

Scope of Study

Correction Officer Staffing

The Department of Correction (DOC) is responsible for confining and controlling accused and sentenced offenders in correctional institutions (prisons) and centers (jails) and for administering medical, mental health, rehabilitative, and community-based service programs. It must also protect its staff and the inmates by ensuring a safe, secure, and humane environment.

Statewide, DOC operates 18 correctional facilities ranging from maximum to minimum security. On any given day during 2002, the department housed almost 19,000 pre-trial and sentenced inmates. DOC employed a total of 7,000 staff including approximately 4,000 custodial staff. The custodial staff includes all ranks of sworn correction officers.

Concerns have been raised about the growth in the inmate population over the past 12 years and a corresponding decline in the levels of DOC custodial staff. Insufficient staffing levels in the state's prison system may create an unsafe environment for staff and inmates as well as jeopardize public safety.

Area of Focus

The study would determine if current Department of Correction custodial staffing levels are sufficient for the safe, effective, and efficient management of the state's prison system.

Areas of Analysis

- Analyze DOC staffing levels for custodial and other personnel in terms of staff-to-inmate ratios, facility security level, services and programs
- Track incidents that may indicate an unsafe working or housing environment in DOC facilities such as inmate assaults, riot, escape, and disciplinary reports for fighting, gang activity, weapons, contraband, property damage, or other inmate behaviors
- Analyze current DOC staffing costs
- Review relevant national standards for prison staffing
- Examine the issue of a statutory minimum staffing requirement for DOC

Area Not Included in Analysis

This study will not evaluate correction officer training or the department's inmate classification system.