

INMATE SERVICES REPORT

INMATE SERVICES REPORT

Commissioned by
The Philadelphia Prison System

M. P. Dugan Associates, LLC
Spring 2008

***“The degree to which society is civilized can be judged by
entering its prisons.”***

Fyodor Dostoevsky, House of the Dead, 1861-1862

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Those who were interviewed or who participated in a focus group encompassed a diverse group of concerned Philadelphians (see Addenda for list) to include ex-offenders, inmates (adults and juveniles, men and women), City officials working in various departments of government, the public defenders, volunteers, contracted organizations providing services, correctional officers, social workers, psychologists, administrators in corrections and social services, educators, leadership from labor, job trainers, personnel of for-profit correctional facilities, representatives from advocacy groups, the courts and the medical profession. The information offered by these participants was substantive, candid and accompanied by a sincere interest in improving programs and services provided for inmates so that they are better able to return to the community as productive, healthy citizens. They did not hide problems; they, too, sought solutions.

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INTRODUCTION¹

As noted by Slevin (2006): “Not only are America’s prisons and jails largely failing the 13.5 million adults who pass through them each year, but the American public is also failing the prisons and jails.”² The national reaction triggered by the report *One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008* (The PEW Center on the States, February 2008)³ has already influenced the passage of The Second Chance Act of 2007, designed to provide funding to help ex-offenders return successfully to the community.

Many major cities and municipalities have recognized and begun to prepare for a paradigm shift in Corrections – from a focus primarily on security concerns to one that equally values comprehensive and effective strategies for inmate reentry and reintegration. However, the sheer numbers of inmates and the cost of incarceration have made this a difficult transition. But unless change occurs now, the growing costs of incarceration – financial and human – will cripple communities for generations to come. This is not to deny that prisons and jails are needed for those who do need to be incarcerated; rather it is the recognition that our country must ensure that the most effective punishment and remediation are employed. This is clearly the *intent* of the mission statement of the Philadelphia Prison System: provide a secure correctional environment; provide programs, services and supervision in a safe, lawful, clean and humane environment, and prepare incarcerated persons for reentry into society.

The Philadelphia Prison System is actively engaged in this challenge of providing both a secure facility for incarceration as well as preparing inmates for life outside PPS. While PPS is proud of its many programs and services for inmates, its leaders understand that changes must be made to accommodate this broader focus. To that end, PPS commissioned an analysis of current programs and services.

During the study it became dramatically apparent that PPS is unable to provide the necessary programs and services that are essential for rehabilitation and successful reentry for the majority of inmates. Extreme overcrowding limits space and places excessive burdens on staff and volunteers. Yet, the large majority of those working with inmates – from every work group – are committed to the mission of PPS – ensuring that inmates leave the jail better prepared to succeed in their families and their communities.

¹ Nationally, the terms “prison” and “jail” have different meanings. However, in Philadelphia, the County Jail is referred to as the Philadelphia Prison System (PPS).

² Slevin, Peter, 2006; Gibbons, John J. and Katzenbach, Nicholas de B., 2006.

³ Warren, Jenifer, et.al. 2008.

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Clearly, steps must be taken to allow the professionals – social workers, correctional officers and volunteers – to succeed in serving the inmates and in achieving the mission of PPS.

Based on the findings of that study, entitled the *Inmate Services Project*, this consulting group recommends the following actions by the City's corrections community and the Philadelphia Prison System:

The Corrections Community must work to:

- Reduce the numbers of people incarcerated and held by PPS.
- Increase housing availability with guidance/supervision for those individuals in our society who are homeless as a result of severe mental illness, with or without the complication of substance abuse, unemployment and deep poverty.

Philadelphia Prison System must work to:

- Create a more efficient work environment through team building, improved efficiency, better communication, transparency in decision-making, increased accountability and training and education for management, staff and volunteers.
- Provide sufficient high-quality treatment, vocational education, job training programs and discharge planning, for all inmates within PPS coupled with strategies to ensure employment for all ex-offenders capable of work.
- Provide housing and programs for those incarcerated that physically separates juveniles from adults, pretrial from sentenced inmates, and first-time offenders from repeat offenders.

This report will address external and internal issues affecting the area of inmate services and offer recommendations to improve current operations.

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Inmate Services in the United States

The financial and human costs of incarceration are immense. As reported by numerous sources, there are 2.3 million adults incarcerated in the United States, followed by China (1.5 million) and Russia (890,000). These U.S. numbers are even more dramatic when compared with countries that better resemble the United States' justice system.⁴ It should be noted that while the U.S. comprises 5% of the world's population, those incarcerated in the U.S. represent 25% of the world population.⁵

In the United States, the cost of incarceration for 2007 has been estimated to be between \$44 billion and \$60 billion, a 315% increase over 30 years, according to the National Association of State Budget Offices.⁶ From the 1920s to 1980, the United States incarcerated approximately 110 individuals for every 100,000 people; today that number has increased tenfold. As reported in the Public Safety Performance Project, 1 in 100 Americans are behind bars – in federal or state prisons or in county jails.⁷ Ironically, these increases occurred despite declines in crime rates during the 1990s.⁸

The resultant cost of this dramatic increase in incarceration has been taking a toll on federal, state and county budgets. On average, corrections consumes about 6% of state budgets. This holds true for Pennsylvania, where the projected cost of corrections for 2008-2009 is \$3.7 billion.⁹ Since funds for corrections come primarily from State revenue rather than federal funds, the costs can have a negative impact on funding for other significant endeavors.¹⁰

The increase in incarceration is particularly problematic for county jails: Jail population growth has outpaced prison growth since 2001 (21% vs. 11% increases).¹¹ Jail populations (currently approximately 750,000 of the 2.3 million incarcerated in the U.S.) have grown in response to social problems. The enormous increase in numbers is largely attributed to more punitive legislation enacted to curtail illegal drug sale and use; interestingly, though, "In 2005, 81.7% of all drug arrests were solely for possession, and

⁴ Warren, Jenifer, et al., 2008.

⁵ Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, October 4, 2007.

⁶ National Association of State Budget Offices

⁷ Warren, Jenifer, et. al., 2008.

⁸ Petteruti and Walsh. 2008.

⁹ Budget in Brief, 2008-09, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

¹⁰ Pettuti and Walsh. 2008.

¹¹ Ibid.

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nearly half of these charges were for marijuana possession”.¹² In addition, jails have become *de facto* substitutes for the failed psychiatric hospitals of the past and temporary housing providers for those who are homeless. The decline in use of community corrections¹³ has also led to growth in the jail population.

In addition, several other factors contribute to the increase of inmates:

- In Philadelphia, for example, the backlog of municipal court cases grew from 7,500 in 1995 to 26,944 (2007)
- the length of sentences has increased (the majority of inmates at PPS who have been sentenced received the maximum sentence for incarceration -- 24 months)
- significant numbers of those released from jail return within 3 years.¹⁴

Clearly, new strategies are needed. Research has documented that the high cost (\$60 billion/year) of prison and jail has not paid off, and recidivism is rampant.

While the financial costs of incarceration are substantial, they are exceeded by the human costs. According to information provided by the Pennsylvania Prison Society, “mass incarceration weakens neighborhood economies, increases crime rates, causes loss of male family and community involvement, drains money from education, childcare, and healthcare, and increases distrust in law enforcement and the justice system.”¹⁵

The impact of incarceration of a parent on children is often dramatic and sometimes described as a “death sentence”.¹⁶ Approximately 3 million children have a parent who is incarcerated; 10% of children with a mother in jail will be placed in foster care, and in some cases the parent’s rights may be terminated – and the parent will lose contact permanently with the child. The loss of relationship can lead to financial hardship, depression, problems with school, delinquency and drug abuse.¹⁷ The majority of women who are incarcerated are convicted of non-violent offenses, have experienced physical or sexual abuse and many have mental health problems. Rather than separating families, alternative sentencing might be more productive and less costly.¹⁸ A panel convened by The Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons noted: “We should be astonished by the size of the prison population, troubled by the disproportionate incarceration of African-Americans and Latinos, and saddened by the waste of human potential.”¹⁹

In addition to the devastating financial and human costs, there appears to be no reduction in crime attributed to incarceration itself. Despite much effort nationally, recidivism

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Community corrections are non-prison sanctions that are imposed on convicted adults or adjudicated juveniles either by a court instead of a prison sentence or by a parole board following release from prison. Petersilia, Joan, 2007.

¹⁴ Goldkamp, John S., 2006.

¹⁵ DiMascio, William. 2008.

¹⁶ Hirsch, A. et.al. 2002.

¹⁷ LaVigne, Nancy G. et.al., 2008.

¹⁸ Maloney, Carolyn, October 4, 2007.

¹⁹ Gibbons John J. and Katzenbach, Nicholas de B., 2006.

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remains high: two-thirds of released offenders commit a new crime or violate the terms of their release within three years.²⁰

Some reasons for the recidivism are easily apparent. Ex-offenders are often released with no job and few skills to secure one; many have no place to live. Ideally, those incarcerated would have the opportunity to develop work skills or improve their education while in prison or jail; however, programs are often limited because of inadequate financial resources, space, and staff – all linked to overcrowding. Limited public housing (or in the case of those with mental health and /or substance abuse problems, limited supervised housing) and no source of legitimate income lead to homelessness for many ex-offenders. Both these conditions – joblessness and lack of housing – often lead to re-arrest.^{21 22} The following aptly describes the situation for many ex-offenders:

Prisoners generally lose all forms of identification while inside, which cripples their ability to function outside. When released, they are prohibited from associating with other felons, so those with relatives with records often cannot go home. They are essentially barred from certain professions, and from receiving food stamps, housing subsidies and certain school loans. They, in short, enter “a kind of neverland that encourages them to go back to doing what they were doing.”²³

The magnitude and tragedy of massive incarceration in the United States has led those involved with corrections – government, the legal profession, law enforcement, the courts, probation, parole, prison/jail officials, community leaders and advocates – to seek strategies to address the problem of overcrowded prisons and jails, as well as the related social and economic challenges.

Two major areas are being targeted²⁴:

- Reducing the numbers of people incarcerated through more reasonable sentencing and diversion initiatives, and;
- Reducing recidivism through improved reentry and reintegration of those released from prison or jail.

Diversion, or providing alternatives to prison, is a major strategy for reducing inmate populations across the country. Community corrections, one form of diversion, can provide offender accountability and deliver rehabilitation services and surveillance, while ultimately costing less than incarceration. It also provides the opportunity for someone who poses no risk of violence to self or others – to be punished for the wrongdoing through some form of rehabilitation and service to the community.²⁵ Alternative sentencing can enable those in custody to develop life skills and job skills and receive

²⁰ Warren, Jenifer, 2008.

²¹ Petteruti and Walsh, 2008.

²² McDonald, George, 2008.

²³ Cose, Ellis, April 24, 2006.

²⁴ It is important to note that while these two strategies target different ends of the spectrum (reducing entry/incarceration vs. expedited discharge and successful reentry) both utilize some of the same tools to accomplish their goals.

²⁵ Petersilia, Joan. November, 2007.

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drug and alcohol rehabilitation. In addition, sentencing laws are being reviewed and revised to provide alternatives to mandatory minimum sentencing. Pennsylvania recently passed legislation that gives judges more leeway in sentencing. It's essential that judges are encouraged to use these options, with the goal of appropriately and thoughtfully reducing the numbers of people – who pose no threat to the community – who enter prison/jail.

The Second Chance Act of 2007, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives (2007) and the Senate (2008), and signed by the President in early 2008, is designed to provide additional funds to aid reentry and reintegration of those released from prison/jail. As the major strategy to reduce recidivism, states and municipalities throughout the country have begun to target reintegration of the ex-offender into the community. While these initiatives may differ in some ways, most propose to begin the reintegration process from the moment of incarceration by working with the offender to develop a plan of action. During incarceration, staff would provide support and remediation and link the offender to community support. That support would be continued post-discharge. Clearly, the goal is to reduce the number of ex-offenders who return.

Responses to the challenge of massive incarceration in the United States vary from state to city to community – and target diversion, reintegration or both.

- New York City has developed housing units to reduce homelessness – to include those who have been cycling between mental illness/hospitalization, incarceration and homelessness/shelters.²⁶
- New York City is also engaged in piloting a discharge-planning model (Frequent Users Service Enhancement, FUSE)²⁷ that includes life skills and job training at Rikers Island Jail.²⁸
- Miami-Dade County has recently opened a mental health facility with 360 beds for incarcerated persons with severe mental health problems; it has planned a non-custodial hospital to house those who do not require incarceration, so that treatment need not end when the inmate is released. The Mental Health Court stipulates assignment to the mental health facility.²⁹
- Baltimore City has implemented the Forensic Alternative Services Team (FAST) to “divert eligible adult defendants with serious mental illness or trauma-related mental disorders from incarceration to relevant mental health services and community supports.”³⁰

²⁶ Slobodzian, Joseph A. and Lin, Hennifer. 2008.

²⁷ Cho, Richard. 2007.

²⁸ Montero, Gabriel. 2008

²⁹ Clark, Nikki A. 2007.

³⁰ Wise, Beverly. 2008.

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- Oregon has developed the Accountability Model (OAM), which works with the inmate from entry through reentry and reintegration, and this model appears to have some success.³¹
- Missouri has develop a model for incarcerating juvenile offenders that is being replicated in many other states; the juveniles live and participate in small groups called pods, creating a team or family environment. Fewer than 8% of their graduates return.³²
- The Cheyenne Mountain Re-Entry Center in Colorado was established as a “specialized way station for inmates...about to become someone’s next door neighbor. An intense schedule of classes, softer architecture and more civilized language aim to change inmates’ lives, reduce recidivism and make streets safer.”³³

For many of these programs and initiatives, the *goal is to change the way the inmates think about treatment.*

³¹ Albers, Nathaniel. 2006.

³² Vestal, Christine. March 7, 2008

³³ Kass, Jeff. October 17, 2005.

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Inmate Services at the Philadelphia Prison System

The Philadelphia Prison System consists of six major facilities on site and several off-site.³⁴ The on-site facilities were designed to house 6,433 inmates; however, due to the tremendous increase in incarceration, there are currently 9,160 “beds” for inmates at the onsite facilities – representing an increase of 42%.³⁵ The increased number of inmates has caused cell overcrowding. To accommodate housing, multipurpose rooms have been converted to cells or sleeping spaces, eliminating space for other activities.

The overcrowding at PPS, which is consistent with that taking place throughout the country, has increased the financial burden for the City. According to a report issued by PICA in 2007, the budget projection for PPS for Fiscal Year 2007 was \$200 million; the actual cost (\$230 million) significantly exceeds the projected costs.³⁶

For decades, the Philadelphia Prison System has provided programs and services for inmates. These were initially established in response to the Jackson v. Hendrick class action suit filed in 1971.³⁷ Over the course of many years, PPS introduced social workers, psychologists and other staff to provide social services, counseling and therapy, and other supports for inmates.³⁸ Clearly the overcrowding has a huge impact on these programs and services, placing impossible demands on facilities and staff.

The *Inmate Handbook*, written and distributed to every inmate, notes the following programs and services:³⁹

Educational Programs

Pennypack House School

PLATO

Tutoring (through volunteers)

³⁴ Major facilities include: alternative and Special Detention Units (several sites), Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility, Detention Center, House of Corrections, Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center, and Riverside Correctional Facility. Descriptions of these facilities and satellite facilities can be found on the PPS website: www.phila.gov/prisons. In addition, many inmates are sent to other jails and PPS contracts with some private companies to provide housing for those incarcerated.

³⁵ Data provided by PPS; information includes block by block numbers from original design through various modifications. Census data is included in the appendix.

³⁶ Dubow, Rob, 2007.

³⁷ Rosenstein, Irv. 2007.

³⁸ The first social worker was hired in 1956, though it was not until the 1990s that the numbers increased substantially; the first psychologist was hired in 1975.

³⁹ A full description of PPS programs appears on the PPS website: www.phila.gov/prison. This information is also available in the PPS Policies and Procedures documents available at PPS.

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- Library Services
- Recreational Programs
- Religious Programs
- Social Services
- Treatment for Alcohol/Chemical Dependency (OPTIONS)
- Vocational Training and Services
 - Archive Preservation
 - Horticulture
 - Building Maintenance
 - Welding
 - World of Work (work skills)
 - Word Processing
 - Janitorial
 - Desktop Publishing
- On-the-job Vocation Training Positions
 - PHILACOR
 - Barricade Construction
 - Carpentry
 - Culinary Arts
 - Dry Cleaning
 - Engraving
 - Furniture Refinishing
 - Furniture Upholstery
 - Garment Making
 - General Products
 - Janitorial Services
 - Laundry
 - Office Traineeship
 - Printing
 - Transportation and Delivery
 - Upholstery
 - MAINTENANCE
 - Carpentry
 - Electrical
 - Maintenance Mechanic
 - Painting
 - Plumbing
 - Refrigeration
 - Roofing
 - Stonemasonry
 - Welding
 - OTHER
 - Food Services
 - Laundry
 - Law Library
 - Recreation
- Work Program Within PPS Facilities
- Work-Release Program Outside of PPS Facilities

In 2002, the JOBS Project was initiated at PPS. This new program was the result of an agreement to end the Jackson v. Hendrick litigation. A fund of \$2 million was established to provide vocational training and job readiness for inmates and to assist in the reentry of ex-offenders.⁴⁰ The JOBS Project ran out of funding in 2006; an evaluation of the Project by the Urban Institute indicated that the Project was a successful model.⁴¹

In addition to the programs and services provided by PPS, numerous volunteer groups and individuals offer services to inmates and ex-offenders.

In examining inmate services, it is important to understand that PPS is a jail, not a prison, despite its name. As a jail, PPS faces challenges that differ from state and federal

⁴⁰ Rosenstein, Irv. June 2007

⁴¹ Roman, John. et. al. 2005.

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correctional facilities. The maximum sentence for an inmate to be held at PPS is 23 months. In fact, only about 1/3 of those incarcerated at PPS have been sentenced. The remaining inmates have not yet been sentenced, and turn-over is constant. Some of those pre-sentence can be released within 24 hours; the majority is released between 72 hours and 14 days. This turn-over makes it extremely difficult to ensure the person being released has received reentry support. Of the approximately 35,000 offenders who are held annually at PPS, about 25,000-27,000 are repeat offenders. Clearly, it is much easier to develop and implement a discharge plan for an inmate who has a time specific sentence than for those who have no defined period for incarceration. Yet, some 40% of sentenced inmates do not participate in any programs or activities of a constructive nature.⁴²

⁴² Communication with Commissioner Louis Giorla, 5-21-08; information based on CORESTAR data.

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Inmate Services Project⁴³

PURPOSE

The PPS is proud of many of the programs and services for inmates offered at the various locations that house inmates. However, PPS has recognized the emergence, nationally, of a new approach to corrections – partnering security concerns with comprehensive and effective strategies for inmate reentry and reintegration. To accommodate such a shift, PPS commissioned an analysis of its current inmate programs and services with recommendations for improvement and change. This project was launched simultaneously with the City’s efforts to expand and improve reentry of inmates into Philadelphia’s neighborhoods and communities.

It should be noted that these inmate services, an integral part of PPS efforts to provide meaningful support for inmates, are deeply linked to other City efforts to decrease the number of those in jail by facilitating alternative sentencing and reducing recidivism. Consequently, the project involved areas beyond inmate services.

PROJECT DESIGN AND PROCESS

Oversight

The Prison Commissioner engaged M.P. Dugan Associates, LLC for the project.⁴⁴ On December 12, 2007, a planning session was held by the Commissioner and members of the Executive Staff, with the consultant, to review the plans of the consultant, propose names of individuals and groups to be included in interviews and focus groups, and provide an overview of the structure, staff, and operations of inmate programs and services, which functions under the Office of Restorative and Treatment Services. Periodic updates have been provided to the Commissioner throughout the process.

Information Gathering⁴⁵

It is important to note that projects that use interviews, focus groups and site visits generally report information based on the perspective of those interviewed as well as data. *No information has been included unless it was substantiated or noted on multiple occasions by different individuals and/or groups.*

Focus Groups

⁴³ The area of PPS that encompasses inmate services is referred to as Restorative and Treatment Services (RATS). For the purpose of this report, the area will be referred to as inmate services. It should be noted that many employees working in this area resent the acronym that the name yields.

⁴⁴ Biographical information about the consultants is included in the Addendum to this report.

⁴⁵ A list of those who were interviewed or who participated in a focus group is provided in the appendix.

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Focus Groups were convened to engage representatives from different facilities and from the diverse workforce, as well as those outside PPS who collaborated on inmate services. These groups included representatives from PPS, Mental Health Management (MHM), inmates and ex-offenders, volunteers, and advocates. Care was taken to ensure that focus groups included males, females, adults and juveniles, as well as line staff, middle management, and senior management. Focus groups included the following areas:

Chaplains

Ex-offenders: Male

Ex-offenders: Female

Inmates: Adult Male
Adult Female
Juvenile Male
Juvenile Female

Psychologists

Social Work Supervisors (2 focus groups)

OPTIONS

General Population

Social Workers (3 focus groups)

Volunteer participants

OPTIONS social workers

General Population social workers

Correctional Officers (2 focus groups)

Program Directors/Supervisors (2)

MHM Social Work Supervisors ⁴⁶

Volunteers and Advocates

Key Interviews

Interviews were conducted with those having major responsibility for, or knowledge of, inmate programs and services. Included were administrators and senior management, middle management, caregivers, advocates, inmates, City officials, expert consultants, members of health services, correctional officers, psychologists, social workers and supervisors, representatives of outside agencies (such as the court, defense and behavioral health), services for the homeless, and drug treatment programs. More than 200 different people were interviewed on at least one occasion. Several people were interviewed on more than one occasion.

Site Visits

Sites visited included all PPS sites on State Road and Alternative and Special Sentencing Division (ASD) sites, such as 600 University Avenue and the Cannery. Other sites visited included: Essex County Jail, New Jersey; Delaney Hall, Newark, NJ (operated by The Coleman Education Center, a private corporation that will be operating the new facility

⁴⁶ MHM stands for Mental Health Management, the private contractor that provides triage/risk assessment and medication for those inmates suffering with mental illness. Health care for inmates is provided by Prison Health Services (PHS), a private contractor.

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for PPS); New Directions for Women; Impact Services; Ready, Willing and Able; and the Mayor's Offices for Re-Entry in West Philadelphia and in Kensington.

Report Structure

The report is divided into two main sections: Part I focuses on Corrections in Philadelphia and Part II focuses primarily on PPS.

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PART I: COMMUNITY and CORRECTIONS ⁴⁷

OVERCROWDING

It was noted repeatedly, by study participants from every group represented, that far too many people were unnecessarily incarcerated – and that resources within PPS could be better utilized if only those who really needed to be incarcerated were there. In fact, much research exists documenting this view, and one of the major reasons for the overcrowding in jails is the incarceration of offenders who broke the rules of probation or parole—rather than an increase in violent crime.⁴⁸ Countless others are arrested for offenses linked to mental illness and/or substance dependency. In most of these cases, incarceration does not adequately address the problem(s), leading to recidivism.

Miscellaneous Factors that Contribute to Overcrowding

Some inmates do not have the resources to pay bail, so they are incarcerated. There is agreement that inmates with low bonds for less serious offenses get “stuck” in the system. In the past, a system was in place for third-party payment of low bonds, facilitated by the Pennsylvania Prison Society.

Another factor that contributes to overcrowding is that a number of State prisoners are held at PPS. During the study, this was noted as a problem on several occasions.

THE IMPACT OF CROWDING

The severe overcrowding at PPS creates serious problems for the system. On a daily basis, close to 9,000 inmates are living within facilities designed for 6,433. While some physical accommodations have been made to house the additional inmates, living conditions have worsened in a setting that is stressful under normal circumstances.

Security and Health

Inmates already living in a security-driven environment are now living in even tighter confines. Some inmates sleep on “boats” (inflated beds) on the floor of two-bed cells. This creates living problems not only for the person in the boat, but also for the other inmates in the cell. The crowding can cause tension, increasing the possibility of violence among inmates. In addition, overcrowding can contribute to transmission of disease, which demands additional health care services. Health services at PPS contribute significantly to the cost of incarceration, because PPS is responsible for health care

⁴⁷ This section of the report addresses major recommendations without which it becomes difficult if not impossible to achieve the goals and recommendations targeting PPS.

⁴⁸ Burke, P. et al., 2007.

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services and costs. Recent improvements in health care, accompanied by cost reduction through efficient management, could be negatively affected by the overcrowding.⁴⁹

Programs and Services

The space constraints caused by overcrowding have had a deleterious impact on programs and services – the tools for preparing inmates for successful, crime-free reentry into their families and communities. Clearly, there is insufficient space to make programs available for the majority of inmates; yet, successful reentry programs provide 4-6 hours of programming or services for inmates daily. Multipurpose rooms have been converted to cells or sleeping spaces, limiting the space available for important programs, such as life skills courses or religious services. Staff, inmates, ex-offenders and volunteers reported that the crowding made it increasingly difficult to participate in programs and services that once were available to a higher percentage of inmates. These initiatives are critical if the City wants to reduce recidivism. Unless there is space to offer these program and services, which are designed to provide inmates with the skills and knowledge to make different life decisions, recidivism will remain high. Consequently, the ever-increasing cost of corrections in Philadelphia will continue to burden the City's finances and thus its ability to fund other broad-based progressive initiatives.

Staff

The overcrowding and space constraints make it difficult for staff to do their jobs as designed – providing programs and services for inmates. If the inmates are unable to participate in programs and services that may positively alter life choices, recidivism will not be reduced.

Social workers and correctional officers are the two units that provide the majority of inmate care and supervision. The correctional officers are not under the supervision of Restorative and Treatment Services; however, they, along with the social workers, are an integral part of inmate care. Social workers are often dependent upon correctional officers for access to inmates. Consequently, correctional officers and their work have been included in this study.

While the number of inmates has increased by 55%, the staff levels have increased by only 17%.⁵⁰ Consequently, correctional officers are forced to work overtime. In addition to the tremendous financial cost of overtime pay (for 2007, overtime will represent 19% of personnel costs – approximately \$20 million⁵¹), excessive work demands create morale problems among staff. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, representatives from every group involved with inmates (social workers, correctional officers, inmates, ex-offenders, volunteers) reported the problems triggered by being mandated to work overtime (or *hooked*) due to staff shortages. Most participants in the study attributed the high absence level among correctional officers (approximately 30%; it is approximately 5% for social workers) to the overcrowding and mandated overtime. For example, those working day shift may call in sick if a snow storm is predicted, to avoid being *hooked*.

⁴⁹ Dugan, M. Prison Health Care Report, 2006.

⁵⁰ Dubow, Rob, 2007.

⁵¹ Ibid.

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Staff report that the impact on morale is apparent, and employees who work too long hours are often reluctant to accommodate requests made by others. For example, a correctional officer working for an additional four hours may be reluctant to release or escort inmates to a meeting or program – especially if short staff and overcrowding make it difficult to leave the cell block. Clearly, some correctional officers select to work overtime; it provides an opportunity for increased income; however, overcrowding and resultant staff shortages create challenges in jail management and oversight. They also create some risk to security; while guidelines mandate that two correctional officers are to work on a cell block at all times, this is not always the case.

The overcrowding creates difficulties for the social workers, too. The sheer numbers limit the time that a social worker is able to spend ensuring that the inmate is prepared for reentry and reintegration at discharge. During the interviews and focus groups, social workers and others reported feeling that there was little time to do anything except prepare paperwork for a variety of needs.

OVERCROWDING AND COST ~THE FINANCIAL VALUE OF DIVERSION

In 2000, California began to offer non-violent drug offenders a choice – jail or probation with community-based drug treatment (Proposition 36). As implementation evolved, there have been challenges to address, including the cost of drug treatment; however, researchers from the Integrated Substance Abuse Programs at the University of California, Los Angeles, reported that California saved \$2.50-\$7 for every \$1 it invested in drug treatment for those who completed the program. This amounted to about \$800 million over a five-year period.⁵²

The Center for Health & Justice in Chicago, Illinois, reported that “...the current annual cost of incarceration plus parole for 10,000 individuals [arrested for non-violent drug crime convictions] is \$22,600 per offender, or a total of \$226 million per year...the cost to provide probation, community-based treatment and case management would be just under \$59.3 million.”⁵³

Mental health courts enable offenders with mental illness to participate in community-based treatment that is monitored by the court. According to a study by RAND, the nonprofit research organization, these treatment courts “have the potential to save taxpayers money.”⁵⁴

In 2006, Oklahoma’s Department of Corrections released a report noting the disparate cost of different forms of supervision or incarceration.⁵⁵

Cost of Incarceration (FY 2005 Actual Expenditures)

⁵² University of California, Los Angeles, 2007.

⁵³ Braude, L., et al., May 2007.

⁵⁴ Ridgely, M. Susan, 2007.

⁵⁵ Oklahoma Department of Corrections, January 31, 2006.

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<i>Type</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Annual</i>
Maximum	\$56.98	\$20,797
Medium	\$46.79	\$17,078
Minimum	\$43.52	\$15,886
Community	\$45.85	\$16,734
Work Centers	\$31.55	\$11,514
Probation, Parole	\$ 1.95	\$ 710

While the conditions and cost of living in Oklahoma, California and Illinois may differ from those in Philadelphia, and these are state vs. county figures, clearly the comparison and cost-savings information is compelling evidence for providing alternative sentencing with treatment. As noted previously, it is estimated that the budget for PPS for FY 2007 exceeds \$230 million, and this figure does not include the cost of employee benefits. This also does not include the cost of litigation over the years due to overcrowding.

STRATEGIES CURRENTLY IN USE FOR DIVERSION

Diversion

Diversion is the process of providing alternatives to incarceration for those who have committed or have been accused of committing some illegal act. Many strategies are employed in Philadelphia and elsewhere to reduce the numbers of people who go to jail. Some people who are arrested do not go to trial; they may be required to do community service, enter treatment for substance abuse or mental illness, and make amends in some form – and they are monitored to ensure they comply. Alternative Sentencing is a form of diversion. Those arrested who do go to trial, if convicted, can be sent to jail or given an alternative sentence. Employing alternative sentencing strategies can be beneficial to the offender, the family and the community at large in terms of human and financial resources. Fortunately, the City of Philadelphia has been working to implement such strategies and some processes are in place.

Philadelphia's correctional system employs a variety of venues for diversion. These include assignment to substance abuse treatment programs (residential or outpatient), assignment to work-release programs operated by PPS, community service efforts, and mental health treatment centers (residential or outpatient). Unfortunately, there are insufficient facilities and programs for those who need residential or outpatient treatment for mental illness or for those who do not have a permanent home.

Persons working with the courts, the State and other members of the correctional community are developing venues to reduce overcrowding. These include Day Reporting and Mental Health Courts. The District Attorney has recently introduced a program to divert those who commit minor offenses (drug possession, prostitution, retail theft). These offenders may be required to participate in treatment for substance abuse or mental health, and for job training. After a year of successful participation, the case could be withdrawn.⁵⁶ It should be noted, though, that the success of these new initiatives will be dependent on the availability of high quality facilities for outpatient and residential

⁵⁶ Ott, Dwight, 5/21/08.

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treatment; and special needs housing with supervision is essential for those with serious mental health issues.⁵⁷

Current alternatives include the following:

Mayor's Office for the Reentry of Ex-offenders (MORE)

MORE was conceived in 2005 in response to the City's recidivism rate. At that time, according to a report of the Philadelphia Consensus Group on Reentry and Reintegration, two-thirds (currently estimated at 75%) of those released from incarceration would be rearrested within three years.⁵⁸ Two MORE Centers are in operation, one in Southwest Philadelphia and the other in the Kensington section, managed by Impact Services, Inc. MORE reports that it has served almost 6000 offenders.

MORE is designed to provide services or referral for:

- GED/ABE
- job readiness training
- mental health/substance abuse services
- emergency housing assistance
- intensive case management services
- career link accessibility
- probation and parole services
- parent classes (Fatherhood Initiative)
- entrepreneurial courses
- motivational lectures
- mentoring
- utilities assistance
- HIV/AIDS education and testing
- voter registration assistance
- identification restoration

Work Release

The Alternative and Special Sentencing Division (ASD) of PPS operates the Work Release Program, which supports inmates who are non-violent and able to work in the community. ASD inmates are identified by PPS or ordered to participate by the courts. Some Work Release participants are able to continue in jobs they held previously, while others are aided in securing employment. The underlying philosophy is that if ex-offenders are able to work, recidivism will be reduced.

There are approximately 500 individuals in Work Release on a given day. The ASD generates income for the City through Work Release; inmates are expected to contribute to their room and board. During FY 2007, revenue was approximately \$200,000. There is

⁵⁷ Experts in this area indicate an immediate need for at least 200-400 supervised housing units for this group.

⁵⁸ Goode, W. Wilson, 2005.

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strong support for the work release program among inmates, PPS administration and staff, the court, public defenders⁵⁹ and others. PPS has been asked to increase Work Release slots by the Defenders Association of Philadelphia, specifically the Office of Alternative Sentencing. (*More detailed information on Work Release is provided in the section on PPS.*)

Forensic Intensive Recovery (FIR)

Forensic Intensive Recovery (FIR) is a comprehensive program to treat substance abuse, operated by the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC). Staffing is funded by the Department of Behavioral Health and treatment is funded through CBH (for those eligible for medical assistance) and by the Behavioral Health Service Administration (BHSA) for those not eligible. A study done in the 1990s reported that those who complete a minimum of six months of treatment were 66% less likely to be convicted of a new crime.

FIR serves about 1,400 individuals. About 450-475 are pretrial and diverted through Treatment Court; approximately 900 participants have been sentenced, with 350-400 referred through alternative sentencing (Intermediate Punishment) and about 500 from PPS. Discussions are underway to establish a FIR presence on the PPS State Road location to facilitate planning for reentry and placement. Often FIR treatment includes assistance for relocation – removing the ex-offender from situations and contacts that have led to problems in the past.

There are numerous residential treatment facilities available to those with substance abuse treatment needs; in fact, there are approximately 2,000 beds approved by the Department of Behavioral Health. Participants in this study report that these facilities differ in terms of quality. Comprehensive evaluations need to be conducted to assess outcomes.

DISCHARGE/REENTRY

Impact of Programs and Services⁶⁰

There are many challenges facing inmates who are preparing for discharge and reentry. For many, they face the same world they left prior to incarceration – no permanent home, no job, poor health, inadequate training and education. Others, who were able to participate in programs and services that offered them guidance, job skills, substance abuse support, and anger management, were better prepared for successful reentry into their families and communities. However, throughout the study, it became clear that there are not sufficient programs and services to prepare inmates for discharge and reentry.

⁵⁹ The Public Defenders Association of Philadelphia (DAP) uses Work Release and other programs even more often as part of a structured plan for early parole.

⁶⁰ It should be noted that thorough programmatic evaluation has not been done to determine the impact of these programs on overall recidivism rates and inmate success on reentry. It is not even possible to get an unduplicated count of those who have participated in the various programs.

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Program availability is critical. Not only can inmates develop new skills and knowledge, and perhaps develop a different world view, but inmates can earn credit for participation in work, various programs, therapeutic treatment, and education. This credit can result in sentence reduction – simultaneously reducing some of the overcrowding within PPS. These programs, as intended, should have some impact on recidivism, by having a positive impact on numbers and, hopefully, by better preparing ex-offenders for successful reintegration in their families and communities.

In fact, there are waiting lists for many of the programs. Sheer numbers make it difficult if not impossible to make programs and services available to all inmates. Unfortunately, PPS has not been able to achieve scale, so that many inmates enter and exit with few or no interventions prior to discharge. In addition, the turnover of pretrial inmates makes it difficult to develop a plan for the inmate – some leave before a meaningful interview can be scheduled! For the pretrial inmates, there is constant turnover; 22% are released within one week, and 46% within two weeks. Overcrowding, space limitations and lack of coordination also impede volunteer efforts, thus this additional source of support for inmates is hampered.

Discharge Planning⁶¹

Discharge and discharge planning are key to successful reentry and reintegration into the community. It is the process that prepares the inmate for a crime-free life outside the jail. PPS has the task of providing a discharge plan for inmates. It is most successful for inmates with mental illness who have been treated while incarcerated. Inmates who have been in PPS substance abuse program also have a more defined discharge plan. However, several factors impede the development of in-depth, reliable discharge plans. The lack of a good system for data collection, sharing and analysis creates significant barriers throughout the prison. For example, the computer system has not been able to generate lists of inmates with the date of their minimum/maximum sentence three months in advance. This is vital information, because it takes a great deal of planning for successful discharge. Currently, the lists are being generated by hand from intake lists. The loss of time and efficiency is significant both in terms of human and financial resources. The rapid turnover of pretrial inmates also impedes the development of a plan. Finally, the lack of housing for inmates, especially those with special needs and those who are essentially homeless, make discharge planning a particular challenge.

Inmates receive a discharge packet that includes information about services and programs in the different communities. However, several participants in this study report finding these packets in the trash receptacle at the bus stop near the entrance to PPS.

Inmates without government-issued identification or medical assistance cards are at great disadvantage – these are usually needed to access services. Impact Services, Inc. is able to assist inmates in acquiring the identification cards, and PPS and others are working to develop strategies to ensure that inmates who qualify quickly acquire medical assistance, but much still needs to be done to implement these efforts and bring both to scale.

⁶¹ Discharge and Discharge Planning is addressed in more detail in Part II, PPS Programs and Services.

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Collaboration Among Corrections Agencies

Clearly, the discharge of inmates from PPS requires the involvement of many additional correctional agencies: the courts, probation, parole, the district attorney and the public defenders. The programs and services that support offenders in their efforts for reintegration must collaborate with the corrections community and with each other. Collaboration will be essential if City resources are to be employed efficiently and duplication avoided. Also, City and City-affiliated agencies must be involved in the collaborative process to ensure comprehensive and well-planned treatment and sustained support for inmates as they return to the community.

However, the recent wide-spread attention to corrections had led to the establishment of numerous committees and working groups. Many people are spending countless hours meeting to identify and implement solutions for this serious set of challenges. The Philadelphia community – especially those involved with corrections – is engaged in numerous initiatives to improve the system. These efforts include everything from addressing issues of overcrowding to ensuring that inmates who are released have continued health care and medicine. While this is a positive indicator of interest and commitment, it is also a burden. There are as many committees as there are issues. Often the same people attend meeting after meeting, with little variation of topic. There is a risk that if the work groups and committees that have been constructed by various organizations become too disparate, there will be unnecessary duplication of effort and tremendous misuse of time and resources.

Several things are working effectively: There is generally a good working relationship between PPS, the Defenders Association of Philadelphia (DAP) and the courts. In fact, of those inmates presented for release by DAP, there is an 80%-91% success rate. DAP's Alternative Sentencing Unit has developed graduate sanctions for Intermediate Punishment (IP) clients. The judges have been trained on alternative sentencing, and the majority of judges use the alternative sentences that are recommended. And, increasing numbers of DAP clients do not go to jail if alternative sentencing makes sense.

However, there are problems with the release process. Inmates stipulated for 90 days participation in OPTIONS are sometimes sent to out-of-county jails that do not have 90-day programs; in other cases, even when the inmate has completed the appropriate stipulated program, the Adjustment Report (which is completed at PPS) may not be ready or may be incomplete. This can result in delays of up to 30 days. In other cases, there may not be a discharge plan available for the inmate, and DAP will only file for release if a discharge plan, considered to be a deterrent to recidivism, is in place. All of these factors delay DAP's ability to file and process for release.

There is also a backup in scheduling hearings, particularly for those detained who have open cases; for this group, currently 85% of inmate hearings are beyond the 10-day requirement. Part of this is due to sheer numbers; however, another reason is that only a portion of judges can be automatically scheduled for hearings. Schedules must be

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coordinated for the majority and this impedes the process and contributes to some inefficiency.

The most serious criticism by those interviewed was directed at the Office of the Chief of Clerks of Courts. There are excessive delays in entering and conveying the information from the court to PPS and DAP, so releases are delayed and the jail continues to hold those who should be released. Problems in this area over time have led to complaints being filed with the appropriate offices; short-term improvement occurs, but the problem essentially remains. It should be noted that this is an elected office and oversight is challenging.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY AND CORRECTIONS

#1: Reduce the numbers of inmates incarcerated at PPS.

[Note: The Corrections Community and Local Government officials should move as expeditiously as possible to reduce the census at PPS by 3,000 inmates, approximating the actual numbers the facilities are designed to accommodate. Clearly only those who hold no risk of violence should be included in the diversion and release efforts.]

- ***Create public support for expanding use of Community Corrections and Alternative Sentencing for those arrested for non-violent crime.***
 - Expand public awareness of the need for more reasonable laws and guidelines for arraignment, sentencing and support for offenders, so that myth and fear-mongering will not undermine progress and good sense.
 - Increase awareness among the public in general, as well as those working in corrections, of the human and financial value of maintaining non-violent offenders *in* their families and communities whenever possible and providing the supports needed to accomplish this.
- ***Facilitate the expansion of Diversion and Release through Community Corrections and Alternative Sentencing.***
 - Assess the quality and impact of existing activities and programs that serve offenders and ex-offenders, and develop a plan of action to increase their capacity or replicate the models that work. This should include Work Release, FIR, MORE, OPTIONS, substance abuse treatment centers and other programs and services now operating and serving offenders and ex-offenders.
 - Expedite the development of Day Reporting Centers, which may be used to track offenders, provide space for treatment programs and provide a safe place for those released. These Centers can also be used to serve the

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post-release population who may need the same type of supervision and services.

- Expedite the development of Mental Health Court, so people with minor offenses could be diverted for mental health evaluation and treatment/services.
- Consider the development of a Central Intake site, separate from PPS or the Police Administration Building, for those arrested for non-violent minor crimes and misdemeanors (such as those who have broken conditions of parole/probation). Such a site would include appropriate courts, medical evaluation (mental, physical, substance abuse), DAP, a bail bonds office, and other correctional and social service support. To reduce the numbers sent to PPS who are released quickly, this facility should also include some temporary sleeping space with security for those who might be held up to 24-36 hours. The Central Intake facility would operate 24/7.
- Re-establish a system for third-party payment of low bonds, with follow-up of those released to ensure court appearance. There is agreement that inmates with low bonds for less serious offenses get stuck in the system. The City once facilitated this through the Pennsylvania Prison Society.
- Establish working groups, composed of the business community, the unions and community organizations, to identify and *commit* to jobs for ex-offenders, so they are able to earn a living, potentially leading to a lower rate of recidivism.
- Collaborate with the State Department of Welfare and others to develop a strategy for ensuring that all inmates who need it have access to medical assistance when they are released.
- ***Increase the efficiency of existing programs and services to expedite diversion/release initiatives***
 - Subsume all operating committees and work groups focusing on corrections under the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety.
 - Review procedures and operations for the Office of the Chief Clerk of Courts, establishing protocol and time lines, which should be monitored by a group identified by the corrections community. If this does not remediate the situation, consideration should be given to changing the Charter so that the position is no longer an elected position, but one that reports directly to the Courts.

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- Review current procedures for scheduling hearings to determine if all the members of the judiciary responsible for this task could allot more time to hearings on a regular basis.
- Reduce the number and length of stays for State inmates.
- Develop more effective strategies for ensuring that inmates being discharged have government-issued photo identification in their possession.

HOMELESSNESS

Across the United States, it is reported that 27%-50% of inmates are homeless or encounter housing problems when they are released from prison or jail. It is estimated that 30% of those released by PPS are homeless. Yet research has documented that having a permanent home is one of the major deterrents to recidivism.

The paucity of available housing creates serious problems for the inmates being discharged, the social workers and other persons seeking housing for them, and the communities to which they return. This was a major concern voiced by social workers, correctional officers, psychologists, chaplains and volunteers. The challenge is especially difficult for ex-offenders who suffer with severe mental illness (approximately 1,900 at PPS *at any one time*), those who are disabled, and those who were convicted as arsonists or sex offenders (particularly juvenile sex offenders). There is additional need for treatment centers for those with mental health issues and those with histories of substance abuse. While there are some residential treatment programs to address substance abuse, there is no consistent evaluation of their services and outcomes, nor are there enough if the City is to divert those with minor no-risk violations to treatment rather than incarceration.

For Philadelphia's poor, the situation has deteriorated -- despite the housing development over the past decade and the efforts to provide housing for those who are homeless. In 1997 there were 13,000 people on a wait list for some form of public housing in Philadelphia; as of late 2005, the number had jumped to 46,000.⁶² This makes the situation for those who are released from jail without permanent housing exceptionally difficult, and, as noted earlier, the links among incarceration, mental illness and homelessness, are well-documented.

While there is cost involved in providing housing in general and permanent supportive housing in particular, there is significant evidence that those who are repeat offenders and incarcerated on multiple occasions also utilize other public services, such as drug treatment and mental health facilities. Studies indicate that those ex-offenders who have

⁶² Eichel, Larry, 2005.

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housing are less likely to continue to cycle through multiple City agencies, at great cost to the City.⁶³

Housing First has grown as a tool for addressing homelessness. It is based on the philosophy that a person must have permanent housing *first*, before his or her other needs can be targeted. Data suggest that people who have permanent housing experience fewer arrests and fewer hospital stays, both costly public services; consequently, employing *Housing First* is a good investment of public dollars.⁶⁴

New York City has served as a model for housing, investing in housing development for those who are homeless – including those who are discharged from jail. In 2005, the then Governor and Mayor Blumberg signed an agreement to provide 9,000 units of supportive housing for the homeless and at-risk population, including families with mental health needs, with or without substance dependency. The ultimate goal is to provide 12,000 new units of housing. This agreement was preceded by a similar one made in 1990 to provide 3,600 units of housing for the mentally ill. According to a study done by sociologist Dennis Culhane (University of Pennsylvania), “...Service use reductions cover[ed] 90% of the costs of supportive housing.”⁶⁵ Prior to being placed in permanent housing, those who were homeless and had severe mental illness utilized services that cost well over \$40,000 per annum, based on the cost of living in the 1990s.⁶⁶

Philadelphia also has model programs that provide specialized housing, as well as traditional housing units for those with no permanent homes. These include the Peoples Emergency Center, Project H.O.M.E., and Ready Willing and Able. They, and others, have developed and operate housing programs that include shelters, transitional housing, supervised housing, and low-cost to moderate housing. Each of these organizations not only provides housing, but also opportunities for self- and skill development. They offer workshops on life skills, literacy and education, vocational education, jobs, and so forth – focusing on personal empowerment and self-sufficiency. However, their beds are limited and they generally operate at capacity. Likewise, Philadelphia’s shelters are filled to capacity. According to a study done by the Center for Urban Community Services for the Mayor’s Task Force to End Homelessness, using data from the Office of Supportive Housing, in early January 2006 there were 3,100 people living in emergency shelters and another 300 on the street.⁶⁷ These numbers continue to grow.

One of the major tasks that must be accomplished is the creation of housing units to accommodate the living needs of ex-offenders. Without a permanent home it is almost impossible to obtain and hold a job – the key to self-sufficiency and a life without crime. Not only are traditional housing units needed for this population, but also supervised housing is essential for those with mental health issues and/or substance dependency issues.

⁶³ Cho, R. 2007; Griffin, P. 2008.

⁶⁴ Rice, J. April 26, 2007.

⁶⁵ Culhane, D. et.al., 2002.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Street, John F. 2007.

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Mayor Michael Nutter has recently announced a plan to rehabilitate more than 600 homes for those who are homeless. However, according to advocates, the numbers of housing units far exceed the 600+ planned. Clearly, immediate and long-term attention – and resources – must be dedicated to meeting this challenge.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY AND CORRECTIONS

#2. Increase housing availability with guidance/supervision for those individuals in our society who are otherwise homeless as a result of severe mental illness, with or without the complication of substance abuse, unemployment and deep poverty.

Immediate:

- Establish a step-down unit for inmates who are released and have special needs that must be met (severe mental illness, homelessness or some other extenuating situation) prior to securing humane and effective placement. This step-down unit should provide non-custodial residential support, including medical, psychological and case management, to secure appropriate placement.
- Evaluate current programs and services that are available to house ex-offenders without permanent homes, including the existing residential substance abuse treatment centers. For those that are successful, develop a plan of action to increase their capacity or replicate the models that work.
- Establish a forum for communication and collaboration among corrections, housing, and City agencies to coordinate existing and future programs and services. (This too might operate under the auspices of the Office of Public Safety.)

Long-Term:

- Implement the housing plan developed by the working group that developed the Report to End Homelessness.
- Utilize the housing/support opportunities to expand efforts to reduce incarceration through diversion and alternative sentencing.

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PART II: PHILADELPHIA PRISON SYSTEM

Inmate services should reflect the mission and goals of the Philadelphia Prison System. These are noted in the PPS Policies and Procedures, and are on file at PPS. While those at PPS seek to achieve the mission and goals, the circumstances created by overcrowding – insufficient space and staff – make it difficult to do so.

Mission:

- Provide a secure correctional environment
- Provide programs, services and supervision in a safe, lawful, clean and humane environment
- Prepare incarcerated persons for reentry in society.

Goals:

- Promote community safety by providing a secure correctional environment
- Affirm the dignities and rights of individuals
- Provide a safe environment for staff and inmates
- Provide humane treatment in the context of a willingness to learn and change
- Foster healthy interaction among staff and inmates
- Process all persons expeditiously through the system and ensure prompt, lawful admission and discharge
- Provide facilities, services, and programs that are adequate and appropriate for inmates in PPS and that meet accepted correctional standards
- Operate an efficient and cost-effective system.

OVERVIEW

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PPS will continue to be challenged by overcrowding, which will take time to address. However, there are some adjustments that can and should be made to improve the work environment and improve outcomes.

At PPS, approximately 35,000 people are processed through Intake⁶⁸; of these, about 27,000 are repeat offenders. According to PPS information, about 22% of those held at the jail are released within one week, and about 46% are released within two weeks. The majority of inmates are held pretrial (approximately two-thirds), with the remainder being held post-sentencing. Approximately 16-20% of the inmate population suffers from severe mental illness; 50-85% of the inmates report problems with substance abuse. Increasingly, inmates are younger, less healthy and less educated.⁶⁹ These special challenges of jails make it difficult to deliver services because so many are released quickly.

A great number of these inmates have nothing to do throughout the day, which increased tension and the potential for violence. Of equal concern is the lack of engagement of inmates in productive activities and programs, making successful reintegration of these inmates less likely. Almost everyone interviewed noted this as a major concern and attributed much of the problem to overcrowding.

The men and women who participated in the study and countless others observed during the visits to PPS are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for those entrusted to their supervision and care. Clearly, there are exceptions; however, the vast majority report that their work has value and they are trying to make the best of a difficult situation. However, at each interview and focus group, frustration was expressed over the obstacles that make it difficult or impossible to accomplish their work. There is recognition that unless circumstances change, the City's goals for ensuring successful reintegration of inmates and thereby reducing recidivism will not be met.

STAFFING AND RELATIONSHIPS

The inmates at PPS are in contact with two groups of employees: the security staff comprised of correctional officers, and; the Restorative Treatment and Services (RTS) staff (referred to in this study as *inmate services*), comprised primarily of social workers, but which also includes psychologists, educators, chaplains and others. In addition, the inmates and PPS staff collaborate with staff from MHM (Mental Health Management, private contractor for mental health services) and PHS (Prison Health Services, private contractor for all other health care), the courts, public defenders, advocates and volunteer organizations and individuals. Interactions occur among representatives of each of these groups and with inmates. Those interviewed for this study report that in some cases the working relationships are positive, but that problems exist that could be remedied by internal change.

⁶⁸ Intake is the process of admitting the accused offender to PPS. It includes information gathering, including mental and physical health assessment, and assignment to a facility/cell block.

⁶⁹ The populations of state and federal prisons are aging, contrary to what is occurring in jails.

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Social workers, while raising concerns about their access to inmates, spoke of the demands placed on correctional officers because of the high numbers of inmates living in close quarters. Correctional officers noted that it was impossible for social workers to meet the needs of the inmates with the caseloads they carried. Both groups also spoke with respect about the other work group, citing examples of social workers and correctional officers who would go out of their way to help a colleague or an inmate. However, there is tension between these two major work groups that must be acknowledged and addressed, because the relationship between social workers and correctional officers is critical for healthy prison operations.

Security Staffing

Responsibilities

Correctional officers are the primary staff for security. They oversee inmates throughout the facility – including serving as escorts for movement of some inmates within PPS, and to and from health care facilities, courts, and so forth. There are approximately 1600 correctional officers employed at PPS, or one correctional officer for about five inmates.⁷⁰ The majority of supervisors and senior administrators at PPS have come through the ranks at PPS. The primary role of correctional officers is to ensure order and security and enforce the policies and rules of the institution where they work. Officers observe actions and oversee tasks assigned to inmates in order to make certain inmates are obeying the rules. Officers may need to search inmates' cells, confiscate drugs or weapons, enforce order, and resolve conflicts between inmates.

As part of their supervisory role, correctional officers make written and oral reports on inmate work and behavior. They also document conflicts, behavior discrepancies, hazards, and suspicious circumstances in a daily log and other specialized reports. Correctional officers must report every inmate who violates a rule without discretion or “playing favorites.” Requirements for employment include various assessments during training and a high school diploma or GED.

Concerns

While the security staff does not come under the auspices of inmate services, as noted previously, their work is intimately connected to that of inmate services staff. Correctional officers participated in two focus groups and many other correctional officers and administrators were interviewed as part of this study. The correctional officers felt that they rarely were asked for an opinion and felt that there was much they could offer if included more in discussions. They noted that often inmates knew what was going on at PPS before they did. This was substantiated by the focus group meetings; not one correctional officer had been given any information other than that he/she was to go to the scheduled room.

Another major concern – and expense – is the cost of absenteeism. At 30% absence per day for correctional officers, the need for overtime is excessive (approximately \$2 million/annum).⁷¹ However, some have reported that more costly problem may be morale

⁷⁰ Giannetta, Marco, 12/2007.

⁷¹ C.O.R.E.S.T.A.R., 12/07.

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and fatigue. While some correctional officers (and their supervisors) want overtime because it enables them to earn additional money, some do not. There has been tension regarding assignment of overtime, with supervisors (sergeants) providing choice overtime opportunities to friends – an instance of favoritism. In addition, those who work demanding shifts may not perform at 100%, even if overtime is by choice.

Working Relationships

While many correctional officers expressed the importance of the work social workers performed, some felt that social workers are naïve and frequently “gamed” by inmates. They also noted that some do not work as hard as correctional officers, and they take lengthy lunch breaks, and come to work late. Correctional officers also noted that social workers did not understand the need for security as top priority and needed to be better informed and trained about issues of safety.

Inmate Services Staffing

The inmate services staff consists of social workers, psychologists and others who provide various programs and services to inmates. This would include, for example, the staff of PLATO, a computer-based adult basic education program that is available to some inmates. There are approximately 215 names (or job slots) *listed* as staff for inmate services.⁷² Numbers of staff in some of the key areas include (approximately):

Social workers	
OPTIONS	24 (including supervisors)
General Population	86 (including supervisors)
Psychologists	6
Recreation	6
PLATO ⁷³	8
JEVS	8
Philacor	3
Education	27
Chaplaincy	10
Clerical	5
Administration	10

This presents a misleading picture. First of all, many of the positions listed have been vacant for some time.⁷⁴ For example, there are no employees assigned to recreation, although six slots once existed. While six positions are listed for psychologists, only four are filled, and one of those positions requires administrative as well as treatment responsibilities. Many of the social worker positions are unfilled and have been for some time.⁷⁵ Some positions are assigned to the JOBS Project, which no longer exists. And

⁷² Source: RTS telephone directory, 11/07.

⁷³ While 4 positions are listed as vacant, 8 persons have been shifted to oversee PLATO instruction in the different facilities.

⁷⁴ Some of these positions have been vacant since the consultant started the earlier study on health care at PPS.

⁷⁵ During the most recent series of layoffs, the staff reduction had the greatest impact on social workers.

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despite the need for jobs for inmates in work release, there are no job developers; social workers have had to assume that responsibility in addition to their traditional responsibilities. In some cases, correctional officers have been hired to fill positions in inmate services; for example, many of the PLATO instructors were correctional officers. Clearly, the vacancies present staffing limitations; however, even if all the vacancies were filled, there would be insufficient staff due to the numbers of inmates.

Social Workers

Responsibilities

The social workers at PPS are responsible for case management services for all inmates – including essential paperwork for those inmates held off-site (PPS and private contractor-managed sites and those at other county sites). Case management begins at intake; each inmate must be interviewed by a social worker within 72 hours of arrival. Social workers are required to meet with those incarcerated again on or by Day 5, then on Day 30 and Day 75. Social workers conduct orientations and inmate assessments. They are responsible for referring inmates to in-house and external programs, developing individual service and discharge plans, providing informational counseling, preparing adjustment and progress reports, advocating for the inmates, serving as liaison with other City and law enforcement groups, and assisting in the reentry process.⁷⁶

Concerns

During interviews and focus groups, several concerns were raised repeatedly. Social workers reported their concern that they were not valued as partners within PPS. They attributed this, at least partly, to the absence of someone with background in social work/psychology at the Executive level of administration. As a result of this, they felt that the value or quality of the work they performed at PPS went unrecognized.⁷⁷ They provided several examples to support this notion:

- Many social workers noted that respect had to begin at the senior level of the organization if it were to exist at the line-staff level.
- Social workers were concerned that the executive administrator responsible for the area had no background in social services or any real interest in managing the area.
- Social workers are referred to as the *kumbaya group*, do-gooders who don't understand corrections.
- There is no social work representative at discipline hearings.
- They have experienced more layoffs than other work units, which has triggered major concerns about their jobs being outsourced.
- They are expected to do extensive secretarial work due to lack of clerical staff and written reporting rather than use modern technology; this reduces meaningful time with inmates.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ A more detailed list of responsibilities and tasks is included in the appendix.

⁷⁷ This has not always been the case. The executive staff had included a person with credentials, experience and background in social services.

⁷⁸ The lack of clerical support, functioning equipment and supplies were also reported by MHM social work supervisors.

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- They do not have opportunities for upward mobility within PPS, except within their own work group.
- Decisions that impact their work are made without their involvement – and it is their perception that their involvement might have made implementation more successful.
- They are not provided with necessary equipment to do their work efficiently, such as desks, phones, computers, working fax and copy machines, and so forth.

Work Relationships

Social workers reported that correctional officers would not always cooperate in releasing inmates who they needed to prepare for release, programs, and so forth. Chaplains, program staff and volunteers also raised this assertion regarding inmate release. Some also reported that correctional officers would sometimes ignore orders from the wardens regarding inmate release for meetings, programs, etc. Social workers and others have also suggested that correctional officers need more training and a better understanding of social work.

Psychologists Responsibilities

Psychologists provide services to inmates who are stipulated to receive psychiatric help, those referred by social services, and those who exhibit behavior that indicates the need for psychiatric help. In the past, six psychiatrists were employed to serve inmates. At this time there are only four. The psychologists conduct assessments of individuals and facilitate individual and group counseling. Unfortunately, due to the increased number of inmates and the decreasing number of psychologists, psychologists acknowledged that it is difficult to meet the needs of inmates. Given that 16-20% of inmates suffer with severe mental health issues and the majority of inmates have some psychological issues, clearly they are understaffed. They also noted that at other jails, psychologists played a more integral role from intake to discharge.

Concerns

Psychologists reported the following concerns:

- Several initiatives are no longer available to many inmates who need them, such as the program offered for sex offenders (Better Minds/Better Men).
- There is a need to provide more specialized support for juveniles, so that the cycle of incarceration can be broken. Many inmates, including juveniles, speak of their desire to talk with a professional counselor. Unfortunately, the psychologists have limited time and need to cover all the facilities on State Road as well as off-site facilities.
- There is a need for better collaboration between psychologists and MHM social workers.
- Like the social workers, psychologists reported that time is wasted due to the lack of technology.
- Lastly, the psychologists felt they needed better access to hospitals for psychiatric placements, including better access to Norristown State Hospital.

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Chaplains

Responsibilities and Concerns

Chaplains provide religious services, counseling and support for inmates. While there are some chaplains who are paid a stipend, the majority are volunteers. Chaplains are deeply concerned that there is declining access to inmates and that fewer inmates attend services; this is not due to lack of interest but to lack of access for religious inmates who want to attend. In general, the chaplains attribute this to the severe overcrowding, which makes it more difficult to allow inmate mobility and to provide the security needed when groups gather.

Other concerns include the following:

- Some chaplains believe that the system is not financially or emotionally supportive of their work, and that many inadequacies are blamed on security issues where none may exist.
- Some stipend positions were eliminated recently, and this is a point of contention with the chaplains. While about half the chaplains receive a stipend (\$10,000/year), half do not, though the number of hours is similar (20 per week). While some chaplains have volunteered, knowing they will not receive a stipend, the inconsistency of payment clearly contributes to the low morale of some of the chaplains and was emphasized at the focus group meeting.
- The chaplains expressed concerns about the decline in participation in other programs, too.
- They report that collaboration, access, and respect for their work and the inmates differ significantly by location and even within the same facility.
- They are frustrated because even when they get permission to do something within a facility – from the Deputy Commissioner for inmate services or the warden – the orders are often ignored or the memo noting permission disappears.
- Chaplains also suggest that there is a need to censor what is on television, implying that educational programming might be more productive than Jerry Springer-type programs.

VOLUNTEERS/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The Office of Community Relations has countless individuals and groups listed as volunteers. While the records include a number of duplicate listings, it is estimated that there are approximately 150 different groups.⁷⁹ To ensure diversity of services, a selected group of volunteers was invited to participate in a focus group, and more than 20 people responded.

During the discussion, several themes became clear:

- Problems existed in getting clearance to enter the facilities.
- Overcrowding made it increasingly difficult for them to have access to inmates.
- Territoriality among staff made it difficult for them to aid inmates.
- Inmates had too little to do and had insufficient or no opportunities to participate in programs that might help them reintegrate into the community upon release.

⁷⁹ Information obtained from list provided.

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- Many inmates do not know what is available to them.
- Food was unappealing and not nutritious.
- There is a need for language support for those inmates who do not speak English or do not understand the language well enough to address their own situations.
- Too many inmates had no place to go when they are discharged; even those inmates who are able to participate in work or work programs at PPS found it difficult to get jobs when they were released.

Based on the structure of the volunteer organization, those who wished to provide support for inmates differed greatly in approach and skills. Most were not aware of what others were doing and how they might collaborate, and PPS provides little support for this. Discussions with staff and inmates indicated that training would also be useful for volunteer groups. Volunteers and staff indicated the challenges faced by inmates because of limited literacy skills and lack of education and job training. The volunteer group also noted that a great number of inmates would be better served through community corrections and alternative sentencing.

Consensus on Concerns

Overview

In reality, most staff members – social workers, psychologists, chaplains and correctional officers – have developed strategies to collaborate. Most agree that steps could be taken to improve working relations and job performance – if the issue of overcrowding is addressed. It is the general consensus that many of the inmates do not need to be there, and that many in this group could be better served through community correction. This would free up valuable time and resources so that in-house services and rehabilitation efforts could target those who require incarceration.

Interestingly, correctional officers and social workers agreed that the newer recruits/hires in both areas needed more training. Many had little job experience and insufficient training and needed much more supervision. Both groups also reported that correctional and social work supervisors needed to be better trained. It was the consensus that good supervisors made staff feel as if they were part of a team and contributed to a positive work environment. Volunteers, social workers and correctional officers noted that there should be supportive services provided for staff, as well as inmates, especially given the difficult work environment. Representatives from all work groups, including administrators, indicated that there is too much discipline and disrespect of colleagues in the presence of inmates, which contributes to a lack of respect towards staff by some inmates.

Training, Development, Team Building

Clearly, a recurring theme in interviews and focus groups was the lack of training of staff, as well as the lack of training for their supervisors. On more than one occasion, a participant reported that “rookies were supervising rookies.” While the Training Academy provides programs for correctional officer recruits, it is clear that this training needs to be reviewed; training geared toward security omits significant elements of life behind bars. Recruits certainly need to learn how to handle weapons with accuracy,

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safety and responsibly, but they may not need the weapon if they are skilled in anger management and conflict resolution. Ongoing training is also essential, and while efforts are made to ensure that correctional officers receive training throughout their career, from the information shared during interviews and focus groups, this too should be reviewed. There is also a need for ongoing training for social workers. There is little opportunity for such training, and it is perceived that the administration views social worker training as less critical than ongoing training for correctional officers.

Both correctional officers and social workers have noted the value of joint- or cross-training. Many experienced such training in the past and felt that it improved performance and made a tremendous impact on work relations. Both groups felt that they left the training with a better understanding of what the other work group did – and how each added value. Cross-training is used in federal correctional facilities, and it was suggested that it be reinstated at PPS. Clearly, this would help create a sense of team work. The absence of a sense of “team” among the different work groups contributes to the overall challenges faced by PPS.

Correctional officers and social workers felt that supervisors needed better training in how to manage people and demand accountability – of themselves and other employees. Many complained that supervisors employed favoritism far too often, sometimes to control problem employees. However, members of both work groups said that often supervisors had little time to supervise, because there was so much work to be done and so many meetings that required their attendance.

Communication

Everyone reported serious gaps in communication. Despite the countless meetings held within and without PPS to attempt to increase collaboration and information sharing, poor communication or lack of communication is the reality. This impacts morale, work efficiency and safety.

MANAGEMENT

There are areas of concern that require the attention of the CEO, the Commissioner himself, and his Executive Staff. Appropriate actions at the senior level of administration will send a clear message to all employees, that PPS will be guided consistently by its policies and procedures.

Accountability

During the study it became increasingly clear that operations often varied from facility to facility and within the same facility. Some of this is to be expected due to the different levels of security needed, as well as the mental, physical and social needs of the inmates. However, due to inconsistent supervision and favoritism, different rules applied depending on the site, staff present and shift – all other conditions being equal. This was a great source of frustration for employees. It created confusion when working in different facilities and damaged morale. It affects *all* working groups and volunteers at PPS, and undermines team building. Consistency and transparency are critical in general, but vital in a secure facility such as a jail.

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Favoritism is an issue that has been repeatedly raised by administrators, staff (from all work groups and disciplines), inmates and volunteers. It has been noted as the basis for promotions, job assignments, schedule allowances, inmate privileges, and collaboration with colleagues. Several interviewees reported that favoritism appeared frequently in issues of discipline: Two employees may be charged with the same offense, and one is fired while the other is moved to another site. Some employees noted that favoritism – real or perceived – reduces morale and impacts performance negatively. If “favorites” appear to be given desirable assignments and promotions, hardworking employees will be reluctant to make the effort to seek advancement or even worry about doing a good job.

Fraternization is also a form of favoritism, and it is an issue at PPS. Behavior contrary to that stated in the PPS Policies and Procedures has been observed and reported to the consulting group. Again, discipline has been perceived as inconsistent and inadequate. There should be *no tolerance* for this in any organization, but it is particularly heinous in a jail.

Efficiency

There is a tremendous loss of efficiency due to the lack of functioning equipment in most work environments; these include fax and copy machines and time-reducing tools such as a computer with Internet. Many resources for inmates can be found through the Internet, but this is not available to most employees. In addition, Lock and Track, the current record-keeping system at PPS, is obsolete. Significant time is lost trying to “work around” this system. The equipment that does exist is old, and time is lost when opening screens and downloading information. Much work that is customarily done via computer in other office environments is still being done by hand at PPS (with paper copies that have to be transmitted from place to place). Social workers have noted that they could lose 2-6 hours a day in unnecessary work and clerical activities. At \$26/hour, this can be costly. (For example, 40 social workers at a 2-hour loss/day = \$750,000/annum; 40 social workers at a 5-hour loss/day = \$1.9 million/annum).

INMATES

Interestingly, inmates’ concerns in many ways replicate those of staff. Inmates and ex-offenders – male, female, and juveniles – describe with gratitude the support and kindness shown by many correctional officers and social workers. However, there are also reports of mistreatment, name calling, and disrespect. Inmates fear that if they complain, their word will not be accepted and that there will be punitive action by the person about whom they complained. Clearly there are some problem employees who have not been held accountable; some names of offending staff were repeated – by inmates, other staff and outside agency representatives.⁸⁰ Despite the fact that numerous people can identify problem staff by name, little action has been taken to remediate or remove them.

⁸⁰ Several inmates and ex-offenders, from different focus groups, reported being called “junkies, crack head” – especially when medicines were being distributed. These claims were heard especially from female inmates – who report being called “whores” by some staff.

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Their concerns include the following:

- A major concern is that inmates have too little time/too infrequent visits with social workers. Inmates also attribute this to overcrowding – and with little exception do not *blame* this on social workers.
- Inmates complain of having too little to do and being confined a great deal of the day; this view is supported by all staff and volunteers.⁸¹
- Space is a special problem in facilities that house juveniles and adults. Adults and juveniles are not to have any sight/sound contact with each other. The overcrowding makes this very difficult and results in limited space availability and more frequent movement restriction and lock down. This is a serious problem at RCF, where female juveniles live on a cell block with female adult inmates. While physical contact is prohibited, clearly they experience “sight and sound.”
- Several participants reported that on some occasions, confidential information would be *accidentally shared* with other inmates by correctional officers, with the intent that the inmates would share the information widely – and *punish* the person whose records were shared. This was supported by staff reports.
- Inmates consistently complained about not having sufficient access to the Library or to reading materials. Libraries in some areas have closed due to space constraints linked to overcrowding. Some jails utilize book carts as a solution, but the inmates do not see this as sufficient; staff and volunteers raised this issue as well.
- Another consistent complaint of inmates is the food – and it is supported by staff and volunteers. While it *may* be sufficient nutritionally, no member of the staff indicated a willingness to eat it. In addition, due to overcrowding, the reliance on the notorious bag sandwich is increasing. Whether poor food quality is perception or reality, it is clearly affecting the morale of inmates, and may be cause for increased spending in commissary. Food takes on increased importance too, when meal time may be one of the few activities during the day.⁸²
- Many of the juveniles expressed difficulty with sleeping due to noise. The buildings were designed and built to accommodate security, visibility, ease of mobility, cleaning and maintenance. Consequently, any sound/noise is magnified. In addition, people shout or speak loudly, increasing the level of noise experienced by those within the jails.

There is much research supporting the notion that contact with family is a key to successful reentry and reintegration of those who are incarcerated. This is especially true for parents of children and juveniles. But making contact is very difficult. All inmates and ex-offenders reported problems with the phones at PPS:

- The phones do not work.
- Access to phones is limited due to overcrowding and thus time is limited.
- The system is incompatible with home cell phones or different (non-215) exchanges.

⁸¹ This issue will be more fully developed under the next recommendation.

⁸² It should be noted that the consulting group did have the opportunity to see the food distributed at lunch for the juvenile females; a suggestion was made to the PPS Executive Director for Health Services that he review the concern.

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This was also reported as a severe problem when this consulting group initiated the Prison Health Care Study in 2006. Not only does this problem reduce opportunities for communication with key family members and friends, it also impacts inmate morale and can be costly in terms of providing social services and health care services. Many requests for sick call continue to be linked to the need for increased phone access; when inmates cannot make calls, they submit sick call requests in order to get to someone who will refer them to a social worker. Meaningless sick call requests with all it entails, is far more costly than providing sufficient and working phones.

Another major issue for inmates is visiting hours. Many have children, spouses and other family members who are unable to get to the various facilities early enough to visit. This is particularly significant for female inmates who are mothers, which is the majority. Current visiting hours at RCF afford them limited contact with their children. (These hours are from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, with registration no later than 5 p.m.) During the school year, this makes it almost impossible for children to see their mothers, since there is insufficient time to travel from school to the jails on State Road before 5 p.m. It is difficult for mother and child to maintain a relationship during the mother's incarceration – despite the reality that the mother was typically the primary custodian prior to incarceration and will be upon release. There are also male inmates who seek to be involved in the lives of their children, and they too require more practical visiting hours. Research indicates that stable family relationships are a strong predictor of successful reentry for inmates. It would seem prudent to provide opportunities for the parent-child relationship to thrive during incarceration. While there might be some cost in adjusting the visiting hours, in the long term, and if successful reintegration is the goal for the inmate parent, the benefit would most likely exceed the expense. Some jails, such as Muncie in Delaware County, have altered visiting hours to better accommodate families, while not increasing the number of hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHILADELPHIA PRISON SYSTEM

#1. Create a more effective work environment through team building, improved efficiency, better communication, transparency in decision-making, increased accountability, and training and education for management, staff and volunteers.

Management

Accountability

- Create an environment that values and nurtures mutual respect:
 - Beginning with the Commissioner through senior staff to the inmate population, references and comments should reflect support, understanding and respect for all working groups and individuals within PPS.
 - Discipline should be meted out to those who undermine this principle.

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- Rewards should reflect support for adherence and advancement of respect and collaboration.
- Ensure adherence to policies and procedures, with special attention paid to those related to discipline, fraternization and favoritism:
 - Plan, schedule and conduct review sessions with all employees regarding policies and procedures, particularly those noted above.
 - Hold administrators and supervisors responsible for ensuring that these are enforced and that infractions result in transparent and consistent consequences.
 - Encourage unit monitoring of adherence to appropriate behaviors between administrator/supervisor and staff, staff and inmate, and inmate and inmate.
- Ensure that administrators and supervisors serve as role models and are held accountable for their own performance and behavior.

Efficiency

- Review the existing structure of Social Services; there may be some value to creating areas of specialization, such as Special Programs, Discharge/Reentry, and so forth.
- Provide sufficient clerical support to relieve social workers and correctional officers of unnecessary paperwork that may still be required even with the introduction and use of technology.
- Develop a mechanism to ensure communication across shifts, so that operations are seamless from one shift to the next.
- Reduce the number, variety and length of meetings. Where possible, meetings should be combined and scheduled for a specific length of time. The agenda should be prepared and shared in advance to ensure preparation.
- Provide the tools and equipment (such as fax machines, copiers, etc.) necessary for work to be accomplished and ensure that they are maintained in proper working condition.
- Provide state-of-the-art electronic technology.
- Convert paper records as quickly as possible to electronic records. This should include information-gathering and reporting across PPS. Electronic records should be transmitted ensuring efficient record maintenance, ease in data retrieval, time savings and ease of transmission:
- Reduce absenteeism, lateness, inefficiency:

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- Create a climate that builds morale and rewards actions that demonstrate a sense of team.
- Collaborate with bargaining units to develop strategies that are fair, humane and reasonable for reducing poor work ethic.
- Ensure and assess administrator/supervisor accountability in communicating problems with the employee, providing a plan for remediation, monitoring behavior and performance, and documenting all of the above.
- Clarify and implement a plan of consequences for failure to remediate.

Staffing

- Provide sufficient staff to fulfill the mission and goals stated in the *Inmate Handbook* and in the PPS Policies and Procedures:
 - Short term
 - Fill vacant positions.
 - Reorganize and coordinate existing staff and volunteers to better fill existing gaps.
 - Long term
 - Develop and implement a plan to secure sufficient staff to serve the population of inmates.
 - Reduce the prison population.

Team Building

Development and Training:

- Provide training for all those working at PPS – administrators, supervisors and staff (security and inmate services), including new employees, current and continuing employees, and newly promoted administrators and supervisors:
 - Establish a working committee, to include representatives from social services and security, to review existing training programs and curricula.
 - Design and develop training models for staff development that are appropriate to the current needs of employees and inmates. This training should emphasize people management skills, such as anger management and conflict resolution, in addition to the traditional training on security.
- Provide regular opportunities for cross-training employees and administrators/supervisors within different work units at PPS, especially correctional officers/sergeants and social workers/supervisors. This should also include staff from MHM and PHS.

Review, Communication and Coordination:

- Provide opportunities for integration among PPS social workers and psychologists and MHM social workers and psychiatrists. Better understanding of roles, cooperation and collaboration should be fostered among these working groups.

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- Ensure support for employees who may be having personal problems or have difficulty working in the secure environment. Evaluate the current EAP program, to include employee surveys. As appropriate provide supportive services, such as workshops and group counseling.
- Develop a strategy for incorporating volunteers in a more meaningful way.
 - Create an accurate catalogue of all volunteer programs and organizations, including their mission, board, staff, purpose and contact information.
 - Review the scope of services and programs provided by the volunteer organizations.
 - Develop a comprehensive, relevant and effective training regimen for volunteers, including an efficient and timely process for participation and securing proper identification.
 - Develop a model for volunteer participation designed to *complement* the work of correctional officers, social workers, chaplains and psychologists, rather than duplicate their work.
 - Coordinate volunteer efforts so that their work is productive and complements staff work.
- Review and better define the role of chaplains so they may be better integrated into the process of preparing inmates for successful reintegration into their families and the community:
 - Review the procedure for providing stipends for chaplains and set a consistent policy for implementation.
 - Develop a strategy that enables more inmates to participate in religious services on a regular basis.

Inmate-specific Recommendations

Treatment

- Ensure appropriate treatment of inmates by staff and eliminate incidents of inappropriate sharing of private inmate issues, heckling, and any other behavior towards inmates:
 - Review relevant policies and procedures with all staff.
 - Establish and implement clear, consistent and transparent consequences for any offenses.
 - Develop a plan to protect inmates who have experienced inappropriate treatment.

Services

- Foster family connections during the period of incarceration
 - To facilitate communication, ensure that inmates have functioning, reliable and adequate phones to contact approved family and friends:
 - Evaluate the existing telephone system (that the inmates use) for availability, condition of equipment and reliability.

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- Develop a plan with a time frame to remedy the current situation regarding phones; implement the plan immediately.
- Provide more accessible and reasonable visiting hours for inmates and their families, particularly parents with children:
 - Establish a review committee to consist of social workers, psychologists, correctional officers, inmates and community representatives to examine this issue and develop operational models.
 - Review models and select those appropriate for implementation at different facilities.

Environment

- Ensure a healthy and attractive diet for inmates:
 - Evaluate the existing food service menu for nutrition and quality.
 - Conduct a survey of inmates to secure their sense of the meals that are available.
 - Conduct a special evaluation of food and nutrition for juveniles and pregnant female inmates.
- Reduce noise as much as possible:
 - Conduct a study on noise levels at PPS facilities.
 - Establish guidelines for loud noises, shouting, and so forth and implement.
 - Conduct a feasibility study of sound proofing areas of the jails and implement where possible.

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PHILADELPHIA PRISON SYSTEM PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Throughout the country, efforts are underway to ensure that those inmates being released to their families and into the community are better prepared to live a successful life free of crime. It is generally accepted that to accomplish this, inmates must be provided with programs and services that help them develop the skills needed to approach society in a different way. Many of the inmates at PPS do not have a GED or high school diploma; others have no work experience, job skills nor do they know how to apply for a job, and; some suffer with mental illness, chronic poor health, substance dependency, and homelessness.

While PPS has numerous programs and services that are designed to improve the inmates' chances for success in a world beyond bars, 40% - 80% of inmates do not participate in these programs and services. While much of this can be attributed to the space and staffing limitations due to overcrowding, the City's efforts to successfully reintegrate ex-offenders will be hampered severely unless inmates have the necessary high quality programs and services available to them.

As noted previously, PPS will continue to be challenged by overcrowding, which will take time to address. However, there are some adjustments that can and should be made to provide programs and services to a larger percentage of inmates, despite the constraints placed on the staff and facilities due to overcrowding. In any event, every effort must be employed to ensure that the period of incarceration is used to prepare the inmate for successful reintegration to the community, and while all inmates may not be prepared to participate fully in a plan for successful reentry, effort should be made to expose them to options they may not have considered previously.

OVERVIEW

PPS provides numerous programs and services for inmates. These fit into the following categories:

- Programs/activities for substance abuse
- Education
- Life skills
- Vocational Education/Work

Many of these programs were viewed by those interviewed as well-designed and providing significant support to encourage personal transformation among the inmates served. However, it should be noted that little evaluative information is available to assess the impact of these programs and services on recidivism. In any event, due to limited space and staff, these programs and services do not reach the majority of inmates.

In general, program assignment occurs through recommendation by the social worker to the social work supervisor. The majority of inmates participating in programs that are considered most effective programs have been stipulated for participation by the court.

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Even this group may not be able to participate as required; for example, some inmates who are stipulated by the court to participate in a 90 day substance abuse program may be housed out of county at a site that does not have a 90 day program.

In addition to having insufficient staff to provide programs and services, there is not always staff available with the appropriate skills to deliver specialized programs and services. Efforts were made in the past to employ program staff with actual experience and skill in an area; more recently, due to budget restrictions, positions have been filled with personnel with little or no experience in the area. Consequently, staff members are placed at a disadvantage and inmates are not necessarily well-served. While in the short-term this may expedite hiring, in the long-term it is not an effective use of taxpayer dollars.

The issues that impede the success of English speaking inmates are multiplied for those who do not speak English as their first language. Very few opportunities exist for education or skill development for this group. This has been raised repeatedly by staff and volunteers as a significant problem.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS

OPTIONS is the PPS primary treatment program for substance abuse; it is operated by PPS social workers, who are specially trained. The program is regarded as one of the more effective programs at PPS; however, little outcome data is available. OPTIONS can accommodate about 600 inmates at a time, and treatment occurs over a 90-day period.⁸³ Most of the inmates in OPTIONS are court-stipulated⁸⁴; as noted above, some inmates who are court-stipulated cannot be accommodated because of insufficient space or housing.

Based on this structure, approximately 2,400 inmates could be served over a one-year period. Clearly, spaces are created when inmates are released, so some additional participation occurs. PPS reports participation of about 7,200 inmates, but this does not account for duplication.

Those inmates who are in OPTIONS frequently have the opportunity to participate in other programs, too, such as anger management, NA/AA, and GED classes. Given estimates that 65%-85% of inmates report some problems with substance abuse, it is unfortunate that more do not have access to OPTIONS.

The rest of the prison population (the majority) is referred to as the General Population. It is the perception of inmates, as well as staff and volunteers, that the OPTIONS group has access to most of the programs during incarceration, while little is available to the General Population. Inmates and staff have suggested that OPTIONS should be inclusive

⁸³ C.O.R.E.S.T.A.R., December 2007.

⁸⁴ Court stipulated means that the inmate is required to participate as a condition of sentencing and subsequent release.

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of all inmates, since the majority of inmates self-report having issues with substance abuse or dependency.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Many of those who are incarcerated do not have a solid basic education. Sadly, according to the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, "...high school dropouts are three times more likely to be arrested."⁸⁵ Throughout the country, the corrections community is designing and implementing strategies to ensure that inmates have the opportunity to get an education while incarcerated. In fact, in some areas, inmates are earning reduced sentences by working to pass their GED, attend college classes, and so forth. Certain counties are allowing inmates to attend college on work furlough.⁸⁶ In fact, research supports that a 5% increase in male high school graduation rates would produce an annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses.⁸⁷

Pennypack House School is the major entity providing education at PPS. Classes are provided for juveniles, and GED instruction is available to adult inmates. PPS also provides GED testing for those inmates who seek to complete their GED while at PPS. The Pennypack House School serves approximately 500 juveniles and about 3,000 adults each year.

Pennypack provides classroom instruction for the juvenile inmates. As of February 2008, there were 140 male and 4 female juveniles incarcerated at PPS. There is adequate space for the juvenile females at this time, and they speak positively about their primary teacher. Their traditional classroom group instruction is supplemented with independent work or tutoring in the cell or cellblock. Many of the juvenile males do not participate in group instruction or do so for a limited number of hours,⁸⁸ because their space is more restricted and many of them are under administrative segregation.⁸⁹

PLATO, individualized computer-assisted literacy instruction, has recently been made available at all the facilities on State Road. Previously, PLATO was only available at certain facilities. Hooked on Phonics is also available to inmates who are at very basic reading levels.

Inside Out provides opportunities for some inmates – primarily those in OPTIONS – to participate in college courses. The program began in Philadelphia and now exists in other states throughout the United States.⁹⁰ It engages college students, professors and inmates in a typical college learning situation; some of the courses examine social issues from the prism of prison. The inmates who participate are very positive in their assessment of this program. The program currently serves approximately 210 inmates.

⁸⁵ Carroll, Tom. 2008.

⁸⁶ Foxman, Adam, 2008.

⁸⁷ Page, Ava, et. al., 2007.

⁸⁸ Administrative segregation is clearly an impediment to an inmate's participation in group instruction.

⁸⁹ Administrative segregation results in confinement to the cell unless accompanied by a PPS official.

⁹⁰ The Program is the brain child of Dr. Lori Pompa, Professor at Temple University.

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Horizon, a companion program, is emerging. Its goal is to give inmates a chance to think about their lives, where they want to be, and what discrete steps can be taken while they are still in jail. It has been suggested that this program could serve as a companion to an effective discharge-planning model.

As with most other programs and services, there are not enough places for a significant number of inmates to participate in educational programs. For example, while the PLATO program is available at every facility, only about 1,200 inmates will be able to participate per annum.⁹¹ Yet, the likelihood of ex-offenders getting employment decreases if they do not have a high school diploma or a GED. (It has not been possible to secure an accurate number or percentage of the population of inmates at PPS who have neither the GED nor the high school diploma.)

For several years, PPS and WHYYY have been partners in a project that would provide closed-circuit programming for inmates throughout PPS facilities. The intent is for it to include educational programming that could help the inmates be better prepared for discharge and reentry, in addition to presenting general information on prison guidelines, health programs, and so forth. While this initiative has tremendous potential, it has not yet been implemented. It has been reported that it may be available at one or more sites soon. It has been suggested by many of those interviewed that television space could be converted to productive learning centers using this as a vehicle; rather than watching mind-numbing programs, inmates could be engaged in skill improvement. With limited space this could convert “empty” time in programmatic opportunities. This would certainly reduce the amount of time during which inmates have nothing to do, and simultaneously reduce the boredom that can contribute to tension and security issues.

The Community College of Philadelphia offered classes for inmates at PPS during the period in which the JOBS Project was in operation. As funding ended, so did the classes. Inmates and staff viewed the classes positively and considered them a venue that could improve employability. With the exception of Inside Out, there is no college program offered for inmates at PPS.

Inmates and ex-offenders were upset that libraries had been used for other space needs and that they did not have regular access to the libraries and essential materials. In the absence of more formal and sufficient educational opportunities, the libraries are even more critical to inmates. The library can also serve as a site for jobs for inmates.

Several volunteer organizations provide or have provided educational services for inmates. The Center for Literacy did have a presence at PPS, but inmates report that it no longer provides literacy instruction. Catholic Social Services once provided tutors, but that has been discontinued.

LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS

Anger management workshops are available for some inmates, especially those who are assigned to OPTIONS. The inmates and ex-offenders who participated in focus groups

⁹¹ It should be noted that PLATO is one of the few programs that is available in Spanish.

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felt these workshops were extremely useful and should be available to all inmates at PPS. Inmates also had high praise for programs offered by some of the chaplains and volunteer organizations, including Maternity Care Coalition, Mothers in Charge, Girl Scouts Behind Bars, Pennsylvania Prison Society, Lutheran Settlement House, and Impact Services. The Girl Scouts Behind Bars initiative provides a positive approach – helping unite incarcerated mothers with their daughters – but as with many other initiatives, there is inconsistency in availability for a variety of reasons.

The inmates also valued the workshops on parenting skills, again suggesting that all inmates should have the opportunity to participate. Several inmates thought it would be good to have a workshop on grieving; this was especially true for those who have come to recognize the damage they have caused self, family (especially children) and friends.

In the past, the JOBS Project and, through the JOBS Project, many other organizations (JEVS, Impact Services, and the Prison Society, for example) provided life skill workshops and programs, such as resume writing, how to dress for work, how to function in a work setting, and how to interview for jobs. Funding for some of these life skill programs has been shifted to the Mayor's Office for ReEntry (MORE). While inmates and ex-offenders are pleased to know life skills instruction is available at MORE, there is a consensus that the life skills training should begin during incarceration, so inmates are better prepared for discharge.

Numerous volunteer groups offer a variety of programs and services for inmates and ex-offenders. One of the greatest concerns of volunteers is that the inmates and ex-offenders do not know what is available to them. On the other hand, lack of coordination of volunteer initiatives, poor accessibility, and limited evaluation of the services result in a sense of confusion and frustration for many involved.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND WORK PROGRAMS⁹²

PPS provides opportunities for Vocational Education and Work through programs that PPS itself operates, such as PHILACOR, on-site jobs, and Work Release. It also contracts with other organizations, such as JEVS, to provide these services to inmates. These programs and services are intended to help prepare the participating inmate for employment upon reentry. In fact, the major focus of the work release program is employment. Clearly, finding and keeping a job is a vital step toward successful reintegration into the community and to supporting a family. Yet it is one of the greatest challenges for ex-offenders.⁹³ And as inmates await release, it is vital that they develop – or at least begin to develop – the knowledge and skills to demonstrate essential competencies.

Jewish Employment Vocational Services (JEVS)

PPS contracts with JEVS to provide vocational education and training on-site. Approximately 3,000 inmates are served by JEVS each year. The training programs are offered three hours each day, three times a day, for 4-6 weeks, with a capacity for about

⁹² Work Release is included under recommendations for reducing numbers of inmates.

⁹³ Carter, Francina C., 2007.

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240 at any one time. The programs are not available at every facility. Currently, JEVS provides the following training programs⁹⁴:

- *Environmental Maintenance*: instruction in proper use of floor machines; maintenance of chemicals, tools and equipment used by the janitorial industry; includes industrial, residential and commercial cleaning.
- *Computer Training*: basic keyboard and word processing skills in a classroom/lab setting; instruction includes document formatting, basic editorial corrections, execute standard business forms, reports and correspondence.
- *Customer Service*: geared to those who have limited or no work experience; teaches skills for jobs as customer service representatives, clerks, receptionists, data entry clerks and clerical aides.
- *World of Work/Computer Literacy*: integrates basic computer literacy and word processing with materials/lessons on job search techniques.
- *Steps to Success*: self-paced computer-based curriculum; enables inmates to assess skills, learning styles and goals; useful for discharge preparation and reentry.
- *Building Maintenance*: teaches hands-on skills for the building trades; curriculum includes carpentry, framing metal, wood and dry wall' decorating, wall papering, ceramics and floor tiling, plumbing.

Correctional Industries (PHILACOR)

PHILACOR's purpose is to provide transferable real-life work experience for inmates that can prepare them for reentry and reintegration. It focuses on helping inmates recognize and accept their strengths. Not only does PHILACOR provide productive work for inmates (currently, there are 210 positions), but it is also one of the largest income producing jail industry programs in the United States. The program has a long history: correctional industries began in Philadelphia in 1933. The program in its current iteration was launched in 1975, when legislation was passed to establish the Revolving Fund.

PHILACOR encompasses the 10 industry shops operated through PPS. The shops are divided into those that provide goods and services for PPS only and those that provide goods and services for PPS, other City agencies and the School District of Philadelphia. The programs include:

PPS Only:

Garment Shop
General Products
Laundry

PPS, City agencies, School District:

Barricade Plant
Carpentry Shop
Culinary Arts
Dry Cleaning Plant
Finishing Plant
Graphics Plant
Upholstery Plant

⁹⁴ These programs are not available in Spanish.

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Despite the fact that these placements are desirable, there are some challenges. A person who is assigned to PHILACOR must be at work from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m.; since the majority of other programs take place during the day, the PHILACOR-assigned inmates are rarely able to participate in other programs of value. In addition, some assigned inmates are transferred to other locations, so it can be difficult if not impossible to participate.

Unfortunately, the PHILACOR programs do not have a full complement of inmates. Assignment is made by the social work supervisors, and at one facility an unresolved personnel issue has had a negative impact on enrollment and participation.⁹⁵ In fact, data requested for this study indicate that just in the month of February 2008, inmates at PICC lost 1,566 potential work hours. Given that work through PHILACOR pays an hourly rate that substantially exceeds general job pay at PPS (45-60 cents/hr. vs. 25 cents/hour), this is a lost opportunity to make/save some money while developing skills.

PHILACOR staff has declined from 42 in 1996 to 23 now. Because the number of inmates who participate is dependent on the number of PHILACOR supervisors available, the overall number of participants has declined since the 1990s.

PHILACOR Program staff suggested that better connections could be made for possible jobs for inmates post-discharge if an advisory board were established with participation from various industries in the Philadelphia area.

Jobs

Within PPS, jobs are available to some inmates. Job assignments may include work in the food service area or in facility maintenance. Some of these are paid jobs – although the amount is minimal. Those inmates who have been sentenced have a greater opportunity to get a PPS job. However, for both sentenced and pre-trial inmates, job acquisition can also be a result of favoritism. PPS leadership is attempting to secure accurate unduplicated information on the number of jobs available at PPS as well as the number and percentage of inmates filling these jobs..

Jobs are highly prized by inmates: the inmate is occupied, has more freedom, is able to earn some money, and his success at work can be a positive factor toward early release. While there is a sense that more jobs could be created within PPS, it is recognized that this would require additional supervision and staff. Almost every group interviewed noted the need for more work opportunities for inmates within PPS itself.

Work Release

As noted on page 16, ASD operates the Work Release Program. This program supports inmates who are non-violent and able to work in the community.

There is strong support for the work release program among inmates, PPS administration and staff, the court, public defenders and others. However, facilities and resources are limited. ASD once had job developers employed to assist in finding employment for

⁹⁵ The primary site of recruitment is PICC.

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inmates; those positions were eliminated during cutbacks, and this role is now filled by social workers who already maintain a demanding workload. In addition, tools that could improve efficiency are absent – such as computers, printers, and copy and fax machines. While there are some computers available to inmates to work on resumes, letters of application and so forth, there are not enough working printers. While excellent software exists that could facilitate resume writing and other job and life skills, it is not available for inmate use. Also, social workers must visit the various sites of inmate employment regularly; these sites are throughout the City. At one time, a car was available for travel, saving valuable time. Currently, social workers must travel by public transportation, which results in significant waste of time. Finally, the site visits require the ability to communicate with the place of employment, ASD, etc. – for safety as well as information; however, social workers who must make the site visits are not provided with cell phones. Work Release programs are also operated by private contractors, who are not held to the same level of accountability as ASD.

DISCHARGE AND DISCHARGE PLANNING

Discharge and discharge planning are essential to successful reentry and reintegration into the community. It is a process that requires preparation and support and should begin at Intake and finish with the seamless transfer of the exiting inmate to organizations that provide high quality reentry and reintegration support, such as that described by MORE.

PPS staff, particularly social workers and other RTS personnel, are charged with preparing inmates for discharge. In the past, a staff member was assigned full time to oversee and coordinate inmate discharge; however, at the time of interviews the position was not filled.

The timing of discharge is greatly influenced by the inmates' participation in programs and activities while incarcerated. The court can require participation in certain programs as a condition for release; for example OPTIONS is often stipulated as a requirement for an offender. In addition, the programs and services are expected to improve the skills of the person incarcerated, so that he/she is better able to live a crime-free life upon release. The unavailability of such programs and services can make early release impossible and successful reintegration improbable. This is the current situation at PPS, for 40%-80% of inmates are not consistently provided with critical programs for self-improvement.

As noted in PART I, inmates being released are provided with an information packet which lists support beyond the prison gates; however, these are often dropped in the trash can near the bus stop at the PPS entrance. Discharge is more structured for those who have participated in treatment – mental health or substance abuse – while incarcerated, but it is one of PPS' greatest challenges.

Everyone interviewed reported their concerns about housing. Many inmates have no permanent home, others need supported housing. Some are unable to live with relatives who are in public housing because of previous drug-related crimes. In addition to real-life

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problems such as these, the lack of sophisticated technology and software at PPS make it difficult to secure accurate lists of those who should be preparing for discharge. And often, inmates are released by the court leaving no time for adequate preparation for the inmate so that there is transitional support.

Those interviewed concur that discharge planning must include housing and employment, without which recidivism will continue at current levels. Study participants also agree that the ex-offender should be *met at the door* by support staff who will provide help with reintegration.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHILADELPHIA PRISON SYSTEM

#2. Provide sufficient high-quality treatment, vocational education, job training programs and discharge planning for all inmates within PPS, coupled with strategies to ensure employment for all ex-offenders capable of work.

Evaluation

- Conduct a thorough evaluation of all existing programs and services at PPS. Existing information is inconsistent and does not account for duplication. The evaluation should include the following:
 - Number of inmates served daily, monthly and annually (unduplicated count)
 - Duration/quantity of the contacts and/or program participation (day, week and month)
 - Number and percentage of completion and what completion means
 - Numbers/percentage of inmates participating in one program; multiple programs (2, 3, and so forth), and over what period of time
 - Impact of program on behavior, release and recidivism
 - infractions while in jail
 - evidence of early release
 - evidence of return/time period
 - Inmate survey for each program in which the inmate participated
 - Inmate survey of services provided by PPS units
 - Evidence of skill training/experience leading to employment post - discharge
- Analyze data and modify programs as needed.
- Maintain on-going evaluation of programs and services.

Staffing

- Ensure that persons with appropriate expertise and education are hired or assigned to teach or conduct PPS programs and services.
- Review staff requirements in terms of skills/experience/education for PPS programs and services and develop job descriptions that reflect these requirements.

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- Review current staffing for PPS programs and services and provide additional training if the current employee does not meet job description requirements.

Achieving Scale

- Provide sufficient program and service opportunities for all inmates so that they are occupied productively at least 4-6 hours per day.
 - Initiate efforts to achieve scale with sentenced inmates, which provide a more stable group.
 - House sentenced inmates at one site to facilitate program development and scheduling
- Develop a strategy for meeting the needs of pre-trial inmates who have shorter periods of incarceration
 - Develop a work group to determine the set of information that would be useful to inmates who will be at PPS for a short time, to include coping with confinement and access to support upon release:
- Develop a strategy to expand OPTIONS or an alternate substance abuse program to serve all inmates reporting some substance dependency:
 - Develop modules that are shorter in length for those who are released within a short period of time.
 - Increase use of group workshops and support for inmates to increase numbers of participants.
 - Develop strategies to better utilize volunteer organizations that have skilled and trained representatives.
- Develop strategies to provide educational opportunities for all inmates. Classes should be offered throughout the day at all PPS sites, utilizing multipurpose spaces as needed:
 - Prioritize education programs for those inmates without a GED or high school diploma. Instruction might be scheduled in three-hour blocks throughout the day (9-12, 1-4, and 7-10) in large rooms, using televised programs.
 - Explore the possibility of training and employing inmates who have the ability, skill and knowledge to assist/tutor others prepare for the GED. This model is used effectively in many venues.
 - Develop a strategy to provide college classes/programs for inmates while they are at PPS. Inmates could make progress toward a college degree and have a better chance of securing work at release. In collaboration with area colleges and employers, inmates could enroll in classes to prepare them for employment in growth areas.
 - Explore the possibility of incorporating Horizons as a vehicle for all inmates as part of the discharge planning.
 - Develop a strategy for utilizing the services of groups such as the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, Center for Literacy, Catholic Social Services and others to augment PPS staff and programs.

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- Provide educational opportunities at all levels for inmates who speak Spanish as their primary language and for those with other language needs.
- Implement the WHYY/PPS collaborative for educational television at all sites as quickly as possible.
 - Identify a team of PPS and WHYY staff, community educators and inmates to identify appropriate educational programs – and develop a schedule of these programs that is published in advance and shared with staff and inmates.
- Identify space for libraries when more learning areas are made available.
 - Engage inmates in serving as librarians and provide training for these inmates through use of interns from schools with library program, such as Drexel University.
 - Establish a committee of inmates and staff to identify the kinds of reading materials that are needed. Make an appeal to the community for these books/publications.
- Expand the availability of life skills programs for all inmates. Topics should include sessions on goal setting (similar to Horizons, which is now partnered with Inside Out), resume writing, interviewing techniques, re-establishing trust, anger management, grief management, parenting skills, and so forth:
 - Survey inmates to determine their interests/needs beyond what is normally available.
 - Train additional staff to conduct workshops. This requires different skills than working with an individual does.
 - Explore opportunities to engage skilled/trained individuals from community groups and organizations, as well as interns from various college programs.
- Expand opportunities, as possible, for vocational education programs for inmates. While these programs can be space-dependent, some programs may lend themselves to expansion, such as environmental maintenance.
- Increase the number of in-house jobs at PPS. Initially, if overcrowding complicates this, job-sharing might be employed so more inmates have something productive to do during the day. Some thought should be given to utilizing inmates (who do not present risk to the community) in more community service projects. This would require coordination and supervision, but would give inmates a productive and service-oriented opportunity.
- Explore the potential for expanding PHILACOR's operations:
 - Ensure that current slots are filled.
 - Review plans for expansion that have been proposed by PHILACOR's senior staff, to include use of Holmesburg, and to expand operation of the print shop and laundry.

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- Expand opportunities for Work Release:
 - Improve the efficiency of ASD Work Release by restoring skilled staff for job development, provide a vehicle for site visits to reduce time loss for travel, and provide cell phones for staff who must visit job sites. Secure appropriate software and computer equipment for inmate use for resume writing and job applications.
 - Explore possible additional sites for work release housing/programs.
 - Ensure that all work release programs operate according to the same guidelines for security, services, job placement and follow-up.
 - Expand job development so that inmates and ex-offenders are able to work and earn money – key steps to a crime-free future.
 - Establish an advisory committee to support PPS efforts to develop jobs for inmates. This advisory committee should include PPS representatives as well as representatives from the business community and civic leaders.

Discharge/Discharge Planning

- Create a unit for Discharge/Reentry within PPS. This unit should be managed by a senior staff person serving at the level of Executive Staff, and would be responsible for ensuring comprehensive and efficient discharge planning and readiness for inmates.
 - Develop and provide special training to assigned staff to ensure full understanding of responsibilities and the value to the overall issue of corrections.
 - Identify and provide an identifiable site within PPS that is co-located with those inmates whose discharge is imminent.
 - Develop strategies and procedures for collaborating with MORE, which is coordinating Reintegration. These two entities should have a seamless connection and transfer of information and responsibilities, with PPS handing Discharge from PPS and MORE picking up the ex-offender “at the door.”
- Provide state-of-the-art technology for record keeping, sharing of information, and transmitting essential forms and approvals for inmate release. Convert all paper copies to electronic versions as permitted by law.

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INMATE HOUSING

OVERVIEW

As the number of inmates has grown, it has become increasingly difficult to house inmates in a way that facilitates targeted programs and services. Discussions with study participants made it clear that there were three clear and distinct groups housed at PPS and each deserved separate attention in terms of programs and services.

Juveniles

Much research is being done on juvenile incarceration and models for helping these young offenders make different choices. Most reports identify the Missouri model as providing one of the most effective approaches to remedying behavior and reintegrating the juvenile into family and community. The Missouri model houses juveniles in units referred to as “pods” in separate smaller facilities that resemble a big home rather than an institution. There are three pods of 10 juveniles in each facility. Juveniles live and function in their group of 10: They share meals, dorm space, classes, therapeutic workshops and treatment sessions and staff. As noted earlier, only 8% of those who complete the program return to crime.

Other states and counties are working on replicating this model. It is a model that Philadelphia might explore as it develops a new Youth Study Center and more appropriate facilities for juveniles at State Road.

The incarceration of juveniles as adults has created real challenges for jails. For example, at PPS it was critical to move the male juveniles to a more modern environment, so the juvenile males were shifted from the HOC to PICC. However, this has created serious space and mobility problems for PICC. A similar scenario exists at RCF, with female juveniles living on cellblocks with adult inmates. Adhering to the policy of “no sound and sight” between adult and juvenile inmates causes already limited space to be further restricted. In fact, given the seriously overcrowded housing situation, it is impossible for the juveniles and adults to be completely separated. Clearly, physical contact can be prevented; however, as one or the other group travels from place to place, they can see each other as well as hear what is being said. In fact, since the female juvenile inmates are housed on a cellblock with adult women, they are able to communicate on a regular basis. The juveniles have commented on the noise keeping them awake at night; it should be noted, though, that the female juveniles also reported that they sometimes appreciate the advice and watchfulness that some of the inmates offer.

During a meeting with juvenile males, it was clear that they were having a difficult time sitting still and needed to burn off some physical energy. Since much of the recreational space is used to accommodate crowding, there is no formal recreation program. The gym is rarely available, and time outdoors is limited. This is true for the female juvenile inmates as well. Both groups of juveniles complained of having nothing to do for a great deal of the time. A significant portion of their time could be spent in educational and therapeutic activities. While the juveniles at RCF and PICC have committed teachers and educational leaders, the space constraints, limited programs and general environment do

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not contribute to reform and development. Separate and specifically tailored space is vital.

Sentenced vs. Pre-trial Inmates

Overcrowding has also resulted in limited ability to separate sentenced inmates from pre-trial inmates. Separate housing for these two groups would facilitate providing programs and services tailored to their differing needs. Lengthier programs could be offered for those in facilities for sentenced inmates, and shorter, targeted programs and services could be available to those who are pre-trial and subject to quick release. Since there is a prescribed period of incarceration for sentenced inmates, some reasonable planning for discharge and reentry could be executed by the social workers and the inmates. Those held pre-trial are incarcerated for different periods of time; many leave with days or weeks. It is obviously more difficult to plan reentry for this group.

First-time Offenders

Some of those incarcerated at PPS are being held for the first time, while others have experienced multiple arrests/incarceration. Clearly, inmate housing assignments are related to the level of risk, which is essential for security purposes. But at this time, due to overcrowding, repeat and first-time offenders are not assigned to differentiated housing. The research indicates that repeat offenders are sometimes arrested for progressively more serious offenses. It is possible that the first-time offender is in a different life situation – and perhaps more receptive to change. Research has suggested that an intensive program tailored to first-time offenders might assist them in making life changes that result in reduced recidivism.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHILADELPHIA PRISON SYSTEM

#3. Provide housing and programs for those incarcerated that physically separates juveniles from adults, pretrial from sentenced inmates, and first-time offenders from repeat offenders.

- Provide separate and dedicated facilities for juveniles:
 - Develop plans for designing and creating a separate facility for juveniles now incarcerated at State Road.
 - Examine the Missouri model – both the facility and program design – and its applicability for PPS needs.
 - Develop a work group, comprised of social workers, psychiatrists, correctional officers, chaplains, child development specialists and pediatricians, to recommend special, comprehensive and ongoing programs, activities and social services for the juveniles, to provide them with an opportunity for reform and reintegration.
 - Provide facilities that include space and programs for recreation and fitness.

- Provide separate housing for sentenced and pre-trial inmates:

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- Develop a plan for housing assignments that takes into consideration the numbers within each group and the facility capacity.
- Develop a work group comprised of social workers, psychiatrists, chaplains, correctional officers, inmates or ex-offenders, and community experts to recommend programs, workshops and services specific to each group.
- Provide separate housing for first-time offenders:
 - Develop a work group comprised of social workers, psychiatrists, chaplains, correctional officers, ex-offenders and community experts to design and recommend programs, workshops and services tailored to ensuring that the first offender is a one time offender.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Corrections in the United States is at a crossroad. With the impetus of the recently released PEW Report: *One in 100* and the President's signing of the Second Chance Act, attention is focused on the way our society treats crime, punishment and renewal. In addition, legislators and correctional experts are also recognizing that: "The steep increase in the number of people in prison is driven, according to most experts, by changes in drug policy and tougher sentencing, and not necessarily an increase in crime....The composition of prison admissions has shifted toward less serious offenses: parole violations and drug offenses. And, nearly 6 in 10 persons in state prison for a drug offense have no history of violence or significant selling activity."⁹⁶ Philadelphia's jails reflect the national reality.

Clearly, there are those who need and require jails/prisons; however, the City currently incarcerates many who might be more successful in leading offense- and crime-free lives through the more creative, humane, family-friendly, and cost-effective strategies of community corrections and alternative sentencing, in essence – diversion.

A major component of diversion and early release is ensuring that offenders are able to access the needed treatments, therapies, jobs, counseling, mental health support and housing that are critical to significantly reducing recidivism. Whether the planning and support begin at State Road -- or through diversion efforts – these components are essential.

These services and supports will cost money – but not providing them will also cost money. What is most critical is that our community, our City, can determine *where* and *how* to spend the money. The recommendations provided in this study suggest a *where* and *how* that differs from past decisions to build more prisons. These are:

⁹⁶ Webb, Jim. 2007.

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- Reduce the numbers of those incarcerated at PPS.
- Increase housing availability with guidance/supervision for those individuals in our society who are otherwise homeless as a result of severe mental illness, with or without the complication of substance abuse, unemployment and deep poverty.
- Create a more efficient work environment through team building, improved efficiency, better communication, transparency in decision-making, increased accountability and training and education for management, staff and volunteers.
- Provide sufficient high-quality treatment, vocational education, job training programs and discharge planning, for all inmates within PPS coupled with strategies to ensure employment for all ex-offenders capable of work.
- Provide housing and programs for those incarcerated that physically separates juveniles from adults, pretrial from sentenced inmates, and first-time offenders from repeat offenders.

During hearings of the Joint Economic Committee in Washington, D.C., Senator Jim Webb (Virginia) borrowed from Winston Churchill: “The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilization of any country.” Webb himself continued, “With the world’s largest prison population, our prisons test the limits of democracy and push the boundaries of our moral identity.”

There are no easy solutions, and effective change takes time, but Philadelphia is up to the challenge if it has the will!

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Addenda

CONSULTING TEAM

Marjorie Dugan, Ph.D., is a consultant primarily serving non-profit and government entities. Current projects include developing/implementing the KEYS community college project (PA Department of Public Welfare) and designing an implementation model based on her strategic plan for restructuring prison health care for the Philadelphia Prison Systems (City of Philadelphia). In addition to these clients, Dugan does extensive *pro bono* work for the Norris Square Civic Association in Philadelphia's Latino community.

Dugan has worked as a consultant since leaving the position of Director of Policy and Planning for the City of Philadelphia. In that role she developed initiative for children, health care, university/city partnerships, and workforce development (including literacy, youth development and welfare to work), and collaborated on projects that included lead abatement, waste management, electronic security, integrating technology, economic development and so forth. Previously, Dugan directed the Policy and Program components of Mayor John F. Street's transition.

Dugan designed and implemented the Philadelphia Education Summit and served as primary author of the final report – *Common Ground on Public Education in Philadelphia*. Her clients have included *Ceiba*, Norris Square Civic Association, and numerous colleges and universities in the Northeastern United States. She has also served as a member of several Middle States evaluation teams. Dugan was engaged to evaluate the Private Industry Council of Philadelphia and completed several studies on workforce development in the City of Philadelphia.

From 1990-1995, Dugan served as Executive Director of the Fellowship Commission, one of the oldest civil/human rights organizations in the country. During her tenure, the Commission played a leading role in organizing the Coalition for Police Accountability, which led to the creation of the Police Review Board; launching the reform initiative on school desegregation; and promoting gun control legislation. Prior to her work at the Fellowship Commission, Dugan served as Executive Assistant to the President of the Medical College of Pennsylvania and completed an 18-year career at the Community College of Philadelphia as founding Dean of the Division of Educational Support Services. She has taught at the University of Pennsylvania and continues to lecture on various topics. Dugan received an A.B. and M.S. in Biology from Immaculata College and Boston College, respectively, and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Education/Human Learning and Development from the University of Pennsylvania.

Dugan serves on the Advisory Board of Friends of Ikamva Labantu, founded to support a community-based education and economic development organization in Cape Town, South Africa. She has served as an officer on numerous boards, such as WOMENS WAY, the Citizens Committee on Public Education, and the PA Association of Developmental Education. She served for three years on the PA State Adult Education

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Task Force. Dugan has been the recipient of fellowships from the Sonntag Foundation and the American Council on Education, and has been honored for distinguished leadership by the National Conference, the Soroptimists and the Prudential Foundation. Two career highlights have been receiving the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching at the Community College of Philadelphia and recognition by Project HOME. For seven years, Dugan hosted a radio talk show that focused on the “issues that divide us” for WMGK-FM.

Vicki W. Kramer, Ph.D., principal of V. Kramer & Associates, specializes in individual and organizational effectiveness. She has more than 25 years of leadership experience in workplace issues, human relations and women’s issues, and management. She provides consulting, training and group facilitation to a wide variety of businesses, professional firms and non-profits; coaches individuals on career issues; and conducts research. Prior to establishing her consulting firm in 1996, Ms. Kramer co-founded and directed Options, Inc., a non-profit career and human resources consulting service. She served as co-director from 1970 until 1996.

Ms. Kramer has been involved in issues of individual and organizational development throughout her career. She has appeared widely on radio and television and has been consulted regularly by journalists on employment and women’s issues. She has also written regular columns for the *Philadelphia Business Journal* and the *Philadelphia Bulletin*. She co-authored the book, *The Job Seeker’s Guide to the Delaware Valley* and collaborated on a national study of social change funds, funded by the Aspen Nonprofit Sector Research fund in 1998. In 2001/2002 she collaborated on a statewide study of gender and race bias in the courtroom for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Ms. Kramer was a commissioner on the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations and chairperson of the employment practices task force of the Philadelphia Mayor’s Commission for Women. She was a founding director and officer of Women’s Way, the nation’s first and most successful women’s funding federation. She served on the board and is a member of the Forum of Executive Women, where she co-chaired the executive suites committee. She was on the faculty of Haverford College and then Swarthmore College for seven years before founding Options. She earned her B.A. from Wellesley College, her M.A. from Radcliffe College, and her Ph.D. from Harvard University.

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Robert Yablon, DAP
6 male ex-offenders
6 female ex-offenders
22 females at New Directions for Women
10 juvenile male inmates
4 juvenile female inmates
10 male inmates
6 female inmates
(213 individuals)

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