to which the juvenile is entitled as a Social Security or Supplemental Security Income beneficiary—must be accessed before funds from federal, state, or county sources. Then, if federal funds are available to pay for a service to the juvenile, they must be exhausted before state or local ones may be used. Finally, costs not otherwise covered by private or federal funding sources may be shared by the state and county, or assumed entirely by the county.

In dollar terms, private sources of funding for juvenile justice services don't usually amount to much. Federal sources, on the other hand, have become increasingly important in recent years. The two federal programs that have emerged as major funders of delinquency services in Pennsylvania—the Title IV-E Placement Maintenance program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The net effect of Act 148 was a massive infusion of juvenile justice resources to local communities.

program—don't seem at first to have anything to do with delinquency. But Title IV-E provides funds to help cover the expenses of maintaining needy children in court-ordered out-of-home placements—including placements ordered in delinquency as well as dependency cases. (See sidebar, "Federal Placement Assistance for Delinquents.") And TANF payments for various emergency assistance and support services for poor families may likewise be applied to the cost of some services provided to the delinquent children of means-eligible families. (See sidebar, "TANF and Delinquents.")

After federal funding sources have been tapped, counties turn to "Act 148" funds from the state. Pennsylvania's Public Welfare Code was amended by Act 148 of 1976³ to set up a large-scale reimbursement scheme for county-purchased child welfare and juvenile justice services. Reimbursement rates were deliberately set at varying levels, depending on the kind of service and the setting in which it was provided. Rates for some services were set high, so that counties would be encouraged to use them and the private sector to

FEDERAL PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE FOR DELINQUENTS

The federal Title IV-E Placement Maintenance Program, administered by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, assists states in taking care of needy children who cannot live at home. Specifically, Title IV-E helps cover a portion of the costs of maintaining such children in foster homes and child care institutions, in addition to some associated administration and training costs. It's an unlimited entitlement program with annual appropriations in the billions—over \$5 billion in fiscal 2001, according to the Children's Bureau—and pays benefits on behalf of hundreds of thousands of eligible children each year.

Some of these children are delinquents. In fact, while most Title IV-E money goes to fund foster care for children who have been abused or neglected by their families, HHS has been approving IV-E reimbursements for juvenile justice placements since the early 1980s. According to the General Accounting Office, along with California and New York, Pennsylvania has been one of the states that has been most aggressive in claiming IV-E money for delinquency placements.

Counties can access Title IV-E reimbursement for delinquency placements if they adopt a process in which delinquents who are removed from their homes receive the same judicial and other protections that must be afforded to *dependent* children under the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 (P.L. 105-89). The key, in other words, is compliance with ASFA. In order to preserve families and to prevent unnecessary separations, ASFA mandates active court oversight of the removal process: in each case in which reimbursement for an out-of-home placement is sought, the judge ordering the initial removal must have examined the facts and determined that it was necessary and could not reasonably have been avoided. Thereafter, to ensure that children removed from their homes do not drift into adulthood in temporary placements, ASFA imposes a mandatory "permanency planning" timetable. Pennsylvania has specifically amended its Juvenile Act to ensure that its dependency procedures conform with ASFA requirements, and the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission has issued Model Petitions and Court Orders (available online at www.jcjc.state.pa.us) to enable Pennsylvania courts in delinquency proceedings to make detailed and timely findings documenting the necessity of removal, the sufficiency of efforts to prevent removal, and the sufficiency of efforts to "finalize a permanent placement for the child" in delinquency cases.

If the juvenile or the juvenile's family meets AFDC financial need and other tests, Title IV-E will pay for part of the cost of "24-hour substitute care"—including sheltering, feeding, and clothing, but not treating the juvenile—in a "licensed or approved" foster home or child care institution. The exact portion of the cost that is federally reimbursable varies from state to state, depending on the Federal Financial Participation (FFP) rate established in connection with that state's Medical Assistance program, which is in turn based primarily on that state's per capita income. In Pennsylvania, the FFP rate for placement assistance is usually about 54%.

Sources: United States General Accounting Office. (June 2000). *Foster Care: HHS Should Ensure That Juvenile Justice Placements Are Reviewed*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office. Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. (2003). *Pennsylvania Juvenile Delinquency Benchbook*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission.

deliver them. Rates for other services were set lower, in order to discourage their overuse. Although originally structured as an unrestricted entitlement for counties, the law was soon amended to limit or "cap" total reimbursement payments. Eventually, each county came to be assigned a definite annual allocation by the Department of Public Welfare, on the basis of a "Needs-Based Plan and Budget Estimate" for dependent and delinquent youth submitted jointly by the juvenile court and the local children and youth agency.

But from the beginning, the net effect of Act 148 was a massive infusion of juvenile justice resources to

local communities—especially those that were able to adapt their approach to take advantage of it. What sort of approach to juvenile justice was called for under Act 148? The broad outlines are clear:

- ⊕ *Serve juveniles in their homes.* Some of the most generous state reimbursement levels apply to services—such as counseling and day treatment—provided to juveniles in their homes, and intended to help them stay there. Currently, 80% of the costs of in-home services to juveniles and their families are paid for by the state. Which means that when a county dollar is spent on, say, private sector case

management, an after-school program, or some outpatient counseling, it has *five times* the effect of a dollar spent elsewhere.

⊕ *Preserve connections.* Even when juveniles must be removed from their homes, there's a difference between placing them and *sealing them off*. Act 148's reimbursement scheme sharply favors "community-based" residential placements over those that isolate juveniles from normal community life. So the costs of 24-hour placement in group homes and foster family homes are generally reimbursed at 80%, as are the costs of other kinds of small, non-secure residential programs that allow juveniles to be educated in ordinary schools, use public recreational facilities, work outside jobs, etc. And while a placement doesn't have to be *local* to be community-based, over time the flow of Act 148 funding has enabled many communities to develop placement options that are not only community-based, but close to home as well.

⊕ *Use less restrictive options.* What Act 148 *discourages*, by contrast, is excessive reliance on the more drastic, intrusive range of responses to juvenile offending. Note that these tend to be the most expensive options anyway. So from a county's point of view, it matters a great deal that Act 148 reserves its

lowest reimbursement rates for secure detention services (50%), secure residential commitments (60%), and non-community-based or "institutional" commitments (60%).

Act 148 only nudged counties and courts in these directions, of course. It couldn't make them go anywhere. But it's worth noting that, by channeling more resources from the state to the local level, and effectively financing the start-up of a new generation of private delinquency service providers, Act 148 reinforced tendencies that had always made Pennsylvania juvenile justice distinctive anyway. Like local control—local "ownership," really—of the problem of delinquency. And private sector

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participation in the work of reclaiming juveniles, which is a tradition going back—through such institutions as the Glen Mills Schools in Concordville and George Junior Republic in Grove City—to the days before there *were* juvenile courts in Pennsylvania. Because Act 148 was going with this historic grain, rather than

TANF AND DELINQUENTS

In 1996, the open-ended federal welfare entitlement program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children was replaced with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, under which states receive block grants to enable them to provide help to needy families. TANF was designed to give states more flexibility to experiment with programs that go beyond traditional cash welfare. In addition to devoting funds to cash assistance, child care assistance, and employment and training programs, Pennsylvania allocates a portion of its TANF block grant to the state Department of Public Welfare's Office of Children, Youth and Families to reimburse counties for various kinds of services provided to means-eligible youth and their families, including some delinquency services. Unlike reimbursement under Title IV-E, reimbursement under TANF is for 100% of the county's covered costs.

One of TANF's fundamental purposes is to help states "provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes..." So it's not surprising that the program pays for in-home services to eligible juveniles, including in-home services to adjudicated delinquents required to participate in community-based programs as a condition of probation. But TANF can also cover the costs of "emergency placements" in shelters or detention centers—up to 30 days in a shelter, or up to 120 continuous days in secure detention. To qualify, the juvenile's parents must sign an eligibility form stating they don't have the means to pay for needed services.

Sources: Evrard, David. (2003). *Funding of County Services: Juvenile Probation Services*. (Unpublished PowerPoint Presentation.) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. (2003). *TANF Essentials*. Online at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/>.

against it, it may have had all the more effect as a result.

CHANGE FOR BUCKS

To see the kind of fundamental changes that Act 148 and the infusion of federal funding for juvenile justice services make possible, it's worth a trip to Doylestown, north of Philadelphia, where the Bucks County Juvenile Probation Office has made imaginative use of these new funding opportunities to become more flexible, more efficient, and more responsive to the needs of local youth.

"Act 148 drove the reform of Bucks," says long-time Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Bill Ford. "It convinced us philosophically."

Ford, whose career with Bucks County goes back more than 40 years, ought to know. When he

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It convinced us philosophically."*

started working as a juvenile probation officer in 1962, he says, the "traditional approach"—heavy on confinement, light on alternatives, sometimes arbitrarily severe—prevailed in Bucks and elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Back then, Ford explains, a juvenile offender was generally given a "first bite," which meant probation. ("Victims were ignored," he adds.) Following a second offense, the response might be placement in an open setting. And following a third? Ford smiles grimly: "Camp Hill had an open enrollment policy."

The traditional approach had already begun to break down by the time Ford took over as Chief in 1973. "Everything changed at the same time," he says, recalling the juvenile justice ferment of the 1970s. The procedural and substantive rights of accused delinquents were still being defined and consolidated. Movements to separate juveniles from adults in custody and to deinstitutionalize status offenders were just under way. And the field was beginning to question the value and necessity of large congregate training schools, and to search for less disruptive alternatives.

Against the backdrop of these and other changes, Act 148 rewrote the funding rules under which counties like Bucks had been operating for decades. Restrictive state confinement that had been "basically free to the county," as Ford remembers it, suddenly became expensive. And the range of less-restrictive, community-based options that Act 148 contemplated was just coming into being.

In Bucks County itself, Ford and other local leaders—including Judge Isaac Garb, then-Juvenile Court Judge, now Senior U.S. District Court Judge Edmund Ludwig, and then-District Attorney, now Administrative Juvenile Court Judge Kenneth Biehn—immediately saw in Act 148 an opportunity to fill long-standing needs. They knew, for instance, that they needed to do a better job of identifying mentally ill juveniles coming into the court. Accessing the generous Act 148 reimbursement for "counseling/intervention services," they put together their own "screening team" of two psychologists, a psychiatrist and a social worker. The team's role was "to assist probation and the court in addressing mental health issues," Ford says, first reviewing information from probation regarding an incoming juvenile's offense and family background, and then interviewing the juvenile and the family before making a report and recommendations. This basic screening approach—with some of the same team members—is still being used, Ford says.

GROWING NEW PARTNERS

Act 148 counseling reimbursement also supplied some of the early fuel for Community Commitment, Inc., one of the pioneering providers of intensive in-home services for juvenile offenders—in Bucks or anywhere else. "We were in the vanguard," CCI founder Peter Stollery says of those times. "This was the beginning of what you could call 'youth work.'"

"We can rehabilitate these kids a lot better by pouring a lot of services in than by warehousing them."

Stollery had been running the Department of Public Welfare's Youth Forestry Camp in Huntingdon County in the early 1970s, when he met Bill Ford and Judge Garb at a conference and proposed "the vague idea

that later became CCI.” The mental health deinstitutionalization movement had shown the way, Stollery says—closing residential institutions all over the country, and replacing them with intensive mental health services delivered in the community. Stollery’s YFC experience convinced him that many juvenile offenders in placement could likewise be safely and effectively served at home. That was Stollery’s basic pitch to Ford and Garb: “We can rehabilitate these kids a lot better by pouring a lot of services in than by warehousing them.”

Stollery says the in-home approach was so much cheaper than confinement that it made fiscal sense even early on, before the passage of Act 148. But Act 148 reimbursement, when it came along, made the financial logic much more compelling.

"All of a sudden the legislature put their money where their mouth is."

“One hundred percent different,” Stollery says. “All of a sudden the legislature put their money where their mouth is.”

Thanks in part to this funding, CCI became an important provider of in-home and school-based counseling services for juveniles in Bucks, and is still going strong under Stollery. In fact, most of the private agencies providing juvenile services in Bucks County seem to have been launched in the burst of idealism and creativity that marked the field in the 1970s, and received the same kind of critical early funding boost from Act 148. The adolescent substance abuse treatment provider known as Today, Inc., for instance, got its start out of an old abandoned farmhouse that Ford convinced the county to lease to “a small group of concerned citizens” for \$1. “It’s now one of Bucks County’s major rehabs,” according to Ford. Community Service Foundation, which began in the late-70s as an alternative school in Sellersville in Upper Bucks and now offers a range of counseling, day treatment, and specialized foster care services, had a similar trajectory. And Youth Services of Bucks County, a small county agency originally organized to fill a gap in services, especially group home services, for “ungovernable” youth—then spun off as a private nonprofit and indirectly supported by Act 148 “in-home” and

“community-based residential” reimbursements—is now Youth Services Agency, a company with 400 employees operating throughout Pennsylvania and Maryland.

CHANGING THE SHAPE OF DELINQUENCY SERVICES

But Act 148 has done much more in Bucks than simply strengthen the mix of private service providers. Over time, it has profoundly changed both the character of delinquency services and the way they are delivered.

The general shape of the changes is clearly visible in the expenditure figures that the Bucks County Juvenile Probation Office submits to the Department of Public Welfare as part of the needs-based planning and budgeting process. Of the three main categories of juvenile service expenditures reimbursed by Act 148—In-Home & Intake Services, Community-Based Placements, and Institutional Placement—the figures indicate that Bucks spends far more in the first two categories than in the third. Within the broad categories, the resources devoted to various means of treating, sanctioning, supporting, and caring for juveniles in the community simply dwarf those devoted to locking them up. The level of spending on

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“counseling services” alone in one recent year was about equal to the entire “institutional placement” budget, and *more than a hundred times* the amount devoted to secure residential placement.

Of course, there is considerable flexibility in the “counseling” category—it is more than just talk. For instance, Bucks County makes frequent use of “ACT Camp”—the Adventure Challenge Therapy program run by Youth Services Agency—particularly as a sanction for truant probationers. It’s a weekend wilderness challenge/community service program, and could arguably be called “residential,” because it keeps juveniles overnight at a 200-bed camp in the Pocono Mountains. However, because Bucks

County uses the program not as a “placement” but as a way to enforce school attendance and otherwise provide juveniles with the discipline and structure they need to live at home and *avoid* placement, Bucks County’s ACT Camp costs were recently recategorized as “counseling service” expenditures—incurred as part of “an on-going course of community supervision” rather than a “removal from the home.” Which means not only that ACT Camp expenses became reimbursable at 80% under Act 148, but that they qualified as “non-placement” expenses eligible for 100% funding under the federal TANF program.

GETTING MORE BANG

The new funding environment—and the expanded private delinquency services industry it fostered—have changed the shape of the Bucks County Juvenile Probation Office as well.

For one thing, relative to its caseload, it is surprisingly lean. “We do it with a small number of probation officers,” Ford says, and the figures bear him out. Bucks County currently handles a total active supervision caseload of about 1,800 juveniles, but employs only 37 juvenile probation officers. (By comparison, Allegheny County, with about twice the active caseload, has three times number of the probation officers.)⁴

Part of the reason is that private providers in Bucks are doing work that falls, often by default, to probation officers elsewhere. And—thanks to the “80/20” state-local funding split—doing it at much less cost to the county. The ratio of almost 50

The ratio of almost 50 probationers to 1 probation officer is workable because Bucks is getting more with less — more safety, more services.

probationers to 1 probation officer is workable because Bucks is getting more with less—more safety, more services. As Deputy Chief Probation Officer Bob Stanzione puts it, “We monitor a lot of kids in the community without a lot of danger to the community.”

“We would need a hundred to a hundred-fifty probation officers to do all this,” Ford adds.

But Ford and Stanzione agree that Bucks County’s partnership with the private sector has done more than save money. It’s been a sensible and clarifying division of labor. Throughout the history of the profession, probation officers have struggled to manage inconsistent and apparently contradictory roles—as supporters and enforcers, social workers and cops. But by largely leaving juvenile treatment and services to private sector caseworkers, therapists, and community-based agencies, while retaining traditional monitoring, enforcement, and referral functions, Bucks County has gone a long way towards reducing this conflict and sorting out these distinct roles. “We don’t think probation officers should be doing group therapy,” Stanzione explains by way of example. “We just make sure the kid goes to group—that he shows up.”

A NEW TRAINING GROUND

The long-term “privatization” of youth-serving functions in Bucks County has not met with resistance from Ford’s probation staff. The reason is simple, he says: “Probation officers see the model as being effective.”

But then many of those probation officers got *their* starts in Bucks County’s private sector. Indeed, according to Ford and others, a subtle but important benefit of Act 148’s encouragement of private, community-based service providers has been the way it provided a flexible, ready-made training and testing ground for those seeking to work with youth—including would-be probation officers.

“Staff development,” Peter Stollery calls it.

“Once 148 provided the money, places like CCI and some others became a training ground for newly minted college grads who wanted to change the world,” Stollery says. “They went on to a lot of things besides probation.” But those who did set their sights on becoming probation officers got something invaluable out of it: “Three or four years of direct youth work.”

As a matter of fact, Stanzione himself is a CCI “graduate,” having worked for a time under Stollery’s tutelage after getting his Law Enforcement and Corrections degree from Penn State in the 1970s. And he’s not the only one in the office. “We’ve probably got 7 or 8 in there now,” Stollery estimates.

What the thriving private job market for entry-level youth workers has yielded to Bucks County, according to Bill Ford, is a more stable, experienced, well-chosen probation staff. "If they were candidates," Ford says, describing the pattern that has emerged over the last two decades, "they could go there to learn as private sector caseworkers.... By the time they were 24 or 25, they'd have spent a lot of time around the court, sitting right next to the PO." Often, Ford says, he has the luxury of knowing and working with them for a matter of years before having to make a hiring decision: "If we can't pick somebody after four or five years...."

PAPERWORK RELIEF

There is, of course, a catch to all this. The flow of juvenile justice funding to Pennsylvania counties—especially federal funding under Title IV-E and TANF—has greatly increased the burden of paperwork for juvenile probation departments. Staying on top of eligibility, reporting, and tracking requirements for these programs has been a daunting task for juvenile probation departments across Pennsylvania. In many counties it has fallen to individual probation officers to ascertain eligibility, secure authorizations, and fill out the forms necessary for program compliance. They may have little training or inclination, and less time. But there is no one else to do it.

Here again, though, Bucks County has devised its own solution, having established a special "fiscal unit" within the Juvenile Probation Office a couple of years ago. Operating under Deputy Chief Stanzione, the unit employs three financial and four quality assurance people to manage documentation and reporting related to Title IV-E, TANF, Medical Assistance, Act 148 and other funding programs, as well as to help train department staff and local providers regarding compliance. According to Stanzione, "We told the POs, 'If you tell us the

Staying on top of eligibility, reporting, and tracking requirements for these programs has been a daunting task for juvenile probation departments across Pennsylvania.

movement—where a kid's going to move—we can do all the tracking, interview the parents, [prepare] the TANF applications.... All we want to know is when the body moves and where it's going to move to."

Title IV-E actually reimburses Bucks for a portion of the cost of the unit—which is only fair. "The federal money made it necessary," Stanzione says. "We had to have a business office."

The unit is only a couple of years old and is still evolving, but Ford and Stanzione see it as another necessary division of labor, enabling line staff to

"All we want to know is when the body moves and where it's going to move to."

concentrate on the work they were hired to do. And it's paying off in other ways, too—for example, by streamlining the enforcement of family support obligations for delinquent as well as dependent youth. Federal regulations require that support orders be entered against parents of juveniles placed in residential facilities. So the business office has taken on the routine filing of petitions with the Domestic Relations Division to secure these orders. It also distributes pamphlets to families explaining their support obligations, and operates a 24-hour voice mail line to field questions. One result is that annual support collections are way up in Bucks—"almost double since the business office took over," Stanzione says.

But as Bill Ford points out, it's not just the money that's important here: it's the leverage with the family that it represents. Above all else, what Ford wants from parents with support obligations is active cooperation with the treatment plan. "I want you *involved*," he says he tells them. And they listen.

"It's the only hammer you have," agrees Stanzione.

AN ONGOING EXPERIMENT

Bucks is an exceptional place in many ways. Thanks to decades of imaginative leadership, it has made unusually good use of the openings that state and federal funding opportunities afforded—to

innovate, to become more efficient and more flexible, to develop more local options for local youth.

But Bucks is far from the only Pennsylvania county to seize these opportunities. Act 148 represented, after all, a kind of experiment—to see what local communities could do if given incentives and resources to respond to delinquency in their own backyards. The results are in now, all over the state,

Act 148 represented a kind of experiment — to see what local communities could do if given incentives and resources to respond to delinquency in their own backyards.

and they are gratifying: a mix of shelters, foster care and group homes, alternative schools, day treatment centers, substance abuse and mental health treatment providers, and other local and community-based diversion and rehabilitation programs that is arguably the richest and most diverse in the nation.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ *In re Wilson*, 438 Pa. 425, 264 A.2d 614 (1970).
- ² The account of juvenile justice service funding in the text is largely based on the work of David Evrard, Juvenile Justice Planner for the Allegheny County Juvenile Court, and particularly his 2003 PowerPoint Presentation entitled *Funding of County Services: Juvenile Probation Services*, which he generously shared with the author.
- ³ The actual citation for the Pennsylvania statute governing “Payment to counties for services to children” is 62 P.S. §704.1. It has been amended numerous times, and not only by Act 148 in 1976. Nevertheless, both the law itself and the funding stream it describes are still popularly known by the name “Act 148.”
- ⁴ 2002 *Allegheny County Juvenile Court Annual Report*.



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