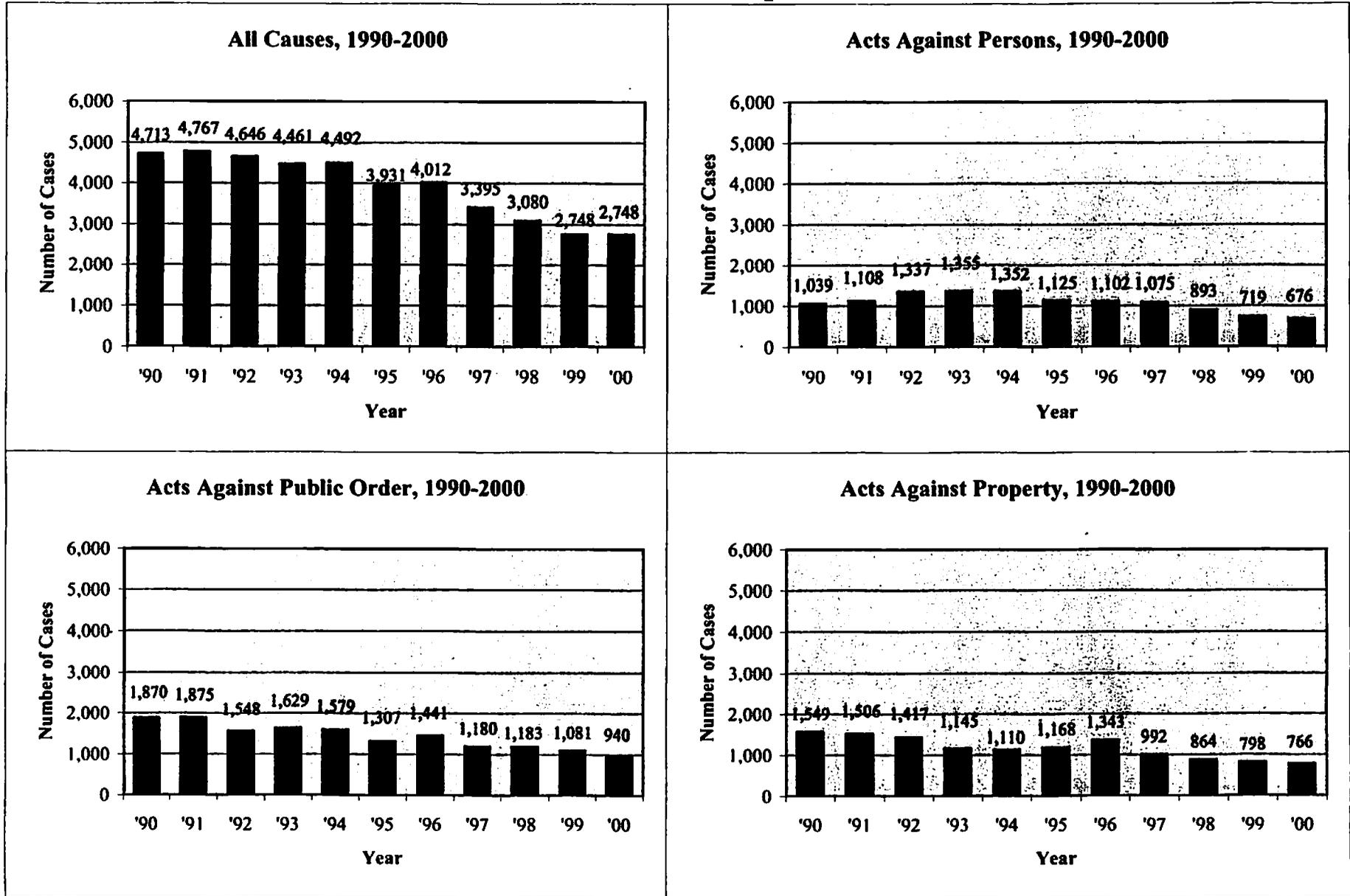


Figure 2

Juvenile Cases Referred to D.C. Superior Court, 1990-2000



SOURCE: District of Columbia Courts, Annual Reports

Addressing Risk Factors for Youth Crime and Violence

Public and elected officials must join with civic and community leaders from private industry to address the correlation between community-based programming and risk for violence and crime. Urban Institute researchers— through a well-designed study of victimization and a critical study of needs among youth across the city- have provided a context in which to link, more effectively, the distribution of resources with risk factors for youth crime and violence. The findings of a 2000 Urban Institute study documenting the peak hours for youth victimization for violent crime during the 3:00 pm-7:00 pm interval is made even more powerful by the Institute's 1999 youth needs assessment, which found that there were very limited social and recreational outlets for vulnerable youth in various neighborhoods. Such findings should also raise concerns about risk for crime and violence, given other longitudinal studies which have found that neighborhoods and communities with a high degree of "social capital" (resources ranging from mentoring to movie theaters that build cohesion) generally have lower rates of crime.

If public and elected officials, researchers, and the public are commonly united in their voice that high quality school-based and out-of-school time programming options prevent crime and violence (both perpetration and victimization), public discourse often demonstrates that these voices are often less certain about the characteristics of trends in youth crime and violence (See Figure 2). With a rate of 662 children taken into custody per 100,000 population in 1997 compared to a national average of 368 per 100,000, the

Table 1**YSA Residential Placements
as of May 20, 2001
by Sex**

Sex	Percent
M	87.64
F	12.36

Table 2**YSA Residential Placements
as of May 20, 2001
by Offense**

Offense group	Percent
Vehicle	20.22
Assault	19.10
Drug	19.10
Unknown	6.18
Weapon	6.18
Property	5.62
Theft	5.62
Robbery	5.06
CHINS	3.93
Sex	2.81
Murder/manslaughter	2.25
Burglary	1.12
Other	1.12
Accessory	0.56
Arson	0.56
Trespass	0.56

Table 3

**YSA Residential Placements
by State and Type as of May 20, 2001**

STATE	TYPE								Total
	Residential Treatment Center	Juvenile Justice Residential Treatment Center	Independent or Transitional Living Program	Therapeutic Group Home	CBRTC	Substance Abuse Residential Treatment Center	Teen Mom	Tran. Living	
VA	33	4	0	3	0	1	0	0	41
PA	15	19	0	1	0	0	0	0	35
DC	8	0	19	0	5	0	0	0	32
MDD	1	3	14	2	0	1	1	1	23
GA	20	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	21
FL	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
MN	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
MO	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
TN	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
AL	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CT	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
UT	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	93	36	34	6	5	2	1	1	178

SOURCE: Youth Services Administration; Research and analysis support from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

Table 4

**YSA Residential Placements
by Facility as of May 20, 2001**

FACILITY	Percent
Ed. Sol.Acad./Re-Direct	15.17
Pines	11.80
Devereux Georgia	10.11
Glen Mills	8.99
Woodside Hospital	5.62
Devereux Florida	5.06
Abraxas	4.49
Riverside Hospital	4.49
CJCJ	3.37
Mesabi Academy	3.37
Alter. Sol. For Youth	2.81
New Morgan Academy	2.25
Tarkio Academy	2.25
Bowling Brook Prep. School	1.69
George Jr. Republic	1.69
Youth for Tomorrow	1.69
Barry Robinson	1.12
Heartland Behavioral Health	1.12
Via Quest	1.12
Addam's Lodge	0.56

FACILITY	Percent
Alabama Clinical Schools	0.56
CHADD	0.56
Caring Hands	0.56
Devereux, GA -Project Plus	0.56
Excelcior	0.56
Good Shepherd Center	0.56
Hermitage Hall	0.56
High Peaks Wilderness Prog.	0.56
Intercept Youth Services	0.56
Mountain Manor	0.56
ResCare, Inc.	0.56
Sommerville Youth Home	0.56
Sophia Mae Consultants	0.56
St. Ann's	0.56
Value Mark, GA	0.56
Value Mark, VA	0.56
Vanguard Srvc/ Deep Run	0.56
Vitam	0.56
Woods School	0.56
Youth In Transition	0.56

SOURCE: Youth Services Administration; Research and analysis support from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

TABLE 5- YSA Residential Placements, July 16-Aug 22, 2001

Facility	State	# of Youth		
Abraxas	PA	6	NA	NA
Addam's Lodge	MD	1	\$182.54	\$66,672.74
Alabama Clinical Schools	AL	1	\$99.00	\$36,159.75
Alternative Solution For Youth	DC	4	\$250.00	\$365,250.00
Barry Robinson	VA	2	RPU Contract	\$0.00
Bowling Brook	MD	3	\$131.91	\$144,540.38
Caring Hands	MD	1	\$223.02	\$81,458.06
CHAD	TN		NA	NA
CJCJ	DC	7	\$162.00	\$414,193.50
Devereux FL	FL	8	MEDICAID	NA
Devereux GA	GA	17	MEDICAID	NA
Devereux GA Project Plus	GA	1	\$195.00	\$71,223.75
Ed. Soutions Acad./Re-Direct	DC	4	\$110.00	\$160,710.00
Ed. Soutions Acad./Re-Direct	DC	9	\$156.00	\$512,811.00
Ed. Soutions Acad./Re-Direct	MD	14	\$110.00	\$562,485.00
Excelsior	CO	1	\$191.24	\$69,850.41
Foundations for Home and Comm	MD	1	\$213.93	\$78,137.93
George Jr. Republic	PA	3	\$147.86	\$162,017.60
Glen Mills	PA	16	\$115.00	\$672,060.00
Good Shepherd	MD	1	\$420.62	\$153,631.46
Heartland Behavioral Health	MO	2	\$125.00	\$91,312.50
Hermitage Hall	TN	0	NA	NA
High Peaks Wilderness Program	UT	1	\$250.00	\$91,312.50
Intercept Youth Services	VA	1	\$178.00	\$65,014.50
Mesabi Academy	MN	6	\$208.00	\$455,832.00
Mountain Manor	MD	2	\$300.00	\$219,150.00
New Morgan Academy	PA	4	\$289.84	\$423,456.24
Pines	VA	18	MEDICAID	NA
Progressive Life	DC	0	YSA Contract	NA
ResCare Inc.	MD	1	\$285.94	\$104,439.59
Riverside Hospital	DC	8	MEDICAID	NA
Somerville Youth Home	VA	2	\$200.00	\$146,100.00
St. Ann's	MD	1	\$95.17	\$34,760.84
Sophia Mae Consultants	VA	1	\$210.00	\$76,702.50
Summit Quest	PA	2	\$250.00	\$182,625.00
Tarkio Academy	MO	4	\$130.00	\$189,930.00
Value Mark, VA	VA	0	MEDICAID	NA
Vanguard Srvs/Deep Run Lodge	VA	1	\$195.00	\$71,223.75
Vanguard Srvs/Phoenix	VA	5	\$79.24	\$144,712.05
VITAM	CT	1	RPU Contract	NA
Woods School	PA	1	RPU Contract	NA
Woodside Hospital	VA	8	RPU Contract	NA
Youth for Tomorrow	VA	2	\$126.00	\$92,043.00
Youth in Transition	MD	1	\$226.03	\$82,557.46
Youth in Transition	PA	1	\$226.03	\$82,557.46
Total		173	\$6,082.37	\$6,104,930.95

District of Columbia has one of the highest commitment rates for youth in the United States. However, this rate masks a sharp decline in the number of youth arrested over the past decade in the city. The number of youth arrested between 1994 and 1999 declined by 34%. Juvenile arrests declined from 4,433 to 2,918 over this period. In 1999, the year for which there is the best available data, youth aged 17 and younger constituted less than 6% of total violent crime arrests in the District of Columbia.

An exploration of the dynamics of arrest, offense, and commitment patterns also reveals a more complex narrative than the stereotypical media portrayal of urban youth as inherently violent, hardcore offenders. The District of Columbia has witnessed a dramatic reduction in several categories of violent crime among youth akin to other urban areas, and, in line with other national trends, a high proportion of those detained and committed are drug and status offenders who have a pressing need for services that could be provided outside of the juvenile justice system. This is also dramatically illustrated, in part, by the Superior Court of the District of Columbia's data noting a decline in "crimes for all causes" and "crimes against persons." Nationally, drug offenders account for approximately 9% of juveniles in custody compared to 34% in the District of Columbia. An analysis of Metropolitan Police juvenile arrest data for 1999 found that most juvenile arrests were for non-violent offenses, and that less than one-third of all juvenile arrests were for more serious Part I crimes.¹

Service Delivery: Costs and Benefits?

Finally, the coordination, quality, and scope of opportunities to address youth violence and crime among juvenile justice agencies in the District of Columbia raises critical questions about the costs and benefits of specific initiatives for youth and the city in general. This includes human, as well as economic cost and benefits. In addition to a recognition that there is a great human benefit to quality investment in youth development and rehabilitation efforts, our findings recognize that a lack of coordination between the Superior Court and local "safety net" agencies has inhibited a more productive leveraging of public and private funds.² A lack of capacity to do conduct quality assurance reviews of out-of-District placements, in particular, inhibits the ability to determine the extent to which public investments in the juvenile justice are making a difference for those in need of specialized treatment. As a component of the approximately \$54,480,000 spent annually between CSS and YSA, there is also a portion of YSA's budget that is used for residential placements, both in and out-of-District (See Tables 1-5). A total of 178 youth are in residential placement by Superior Court order as of September 19, 2001. They remain in 12 states and the District of Columbia. at an estimated annual cost of over \$6 million dollars.

¹ Part One offenses include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson. Part Two offenses include weapons, narcotics, disorderly fugitives. Status offenses include truancy, running away from home, underage drinking.

² See Scott Higham and Sari Horowitz, "Another Child Under D.C.'s Protection Dies," *The Washington Post*, October 25, 2001, p.B1; Marion Ein Lewin and Stuart Altman, Editors, *American's Health Care Safety Net: Intact but Endangered* (Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine, 2000) for a comprehensive analysis of the array of community-based networks and services that constitute the safety net.

Core Findings

The Commission submits the following findings as part of the policy recommendations presented in this report:

- **Critical data, information, and research related to recidivism, community supervision, racial disparity, and quality assurance are needed to assess youth services and the juvenile justice system. A central data and research warehouse is needed in the Executive Office to overcome current territoriality related to data, information, and research among some District agencies. Though lags in data, information, and research are to be expected in any large system, processes to promote ease of access and availability are needed to heighten public and interagency awareness of challenges and successes. The lack of recidivism data, community supervision information (i.e., probation revocation data, aftercare strategies, etc.), youth arrest data analyzed on a regular basis, juvenile justice information sharing networks between local and federal entities, and program evaluation data impedes efforts to devise longitudinal studies and other strategies aimed at improvement in programming, policy, and accountability in leadership.**

- **Over detention and over commitment of juveniles is evident in current practices in the District of Columbia.** The apparent excessive use of commitment as a strategy to secure services has resulted in the detention and confinement of youth who could be served in other settings and contexts. This has especially been found to be the case with first-time drug offenders and status offenders, many of whom have been sent to the Oak Hill Youth Center, for example. More effective training of police and public officials in a youth development framework is sorely needed to reverse these trends. The Commission stands firm in its declaration that there should be accountability for antisocial behavior, but it also believes that inappropriate detention and commitment does not serve children or society. There is also a need to address quality of representation of children and youth, given frequent social file data indicating difficulty in reaching and communicating with defense attorneys.
- **More study of social and racial disparity in detention and commitment is needed to assess the origin of disparities at each point in the juvenile justice system and to address the identified factors.** The Commission has found an enormous disparity in bookings, as well as in commitments by ward. Given the voluminous literature on spatialized residential patterns of particular social groups in cities, more study is needed to understand and address the disproportionate impact of trends on poor African American and Latino youth, in particular. These youth represent approximately 87% of the city's population under 18 years of age but constitute 100% of those who have been committed. According to their most

recent data for the Nation, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention also reports that Washington, D.C. is the only jurisdiction in the United States with 100% minority representation in residential commitment to public facilities and 100% minority representation in detention.

- **Blended sentencing should be implemented to provide judges with the flexibility to promote rehabilitation and treatment for youthful offenders who may be sentenced as adults.** The Commission affirms that options to rehabilitate children and youth must be examined in order to determine what is appropriate for proper care and treatment. This will establish a clear framework for decision-making by judges, who will now be able to determine what other options may benefit a juvenile. Therefore, the Commission finds that a system is needed to establish flexibility for judges, by giving them the latitude to assign a youth to the juvenile system with the possibility that an adult sentence will be commuted if rehabilitation is successful.
- **The Direct File authority of the United States Attorney needs to end, so that juvenile transfer hearings can determine the appropriate venue for adjudication; and, the age for prosecution as an adult must not be lowered.** Currently, the United States Attorney is able to try youth as adults without a hearing, if they have committed certain categories of violent crime. The Commission stands firm in its conviction that juveniles must enjoy the due process of transfer hearings and that the age at which they can be tried as adults

should not be lowered. There are no data supporting the adult prosecution of younger 13- and 14- year old offenders based on an increase in the incidence of violent crime among this age group.

- **A seamless continuum and network of youth services and opportunities is needed to account for a void in supportive employment, health, mentoring, and recreational services. Youth voices must also be a meaningful and integral part of the process that moves a public agenda forward on their behalf. Strategies to operationalize a culture of child and youth advocacy must begin with attention to youth development theory and practice for all who interact with and serve children and youth. On a fundamental level, agencies must be encouraged to draw upon youth and community assets as they promote opportunities to build service delivery systems. These services and opportunities should be age, gender, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. Youth must also be empowered- beyond mere tokenism at decision-making tables- to carry their own aspirations forward in specific policy domains that impact their lives. At bottom, they also represent an integral part of the economic development agenda of the city. Children and youth serving programs must also be brought to scale of need in neighborhoods where vulnerable youth have been identified. In terms of health and social welfare supports for children and youth, the lack of critical preventive and treatment options for mental health and substance abuse is of crisis proportions and should command immediate attention.**

- **A culture change is required to bring best practices in detention and commitment to the District of Columbia's juvenile justice system. State-of-the-art detention and commitment facilities are needed along with community-based options to establish a seamless, child and youth friendly continuum of care in secure and non-secure settings. With regard to the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of children and youth in the juvenile justice system, the Commission stands firm in its conviction that the provision of specialized care and treatment in small, cottage and home-like environments- and not in warehouses where rehabilitation does not take place. With these principles in mind, the Commission recommends three courses of action: *first*, the demolition of the Oak Hill Youth Center in Laurel, Maryland. This facility has, unequivocally, outlived its usefulness and is not consistent with best practices that treat children as children. This should be done expeditiously. However, recognizing that the closure of Oak Hill without the construction of a new facility may result in out-of-District placement of youth, the Commission recommends that construction of a new facility on the 866 acre property in Laurel, Maryland or on a site closer to the District of Columbia should precede Oak Hill's demolition. Reflecting a strong commitment to a new vision for rehabilitation in the context of a child and youth friendly environment, the Commission believes that a new design has to involve staffing, housing, and technology akin to the William Woods University/Rosa Parks Home and other smaller specialized treatment cottages observed in Missouri (see Appendix for photographs). (2) *second*, the District of Columbia should proceed with construction of the Mount Olivet Road**

Detention Center, which will stand as a model of multidisciplinary care and treatment for children and youth held in pre-trial and pre-disposition status. With a network of services and opportunities- ranging from mental health services to DC Public Schools support personnel- it will provide an option for comprehensive care in the District of Columbia; and *third*, the Commission recommends that the District of Columbia continue with the development of residential treatment options in community and home-based settings for PINS and committed youth who would benefit from these services. The Commission also strongly supports the city's efforts to continue its work to develop and implement a workplan for returning youth from out-of-District placements, in order to bring children and youth closer to their home and families.

- **The implementation of an Executive level Youth Services Coordinating Commission is needed to coordinate, monitor, and ensure accountability for a youth services and juvenile justice policy vision.** The isolation of agencies- both local and federal- from each other's work has prevented effective strategic planning, guidance, and collaboration in juvenile justice conversations. The critical intersection of child welfare, delinquency, and youth development has to be explored in a forum in which there is accountability across agencies and jurisdictions, if children and youth are to be well served. This will enable a more collaborative framework in the identification of factors that put children and youth at risk for violence, crime, and other identified outcomes. Barriers to effective programming, such as obtuse contracts and procurement and personnel policies, can also be addressed in a more unified fashion.

- **Notwithstanding *Not In My Back Yard* (NIMBY)'s challenges, community-based alternatives to confinement are desperately needed.** Recognizing that youth should be held accountable for antisocial behavior, there are many youth who have been committed for offenses for which they might be better served in community-based settings. This is a challenge, given the media glorification of the urban "super-predator" and community backlash against such proposals, among other factors. However, the Commission recognizes that community-based supports are the ideal and that public and elected officials, advocates, and experts need to partner in their efforts to educate the public at-large about the benefits observed in other jurisdictions. There are many unrealized opportunities to promote rehabilitation of youth through use of home and community-based supports.

Report Outline

The report's findings are given greater contextualization in various chapters of the report. **Chapter 1** (Youth Development: Building and Sustaining a Seamless Network of Services and Opportunities) outlines theory and practice of youth development in the context of the Commission's findings related to prevailing information about community-based supports for youth. **Chapter 2** (Youth Interactions with the Juvenile Justice System) outlines demographic characteristics of youth in the District of Columbia, and themes and trends in youth violence and crime. It also presents a sketch of the juvenile

justice-related agencies and their roles. **Chapter 3 (Programming in the Juvenile Justice System: Building a Continuum of Effective Human and Social Services)** presents an overview of effective models of juvenile justice practice in relation to current practice in the District of Columbia. **Chapter 4 (Administrative and Legislative Reform)** addresses proposals for legislative reform that will be needed to strengthen rehabilitation efforts and the operation of juvenile justice agencies. **Chapter 5 (Commission Recommendations for Implementation Process)** discusses the steps that the Executive Office of the Mayor might take in partnership with the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, the City Council, and juvenile justice-related agencies to operationalize new “child and youth friendly” practices. The **Conclusion** summarizes the basic principles that the Commission feels should be at the heart of the effort to strengthen the juvenile justice system in the District of Columbia. The set of **Appendices** at the back of the report present Commission member and staff biographies, valuable data and information, Commission-related outreach materials, focus group reports, and best practice literature and templates.

The Commission recognizes that it would be disingenuous to recommend sweeping changes in public policy without the provision of some guidance for implementation. In order to facilitate the cultural and institutional processes for change, the following recommendations are offered with suggested timelines based on conversations with colleagues in the District of Columbia and other jurisdictions.

Themes	Policy Recommendations	Timetable
L. Oversight, Monitoring, and Coordination of Youth Services and Juvenile Justice Policy Vision		
	<p data-bbox="505 365 1219 491">A. Establish a Youth Services Coordinating Commission with responsibility for the oversight, monitoring, and coordination of a policy vision for a youth development and juvenile justice system in the District of Columbia.</p> <p data-bbox="553 520 1219 617">Primary functions of the YSC Commission should include the following, but should not be limited in terms of its core duty to:</p> <ol data-bbox="553 646 1219 1457" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="553 646 1219 827">1. Provide a knowledge building and governance framework to bridge youth development activities and juvenile justice responsibilities and functions for the maintenance of a seamless delivery of services and opportunities to youth across governmental and non-governmental entities. <li data-bbox="553 865 1219 1016">2. Establish and adhere to specific, measurable and time sensitive goals (i.e. reduction of school suspensions and truancy, provision of services for underserved youth in various geographic areas of the city, youth development training for all youth workers, etc...). <li data-bbox="553 1054 1219 1234">3. Assure the District's compliance with <i>Jerry M.</i> decree within two years, along with the timely demolition of Oak Hill, the construction of a secure and state of the art cottage-like smaller facility, and the continued expansion of high quality community based programming and facilities.³ <li data-bbox="553 1272 1219 1331">4. Coordinate policy and outcome-based planning across agencies as basis for creation of innovative programs. <li data-bbox="553 1369 1219 1457">5. Ensure the collection, analysis, evaluation and public reporting of youth data from public and private sector agencies. <p data-bbox="529 1495 1179 1604">In order to achieve these objectives in a timely manner, the Commission also recommends that the Mayor:</p>	<p data-bbox="1235 365 1390 394">Dec 31, 2001</p>

³The Commission believes that the Oak Hill Youth Center is outdated and no longer meets the complex needs of today's juvenile population. Commission members envision a design that is consistent with standards that "treat children as children" in the context of universally-recognized best practices for specialized care and treatment. Features of this new design should include appropriate child and youth friendly staffing, housing, and technology. The location in Laurel would also keep children and youth closer to their homes and facilitate the unification of families in the District of Columbia.

	<p>6. Establish the Youth Services Coordinating Commission by Mayoral Order and submit to the Council of the District of Columbia proposed legislation statutorily creating the Youth Services Coordinating Commission.</p> <p>7. Enact a statute establishing a Youth Services Coordinating Commission consistent with the principles and rationale outlined in Chapter 6.</p> <p>8. Appoint a diverse and interdisciplinary body composed of representatives from youth, government, community, academia, and the private sector to constitute the Youth Services Coordinating Commission.</p> <p>9. Provide appropriations for staff and adequate budget in order for the Commission to perform its functions.</p>	<p>Oct 31, 2001</p> <p>Dec 31, 2001</p> <p>Oct 31, 2001</p> <p>Oct 31, 2001</p>
	<p>B. Centralize all local and federal juvenile justice funds under the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, and Families, in order to facilitate more integrated and unified programming, policy, and monitoring related to youth services and the juvenile justice system in the District of Columbia. This should include the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) and federal grants from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.</p>	<p>Begin immediately</p>