

Chapter 4

Case Processing in Three Juvenile Courts

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes three case studies conducted in urban juvenile courts. The case studies analyzed delinquency case processing practices in each jurisdiction and examined the extent to which processing delays affected day-to-day court operations.

The three jurisdictions were Baltimore City, Maryland (which is distinct from Baltimore County), Cuyahoga County, Ohio (including the City of Cleveland), and Maricopa County, Arizona (including the City of Phoenix).

The selection of the three case study sites was based upon several factors:

- The size of the jurisdiction (i.e., population);
- The upper age of the juvenile court's legal jurisdiction and any other factors that would affect the volume of a juvenile court's delinquency caseload;
- Geographic balance;
- The availability of automated caseload data;
- The characteristics of the case processing system itself; and
- The jurisdiction's willingness to participate in the study.

Although problems of case delay are not limited to large jurisdictions, caseload management problems are usually more complex in large jurisdictions, making them a richer resource for studies of court operations. Furthermore, the professional staff of large courts are often more experienced at dealing with case backlogs and delay and have more insights about successful methods of managing these problems. Also, the lessons learned from studies of large courts should be transferable to the caseload problems experienced by smaller jurisdictions.

In each of the three jurisdictions, researchers collected written documentation about the court's case handling practices and conducted on-site interviews designed to illuminate the origins, characteristics, and impact of delays in delinquency case processing. Dozens of interviews were conducted with judges, court administrators, docket managers responsible for case assignment and calendaring, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other supervisory and line staff. The interviews focused on each

jurisdiction's case processing system and the extent to which it facilitated or hindered the timely handling of delinquency cases.

Various external factors were considered, but the studies focused primarily on each court's caseload management practices. The interviews of court personnel typically included questions such as:

"What specific responsibilities do you have in processing delinquency referrals?"

"What pressures do you experience when cases become delayed?"

"How do delays in case handling affect court staff and the juveniles involved with the court?"

"What impact do case delays have on court operations in general?"

"What factors do you believe contribute to case processing delays?"

Baltimore City

The juvenile justice system in Baltimore City was selected for two reasons. First, it is one of the few cities in the United States (St. Louis is another example) that is not part of a county or any other sub-State unit of government. Baltimore City is essentially its own county, but without the typical suburban areas found in most counties. As a result, the Baltimore City juvenile court serves an intensely urban population, which gives it one of the highest case rates in the Nation and magnifies many other urban-related problems faced by large juvenile courts (table 4.1).

Second, the juvenile justice system in Baltimore has been coping with severe delay problems for the past decade. According to interviews conducted by the authors, it was once not uncommon for arrested (non-detained) juveniles to wait 6 months or more just to be contacted for an initial intake interview. More than 9 months might elapse before a court hearing could be scheduled. In the worst cases, 18 to 24 months might pass before juveniles had their first formal court hearing.

Recently, efforts to improve delinquency case processing in Baltimore have been undertaken by various agencies, including the police, the State agency responsible for intake services, the juvenile court, the State's Attorney's office, and the Public Defender's office. As a result, the Baltimore juvenile justice system is becoming more timely than it was just two or three years ago. The experiences of Baltimore may be instructive for other jurisdictions just beginning to grapple with serious juvenile justice delays.

Cuyahoga County

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court was selected for this study because it is representative of many urban juvenile courts facing large caseloads with limited resources. The Cuyahoga court is a service-oriented juvenile court. The court itself administers an extensive continuum of intake diversion and post-disposition services to address the needs of delinquent and unruly (incorrigible) juveniles.

TABLE 4.1
Delinquency cases disposed in three jurisdictions, 1986–1993.

Baltimore City Year	Population Ages 10-17	Delinquency Cases Disposed			Total Cases per 1,000 Juveniles
		Non- Petitioned	Petitioned	Total	
1986	81,600	3,879	4,559	8,438	103.4
1987	79,700	3,386	4,699	8,085	101.4
1988	77,900	3,236	4,105	7,341	94.2
1989	77,100	3,237	5,607	8,844	114.7
1990	70,500	2,930	4,196	7,126	101.1
1991	69,700	3,199	5,905	9,104	130.6
1992	72,300	4,645	7,586	12,231	169.2
1993	72,400	4,434	7,930	12,364	170.8
Percent Change 1986–1993	–11%	14%	74%	47%	65%
Cuyahoga County					
Year					
1986	153,200	2,555	6,866	9,421	61.5
1987	*	*	*	*	*
1988	145,500	3,207	5,577	8,784	60.4
1989	141,700	2,918	6,708	9,626	67.9
1990	142,500	3,616	7,419	11,035	77.4
1991	141,600	4,100	8,487	12,587	88.9
1992	142,300	4,485	7,398	11,883	83.5
1993	142,700	4,300	7,424	11,724	82.2
Percent Change 1986–1993	–7%	68%	8%	24%	34%
Maricopa County					
Year					
1986	211,400	11,969	5,086	17,055	80.7
1987	215,700	11,037	5,592	16,629	77.1
1988	220,800	11,265	5,961	17,226	78.0
1989	218,800	10,576	5,915	16,491	75.4
1990	225,400	12,500	7,679	20,179	89.5
1991	232,900	13,010	9,638	22,648	97.2
1992	241,800	13,521	6,720	20,241	83.7
1993	254,300	11,007	9,327	20,334	80.0
Percent Change 1986–1993	20%	–8%	83%	19%	–1%

* Data not available.

Source: *Juvenile Court Statistics* (Annual). (Snyder et al., 1990a:133–174; Snyder et al., 1990b:135–175; Snyder et al., 1990c:157–197; Snyder et al., 1992:155–197; Snyder et al., 1993:127–169; Butts et al., 1994:171–214; Butts et al., 1995:61–93; Butts et al., 1996a:59–97).

Note: The increase in Baltimore cases from 1991 to 1992 is inflated somewhat by improved reporting (i.e., reporting was more thorough after 1991).

The court has struggled to maintain control over its case processing time. Caseload management in Cuyahoga County is a labor-intensive process. The court's ability to process most delinquency cases in a timely manner is largely the result of the vigilance of a dedicated group of staff. Their vigilance has been essential to the court's efforts to maintain efficiency in the face of steady increases in delinquency case filings, a large increase in official dependency complaints, entrenched bureaucratic procedures, autonomous courtroom staff, and inadequate information systems. The court was chosen as one of the sites for this study because it has achieved notable success in improving the timeliness of delinquency case processing despite such obstacles.

Maricopa County

The Maricopa County Juvenile Court is widely recognized as one of the most well-managed juvenile courts in the country. The court was selected for this study in part because of this reputation, but also because it is a leader in computerization. The court's Juvenile On-Line Tracking System (or JOLTS) is known by juvenile justice professionals nationwide and has inspired many other software development efforts in juvenile justice agencies. The JOLTS software allows the Maricopa court to move cases efficiently from referral to disposition and to track their progress at each stage of the process. Despite its size and ever-expanding caseload, the Maricopa County court has a long tradition of sound management and technological innovation, and has demonstrated a high degree of commitment to improving its caseload management through automation and caseload monitoring.

BALTIMORE CITY: LEGISLATING DELAY REDUCTION

As mentioned above, the Baltimore juvenile justice system serves an intensely urban population and handles a relatively high volume of juvenile delinquency cases. Although the juvenile population of the city decreased 11% between 1986 and 1993, the number of delinquency cases handled by the juvenile justice system increased more than 40% during that time (table 4.1).

By the early 1990s, severe caseload pressures and long-standing problems in the coordination of delinquency case processing resulted in the Baltimore juvenile justice system having some of the longest delays in the Nation. In particular, the time between the arrest of juveniles and their first contact with the juvenile justice intake process often exceeded six months. Police handling of non-detained cases often took longer than the entire court process, from intake to disposition. In the very worst cases, an arrested juvenile who was released to await court processing may not have been asked to appear for an intake interview for more than two years after his or her arrest.

In response to this situation, the Maryland legislature passed a bill in 1995 that mandated a 15-day time limit for the police to make referrals to the juvenile justice system (Senate Bill 343). A previous legislative provision required the juvenile justice intake process to be completed in no more than 25 days, a much shorter time frame than was often possible in recent years.

Although initially it was not clear exactly what the consequences would be if these deadlines were missed, most of the agencies in the Baltimore juvenile justice system were confident that the legislative requirements would help to reduce juvenile justice processing delays.

Delinquency Case Processing

The Baltimore juvenile justice system is unique in several ways. First, as noted earlier, the City is separate from the surrounding county. Second, the Baltimore City juvenile court relies heavily on referees or “Masters” to handle both its dependency and delinquency caseloads. While other juvenile courts make use of non-judicial court officers to hear some cases, the Baltimore City juvenile court relies on referees far more than the vast majority of U.S. juvenile courts (Rubin, 1991).

Finally, unlike many jurisdictions where the juvenile court’s responsibility for delinquency cases begins at the moment of the police referral, the Baltimore juvenile court must wait for two other agencies to handle delinquency cases prior to any court action. The Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is responsible for the juvenile justice intake process and the screening of cases for prosecution. DJJ decides how to proceed against each youth, whether to refer the case for prosecution or to handle the matter informally. If DJJ intake refers the matter for formal prosecution, screening of the charges as well as the initial filing of charges is the responsibility of the State’s Attorney’s Office for Baltimore City.

As recently as the 1970s, the Department of Juvenile Justice (previously known as the Department of Juvenile Services, and before that as the Juvenile Services Administration) had great discretion over the juvenile intake process. Its discretion began to be limited during the 1980s. Intake officers now have total discretion only in cases involving misdemeanors other than handgun violations. For felonies and all handgun violations, the DJJ intake worker must obtain the permission of the prosecutor’s office to handle a case informally.

Discretion throughout the entire system is even more constrained in cases involving detained juveniles. Perhaps because of this reduced discretion, detention cases move far more quickly through the intake, prosecution, and dispositional process. Once a youth is detained, State law requires the juvenile court to hear the case the next business day. When DJJ makes the decision to detain a youth, it is assumed that the case will be referred for prosecution. The next court day, a DJJ intake worker (one who works in the courthouse as opposed to the DJJ offices several blocks away) will physically take the paperwork to the prosecutor’s office so that charges can be filed that day. The court will then hold an “emergency arraignment,” which serves as both the arraignment and the detention hearing. An adjudication hearing must be held within 30 days, with disposition required 14 days later.

The focus of attention on delinquency case processing time has been on the handling of non-detention matters. In part, this is because of their greater numbers. On average, about 80% of delinquency referrals in Baltimore do not involve detention.

In addition, delay problems have always been far worse in cases involving released juveniles. The Baltimore police department was apparently not troubled by the requirement that it release paperwork on detention cases almost immediately. Non-detained cases, on the other hand, were subjected to lengthy internal review prior to being sent forward for DJJ intake. DJJ also employed a less expeditious intake process in cases where the juvenile was released to await arraignment. As a result, processing delays in cases of non-detained juveniles were far more serious than in cases involving detained juveniles.

Ongoing Challenges

Prior to the enactment of the 1995 legislation, the processing of non-detained juveniles would sometimes take several months. It was not uncommon for Baltimore prosecutors to receive juvenile cases from DJJ intake in which the initial arrest had occurred more than a year before.

With the passage of the 1995 legislation, the police department was required to complete all processing of even non-detained juveniles within 15 days. DJJ is required to make intake decisions within 25 days of police referral. The prosecutor's office then has 30 days to screen the case and file charges, and by court policy an arraignment is to be held within 14 days of charges being filed.

The initial reaction to Maryland's new case processing legislation among those in the juvenile justice system was guarded enthusiasm. Officials in the juvenile court, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the State's Attorney's office, and the Public Defender's office all expressed support for the goals of the legislation. The actual impact of the legislation, however, was not as clear. (The Maryland Court of Appeals also issued a decision recently that effectively granted juveniles the right to a speedy trial.)

Most juvenile justice officials in Baltimore expect continued efforts to reduce case delays despite the new legislation. Even the provisions of the new legislation may appear to some observers to be rather lenient. Assuming all processing of non-detained juveniles is completed within the required time limits, several months will pass between a youth's arrest and his or final disposition (i.e., 15 days for police handling, 25 days for DJJ intake, 30 days for prosecutor screening, 14 days for arraignment, 30 days for adjudication, and 30 days for disposition). Thus, non-detained juveniles will still likely wait nearly 5 months between arrest and disposition.

The experiences of the Baltimore juvenile justice system point out the potentially important role that legislation (or formal court rules) can play in instigating positive changes in juvenile court case processing time, especially in jurisdictions experiencing severe delay problems. Of course, the recent changes in Baltimore also underscore the limits of formal inducements to improve case handling. Even after more aggressive legislation or court rules are enacted, the real work of reducing juvenile court delay remains to be done. Those professionals who work in the juvenile justice system must still find ways of moving cases through to final dispositions more efficiently.

CUYAHOGA COUNTY: LABOR-INTENSIVE DELAY REDUCTION

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court in Cleveland, Ohio is the second oldest juvenile court in the United States. The court opened its doors on June 4, 1902 when 20 juvenile males under the age of 16 appeared before the Honorable Thomas E. Callaghan, the first judge of the newly established court. Since then, the court's mandate has gradually expanded to include jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to delinquency, incorrigibility (unruliness), dependency, neglect and abuse, termination of parental rights, and juvenile traffic violations. The juvenile court is also responsible for custody, paternity and child support matters, cases in which an adult has been charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and other issues involving children, such as approving a minor's right to marry or have an abortion without parental notification.

The juvenile court in Cuyahoga County is a division of the Court of Common Pleas. The main juvenile court complex is located in downtown Cleveland and houses the courtrooms, administrative offices, the detention center, and central offices for intake, probation and community services. The court leases space in a second downtown building to house supplementary programs including home detention, victim aid and restitution, traffic and child support services. A field probation office serving low-risk juveniles is also located in this second building. The juvenile court also maintains seven branch offices throughout the county that provide intake services. Field probation offices are located in five of these branch offices.

The juvenile court has six judges that are elected directly to the juvenile bench and are not subject to rotation within the Court of Common Pleas. Six magistrates assist these judges and are responsible for handling up to 60% of the jurisdiction's formally petitioned (or "official") delinquency cases.¹ Judges are responsible for reviewing the decisions and court orders of the magistrates and for determining the types of cases heard by magistrates. Typically, judges hear first and second degree felony cases with magistrates presiding over lesser felonies, misdemeanors and unruly cases.² Judges also generally assign certain types of dependency and custody filings to their magistrate. The court employs four additional magistrates to hear specialty dockets, such as child support, traffic and custody review. These magistrates are not assigned to a specific judge.

Juvenile Court Workload Statistics

Although Cleveland's population is half what it was in the 1950s, Cuyahoga County remains the largest county in the State, with a total population of 1.44 million and a child population (under age 18) of 332,100 (Butts et al., 1996a:79). The juvenile court has experienced a steady increase in the number and seriousness of delinquency filings in the last 10 years (table 4.2). In 1994, 12,970 delinquency cases were filed with the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, an increase of 21% over the number of cases in 1990.³ The number of delinquency cases involving violent offenses increased 50% between 1990 and 1994, while drug offenses jumped 424%.

The juvenile court also experienced dramatic growth in the number of dependency, neglect and abuse actions filed during this period. Between 1990 and 1994, these case filings grew 89%. The growth in dependency, neglect and abuse actions limited the court's ability to process official delinquency cases in a timely manner.⁴ Dependency, neglect and abuse cases are given priority status because of legislatively mandated case processing timelines. State legislation passed in 1989 (Senate Bill 89) required these cases to be dispositioned within 90 days of filing. Cases are to be dismissed (without prejudice) if the time limit is exceeded.

The disposition rate for official delinquency and unruly case filings declined considerably during recent years, suggesting that the juvenile court's backlog of these cases increased (table 4.3). From 1992 to 1994, the court *disposed* 21,550 official delinquency and unruly cases. This was 15% less than the 25,319 cases *filed* during the same period. This translates into an average backlog of more than 1,250 cases per year. In 1994, the difference between the number of official cases disposed and official cases filed was 1,670. During the prior three year period from 1989 to 1991, the number of dispositions kept pace with filings. From 1986 to 1988, the court officially disposed of 37% more cases than were filed. This suggests that the court had amassed a large backlog and that at least part of this backlog was disposed between 1986 and 1988.

TABLE 4.2
Cuyahoga County juvenile court workload statistics.

Court Referrals	1990	1992	1994	Pct. Change 1990-94
Delinquency, total	10,695	11,612	12,970	21%
Delinquency, official court action	6,997	7,118	7,763	11
Delinquency, violent offenses*	1,807	2,422	2,702	50
Delinquency, drug offenses	327	1,143	1,385	424
Unruly**	3,289	4,117	4,583	39
Dependency, neglect and abuse	2,094	3,641	3,968	89

* Includes homicide, assault, robbery and sex offenses.

** Status offenses including incorrigibility, curfew violations, truancy and running away from home.

Source: Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court *Annual Reports*, 1990, 1992, and 1994.

TABLE 4.3
Disposition rate for official delinquency cases and unruly cases,
1986–1994.

	1986-88	1989-91	1992-94
Official delinquency and unruly cases filed	21,109	24,593	25,319
Official delinquency/unruly dispositions	28,857	24,797	21,550
Disposition rate*	137%	101%	85%

* Rate = Number of dispositions divided by number of cases filed.

Source: Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court *Annual Report*, 1986-1994 and Chinn Planning Partnership, *Continuum of Detention Services Plan* (1994).

Local Rules for Delinquency Case Processing

Cuyahoga County has developed procedures and rules for the timing of delinquency case handling that are considerably shorter than those established by the State (table 4.4). Ohio Supreme Court Rules of Superintendence recommend that delinquency cases be disposed within six months; unruly cases are to be disposed in three months (Hamel, 1994:12–13). Cuyahoga County rules stipulate that detained cases should proceed to case disposition within a maximum of 38 calendar days from the time a youth is detained. In non-detained cases, disposition should occur within a maximum of 95 calendar days from the date the official complaint was filed with the juvenile court (116 days from date case was referred to court).

Delinquency Case Processing

The processing of delinquency cases in Cuyahoga County is a labor intensive process. Although the court has an automated information system, when contrasted with other jurisdictions (notably Maricopa County), the system in Cuyahoga County is outdated and is not sufficiently integrated into the case processing stream.⁵ Still, the court has been successful in reducing case processing delays in recent years. This has been accomplished through improvements to the docketing and caseflow management system, including modifications to the manual caseflow process, reorganization of court staff to better facilitate and monitor case processing and, most importantly, staff vigilance in the monitoring of case processing activities and timelines.

Some enhancements have been made to the court's automated information system to facilitate the scheduling and tracking of hearings. However, the ability of the court to track hearings in an automated fashion has been limited by the fact that the court maintains two independent computer systems that cannot interact, necessitating duplicate and redundant data entry and data analysis. Moreover, neither information system appears to collect sufficiently comprehensive caseflow data, nor are they designed to allow for the ready development of the types of case tracking and case aging reports that are critical to maintaining continuing and effective control over caseflow.

The court's intake staff handle all incoming referrals.⁶ Upon receipt of a new referral, an intake staff person completes a fact sheet that contains basic demographic

and offense information on the juvenile. Data from the fact sheet are eventually entered into the court's main computer system with the appropriate system identifiers. The fact sheet is also used to log the intake decision (to divert, by-pass, or file for official action) and to generate "service of process" (written notification of relevant parties) if the case is accepted for official action and a court hearing is scheduled.

TABLE 4.4
Time frames for processing of detained and non-detained delinquency cases.

Non-Detained Cases	Cuyahoga County Time Guidelines	
Intake screening of referral and filing of official complaint	21 days	From date of referral to court intake. (Includes prosecutor review of the official complaint.)
Arraignment hearing	21 days	From date official complaint was filed with court.
Pre-trial hearing	14 days	From date of arraignment.
Adjudication hearing	30 days	From date of pre-trial hearing.
Disposition hearing	30 days	From date of plea/admission or adjudication.
Hearing on probation violation*	28 days	From date complaint was filed with the court.
Detained Cases		
Detention hearing/arraignment	3 days	From date youth was detained.
Intake screening of referral and filing of official complaint	1 days	From date youth was detained.
Pre-trial hearing	7 days	From date of arraignment.
Adjudication hearing	14 days	From date of Pre-Trial Hearing.
Disposition hearing	14 days	From date of plea/admission or adjudication.
Hearing on probation violation*	10 days	From date youth was detained.

* Including hearings on violations of court orders, reviews and motions.

Intake mediators are responsible for screening all delinquency referrals to determine whether a case should be diverted or set for official action. If a case is accepted for official action, the intake mediator is responsible for preparing the official petition (or "complaint") that charges the youth with delinquency. Most official felony complaints prepared by an intake mediator are forwarded to the county prosecutor's office for legal review. Attorneys assigned to the prosecutor's office make a final determination on the actual charges to be contained in the official complaint.⁷ Upon completion of this review, the complaint is sent to the appropriate law enforcement representative for signature.⁸

The official complaint and accompanying case file are next routed to the “scheduling desk” in the Assignment Services unit for the scheduling of the arraignment hearing and the assignment of a judicial team (judge and magistrate). If a plea agreement is not forthcoming at arraignment, a pre-trial hearing is scheduled. Pre-trials are automatically scheduled for the following week on a specific day and time based on the day of the week of the arraignment hearing. All parties to the case are informed of the pre-trial prior to the conclusion of the arraignment hearing.

The scheduling of all subsequent hearings (i.e., adjudication and disposition hearings) is left to the discretion of the jurist. Computer terminals are available for courtroom staff to access a jurist’s calendar and to schedule a subsequent hearing directly from the courtroom. Most judges use their courtroom staff to schedule future hearings in this fashion. However, most magistrates prefer to have Assignment Services schedule subsequent hearings. Overall, Assignment Services staff estimate that approximately 50% of all hearings on delinquency cases are scheduled by their office. Assignment Services anticipates that the bulk of post-arraignment hearings will be scheduled in the courtroom as jurists and their courtroom staff become more familiar with using the computer terminal and the court’s scheduling software.

Assignment Services strongly encourages jurists to schedule future hearings from the courtroom. This simplifies the scheduling process in that all parties are notified of the subsequent hearing prior to leaving the courtroom and the court does not have to provide official notice to these parties. Additionally, any scheduling conflicts that arise can be resolved immediately with all parties present rather than after service has been completed.

The scheduling of a subsequent adjudication or disposition hearing by Scheduling Desk staff results in some built-in delays than can be particularly problematic if a subsequent hearing must be held at the earliest available date. The hearing officer and courtroom clerk must first complete all post-hearing processing of the case file (including the development of any court orders arising from the hearing) before releasing the file to a courtroom coordinator from Assignment Services.⁹ If the just-completed hearing resulted in a court order, the courtroom coordinator will first route the case file to the Clerk’s Office. There the order is “journalized” and prepared for distribution prior to the file being routed to the Scheduling Desk for the scheduling of the next hearing. This can take two to three days and sometimes longer. Furthermore, Scheduling Desk staff are unable to schedule a hearing on short notice because legal notice must be served on all parties informing them of the hearing date and time. In most instances, two weeks is the earliest that the Scheduling Desk can set a routine subsequent hearing.

Improving the Management of Caseflow

In recent years, both the judiciary and court administration became increasingly concerned with issues related to time standards, docketing time frames and caseflow management. The impetus for this increased concern was the passage of Senate Bill 89 which places strict time limits on the processing of dependency, neglect and abuse

cases. The legislation required these cases to reach disposition within 90 days of filing. The bill also placed firm time requirements on the review process and the length of time a dependent, neglected or abused child may remain in temporary foster care. These mandates were enacted at a time when the juvenile court was already experiencing severe pressures to absorb the increasing number of dependency, neglect and abuse case filings.

The timeliness of delinquency case processing began to slide in the late 1980s and at least some of this was attributable to the juvenile court's anticipation of the new mandates for dependency, neglect and abuse cases. In the fall of 1990, the Administrative Judge of the juvenile court asked the court's Legal Director and Manager of Assignment Services to work with the Case Management Committee to conduct a caseload management study and recommend methods to improve the processing of delinquency cases. While it was apparent that delinquency case processing time had increased, it was not clear how long and how often delays occurred because the court's information system was unable to provide reports that tracked case processing time.

An analysis of a small sample of randomly selected cases revealed that it took an average of 226 days (more than seven months) for official delinquency cases to proceed to final disposition (Graham and Howley, 1992). The study also revealed that much of the existing delays originated during case processing prior to the scheduling of hearings, including intake screening, prosecutor review of the official complaint, assignment of jurist and counsel, service of process, and data entry. The Director of Juvenile Court Services concluded that too many court staff were involved in the handling of each case file, and that court staff too often had complete discretion to hold a case for as long as they wished in order to complete their case processing tasks. Thus, small delays at each processing stage were resulting in considerable delays overall in scheduling hearings and ultimately disposing of cases.

In early 1991, the juvenile court implemented a revamped caseload management system that included a number of procedural and organizational changes designed to facilitate the timely processing of delinquency cases. The monitoring of the flow of case files to and from the courtroom became a primary responsibility of Assignment Services courtroom staff. Critical caseload management changes that were implemented included:

- A centralized processing unit was created (as part of Assignment Services) to coordinate all case processing activities once a case was scheduled for court. A courtroom coordinator was assigned to each courtroom to work with the jurist and court clerk to facilitate the flow of case files to and from the courtroom and to facilitate the timely scheduling of all future hearings.
- Empirical time frames were established for each case processing step and codified into court procedures and rules.
- The jurist assignment of delinquency cases was centralized as was responsibility for the scheduling of the arraignment hearing.
- Pre-trial hearing dates and times were tied to the date and time of the juvenile's arraignment ensuring that all parties present at the arraignment hearing were aware of the future pre-trial date.

- Jurists were encouraged to schedule all future adjudication and disposition hearings from the courtroom prior to the conclusion of the current hearing whenever possible.
- Docketing timelines were established for the scheduling of all hearing types and measures were taken to manually monitor compliance with these timelines.
- Rules were established to govern the granting of continuances with compliance to be monitored.

These changes had a dramatic impact on case processing time. A follow-up study of a similar number of randomly selected delinquency cases from a cross-section of jurists revealed that within six months the number of days to disposition had been reduced to an average of 88 days (Graham and Howley, 1992). This represented a 61% decrease in case processing time from the earlier average of 226 days. While the sample sizes used in the two studies were limited because of the time necessary to collect and analyze caseload processing data manually, court administrators and jurists were confident that these results were fair indicators of the improvements achieved in recent years.

A critical component of these improvements was the vigilance of the courtroom coordinators and other Assignment Services staff. Each courtroom coordinator was assigned to two courtrooms and was responsible for working closely with the court clerks to facilitate the timely processing and movement of case files. Judges and administrators agreed that the courtroom coordinators should do whatever it takes to move cases. Over the years, the Assignment Services staff developed good working relationships with the judges and magistrates as evidenced by the general cooperation afforded them by jurists and their courtroom staff. This was a key element in the success of Assignment Services since the office has very little authority to require compliance with caseload and docketing guidelines.

As of 1995, the case processing time frames promoted by Assignment Services had been codified into local court rules. The rules, however, were to serve as guidelines only. No sanctions were tied to violations. While individual courtroom coordinators continued to monitor compliance with the rules, they had no authority to hasten the processing of case files by court clerks, or to override the scheduling practices of individual courtrooms. Their success continued to depend on personal relationships and individual persistence.

Efforts to Facilitate Timely Processing of Detention Cases

In recent years, the juvenile court has taken steps to reduce the number of juveniles detained for extended periods in violation of juvenile court and/or state length of stay requirements and for those juveniles who remain in detention awaiting placement planning or placement transfer. A 1994 study indicated that between 10% and 20% of the juvenile detention population during the first two months of 1994 had been detained in excess of the 60-day limit set by internal court policy, with approximately 3% of the detained population at any one time held in excess of 90 days in violation of state statutes (Chinn Planning Partnership, 1994:19-20).¹⁰

In addition, up to 20% of the remaining detention population during this period were youths awaiting pre-dispositional placement planning or post-dispositional transfer to the county's Youth Development Center (YDC), the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS), or to a private placement. Extended stays in detention appear to result from a number of factors (Chinn Planning Partnership, 1994:29-33):

- A lack of placement options for certain offenders (most specifically, sex offenders);
- Extensive placement referral preparation and screening; and
- Bed-space and budgetary constraints in the number of private placement options.

By the latter months of 1994, these numbers had been reduced considerably. Detention data compiled by court staff for selected weeks in August and September 1994 suggested that the number of detained juveniles in violation of length of stay limits and youth awaiting placement planning or post-dispositional transfer had been reduced by 50%.

These reductions in detention stays were the result of continuing efforts by the juvenile court to expedite the processing of detained cases including the convening of a weekly detention population meeting to staff cases that fall outside of court policy and statutory guidelines. These meetings were chaired by the Detention Center's population manager and attended by representatives from the Legal Department (Intake and Assignment Services) and Juvenile Probation in addition to staff from shelter care providers, YDC, ODYS, and court-sponsored commitment alternatives programs (boot camp and community corrections). This committee began to meet on a weekly basis in 1992. The purpose of the meetings was to:

- Expedite the screening of detained youth to determine program eligibility for placement in one of the court-sponsored commitment alternatives programs (boot camp or community corrections);
- Coordinate the post-disposition transfer of cases to placement (ODYS, YDC, and private placements) including expediting the completion of all court paperwork and placement/commitment packet materials (court orders, completion of social history and psychological assessment reports, etc.);
- Facilitate the processing of detained juveniles awaiting hearing dates and those whose hearings have been continued; and
- Monitor instances in which juveniles were detained due to probation violations and other violations of court orders (the court discourages detention in these cases unless new charges are filed).

A second Population Management Committee was established in 1991 and agreed to meet on a bi-monthly basis. This committee was chaired by the Director of Juvenile Court Services and represented a high level of commitment from the court to monitor detention cases. Committee members included the Juvenile Office Chiefs from the County Prosecutor's and Public Defender's Office, a representative from the Cuyahoga

County Department of Children and Family Services, and administrators from every court department except Human Resources. Two weeks before each meeting, Research and Information Services staff prepared a report on juveniles who had been detained for 60 days or more including home detention and shelter care cases. This report was distributed to all committee members prior to the meeting and cases were individually reviewed to see what could be done to expedite the movement of juveniles from secure detention, shelter care and home detention. The court-wide population management committee also reviewed and established court policy with regard to detention.

To facilitate the processing of detention cases, the court created a case management coordinator position. This individual worked in Assignment Services with responsibilities similar to those of the courtroom coordinators. She was responsible for overseeing and coordinating the flow of case files for all detention cases (including secure detention, home detention and shelter care). Her responsibilities included:

- On a daily basis, picking up all police reports left with detention center staff on newly detained juveniles and delivering them to Intake for expedited screening and preparation of the official complaint. This single step was thought to have increased the completion of intake screening for detention cases by a full day.
- Monitoring the files of detained juveniles to insure that the cases were screened within 72 hours, and working with Intake staff to facilitate the processing of these cases. Intake returns all case files on detained juveniles to the case management coordinator once initial screening is completed and the official complaint has been reviewed by the County Prosecutor's Office. The case management coordinator hand delivers these to the Detention/Arraignment Courtroom located in the Detention Center.
- Insuring that future court hearings on detained juveniles are set in a timely manner. The coordinator works closely with the population manager who provides a listing of detained cases for which court hearing dates have not been entered on the juvenile court's main automated system. For cases set in front of a magistrate, the case management coordinator schedules the next hearing date if this has not been accomplished in the courtroom. For cases to be heard by a judge, she delivers the case file to the judge's chambers so that the next hearing can be set by the judge's administrative staff.
- For juveniles who are not released after their initial detention hearing, working with the courtroom clerk assigned to the detention referee to insure that paperwork is completed in a timely manner. The case management coordinator types the order authorizing detention and delivers it to the assigned judge for signature.
- Facilitating the processing of all warrants and other court actions on detained juveniles that require special handling.

The concept of a case management coordinator for detention cases grew out of a pilot study conducted by Assignment Services in 1992. Of the 34 secure detention cases included in the study, half were assigned to a case management coordinator who was given responsibility for facilitating the processing of these cases. The remaining cases were permitted to proceed through normal processing. Study results were encouraging in that arraignment hearings were held on cases assigned to the case management coordinator in one-third less time than for control cases that were handled routinely (Chinn Planning Partnership, 1994:24-25).

Continuing Impediments to Timely Case Processing

Processing delays appear to have decreased considerably in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court during the early 1990s. The Assignment Services unit of the court conducted a number of caseload studies that confirmed this impression. The court's success, however, was due primarily to the efforts of dedicated personnel who were willing to manually expedite and monitor case processing in an organizational environment that was not all that conducive to greater efficiency. As indicated previously, exponential growth in dependency case filings and processing requirements continues to place tremendous strains on the system and to limit the court's ability to address issues affecting the processing of delinquency cases. The court continues to be hampered in its efforts to manage caseload. Critical factors include the following:

- Antiquated information systems that do not provide court staff with the type of caseload, case aging, or "exception" reports necessary to monitor caseload effectively;
- Staffing and budgetary arrangements that do not encourage courtroom accountability with respect to timely case processing;
- Need for greater judicial involvement in the management of caseload and a commitment to the timely processing of delinquency cases; and
- Inconsistencies in the enforcement of the juvenile court's policy on the granting of continuances.

1. Inadequate Information Systems

The informational capabilities of the juvenile court are severely limited. These deficiencies have reduced the ability of court staff to monitor case progress and to identify and address individual case delays in a timely fashion. The primary management information system does not meet the court's data processing and reporting needs. Data entry and retrieval, particularly in summary display and report format, are difficult if not impossible. Caseload and case aging reports are virtually non-existent. According to the Ohio Supreme Court's recent study of caseload management in Cuyahoga County:

The court is unable to easily produce information that allows comparison with its time guidelines. As a result, it is very difficult to pinpoint where the caseload management system breaks down in order to resolve problems. Data on the length of time a delinquency case takes to travel through the system [are] not available without incurring substantial staff time and effort because data must be assembled manually (Hamel, 1994:14).

Inadequacies in the court's information system and the limited support of this system by the Cuyahoga County Data Center has encouraged individual departments to develop separate automated systems. The proliferation of multiple systems on differing platforms results in numerous inefficiencies. For example, Assignment Services' case assignment and docketing systems are maintained in two separate packages on a mini-computer. Case assignment and hearing scheduling data, however, are processed by the court's primary computer system. This requires data on hearing schedules and results to be entered independently. At minimum, re-keying of data on multiple systems increases the staff time necessary to produce essential information and increases the likelihood of data-entry error. Department staff also tend to be concerned with the accuracy of their own data, but only minimally concerned with other systems. Depending on which systems they use the most, staff may occasionally make decisions based upon data that other staff know to be unreliable and/or outdated. Timely dissemination of case processing and case tracking data is difficult at best in such an environment.

2. Caseload Accountability

Juvenile court administrators, including the Director of Juvenile Court Services, have little formal authority to require that individual jurists and their courtroom staff comply with the court's docketing and case processing directives. Local court rules are carefully worded and are only intended to serve as guidelines. No sanctions are tied to violations. Section H of Rule 20 states that "[t]he time frames set forth in this rule are case management guidelines only and a failure to follow such time frames in any individual case shall not be grounds for dismissal of the case or suppression of any evidence."

Furthermore, court administrators and individual courtroom coordinators have only limited administrative ability to require that courtroom staff comply with docketing time frames and other case processing requirements. This is particularly true of staff assigned to the judges' courtrooms. Each judge has a bailiff, assistant bailiff and clerk. These courtroom staff are hired directly by the judge, and the salaries and duties of these staff are set by the individual judges and thus differ from courtroom to courtroom. Assignment Services and the courtroom coordinators have to rely on the judge's clerk to complete the post-hearing processing of case files. These court clerks, however, also typically serve as judicial secretaries. It is not unusual for these duties to conflict (Hamel, 1994:26-27).

3. Judicial Involvement in Management of Delinquency Caseflow

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court judges are generally very supportive of recent court-wide initiatives to improve caseflow management and the timeliness of delinquency case processing. They are also very sensitive to case processing standards and the performance of their courtrooms. The recently implemented caseflow management system was well received by the judiciary because the system was flexible enough to allow for varying judicial needs and priorities. However, the caseflow management system may not have increased the consistency of delinquency case processing practices between courtrooms (Hamel, 1994:12–14;22–30). In general, the court lacks adequate organizational mechanisms to ensure judicial communication and cooperation on common case processing issues.

4. Inconsistencies in the Granting of Continuances

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court operates under a local rule that limits the granting of continuances and requires continued cases to be scheduled on a date-certain basis and at the earliest possible date from when a continuance is granted.¹¹ Judges and referees, however, do not consistently adhere to the policy. Some are more likely to grant continuances and, in general, allow attorneys more control over the pace of litigation.¹² Furthermore, the court's automated information system does not track continuances and no individual at the court is responsible for monitoring the frequency with which continuances are granted.

The inability of the court to implement its continuance policy contributes to delays. Not only do continuances affect the available calendar time for other cases, they create added paperwork and processing requirements for all court staff. Referee Margaret Mazza, a Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court referee known for maintaining strict control over her docket, asserted that "continuances are the kiss of death" in caseflow management and that continued cases often take up more docket time when the case finally is heard because of the likelihood that the juvenile has been referred to the court on additional charges in the interim.¹³

Conclusion

Cuyahoga County has realized considerable success in its attempts to exert more control over the pace of delinquency case processing. This success has been due largely to the efforts of dedicated staff who manually expedite the processing of delinquency cases, and it has been accomplished despite an organizational environment that is not always supportive of such efforts. Internal and external impediments to timely case processing remain, including a steady increase in case filings, new legislation that has increased the court's oversight responsibilities in dependency cases, entrenched bureaucratic procedures, autonomous courtroom staff, and an inadequate information system. Of course, many if not most juvenile courts in large, urban areas face similar challenges as they struggle to maintain control over their delinquency caseloads.

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court is an excellent example for other similarly situated juvenile courts. The experiences of Cuyahoga County demonstrate that significant progress can be achieved in controlling case processing delays using only the energies and talents of existing staff. On the other hand, the court is also an example of the real limits on caseflow management in courts facing a range of organizational impediments. If not remedied, such impediments can frustrate the efforts of even a dedicated and vigilant staff as they attempt to develop and nurture an effective caseflow management system.

MARICOPA COUNTY: CONTROLLING DELAYS WITH AUTOMATION

The Maricopa County Juvenile Court is one of the largest juvenile courts in the United States in one of the Nation's fastest growing urban areas. The juvenile court is a division of the Superior Court, part of a unified court system administered by the Arizona State Supreme Court. The juvenile court has original exclusive jurisdiction over all persons under the age of 18 including all matters pertaining to delinquency, incorrigibility, dependency, severance (termination of parental rights), adoptions and juvenile traffic cases. The total population of Maricopa County was 2.3 million as of 1993, including 603,800 children and youth under 18 years of age (Butts et al., 1996a:65).

The Maricopa County Juvenile Court operates two facilities located 20 miles apart. The Durango complex was built in 1976 and is the more central facility. It is located southwest of central Phoenix and serves the central and western portions of the county. A second complex, the Southeast Facility (SEF), was opened in 1990 and serves the remainder of the county. Although the presiding juvenile court judge, director of court services and court administrator are housed at the Durango complex, both facilities are self-contained units. Each facility completes its own intake procedures on new referrals (or complaints), schedules and conducts hearings on the entire range of cases before the court, operates a secure detention facility with more than 100 beds, and provides a wide range of diversion and probation services.

Six judges are assigned on a rotational basis to the juvenile court—three to each facility. The court also has 11 commissioners (similar to “referees” or “masters”) who handle the bulk of the delinquency caseload (as much as 90% of all hearings). State statutes require that a judge preside over all criminal-court transfers (or “remand” hearings). Judges also hear many delinquency adjudications and dispositions. A considerable portion of the judicial workload, however, is in the neglect and abuse arena. Judges are responsible for hearing all contested dependency and termination of parental rights cases, while commissioners handle most initial and uncontested dependency hearings.

TABLE 4.5
Maricopa County juvenile court delinquency workload statistics.

	1990	1992	1994	Pct. Change 1990-94
At-risk juvenile population (Ages 8 through 17)	289,221	306,773	327,429	13%
Delinquency and incorrigibility complaints received	29,031	27,624	32,703	13
Number of juveniles involved	18,491	18,183	20,877	13
Complaints per juvenile	1.57	1.52	1.57	0
Complaints as percent of juvenile population	6.4	5.9	6.4	0
Delinquency and incorrigibility complaints petitioned and set for formal court action	8,031	9,360	9,976	24
Hearings scheduled on delinq. and incorrigibility petitions	31,460	33,720	33,510	7
Total hearings scheduled	43,846	46,037	50,775	16

Source: Maricopa County Juvenile Court, Division of Research and Planning.

Juvenile Court Workload Statistics

The delinquency workload of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court has increased steadily in recent years. Statistics for 1990 through 1994 reveal that 32,703 delinquency and incorrigibility complaints were received by the juvenile court in 1994, a 13% increase over the number received in 1990 (table 4.5).¹⁴ This increase closely parallels other demographic trends in the county. The population of juveniles considered to be “at-risk” of delinquency in Maricopa County (youth ages 8-17) increased 13% between 1990 and 1994.¹⁵

During this period, the volume of complaints as a percentage of the at-risk juvenile population remained relatively constant. In 1990, 1992 and 1994, the number of delinquency and incorrigibility complaints received was equal to approximately 6% of the county’s juvenile at-risk population. The average number of delinquency and incorrigibility complaints per referred juvenile also remained relatively constant during this period at 1.57 complaints per juvenile in 1990 and 1994 and 1.52 complaints per youth in 1992.

Formal court proceedings on delinquency and incorrigibility matters, however, grew at a rate faster than would be expected given population increases and a stable juvenile referral rate. The number of delinquency and incorrigibility petitions filed with the court increased at a rate almost double the increase in complaints during this five year period, reportedly due to policy changes in the County Attorney’s Office.

The number of hearings scheduled on these petitions also increased, but at a rate lower than would be expected given the increase in petitions filed. In 1990, a total of 31,460 hearings on delinquency and incorrigibility petitions were scheduled. In 1994, the number of hearings on these petitions increased 7% to 33,510. Lastly, the total number of hearings scheduled by the juvenile court on all matters (including dependency, severance and adoption petitions) increased 16% from 43,846 hearings in 1990 to 50,775 hearings in 1994.

Stable Leadership

The Maricopa County Juvenile Court has long been recognized as one of the best managed juvenile courts in the nation. In 1979, it was one of the first juvenile courts to earn accreditation from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. While 1995 was a year of transition, one of the court's trademarks for two decades has been stable and strong leadership. Only two individuals served as presiding juvenile court judge between 1978 and 1995. Judge Kimball Rose served as presiding juvenile court judge from 1978 through 1989. Judge Rose was succeeded by Judge James McDougall (1989–1995).¹⁶ In May, 1995 Judge McDougall rotated to the Adult Division of the Superior Court and Judge John Foreman was installed as presiding judge after serving as a juvenile court judge for approximately 5 years.

In 1995 Mr. Ernesto Garcia retired as director of juvenile court services after 23 years as court director and more than 35 years with the juvenile court. Mr. Garcia developed a national reputation as a skillful administrator who was able to effectively lead the court during an extended period of growth and expansion.

In close cooperation with the judiciary, Mr. Garcia also effectively represented the needs of the juvenile court to the County Board of Commissioners. These efforts were critical in securing the funding necessary to build the SEF facility and to develop and support Maricopa County's state-of-the-art juvenile court information system, known as JOLTS (*Juvenile On-line Tracking System*). In general, the judiciary and administration of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court have long been committed to developing the organizational and technological supports necessary for sound caseflow management.

Court Automation and Caseflow Management

The Maricopa County Juvenile Court has also been a national leader in the development of automated tools to facilitate efficient case processing. For more than two decades, the court's Juvenile On-Line Tracking System has been the inspiration for numerous software development efforts throughout the Nation.¹⁷ The system plays a central role in the day-to-day operations of the court and allows for smooth coordination of case processing between the court's organizational units within and across court facilities. The case processing needs of the County Attorney and Public Defender's Offices are also supported by the JOLTS software and to a large extent the coordination of delinquency case processing across these separate agencies is seamless.

The JOLTS software also contains sophisticated case assignment and calendaring modules and an extensive series of automated reports have been developed to assist the judiciary, court administration and line staff in monitoring performance and making the continual system adjustments necessary to expedite caseload.

Automation facilitates caseload management in a variety of ways in Maricopa County, including:

- Preliminary screening and routing of delinquency complaints not involving detention;
- Automated scheduling of diversion appointments and generation of appointment letters;
- Automated calendaring of court hearings;
- Assigning of delinquency cases to juvenile probation officers at court intake;
- Electronic notification of critical case events and calendar changes;
- Preparation of court documents;
- Electronic archiving of important case documents; and
- Monitoring of system performance and individual case progression.

1. Preliminary Screening and Routing of Complaints Not Involving Detention

In most juvenile courts, the bulk of the delinquency caseload consists of complaints filed by law enforcement agencies that do not result in a juvenile's detention. Nationwide, approximately 80% of all delinquency matters are handled without placing the juvenile in secure detention (Butts et al., 1996a). Delays in the processing of these cases are common because non-detained cases handled in a more relaxed fashion than complaints in which a juvenile is being held in detention.¹⁸ In Maricopa County, for example, the paper work for delinquency complaints not involving detention are typically dropped off or mailed to the court. In detention cases, on the other hand, the matter must be screened immediately so that a petition can be filed prior to the juvenile's detention hearing.

In many courts, preliminary screening of complaints not involving detention and the initial assignment of these complaints for further processing are time consuming tasks that can take days to accomplish and often involve several different organizational units and staff. In Maricopa County, these tasks have been routinized and are accomplished automatically by JOLTS at the moment information about the complaint is entered into the system by the staff of the "Central Index" unit. JOLTS automatically evaluates the complaint against a variety of pre-defined parameters that have been incorporated into the software to guide decision-making. For example, the system automatically:

- Determines which facility (Durango or SEF) the complaint will be assigned to based on the child's zipcode.

- Determines if the compliant is eligible for diversion by examining the offenses on the complaint and the child's prior delinquent history. In Arizona, a juvenile's first two misdemeanor complaints are eligible for diversion. JOLTS will examine all charges on a complaint for eligibility and then search the database for a child's prior delinquent history. If eligible for diversion, the system grades the complaint as diversion-eligible and routes the complaint to the appropriate Intake Unit for further processing. Felony and third misdemeanor complaints are automatically routed to the Charging Bureau of the County Attorney's Office for petition screening.
- Assigns the case to a specific probation officer assigned to Intake or a specific assistant county attorney in the Charging Bureau of the County Attorney's Office based on the current caseload of the intake officer or prosecutor, respectively.
- If a youth has been previously referred to the court on a delinquency complaint and is currently on probation, JOLTS generates an automatic message notifying the assigned probation officer of the new case activity and the complaint is routed to the officer for further processing.
- If a juvenile currently on probation is detained on a new charge, JOLTS automatically generates a message notifying the probation officer that the youth is being held in the detention center.

Preliminary screening, routing and case assignment are combined into a one step process that occurs simultaneous with initial data entry. Initial case processing tasks that can take days or weeks to accomplish in many other juvenile courts are completed within minutes in the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. Complaints are routinely routed to the next processing stage within 24 hours of the receipt of the complaint by the court.

2. Automated Scheduling of Diversion Appointments and Generation of Appointment Notification Letters

Delinquency complaints eligible for diversion are routed to the appropriate Intake Unit for continued processing after Central Index has entered the complaint into the court's JOLTS database. As shown above, the court annually processes 20,000 to 30,000 complaints. The majority of these are informally "adjusted" after the juvenile has completed a specified number of community work service hours or participated in other programs provided through the court. The decision to route a complaint to Intake for diversion screening is made by the automated system. Screening of these complaints requires an Intake probation officer to conduct an initial diversion interview with the referred juvenile and parent(s) to discuss circumstances surrounding the incident, the youth's school performance, general behavior, etc. If there are no major behavioral problems and the juvenile acknowledges involvement in the alleged offense, the complaint can be informally adjusted subject to specific conditions. Conditions of adjustment generally require that the juvenile participate in a specialized education

and awareness program, family or individual counseling, day treatment, restitution, or completion of community work service hours.

The Intake officer and Intake support staff rely heavily on the automated system in completing these screenings. Diversion screening tasks involving JOLTS include:

- Scheduling of the initial diversion interview using scheduling parameters built into the automated system. Intake officers typically complete 5 to 7 interviews daily. The Intake officer will examine his/her personal calendar to find an open time slot within the appropriate time frames. Once a slot is identified, the officer will schedule the interview. JOLTS will update the officer's interview calendar, post the date and time of this interview in the appropriate child file, and automatically add the information to a daily master and individual officer interview list. This is all accomplished in a matter of seconds with a limited number of keystrokes.
- The officer will direct JOLTS to generate a letter informing the child and parent(s) of the option to handle this complaint informally at the initial diversion interview as scheduled on the designated date and time. A mailing label is also generated.
- Interview cancellations are logged into the system by support staff or the Intake officer. The interview slot is freed up on the officer's calendar and these slots are used by the officer for re-scheduling interviews and second interviews in instances where a child does not show. As the slots are filled, the automated system will update the child's JOLTS file and the officer's personal calendar. JOLTS also tracks the number of times an interview has been rescheduled.
- Each day, JOLTS generates master interview calendars for each facility that are used by court receptionists to direct juveniles and their families to their scheduled interview. Immediately upon a receptionist indicating that a party has checked in, JOLTS generates an electronic message informing the Intake officer of their arrival. The system then waits for the receptionist to note that the Intake officer has met with the family. If the Intake officer does not meet with the family within a specified period of time, JOLTS sends a second reminder message to the officer. If the family continues to wait, a third message is automatically sent to the officer's supervisor or to another Intake officer who has been designated as the "Officer of the Day." If no activity is noted on the master calendar, JOLTS assumes that the family did not show up for the appointment. This permits the system to automatically track no-shows and to remind the Intake officer that another interview needs to be scheduled or that other action needs to be taken.¹⁹

Automation allows the Maricopa County Juvenile Court to process a large volume of diversion-eligible complaints in a very timely manner. JOLTS also plays an important part in the assignment of diversion services. Intake officers use JOLTS to enroll juveniles in specific programs or classes prior to completion of the initial diversion interview. If participation in an education and awareness program is assigned, the

officer will use JOLTS to pull up a schedule of classes (including location and time), determine the class site closest to where the youth lives and the earliest day the class is held for which a slot is open. The officer will then update the class roster to reflect the youth's enrollment in the class. The JOLTS database is also automatically updated to reflect current enrollment in the class. There is no need for the child to be referred to the contracted provider for enrollment in the assigned class. Before leaving the initial interview, the child and parent(s) are informed of the date and time of the class. The family is also provided with printed confirmation of the appointment and all necessary permissions or waivers are completed. A few days before the class is held, the provider is given a roster of all juveniles expected to attend each session.

Some service providers require an application prior to enrollment. In these instances, the Intake officer will bring up a template of the provider's application and complete the application with the youth and parent(s) as part of the initial diversion interview. JOLTS automatically completes as much of the application as it can from data already maintained in the database. The remainder is provided by the officer, the juvenile, and the parent(s). The application is then immediately faxed (directly from the terminal via modem) to the provider. The JOLTS database is updated to reflect the diversion services as they are assigned.

If a juvenile is assigned to complete community work service (CWS) hours, the officer will identify the appropriate agency and set up the referral through JOLTS. The court has developed working agreements with over 500 public entities through which a juvenile can complete CWS hours. JOLTS searches the agency database and provides a list of CWS agencies that are either close to the juvenile's home address or school (using zipcode as the search criteria). The officer can obtain pertinent information on JOLTS, such as a contact person, the types of juveniles the agency accepts, the hours during which CWS activities are available, and the type of work juveniles perform. Lastly, the officer calls the provider to set up the CWS referral and the JOLTS database is automatically updated to reflect the juvenile's CWS assignment.

At the completion of the initial diversion interview, the Intake officer may use JOLTS to complete a brief summary report of the interview including presenting problems, issues and diversion services assigned. Demographic and complaint information are extracted into the report template from JOLTS while the officer provides a summary of the interview. This report is archived for later retrieval.²⁰

Intake support staff track the completion of the assigned services or CWS hours through exception reports and listings provided by JOLTS. Support staff enter complaint disposition data if the juvenile completes the assigned services or CWS hours. If the juvenile does not complete the required activities during the required time frame the case is forwarded to the assigned Intake officer for further processing.

The Intake director indicated that automation improved the productivity of the court's diversion officers and has permitted the Intake unit to handle an ever-increasing workload with a minimum of additional staff. He estimated that the capabilities of JOLTS as described above reduced the time his officers spend on administrative duties and documentation and increased efficiency by 25%.

3. Automated Calendaring of Hearings

Many juvenile courts, particularly those with multiple courtrooms, struggle to maintain control over the hearing calendar. Inability to schedule hearings efficiently is often cited as a major contributor to processing delays. The scheduling of hearings is often accomplished in a haphazard fashion, resulting in repeated requests for continuances due to scheduling conflicts and inefficient use of courtrooms due to imbalances between how the calendar is partitioned and the types of hearings that actually need to be scheduled. An overabundance of hearing slots reserved for one type of hearing may limit the availability of hearing slots needed for other types of hearings. This results in the latter hearings being scheduled too far out on the calendar while the other segments of the calendar are underutilized with the courtroom sitting empty.

Over time, the Maricopa County Juvenile Court has used JOLTS to devise a very sophisticated automated calendaring system that permits the court to maintain control over the calendar and to insure that imbalances between reserved hearing slots and the scheduling needs of the court are kept to a minimum. The automated calendaring utility is used by both the Court Administrator's Office and individual courtrooms. The Court Administrator's Office is responsible for setting all advisory (initial) hearings. Court clerks assigned to individual courtrooms will, for the most part, schedule all subsequent hearings on a case. The Court Administrator's Office also assists the individual courtrooms in scheduling subsequent matters when requested.

The automated calendaring module uses a series of logical default parameters defined by the Court Administrator's Office as well as specifications provided by the user at the time of the request. The parameters guide the system in identifying prospective hearing slots. These scheduling parameters include the following:

- *Type of hearing:* Each jurist's calendar is partitioned into specific segments for various types of hearings. JOLTS will search those portions of the calendar reserved for the type of hearing requested for an available slot.
- *Hearing time frames:* JOLTS will search for a specific type of hearing slot within a designated time frame—minimum and maximum days from today's date, petition or first hearing, whichever is most appropriate.
- *Searching for earliest or latest available slot:* A default parameter directs JOLTS to search for either the earliest or latest available date. That is, JOLTS can search forwards or backwards. This parameter can be set by the user at the time of the request.
- *Searching an Individual or Master Calendar:* JOLTS can search a specific hearing officer's calendar, a calendar of a designated grouping of hearing officers, or the calendars of all hearing officers assigned to a specific facility.
- *Amount of hearing time needed:* A pre-defined time period is allotted for various hearing types (e.g., 10 minutes for routine disposition hearings, 15 minutes for adjudication hearings, etc.). The default time can be customized

for individual jurists or can be set case by case. If JOLTS identifies an open hearing slot but the slot does not have the required amount of time, it will bypass it and continue to search.

- *Handling scheduling conflicts of other interested parties:* The Calendaring module simultaneously considers the court schedules of the county attorney, public defender and juvenile probation officer assigned to the case. On occasion, a scheduler may be forced to request a hearing slot that entails a time conflict. The slot will appear as requested but the potential conflicts are asterisked so that they can be discussed by the parties before a hearing time is reserved.
- *Notification of hearing changes:* All parties to a hearing are automatically notified by JOLTS through electronic mail of any changes to scheduled hearings.

After a specific hearing is requested, JOLTS will search the calendar database and provide the user with a list of available hearing slots that meet the pre-defined default parameters and hearing specifications controlled by the user. Typically, three prospective hearing slots are provided. If these slots are not satisfactory, a user can direct the system to search for additional slots that meet the requested parameters or the user can change the parameters to allow for a more expanded search. All interested parties with personal calendars maintained on the system including the jurist, county attorney, public defender and the assigned juvenile probation officer are notified via electronic mail of the newly scheduled hearing. Also, the individual calendars of these interested parties are automatically updated to reflect newly scheduled hearings.

The calendaring system can accommodate individual jurist preferences and customize their calendar accordingly. For example, a commissioner may reserve Monday mornings for a predetermined number of non-detained advisory hearings slots and Monday afternoons for a specific number of delinquency adjudication hearings. A second commissioner may reserve Monday mornings for delinquency disposition hearings and Monday afternoons for detained advisory hearings. The entire calendar is managed so that the appropriate number of hearing slots are reserved over the course of each 4-week cycle. Each jurist's four week cycle can be partitioned differently. The calendar administrator responsible for examining and coordinating the individual preferences of jurists insures that the requisite hearing coverage is provided on a court-wide basis.

At any time, JOLTS is capable of producing a summary report of how many hearing slots by type are still available per cycle. A user can obtain a screen view of a specific calendar day that displays both scheduled and available hearing slots. These reporting capabilities allow for close monitoring and adjustment of courtroom calendars to insure that the future hearing needs of the court are being met. On a weekly basis, the calendar administrator and her staff examine the availability of open hearing slots and balance these against the anticipated hearing requirements of each commissioner's caseload to determine if adjustments need to be made.²¹ Adjustments may be necessary

due to the utilization of additional hearing slot for continuances or because of an unanticipated increase in petition filings that places additional hearing requirements on the court (e.g., drug sweeps).

As necessary, the administrator's office will inform a commissioner (via electronic mail) of the office's intent to re-distribute available hearing slots (for example, to take some open adjudication hearing slots and re-designate them as disposition hearing slots). The office will give the commissioner time to respond to the electronic message before implementing the change.

Automated calendaring has proven to be a very powerful technological enhancement for the Maricopa County Juvenile Court that has resulted in the more efficient use and management of the court's calendar. Its impact on the timely conducting of hearings hasn't been fully realized, however, because of the relative ease with which cases can be transferred between judicial officers and lax policies regarding the granting of continuances.²²

4. Assignment of Cases to Probation Officers

The Maricopa County Juvenile Court has a long-standing policy of assigning new cases to a specific juvenile probation officer at the very beginning of a juvenile's involvement with the court. Probation officers are assigned to new delinquency complaints either at the time a petition is filed by the County Attorney's Office or when the complaint has been routed from Central Index to Intake because JOLTS has flagged the complaint as diversion-eligible. All new delinquency complaints on juveniles currently on probation are assigned to a youth's current probation officer. The automated system plays a key role in insuring that these case assignments are made in a timely manner.²³

When complaints are diverted to Intake for additional screening, JOLTS will assign the case to a specific intake officer based on current caseload counts and taking into account other factors such as assigning co-defendants to the same officer, reassigning a youth to the same officer if previously seen by that officer, etc. Formally petitioned complaints are assigned by JOLTS to the appropriate Investigation Unit (either Durango or SEF) based on zip code (if the youth is not currently on probation). Supervisors in the Investigation Unit review incoming cases and assign a juvenile probation officer within two days for non-detained cases and immediately for detained cases.²⁴ The assigned Investigation Unit officer meets with the juvenile and family prior to the initial advisory hearing and is responsible for attending all hearings on the case and the completion of the pre-disposition investigation and report (if so required by the court). For new complaints on juveniles already on probation, the currently assigned probation officer is responsible for attending all hearings on the case.

Early probation assignment ensures that trained and qualified juvenile justice personnel are responsible for facilitating each case's movement through the system. Early assignment also ensures that requests for information on the progress of a case can be directed to an accountable individual with specific knowledge of the case. Additionally, any special handling or provision of pre-disposition services is coordinated

through a professional trained in such matters. Any remaining delays in the initiation of probation supervision are readily apparent to probation officers and supervisors because JOLTS has a built-in probation case management system that closely tracks client contacts and flags cases when deficiencies occur.

5. Electronic Notification

Untimely communication frequently contributes to case processing delays in juvenile courts. The Maricopa County Juvenile Court makes extensive use of electronic mail to minimize such delays. Thousands of messages are posted daily using JOLTS. The judiciary, court administration, and unit supervisors routinely communicate among themselves and staff employees through electronic mail. This further encourages the use of electronic mail among line staff who routinely check for messages from judges, court administrators and their supervisors to keep abreast of scheduled meetings, scheduling changes, management directives and individual case developments.

In addition to the routine use of electronic mail by court personnel, JOLTS automatically generates electronic messages for key case events. For example, system-generated electronic messages are automatically routed in the following instances:

- Field probation officers are automatically notified of activities regarding juveniles on their caseloads —e.g., new complaints, if a plea is accepted, if psychological assessment reports are past due, when a detainee is written up for an incident in detention, or when a warrant is issued or quashed.
- Judicial officers, county attorneys, public defenders and probation officers are automatically notified of all changes to the hearing schedule.
- Field and Intake Probation officers are automatically notified when the court receives verification that a juvenile has completed or has not shown up for a court-ordered activity (e.g., community work service, drug testing, educational class, etc.) or when payment has been made on an assessment (restitution, probation or PIC-ACT service fee, etc.).
- Field and Intake Officers are automatically notified when a due date for a payment and/or court-ordered program has passed with no indication of compliance.
- The Finance Unit is automatically notified when a juvenile in a court-funded placement is detained (i.e., so that the court does not pay the placement per diem for that youth).
- Field and Investigation Unit probation officers are automatically notified whenever a juvenile on their caseload is detained.
- After a juvenile has been in placement for 30 days, workers from the Treatment Alternatives Unit are automatically reminded to investigate funding options for continued placement.

6. Preparation of Court Documents

Word processing capabilities are fully integrated in the JOLTS software. This facilitates the automated generation of a wide variety of court documents (including petitions, court orders, and minute entries) and investigative reports (including pre-disposition reports and psychological assessments). JOLTS merges relevant child and court information into document and report templates thus reducing the amount of time necessary to complete these tasks. County attorneys utilize integrated word processing to create petitions by merging child data already maintained in the database with standard charge clauses developed by the office. Very little support staff time is needed to complete these documents.

Court clerks are able to complete minute entries using JOLTS. Minute entries contain court orders made at the hearing and include rulings that were made after a case was taken under advisement. Most minute entries are constructed by merging child, petition, and hearing data maintained in the JOLTS database with standard hearing and court order clauses. Court clerks have up to three days to complete most types of minute entries, although they are often completed within hours of the hearing. Minute entries containing warrants must be completed within 24 hours and entries containing commitment orders to the state's department of juvenile corrections must be completed in time to allow for the twice weekly transportation of juveniles to the juvenile corrections reception facility.

A considerable amount of child, family and court history information is stored in the JOLTS database. This information can be used to complete the initial sections of the pre-disposition report prepared for the court by the assigned juvenile probation officer. These initial sections provide the court with a demographic description of the child and a brief summary of all prior and pending complaints and petitions (delinquency and incorrigibility) filed with the court. The merging of JOLTS data into the report template cuts down considerably on the word processing requirements necessary to produce pre-disposition reports (by 25% or more).²⁵

Delays in the submission of court reports is often a source of processing backlogs in juvenile courts (see Chapter 3). In many courts, large caseloads prevent probation officers from completing investigations and reports until just prior to the disposition hearing. In Maricopa County, probation officers have the ability to prepare their own reports without the assistance of clerical staff. The relative ease with which these reports can be completed using JOLTS as well as the high level of computer literacy among line probation staff encourages this practice.

7. Electronic Archiving of Critical Court Documents

All critical court documents and reports are electronically archived for easy retrieval from any JOLTS terminal. JOLTS stores an on-line version of the most important portions of a child's social and legal file that can be conveniently accessed and printed by all court personnel with access to a youth's court records. Important case documents external sources (i.e., documents not produced using the JOLTS word-

processing utility) are routinely scanned into the system and are also archived for easy retrieval. Electronic archiving facilitates caseload management in a number of important ways:

- The need for access to paper files is reduced considerably, diminishing the likelihood that important files may be checked out when needed or even misplaced. Electronic archiving reduces staff time spent on the management of paper records and eliminates the cancellation or continuation of hearings due to the unavailability of case files. Jurists have access to all critical case documents through terminals located in the courtroom and a hard copy of any juvenile's file can be quickly reconstructed by printing the necessary case documents archived on the system.
- Multiple individuals from different court departments can access a child's court records simultaneously without having to access the actual file or a hard copy of a document from the file. Case processing steps that may have previously been completed in sequential and laborious fashion can now be completed concurrently and quickly.
- Editing and supervisor review of court-ordered reports (e.g., pre-disposition reports) can be completed via a terminal without shuffling paperwork between court personnel (juvenile probation officer, clerical staff, and probation supervisor, etc.).

8. Monitoring of System Performance and Individual Case Progression

In Maricopa County, JOLTS provides users with a vast array of screen displays and statistical reports that facilitate effective caseload management, caseload tracking and court-wide planning. A number of reports are generated and distributed to appropriate court staff on a regular production schedule developed by the court's Division of Research and Planning (RAPS). Other screen displays and reports can be generated without the assistance of staff from RAPS. Many of these permit a user to limit the system's search to specific types of cases (e.g., by gender, race, detention status, offense type, disposition, etc.) and/or cases falling within a specified range of calendar dates. Users also have the ability to examine caseloads and caseload progress on a court-wide basis, by individual jurist, or by juvenile probation officer. The system's reporting capabilities give the court the capacity to track and closely monitor case activities and decisions that affect the timely processing of delinquency cases. Users have the ability to:

- Ensure that cases are assigned in an equitable manner and to closely monitor current caseloads so that they remain in relative equilibrium;
- Achieve early identification of cases with no apparent activity before the cases get lost in the shuffle and remain inactive for extensive periods of time;
- Monitor time between critical case processing stages to identify cases that are lagging so that case-specific issues can be addressed in a proactive manner;

- Identify cases with case processing inconsistencies to determine whether these inconsistencies are due to errors in data entry or faulty processing decisions;
- Monitor overall caseload performance; and
- Analyze aggregate caseload statistics and case processing trends to support the court's short and long-term planning goals.

Most juvenile courts have at least some automated case tracking and reporting capabilities. What sets the Maricopa County Juvenile Court apart is the sophistication and flexibility of the court's automated reporting utility. Well over 100 standard listings/displays and reports are available through JOLTS and many of these are used on a daily or weekly basis by all levels of staff including court administrators, unit supervisors, line probation officers, court clerks and various other types of support staff. Research and planning staff work continually with the various levels of court personnel to expand and modify the system's reporting capabilities to provide users more comprehensive and timely information. The research and planning staff also tend to be very proactive in anticipating the needs of court staff and often independently suggest and develop new reporting capabilities for users to test.

Case "aging" reports and summary statistics are of particular interest to the court as it attempts to process cases in a timely fashion. Court rules promulgated by the Arizona Supreme Court establish benchmarks for the timely processing of delinquency (and status offense) cases. Additionally, the court has developed internal court rules and policies to compliment State rules and to guide the processing of cases not addressed by the State supreme court.

Sample Reports

Four automated reports used in Maricopa County are representative of the data that are readily available from the automated system to assist staff in the management of the court's delinquency caseload. The four types of reports include:

1. Delinquency Calendar Summary Report;
2. Delinquency Calendar Detail Report;
3. Pending Petition Summary Report; and
4. Delinquency Petition Pending 360+ Days Detail Report.

The Delinquency Calendar Summary Report (figure 4.1) is produced for general distribution to all court administrators and judicial officers on a monthly basis. The report examines how timely delinquency petitions have progressed through various hearing stages during a specified time frame.

The user provides the time frame to be examined, which can be as short as one day and as long as several years. In most instances, the report period is one month, one quarter, or one year. A second report parameter allows the user to generate separate reports for individual judicial officers. It provides users with the average number of

FIGURE 4.1
Maricopa County juvenile court center delinquency calendar
summary report*
Period: 09-01-94 to 09-30-94

	Number	Average	Goal	Within Goal		Outside Goal	
Petition to advisory (detained)	223	3	2	187	84%	36	16%
Petition to advisory (not detained)	311	28	30	302	97	9	3
Advisory to adjudication (detained)	263	11	30	256	97	7	3
Advisory to adjud. (not detained)	341	24	60	328	96	13	4
Adjudication to disposition (detained)	117	24	30	110	94	7	6
Adjudication to dispo. (not detained)	276	39	45	255	92	21	8
Advisory to conclud. transfer hearing	48	29	30	48	100	0	0

* Does not includes cases in which warrants for failure to appear were issued or instances in which continuances of more than 30 days were granted by the court.

days it took for a petition to proceed through a specific processing stage, and the number and proportion of petitions that proceeded through this stage within and outside of the prescribed time limits.

For example, during September, 1994, 117 delinquency petitions involving detained juveniles had proceeded from adjudication (including pleas) through to disposition in an average of 24 days. Of these, 94% (110) reached disposition within the 30-day time limit. The remaining 6% took longer than 30 days.

A companion report (the Delinquency Calendar Detail Report) provides detailed information on all petitions processed during a specified time period (figure 4.2). This report is sorted by processing phase and the total number of days a case took to proceed through a given processing stage. This report is very useful because it identifies cases that exceeded time standards and provides the user some indication as to the reasons for the delay. The report also includes the number of continuances granted (and for how many days) during this processing phase and whether an arrest warrant (for failure to appear) was open during any part of the processing period and the number of days the warrant was open.²⁶

Another very useful report generated on a monthly basis is the Pending Petition Information Report (figure 4.3). Most juvenile courts are required to generate or manually tabulate a version of the top portion of this report to submit to their appropriate state agency or commission responsible for maintaining statewide court caseload statistics. Information on petitions pending at the start and end of the time period provides an administrator with a good profile of the court's work flow.

FIGURE 4.2
Maricopa County juvenile court delinquency
calendar detail report (sample output)
Period: 09-01-94 to 09-30-94

Processing Stage: Adjudication to Disposition for Detained Cases (Goal = 30 days)

File #	Petition Date	Total Goal	Goal Days	Days	Cont/ Days	Warr/ Days	First Set	End Event
1	07/09/94	Yes	20	20			09/29/94	09/29/94
2	08/15/94	Yes	23	23			09/15/94	09/15/94
3	06/24/94	Yes	25	18	1/7		09/12/94	09/19/94
4	08/03/94	Yes	28	28		Yes/9	09/17/94	09/26/94
5	07/16/94	Yes	43	27	1/16		09/06/94	09/22/94
6	07/20/94	No	51	34	1/17	Yes/1	08/23/94	09/09/94
7	06/22/94	No	56	37	1/19		08/23/94	09/13/94

FIGURE 4.3
Maricopa County juvenile court pending petition information report
Period: 09-01-94 to 09-30-94

Petition Type	Petitions Pending at Beginning of Period	Petitions Filed	Petitions Dispositioned	Petitions Pending at End of Period
Adoption	1,299	66	51	1,314
Delinquency	2,986	725	733	2,978
Dependency	3,697	77	28	3,746
Severance	730	46	29	747

Age of Pending Delinquency Petitions

Delinquent Petition Type	Days Delinquency Petition Pending			
	0-90 Days	91-180 Days	181-360 Days	360+ Days
All delinquency petitions*	1,323	401	161	201
Percent of delinq. petitions	63%	19%	8%	10%
Petitions pending disposition*	305	75	18	6
Percent pending disposition	23%	19%	11%	3%

* Excludes delinquency petitions with warrants or for juveniles over the age of 18.

A companion report (figure 4.4) provides information on delinquency petitions pending for more than 360 days. This listing includes all delinquency petitions pending for 360 days or more, including those in which warrants were issued that remain open, and open petitions in which the juvenile reached the age of majority. The report is sorted by the length of time petitions have been pending, by type of case. For example, all delayed cases pending disposition in which warrants are open are presented first (from oldest to youngest). Next, all petitions with active warrants that are held up at an earlier case processing stage are presented. Delayed cases without active warrants are presented third, and all delayed cases without active warrants and not pending disposition are provided in the last grouping. The report provides users with critical case information that can help identify reasons for delay.

[illegible]

Studies and Experimentation

The staff of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court have been highly conscious of the need to examine the organizational dynamics and external factors that impede and facilitate caseflow. In 1981, the research and planning division of the court conducted an analysis of case processing time, calendar goals and judicial officer needs. The study recommended additional judicial officers and the implementation of certain procedural changes. This was followed by a second, more comprehensive study in 1984 that found case processing time frames had improved somewhat since 1981 but consistently fell below the standards set by the Court Calendar Goals established in 1981 (Burgess and McCarthy, 1984).

The 1984 study included a detailed analysis of the court's caseload (new filings and backlogs), available resources (the number and availability of hearing officers), and procedures, as well as how each of these affected case processing times for all types of cases handled by the court. The study recommended the development of monthly case monitoring reports for all case processing stages for which time standards had already been enacted and the establishment of additional calendaring goals. The study led to many of the automated calendaring enhancements and the development of the monitoring reports discussed above.

In January of 1991, the presiding judge appointed a Caseflow Management Task Force to continue the court's review of its calendaring practices and to develop recommendations that would serve as the foundation for the implementation of a new case management system. Subcommittees were formed for each of the court's major case dockets. A sixth subcommittee was charged with reviewing the court's various calendaring approaches including a comparison of master, individual and team calendaring.

The final report of the task force and subcommittees was presented in May, 1992. The report contained specific recommendations for case processing time frames and policies and procedures for a new calendaring system. The Delinquency Subcommittee developed flowcharts for the tracking of case processing events necessary to complete seven different case types from start to finish. The flow charts reflected streamlined procedures. Unnecessary steps were eliminated with considerable emphasis placed on the automation of procedures. The process proposed by the Delinquency Subcommittee was designed to accommodate the "normal" case. The report anticipated that 80% of all delinquency cases would fall within proposed time frames.

The Calendaring Subcommittee recommended the adoption of a team calendar system that would give jurists direct responsibility for hearing scheduling. The subcommittee believed an individual calendar system would reduce conflicts among parties, increase the predictability of hearings, reduce continuances and courtroom "dead time," and generally enhance caseflow management. The subcommittee recommended that cases be assigned to judicial officers based on geographic considerations. The subcommittee believed its recommendations would foster the development of a team concept even with the individual calendar system since the

county attorney, public defender, and probation officer would all be assigned to cases in similar fashion.

The presiding juvenile court judge accepted the recommendations of the Caseflow Management Task Force with only minor revisions and established an on-going Calendar/Caseflow Advisory Oversight Committee to monitor the implementation of a caseflow management system and to serve as a continuing advisory group for the maintenance of the system. The oversight committee agreed to meet on a monthly basis with its membership to include the presiding juvenile court judge, the chief deputy juvenile county attorney, the chief deputy juvenile public defender, the head commissioner, the director of juvenile court services, the court/calendar administrator, the juvenile court clerk services administrator, a representative of Arizona's public child welfare agency (the Department of Economic Security), and the chairperson of the Juvenile Practice Committee.

Research and Planning staff worked closely with the oversight committee in redesigning and developing additional case tracking and aging reports. Certain recommended changes to delinquency case processing were modified after being found difficult to implement in their original form. Changes were made to the judicial case assignment and calendaring system to further foster case continuity and case processing accountability.

CONCLUSION

Automation has not completely eliminated case processing delays in Maricopa County. Delays in the processing of delinquency cases still occur, sometimes in violation of court rules and policies. While automated calendaring has resulted in more efficient use of the court's delinquency calendar, continuances are still problematic and the court continues to take steps to firm up its policies regarding continuances. The court's ability to track and monitor caseflow also does not automatically lead to timely case processing. As of 1995, the court was again updating its automated case tracking and reporting utilities so that court personnel would be more apt to use the system to monitor case movement.

The consistent improvement of caseflow management in Maricopa County, however, illustrates the potential of automation to strengthen the day-to-day operations of juvenile courts. Comprehensive and flexible information systems allow for better coordination and monitoring of case processing among all organizational units of the court. While automation is not a panacea, it is an essential tool for any court wishing to tackle the wide range of internal and external issues that affect the timing of delinquency dispositions. The Maricopa County Juvenile Court has used its automated information tools to infuse the entire court system with greater efficiency and accountability.

Chapter 4 Notes

1. The court has recently revamped its jurist assignment system to create six teams with each magistrate being assigned to a specific judge. Previously, three magistrates were randomly assigned to delinquency cases. Their orders on a specific case would be reviewed by the judge appointed to the case. A fourth magistrate was responsible for hearing all delinquency arraignments.
2. There are no statutory limitations to the types of delinquency cases a magistrate may preside over. There are statutory provisions, however, requiring that a judge preside over abortion by-pass cases and adult cases in which the alleged charge is contributing to the delinquency of a minor.
3. Unlike the analysis in Table 4.1 which uses the unit of count preferred by Juvenile Court Statistics (“cases disposed”), this analysis presents counts of case filings. Thus, the measures vary slightly.
4. Although unruly referrals also grew during this period, this increase had less impact on court workloads because unruly filings are generally diverted to a private provider without substantive screening.
5. Of course, Maricopa County also employs considerably more staff to maintain its automated system.
6. Referrals involving non-detained juveniles are filed with court intake at either the main court building or at one of the seven branch offices. Police referrals on detained juveniles are filed with staff at the court’s detention facility at the time the youth is detained and are routed to court intake in the main court building for screening. The juvenile court has a “case management coordinator” who is responsible for facilitating the court processing of detention cases. To facilitate screening of these cases, the case management coordinator picks up police reports from the juvenile detention facility and delivers them to Intake.
7. The prosecutor’s office is responsible for confirming probable cause, deciding whether to initiate criminal court transfer proceedings (or “bindover”), deciding on property forfeiture motions and reviewing the praecipe for sufficiency. Reviews are not generally conducted on misdemeanor and lesser (third and fourth degree) felony complaints (Hamel, 1994).
8. Intake screening of delinquency referrals on detained juveniles (including those placed in shelter care or on home detention) must be completed within 72 hours. This includes time for the prosecutor’s office to complete the legal review of the official petition. For delinquency referrals on juveniles not detained at the time of arrest, the Intake Unit has up to 21 days to complete case screening. This includes the 72 hours provided for the prosecutor’s legal review.
9. A courtroom coordinator from Assignment Services is assigned to each courtroom.
10. Ohio statutes limit the amount of time a juvenile may be detained in secure detention to a period not exceeding 90 days. Local juvenile court policy limits detention stays to 60 days.

11. Local Court Rule #10 states that “[n]o case will be continued on the day of the trial or hearing except for good cause shown, which cause was not known to the party or counsel prior to the day of the trial or hearing and provided that the party and/or counsel have used diligence to be ready for trial and notified or made diligent efforts to notify the opposing party or counsel as soon as they became aware of the necessity to request a postponement. This rule may not be waived by consent of counsel.”
12. The recent report from the Ohio Supreme Court came to similar conclusions regarding implementation of the court’s continuation policy and the influence of attorneys on the pace of litigation (Hamel, 1994:22–24).
13. According to Referee Mazza, a lenient jurist might continue 60% of their cases on any given day, and then increase the number of cases set for the docket in order to adjust for anticipated continuances, which just “feeds the problem.”
14. Unlike the analysis in Table 4.1 which uses the unit of count preferred by Juvenile Court Statistics (“cases disposed”), this analysis presents counts of complaints received. In addition, the data provided for this analysis include cases of “incorrigibility,” which are not included in Table 4.1. Thus, the two caseload measures vary considerably.
15. Matters involving children under the age of 8 are not considered to be delinquency complaints in Arizona.
16. Judge Rose was later installed as Presiding Superior Court Judge and in this capacity continued to provide leadership and support to the juvenile court. Judge Rose served as Presiding Superior Court Judge until 1995.
17. Modified versions of JOLTS have been installed in a number of juvenile courts, including courts in Fulton and Clayton County Georgia (Atlanta), Wayne County Michigan (Detroit), and Pima County Arizona (Tucson).
18. Most States require detention hearings within 24 to 48 hours.
19. JOLTS also tracks when parties check in for court hearings.
20. A hard copy of the report is also placed in the juvenile’s paper file.
21. The Court Administrator’s Office does not schedule the judges’ calendars. However, commissioners preside over 90% of all hearings on delinquency matters.
22. The authors’ interviews suggested that the vast majority of requests for continuances are granted. One court administrator indicated that an estimated 97% of all such requests were approved.
23. JOLTS is also used to assign delinquency cases to prosecutors from the County Attorney’s Office.
24. The assignment of petitioned cases to juvenile probation officers in the Investigation Unit can also be accomplished directly through JOLTS without supervisor involvement based on assignment parameters maintained by unit supervisors.

However, supervisors and court administration prefer that assignment of these cases be more individualized via manual review.

25. Interview data suggest that 25% understates the savings from both the probation officers who no longer have to dictate specific items and for typists who no longer have to transcribe these dictations. JOLTS automatically provides a narrative on each referral as part of the production of the pre-disposition report. Dictating and transcribing these narratives was once very time consuming especially for juveniles with extensive delinquency histories.
26. Arizona Supreme Court Rule 6.1, subsection G permits the time elapsed during certain types of continuances to be excluded from the calculation of time limits. The data provided in the goal days column of the Delinquency Calendar Detail Report subtracts the number continuance days from the total number of days found in the preceding column.