

PROBLEM STATEMENT: First, define the problem exactly as it exists in your particular community. Describe the nature and magnitude of the problem using valid, updated statistical data, and cite the source and date of your information. Prior data may be used to show changes in the magnitude or severity of the problem. Remember to document the problem and not the symptoms or solutions of the problem. Second, identify your existing efforts, current resources and programs being utilized to deal with the problem.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

United States

Child abuse is a major problem in the United States and South Carolina. Elder abuse is a less familiar problem, but mistreatment at any age is cause for great concern. Since one or both of these areas impact everyone at some point during their lives, both of these areas deserve attention.

The reporting of child abuse, as well as the actual incidences of abuse, is more prevalent than elder abuse. In the United States, percentage estimates of abused seniors range between four and ten percent. Whatever the true figures, people concerned with elder abuse agree that the problem exists and needs to be stopped. Part of the reason why no reliable statistics exist on elder abuse is because it is under reported. Some elderly may be embarrassed to reveal abuse by their relatives, or they may fear being placed into an institution if they live at home. Elders may worry about reprisal from their abusers. Approximately 450,000 elderly persons in domestic settings were abused and/or neglected during 1996. When elderly persons who experienced self-neglect are added, the number increased to 551,000 in 1996.¹

The degree of family violence that is currently detected in America is most likely the product of years of improper socialization. Tolerance of family violence by one generation encourages it in the next. Until society rejects resolving conflict and expressing anger through violence, domestic violence will continue.² Apparently, customary forms of problem solving and family interaction have traditionally centered on violence. Consider this quote from a psychology textbook published in 1987:

“The traditions of family relationships in Western culture must encourage violence in the family. The ancient Greeks practiced infanticide, although only baby girls were left to die. In roman times, a father could sell, sacrifice, mutilate, or kill his offspring...A comprehensive study of child abuse points out that with the exception of the military and the police, there is no more violent social group in America than the family. ‘A person is more likely to be hit or killed in his or her own home by another family member than anywhere else or by anyone else’. Nearly one out of every four murder victims is killed by a member of his or her own family...”³

Numerous studies have shown that abused children grow up to abuse others.⁴ According to a 1996 National Institute of Justice report, *The Cycle of Violence Revisited*, abused or neglected children were 11% more likely to have a juvenile and adult arrest record. In an *Offender Profile*⁵ study, victimized children were found to be 50% more likely to perpetuate violence as adults. The same study shows that chronic juvenile offenders were 78% more likely than other juveniles to make the transition into the adult criminal

¹ *The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study* as cited in the South Carolina Department of Public Safety grant abstract for Child/ Elder Abuse (2001).

² Handbook titled *S.T.O.P. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PROGRAM PROTOCOLS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT & PROSECUTORS*. Disseminated by the South Carolina Attorney General’s Office. Page 3.

³ Child Development, Fifth Edition, by Salkind and Ambron. Published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston 1987. Page 266.

⁴ National Crime Prevention Council and *Childhood Victimization and Risk for Alcohol and Drug Arrests* by the National Institute of Justice as cited in the South Carolina Department of Public Safety grant abstract for Child/ Elder Abuse (2001).

⁵ National Crime Prevention Council as cited in the South Carolina Department of Public Safety grant abstract for Child/ Elder Abuse (2001).

justice system. In another NIJ study, over 70% of those abused and convicted as juveniles were convicted as adults. In 1993 nearly 3 million children were maltreated or endangered through physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and emotional and educational neglect. That number was twice what it was in 1986.⁶ These statistics demonstrate the urgent need for increased investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases as well as raised public consciousness of this problem.

Research indicates that approximately 20 – 25% of girls and approximately 10% of boys are sexually abused before the age of 18. In another report (the result of a telephone survey), 22% of the respondents revealed that they had been sexually abused as children. Of that number, 27% were women and 16% were men. Friends or relatives perpetuated almost 70% of the abuse. Ninety-three percent of the victims stated that the abusers were men.⁷

Although studies have indicated a high potential number of juvenile victims, most child professionals agree that the majority of crimes against children are not reported. Juvenile crime victims encounter barriers to accessing and receiving justice in the criminal justice system. In examining the reporting of juvenile victimizations, it is important to look at conditions that affect crime reporting in general as well as those that are special to the situation of juveniles. While any child is a potential victim of sexual abuse, certain characteristics such as age, sex, ethnicity, and family relations help to identify specific factors that may increase the risk. In general, children seem to be most vulnerable during pre-adolescence, particularly between the ages of 8 and 12 years. Other risk factors include (1) family disruptions, (2) parental conflict, absence, or unavailability, and (3) presence of a “nonbiological related father”. Often by the time that a child recognizes the abusive nature of a trusted adult’s behavior, the child is likely experiencing feelings of responsibility, shame, and/or isolation – feelings that further inhibit disclosure of victimization circumstances.⁸

The majority of juvenile victimizations are not reported to the police. Many factors in youth underreporting may have to do less with juveniles themselves than the kinds of crime victimizations that they experience. It has been well established that less serious offenses and crimes committed by acquaintances and family members are reported at lower rates and juvenile victimizations *may be* of this sort. On the other hand there are various special conditions of youth that influence reporting. There are, for example, cultural constructions that interpret violence against youth as more normal and less “crime-like” than it would be against adults. When a peer physically attacks a 14-year old on the school grounds it is typically seen as a scuffle, even though it might be behaviorally identical to acts that would be labeled criminal assaults were they to occur between adults. This may result in underreporting. Other special conditions may also exert an influence. Crimes involving juvenile victimizations may not be reported to police because they are reported to school officials who deal with the victimization in a quasi-judicial fashion and juveniles may be hindered from reporting by developmental factors linked to their age such as ignorance of the criminal justice system and dependence on adults for communication with authorities. According to the most recent research reviewed, only 28% of violent crimes against juveniles become known to police. This is a low figure in absolute terms and also a low figure when compared to the 48% report rate of all violent crimes against adults.⁹

⁶ *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 Report* as cited in the South Carolina Department of Public Safety grant abstract for Child/ Elder Abuse (2001).

⁷ *Our Sexuality*, Third Ed., Robert Crooks and Karle Baur, published by The Benjamin /Cummings Publishing Company, Inc., 1987. Page 670.

⁸ *Child Maltreatment, A Clinical Guide and Reference*. G. W. Medical Publishing, Inc., St Louis 1994. Monteleone and Brodeur. Page 165.

⁹ *Factors in the Underreporting of Crimes Against Children*. *Child Maltreatment*, Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. Volume 6, Number 3, August 2001. Pages 219-229.

Of specific juvenile crime victimizations, the only one that does not seem to be less reported to the police than adult victimizations is sexual assault. Sexual assault is itself underreported to any authority compared with other violent crimes (odds ratio = 0.68) but this bias operates equally for both juvenile and adult victims. Thirty percent of juvenile sexual assaults are reported to the police compared with 29% of sexual assaults on adults. Thefts committed against juveniles are extremely underreported. Ten percent of thefts against juveniles are reported to the police as compared to 31% for adults. Approximately 60% of all thefts occur in school and a little more than half (51%) of those get reported to some *authority* (police, school, etc) compared with 22% of thefts that occur to juveniles outside of school. For violent crime overall, reporting to any authority holds constant at approximately 40% to 50% throughout the adolescent years. Reporting to police steadily increases as age increases. Initially, at only 20% for 12-year olds, the reporting rate rises to 38% for 17-year olds. This pattern suggests that police reporting of crimes against children younger than 12 is significantly lower than that for teenagers.¹⁰

Other factors, in addition to age and type of crime, can influence reporting. For violent crimes, the two factors most strongly associated with reporting are victim injury and the offender's use of a weapon. Incidents involving robberies and Black victims are also positively associated with reporting. On the other hand, incidents with male or White victims, involving assault, sexual assault, verbal threats only, and juvenile or acquaintance perpetrators are negatively associated with reporting.¹¹ And, as noted before, incidents that occur at school are negatively correlated with reporting to the police.

There is a lot of evidence that juveniles are being deprived of justice in part due to underreporting. First, the discovery in the past two decades of substantial quantities of previously unreported serious physical and sexual abuse to children certainly suggests that it is easy for serious crimes against juveniles to escape the attention of the criminal justice system. Second, there continues to be evidence about traumatizing forms of child victimization that are not being taken seriously by any authorities: bullying, nonsexual genital violence, and sexual harassment. Third, there are some who argue that the formal justice system is inappropriate for children and youth. This credibility of this argument has decreased. The formal justice system is becoming more sensitive to young victims. Moreover, the presumption (held by many victims and families) that involvement in the formal justice system is generally noxious for juvenile victims has not been supported by research. In general, juveniles and families report more positive reactions than they anticipate.¹²

Unlike children, elderly people seem to be particularly susceptible to crimes motivated by economic gain. The types of crimes in which the elderly are disproportionately victimized include robbery and personal theft, household crimes such as larceny and burglary, and motor vehicle theft. Like the general population, the elderly are most susceptible to household crimes and least susceptible to violent crimes. Unlike younger victims of violence, elderly victims of violence are about as likely to be robbed as assaulted. Although robbery accounts for only 20% of the violence experienced by persons younger than 65 years they account for 38% of the violent experienced by persons 65 and older. Injured elderly persons are more likely than younger victims to suffer a serious injury. In addition, elderly victims of violent crime are almost twice as likely as younger victims to be raped, robbed, or assaulted at or near their home.¹³

¹⁰ *Factors in the Underreporting of Crimes Against Children*. Child Maltreatment, Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. Volume 6, Number 3, August 2001. Pages 219-229.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Elderly Crime Victims: National Crime Victimization Survey as cited in the South Carolina Department of Public Safety grant abstract for Child/ Elder Abuse (2001).

Two of the most compelling factors in making this type of abuse “invisible” to the rest of society and law enforcement are (1) the family is [considered] sacrosanct and interference with family life by outsiders is not tolerated, and (2) because abuse occurs within the confines of a private dwelling, it is hidden from outside scrutiny.¹⁴

Some persons accept their troubles without seeking relief. This is possibly due to a personality trait or based on a philosophy of tolerance, resignation, or understanding. This can be used by the abuser for their own benefit and protection. Moreover, persons in abusive situations become physically and socially isolated from contact with others outside the home. This makes detection and intervention very difficult.¹⁵

State of South Carolina

Child abuse knows no socio-economic, educational, or racial boundaries. The data on families, economic status, health, readiness, school achievement, and adolescent risk behaviors provide a troublesome picture of the condition of children in South Carolina. According to Kids Count 2001, the 25.1% of children in single parent families, 21% in poverty, 33.4% not graduating from high school, 37.4% of high school students using alcohol, and 19.6% using drugs each month, and other data profiled in this report suggests that too many children are at risk of not growing up to become self-supporting adults, good family members, and responsible community citizens.¹⁶

The data for South Carolina is equally distressing with that of the United States as a whole and the numbers indicate that something must be done to decrease the occurrence of these cases and prevent further criminal acts that result from this abuse. According to Kids Count, in 1997-1998, 39,105 children were investigated as alleged victims of child abuse and neglect. Of that number, 47.7 were male, 52.3 were female, 49.1% were white, and 50.9% were African-American or other. Looking at alleged victims by age, 38.4% were 0 – 5 years old, 40.6% were 6 – 12 years old, and 21% were 13 – 17 years of age. Abused and neglected children were 0.9% of all children age 18 or younger, 0.7% of all whites, and 1.2% of all African-Americans and others. In the indicated cases, 29.9% of abused and neglected children lived in two-parent families, 46.3% lived in single parent families, 9.4% with extended families, and 14.3% lived in “other” circumstances. Of the number of children in indicated cases of abuse and neglect, 14.8% were for physical abuse, 6.7% were for mental injury, 6.2% were for educational neglect, 0.8% were for abandonment, 0.7% were for delinquency, 47.5% were for threat o harm, and 0.5% were for “other” types.¹⁷

In 2001, compared to all other states in the U.S., South Carolina ranked 42nd in the overall well being of children. South Carolina ranked as follows in the listed categories:

Low Birth Weight	48 th
Infant Mortality	47 th
Births to teens	42 nd
Single-Parent Families with children	40 th
Child Poverty	37 th
Child Deaths	36 th
Teen Deaths (accidents, homicide, suicide)	33 rd

¹⁴ *Abuse of the Elderly and Other High Risk Adults*, published by the Criminal Justice Academy, South Carolina Department of Public Safety. Page 6.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Excerpt form South Carolina Department of Public Safety grant abstract for Child/ Elder Abuse (2001).

¹⁷ Ibid.

City of Anderson South Carolina

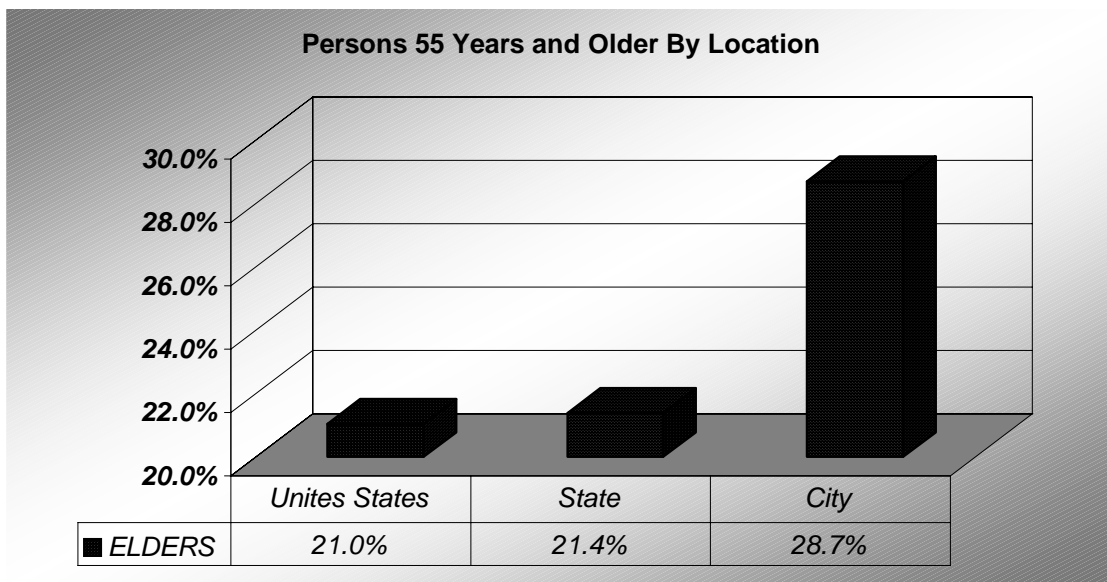
The City of Anderson, South Carolina covers 13 square miles and has a population of approximately 25,514¹⁸ residents. Of the total population, approximately 5,221 (20.5%) are children age 0 to 17, and 7,327 (28.7%) are elderly citizens who have reached the age of 55. These are the age groups that will be affected by a Child/Elder Abuse Investigator.

According to Census 2000, there are 5,656 people in the city of Anderson, South Carolina who are 18 years and under. That is 22.2% of the city’s population and 4.4% below the state’s 26.6% calculation for the same age group. The state’s portion of persons at or below the age of 18 is less than that of the United States as a whole.

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Unites States</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under 5	19,471,204	6.8%	264,679	6.6%	1705	6.7%
5 to 9	20,854,667	7.3%	285,243	7.1%	1605	6.3%
10 to 14	20,833,872	7.3%	290,479	7.2%	1476	5.8%
15 to 18	<u>16,341,689</u>	<u>5.7%</u>	<u>230,102</u>	<u>5.7%</u>	<u>870</u>	<u>3.4%</u>
TOTAL	77,501,432	27.1%	1,070,503	26.6%	5,656	22.2%

Although the population of 18 year olds and under in Anderson is less than the state and national averages, the proportion of 55+ year olds is higher. The city of Anderson has 7.3% more elder people per capita than the rest of the state. This translates into a 34% disparity. In addition, the city has 7.7% more elders by proportion that does the Unites States as a whole, which is a 37% disparity.

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Unites States</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Percent</u>
55+	60,041,021	21.0%	858,244	21.4%	7327	28.7%

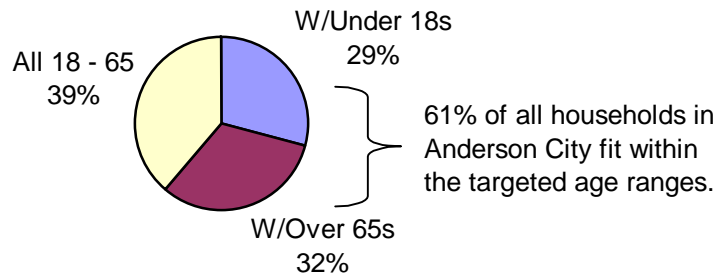


With 28.7% of its population age 55 or older, Anderson City has more elder persons per capita than any state, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Even Florida, with 27.3% of its population 55 and older, would be second place to Anderson City in percent of elders per capita if Anderson were a state.

¹⁸ Census 2000.

The City of Anderson has approximately 10,641 households. Out of that number, 3,102 (29.2%) have people living in them who are under 18 years old and 3,401 (32%) have persons 65 and older. In addition, there are 1,991 female-headed households in Anderson City that have no husband present.

Households in Anderson City with Children under 18 and Elders 55+



Anderson City is not immune to the child/elder abuse problem that the rest of the state and nation currently faces. According to a S.L.E.D. computer search for the last five calendar years, incident reports filed by the City of Anderson Police Department documented the following number of actual cases for the listed age groups:

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Child ¹⁹	229	226	221	170	162
Elder ²⁰	<u>70</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>44</u>
TOTAL	299	292	284	216	206

The above statistics are dependent upon accurate recording of the victim’s birth date and/or age at the time the initial incident report was filed. The data reflects known occurrences coupled with an accurate recording of the victim’s age and/or birth date. The City of Anderson Police Department documented thousands of incident reports for each year listed. Therefore it is premised that the above figures (which represent documented child and elder abuse) may be greatly under reported due to a lack of adequate information being placed upon the initial report.

Making the necessary adjustments for the underreporting of various types of crimes (as mentioned earlier) shows a dismal picture for the potential number of juvenile and elder victimizations in Anderson. The crime-reporting rate for victimizations is as follows and was used to develop the model for potential need.²¹

	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Child</u>
Sexual Assaults	29%	30%
Violent Crime (Non Sexual)	48%	28%
Non-violent Crime (thefts/B&E)	31%	10%

When the above factors are calculated into the known crimes against juveniles and adults in the city of Anderson, it appears that 4,215 crimes against children and elders has gone unreported in the last five years. This is an average of 70.25 per month (3 ½ per workday) over the five-year period. The data and

¹⁹ Age is less than 18 years.

²⁰ Age is at least 55 years.

²¹ *Factors in the Underreporting of Crimes Against Children.* Child Maltreatment, Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. Volume 6, Number 3, August 2001. Pages 219-229.

analysis indicates that on average per month during the last five years, 3.25 sexual assaults occurred, 66.15 nonsexual violent crimes occurred, and 0.85 thefts and burglaries were perpetuated against our targeted age groups. Note the following chart which depicts our needs model of unreported crimes for children and elders:

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Sexual Assaults	53	30	43	26	43
Violent Crime (Non Sexual)	904	908	868	669	620
Non-violent Crime (thefts/B&E)	<u>6</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	963	951	921	711	669

As previously mentioned, child and elder abuse occurs across all levels of the social strata. However, historical research has documented a theoretical correlation between depressed levels of education,²² social isolation,^{23/24} unemployment,^{25/26} low socioeconomic status,^{27/28} and confirmed instances of abuse within the family. In other words, in families that are socially isolated, under educated, and poor, there seems to be disproportionately more domestic abuse. A high number (per capita) of individuals in South Carolina (compared to the United States as a whole) drop out of school before receiving their diploma. Considering our previously mentioned nexus between low education, social isolation, unemployment, low socioeconomic status, and abuse, it naturally follows that the rate of child and elder violence will correlate with the high school dropout rate. This conclusion is in keeping with one of the accepted theories of violence which states that family violence is correlated with educational level (and educational level is correlated with socioeconomic status, etc).

Approximately 23.1% of Anderson County’s population has less than a high school diploma.²⁹ That is a 5% higher non-high school graduate rate than South Carolina and 34% higher rate than the United States. Applying the theory of a correlation between low education level and violence, it naturally follows that Anderson County’s higher drop out rate leads to an increased violence rate for Anderson County as compared to the rest of the nation. Analysis performed by the City of Anderson Police Department indicate that the city has a violent crime rate of 40.1 per 1,000 inhabitants.

In addition to direct violence acted out against juveniles, whether by family or acquaintances within the home or strangers, there is also the issue of neglect. Neglect is positively correlated with low socioeconomic status in other research. In 1998, 45% of all South Carolina 4th graders scored below the basic reading level, compared with 39% nationally. That same year, 35% of all 8th graders scored below the basic reading average, compared with 28% nationally. In 1996 the median income of families with children in South Carolina was \$34,300 (compared with \$39,700 nationally) and 12% of all children in South Carolina lived in extreme³⁰ poverty.³¹ With a child death rate of 39 per 100,000, South Carolina was 49th in 1996,

²² Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life, Seventh Edition by Coleman, Butsher, and Carson. Published by Scott, Foresman and Company. Note: Quotation states that social class influences level of education, which is related to crime. Page 262.

²³ Child Development, Fifth Edition, by Salkind and Ambron. Published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston 1987. Page 271.

²⁴ Human Development, Fourth Edition, by Craig. Published by Prentice-Hall 1986. Page 339.

²⁵ Child Development, Fifth Edition, by Salkind and Ambron. Published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston 1987. Page 269.

²⁶ Human Development, Fourth Edition, by Craig. Published by Prentice-Hall 1986. Page 339.

²⁷ Ibid. Page 338.

²⁸ Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life, Seventh Edition by Coleman, Butsher, and Carson. Published by Scott, Foresman and Company. Note: Quotation states that social class directly influences level of education which is related to crime and thereby indirectly impacts criminal behavior. Page 262.

²⁹ Appalachian Council of Governments. Data is for persons 25 and over and for the last year available (1990).

³⁰ Extreme poverty is defined as poverty listed in the income range below 50% of the poverty level.

³¹ 1999 Kids Count Data Book. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Page 122.

followed only by Mississippi and the District of Columbia.³² In 1998, the infant mortality rate for South Carolina was 9.55 per 1,000 and the state ranked 48th in infant deaths. In a comparison chart, Anderson County had 11.8 infant deaths for the period covering 1998. Compared with a national rate of 7.2, if the county of Anderson had been a state, it would have been # 51 – the worst state rate in the nation.³³ With a teen violent death rate of 89 per 100,000, the county of Anderson would also have been ranked 51st if it were a state.³⁴

EXISTING EFFORTS and CURRENT RESOURCES:

Currently, the City of Anderson Police Department does not have an investigator specially assigned to child/elder abuse cases. When such cases are taken, they are currently assigned to the next available detective in addition to the detective's normal caseload. According to the department's work-study analysis, when functioning at or near 100% efficiency, individual investigators can build and prosecute 63 - 96 cases per year,³⁵ therefore it is difficult to devote specialized attention to this type of case.

To pursue and prosecute *all* potential child/elder abuse cases would require a number of additional detectives. The city of Anderson cannot afford to increase its police department with existing municipal funding. Police Department funding through the general revenue is projected to stay at its current level for at least two more years thus precluding the department from adding additional personnel without outside funding. Funding for two additional detectives to investigate child and elder abuse would expectedly result in a substantial increase in arrests, prosecutions, and convictions in child and elder abuse cases. The projected increase in these types of abuse cases are expected to cause a future decrease in cases of child and elder abuse.

The City of Anderson Police Department actively participates and cooperates with such interested agencies as the Department of Social Services, School District Five of Anderson County (which has a pilot program – Safe Schools and Healthy Families which identifies at-risk youth), the Boys and Girls Club, and the Alternative School of Anderson County. If funded, in addition to the previously mentioned organizations, the Child/Elder Abuse Investigator will also work closely with the Victim's Advocate, Family Court, and the City of Anderson Police Department's Community Patrol and School Resource Officers.

CONCLUSION:

The number of child and elder abuses violence incidents in the United States and South Carolina is staggering. These crimes are unconscionable. Statistics indicate a dismal state of affairs for both children and elders in the United States, South Carolina, and Anderson City. South Carolina continues to remain at or near the bottom of the list of states that compares the well being of children.

Victims are often reluctant to prosecute offenders because of some philosophical belief or because they have been socialized through their upbringing to accept victimization through domestic violence as normal. According to documented research, although child and elder abuse occurs across all income levels, it appears to be positively correlated with social isolation, level of education, and unemployment. Level of education and unemployment are correlated with low socioeconomic status. Because of this, in the past it

³² Ibid. Page 33.

³³ Kids Count Comparison Data: Infant Deaths

³⁴ Kids Count Comparison Data: Anderson County

³⁵ Analysis based upon FY 2000 and FY 2001. Actual number within range depends upon type of crime and whether or not the crime is tried in City Court or General Sessions Court.

was sometimes believed that low socioeconomic status produced domestic violence. However, the influence of class status on this type of crime indirect and has yet to be substantiated.

Anderson, South Carolina has a higher per capita rate of non-educated people than the average for the United States, the southern region of the United States, or the state of South Carolina. Anderson also has comparably less household earnings. These two factors contribute disproportionately to and are correlated with increased levels of violence observed in Anderson as compared to the rest of the nation. Based upon our model theory for child and elder abuse which demonstrates an estimated 669 crimes against children and elders in calendar year 2000 in the City of Anderson, it appears that at least one additional investigator is needed by the department on order to focus directly on child and elder abuse.

