



State Commission For The Blind

400 STOKES BUILDING, 314 WEST 11TH STREET, POST OFFICE BOX 12866, AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

EVANS N. WENTZ, Executive Director

WILLIAM C. CONNER, Chairman

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Bill Presnal, Chairman, and Members
Appropriations Committee
Texas House of Representatives

FROM: Evans N. Wentz, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Response to Questions Raised in House
Appropriations Committee Hearing This Date

DATE: March 31, 1981

Evans N. Wentz

Historically, the State Commission for the Blind has purchased services from the Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville to aid blind individuals in adjustment to the loss of sight in order that they may secure employment. The same and more comprehensive services are available at the state-owned Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center in Austin. Criss Cole was constructed in the early 1970s at a cost of approximately 3.5 million dollars with federal vocational rehabilitation funds and state appropriations. Impetus for a new state-owned facility occurred in the mid-1960s when the Lions Camp failed to comply with provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which forced the Commission to terminate the contract for a two-year period (1966 and 1967). After the opening of Criss Cole, and in spite of excess capacity at Criss Cole, the Commission's administration continued to purchase services from the Lions Camp. Since the completion of the Criss Cole facility there have been continuing queries from the Legislative Budget Board, the Governor's Office of Budget and Planning and various legislators regarding the underutilization of Criss Cole.

A study by the Commission, completed in the fall of 1980, concluded that Criss Cole could accommodate the total number of blind citizens previously served by both the Lions Camp and Criss Cole. The Commission's decision to consolidate services is based on the results of the analysis. This decision is not based on any dissatisfaction with the services offered by the Lions Camp, but on sound management principles. Comparison of the two facilities and programs on an equal basis is almost impossible because of the factors enumerated on Attachment A.

While the primary consideration for discontinuing the contract with the Lions Camp is the study indicating underutilization of Criss Cole, the

rapidly increasing cost to the Commission for the Lions Camp program focused additional attention to the issue. From 1978 to 1981, requests for funds submitted to the agency by Mr. Glen Crawford, executive director of the Lions Camp, increased 101% from a net of \$177,700 in 1978 to \$357,198 in 1981. During the same period, the number of clients served declined from 65 to 50. The reduced number of clients had an adverse impact on the cost per client.

This consolidation of service programs is not a change to effect a cutback in services, but to save taxpayers' money by maximizing the use of existing state facilities which will assure compliance with state and federal law. All programs and services of the Commission will continue. This procedure will also allow the Lions to use the money they are now using in duplicative services to sponsor other worthwhile programs for the blind for which federal funding assistance is inadequate or unavailable.

The State Commission for the Blind has only the deepest admiration for the activities that the Lions have traditionally sponsored, including their support of programs to aid the blind and to prevent blindness. Cooperation between the agency and the local Lions Clubs of Texas has existed for decades and has grown stronger over the years. We look forward to a continuation of working with them in the future on other activities to help blind citizens.

The Commission has recently received copies of letters addressed to various legislators which suggest that Criss Cole should be converted to other official use and the entire adult blind rehabilitation program should be transferred to the Lions Camp. We will evaluate any proposal which offers equal or better training for reduced cost. However, to date the agency has not received a detailed proposal from the Lions Camp describing the expansion of services beyond those limited ones that have been traditionally offered.

There has never been any indication from the administration of the Lions Camp of the desire or ability to accept all clients. To the contrary, the present executive director of the Camp has requested that the more handicapped or multihandicapped clients not be referred to that facility. The posture of the Camp's executive director, coupled with the federal requirement that the Commission serve the most severely handicapped on a priority basis has resulted in these more costly and complex cases being served entirely by Criss Cole. The agency is unaware that the Lions of Texas are willing to commit the resources necessary to accommodate almost 200 clients annually, including the multihandicapped with their special and costly requirements.

COST ANALYSIS

Given the excess capacity of both the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center and the Lions Camp, cost per client figures lose much of their relevance. Historically, an increase in the referral rate to either the Lions Camp or Criss Cole has been at the expense of the other. Attachments B, C, and D provide historic and projected cost data for the two facilities. Due to the absence of a proposal from the Lions Camp, the Commission is unable to

provide information pertaining to the cost of training all clients at the Lions Camp. The Commission has serious reservations regarding the ability of the Lions Camp to provide the array of services offered by Criss Cole without extensive capital outlay.

Should you desire any further information on the subject matter or any of the other programs of the State Commission for the Blind please let us know.

CRISS COLE SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Training Services

- Orientation and Mobility Skills, including training in use of electronic travel aids such as the MOWAT Sensor
- Cooking and Food Preparation Skills, including nutrition and meal-planning, food budgeting, and marketing
- Housekeeping Skills
- Grooming Skills and Personal Hygiene
- Clothing Care and Management, including minor sewing repair and clothing construction
- Braille
- Abacus
- Money Management and Personal Budgeting
- Aids and Appliances, including Opticon evaluation and training
- Typing

Special Training Services

- Low Vision Evaluation and Training
- Evaluation and Training in the Use of Aids for Hearing Impaired
- Sensory-Motor Integration Therapy
- General Physical Conditioning
- Deaf-Blind Evaluation and Training, including training in specialized devices such as Tell-a-Touch
- Recreation Skills Training
- Crafts
- Woodworking

Special Training Services (Cont'd)

- Home Maintenance
- Small Engine Repair
- Independent Living Experience

Counseling and Medical Services

- Vocational Rehabilitation Case Services
- Personal Adjustment Counseling
- Vocational Guidance and Career Planning
- Deaf-Blind Counseling and Consultation
- Interpreter Services for Deaf-Blind
- Psychometric Assessment
- Comprehensive Neuropsychological Evaluation
- Pastoral Counseling
- Health Maintenance Services
- Ophthalmological Services
- Clinical Evaluation of Low Vision
- Audiological Services
- Speech Therapy/Language Development
- Endocrinology Specialty Services, including Dialysis Unit
- Diabetic Education and Training

Consultants provide some of the above services at the Center, thus being a resource for staff in determining the impact on training for the client.

College Preparatory Program

Provides personal adjustment and college preparatory skills training for legally and totally blind clients enrolling in colleges and universities, technical and vocational schools, and other competitive vocational training programs.

Community Resources

University of Texas at Austin

- Courses available to clients attending college preparatory program
- Campus and facilities utilized as a training resource for clients
- Job-readiness clinic available for clients at CCRC
- Students in rehabilitation counselor programs work with CCRC clients in counseling and guidance
- Resource for CCRC staff development through continuing education program and U. T. rehabilitation counselor training program

Austin Community College

- Provides courses to clients in adult basic education, GED, and English as a second Language

Travis Association for the Blind

- Provides vocational evaluation and work adjustment training for clients

City of Austin Parks and Recreation

- Provides evening and weekend courses and recreational programs for clients

The Austin Urban Environment for Training Clients in Orientation and Mobility Skills

- Including public transportation resources

Travis County Association for the Deaf

- Provides interpreter services for deaf-blind clients when CCRC staff is not available

OTHER CCRC SERVICES

- Facilities for training and housing trainees in the Commission's Business Enterprises Program
- Provides meeting and staff training space for other state agencies such as State Department of Health, Texas Department of Mental Health-Mental Retardation, Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, etc.

OTHER CCRC SERVICES (Cont'd)

- Statewide accessibility of Austin
- Physical facility is barrier-free. It was built specifically as a comprehensive rehabilitation center for the blind based on research that included the latest state of the art for services for the blind. It is a single facility designed for the training and mobility needs of blind and multihandicapped blind persons, and is designed to provide comfort during inclement weather.

The facility and program ranks among the finest and best available anywhere.

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY GRAPH

OF

"COMMISSION COST FOR CONTRACT WITH THE
TEXAS LIONS LEAGUE (TLL)"
(TEXAS LIONS CAMP, KERRVILLE)

COMMENTS

While the primary consideration for discontinuing the contract was the study indicating excess capacity at Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (Criss Cole), the rapidly increasing cost to the Commission for the Lions Camp program focused additional attention to the issue.

Considering the 1981 request, total costs to the Commission for this contract have risen 92% since 1978 while the number of clients served has declined by 23%, resulting in a 250% increase in Commission cost per client day at the Lions Camp.

Data Sources:

Commission costs of Lions Camp contracts include the net contract amount plus the salary expenses for one counselor assigned exclusively to the Kerrville facility.

Number of Clients Served: Count of clients served as reported by the Lions Camp. 1981 estimate is clients served through 2/28/81 with projection, based on applications, through last class starting 4/13/81.

Commission Cost per Client Day at Lions Camp: Annual cost to Commission, \div total number of clients served = annual cost per client \div 90 (assumed average days per client) = Commission cost per client day at Lions Camp.

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY GRAPH

OF

ANALYSIS OF COMMISSION'S COST FOR
CRISS COLE REHABILITATION CENTER (CCRC)
TEXAS COMMISSION f/t BLIND (TCB)

COMMENTS

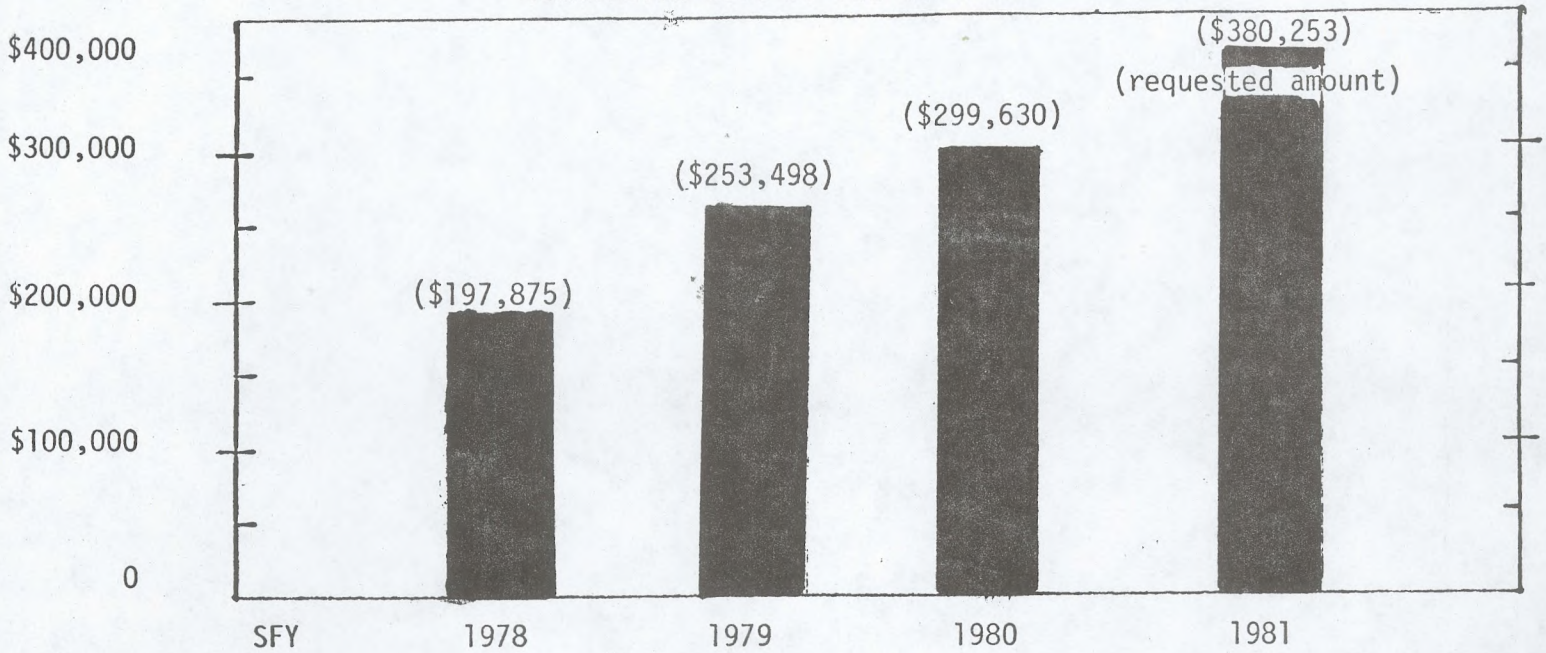
For the last three years the average cost per client day at CCRC has been \$76.78. This cost is overstated due to various TCB training, service, and other program costs which are absorbed by CCRC. Additional factors influencing the cost are the wide array of services and specialized facilities, the large percentage of multihandicapped clients, and the vacancy factor. Note that the estimated cost per client day would have fallen to \$65.00 daily in 1981 if the facility were used to a level closer to capacity. (198 clients equal the number of referrals to both CCRC and the Texas Lions Camp.)

It is the best estimate of the Commission that the budgetary impact to the Commission from discontinuing the Lions Camp contract will be a savings of the total Lions Camp contract (\$277,700) less increased utility and food cost of no more than \$20,000 for a net savings of \$257,000.

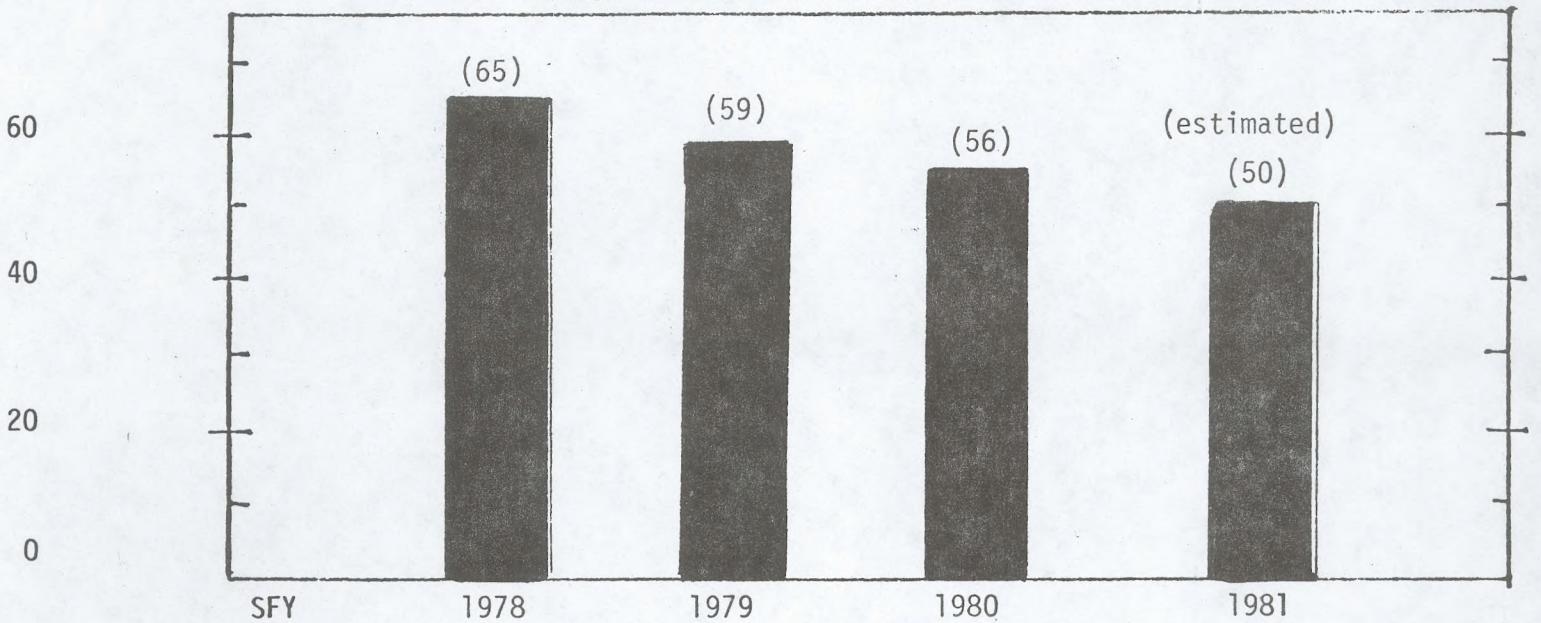
Data SourcesCommission Cost - TCB Biennial ReportsNumber of Clients Served - TCB Biennial ReportsCost per Client Day - Annual cost ÷ number days (assumed 90 days for long term, 11 days short term except for 1979 where the actual number of training days were used).

COMMISSION COST FOR CONTRACT WITH THE
TEXAS LIONS LEAGUE (TLL)

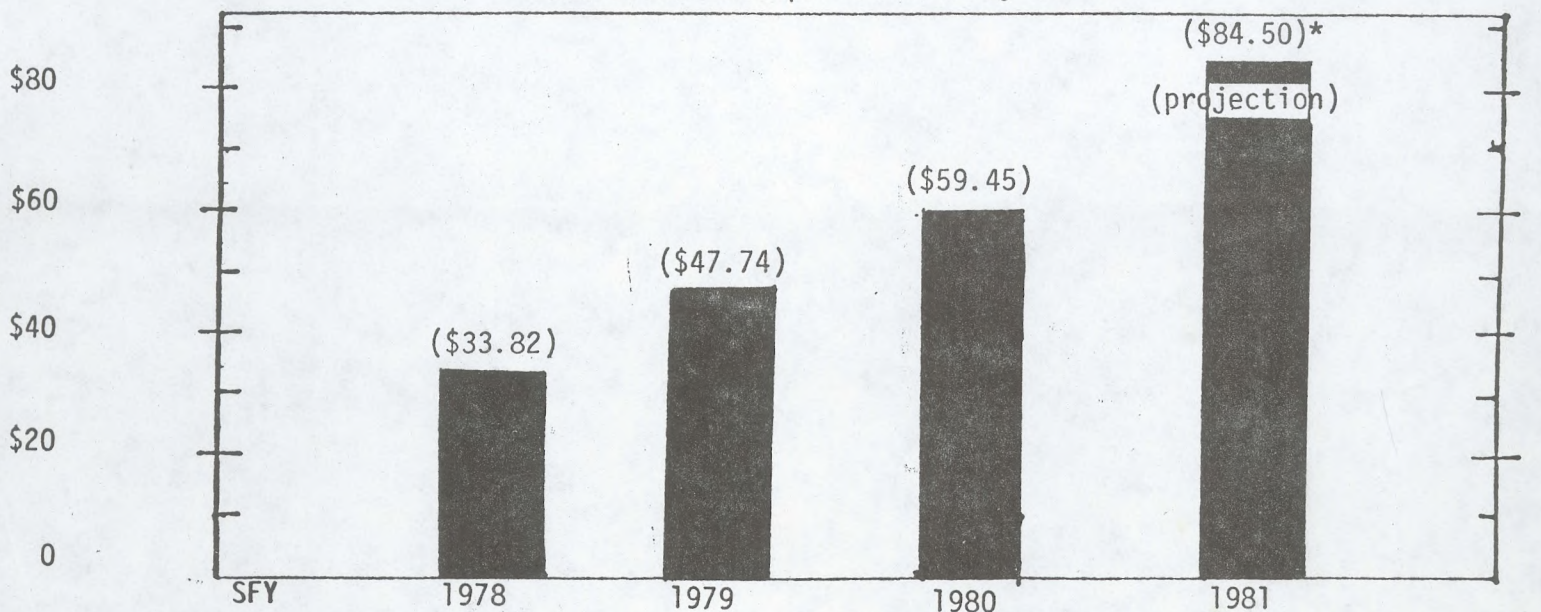
Commission Cost of TLL Contract



Number of Clients Served at TLL



Commission Cost per Client Day at TLL



* The projection for the total cost of the program (Commission cost plus Lions' contribution) was projected by Mr. Glen Crawford, TLL Executive Director, to be \$549,535 in SEY 81; or per client day cost of \$122.12.

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY GRAPH
OF
"TOTAL COST FOR TEXAS LIONS LEAGUE (TLL)
PROGRAM FOR THE BLIND"
(TEXAS LIONS CAMP, KERRVILLE)

COMMENTS

Circulated misinformation depicts Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (Criss Cole) as inefficient and a "white elephant" with an average daily cost per client of \$87.35 (actual cost ranges from \$75.71 to \$77.90 for the 1978-1980 period).

TLL is depicted as cost efficient with an average daily cost per client of \$54.75.

The attached graph discloses that the actual total average daily cost at the Lions Camp exceeds \$87.35 (the amount depicted as inefficient) for the last three (3) years.

Data Sources:

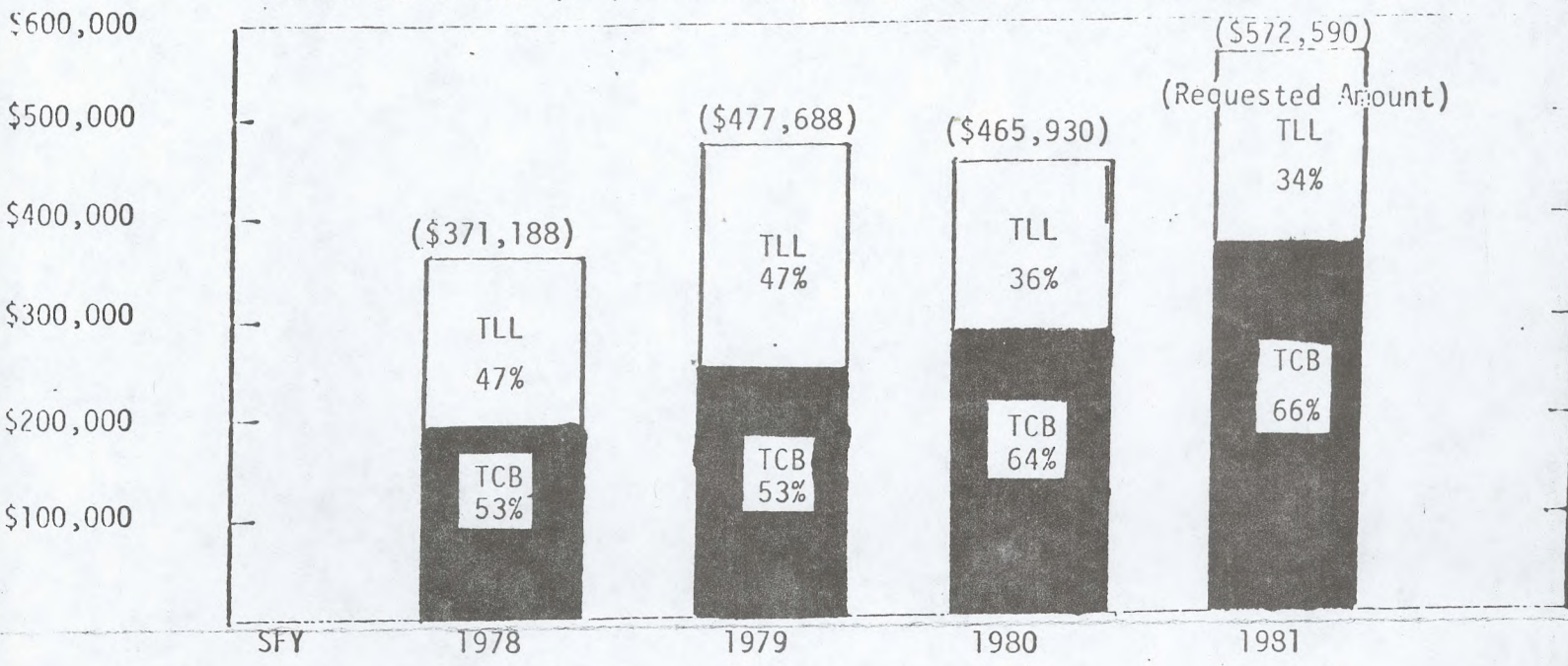
TLL/TCB Ratios - Base costs for SFY 1978 and 1979 from 1979 Lions Camp audit report of BOEHN and BOEHM; 1980 from Lions' Camp accounting records; and 1981 from Lions' Camp budget. Salary expenses for one counselor exclusively assigned to the Lions' Camp have been added to all years' base costs.

Number of Clients Served - Count of clients served as reported by the Lions Camp; 1981 figure is number of clients served through 2/28/81 with projection, based on applications, through last class starting 4/13/81.

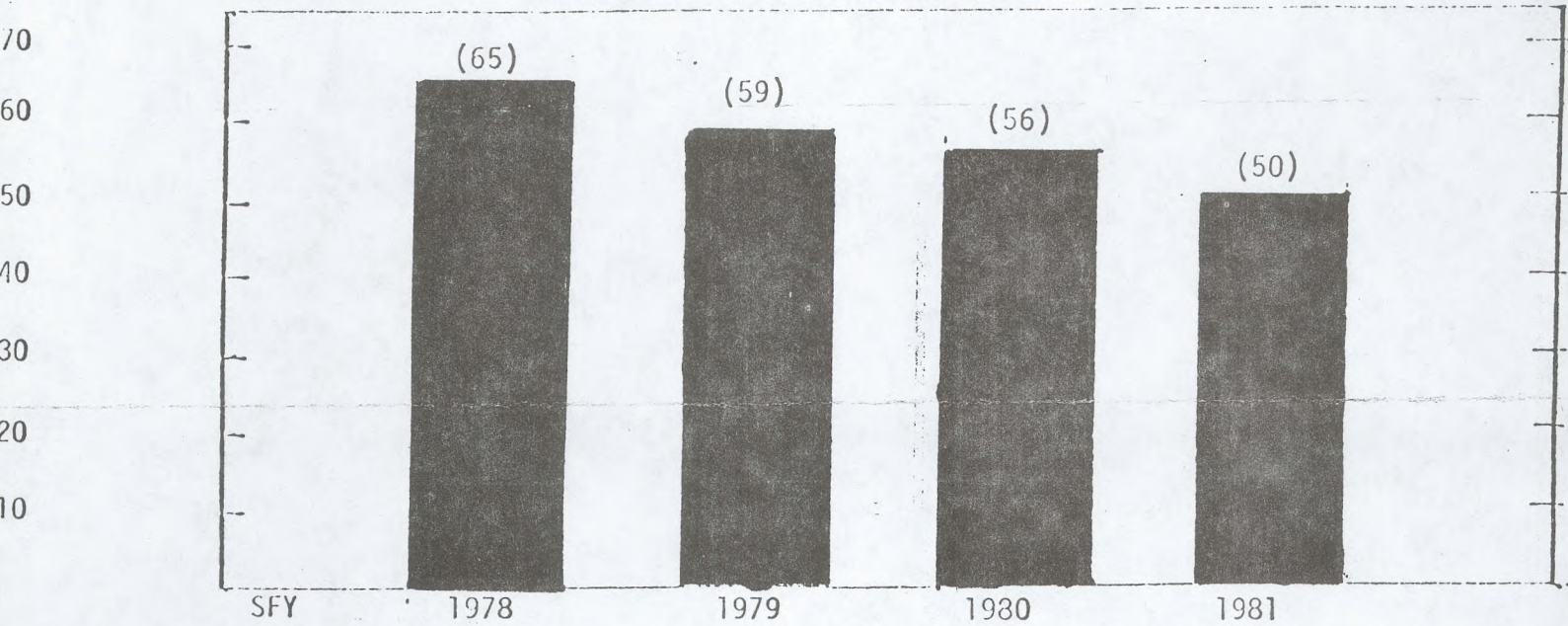
Total Cost per Client Day at Lions Camp (TLL) - Total annual cost ÷ number of clients served = annual cost per client ÷ 90 (assumed average days per client) = total cost per client day at Lions Camp (TLL).

PROGRAM FOR THE BLIND

BLIND COMMISSION (TCB) CONTRIBUTIONS SHADED; LIONS' CAMP (TLL)(KERRVILLE) CLEAR



NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED AT TLL



TOTAL COST PER CLIENT DAY AT TLL

